



South Warwickshire Pharmacy Report

September 2024

healthwatch
Warwickshire

Introduction

Between June and August 2024 Healthwatch Warwickshire asked people across South Warwickshire about their experiences of using pharmacy.

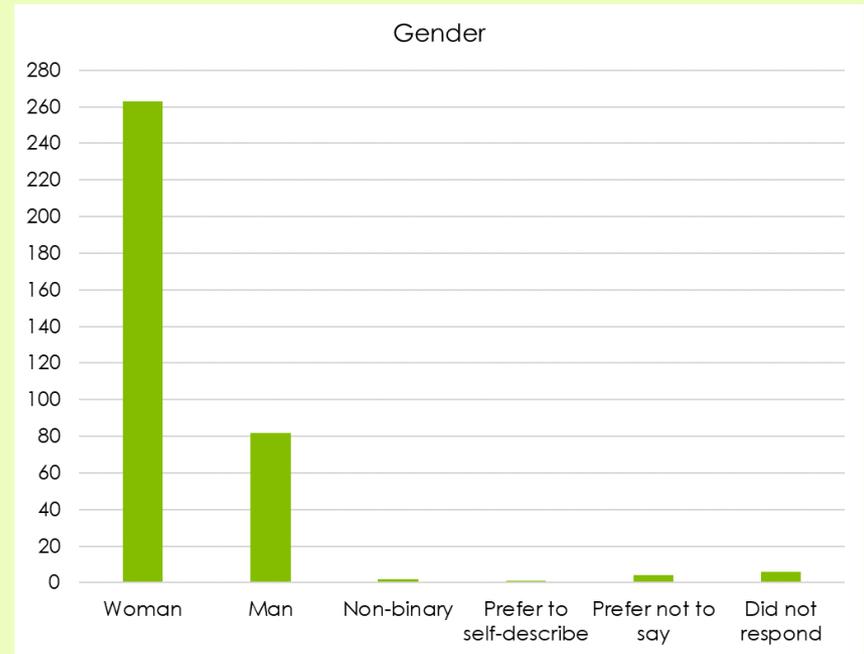
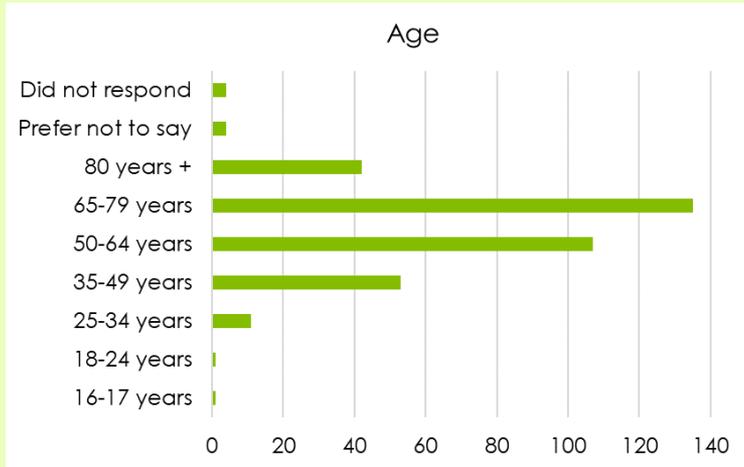
Background

- Between December 2022 and March 2023 HWW received 352 pieces of feedback about prescriptions and pharmacies throughout Warwickshire. [Read our report here](#)
- In May 2024, the Patient Participation Group at Clarendon Lodge, a South Warwickshire GP practice, reported on the experience of pharmacy. Whilst most feedback was positive, they found issues of communication, medication shortages, digital exclusion and concerns about Pharmacy First after surveying 312 of their patients, interviewing local pharmacies and consulting the Practice and the PCN. [Report available on their website](#)
- In this 2024 targeted survey, we asked which pharmacies people choose to use, why, and how often they visit. We asked for people's experiences, including filling repeat prescriptions, hospital pharmacy and digital ordering. We asked about the understanding and experience of using Pharmacy First. Our **Rugby Pharmacy Report** has been published. [Read our report here](#)
- We had **358 responses** from South Warwickshire residents (**183** from Stratford District and **175** from Warwick District). 205 people told us they have a Long-Term Condition, 55 that they have a disability, 41 that they are a carer, 8 that they are Armed Forces Veterans and 1 that they are a serving member of the UK Armed Forces.

The pharmacy survey closes at the end of September 2024 in Warwickshire North.



Who we heard from



“Our local pharmacy is a short walk from our house. Due to a lot of our appointments being over the telephone, it is easier to go to our local pharmacy than the one next door to the GP surgery.” Warwick District Resident

Use of pharmacies

We asked which community pharmacies people choose to use, why, and how often they visit

- 256 people told us the area and branch of pharmacy that they used in South Warwickshire. We also heard from 4 people who regularly visit a pharmacy outside of Warwickshire.
- The majority of people who responded to the survey (329 out of 357, 92%) had used a pharmacy most recently ‘in the last month’.
- The most common response (219 out of 352, 62%) was from people who told us they use a pharmacy ‘monthly’.
- 307 people told us that they always use the same pharmacy and 46 people told us they use different pharmacies most commonly due to convenience, lack of stock, opening hours or variation in customer service.

Warwick District Area	No. of respondents	No. of pharmacies we heard feedback about in each area
Kenilworth	66	5
Warwick	28	7
Leamington Spa	26	8
Whitnash	4	1
Budbrooke	1	1

Stratford District Area	No. of respondents	No. of pharmacies we heard feedback about in each area
Alcester	50	2
Stratford upon Avon	17	4
Southam	15	1
Bidford on Avon	15	3
Shipston on Stour	13	2
Wellesbourne	9	1
Henley in Arden	5	1
Fenny Compton	4	1
Studley	3	1
Meon Vale	2	1
Kineton	2	2
Harbury	1	1

Use of pharmacies

We asked which hospital pharmacies people have used and what their experience has been.

- We received 84 pieces of feedback about using hospital pharmacies. 43 of these were negative in sentiment, and 30 were positive.
- The majority of the feedback was about Warwick Hospital. 24 people commented on delays to accessing their medication at Warwick Hospital pharmacy, due to either waiting for the prescription, internal communication between departments, or waiting in line to reach the pharmacy counter.
- 10 people told us they had issues accessing medication after a visit to hospital.

"I have had very good professional service from both Stratford Hospital and Warwick Hospital pharmacies for prescriptions at short notice."

"There are often communication issues between other departments and the pharmacy which causes delays and is frustrating for everyone. The staff always seem overstretched and work very hard but are always helpful and polite." Warwick Hospital pharmacy

"Waited nearly 2 hrs to collect prescription for my 92yr old mum who'd been discharged but couldn't collect at local pharmacy."

Warwick Hospital pharmacy

"Very long waiting times, long queues (which is harder if you can't stand for long). It was so loud I couldn't understand what they were saying. The system and layout didn't work. I called back with a question regarding my prescription however they didn't answer the phone or respond to my answer phone message." UHCW pharmacy

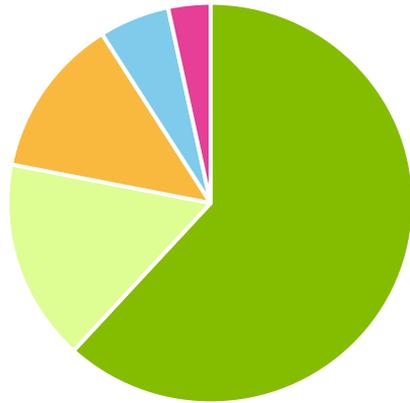
	Negative	Mixed	Positive	Neutral	
University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW)	5	1	1	1	8
Warwick Hospital	36	3	20	5	64
Stratford Hospital	2	0	9	1	12
	43	4	30	7	

“My local pharmacy is brilliant. They are always helpful and polite. The only problem is they are overwhelmed with the number of prescriptions they currently receive.” Satisfied

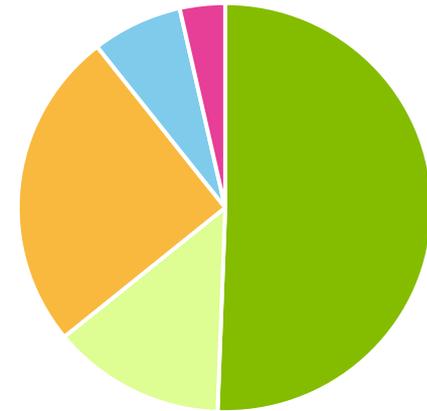
People’s experiences,

We asked, “How satisfied are you with the pharmacy service received in the last 6 months?”

Stratford District Responses



Warwick District Responses



- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- My Satisfaction varies
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

“It can have very long queues. Often medication isn’t ready, and I have to come back another day. It is the only pharmacy in my town.”
My satisfaction varies

“Staff are friendly and courteous, take time to explain things. Offered a blood pressure check and suggested looking at pre-payment.”
Very satisfied

“...She really put a significant amount of effort into getting me an emergency prescription.” Very satisfied

“It’s a very slow service and there’s often a queue when I go to collect the prescription. It relies on my husband calling the pharmacy to re-order his repeat medication and there’s often a problem. There seems to be little co-ordination between GP and the pharmacy, even though it’s in the same building.”
Very dissatisfied

“Easy to use, can use it out of hours which helps when I am busy working myself or forgotten. Can add messages if needed.” Patient Access and GP website user

People’s experiences,

We asked about alternative ways of filling repeat prescriptions.

- We asked about people's experience of **using technology** to manage prescriptions.
- 89 people told us they did not use the NHS app, Patient access or their GP's website. 6 of those people used other online pharmacy services, 4 relied on their pharmacy to arrange repeat prescriptions with the GP directly and 3 used apps provided by their own pharmacy.

“Very good use it all the time and very quick you can order prescriptions and book appointments also see results .” NHS app user

“It is ok if the repeat medicines are listed on the NHS app, but if they are not, it makes it difficult to request a prescription. It would be better if the hospital doctors could just add them to the records on the app at the point of prescribing rather than the surgery having to wait for a letter and then add it.” NHS app user

Sentiment of Feedback (Number of comments)

	Positive	Mixed	Negative	Neutral	
NHS App	46	7	5	2	60
Patient Access App	11	2	4	0	17
Patient Access website	2	2	1	0	5
My GP's website	6	1	0	0	7
	65	12	10	2	

“Ordering via the website is very simple. However, registering for the service is absurdly difficult, requiring the use of a mobile phone to take a variety of photos that take multiple attempts to get images that the system likes.” Patient Access website user

- We heard feedback from 80 people who **do not use technology** to manage their prescriptions. 19 people told us they do not have access to or understanding of the technology that would be needed. 12 people told us they prefer to call or visit their GP and do not need online services. One person told us they don't use apps as they are visually impaired.

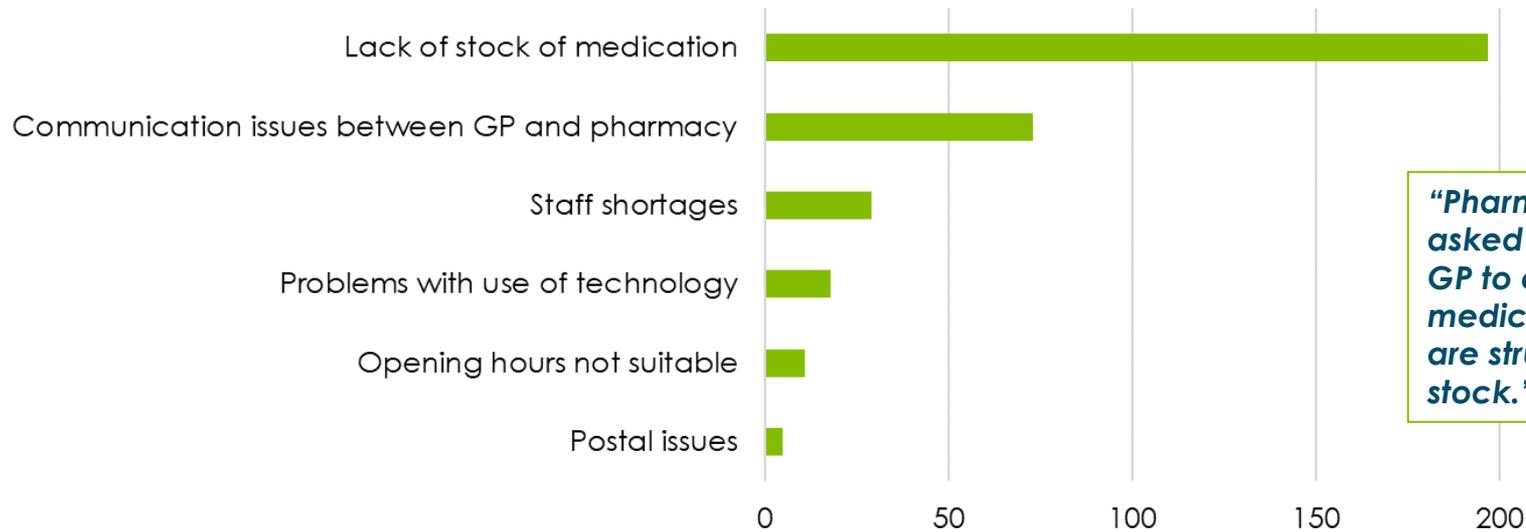
“I don't use online services. I have nothing at home - I would need to go to the library”

People's experiences,

“My pharmacy gave me my prescription back to try elsewhere to save me waiting on a few occasions.”

We asked about delays to medication, and how they were resolved.

If you have ever had a delay in medication, what do you think was the cause?



“Pharmacy has asked me to get the GP to change my medication as they are struggling to get stock.”

“I had to go into the pharmacy in person and speak to the pharmacist, then I had to go next door and speak to the receptionist (you can never speak to a doctor in live time) - then wait for a phone call from the medication nurse (again not the doctor) - to get alternative medication when something is out of stock - then the alternative was not put onto computer as a 'repeat' until the original medication came back into stock, so the whole process had to be done again to get it onto repeat.”

“Sometimes I have had to go to 3 different pharmacies and queue for 30 mins at each one just to be told they don't have it! I have also had to go back the next day many times despite it being an urgent prescription.”

People's experiences,

We asked people how they get medication on repeat prescription, if they do not visit a pharmacy to collect their medication themselves.

How medication is received if the pharmacy is not visited in person.



- We received 80 pieces of feedback from people who do not pick up their prescriptions themselves. 25 people from Warwick District and 55 people from Stratford District.

“I use Lloyds direct - they frequently have stuff out of stock which I think is the same everywhere but at least I don't have to go up, ask for my prescription and then wait 20 minutes. No good for urgent prescriptions though.” Warwick District Resident

“It comes every 28 days and is brilliant. Delivery drivers and very sociable – Pharmacy to my door.” Stratford District Resident.

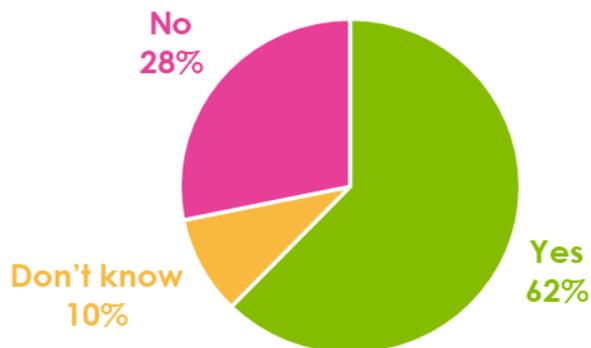
“The public bus service is 30minute walk from my rural home, so I have deliveries from Hopkins which is attached to Alcester Health centre” Stratford District Resident

“My neighbour picks up my prescription and we order three weeks in advance to ensure she can get both. I am visually impaired so can't drive. I asked if the pharmacy could deliver to me, but they said they were full.” Stratford District Resident

Peoples experience of Pharmacy First

We asked people if they were aware of Pharmacy First, and whether they had experience of asking for advice at pharmacies.

Have you heard of, or seen any advertising for, Pharmacy First?



- 13 (5%) of the people who were aware of Pharmacy First expressed concerns about how it would work effectively. 37 people (17%) told us where they had seen or heard of Pharmacy First, including 9 (4%) via their GP, and 7 (3%) via a pharmacy.
- 58 people told us they had asked a pharmacist for advice about one of the seven conditions outlined under Pharmacy First.

“Ear checked and drops issued. Sore throat checked required antibiotics. All good.”
Earache (patient aged 1 to 7 years)

“Had to make arrangements to see a GP both times as pharmacy were not able to provide necessary antibiotics.” Sinusitis (patient aged 12 years and over), sore throat (patient aged 5 years and over)

“I was given advice and some cream but was told I needed an out of hours GP appointment.”
Infected insect bite (patient aged 1 year and over)

They were brilliant. Dipped urine, but because my symptoms indicated a higher kidney infection, (Pharmacist) actually called the surgery and got me an appointment with a GP.”
Urinary tract infection or UTI (woman aged 16 to 64 years)

“...had a big problem finding a pharmacy within 15 miles early Saturday evening. Choice is needed.”
Urinary tract infection or UTI (woman aged 16 to 64 years)



Other things people shared with us

“Very prompt in organising my repeat prescriptions and have a vending machine dispenser so can collect prescriptions 24/7.”

Warwick pharmacy user

“The surgery interviews me over the phone every year and arranges the prescriptions to be sent to Pharmacy to my door.”

Shipston on Stour pharmacy user

“Occasionally I use another pharmacy if I have to go on a “hunt” for my repeat prescription meds. There seem to be more occasions when drugs are out of stock, and I have to go as far as Coventry. This usually involves a lot of phoning around.”

Kenilworth pharmacy user

“I can’t speak highly of them enough. As a patient on a lot of medications, they have been a god send. No question too silly, never unable to help and if there was an award for the best pharmacy my vote would go to them!”

Alcester pharmacy user

“We need more pharmacies, the queues are too long, and they are too overstretched. Communication between pharmacy and doctors over what medication is not available is also needed. Pharmacists should be allowed to swap medication to a similar one they have the knowledge let them use it.”

Kenilworth pharmacy user

“Some pharmacies will see more conditions than others which makes it tricky for patients. For other patients, I’ve often found that delays are caused by stock shortages which we’re not aware of until a script is rejected and we’re not given an alternative to prescribe to speed up the process. Also, a common issue is that a pharmacy has said they have not had the prescription, when the reality is that they just haven’t downloaded it from the spine to process. This causes delays and frustration for patients.”

Healthcare professional

“Southam pharmacy can’t cope with the number of residents in the area. New houses are still being built. We need a much larger or second pharmacy. Prescriptions often not ready, long queues. The staff are overwhelmed.”

Southam pharmacy user

“The GP tells me the pharmacies don’t stock it. The pharmacies say the GP hasn’t ticked the right box.”

Next steps, summary, and recommendations

All the findings from our pharmacy engagement will be shared with the Regional Pharmaceutical Committee, our local partners, and on our website.

- Most feedback on pharmacy was positive in nature, with fewer than 10% of people telling us they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. People told us about the pressures locally on pharmacies and pharmacists. We received more negative responses than positive about hospital pharmacy, which may require further investigation.
- Over two thirds of survey respondents told us about delays to their medication. Over half of survey respondents had experienced delays due to a lack of stock of their medication. People told us about having to sort out alternative medication themselves through additional appointments, travel or phone calls.
- We heard repeatedly about issues of communication between GPs, hospitals, pharmacies and patients leading to delays in medication for 20% of survey respondents. This needs to be addressed as a separate project.
- Pharmacy First is in its infancy and its impact should be closely monitored to assess its impact on patient experience.
- People who do not use technology, either by choice or circumstances prevent them, to communicate with pharmacies and GPs (22% of respondents, 13 with a Disability, 39 with a Long-Term Condition, 10 Carers and 1 veteran) need to be factored into new initiatives and processes so that they are not left out or forgotten.

“All pharmacies are busy, especially now with the added responsibilities for advising people on minor problems, rather than consulting their GP, but I am very grateful for the service & advice given by my own pharmacy .”

“Asda are amazing. Having longer hours, cheerful and helpful staff, a quick turn-around from GP to getting fulfilled (usually the same day) plus the pharmacist is always helpful & works later hours- brilliant for after work.”

For more information

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