

Healthwatch Bucks update

September 2022

This paper summarises recent project work we have undertaken in relation to health and social care services, as aligned with the priorities of the Joint Health & Wellbeing strategy.

Live Well

We wanted to find out about awareness of social prescribing in Buckinghamshire, as well as whether people have made use of the service and know how to access it.

- We developed an online survey that was available for Bucks residents to complete between 12 May and 4 July 2022.
- We also went to four libraries – Chesham, Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Buckingham – so we could collect responses directly from members of the public.
- In addition, we researched what local GP surgeries said about social prescribing on their websites.

Key findings

- Most of the people who completed our survey had not heard of social prescribing. However, when given a high-level explanation of the service, the majority felt it was a good idea.
- Many people remained cautious about the idea of social prescribing because of a lack of knowledge.
- More women than men had heard of social prescribing.
- People aged over 56 were less likely than younger people to say they'd consider using the services of a social prescriber in the future.
- Many GP surgeries' websites did not provide much, if any, information about social prescribing or how to access the service.

Our recommendations

Although awareness of social prescribing is low, our survey showed people were very positive about the benefits it could offer.

We recommend that the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) works with local Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and general practices to raise awareness of social prescribing – both what it is and how to use it.

This could involve:

- Displaying more posters in general practice waiting areas
- Sharing information about social prescribing with Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)
- Encouraging the sharing and displaying of posters about social prescribing in community hubs
- Holding briefings for local councillors and other key stakeholders to increase their knowledge of social prescribing
- Targeting advertising to help reach specific groups, such as men or people aged over 56.

You can read the full report [here](#).

Voices (pharmacy)

Since April 2022 we have seen an increase in the number of people reviewing pharmacies on our website. Over the previous 4 months we received 28 comments, which resulted in 58 feedback elements. The majority of these, over 80%, were negative.

The most common negative theme was “Service delivery, organisation and staffing”, which we use as a catch-all for non-specific feedback. The next most common was waiting/queueing time at the pharmacy. Then issues with dispensing particular medications.

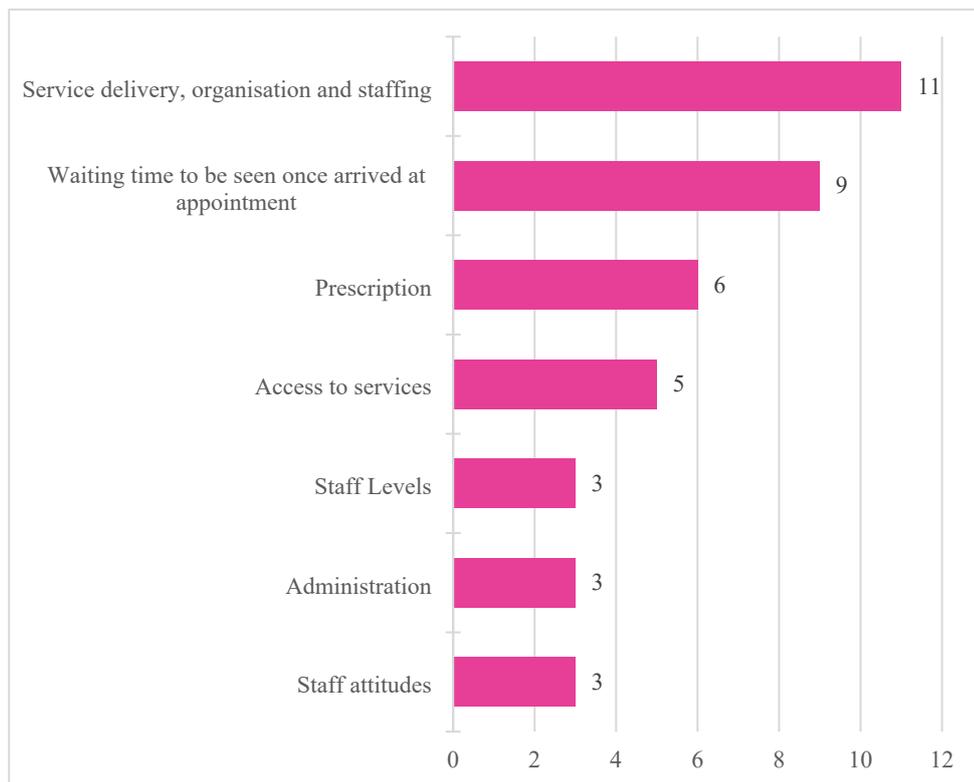


Figure 1 - Top 5 Negative Themes

On the positive side, general positive feedback was most common, followed by staff attitudes. We can't provide a top five because we only identified four themes in the feedback.

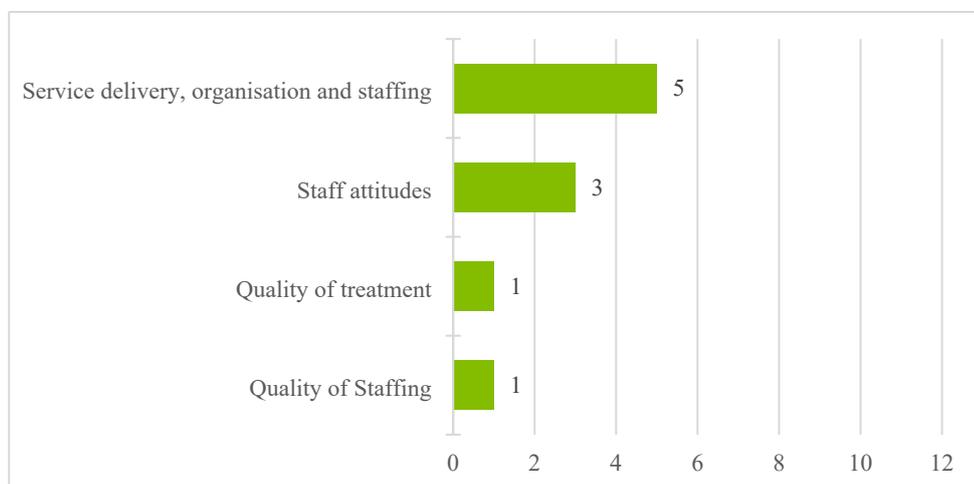


Figure 2 - Top 4 Positive Themes

We know that patients are being diverted to pharmacies (as appropriate) by general practice. Therefore, we think it is reasonable to expect the amount of feedback we receive in this area to increase.

We have already shared some of the feedback with the BOB ICB Quality Team (Bucks). We will continue to monitor and escalate this intelligence as appropriate.