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# Summary

The views and experience of children and young people can often be overlooked, with many engagement methods not always easy for a younger age group. Healthwatch Northamptonshire wanted to seek the views of children and young people directly in a different and engaging way.

Throughout the spring and summer of 2017 Healthwatch Northamptonshire attended various events held by partners across the county. This enabled us to gain views from a diverse range of children, some of which had special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or were in foster care. Based on what we heard we make the following recommendations:

## Recommendations

1. Some young people told us that they were bored, nervous and scared when attending GP appointments. Many of the toys and books in waiting rooms are aimed at under-five's. Waiting rooms in healthcare settings should have more for older children and young people, such as suitable books and activities to prevent them being bored or anxious as they wait for their appointment. Children and young people should be involved in choosing or designing these to make positive changes.
2. To further ease anxiety and fear in children and young people more should be done to explain to them what is going to happen at the next appointment and a brief outline of what the next part of the treatment will involve, including confirming that they have understood. This should be done by trained staff or clinicians.
3. Further work could be done by Nene and Corby Clinical Commissioning Groups and Healthwatch Northamptonshire to engage with and consult children and young people about what changes they would like to see in healthcare settings in Northamptonshire. Children and young people should be included in plans to make sure changes are positive.



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# Method

We attended five events in Northampton in the spring and summer of 2017.

- The Summer SENDsation (an event for children and young people with disabilities and their families)
- National Playday event in Abington Park
- Northampton Carnival
- World Health Day on the Market Square Northampton
- The Umbrella Fair in Northampton Racecourse

We asked children and young people ‘What did it feel like the last time you went to the doctors?’. For the children and young people that were unable to remember the last time they attended the doctors we asked them to think of another service they had used such as the opticians, dentist or hospital.

We asked the children and young people to write their name and age if they wanted to. We also asked them to draw how it made them feel or use an ‘emoji’ sticker. We had stickers with different emotions on them for children and young people that were unable to draw their own emotions and as a prompt for those that could, but found it difficult to express emotion.

We made sure that the children and young people had the opportunity to really think about and express how it made them feel the last time they went to the doctors.

We used a paper table cloth, paper plates and some marker pens as well as the ‘emoji’ stickers for the children and young people to draw their experiences of how they felt. There were no restrictions on what they could write however, most chose to write one word or phrase to describe how they felt.

We spoke to 137 children and young people in total, ranging in age from one to 15 years, although 15 did not specify their age. Younger children were helped by their parents, carers or siblings.





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Example quotes:

“I am worried when I go to the Doctor’s

*Jessica (no age given)*

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“It made me happy because I got a sticker and Daddy held my hand.”

*Five year old*

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“I felt quite excited sometimes they make you feel like you're special and people care”

*Samuel (no age given)*

---

“The waiting room is not very colourful - It's boring”

*10 year old*

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“Anxious and worried”

*13 year old*

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“I felt like a superhero”

*Adam, 3*

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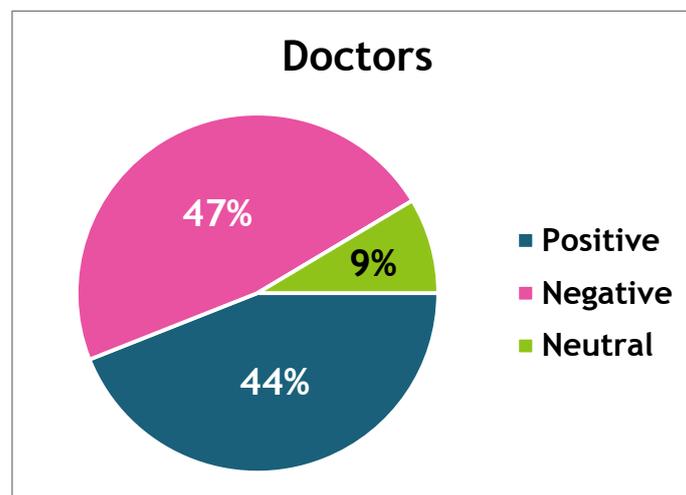


We categorised the findings into positive, negative and neutral comments or reactions/stickers.

137 children and young people completed the activity. Most mentioned doctors (116) and others mentioned dentists (11), opticians (1) and orthodontists (1):

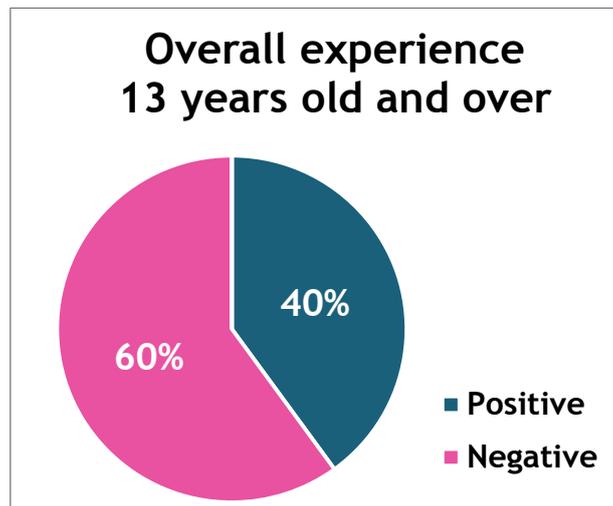
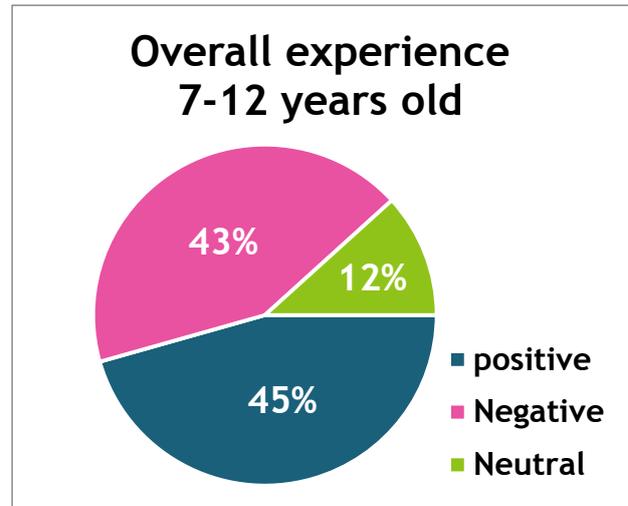
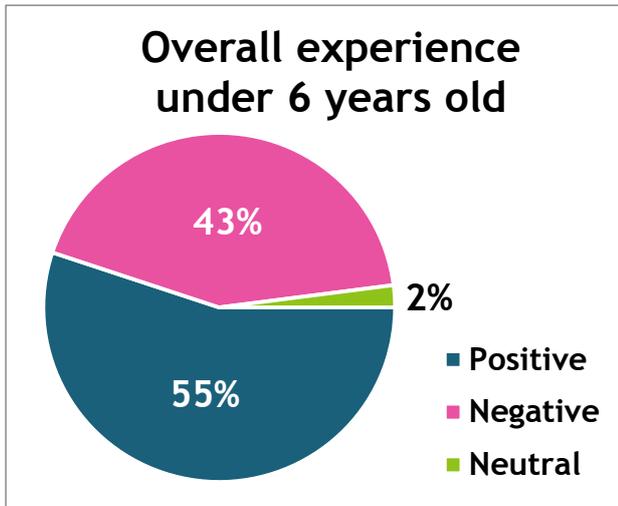
Doctors	116
Dentist	11
Hospital	8
Opticians	1
Orthodontist	1

Of those children and young people that talked about their last visit to the doctor, 44% (51) gave a positive comment, 47% gave a negative comment, and 9% gave a neutral comment.

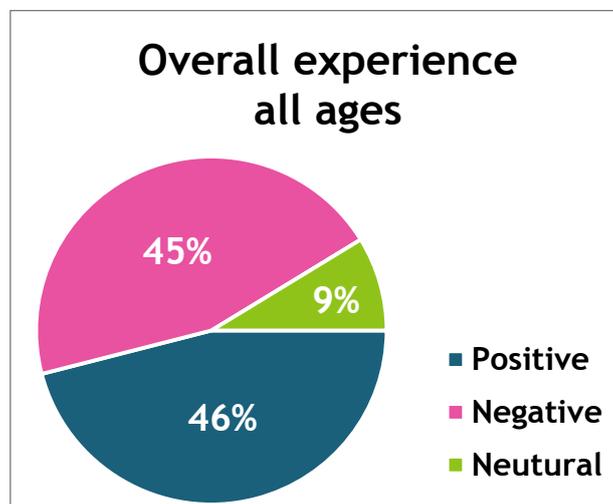




We found that younger children more often said their overall experience was positive:



Across all services, 46% of children and young people reported having a positive experience and 45% a negative experience with only 9% reporting a neutral experience.





# Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Northamptonshire would like to thank all of the children, young people and their families that we have met over the spring and summer who took part in this activity.

Thanks also go to:

- Summer SENDsation
- National Playday
- The Umbrella Fair
- Northampton Market Square (World Health Day organisers)
- Northampton Carnival





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# About Healthwatch Northamptonshire

Healthwatch Northamptonshire is the local independent consumer champion for health and social care. We are part of a national network of local Healthwatch organisations. Our central role is to be a voice for local people to influence better health and wellbeing and improve the quality of services to meet people's needs. This involves us visiting local services and talking to people about their views and experiences. We share our reports with the NHS and social care, and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) (the inspector and regulator for health and social care), with recommendations for improvement, where required.

Our rights and responsibilities include:

- We have the power to monitor (known as “Enter and View”) health and social care services (with one or two exceptions). Our primary purpose is to find out what patients, service users, carers and the wider public think of health and social care.
- We report our findings of local views and experiences to health and social care decision makers and make the case for improved services where we find there is a need for improvement.
- We strive to be a strong and powerful voice for local people, to influence how services are planned, organised and delivered.
- We aim to be an effective voice rooted in the community. To be that voice, we find out what local people think about health and social care. We research patient, user and carer opinions using lots of different ways of finding out views and experiences. We do this to give local people a voice. We provide information and advice about health and social care services.
- Where we do not feel the views and voices of Healthwatch Northamptonshire and the people who we strive to speak on behalf of, are being heard, we have the option to escalate our concerns and report our evidence to national organisations including Healthwatch England, NHS England and the Care Quality Commission.



# Contact us

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