

# Gorleston Engagement Feedback

## March 2022

In March 2022 Healthwatch Norfolk engaged with members of the public in the Gorleston area. This took place at Gorleston Library, Shrublands Medical Centre, and online in a local community Facebook group. As a result, 47 pieces of feedback for nine different service providers were collected.

Included within this report are direct pieces of feedback gathered by Healthwatch Norfolk staff. However, feedback gathered over social media has not been directly quoted due to not having consent. This feedback has still been accounted for in the themes. Themes and frequently referenced services have been drawn from both means of feedback gathering.

Healthwatch Norfolk would like to thank everyone who took the time to speak with us, leave feedback on our website, or via social media. This report will be shared with local commissioners and healthcare leaders to ensure that the views of the community are heard.

## Themes

### Dentistry

One of the most frequently mentioned concerns was a lack of access to dentistry, which is an issue across the entire county. 17 out of 47 (36%) of all feedback gathered was related to dentistry. Patients spoke of an inability to access NHS dental care, resulting in worsening of conditions and extended periods of pain. People regularly reported having to travel long distances or spend large sums of money to access private dental care.

## **Access to GP appointments**

Patients primary concern is a difficulty accessing GP appointments. There was a lot of frustration on this subject, with 12 out of 47 (25%) pieces of feedback mentioning difficulties. This was divided between people who felt they were unable to get in contact with surgeries at all, those who were not given appointments with a GP but a different healthcare practitioner.

One concerning piece of feedback was from someone who felt they had no choice but to attend to A&E to receive treatment because the GP triage resulted in waits that are too long.

Although there were frustrations, we also heard from patients who were happy with the triage system and felt it worked well. In general patients were also very positive about the staff themselves, and even if they had concerns about appointment processes they still voiced praise for the staff.

## **Mental Health Services**

Concerns were raised by patients regarding access to mental health services. Long waits were mentioned more than once, with one patient having waited 2 years for treatment and is yet to receive any. Others had to wait several weeks for medication or were given the wrong medication. We also heard from someone who felt their only option was to get private mental health treatment due to being unable to access treatment.

Date	Service	Title	Review	Rating
18/03/2022	James Paget Hospital	Short notice to lose weight for knee op	My knees have gone so I was waiting to go to the hospital. Two days before the operation they told me I needed to lose weight to be able to have the operation. They did give me information on how to do this but I can only really change my diet because with my knees being how they are I can't start exercising until they are better. It's just frustrating because I've seen bigger people than me have the operation. I can't complain though because everything I've had done at the hospital I've been pleased with. It's just the delay with this but they did agree to rebook it in once I'd lost the weight.	4
21/03/2022	James Paget Hospital	Not a good experience	I needed to have my gallbladder removed and I was feeling very unwell. I was taken to hospital and was told that there was no where for me to lay down, I'd have to sit somewhere. I was unable to sit due to how unwell I was feeling and had to lay down, so I ended up having to lay on the floor in reception. It was because of this that I was eventually moved in to a ward, but until this there was no provision there for me. Of course, the conditions at the time weren't good due to Covid but I still needed somewhere to lay.	3
21/03/2022	James Paget Hospital	Brilliant!	My experiences at the Paget have been brilliant. I go regularly because I've been helping my friend who is currently having chemo. I was also seen very very quickly for an exam, and I was seen within a week.	5
24/03/2022	James Paget Hospital	Ongoing health issues	Three years ago I was in for an operation, and was given compression stockings that were much too small and tight. As a result I developed ulcers, which is still a problem for me. It's completely changed my life. I used to be an avid walker and loved taking my dog for a walk but now I can't do any of that.	1

17/03/2022	Millwood Surgery	So difficult see someone but happy with care	<p>I think it's about time they got back into the surgery. I thought I had vertigo but have now been told it was something to do with my inner ear. I did manage to contact the surgery and get an appointment on the same day. But when you phone you've got to get past the receptionist. It just depends who you speak to when you call.</p> <p>It went downhill when they went into partnership.</p> <p>It's just so difficult getting an appointment. Everyone at the practice has been kind and proficient once you're there. Dr Hammond was very thorough when I saw him recently. I'm very happy with the medical side of it. There's nothing wrong with the staff. You expect a wait but you don't have to wait long - a bit like a train! It's just getting an appointment is so difficult.</p>	1
17/03/2022	NHS England	Lack of NHS dentists	<p>I was left in agony for almost three weeks due to the lack of NHS dentists and no dentists being available. Three of my teeth had to be removed under sedation due to infection and decay due to not being able to see a dentist.</p> <p>The practice I visited was lovely unfortunately they were not taking on new patients. Absolutely nowhere seem to be doing any type of prevention, unless you are part of a practice.</p>	2
18/03/2022	NHS England	Can't find an NHS dentist	<p>We can't find an NHS dentist in Norfolk. We've spent two years trying to find one. It's cost over a thousand pound to get work done privately now. It's frustrating because when we've called we've been told we can't get NHS but can be seen tomorrow privately. We got to one in Gorleston privately because it's cheaper than a lot of the other private dentists but it's still a lot of money. I did manage to get an emergency extraction during the pandemic but nothing else was offered, I was only able to have an extraction. Because of the issues I was having with my teeth I got an infection and had vertigo for over a year. I even called an ambulance at one stage because I was feeling so unwell. They weren't able to get my treatment but I did get an NHS extraction very quickly and my doctors gave me antibiotics beforehand.</p>	1
24/03/2022	NHS England	Cannot get an NHS dentist!	<p>It's impossible to get an NHS dentist. My ex-partner even had to pull his own tooth out during lockdown because he was in that much pain and just couldn't get in to see anyone.</p>	1

28/03/2022	NHS England	I've had to go private	I moved to Norfolk in October and I've been unable to find an NHS dentist. In the end I've had to go private, which is costing me £25 a month even if I'm not using.	1
15/03/2022	Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (NNUH)	Stretched but they're a good hospital	<p>I moved to Norfolk from Stevenage and I believe if I was still in Stevenage, then I wouldn't be here today. The care I've had since being in Norfolk is miles better. It's the flexibility of staff. The staff in the day procedure unit were moved into the emergency unit and helped with my infection after I had an operation. I had various issues while in hospital. There were just two nurses looking after the patients on the ward. They're clearly stretched and strained but they're a good hospital.</p> <p>Waiting is a bit of an issue. I had a blocked kidney and they wanted to put a stent in. I said I get infections from them but would have one if it was just short term. Then it turned out it needed to be longer. It just feels like they can make promises to make you shut up.</p> <p>The quality of care is very good but one or two can let you down. Staff always let me know what's going on.</p> <p>The food here is not the best. I've been in another hospital before who gave me a booklet to choose your meal. The nurses gave you advice on the meals but I like having the choice. It would be good for others to do this.</p>	4
21/03/2022	Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT)	Long wait	My son was referred for a medication review and he's still waiting 5 or 6 weeks later and it's urgent.	1

18/03/2022	Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT)	Told I could re-refer but not been able to	<p>I was under mental health services for many years. They discharged me because they thought I had all the tools I needed to self-manage. I said I wasn't ready to be discharged but they said I could be re-referred if I needed to be. I mean how ready can someone be to be discharged after being in a service for 10 years?! It was also not a good time to discharge me with it being the peak of the COVID pandemic and I had a number of other things going on in my life. Shortly after being discharged I fell into a bad place and this has been ongoing for the last year.</p> <p>I went to the doctors and ask to be re-referred. My doctors were good and made the referral for me. I just felt like I needed help before it got worse. I got put onto the waiting list for Northgate. Meanwhile my mental health and eating disorder is getting worse. My physical health is deteriorating. I had my assessment in September 2021 and was given a referral to wellbeing who got back to me quickly. They assessed that I needed to be seen quickly and referred me on. I was sent round multiple places. I'm being told I'm too underweight for support from one place but not underweight enough for the other. Things are getting worse with my eating disorder in the meantime. It's just difficult for me because when I was discharged they told me I could be re-referred.</p> <p>My GP has tried to help but when I went initially they didn't have anyone with specialist knowledge of mental health in their team so they just took my physical observations again. They do have a mental health practitioner now, who I've seen but they weren't much help for me. It's just taken constant prompting. Constantly chasing people to get some kind of support. When I'm saying I want help, it's so frustrating. Once I've prompted the doctors they have been good to find things to help me while I wait for more support.</p>	1
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17/03/2022	The Beaches Medical Centre	Stopped using other branches	<p>The surgery seem to have stopped using the other surgeries at Magdalen Way and Hopton. They're only offering us appointments at Sussex Road. Magdalen Way and Hopton are newer buildings and they offered quite a few services like physio. I just think they should be being used.</p> <p>They did do a video call for patient before which was quite good. It was a way to help triage patients and you would get a call back if necessary and you could have a video call if they needed to see anything. It did stop at midday but it allowed more people to get treated. It's the same as in the surgery really but they just can't take your blood pressure etc.</p> <p>When you get into the surgery and see them, they're nice people. It's just a real struggle to get there and I don't even know if there's doctors there. I would have rated it 5 before but it's down to 2 now.</p>	2
18/03/2022	The Beaches Medical Centre	Difficult to contact	<p>It feels like they want to keep you away. I have to fill in an online form to contact them and then you get a receptionist or someone else call you. I don't like that I have to discuss my health with someone who isn't a health professional. I do understand that they have to triage patients though.</p> <p>I called this morning and wanted to book a non-urgent appointment. They told me to fill in a form. They didn't seem to understand that I didn't want to fill in a form for someone to call me and decide if I could see someone. I've waited in a phone queue to speak to the surgery and then been told there's no appointments because they've not been released yet. In my opinion, it just feels like the whole ethos is to keep you away.</p> <p>I've even had to fight for blood tests before. When I came out of hospital my haemoglobin was low so I needed regularly checked. It felt like I was having to fight to get the blood tests even though my physio was advising I had them. I've been unfortunately since I've had lots of issues. I find it important to get someone to see you now. They used to have an online system to book appointment but they got rid of it and the online contact form is not as good.</p> <p>I find it difficult to talk to the staff at the front desk with the screen in place, I find myself having to shout so they can hear me and this means you have no privacy.</p>	1

21/03/2022	The Beaches Medical Centre	Can't make an appointment	We live right by the Magdalen branch but during covid it all went to Sussex Road, and there's not much parking at Sussex Road. I went to make an appointment but I was told by the receptionist that I couldn't do that there, I'd have to ring. I ended up ringing the surgery to book an appointment while I was sat in reception. To actually get to see a doctor is a problem, we don't really bother trying now. Before all of this I'd have rated them 10/10, I used to be able to get in very quickly.	2
22/03/2022	The Beaches Medical Centre	Staff are very helpful	The staff at the surgery are very friendly and helpful. It's always very good when we come here.	5
24/03/2022	The Beaches Medical Centre	A good experience, all went well.	I came in for an injection in my knee. The staff explained the procedure well and put me at ease. I was treated well. The problem with my knee started back in November, I was then offered the injection in January, and I've only just had it in March. It was delayed but I don't mind, it's due to Covid.	5
28/03/2022	The Beaches Medical Centre	Happy with online triage system	I joined two years ago and I've had all my checks done and seen lots of staff. Everything's been done with a quick turn around. There's a much better meds system here than in Essex where I moved from, it's more efficient. I'm happy with the online triage system and they get back quickly online. This doesn't seem to be the same for patients not comfortable online though.	3
28/03/2022	The Beaches Medical Centre	Got to see a doctor so it was very good	<p>The doctor was very clear and spoke in a way that I could understand. I partly lipread so I need face to face appointments. When we do get appointments it's usually with nurses so we were happy to get to see a doctor today.</p> <p>It does feel that the last two years we've been left, and it's not been very good or helpful. I thought doctors would have been back by now, everything else is, it seems that they never have appointments.</p> <p>We were happy with our experience today though.</p>	4



28/03/2022	The Beaches Medical Centre	Very hard to get through	<p>There's very long phone queues and often when it answers it's the answer phone system. I use pay as you go so it gets very expensive for me. I only use a phone and I feel that I'm segregated because I can't use a computer. I was also unhappy because they provide a fit note so that I'm able to receive universal credit, and I was told it was in the post but it was a week late and still hadn't arrived. This meant I was in trouble with the DWP. I went in to ask them about it and they found it on a tray so it hadn't even been posted.</p> <p>I've been with the surgery 7 years and I don't have an assigned doctor. It feels like they're not at the surgery, only the nurses, I don't understand it. The nurses have been outstanding though, they're doing everything.</p>	1
28/03/2022	The Beaches Medical Centre	It's very hard to get in for an appointment	Trying to get in to The Beaches is very hard, I can't get an appointment. I always ring up and I can never get through. If I do get through they're busy and fully booked. I'd love to see the same GP every time, each time it's someone else so they don't know me.	2
28/03/2022	The Beaches Medical Centre	Couldn't make an appointment there	My grand daughter was seen by the doctor who said we needed to book bloods. After the appointment we went to reception to do this and were told we needed to ring, even though we were stood right there.	2
28/03/2022	The Lighthouse Medical Centre/Phoenix House	The gold standard	When you make your first call the receptionists are exceptional. You can always see a doctor. During covid nothing has changed for emergency appointments. You get a choice of face to face or phone. Can't exaggerate enough how good they are. They're pro-active so you don't have to chase anything and this has all been consistent for years.	5