

Healthwatch Kent Insights

February 2022



Every day we are hearing feedback from people in Kent about their experience of health and social care services.

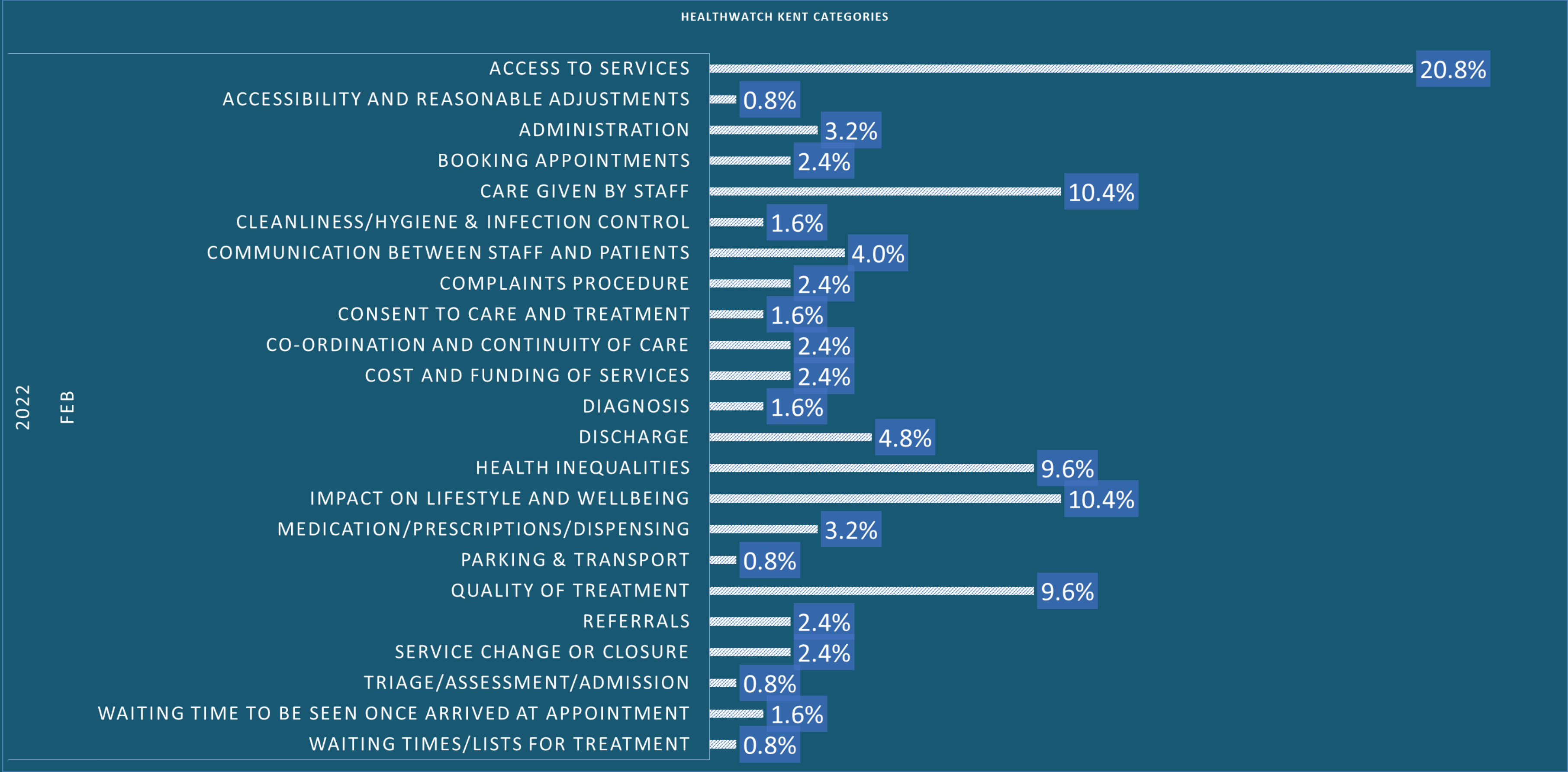
This report summarises the feedback we've heard in February 2022.

If you would like more details, we can supply that. Just drop us a line

feedback@healthwatchkent.co.uk



What have we heard about this month?



What have we heard?

Access to Services – 20.8% of the feedback

Access to services once again made up a large proportion of the feedback that we heard this month with the majority (66%) about **dental services**.

- We continue to hear from people who don't know that you will be unregistered if you don't visit the dental surgery.
- Over 60% of dental feedback is from people telling us that they couldn't get an appointment and were experiencing dental problems or needed emergency treatment like the extraction of a rotten tooth.
- One person told us they couldn't go to the dentist due to a health condition. This condition also affected their voice so they could not phone the practice. They now have a carer who can speak for them but when they tried to make a dental appointment, they were told that they were no longer on the NHS dental patient list. They are upset that 'reasonable adjustments' were not made and told us that the issues with their teeth are now impacting their mental health.

GP surgeries (13% of the feedback)

- Half of the feedback is from people unable to register with a GP.
- One person told us they have been unable to register with a GP since moving in summer 2021, and therefore have been unable to get medication for their mental health.
- Another person told us that they had been removed from their GP's patient list due to 'inactivity'. They told us that their Covid vaccine records are now missing and as a result can't get a travel pass.

Community Mental Health

- We heard some negative feedback about Community Mental Health services. For example, one person told us they have been unable to access a treatment pathway because they missed a group session due to ill health.

What have we heard?

Care given by Staff – 10.4% of the feedback. 7% increase from last month

- Feedback about inpatient services made up almost half of this category. We heard both positive and negative experiences
- Examples include; a parent of a premature baby praising staff who were helpful, kind and professional. However they also told us about the lack of care given to them as a first-time parent, particularly on days when they received tough news about their child

Please note: although we have not named services in this general feedback, we do send detailed feedback of every case to each provider. If you need a copy of that, just drop us an email at feedback@healthwatchkent.co.uk



What have we heard?

Impact on Lifestyle and Wellbeing 10.4% of the feedback

In February we heard a vast increase in feedback in this category, shooting up from 0.8% to 10.04%.

- 40% of the feedback was about dental services. One person told us they were unable to see a dentist during lockdown which meant they have lost teeth. This has had an impact on their lifestyle and wellbeing.
- Comments about GP practices made up 13% of the feedback. One example is from a patient who went deaf whilst waiting for an urgent referral from their GP. When they finally had an appointment, the consultant told them the issue was now untreatable and that the GP should have put the appointment through as an emergency rather than urgent. They told us that they feel no one is taking responsibility for what has happened to them.

What have we heard?

Quality of Treatment 9.6% of the feedback

- We heard from a clinically vulnerable patient who told us that after testing positive for Covid, their GP practice acted in a way that they felt was 'responsive and very reassuring'. They received a number of phone calls from their GP surgery to check they were okay and offer advice.
- Almost 28% of the feedback in this category were about mental health services, with the majority about issues with discharge from inpatient care.
- We also saw several cases where people with mental health problems told us that services weren't communicating effectively. For example, the Crisis Team and Community Mental Health Team and this has impacted on the quality of care that people have received.
- We heard from a parent who had been advised to take their child to A&E. They told us that the service at the hospital was 'amazing'. They were seen, given a referral for a scan and then able to leave all within 20 minutes.

What's new this month?

In Summary

- 75% of the feedback we heard this month was negative. 23% of the comments were mixed, with only 2% of the experiences we heard being positive.
- Over the past few months, we've seen a steady increase in the number of people telling us that they're unable to **register with a GP**. We're increasingly hearing about the impact this is having on people's ability to access their medications and the knock on impact on their daily life.
- Nearly 10% of the February feedback was from people telling us how the **pandemic** had impacted upon their care and treatment. We heard from someone whose one year old baby has not been seen by a health visitor because of the pandemic and restrictions at their local health centre. They told us they have been struggling with their postnatal mental health and have not been able to access the support they need. This has left them feeling hopeless and suicidal.
- The volume of people contacting us with issues accessing **dental appointments** remains high. We are now seeing an increase in the number of people contacting us with **dental emergencies** and being unable to register with a dentist and get an appointment.
- In February we also saw a jump in the number of **parents** contacting us about the health and social care difficulties their children are having. In January this made up 3% of the data but this month it has increased to 13%.

Insight from community organisations across Kent

- One organisation told us their service users are very confused about the availability and potential costs of Covid **testing**.
- We heard from an organisation for whom several of its users had seen a deterioration in their **eyesight** due to the withdrawal or postponement of regular checks and screenings during the pandemic.
- Another voluntary group told us about someone who had come to them for help in finding an NHS dentist as they were unable to afford to go private and couldn't find any **dentist** willing to take them on in their own area.
- We heard feedback that people were experiencing differing rules and regulations when visiting relatives in care homes. Some were advised to PCR test in advance, some were told there were no longer any protocols in place. This led to them worrying about the inconsistencies.

What have we done with the feedback?

We share the detailed feedback directly with the relevant organisations so that it can inform and influence their own plans.

We will always escalate any safeguarding or urgent cases for immediate action.

This month we have escalated 13 cases.
8 of them have been responded to.



What has the Mental Health User Voice Network heard?

114 people shared their experience of mental health services in February



66% of the feedback was about Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs), GP surgeries, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Themes include:

- Communication & discharge from **CMHT**, with some people not aware they had been discharged from CMHT until their GP told them
- People want face-to-face appointments with a **GP** and more availability
- Waiting times and lack of support while waiting for up to 2 years for an ASD diagnosis through the **CAMHS** service
- Complexity of forms from **Department of Work & Pensions** is overwhelming. People told us they are made to feel like criminals when their claim is unsuccessful despite mental health assessment from their GP.
- The return to face-to-face Peer Support groups is welcomed by many, but those who are housebound may lose their only outside contact.

You can find more information about the Kent Mental Health User Voice network [here](#)

What have we done with the feedback?

- We heard about a lady who was homeless, pregnant and in need of dental treatment. Her dental health was affecting her pregnancy. We helped them to contact the Kent Dental Helpline and they have now seen a dentist and got the care that they need. Using our Social Return on Investment framework, we can calculate that our intervention generated £2,500 of social value for this lady. You can read more [here](#)
- Carers came to us asking questions about Kent County Council's new Carers strategy. We wanted to ensure as many people as possible knew about the strategy and heard the answers to peoples' questions, so we interviewed their Director of Adult Social Care. He encouraged listeners to share their thoughts to inform the final version of the strategy. We got answers to all your questions and shared them on our website so everyone could benefit. Listen to the interview [here](#). Our interview has been shared with 4,000 Kent County Council staff as well as being shared on our own social media channels.

You can read more about what we did with your feedback in February [here](#)

We hear feedback via a range of routes including:



calls, texts and emails to our Information & Signposting service



social media and our online feedback form



we proactively reach out to voluntary groups to hear about issues facing their clients

This month we've reached 3,979 people

“You really listened to me and took the time to support me, thank you.”

“Thank you very much. The information you gave me about the Kent Forums was really helpful”

“You actively listened and made me feel respected and valued.”

Want more details?

Let us know. We can review our data for specific topics and organisations, just let us know what you want.

Email:

feedback@healthwatchkent.co.uk

