



**Repeat  
Prescriptions**

# Pharmacy First

October 2024

**healthwatch**  
Stoke on Trent

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# Introduction

Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent is the independent voice of the public in health and social care in Stoke-on-Trent. We gather feedback from the public through engagement and projects and use that feedback to work with health and social care providers and commissioners to improve service delivery.

Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent is delivered by Engaging Communities Solutions CIC (ECS) and ECS recently undertook a project across its seven local Healthwatch to gather feedback from people about their knowledge and experience of Pharmacy First and other community pharmacy services.

Pharmacy First was launched by the NHS in January 2024 with the aim of enabling pharmacists to provide advice and treatment such as antibiotics for a range of minor ailments. This service would then be able free up GP appointments for those with more serious or long-term health conditions.

This report outlines the feedback from the people of Stoke-on-Trent who took part in the project by completing a short survey.

# Methodology

The project was undertaken using a short survey that was available online and as paper copies where required. We shared the survey link and QR code with the Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent network, on our website and our social media. We also undertook face to face surveys with people at pharmacies and at local community groups.

## Who took part

There was a total of 48 responses to the survey from people who said that they were from Stoke-on-Trent. Of these 16 were aged 25-49 years; 19 were aged 50-64 years and 12 were aged 65-79 years. One person said that they preferred not to say what age band they were in.

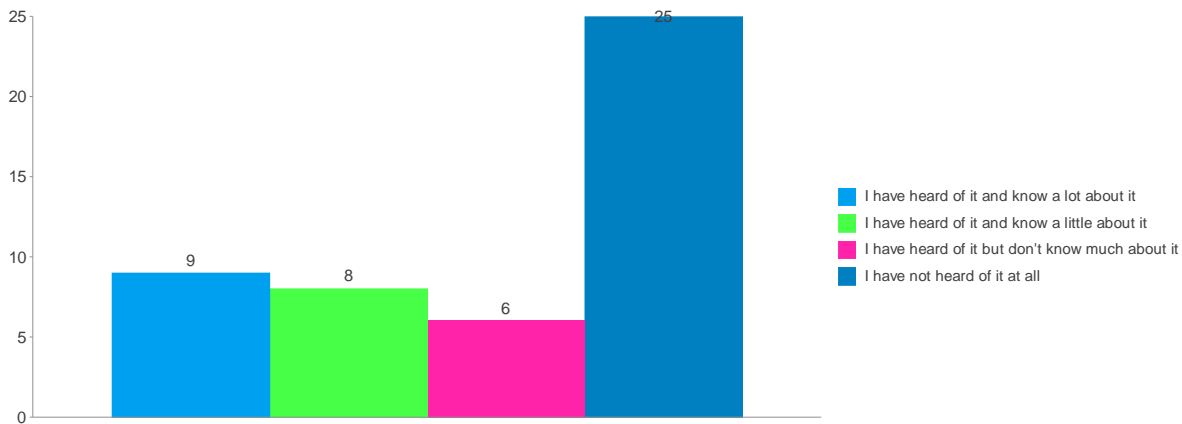
33 of the people who took part in the survey said that they were women and 13 were men. One person preferred not to say what their gender or sex was.

40 people said that their ethnic background was White British; 1 person said that they were from a White Irish background and 5 people said that they were from another White background. One person said that they were from an Asian/British Asian Chinese background. One person said that they preferred not to say what their ethnic background was.

30 people said that they had a long-term health condition and 13 people said that they had a disability.

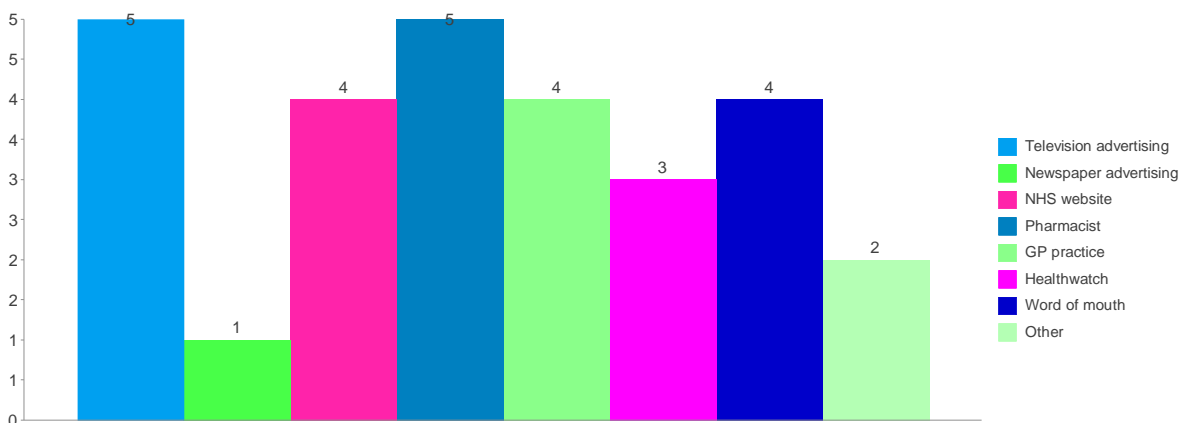
# Findings

How aware of Pharmacy First are you? Stoke-on-Trent



When asked about their awareness of the Pharmacy First service 25 people said that they had not heard of the service at all. 6 people said that although they had heard of the service, they did not know much about it. 9 people said that they knew a lot about the service and 8 said that they knew a little about the service.

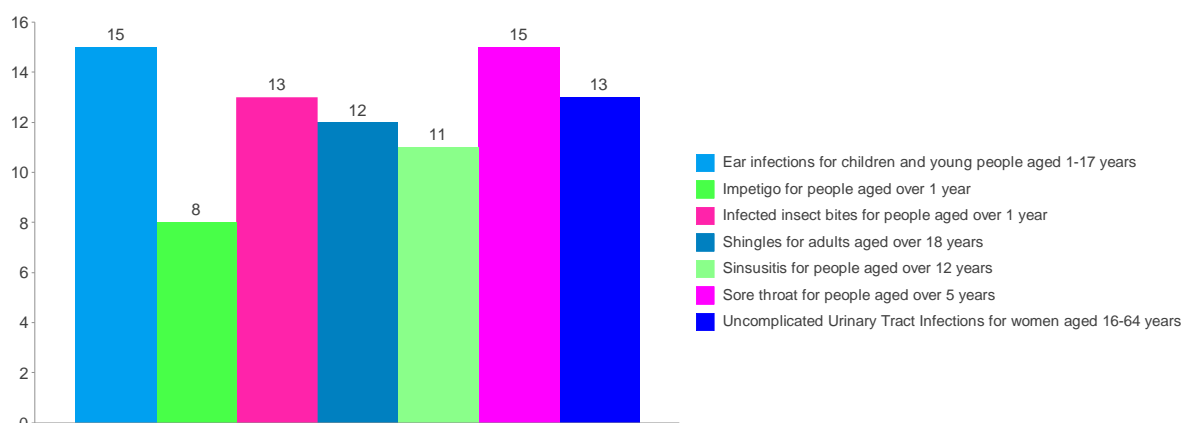
If you have heard of the Pharmacy First service, how did you hear about the service? Stoke-on-Trent



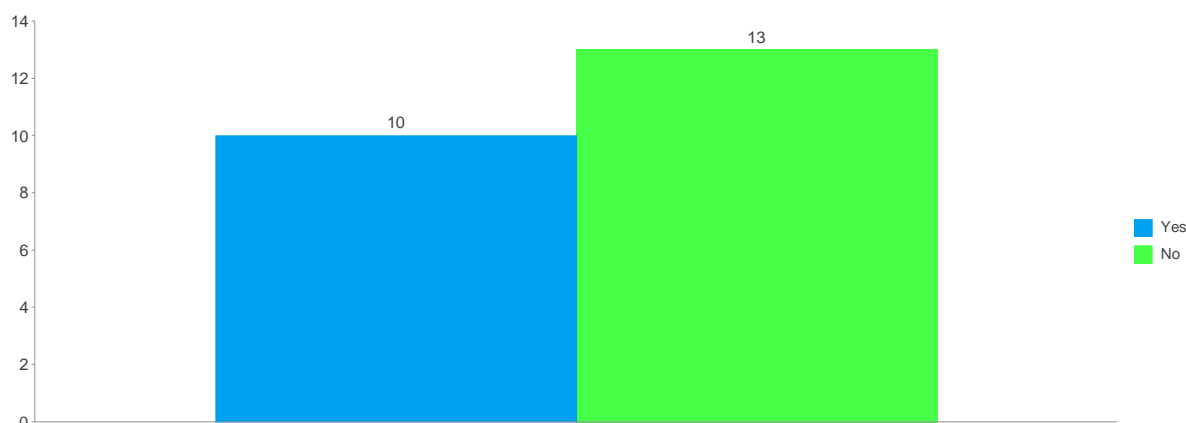
Those people who said that they had heard of the service were asked how they had heard of it. They were able to choose all of the ways that they had heard about it. 5 people said that they had seen television advertising of the service and 5 people said that they had heard of it from a pharmacist. 4 people said that they had found out about it from an NHS website; 4 people had heard of it from a GP practice and 4 through word of mouth. 3 people said that they had heard of it through Healthwatch, and 1 person had seen newspaper advertising. 2 people said that they had found out about through another means.

People were asked what services they were aware of being delivered under Pharmacy First. 15 people said that they were aware of advice and treatment for ear infections in children and young people being part of the service and 15 people were aware of the service for sore throats. 13 people knew that infected insect bites were covered by the service and 13 people were aware that uncomplicated urinary tract infections could be treated by pharmacists. 12 people knew about shingles being included, 11 people knew sinusitis was included and 8 people knew that advice and treatment for impetigo was part of the service.

Which of the following services were you aware that Pharmacy First offers? Stoke-on-Trent



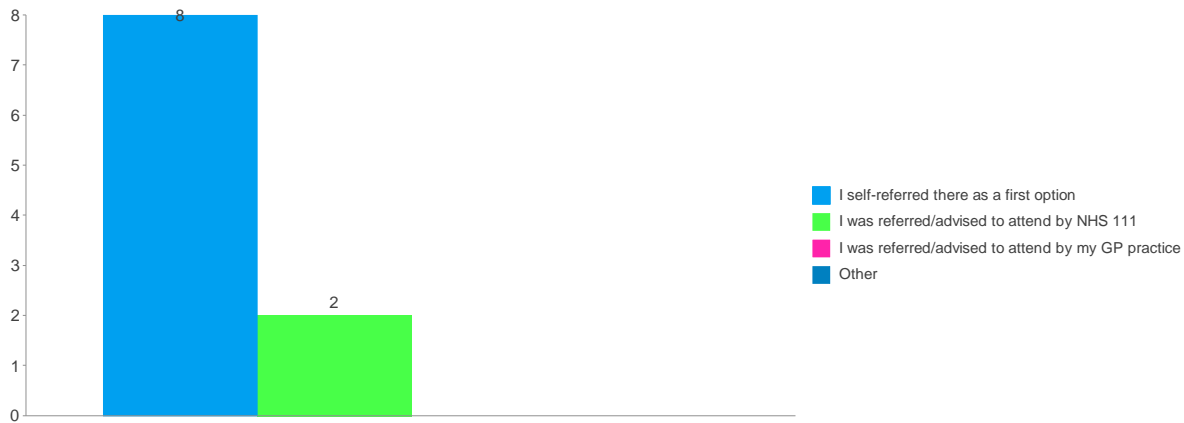
Have you used the Pharmacy First service? Stoke-on-Trent



People were asked if they had used the Pharmacy First service and 10 people said that they had used the service.

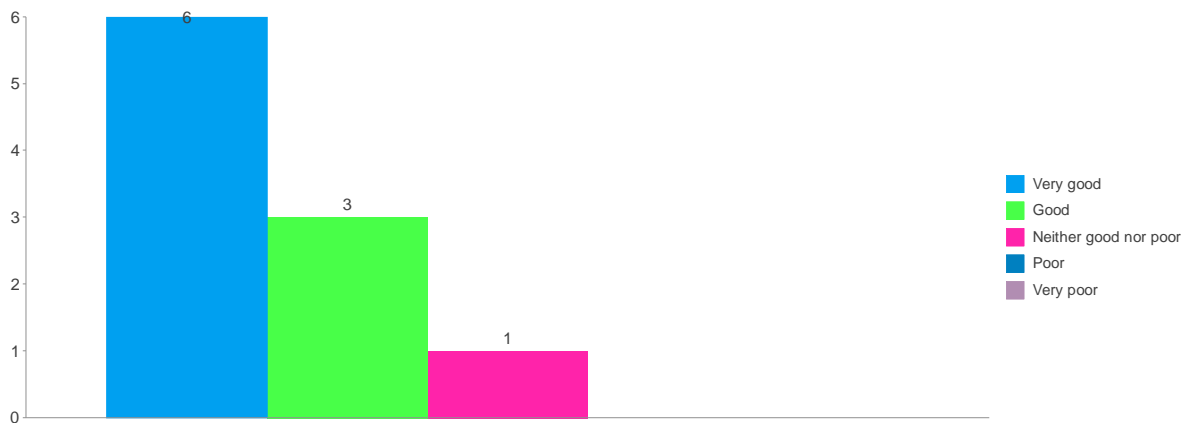
They were asked how they had chosen to use the service. 8 people said that they had self-referred there as a first option and 2 people said that they were referred or advised to attend by NHS 111.

If yes, how did you choose to use the service? Stoke-on-Trent



People were asked to rate their experience of using the Pharmacy First service and 6 people said that the service they received was very good; 3 people said that it was good, and 1 person gave a neutral answer.

How would you rate the service you received from Pharmacy First? Stoke-on-Trent.



When asked the reason for their rating people spoke about the service being quicker than trying to get a GP appointment and the helpfulness of the pharmacy staff.

**'Quicker than getting a GP appointment.'**

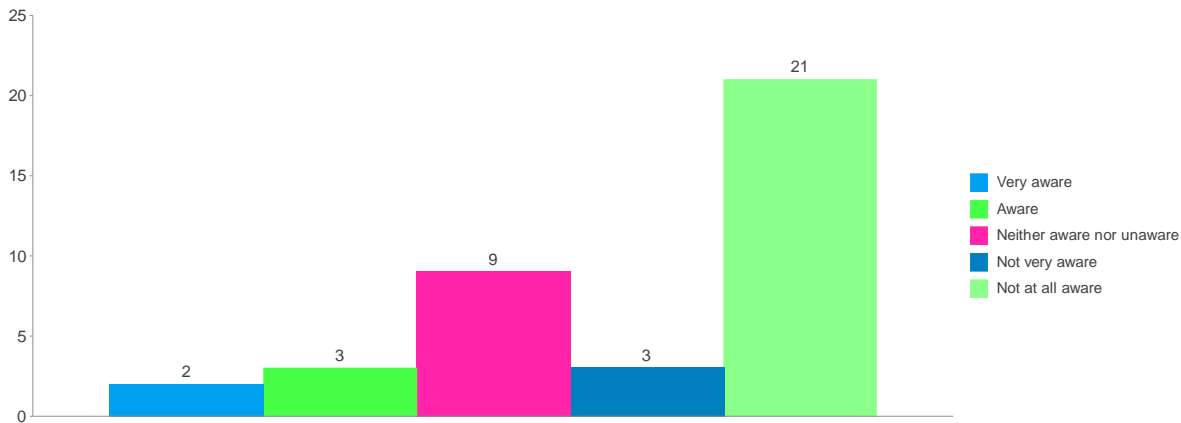
**'The pharmacist was great, very friendly and explained everything clearly.'**

There was comment that the service was not able to help and that they had been referred to other healthcare services.

'I have many allergies, including several antibiotics, so they couldn't help me. They referred me to my GP. I had shingles and went to the pharmacy, again they referred me to A&E.'

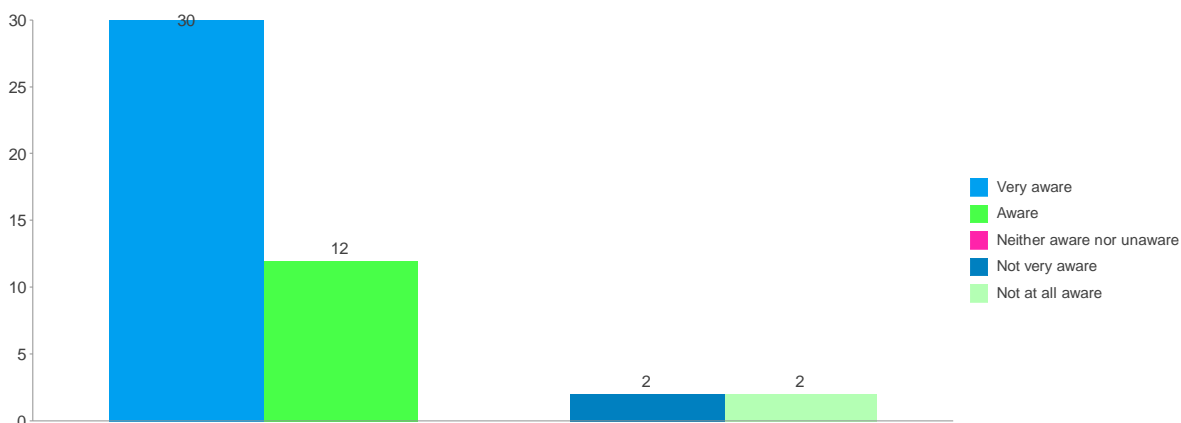
All people who took part in the survey were asked what awareness they had of the other additional services that were offered by community pharmacies.

Appliance use review. Stoke-on-Trent



21 people said that they had no awareness of the appliance use review service and 3 people said that they were not very aware of it. 5 people said that they were either very aware or aware of the service and 9 people gave a neutral response.

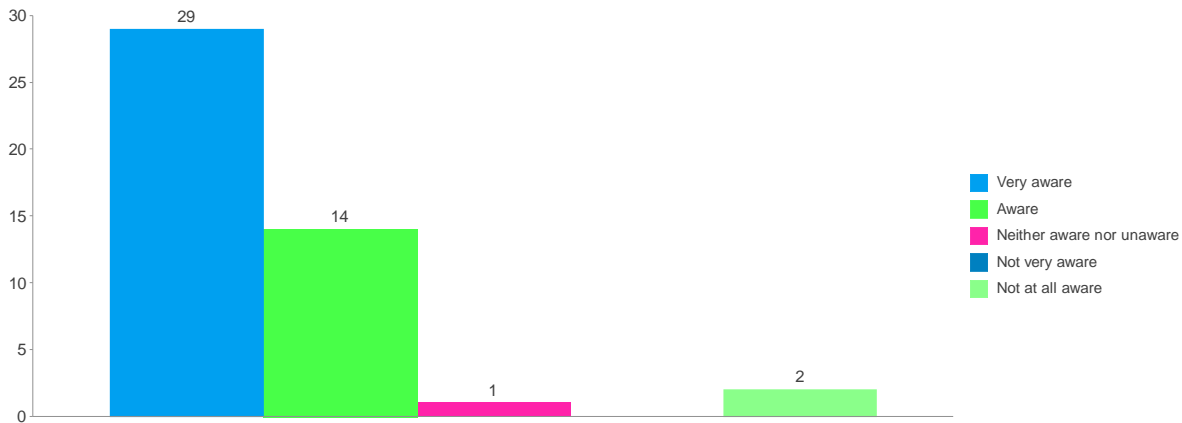
Flu vaccination service. Stoke-on-Trent



30 people said that they were very aware of the flu vaccination service in pharmacies and 12 people were aware. 2 people said that they were not very aware of the service and 2 were not aware of it at all.



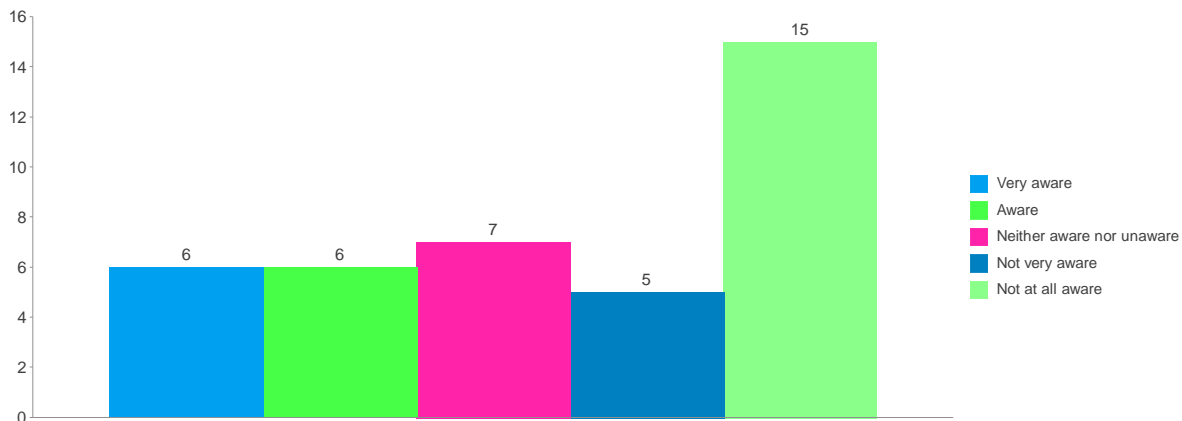
Blood pressure checks. Stoke-on-Trent



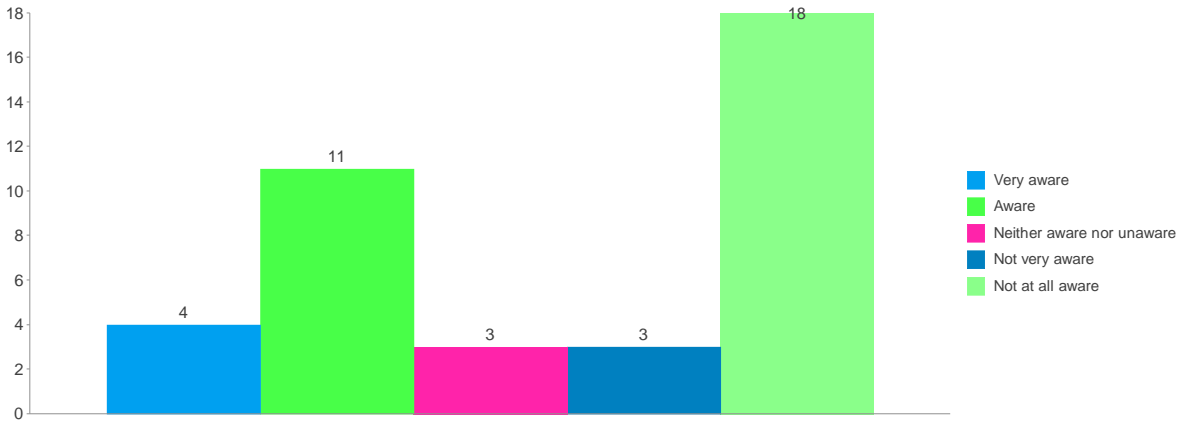
29 people were very aware that blood pressure checks were available at community pharmacies and 14 people were aware of the service. 2 people said that they were not aware of the service at all, and 1 person gave a neutral response.

15 people said that they were not at all aware of the lateral flow device service offered at community pharmacies and 5 people were not very aware of the service. 12 people said that they were either very aware or aware of it. 7 people gave a neutral answer.

Lateral flow device service for eligible groups for eligible groups. Stoke-on-Trent

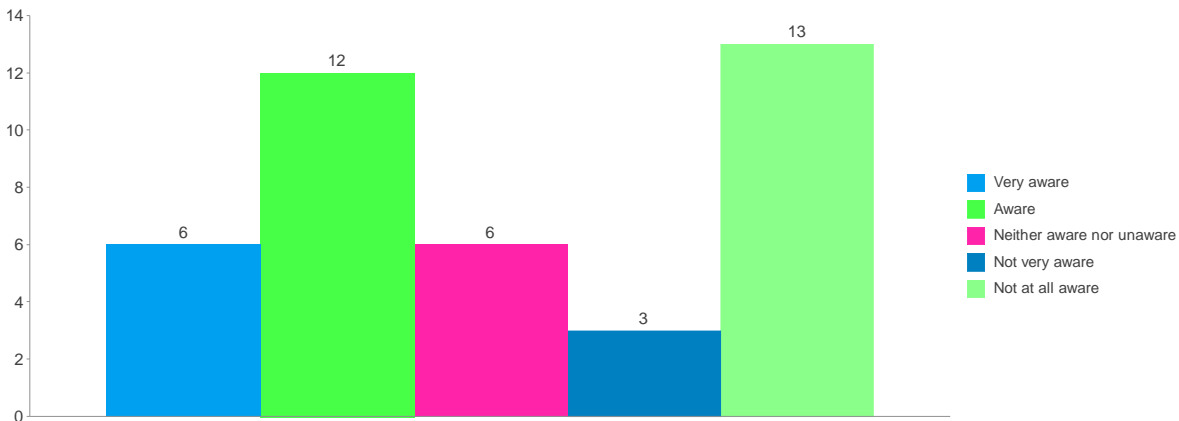


New medicine service. Stoke-on-Trent



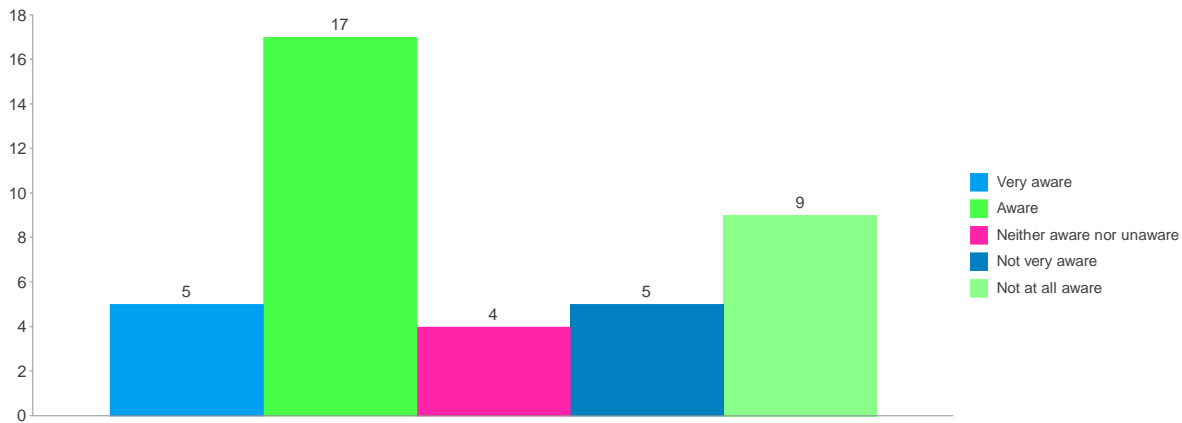
18 people said that they were not at all aware of the new medicine service and 3 people said that they were not very aware. 15 people said that they were either very aware or aware of the service and 3 people gave a neutral response.

Pharmacy Contraception Service. Stoke-on-Trent



18 people said that they were either very aware or aware of the pharmacy contraception service and 16 people said that they were either not at all aware or not very aware of the service. 6 people gave a neutral response.

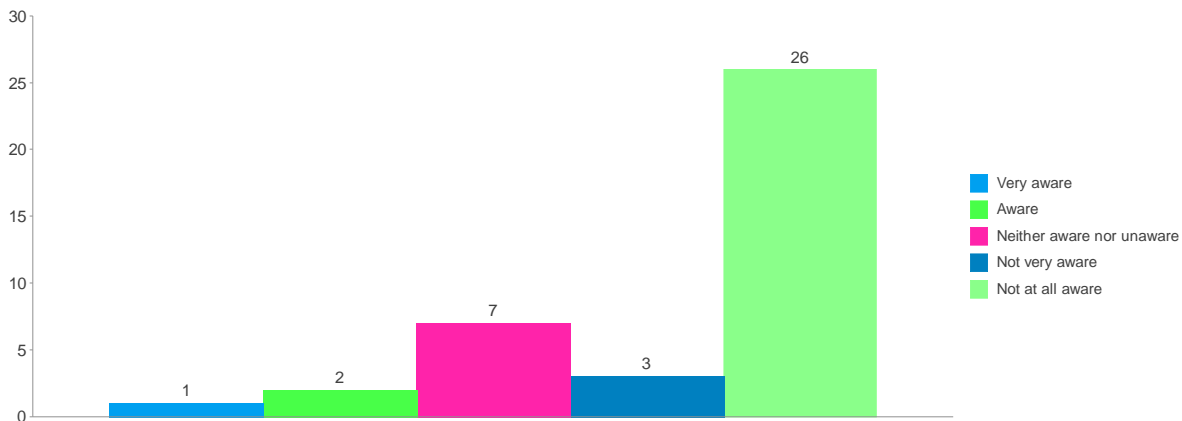
Smoking cessation service. Stoke-on-Trent



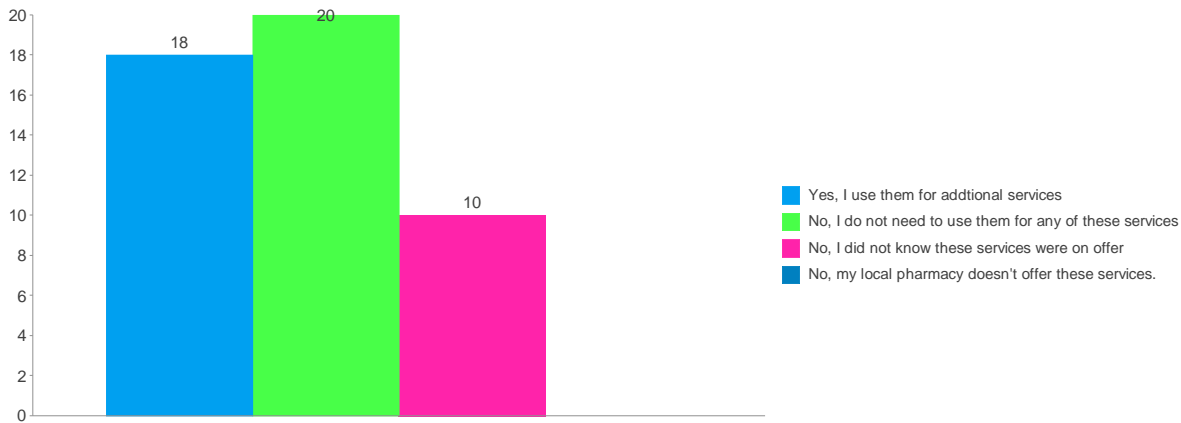
22 people were either very aware or aware of the smoking cessation service and 14 people said that they were either not at all aware or not very aware of the service. 4 people gave a neutral response.

29 people were either not at all aware or not very aware of the stoma appliance customisation service and 3 people were aware of it or very aware. 7 people gave a neutral response.

Stoma appliance customisation. Stoke-on-Trent

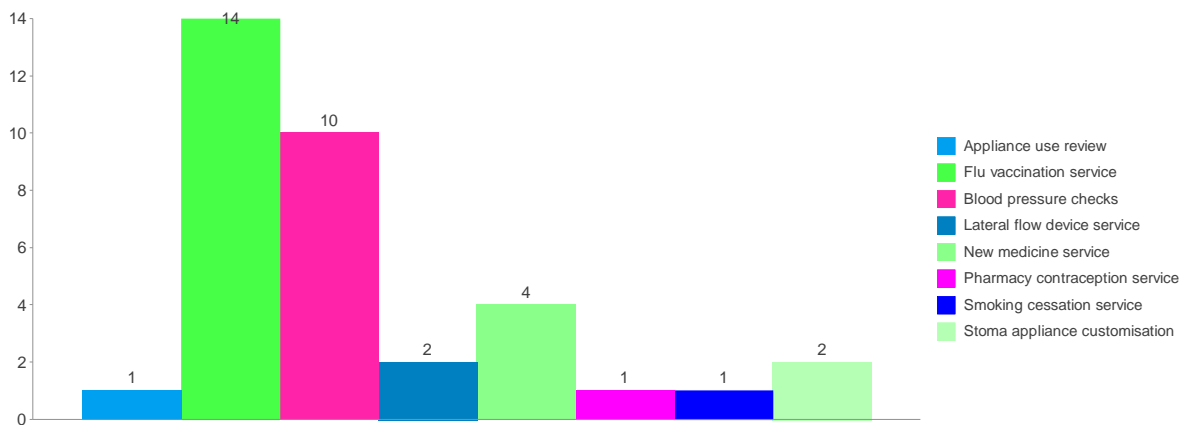


Have you used your local pharmacy for any of these services? Stoke-on-Trent



When asked if they had used any of the additional services at their local pharmacy, 18 people said that they used their local pharmacy for the services. 20 people said that they did not need to use any of the services. 10 people said that they did not know that the services were on offer.

If yes, which services do you access? Stoke-on-Trent



Those who said that they had used additional services at their local pharmacy were asked to indicate all the services that they had used. 14 people said that they had accessed flu vaccinations at their local pharmacy and 10 people had used the blood pressure checking service. 4 people had used the new medicine service; 2 people had used the lateral flow device service, and 2 people had used the stoma device customisation service. 1 person each had used the appliance use review, pharmacy contraception service or smoking cessation service.

# Conclusion

The number of people who took part in the survey means that the findings from the survey for Stoke-on-Trent present a snapshot of the experiences and knowledge of those who completed the survey. However, as part of the wider project delivered by ECS, the finding that people from Stoke-on-Trent were largely not aware of the Pharmacy First service are broadly similar to the results from the larger project.

People also found their experience of using the service to be broadly positive, although there are concerns raised about the limitations of the service and the knowledge of people who use it about them. This means that there are instances when Pharmacy First is not the most suitable option and a GP appointment would have been more appropriate.

People were not aware of the additional services that pharmacies can deliver except flu vaccinations and blood pressure checks.

# Recommendations

	Recommendation
1.	Raise awareness of the Pharmacy Service as an alternative to a GP appointment, ensuring that people are made aware of the services that are on offer.
2.	Ensure that people are made aware of the limitations of the service to prevent people not having expectations met and delaying them accessing GP appointments.
3.	Promote additional services that are available in community pharmacies to increase knowledge of service availability.

# Thank You

We are grateful to everyone who helped shape this document by sharing their stories, thoughts, and reflections.

A special mention to 'Better Together' for their kind welcome allowing us to complete surveys with the local community in Trent Vale.

The contract to provide the Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent service is held by  
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We are committed to the quality of our information. Every three years we perform an in-depth audit so that we can be certain of this.

# healthwatch

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