

# Healthwatch Cornwall

St Austell Healthcare  
Report

November 2015





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# Background and Introduction

At Healthwatch Cornwall (HC) we listen to patient experiences and base our work with commissioners and providers on them in order to inform service improvement.

HC has collected 130 feedback comments during the past two months from patients that have used St Austell Healthcare (SAH).

This feedback was collected through the HC rate and review website, phonenumber and targeted service evaluation. The evaluation was conducted during a flu clinic held at Polkyth Leisure Centre on October 10, 2015, and asked the question, “Have you contacted SAH by phone since September 2015?” September was chosen for this

question due to changes made by SAH to improve the phonenumber system. If respondents answered yes they were encouraged to leave feedback about their experience. 69% of the feedback in this report was collected through this particular visit.

In the feedback we have collected to date, patients generally responded negatively (77% negative, 18% positive and 5% neutral).

This report highlights the issues raised by patients and summarises the concerns and recommendations, with a chart displaying the top trends.



# Summary of Concerns

1. Telephone system - patients were annoyed at the length of time it took to speak to somebody. People were frequently in phone queues with more than 12 people waiting. After holding for 40 minutes or more they then found that there were no more appointments left for that day. People stated that it was easier to visit the surgery in person to book an appointment and that the cost of ringing the surgery on a mobile was expensive.

Patients were frustrated that these problems didn't exist before the changes were made. See feedback below:

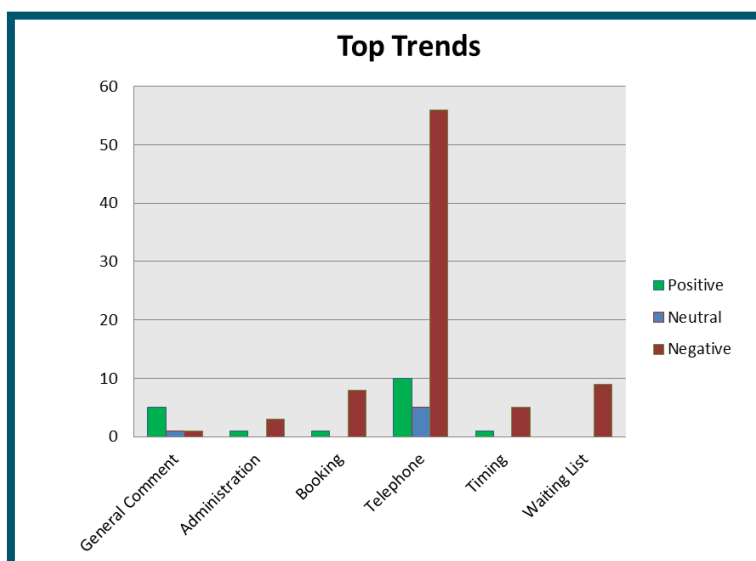
*“Tried to use yesterday. Was repeatedly engaged. I spend lots of time trying to get through. It puts me off making an appointment - often just go to surgery.”*

*“Kept ringing. Held on line for ages. Queue at 20. Quicker to go up and see someone.”*

*“I hung up in the end. Waited 1 1/2 hrs. Still haven't got the prescription or appointment.”*

2. Waiting list to get an appointment - patients stated that when booking an appointment they have to wait up to two weeks to see a GP. Patients also stated that the call back system doesn't work; they were told that a GP would call them back and this didn't happen.

3. Booking an appointment - as mentioned in concern '1', many people are currently struggling with the telephone system. There were also a number of other issues raised with the booking system:





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- The inability to book an appointment in advance. This issue was raised by patients needing to access an appointment for International Normalized Ratio (INR). See feedback:

*“I am a 10 week regular INR tester. I need to book a month ahead for a test - not convenient. Why can’t we book ahead at the previous appointment?”*

- Misinformation on how to book an appointment. Feedback below:

*“In Aug told to phone in two weeks for my next appointment. Had to phone six times, I was told it was too early to book. Phoned Monday then told to phone Fri. Only one appointment left. Husband has INR test re: warfarin treatment - he needs regular appointments.”*

4. Waiting time to see or hear a GP- number of feedback comments stated that they had a long wait in the waiting room for their appointment. There was also an issue around length of time to receive a call back from a GP, feedback below:

*“I waited in all afternoon as I was told a doctor would ring me. At 17.45pm I rang again and they said: “Sorry he’s not going to ring you”.”*

*“My appointment time was at 10.30am and I was not seen until 11am.”*



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# Recommendations

1. HC request a meeting with St Austell Healthcare to discuss what additional measures can be implemented to improve the current areas of concern within St Austell Healthcare.
2. As a duty to our members and the public, we will want to report the issues and outcomes of the meeting via our newsletter and You Said - We Did web page.
3. HC to work with St Austell Healthcare to complete a more comprehensive service evaluation on jointly agreed aspects of the newly developed service in 2016. This could incorporate work with allied services in the local area such as pharmacy, which we also have feedback about.



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# Contact us

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