

Your Voice

Pharmacies in Lancashire

November 2017

Central Lancashire

Report summarising the findings of Healthwatch Lancashire's patient engagement activities in community pharmacies in Central 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 the central 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/.](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.

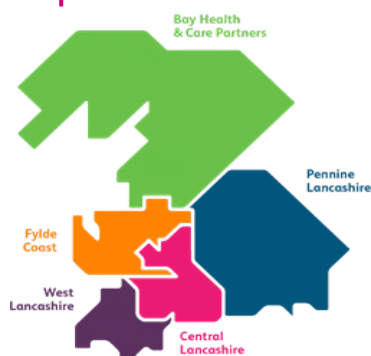
Community Pharmacy Lancashire works with the local NHS England area team, local authorities and other healthcare professionals to help plan health care across the area (including Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire County Council areas). The LPC works with commissioners to implement community 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 Central Lancashire Local Delivery Plan area. The findings are detailed in this report.
- 61 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 Central Lancashire

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

- 97% of people said they had not had difficulties in attending the pharmacy. Those that chose to comment further said they did not struggle because they live locally, find it easy to walk or they do not struggle because they drive. A small number said they had experienced difficulties, including problems with car parking and walking distance.
- 90% of people said they usually attend the same pharmacy.
- 67% of people said they attend the same pharmacy because it is convenient. 33% said they chose the pharmacy because of the good service it provided.
- The majority that chose to comment further said they lived locally or their GP was connected or close by. Many positive comments were also made about the staff.

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

- 46% of people said they attend the pharmacy to pick up prescriptions, 20% for healthcare advice, 17% for over the counter medication, 11% said for other reasons including to buy toiletries and 7% said because they could not get an appointment at their GP.
- 81% of people said they were aware of the services available at the pharmacy.
- The most mentioned services was the flu jab service.
- 58% of people said they had used the Minor Ailment Service. 16% of comments said they had not needed or wanted this service.
- 52% of people said they had attended a consultation with the pharmacist. 28% of comments said they had not needed the service. Please note, no appointment is needed to get advice or to attend a consultation at the pharmacies.

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

- The majority said they were happy with the service provided at the pharmacy and many referred to the service being very good because of the staff. A small number of negative comments were shared mainly relating to problems with prescriptions.
- 7% of people said they thought the pharmacy could improve its services with one comment received stating that they have to pay for

their child's prescription after an appointment with the pharmacist whereas it is free when they see their GP. 6% of comments were from those who 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.
- 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:

- 56% of people said they think attending the pharmacy means they do attend other health services less, with several comments saying they would go to the pharmacy before seeing their GP, particularly for advice and some as they are struggling to get appointments with their GP. 44% of people said they did not think it made any difference, mainly because they would still need or prefer to see their GP, particularly for more serious or long-term health conditions.

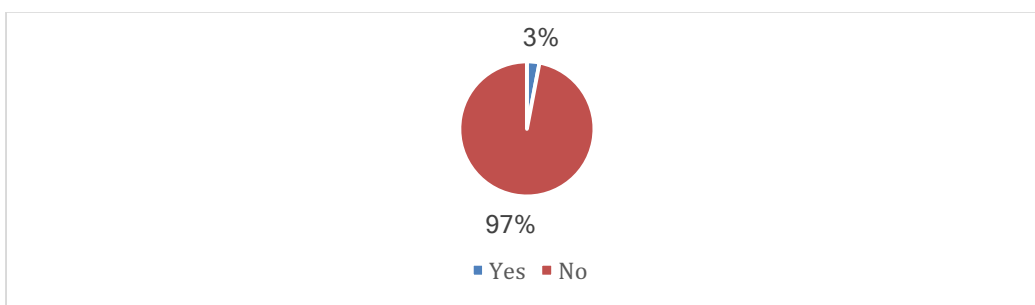
We asked people about their awareness, use and helpfulness of the Electronic Prescription Service and found:

- 54% of people said they use the Electronic Prescription Service.
- The majority of people made positive comments about the Electronic Prescription Service. 1% said the Electronic Prescription Service was not good. 39% said they do not want to use the Electronic Prescription Service.

Central Lancashire results

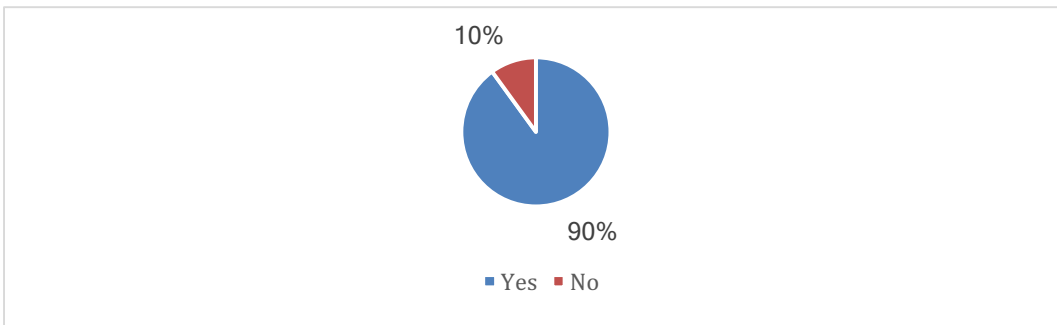
This section provides further detail on the views shared by 61 people that we spoke to within the Central Local Delivery Plan area.

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



(61 people answered)

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



(61 people answered)

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

67% said for the convenience **33%** said for the good service provided at this pharmacy

(54 people answered)

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

Below are some of the comments provided:

"It is local and connected to the doctor. The staff are fabulous, you can talk to them."

"It is the only one that is close by."

"I live locally and it is easy to access plus it is opposite my GP. There is also the continuity of service."

"It is linked with the surgery and has an accessible bus route."

"The one next to my GP is not good. You have to wait too long there so I prefer this one."

"I have used others but I prefer this one as they are friendlier. The pharmacy that is next to my GP practice is more of a dispensing service. It is too busy for personal attention. I would rather walk here than go elsewhere."

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:

"I moved to Croston but I still come here. I like that there aren't any busy bodies in here and I like the staff here."

"I usually go to the pharmacy at my doctors but I forgot. We have come for Calpol on the Minor Ailment Service."

"I have come here because my dentist is close by and she has given me a prescription."

"I don't usually need the pharmacy but this one was close to where I was today."

(10 people answered)

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

46% said to obtain prescriptions **20%** said for healthcare advice

17% said for over the counter medication

7% said because they were unable to get a GP/nurse appointment

11% said for other reasons including to buy toiletries

(60 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 is very good. The atmosphere is what you want, we have a crack in here. We have love. I don't like going to places where people are miserable."

"I'm very happy - all the staff are thoroughly knowledgeable."

"It is very good, excellent service by the pharmacist and staff. You always get brilliant service."

"They've helped me so much. At every point the pharmacy have helped me. Extra advice that I could never have expected. They go the extra mile. They are so helpful, they can't help me enough. This pharmacy is the first port of call."

"Very good, very friendly staff and they know me well."

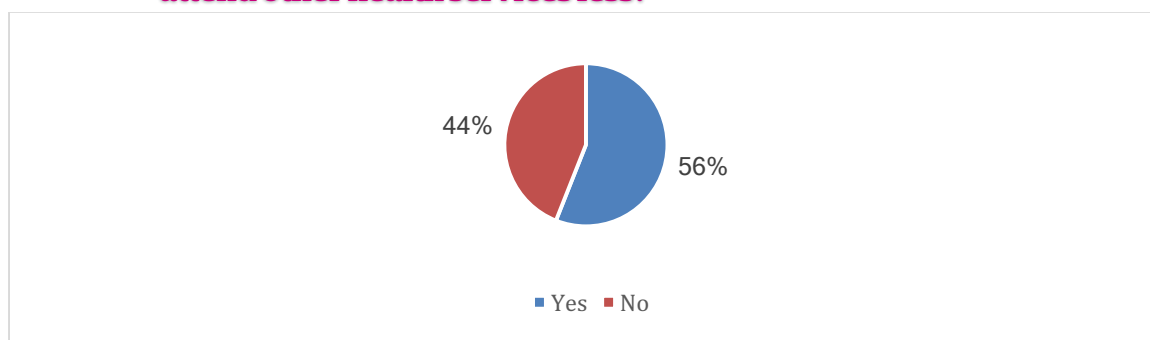
Negative comments received:

"They are alright. Although there has been some confusion between prescriptions and blaming between the GP and chemist."

"All good here. GP service is a problem. I ordered my prescription on Saturday but my prescription still has not arrived, it is now Wednesday."

(59 people answered)

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



(59 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 can ask for advice, plus medications monitoring and had blood pressure taken before getting my prescription."

"We're having problems at the moment with our GP as it has merged, so it's much easier to come here."

"Sometimes I have been given advice and bought things here rather than bother my GP."

"I will buy over the counter medication first before going to my GP."

"It is my first point of contact. I only go to my GP for more serious problems."

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

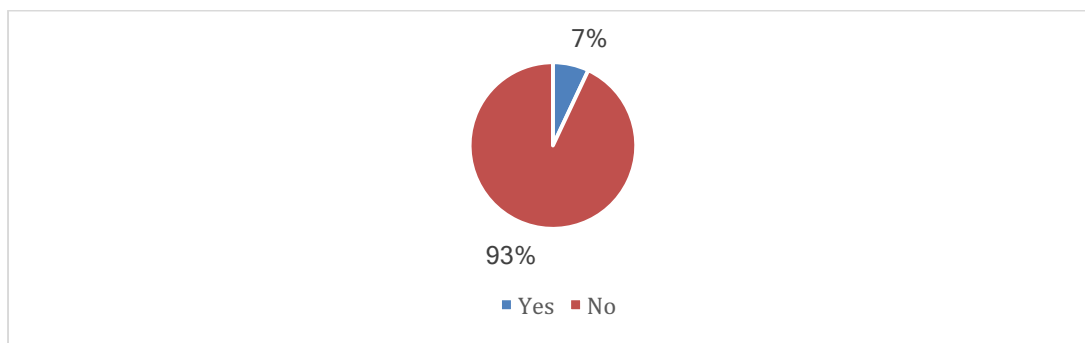
"I only come for minor ailments, so it doesn't make a difference."

"I can't get appointments at my doctor. When I've come in here with problems they've contacted the surgery."

"It makes no difference. I just use it to pick up regular medication and try to keep away from my GP."

"I still need to go to the hospital and to my GP."

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



(60 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 never gone away and felt I should have asked more."

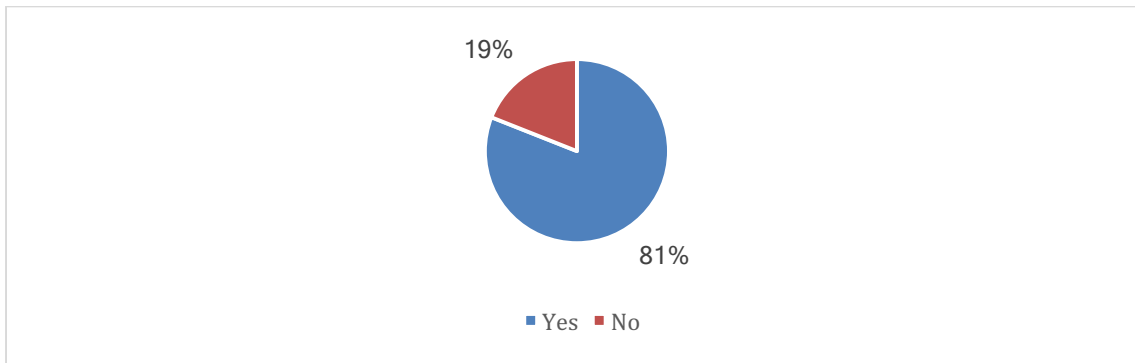
"It's been smashing. If they don't have something they'll get it and ring you to let you know."

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

"I haven't thought about it, I'm not aware of what is available."

"When you see GP for my child the prescriptions are free. If I come to the pharmacy and they advise on a medication I have to pay for it."

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



(59 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 changes to my medication have become very confusing and complicated. I had a lot of medication and they’ve helped me with it. They told me what I need and what I don’t need anymore. It only took ten minutes and it was done.”

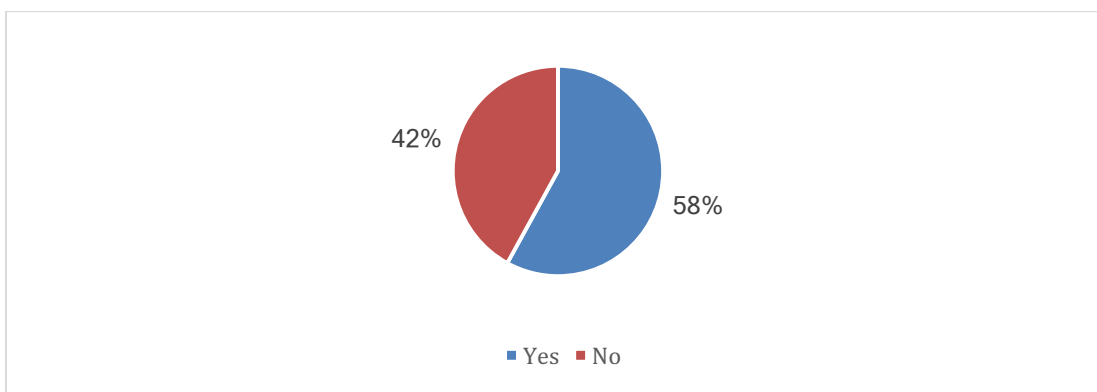
“Blood pressure, diabetic checks/advice, told about minor ailments service by pharmacy.”

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

“I’m aware of some of them.”

“I know of some services. I have heard of the Minor Ailment Service but I did not know the extent of it.”

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



(60 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 got what I needed, it was great.”

"I have been for my son. It was great. It was good because he doesn't like going to the doctors and he was sorted here.

used for colds and sore throat

"It's okay - but I need the 'passport' to access free medications for children, and I don't always have that on me."

"I have used it for several day to day issues. It is a clear and easy scheme."

"I use the Minor Ailment Service for my 11-month-old daughter. I was advised by nursery that I needed to get medication for my daughter via minor ailments as they can't give medications purchased over the counter. The Minor Ailments Service provides medication with a sticker to indicate it has been prescribed. The service was good."

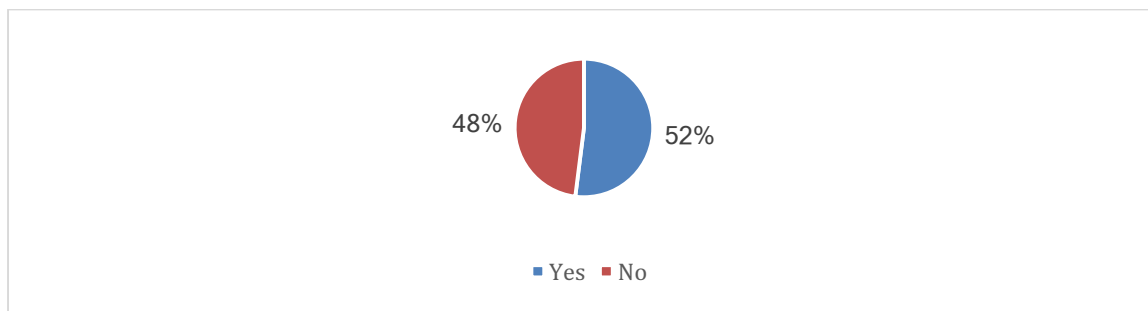
Below are some of the comments provided from those who said yes:

"I would use it if needed."

"It has not been appropriate for any of my needs."

"I would not use it."

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



(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:

"It was very informative. One time the pharmacist said I did need to go to the doctor and another time they said I didn't. Because they do my prescriptions they know me and my condition so I can talk to them about it and we can go through it."

"I had the flu jab. Everything was good and they were very helpful. It's like coming home being here."

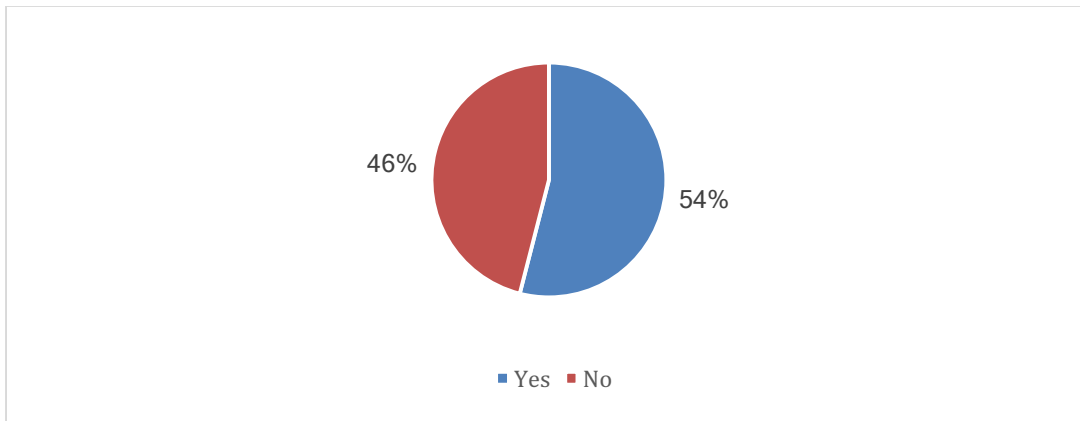
"I had a consultation for a medication review. It was absolutely brilliant."

"Several times and it has been very good, good advice and all confidential."

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

"I did not know it was available."

"It has not been needed. I have verbal checks to ensure medication is taken correctly."

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

(59 people answered)

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

Below are some of the comments provided:

"I don't use it. I leave a voicemail at my GP and then pick up from the pharmacy."

"I'm not sure if I use the Electronic Prescription Service. I telephone the pharmacy and they get the prescription."

"It's usually okay. Now and again it goes 'iffy' but it is usually excellent."

"It is a very good service, I've never had any problems."

"It works a good majority of the time."

"It is super and I get reminders which is good."

"Sometimes I have problems at the GP end but none at the chemist."

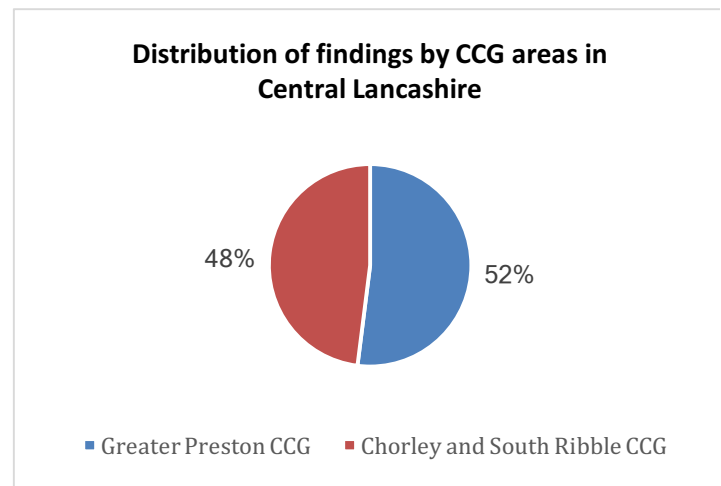
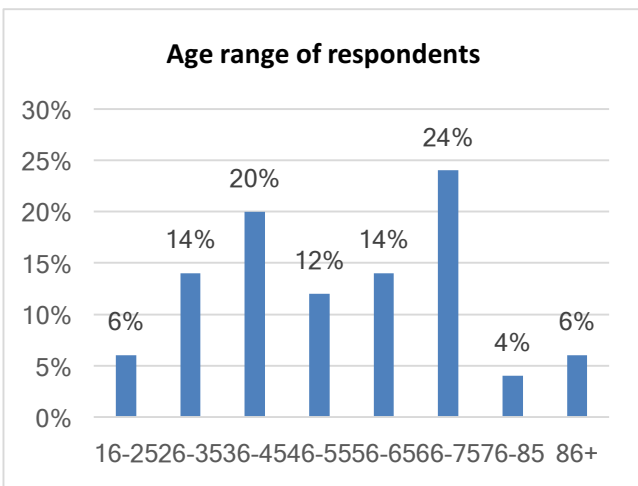
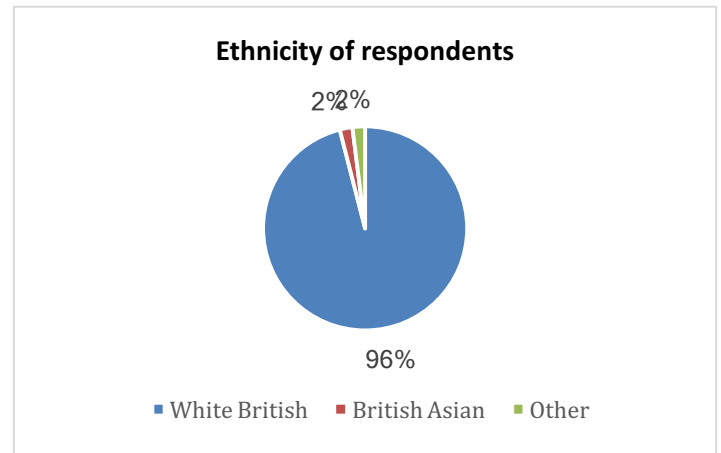
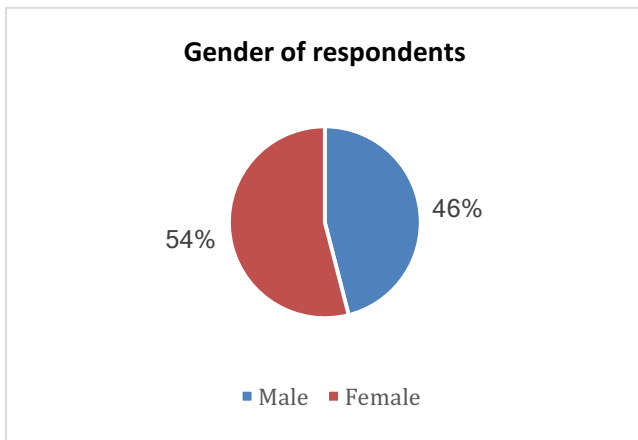
"I use it sometimes. I am not good with computers so I only use it as a last resort. I prefer to phone the GP surgery and order over the phone and get the prescription sent to the pharmacy for me to collect."

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 Central Local Delivery Plan area:



www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk
info@healthwatchlancashire.co.uk
 Twitter: @HW_Lancashire
 Facebook: facebook.com/lancshealthwatch