



Rugby Pharmacy Report

August 2024

healthwatch
Warwickshire

Introduction and background

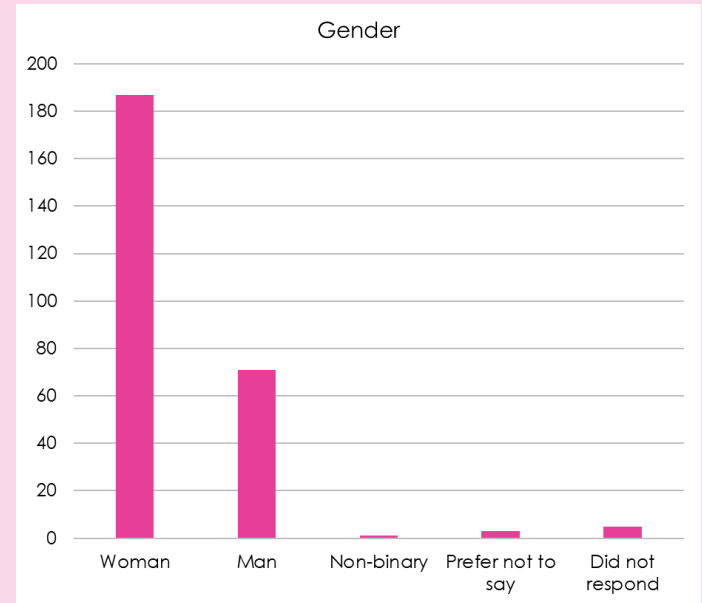
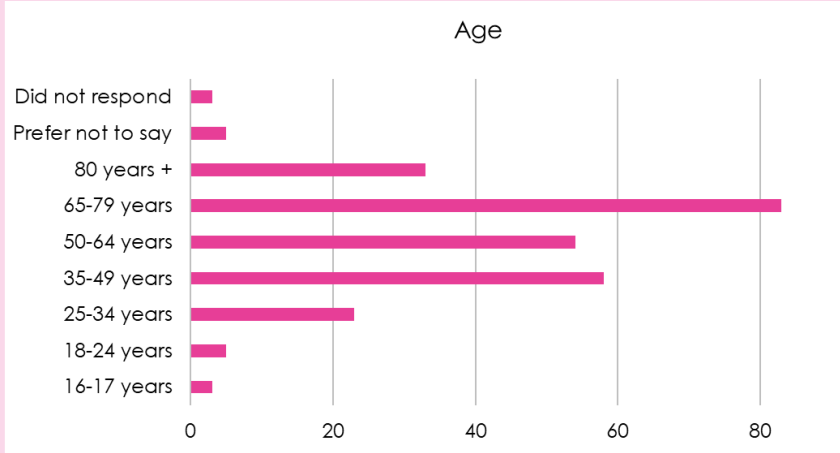
Between April and July 2024 Healthwatch Warwickshire asked people across Rugby about their experiences of using pharmacy.

- Between December 2022 and March 2023 HWW received 352 pieces of feedback about prescriptions and pharmacies throughout Warwickshire. [Read our report here](#)
- At our Health and Social Care Forum: 'State of Care in Rugby', in October 2023, we heard concerns about pharmacy closures, praise for pharmacy staff, and residents wanting pharmacies to offer even more services especially outside of normal working hours.
- 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, alternatives to using the POD (Prescription Ordering Direct) telephone service and digital ordering. We asked about the understanding and experience of using Pharmacy First.
- We had **267 responses** from Rugby Borough residents. 155 people told us they have a Long-Term Condition, 48 that they have a disability, 26 that they are a carer, and 4 that they are Armed Forces Veterans.

The survey closes at the end of August 2024 in South Warwickshire, and the end of September 2024 in Warwickshire North.



Who we heard from



Use of pharmacies

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

- The majority of people who responded to the survey (208 out of 267, 78%) had used a pharmacy most recently 'in the last month'.
- The most common response (155 out of 267, 58%) was from people who told us they use a pharmacy 'monthly'.
- 220 people told us they always use the same pharmacy and 57 explained why. The most common themes were the convenient location of the pharmacy, and that the pharmacy was the one nominated at their GP surgery.
- 39 people told us they do not always use the same pharmacy and 27 explained why. Location was the most common theme, with people deciding on a pharmacy that was convenient each time they needed one. Medication availability was the second most common theme.

Which community pharmacy have you visited most often in the last 6 months?	
Avicenna Pharmacy Bilton	38
Rowlands Pharmacy	33
Paddox Pharmacy Hilmorton	30
ASDA Pharmacy	28
Tesco Pharmacy	21
Knights Pharmacy	17
Lister Brownsover	13
Dunchurch Pharmacy	12
Boots pharmacy	10
Well Pharmacy	8
Lloyds Pharmacy	7
Wolston Chemist Coventry	6
Boots pharmacy J1 Retail Park	5
Magson Pharmacy Bulkington	5
Morton Gardens Pharmacy	5
Burbage Pharmacy	4
Revel Pharmacy Brinklow	4
Wolvey Surgery Pharmacy	1
Did not respond	20

Use of pharmacies

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

- We received 60 pieces of feedback about using hospital pharmacies. 28 of these were negative in sentiment, and 16 were positive.
- The majority of the feedback was about UHCW and St. Cross.

“My mum was given a prescription in the evening after the UHCW pharmacy had closed and the doctor told me I would need to travel back in the morning to get it dispensed. Thankfully I noticed that it could be dispensed at St Cross.”

“Rubbish, 2 queues. 1 to hand in and then the other queue to collect . Waited 1 hour.” St. Cross

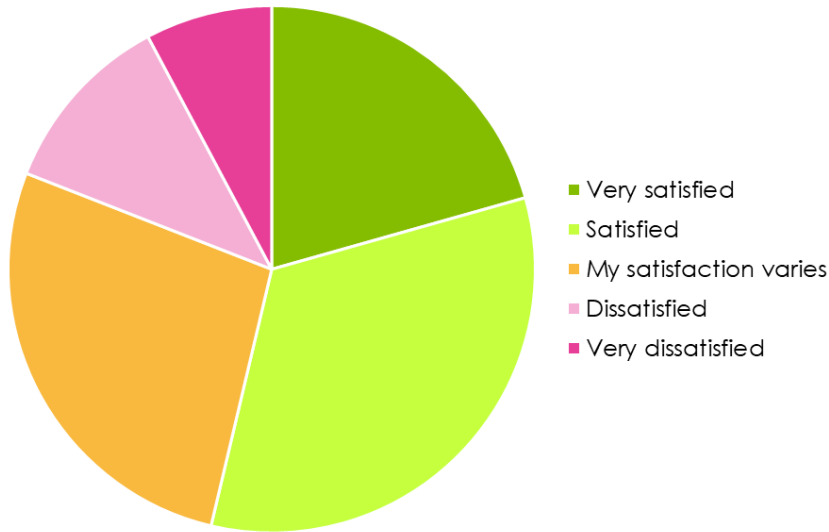
“Waiting time for take-home tablets to be dispensed following prescription can be as long as 12 hours, ridiculous waiting when the hospital bed could be easily vacated for the next patient if drugs were promptly supplied.” UHCW

	Sentiment of feedback				
	Negative	Mixed	Positive	Neutral	
George Eliot Hospital (GEH)	1	0	0	2	3
Hospital of St Cross	9	2	8	3	22
University Hospitals Coventry and Wawrwickshire (UHCW)	14	2	5	4	25
UHCW/ St Cross	3	3	3	0	9
Warwick Hospital	1	0	0	0	1
	28	7	16	9	

People's experiences,

We asked if people were satisfied with their experience of pharmacy.

Rugby Borough responses



- From the 48 people who told us they have a disability, 13% were 'very dissatisfied' with pharmacy service in the last 6 months.

“Even though my prescription gets sent electronically from the GP, you have to go to the pharmacy twice. The first time is to tell them you have ordered items and the second time to pick them up. There's always a queue and it takes a long time to see each person. I am an ambulant wheelchair user and if I go without my wheelchair I always have at least 30-40 minutes to wait in a queue which is too long for me to stand up. I went in my wheelchair recently and spoke to the lady at the counter about getting my medication. She went to look for my items but there was a problem with it. When she returned to tell me about the problem, she chose to speak to my husband about my prescription rather than me.” Very dissatisfied

“The stock levels vary each month and it's rarely clear when there are delays and why.”

My satisfaction varies

“...(they are) picking up a huge catchment area. There can be a queue, or you just walk in. I appreciate they are busy.” Satisfied

“They text me when my prescription is ready.”

Very satisfied

“Fine except communication can be poor between GP and pharmacy.” Satisfied

People's experiences,

We asked about alternative ways of filling repeat prescriptions.

- 30 people (11%) told us they previously used the **POD (Prescription Ordering Direct)** telephone service. This closed at the end of March 2024. No one told us that this closure will negatively affect them. Two people said their GP has supported them, and nine people said they are confident to use the NHS App or to order online. One person told us they had been satisfied with POD and five told us they had been dissatisfied, mainly with the time taken for calls to be answered.
- We asked about people's experience of **using technology** to manage prescriptions.
- 47 people (34%) told us their experiences of using apps or websites to manage their prescriptions was positive, and 14 (10%) told us their experience was negative.

	Sentiment of feedback				
	Positive	Mixed	Negative	Neutral	
NHS app	28	1	5	4	38
Patient Access app	8	1	4	0	13
GP website/ app	9	1	3	1	14
Avecienna app	0	0	1	0	1
Lloyds Direct app	0	0	0	1	1
Pharmacy2U app	1	0	0	0	1
Patient Access website	1	1	1	0	3
	47	4	14	6	

"I found the process of ordering repeat medications online very confusing to begin with, but the steps are fairly well explained, and I have got used to it after some time."

NHS app user

"I've not got a smart phone. When I am sent online information, I have to ask my daughter to deal with it. I don't want to use these services."

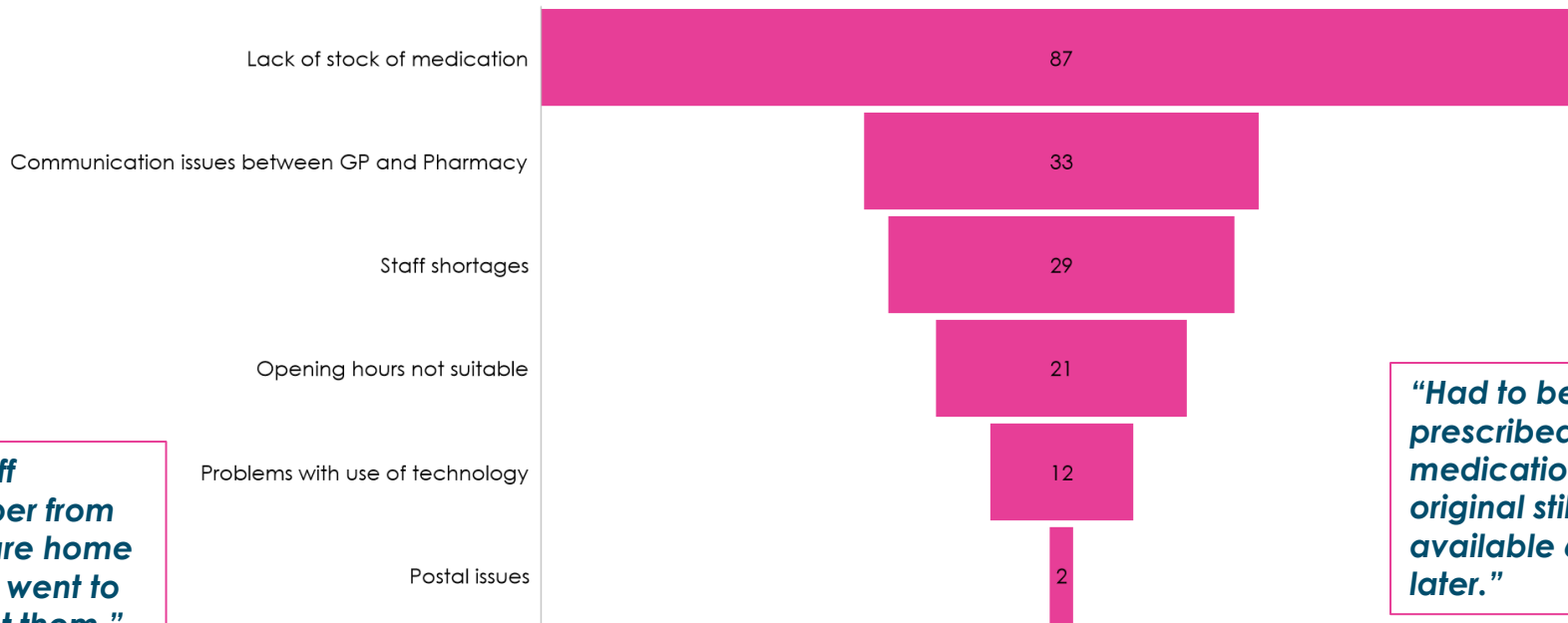
- We heard feedback from 49 people who **do not use technology** to manage their prescriptions. 20 of these do not have access to the technology that would be needed or think their GP doesn't. 20 people told us they prefer to call or visit their GP, and 8 people told us someone else arranges their prescriptions for them. Three people told us they don't use apps as they are visually impaired.

People's experiences,

"You just have to go back, time and time again and hope it's ready. Sometimes I've had to make 3 visits for 1 prescription - I don't have time for this!"

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?



"A staff member from my care home kindly went to collect them."

"Had to be prescribed different medication as original still not available 6 months later."

"Asked for the slip and went to another pharmacy."

"A lot of back and forth with the GP and pharmacy and frustrating especially on a Friday as the pharmacy is shut weekends."

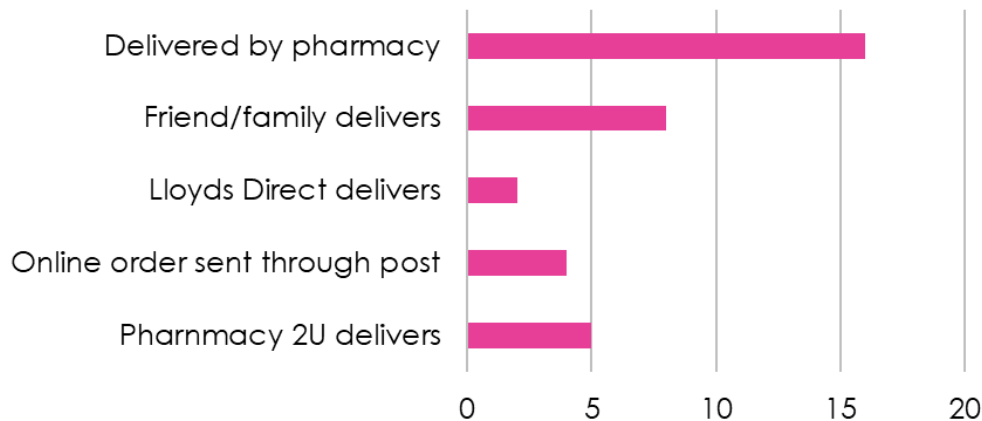
"ADHD meds have had national shortages. It was resolved in a couple of months."

"There is a sign up in the pharmacy that tells you there is staff shortage and there will be delays."

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 pharmacy is not visited in person



“Pharmacy problems have massive impact on our work. There are shortages of medication, and we are waiting longer periods. We have had to go to an external company - Pill pouch - for our regular medications which all comes by mail. For acute/emergency medication like antibiotics we use Rowlands or Welles, and these have been phenomenal, brilliant. We don't use local pharmacies for regular medications because of the shortages and residents not getting their medications so we had to change. We have 48 residents, and we support 22 with medication. We had a consultation and moved all 22 on to Pill Pouch.”

Manager at over 55s extra care property

“Occasionally I ask for prescription to be delivered, which - on the whole - is a satisfactory service although expensive.”

“I get an email to check if I need my medication, I click which I am running short of, and they check with my GP and then post out to me. No problems, I receive 7 medications.”

People's experiences,

We asked people what did and did not work, when having their medication delivered.

"Lloyds Direct, sometimes they don't have it in stock, so they email me to say that, and then email when it's in stock and are sending out."

"I can't get to the pharmacy myself now, so I had my medication arranged to be delivered (planned two weeks previously). They don't answer the phone, and I called and called and there was no one to deliver my medication. It was early Friday afternoon, and it is shut on Saturday so a member of staff, where I live, had to go and pick it up for me. It is busy in there so no one answers the phone so you can't sort things out without going in person - which I can't do."

Resident at over 55s extra care property

"Since covid, there have been constant problems with pharmacies. First there was a lack of delivery drivers as they were getting older and stopped working. Secondly lots of pharmacies have shut. Then they told us that prescriptions weren't arriving, saying that the doctor had not sent them. We would have to go back and forth for our residents and would find out that the pharmacy actually did have the prescription. I was sent information from an online pharmacy called Pill Time and that has solved the problems. Previously I was going out almost once a day having to chase medications, now I can only think of one time I had to go out and get medication and that was emergency antibiotics. We encourage all our residents that we provide care for to sign up for Pill Time as we are not paid to chase medications. It is our only barrier to being able to deliver good care in Rugby when we need to report it to the CQC. Three Lloyds have gone and the pharmacies that are still open are completely overwhelmed. Pill Time has been our saviour. Residents who do not receive care from us have been told about Pill Time, but it is up to them if they use this service. I know of a 90yr old who had to get a taxi into town to get tablets sorted. No pharmacy answers the phone so there is no option but to go in person. People can be queuing outside for an hour, elderly people, and when they get to the front of the queue, they are told their prescription is not ready and they must wait longer - their script could have been there 4 or 5 days already. Our biggest barrier is the medications arriving in time as we don't want to have to record people missing medication on our charts."

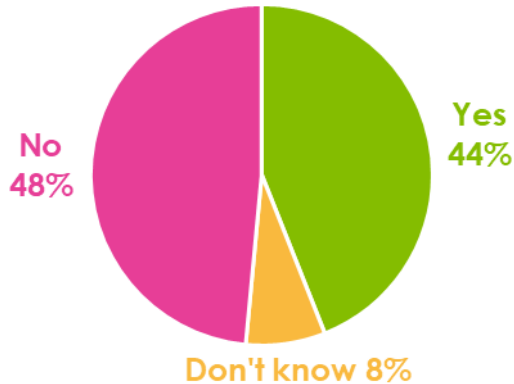
Manager at over 55s extra care property

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?

- 15 (30%) of the people who were aware of Pharmacy First expressed concerns about how it would work effectively.



“I get the impression pharmacists are already overloaded without this extra task.”

“I think offering this service has the potential to improve access to GP appointments as it will free up time for the GP. However, I believe it will make delays and queues at the pharmacy even longer.”

- 18 people told us they had asked a pharmacist for advice about one of the seven conditions outlined under Pharmacy First.

“Very pleased with service. I saw the pharmacist straight away and was prescribed antibiotics, which I was able to start taking straight away.”

Infected insect bite
(Patient aged 1 year and over)

“Pharmacy told me I needed to go to GP, GP referred me back to pharmacy.”

Sore throat
(Patient aged 5 years and over)

“Advice on what to do, got over the counter medication Also get advice on the phone.”

Earache
(Patient aged 1 to 7 years)



Other things people shared with us

“The inability to get a paper prescription from the GP can be problematic when medication is out of stock, as we have to keep asking the GP to reissue it to different pharmacies .”

“Extremely concerned that with the introduction of Pharmacy First and the currently already underperforming pharmacies in Rugby will be unable to cope even further and patients are at risk of harm due to this.”

“I find it quite difficult to get my medication. As I work full time and do not drive the choices of where I can obtain it are limited. I have no idea how far in advance I can collect my medication and so have run out several times as I have been unable to pick it up in time despite ordering well in advance, due to queues exceeding the time I had, or stock issues. I find it frustrating that I can only collect 1month’s supply of medication I am on for life which necessitates these repeat visits.”

“There is not enough pharmacies within Rugby. It’s sad that 3 have closed and limiting where you can get your medication from as housing is growing. There is constantly a queue in any pharmacy.”

“The pharmacy text me when it arrives and let me know if they will be closing early so I know to pick it up.”

“Quite pleased actually. They do a good job with the pressure of having more people to cater for.”

“I think it is great the Pharmacists are now being allowed to do more e.g. take blood pressure, prescribe medication, etc. sometimes I think they are more helpful than GPs.”

“Having bilingual staff at the pharmacy is great especially when they are trying to explain information to you.”



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.

- The majority of people we spoke to prefer to use the same pharmacy each visit, are loyal, and use pharmacies at least once per month.
- People understand the pressures locally on pharmacies and pharmacists. Generally, their comments and satisfaction levels take this into account.
- Much of the frustration, about both community and hospital pharmacies, was specifically around time taken to dispense medications.
- People who do not use technology, either by choice or circumstances prevent them, to communicate with pharmacies and GPs (15% of respondents, 17 with a Disability, 37 with a Long-Term Condition, 6 Carers and one veteran) need to be factored into new initiatives and processes so that they are not left out or forgotten.
- People who experience delays in their medication want to be kept informed about lack of stock and solutions to these delays.
- Pharmacy First is not yet fully understood, or trusted. Those who have experience have found it to be a good service on the whole, although there is variability between different pharmacies as to how successfully it is being used.

For more information

Healthwatch Warwickshire

4-6 Clemens Street

Leamington Spa, CV31 2DL

www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk

t: 01926 422823

e: info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk



@HealthwatchWarw



@HealthwatchWarw



@healthwatch_warwickshire

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Warwickshire