

# **Your Voice**

## **Pharmacies in Lancashire**

**November 2017**

# **West Lancashire**

Report summarising the findings of Healthwatch Lancashire's patient engagement activities in community pharmacies in West Lancashire.

## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>Why we undertook this project</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Reference for the reader - STP and LDPs explained</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Breakdown of findings for West Lancashire</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>West Lancashire findings</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>How we will use this report</b>	<b>Page 13</b>
<b>Who we spoke to during this project (demographics)</b>	<b>Page 13</b>

## 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 the west Lancashire area, it was delivered by Healthwatch 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.

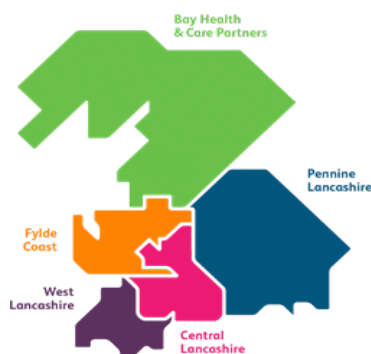
Community Pharmacy Lancashire works with the local NHS England area team, local authorities and other healthcare professionals to help plan health care across the area (including Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire County Council areas). The LPC works with commissioners to implement community 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](http://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 spoke to people at three pharmacies within the West Lancashire LDP area. The findings are detailed in this report.
- 62 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 West Lancashire

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

- 98% of people said they did not have any difficulties getting to the pharmacy. Some people with physical disabilities said they have struggled at times and two comments on car parking were raised.
- 85% of people said they usually attend the same pharmacy.
- 88% of people said they attend the pharmacy for convenience. 12% said for the good service provided at the pharmacy.
- The majority of people who chose to comment further said they usually attend this pharmacy because it is local to them or their GP is nearby. Of those who said they do not usually attend this pharmacy, the majority said they chose it because they were in the area at the time.

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

- 54% of people said they use the pharmacy to pick up prescriptions, 17% for healthcare advice, 17% for other reasons such as to buy toiletries and 13% for over the counter medication.
- 79% of people said they were aware of the services available at the pharmacy. Some people said they were aware of the available services but do not use them. Two people said they were unaware of the services available at the pharmacy.
- 29% of people had used the Minor Ailment Service. Some people said they had not needed this service whilst others said they were unaware of the service or were unsure what it covered.
- 52% of people said they had attended a consultation with the pharmacist. Many said they had not needed the service.

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

- The majority said they were happy with the service being provided. A small number of negative comments were shared, referring to a slow service, time taken to pick up prescription, items out of stock and one comment about a lost prescription.
- 23% of people said they felt the pharmacy could improve its services. Comments included longer opening times, raising awareness of services

available, increase in staff during busy periods, communicating when prescriptions or medication is available, and increasing medication stock.

- The majority of people who had used the Minor Ailment Service said they were happy with the service.
- The majority of people that had attended a consultation with the pharmacist said they were happy with the service.

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

- 63% of people said that attending the pharmacy made no difference to them accessing other health services any less, as they would still need or prefer to see their GP, particularly for long term health conditions. Of the 37% that did say they felt attending the pharmacy meant they needed other health services less, half said this was because they would go to the pharmacy before their GP, particularly for minor illness or advice.

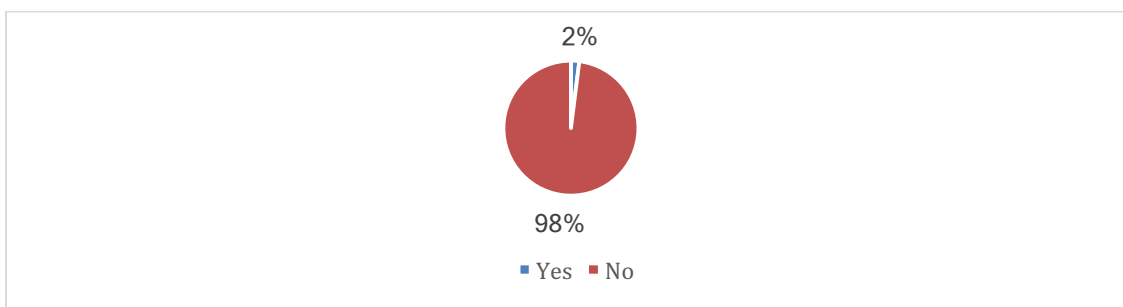
**We asked people about their awareness, use and helpfulness of the Electronic Prescription Service and found:**

- 50% of people said they use the Electronic Prescription Service.
- The majority of people made positive comments about the Electronic Prescription Service. 8% said the Electronic Prescription Service was not good. 8% said they did not want to use the Electronic Prescription Service.

## West Lancashire findings

This section provides further detail on the views shared by 62 people that we spoke to within the West Lancashire Local Delivery Plan area.

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



(61 people answered)

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

Below are some of the comments provided:

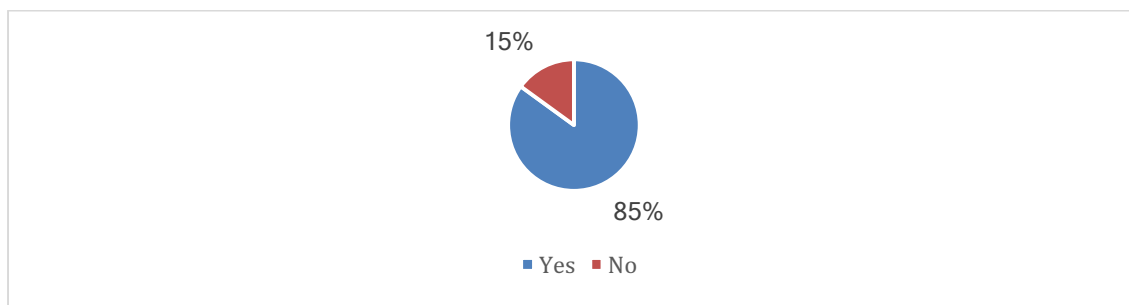
*"No, I've walked and I live locally."*

*"Not really. I drove here, but sometimes there is nowhere to park, generally it's okay."*

*"Yes, due to my back pain. It can be difficult to get here."*

*"Sometimes it is difficult as I have arthritis."*

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



(59 people answered)

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

**88%** said for the convenience

**12%** said for the good service provided at this pharmacy

(45 people answered)

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

Below are some of the comments provided:

*"I always come here. It's close to GP and the staff are so friendly."*

*"It's quick and close to where I live."*

*"I live near this pharmacy and my GP is across the road. I wouldn't use other pharmacies in Skelmersdale. I don't like the service at the others."*

*"I have got to know the staff here."*

**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 today."*

*"I just use any pharmacy."*

*"It depends where I am."*

(11 people answered)

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

**54%** said to obtain prescriptions

**17%** said for healthcare advice

**17%** said for other reasons - such as to buy toiletries

**13%** said for 'over the counter' medication

(62 people answered)

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

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

Positive comments received:

*"It's always been first rate."*

*"The service is great."*

*"I am very impressed with the service. It's top notch. Highly useful and I would recommend it. I have received lowering BP advice on a number of occasions."*

*"Very good service. They are helpful and thorough."*

*"Brilliant! They're great here and the service is always quick."*

Negative comments received:

*"It can be a bit slow."*

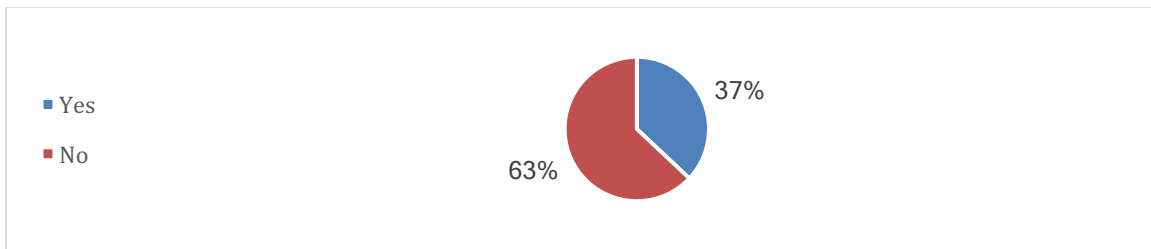
*"It's sometimes slow with prescriptions taking three to four days."*

*"Not good, my prescription items are out of stock."*

(60 people answered)



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



(62 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:

*"The pharmacist is good like that."*

*"It's better here than at the GP."*

*"I came here for advice for minor stuff and it's brilliant."*

*"I am happy to use for flu injections rather than bothering the GP."*

*"I definitely see the pharmacy as the starting point and I am well aware of the range of services so I am happy to use them."*

*"Definitely - especially with children."*

*"Can come here for over the counter medicines, which you can just buy and saves going to GP for prescriptions."*

*"It's quite easy to come here, and so helpful. I still use GP but I'm happy to come to pharmacy with questions."*

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

*"I have ongoing problems so I prefer to see my GP."*

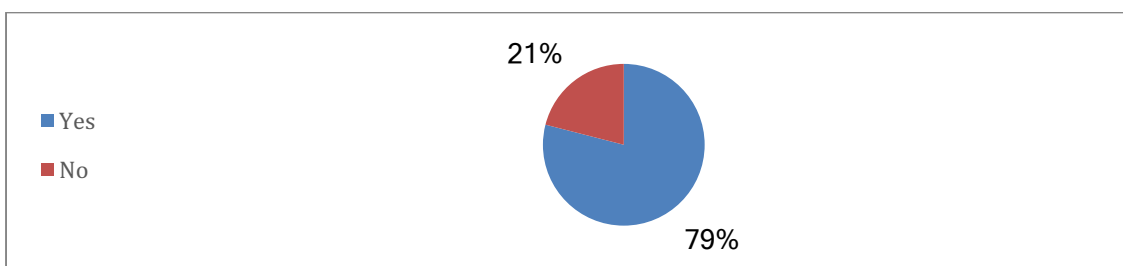
*"Not particularly, but it adds to the health service."*

*"It's just an addition. If it's not an important complaint I would ask to see if they think I should see GP."*

*"Not really - I don't see the pharmacy as a GP replacement."*

*"I still like to go to my GP as they know about my conditions."*

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



(61 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:

*“Maybe. Only if more consultation could be done with pharmacist rather than GP to free GP up.”*

*“Not at this pharmacy, but others in the area need to improve their service. They are sometimes rude at other pharmacies and that’s why I always come to this pharmacy.”*

*“A little more advice to be given, only if the man power is available.”*

*“To extend the range of brands available at a pharmacy.”*

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

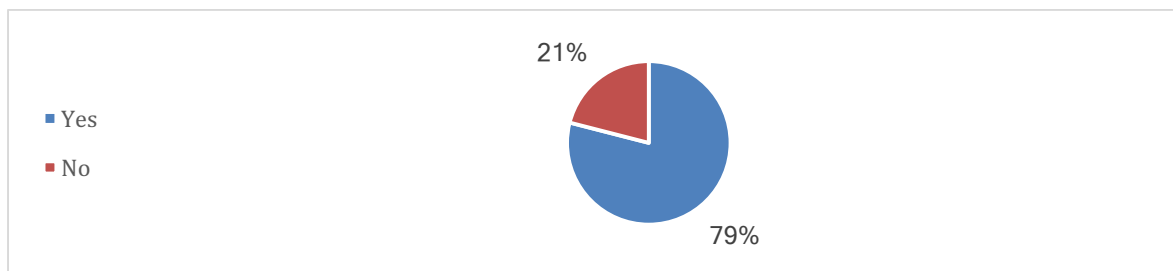
*“I am quite happy with it.”*

*“They are fantastic with me.”*

*“I don’t think it could improve on what I find to be an excellent service.”*

*“It’s really good - if not broke, don’t fix it.”*

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



(61 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 health care advice and the Minor Ailment Service.”*

*“I use a range of services, and I’m encouraged by the friendly, helpful service that I get.”*

*“I know about them but I don’t use them, I just go to my GP.”*

*“I know about advice but I haven’t used the pharmacy for it.”*

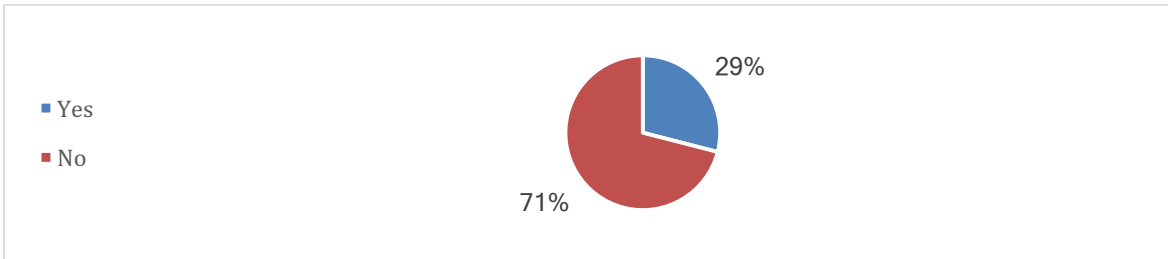
Below are some of the comments provided from those who said no:

*“I didn’t know a pharmacy offered all those services until you pointed out the information displayed.”*

*“I wasn’t aware of the services available until you pointed out all the information/posters.”*

*“I have no knowledge of any - I only tend to come here for prescriptions.”*

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



(62 people answered)

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

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

*"It was very good. You don't need card (payment exemption) anymore."*

*"It's a good service and I have used it lots."*

*"It is brilliant. It's really useful for my daughter. It saves time going to the GP and you don't need to make an appointment, you can just turn up and get help."*

*"I use it for my children more than myself, but it is a good system and it helps."*

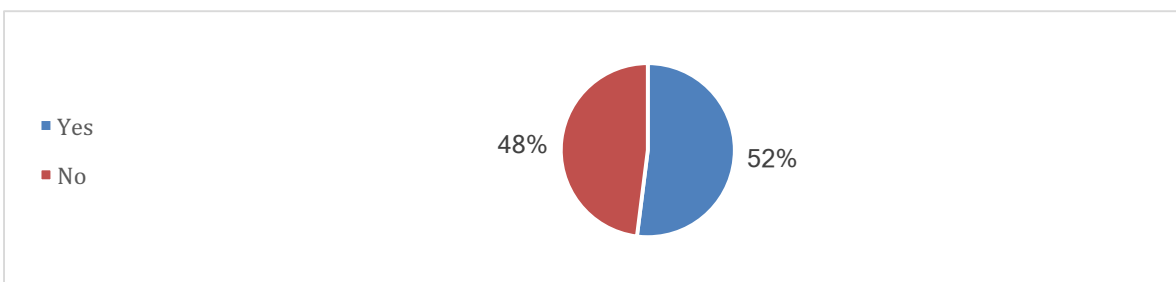
Below are some of the comments provided from those who said no:

*"I have never thought about it. I didn't know it existed."*

*"I haven't used it. I trust my GP more for other things."*

*"I don't know what it is. I would probably use it."*

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



(62 people answered)

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

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

*"Yes, for a medication review. It's helpful and friendly. I was offered suggestion to stop using sweeteners."*

*"I had a medication review. My medication was changed due to side effects I was experiencing. The pharmacist consulted with the GP before this was done."*

*"It was private and useful."*

*"It is brilliant and I tell others to use it."*

*"It was helpful. It really helped me understand my medications."*

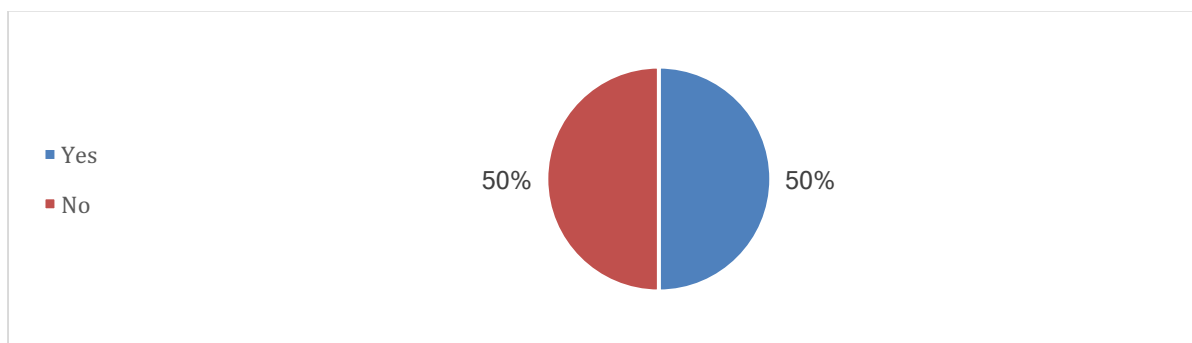
**Below are some of the comments provided from those who said no:**

*"I've not needed or seen any use for it. I use my GP for long standing health issues."*

*"I have never thought about it."*

*"I am a retired doctor so I don't need to use it."*

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



(62 people answered)

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

**Below are some of the comments provided:**

*"It's been completely revolutionary. I do everything online. The best thing they have done. It is so fast and quick and is ready next day."*

*"It's not so bad. Initially when I started using it about 12 months ago, it was terrible."*

*"It works really well – the online system is very good."*

*"I am not into computers so I don't use it."*

*"It's brilliant. I only use it for this pharmacy though. I won't have it sent to any other pharmacy. My GP surgery tried to encourage me to use a different pharmacy, I don't know why though."*

*"I did try it but it wasn't working for me. The GP surgery kept getting it wrong and the pharmacy always sorted it out for me, but it was getting more hassle than it is worth so I stopped using it."*

*"I have used it a few times, but the receptionist messed up my prescriptions so I stopped using it."*

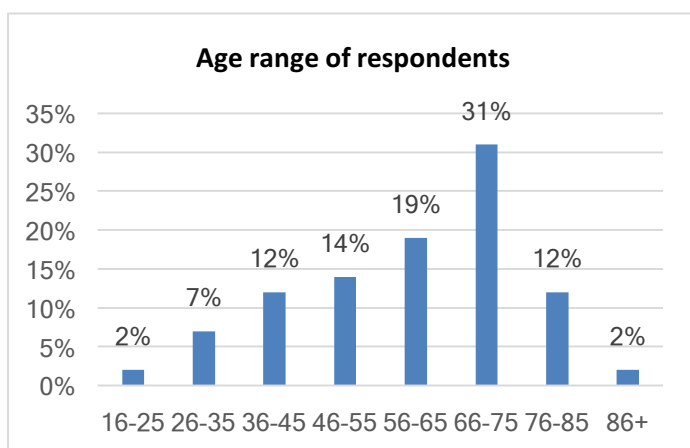
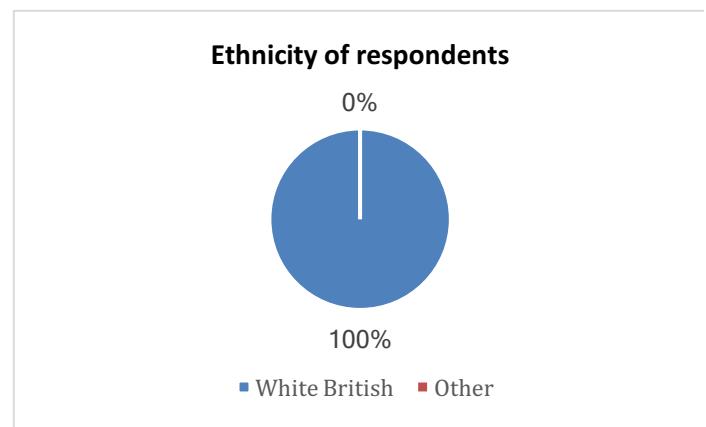
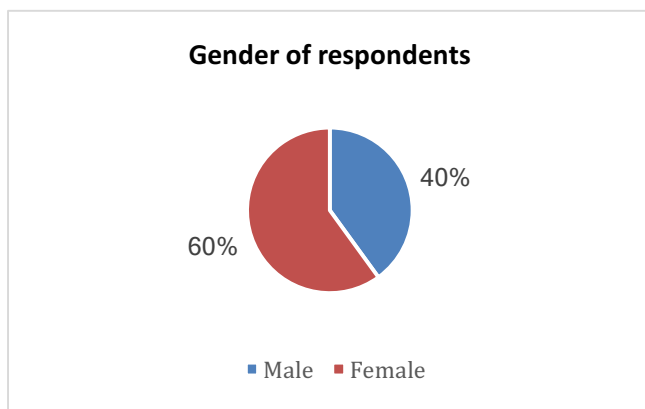
*"It's okay, but it doesn't always work correctly."*

## 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 within the West 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](http://www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk)**  
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