What Wirral told us: Sep-Oct 2026

During September and October 2026, we gathered insights from people using health and social care services across Wirral. People shared positive experiences of caring staff, prompt appointments and clear explanations, alongside concerns about accessing services, delays in care and getting information. Feedback also highlighted the importance of keeping people informed about their treatment.

We heard from...

63

People who shared feedback about health and care services

We heard about...

39

Different health and care services through people's feedback

We heard from...

181

People contacting us for information and advice

What we heard most about during September and October:

Services:

- **Hospital Care**
- **GP Services**
- **Dentistry**

Themes:

- **Communication**
- **Access to services**
- **Experience of staff**

GP Services and Dentistry

GP Services

People shared positive experiences of helpful staff, prompt responses and reassurance. One person described receiving clear advice about alternative vaccination sessions and being able to discuss their preferences.

Some people described difficulties getting GP appointments, including being asked to call back the following morning or going through repeated rounds of triage. One person reported being directed to a walk-in centre after several days of trying to arrange care. Unclear text messages and a lack of information when appointments were running late was also raised.

We heard concerns about communication around test results, repeat prescriptions and changes to treatment. Some people needed support from Healthwatch to contact their practice for results or clarify whether medication would be available. Others wanted clearer explanations of treatment decisions and support to raise concerns. Some feedback highlighted difficulties with continuity of care, including accessing a preferred clinician after they had moved practice and understanding what was happening with specialist referrals. We also heard from someone who felt they were not receiving sufficient support with ongoing pain.

"My phone call was answered promptly and I was reassured there would be 'mop up sessions'."

"Without exception the staff are always helpful and nothing is ever too much trouble."

"I had difficulty understanding what they meant in the text."

"Also waiting 50 minutes to be seen for a pre booked appointment [...] no information given."



Dentistry

Positive feedback described dentists and hygienists as gentle and caring. People valued being made comfortable during treatment, being seen on time and being fitted in quickly when they needed an urgent appointment.

We also heard about difficulties finding NHS dental care. One person reported that information on the NHS website suggested a practice was accepting NHS patients, but the practice advised that it had a large waiting list and offered private treatment instead.

Other enquiries concerned access to specialist dental care and continuing pain after emergency treatment. One person was concerned that their referral did not include all relevant health information and subsequently reported that the referral had been refused.

"The dentist made the whole experience as comfortable as she could, and I was very pleased with the care that she took."

"Very thankful to be fitted in so quickly."

"Was not taken on as an NHS patient, despite NHS website listing it as accepting NHS patients."



Hospital Care

People shared positive experiences of prompt outpatient care, including being seen quickly for scans, receiving X-rays within minutes and getting appointments relatively soon after referral. Others praised clear explanations and staff who helped them feel comfortable and reassured. One person described feeling treated as an individual throughout their appointment.

Communication remained a recurring concern. We heard about an appointment letter arriving after the appointment date and difficulties reaching departments by telephone. One person reported arriving late to an appointment and being unable to get through to explain the delay.

Some people described delays or uncertainty around specialist referrals and treatment. This included referrals reportedly cancelled without a clear explanation, conflicting advice about whether treatment could proceed, and uncertainty about replacement medication or who was responsible for arranging ongoing care. Feedback about emergency and urgent care included long waits, uncomfortable waiting areas and limited information about when specialist staff would be available. We also heard concerns about corridor waits for people with additional needs.

Feedback about the Urgent Treatment Centre highlighted difficulties hearing patients being called, knowing how to report worsening symptoms and accessing appropriate support while waiting.

Some people and families raised concerns about feeling dismissed or not listened to. Other accounts described concerns about monitoring, medication, falls prevention and communication when a relative's condition deteriorated. These were experiences and concerns reported to us by patients and families.

Experiences of the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and complaints processes were mixed. One person praised PALS for resolving queries quickly, while others needed help obtaining acknowledgements, updates or responses to outstanding concerns.

We also continued to hear about hospital parking. Feedback highlighted insufficient information about the new arrangements, difficulty locating payment machines and uncertainty about possible parking charges.

"Everything was explained to me and i was made to feel as comfortable as possible."

"I felt like an individual, not just another patient."

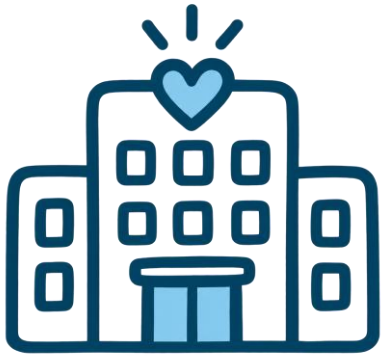
"Received an appointment letter through the post for a scan, the scan was booked for 2 days before the letter arrived."

"Staff were often unable to answer questions and were unable to provide clear information about what was happening or how long [they] would be expected to wait."

"[PALS] have solved my queries quickly and brilliantly."

"I was made to wait from 3:00 pm until nearly midnight before being told that there was no cardiology doctor available and that I would need to wait until 10:00 am the following morning to be seen."

"I tried to ring the department only to get through to a switch board which I found very confusing and eventually gave up."



Other Services

Ambulance Service (North West Ambulance Service)

We received limited feedback about ambulances. One person sought further support with an ongoing complaint about their ambulance journey and the service they were taken to. Another account raised concerns about whether suitable equipment was available to transfer someone with complex mobility needs safely.



Walk-in Centres

The limited direct feedback about walk-in centres was positive. One person praised staff and said their problem was resolved during the visit. Although they waited just over an hour, they felt this was in line with their expectations.

"Really good staff and got me sorted there and then."



Mental Health Services

Feedback about mental health services highlighted difficulties understanding referral pathways and knowing where to turn for support. In one case, Healthwatch contacted a GP practice to clarify that a referral had been made.

We also heard concerns about continuity of support following discharge from crisis or home treatment services. One person described feeling passed between services without a clear plan for ongoing care or medication.



Pharmacies

Feedback about pharmacies was mixed. One person praised timely support and understanding of their circumstances. Another described having to return later to collect a prescription because the pharmacy's computer system was unavailable, although they recognised that staff were apologetic.

"Timely intervention and understanding of personal details."

"It's a good service, it was just a bit inconvenient that they were having trouble with the computer system."

Community Equipment / Wheelchair services

We heard about difficulties arranging repairs and replacement equipment, including concerns that equipment had been returned with the original problem unresolved. Other feedback described delays obtaining suitable wheelchair replacement parts and dissatisfaction with communication and staff attitudes.



Other Services

Social Care

Some people and carers contacted us for help understanding how to access care assessments, equipment and support at home. We also heard concerns about delays in occupational therapy assessment and essential equipment, and the effect this could have on safety, comfort and dignity.

One family sought support to challenge a planned reduction in a continuing healthcare package, which they felt had not been preceded by a formal review.



Children and Family Services

We heard concerns about a young person being discharged from an autism and ADHD assessment pathway. Other feedback highlighted difficulties maintaining continuity of ADHD care, including access to medication, when moving between private treatment and NHS services.

We received further enquiries about care decisions and support to understand how to raise concabout community paediatric and eye care as parents sought clearer information erns.



What we're working on

Collecting and sharing people's experiences of health and social care services is only one part of our role. We want to take this opportunity to provide an update on the work we're doing moving forwards.



RecoveryFest
In September, we attended RecoveryFest in Birkenhead, and it was an opportunity to hear positive stories of recovery and meet organisations offering support across Wirral.

Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment (PLACE)
We contributed to PLACE visits at Arrowe Park and Clatterbridge hospitals, assessing how well the environments meet patients' needs and identifying opportunities for improvement.

Citizen's Panel
This month, we recruited for our Citizen's Panel by contacting Patient Participation Groups across Wirral. Our Citizen's Panel have recently contributed feedback for bereavement booklets, hospital appointment letters, and car park information.

Neighbourhood Health and Care
We're working alongside Wirral Council, Cheshire and Merseyside ICB, and other system partners to contribute towards the development of neighbourhood health and care services. This approach aims to coordinate services around local people's needs.

Living with Cancer and Dementia
We want to hear from people living with both cancer and dementia, and those who care for or support them. Please contact Healthwatch Wirral to share your experiences, what support has helped you and where further support is needed.

Corridor Care
Collaborating with other Cheshire and Merseyside Healthwatch, we have begun work capturing patient's experiences of Corridor Care. In Wirral, we have also conducted Enter and View visits to explore the implementation of the Red Line Toolkit.

ICB Quality and Performance Committee
Across Cheshire and Merseyside, Healthwatch have shared insights into people's experiences of mental health services, particularly in emergency departments and urgent care.

Additional care home visits
Next year, we will carry out further Enter and View visits to care homes across Wirral to identify good practice and opportunities to improve access to primary care services.

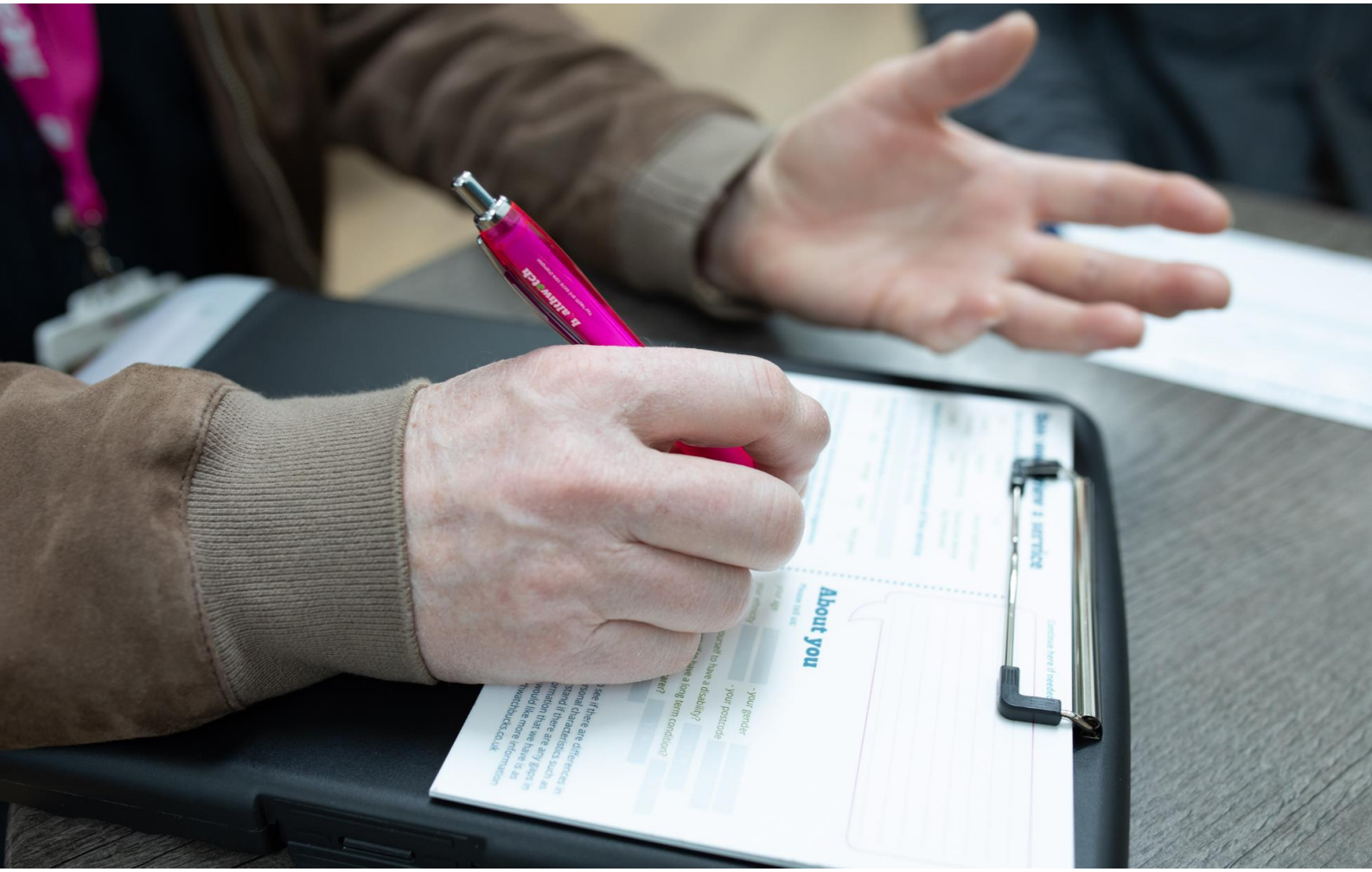
Safeguarding Improvements
Recently, We have been working with system partners to identify how safeguarding pathways in Wirral could be improved.

Health and Wellbeing Survey
For the upcoming Health and Wellbeing survey, we are involved with providing additional support by assisting members of the public complete forms.

Communication Strategy
We worked with local partners to review the Integrated Care Board's (ICB) communications strategy, including how it keeps the public informed and communicates its plans for the future.

Having your say

To leave feedback, contact us using the details below or visit our Feedback Centre at:
www.speakout.healthwatchwirral.co.uk



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