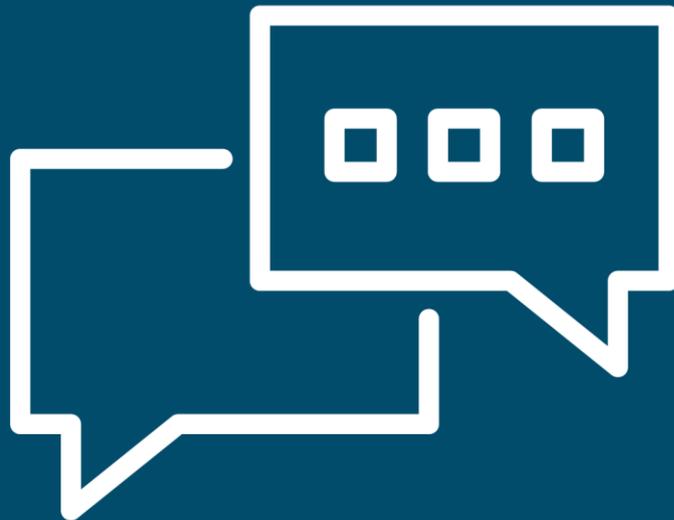


Healthwatch Newcastle 2026 Annual Survey Results



About Us

Healthwatch Newcastle is one of 153 independent not-for-profit Healthwatch services established in England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

We help children, young people and adults have a say about social care and health services in Newcastle. This includes every part of the community, including people who sometimes struggle to be heard.

We work to ensure that those who plan and run social care and health services listen to the people using their services and use this information to make improvements.

Healthwatch Newcastle would like to thank everyone who generously gave their time and expertise to assist with this report.

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Methodology

Healthwatch Newcastle released their annual survey for public engagement in order to establish our priorities to work on for the upcoming financial year 2026-2027. The survey was advertised on Healthwatch Newcastle social media pages and public engagement took place in localities throughout the period of eight weeks as the survey was active.

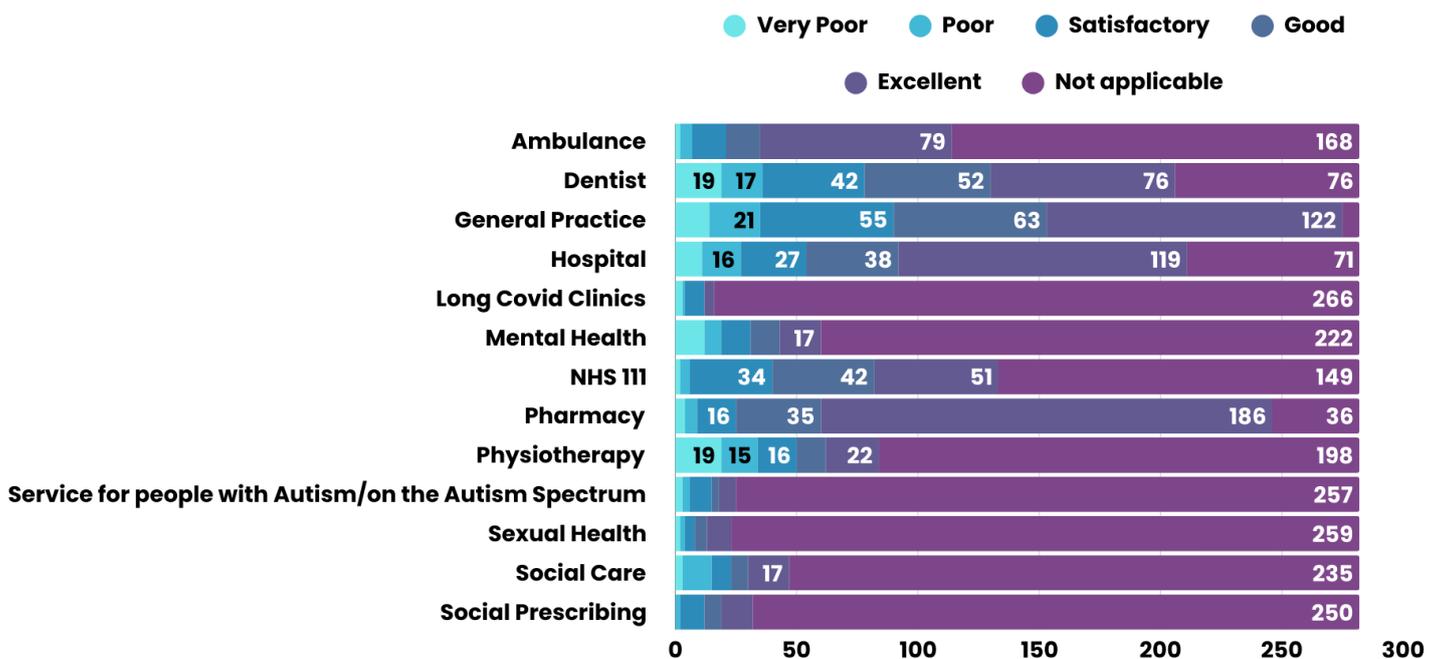
We received **282** responses in total which provided insights and experiences on a range of health and/or social care services which were accessed in Newcastle in the past 12 months.

Experience

We asked respondents to rate their experiences on a range of health and/or social care services which they have used in the past 12 months.

Experiences were ranked on a scale from 'Excellent' to 'Very poor'.

The chart shows the number of responses for each rating category within each service, allowing comparison of how satisfaction varies across different parts of the health and care system. It also highlights how many respondents had not used certain services in the past year (shown as 'Not applicable'), indicating differences in service usage among members of the public.



Number of ratings to the Annual Survey is summarised in the table below:

Topic	Number of ratings for 'Excellent' or 'Good' or 'Satisfactory'	Number of ratings for 'Poor' or 'Very poor'	Number of ratings for 'Not Applicable'
Ambulance	107	7	168
Dentist	170	36	76
General Practice	240	35	7
Hospital	228	27	71
Long Covid Clinic	12	4	266
Mental Health	41	19	222
NHS 111	127	6	149
Pharmacy	237	9	36
Physiotherapy	50	34	198
Services for people with Autism/ADHD	19	6	257
Sexual Health	19	4	259
Social Care	32	15	235
Social Prescribing	30	2	250

The most chosen topics for respondents to share their experience **both positive and negative** were:

1. General Practice (52 responses)
2. Hospital (38 responses)
3. Dentist (35 responses)

The topics respondents gave the greatest number of **positive** feedback to were:

1. General Practice (21 responses)
2. Pharmacy (17 responses)
3. Hospital (14 responses)

The topics respondents gave the greatest number of **negative** feedback to were:

1. General Practice (31 responses)
2. Dentist (26 responses)
3. Hospital (24 responses)

Ambulance: Five respondents chose this topic – four were positive and one was negative

- 79 respondents rated ambulance services to be a 'excellent' for them compared to two respondents who rated their experience with the service as 'very poor'.
- Five respondents provided additional comments regarding a recent experience with the ambulance service.
 - Four respondents shared a positive experience which included that the ambulance service came very quickly and the paramedics were professional and helpful.
 - One respondent shared a negative comment stating that they find the ambulance service to be poor but did not specify why they found it to be this way.

Dentist: 35 respondents chose this topic – 9 were positive and 26 were negative

- 35 respondents provided insights into their dental experiences. A large majority said that they are unable to register with a dentist or able to get an appointment as an NHS patient. Many respondents said that they have registered with a private dentist and have received excellent care.

GP: 52 respondents chose this topic – 21 were positive and 31 were negative

- Ten highlighted quick and responsive service, including follow-ups, medication refills, and text messaging, while eight praised the quality of treatment and care when seen.
- Four noted that online forms or apps had improved access.
- On the other hand, 30 respondents reported difficulty getting appointments, including same-day only availability, long waits, and phone access issues.
- Twelve mentioned inconsistent quality of care or missed diagnoses, six noted prescription errors or outdated NHS app information, and another six reported poor chronic care management or follow-ups.
- Additional concerns included staff rudeness (five respondents), depersonalized care (four respondents), and frustration with online forms (three respondents).

Hospital: 38 respondents chose this topic – 14 were positive and 24 were negative

- 25 out of 38 (66%) mention long waiting times, including 8–12+ hour A&E waits, months on outpatient lists, delayed follow-ups, or overcrowding.
- 12 out of 38 (32%) highlight communication problems, such as lack of updates, cancelled appointments, delayed results, or interpreter issues.
- 6 out of 38 (16%) specifically describe very long waits in mental health or autism services (including waits of months to 2+ years).
- 14 out of 38 (37%) report positive hospital experiences, praising good treatment, efficient oncology/day services, successful surgery or caring staff.

Long Covid Clinics: 16 respondents chose this topic – 12 were positive and four were negative

- 16 respondents rated Long Covid Clinics as a service they have used in the past 12 months, with 266 respondents who said that this service was not applicable to them.
- Eight respondents rated the service as satisfactory.
- However, no respondents provided any additional details as to how their experience was with the service.

Mental health: 13 respondents chose this topic – four were positive and nine were negative

- Four respondents provided positive feedback about mental health services which included good support from the mental health support team at the Newcastle City Council, good awareness of mental health in the public and have received help from mental health services.
- Other respondents highlighted they find the services to be slow when going through a crisis. One respondent described mental health teams to be "*non-existent*".

NHS 111: six respondents chose this topic – four were positive and two were negative

- 4 out of 6 (67%) describe NHS 111 positively, using words such as *helpful, quick and easy*, and saying they rely on the service or that it saved them time.
- 2 out of 6 (33%) report negative experiences, stating it was *not helpful*, dependent on who answers the call, or that staff had limited understanding.
- Overall, feedback on NHS 111 is mostly positive (67%), though one-third (33%) highlight inconsistency in advice and staff knowledge.

Pharmacies: 20 respondents chose this topic – 17 were positive and two were negative (one was mixed feedback)

This service had the highest rating of 'Excellent' (186 ratings). From the 20 pharmacy-related responses:

- 16 out of 20 (80%) describe pharmacy services positively, highlighting quick prescription turnaround, helpful and knowledgeable staff, good communication, reliability, and accessibility for minor ailments.
- 3 out of 20 (15%) mention minor issues, such as occasional long waits or medication not being in stock immediately.
- 1 out of 20 (5%) includes more neutral feedback, saying the service works well but “not for everything.”

Overall, pharmacy services receive very strong feedback, with 4 in 5 respondents (80%) expressing clear satisfaction, making it one of the most positively rated services in the responses provided.

Physiotherapy: 22 respondents chose this topic – three were positive and 19 were negative

Comments provided around physiotherapy services were largely negative.

- A total of 17 out of 22 respondents (77%) express dissatisfaction, most commonly describing long waiting times and limited access to appointments.
- Nine people (41%) specifically mention delays, and 3 (14%) say they chose to pay for private physiotherapy because NHS waits were too long.
- Almost half (10 out of 22, 45%) criticised the format of the service, particularly telephone assessments and being given exercise sheets, with several stating that a GP could have provided the same advice without referral.
- A small number (2 responses, 9%) highlight poor follow-up after hospital discharge, which they felt affected recovery.

- Only 3 out of 22 respondents (14%) report positive experiences, mainly relating to inpatient hospital physiotherapy.

Services for people with Autism/on the autism spectrum: two respondents chose this topic – zero were positive and two were negative

- Six respondents rated services for people with Autism as 'very poor' or 'poor'.
- Nine respondents rated their experience with the service as 'satisfactory' with ten respondents rating the service as 'good' or 'excellent'.
- Only two respondents provided additional feedback. Both respondents described very long waiting times and lack of timely support. One mentioned waiting over two years for an assessment, while another reported waiting over four years with virtually no follow-up or meaningful contact. Both responses highlight significant delays and insufficient early intervention, with their needs growing or becoming more serious while they were still on the waiting list, without receiving help.

Sexual health: one respondent chose this topic – zero were positive and one was negative

- Four respondents rated their experience with sexual health services as 'very poor' or 'poor' with another four respondents who rated the service as 'satisfactory'.
- A further 15 respondents rated their experiences as 'good' or 'excellent'.
- One comment was provided regarding sexual health services within Newcastle. The response highlights difficulty accessing sexual health services, particularly due to a lack of bookable appointments and reliance on a first-come, first-served system. The respondent reports waiting months for an implant removal, especially as some GP practices do not provide this service.

Social care: five respondents chose this topic – three were positive and two were negative

- 3 out of 5 (60%) responses were positive, describing social care support as “good,” “first class,” and expressing overall satisfaction with the care provided.
- However, 2 out of 5 (40%) responses were negative, highlighting long waits, high costs, poor communication, lack of empathy, and concerns about value for money.

Social prescribing: 11 respondents chose this topic – one was positive and zero were negative (one was neutral and nine respondents were unsure)

Responses relating to social prescribing, awareness is very low.

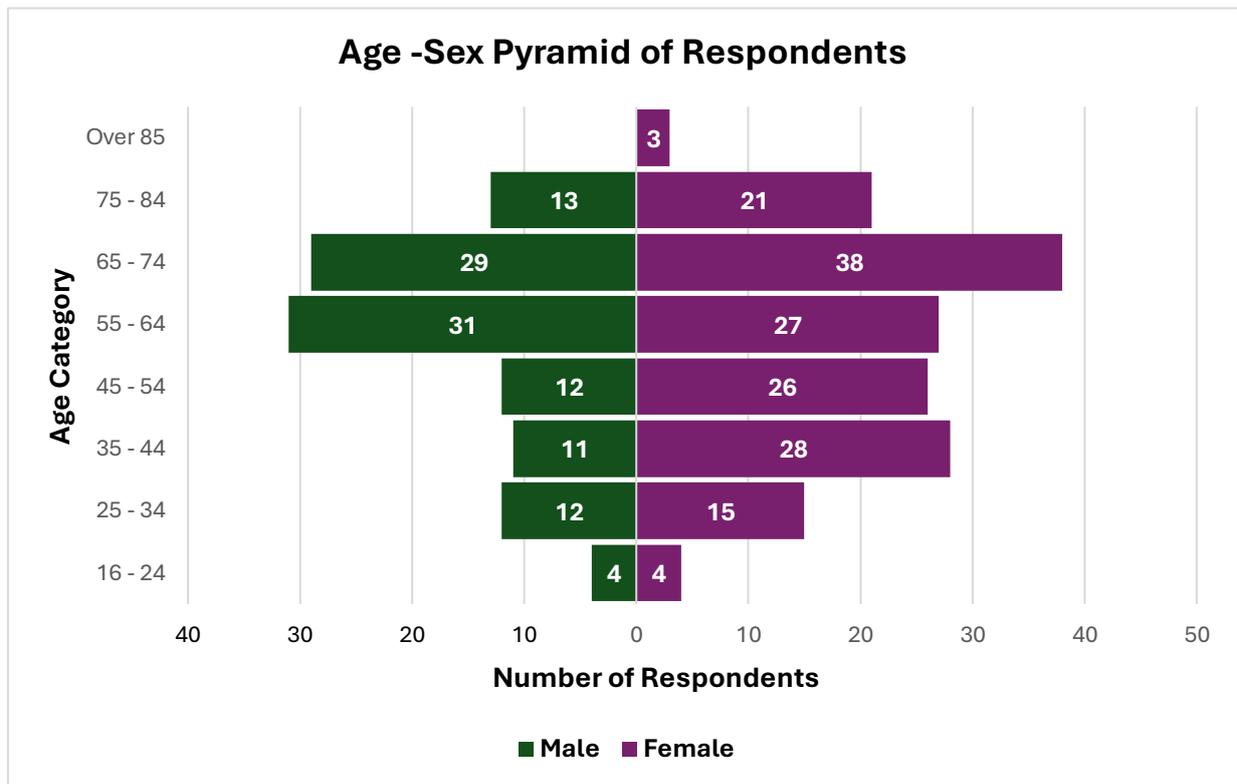
- Nine out of 11 (82%) state that people did not know what social prescribing was or had never heard of it, with several notes explaining that respondents selected “N/A” due to lack of understanding.
- Only one out of 11 (9%) clearly describes social prescribing as helpful, and one out of 11 (9%) provides neutral feedback (satisfied with what was received but without detail).

Demographics

Gender and age

We had a higher number of females who responded to the survey (162 female respondents compared to 112 male respondents). We had a higher number of females aged 65-74 (38 female respondents). As for males, we had a high value of male respondents aged 55-64 (31).

Eight respondents preferred not to share their gender or did not answer the question.



Ethnicity

In terms of ethnicity, a high proportion of respondents were of a White ethnicity (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British (148 respondents). 81 respondents were of an Asian ethnicity.

Those who specified another ethnicity were Iranian, Kurdish, Latin American or Vietnamese.

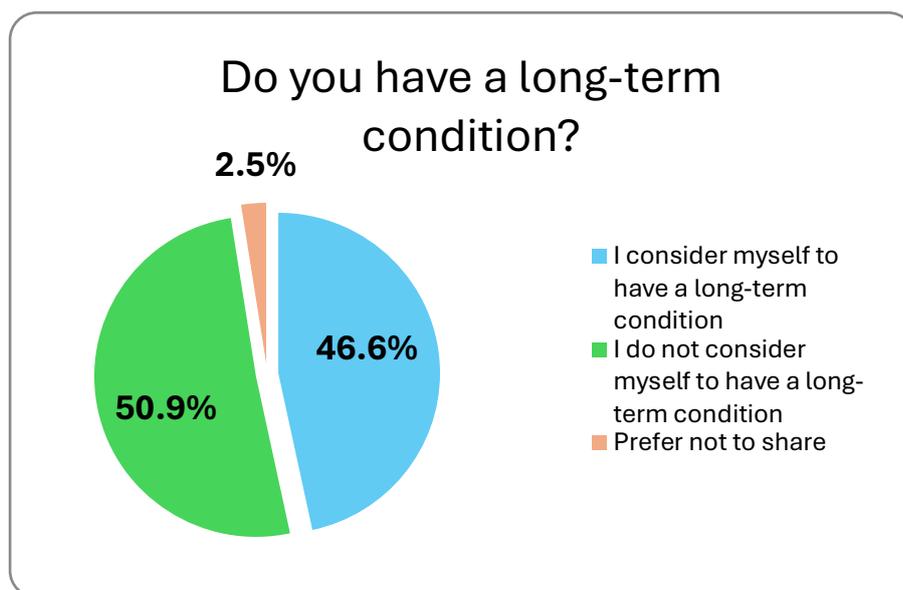
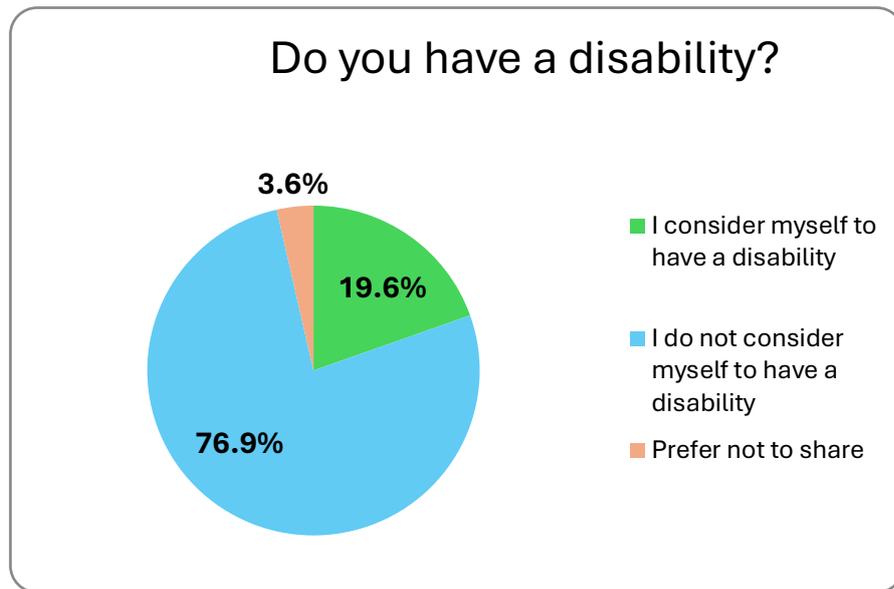
The table below shows the results of ethnic background:

Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, any other Asian background)	28.9%	81
2	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	5.7%	16
3	Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background	0.4%	1
4	White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	52.9%	148
5	White: Irish	0.4%	1
6	White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma or Other White	1.8%	5
7	Arab	2.1%	6
8	Prefer not to share	1.4%	4
9	Other (please specify):	6.4%	18

Disability/Long-term condition

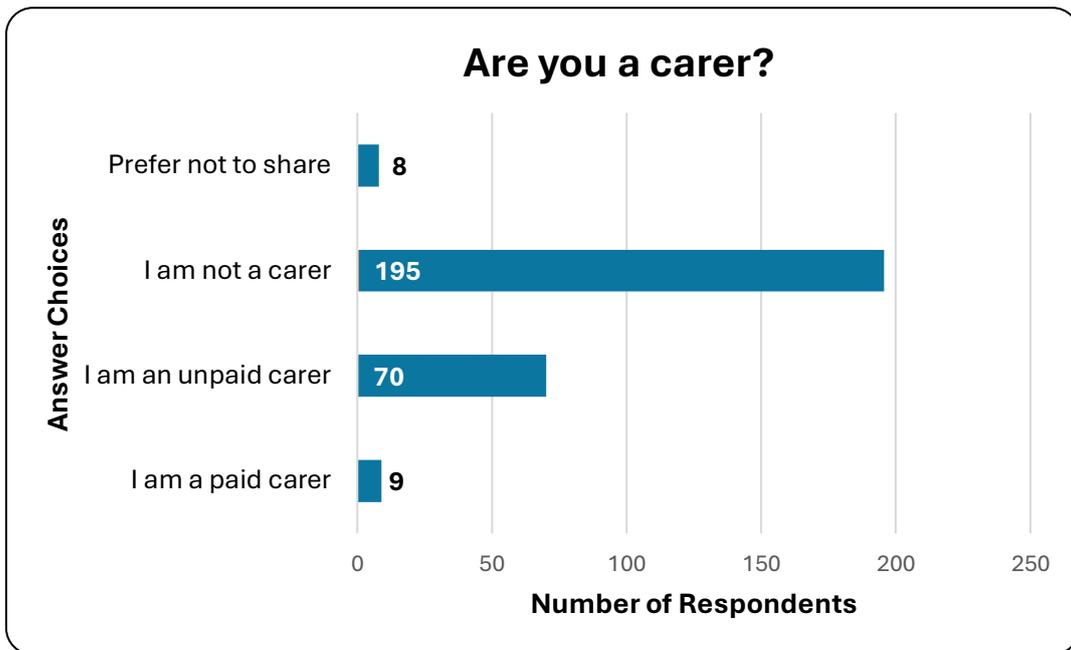
We asked respondents if they considered themselves having a disability or a long-term condition.

- 55 (19.6%) said that they consider themselves having a disability.
- 131 (46.6%) said they consider themselves having a long-term condition.



Carer

We also asked respondents if they were a carer. The majority of respondents said they are 'not a carer'. Those that were carers, a majority were unpaid (70 respondents).



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