

Your Voice

Pharmacies in Lancashire

November 2017

Pennine Lancashire

Report summarising the findings of Healthwatch Lancashire and Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen's patient engagement activities in community pharmacies across Pennine Lancashire.

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Introduction

Healthwatch Lancashire is committed to listening to patients and members of the public in Lancashire and making sure their views and experiences are heard by those who run, plan and regulate health and social care services. This is achieved through a core programme of work visiting health and social care services and speaking to service users.

Healthwatch Lancashire, Healthwatch Blackpool and Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen were approached to help Community Pharmacy Lancashire gain feedback on their services to the public across the county of Lancashire. The three local Healthwatch organisations of Lancashire collaborated and developed a programme of work which ran from January 2017 to March 2017.

Each local Healthwatch lead in their geographical area. As this part of the project was for pharmacies within Pennine Lancashire, Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen delivered engagement activities in Blackburn with Darwen whilst Healthwatch Lancashire delivered those within the rest of East Lancashire.

Reports for other areas across Lancashire, including a report which combines all findings in the project, can be found on the Healthwatch Lancashire website here:
<http://healthwatchlancashire.co.uk/reports/reports/>.

Why we undertook this project

The aim of this programme was to gather experiences from the public about pharmacy services in Lancashire. Over the past four years, we have received little independent feedback regarding public perceptions of pharmacy services. However, the public are increasingly encouraged to use pharmacy services for minor illnesses or ailments, partly to reduce pressures on primary or secondary care services including A&E. As such, the aim of our pharmacy programme was to gather views and experiences from the public about pharmacy services across Lancashire.

About Community Pharmacy Lancashire

The Lancashire Local Pharmaceutical Committee are known as Community Pharmacy Lancashire. A Local Pharmaceutical Committee, or LPC, is a statutory body that works within NHS regulations to represent and support community pharmacists and owners of community pharmacies. Community pharmacies (also known as chemists) can be found across Lancashire e.g. in health centres, supermarkets and high streets, villages and local housing estates and also online.

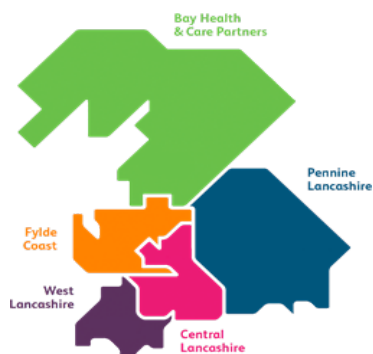
Community Pharmacy Lancashire works with the local NHS England area team, local authorities and other healthcare professionals to help plan health care across the area (including Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire County Council areas). The LPC works with commissioners to implement community pharmacy services. They are available to advise community pharmacists and owners, as well as allied professions such as GPs and hospitals. This advice is also available to those who want to know more about what their local pharmacy can offer them, or those people who are simply visiting the area.

Reference for the reader - STP and LDPs explained

Throughout this report, we refer to Local Delivery Plan (LDP) areas. The five LDPs operate as part of the Healthier Lancashire and South Cumbria Sustainability and Transformation Partnership also known as the STP. The STP is a group of organisations including Local Healthwatch who work together to improve health and care in our region. For more information www.healthierlsc.co.uk.

Information in this report is provided to organisations within the STP to ensure that the public voice is used to influence change in service improvement and redesign.

Map of Local Delivery Plan area



Below are the LDP areas in Lancashire:

- **Bay Health & Care Partners:** Lancaster and Morecambe
- **Pennine Lancashire:** Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale, Hyndburn, Ribble Valley and Blackburn with Darwen
- **Central Lancashire:** Preston, Chorley and South Ribble
- **West Lancashire:** Ormskirk and Skelmersdale
- **Fylde Coast:** Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre

Methodology

We wanted to find out about:

- Experiences of accessing pharmacies and why people chose the pharmacy they attended
- Awareness and use of community pharmacy services
- Quality of care provided
- Whether using the pharmacy means that people use other health services differently. For example, people choosing to attend their pharmacy rather than going to their GP.
- Awareness, use and helpfulness of the Electronic Prescription Service. **Please note, this service is provided by NHS Digital rather than the pharmacies. For more information on this service please visit the NHS Choices website here:**
<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/pharmacists/Pages/eps.aspx>

The three local Healthwatch spoke to people in a selection of community pharmacies in Lancashire:

- 24 different pharmacies were visited across Lancashire, including Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen.
- Healthwatch Lancashire and Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen spoke to people at six pharmacies within the Pennine Lancashire Local Delivery Plan area. The findings are detailed in this report.
- 108 people shared their views and experiences.

Note, the number of respondents varied for each question, as often once people were served or received their prescriptions they did not have time to fully complete the survey. The number of people that answered each question is detailed in brackets under the results of each question.

Acknowledgments

Local Healthwatch would like to thank Community Pharmacy Lancashire, and all the staff working in the individual pharmacies that we visited for making us feel welcome. We would also like to thank the people that took the time to share their experiences of their local pharmacy during our visits. Lastly, we would like to thank local Healthwatch volunteers who supported this project.

Breakdown of findings for Pennine Lancashire

We asked people about accessing pharmacies and why they chose the pharmacy they attended and found:

- 96% of people said they did not have any difficulties getting to the pharmacy. Those that chose to comment further said they had no difficulties because the pharmacy was accessible for them, including the pharmacies close proximity to where they live, their GP, or the town centre. A small number said they had experienced difficulties including the pharmacy positioned on a steep hill and the car park being too small.
- 90% of people said they usually attend that pharmacy.
- 81% of people said they attend the pharmacy because it is convenient. 19% said they chose the pharmacy because of the good service it provided.
- The majority of people who chose to comment further said they usually attend this pharmacy because their GP is on site or nearby. Of those who said they do not usually attend this pharmacy, the majority said they chose it because they had an appointment in that building. Two people said they chose it because their usual pharmacy was busy.

We asked people about their awareness and use of community pharmacy services and found:

- 68% of responses referred to using the pharmacy to pick up prescriptions, 12% for healthcare advice, 12% for over the counter medication and 8% said for other reasons including to buy toiletries.
- 83% of people said they were aware of the services available at the pharmacy. Of those that commented further, some said they were unsure about the services available at the pharmacy. The most mentioned services were blood pressure checks and health care advice, including medication reviews.
- 27% of people said they had used the Minor Ailment Service. Many people who commented on the Minor Ailment Service said they had not needed or wanted this service. A small number said they were unaware of the service. **Please note, pharmacies within Blackburn with Darwen are not currently commissioned to provide the Minor Ailment Service and therefore these questions were not asked in this area.**
- 48% of people said they had attended a consultation with the pharmacist. 25% of people that provided further comments said they

had not needed a consultation with the pharmacist. A small number said they were unaware of the service.

We asked people about the quality of care provided and found:

- The majority said they were happy with the service being provided and many referred to the service being very good because of the staff. 6% of comments were negative mainly referring to slow service or prescriptions not being ready.
- 18% of people said they thought the pharmacy could improve its services. Comments included increasing the number of staff, improving waiting times, problems with prescriptions and more seating. A small minority said they were unsure whether improvements could be made.
- The majority of people that had used the Minor Ailment Service said they were happy with the service. 3% said the service was not good.
- The majority of people that had attended a consultation with the pharmacist said they were happy with the service. 5% of people that provided further comments said they would rather see their GP than attend a consultation with the pharmacist.

We asked people whether using the pharmacy means that they use other health services differently and found:

- 70% of people said that attending the pharmacy had no impact on them needing to access other health services any less, with many comments saying they would still need or prefer to see their GP first. Of the 30% of people that said it did mean they attend other health services less, the majority that commented further said they would go to the pharmacy instead of their GP, particularly for minor illness or advice.

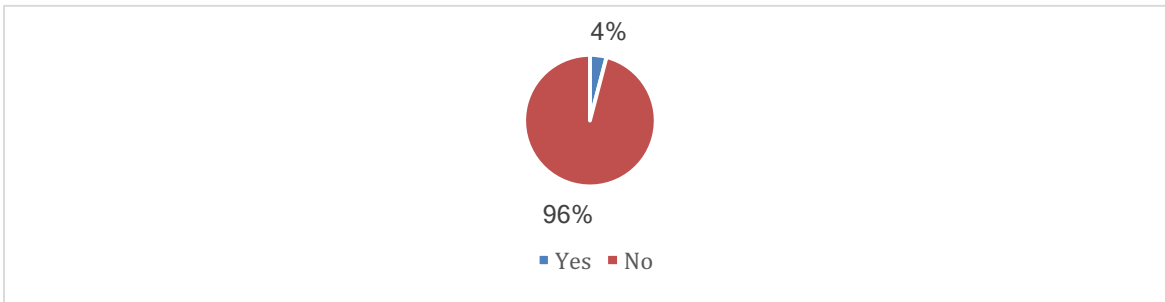
We asked people about their awareness, use and helpfulness of the Electronic Prescription Service and found:

- 52% of people said they use the Electronic Prescription Service.
- The majority of people that had used the service provided positive feedback, 10% said the Electronic Prescription Service was not good and 11% said they did not want to use the Electronic Prescription Service.

Pennine Lancashire results

This section provides further detail on the views shared by 108 people that we spoke to within the Pennine Lancashire Local Delivery Plan area.

1. We asked: 'Have you had any difficulties getting here today?'



(108 people answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

Below are some of the comments provided:

"I live nearby and it's next to my GP surgery."

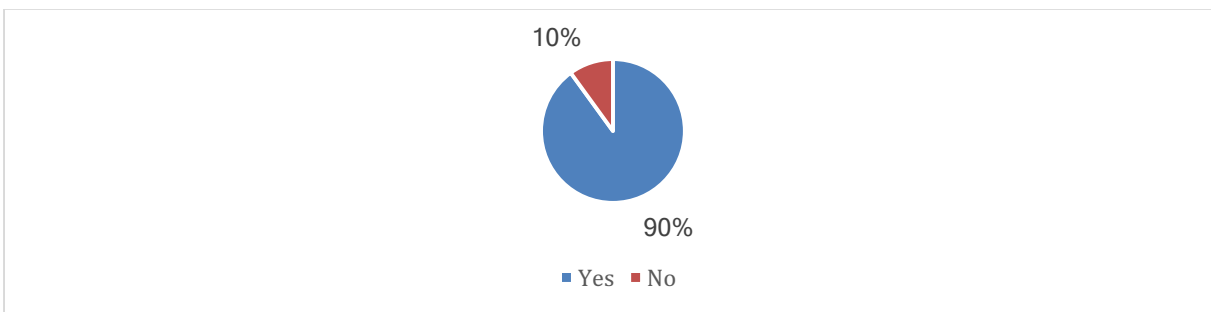
"Just a bit of traffic."

"There's parking in town, so it's easy access as it's on main shopping street."

"The car park is too small."

"The hill the pharmacy is on is steep. However, that's just the geography of Colne."

2. We asked: 'Do you usually come to this pharmacy?'



(107 people answered)

3. We asked those that answered yes to the above question: 'why is this?'

81% said for the convenience

19% said for the good service provided at this pharmacy

(90 people answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

Below are some of the comments provided:

"It's next door to the GP."

"It's local."

"It's easy to park here."

"It's on bus route and very easy."

"They deliver prescriptions."

"It's local and staff are friendly and helpful."

"It's convenient when I'm out shopping. I can just come in and pick up my prescription."

"You get to know the people who work here now."

"My GP is based in same building."

4. We asked those that said they do not usually attend that pharmacy: 'why did you choose this pharmacy today?'

Below are some of the comments provided:

"It was on my way home."

"The pharmacy at the Health Centre was really busy today."

"I use any pharmacy. I don't have regular medication so I only go to one when needed."

"I'm waiting for an appointment in this building."

(9 people answered)

5. We asked: 'What do you use the pharmacy for?'

68% said to obtain prescriptions **12%** said for healthcare advice

12% said for over the counter medication

8% said for other reasons including to buy toiletries

0% said because they were unable to get a GP/nurse appointment

(105 people answered)

6. We asked: 'What do you think of the service you get here?'

Positive comments received:

"They are very good and helpful."

"The service is excellent."

"Good. They are helpful and explain everything if I've got questions."

"It's fine. The staff always seem friendly."

"It's first class and brilliant. They know my name."

"The staff are approachable, helpful and understanding."

"It's a good service here. The doctor keeps leaving medication off my prescription and the pharmacy then have to sort it out - they are very helpful."

"Good people. They can translate for me too."

Negative comments received:

"It is very slow, you sometimes have to wait a long time for the prescription to be ready."

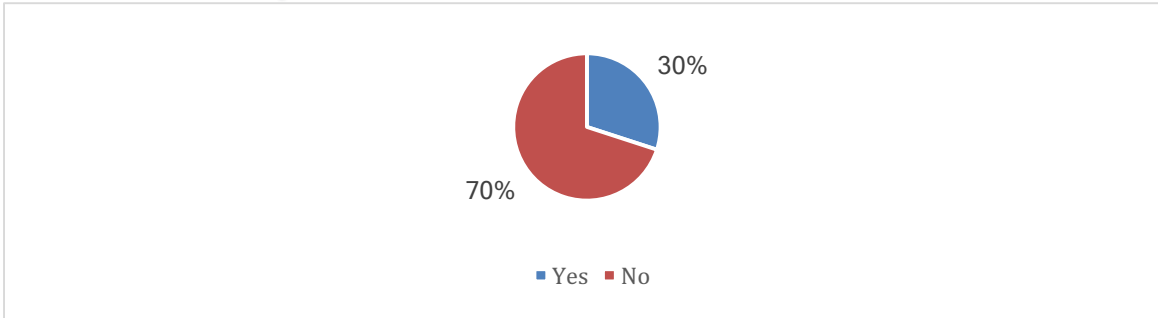
"It can be busy at times."

"It's shocking. It's so slow. The staff are ignorant."

"I wait a long time sometimes."

(101 people answered)

7. We asked: 'Do you think that coming to the pharmacy means you attend other health services less?'



(105 people answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said yes:

"I would always come here before seeing my GP."

"If it's anything like a cold or anything minor, I would use the pharmacy."

"I have asked here instead of going to the GP. The staff have been here for years and are helpful."

"I don't go to the doctor's unless I have to. I have asked for advice here."

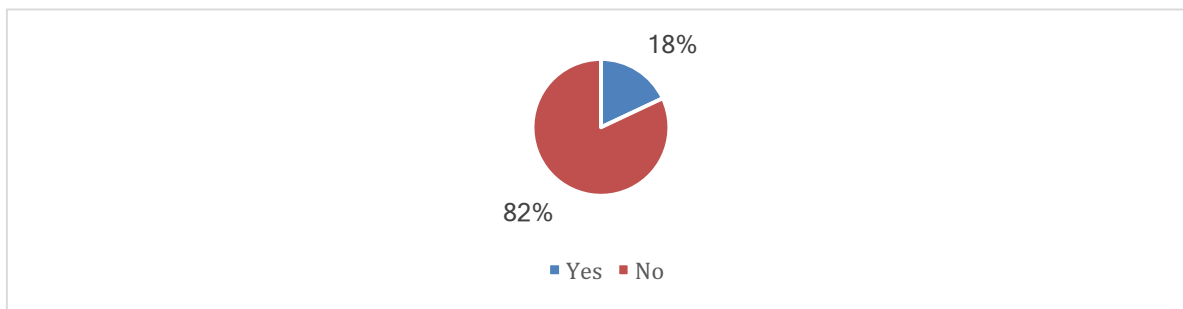
Below are some of the comments provided from those who said no:

"I just go to my GP."

"I would go to the GP anyway."

"I just go to GP's. I wouldn't come here especially for advice."

8. We asked: 'Do you think the pharmacy could improve its services to you?'



(104 people answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said yes:

“Sometimes, they do take a long time to dispense medication.”

“By being more helpful.”

“More staff.”

“It would be good if it was bigger and had more chairs. It can get really busy here.”

“Some pharmacies could just be more polite and friendly.”

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said no:

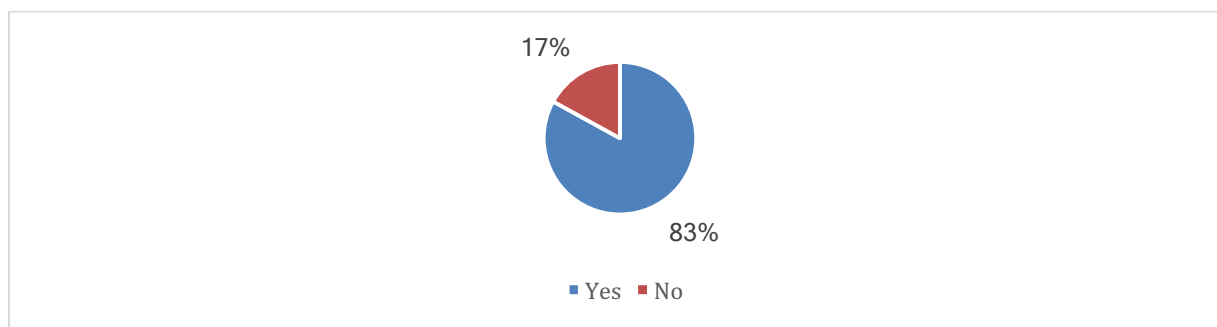
“It’s very good as it is.”

“They are very good and on time.”

“It is great, I would not change anything.”

“They could not do any better. Pharmacy staff very helpful and helped with advice when my mother was terminally ill.”

9. We asked: ‘Are you aware of the different health services available at this pharmacy?’



(104 people answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said yes:

“I am aware of smoking cessation.”

“I use them already.”

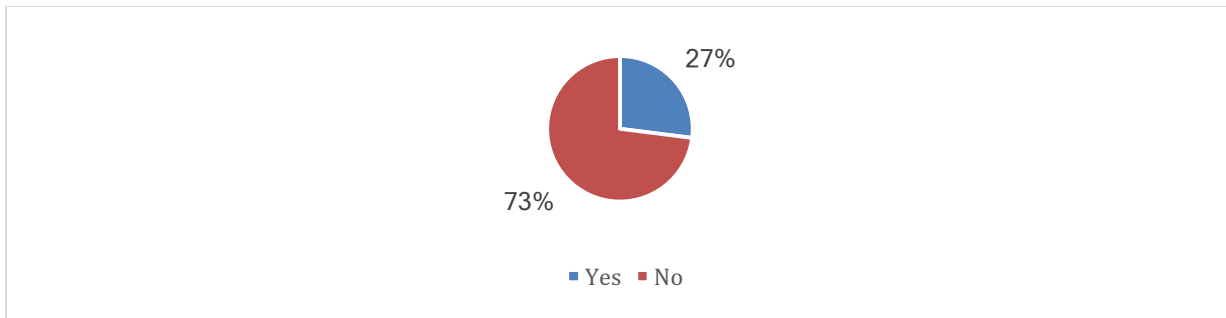
“There is a large poster displayed.”

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said no:

“I know about consultation with pharmacist about repeat medication but nothing else.”

“I am not sure what else they do.”

10. We asked: 'Have you used the Minor Ailment Service? (if provided at this pharmacy)'



(55 people answered - please note, pharmacies within Blackburn with Darwen are not commissioned to provide the Minor Ailment Service so the findings to this question relate to those within East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group area)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

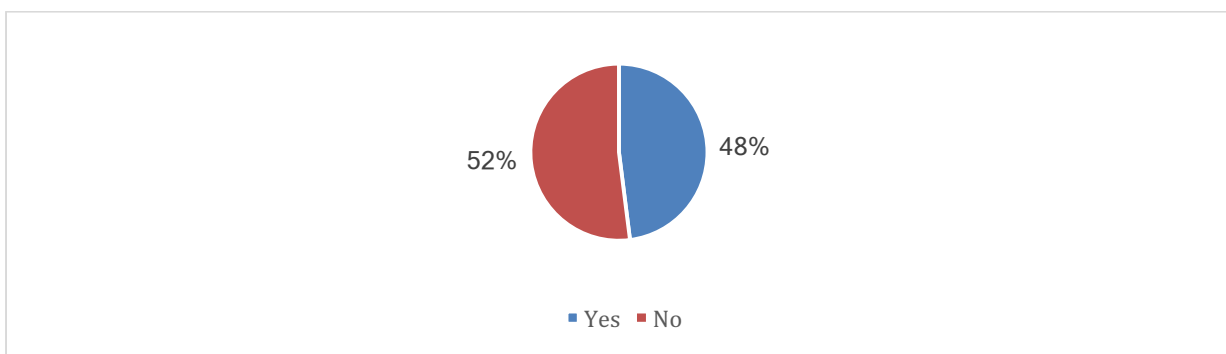
Below are some of the comments provided from those who said yes:

- "My wife has and I believe she found it very helpful."*
- "It's really good, it saves time and hassle."*
- "They're very helpful and friendly, they answered all questions."*
- "I find it helpful for my children."*

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said no:

- "I haven't heard of it."*
- "I probably won't use it."*
- "Just ask for advice and buy the medication, the NHS is stretched enough."*
- "It's easier to go to my GP for a timed appointment."*
- "I just go to my GP. They are too busy in the pharmacy."*
- "I didn't know about it. I may use it in future now I know about it."*

11. We asked: 'Have you ever had a consultation with the pharmacist here?'



(104 people answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said yes:

"I have had a consultation for COPD and the use of inhalers. It was good."

"It's good. Just checking up and making sure I'm doing things right."

"It was quite informative and of benefit to me."

"It was ok. It was private and was helpful to review my tablets and medication."

"I have a consultation every 6 months. It's good and I find it helpful."

"Yes, it was alright. It was helpful and confidential and took place in a small room."

"I was made to feel comfortable. I had a leg injury and asked the pharmacist for advice and they took me straight to the Health Centre for treatment."

Below are some of the comments provided from those who said no:

"I am not aware of that service."

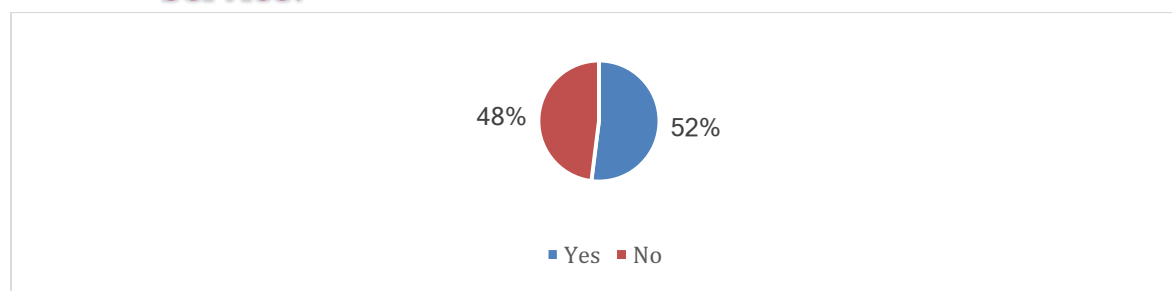
"I have not needed it."

"I wasn't aware of it but now that I've seen it would be good to have a blood pressure test."

"My husband struggles to walk and is in hospital, so I wouldn't bother. But I get prescriptions delivered."

"I just go to my GP."

12. We asked: 'Do you use the Electronic Prescription Service?'



(106 people answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire also recorded additional comments received after asking the above question.

Below are some of the comments provided:

"It's easy to use and convenient."

"I have tried using it but it didn't work properly."

"It's a good service."

"The EPS is ok."

"I prefer to come out so I don't use it."

"I have never thought of doing it."

"There have been problems with prescription getting sent through electronically from doctors to pharmacy. I'm waiting today as it hasn't come through yet."

"Usually good apart from today as the prescription hasn't come. They are chasing it up for me."

“I get a text when it's ready. It's a good service.”

“I don't use the EPS because I'm a 'techno-phobe' and there may be privacy issues.”

“I know about it but I prefer manual.”

“I'm not interested in it.”

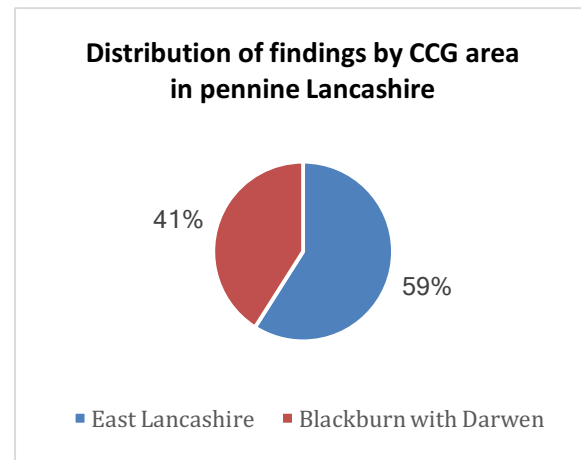
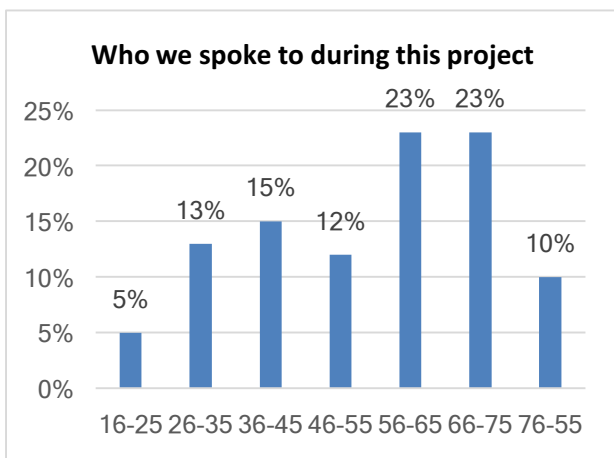
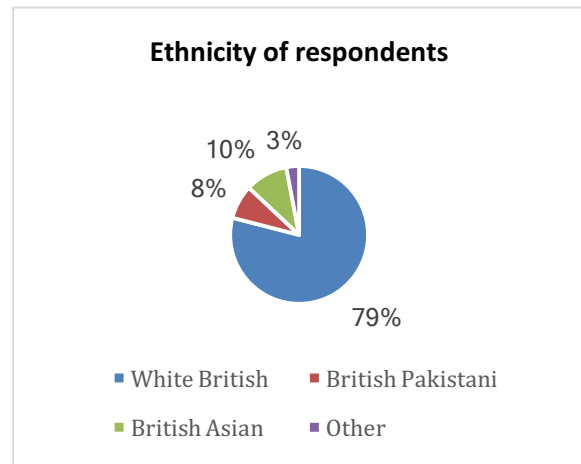
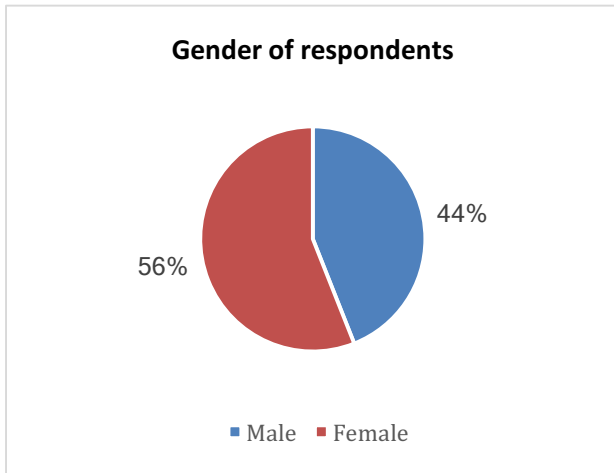
“I wasn't aware of it but I prefer to visit the pharmacy.”

How we will use this report

- The experiences and views shared by people in this report will be shared with and used within the Primary Care Strategy and Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment as a tool to influence decisions on these services.
- This report will be shared with:
 - Local Clinical Commissioning Groups
 - NHS England
 - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) in Lancashire
 - Healthwatch England to help generate a picture of public views on pharmacy services across England

Who we spoke to during this project

Below shows some demographic characteristics of people we spoke to and where they were within the Pennine Lancashire Local Delivery Plan area:



Please note, percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number and therefore do not add up to 100%.

www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk
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