

# Resident Experience Survey Community Pharmacy


October 2023



# Contents

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Executive Summary	3
Statement from Community Pharmacy Kent	4
Project Background	5
Methodology	6
Demographics	7
Survey Results	8
Appendices	12
- Questionnaire: Street	13
- Questionnaire: Exit	16
- Questionnaire: Demographics	19



**92.5% of residents interviewed  
said that they received everything  
that they required from the Pharmacy**

# Executive Summary

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This project aims to discover what Medway residents currently utilise their pharmacies, and their views on how GPs and Pharmacists can work more effectively together.

The data collection took place in July 2023 by two means:

- 1) Street survey on Chatham High street (59 respondents)
- 2) Interviews with residents directly exiting a community pharmacy, termed exit interviews (22 respondents)

There were more female respondents than male (2:1), with a statistically representative spread of ethnicities and ages. Carers are well represented in the data.

Medway residents that were interviewed in the street indicated that they visit Pharmacies often, usually to collect prescriptions, but also to purchase supplies. 75% of respondents were aware of services offered at the pharmacy other than dispensing medication. Most mentioned were vaccinations, blood pressure checks, sales of over-the-counter medications, and health-related support & advice.

92.5% of residents interviewed said that they received everything that they required from the Pharmacy. Of the remaining 7.5% who did not receive what they needed, four people said that the medication they required was not in stock, and two people had issues with the Pharmacy receiving the prescription from the GP.

38% of residents we spoke to were not entitled to free prescriptions, and of these residents, 40% were not aware they could purchase NHS prescription pre-payment certificate (PPC). These residents were supplied with the information needed to purchase the prepayment certificate.

When asked how GP surgeries and Pharmacies can work better together, most people mentioned the issues they have with accessing their GP but felt that the Pharmacy worked well. People would like to see pharmacies able to hire more staff, and better promotion of additional services in pharmacies. Six percent (4/68) would like to see better communication by the GP surgery with the Pharmacy. Further research is needed to understand what other improvements residents would like to see.

# Statement from Community Pharmacy Kent

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*“This report provides a valuable snapshot about the integral role community pharmacy plays within Medway, and the wider NHS. We continue to support the great work of Healthwatch Medway- listening to experiences of the residents, and working to improve their healthcare experience*

*This report has been useful in drawing out some areas which we can focus on in order to provide a better service to our community.*

*Community pharmacies and GPs must continue to work collaboratively to help drive healthcare provision across Medway to benefit patients.”*

**Mark Anyaegbuna**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Community Pharmacy Kent**

# Project Background

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In May 2023, NHS England released their **delivery plan for recovering access to primary care**. One area of focus is expanding the services community pharmacy provides.

Community pharmacies play a crucial role in providing accessible front-line healthcare services, with 80% of people in England living within a 20-minute drive of a pharmacy. They offer expert clinical advice, and most individuals feel comfortable consulting a pharmacist for minor illnesses. All pharmacies within the UK have a private consultation room to conduct services and to allow patients to speak confidentially to staff about any issues they may have, including those of a sensitive nature

The existing progress to develop patient accessibility includes initiatives such as referrals from general practice and NHS 111 for clinical assessment by the pharmacist, supporting patients starting new medicines, providing blood pressure checks, contributing to vaccination programs and many other services. In order to further improve access, a "Pharmacy First" service is being introduced whereby the pharmacist can provide prescription-only medications for common health conditions without the need for a GP visit. Additionally, services like blood pressure checks and oral contraceptives will be expanded, to help reduce the incidences of cardiovascular events and providing greater contraceptive access, respectively.

Investment in IT system connectivity is planned to improve information sharing between general practice and community pharmacy, ensuring seamless patient care. There is also a focus on flexibility for pharmacy contractors, allowing them to deploy staff more efficiently and release pharmacists for direct patient care. New legislation enables registered pharmacy technicians to administer vaccinations and conduct clinical services under specific national protocols, freeing up pharmacists.

The government plans to facilitate efficiency, through measures like allowing pharmacists to dispense medicines in their original packs and expanding pharmacy hub-and-spoke arrangements\*. Lastly, a collaborative effort will identify medicines that could be reclassified for wider availability based on international practices and safety evidence.

**This project aims to discover what Medway residents use their pharmacies for currently, and how they feel GPs and Pharmacists can work better together**

*\*Pharmacy hub and spoke arrangements are a type of dispensing model where parts of the dispensing process are carried out in separate pharmacy premises. The concept is that the simple, routine aspects of assembling prescriptions can take place on a large scale in a 'hub' that usually makes use of automated processes*

# Methodology

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This research project adopted a mixed-method approach to gather comprehensive insights.

## Exit Interviews at Community Pharmacies

- **Objective:** The primary aim was to capture feedback from individuals exiting Community Pharmacies.
- **Target Participants:** The study aimed to conduct 25 exit interviews.
- **Execution:** Trained interviewers stationed themselves outside of 4 Community Pharmacies within 0.8 miles of the Pentagon Centre and engaged with individuals exiting the premises to gather their feedback.

## Street Survey on Chatham High Street

- **Objective:** This component sought to collect input from residents of Medway.
- **Target Participants:** The study aimed for a sample size of 50 respondents.
- **Location Selection:** Chatham High Street was chosen for its accessibility and diverse foot traffic, ensuring representation across various demographics.
- **Survey Design:** A structured survey was developed to cover a range of topics related to community pharmacy services and accessibility.
- **Demographic Diversity:** Special attention was given to ensuring a diverse participant pool, encompassing different age groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and cultural affiliations.

## Data Collection Instruments

- For exit interviews, a semi-structured questionnaire was used to prompt participants' feedback on their pharmacy experiences.
- The street survey questionnaire was designed to capture detailed responses from residents regarding their perceptions, needs, and experiences with community pharmacies.

## Data Analysis

- Qualitative responses from exit interviews were analysed thematically to extract common trends and concerns.
- Quantitative data from both the exit interviews and street survey were subjected to descriptive analysis.

## Ethical Considerations

- Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement.
- Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the study to ensure participant privacy.

## Limitations

- While efforts were made to achieve a diverse sample, it is acknowledged that some demographic groups may be underrepresented.
- The study's findings are context-specific to Chatham area in Medway and may not be entirely generalisable to other regions.
- Due to the nature of interviewing the public on an opportunistic basis, people may not have had the time to give detailed responses to the open questions.

## Quality Assurance

- Interviewers and surveyors were trained to maintain consistency and rigour in data collection techniques.

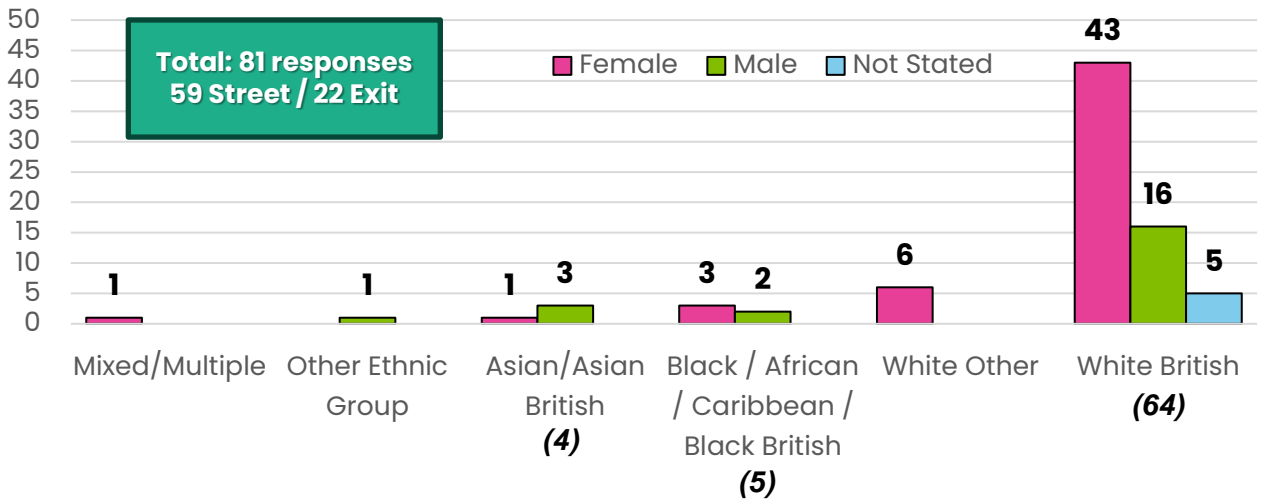
This methodology was designed to provide a robust and comprehensive understanding of community pharmacy experiences among Medway residents, leveraging both exit interviews and a street survey with a diverse sample pool.

# Demographics

There were more female respondents than male (2:1), with a statistically representative spread of ethnicities and ages.

Carers are well represented in the data and formed just under 20% of the total residents surveyed.

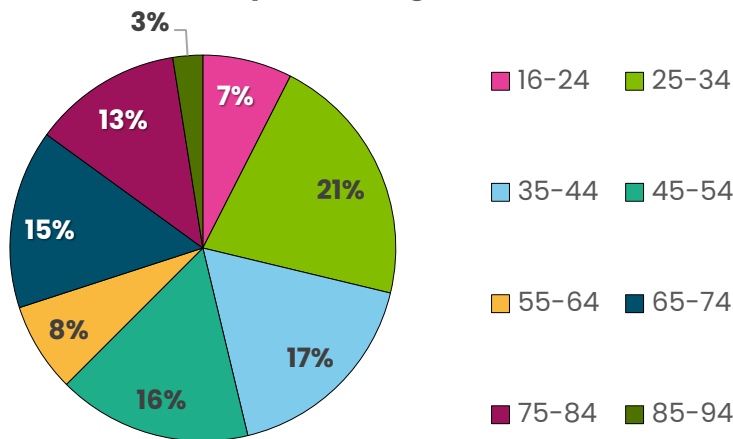
**Ethnicity / Gender (f)**



	Mixed / Multiple	Other Ethnic Group	Asian / Asian British	Black British / Black Other	White Other	White British
This Survey	1.2%	1.2%	4.9%	6.2%	7.4%	79%
Medway Population (2021 Census)	2.8%	1.4%	5.9%	5.6%	5.4%	78.9%

	Chatham	Rochester	Rainham	Gillingham	Strood	Peninsula	Refused
Medway Locality	40 (49.4%)	13 (16%)	9 (11.1%)	8 (9.9%)	1 (1.2%)	2 (2.5%)	8 (9.9%)

**Respondent Age (%)**



Demographic	% of respondents
Is a carer	19.6%
Disability / Long term health needs	6%

D1. What is your ethnic group? [STREET & EXIT] (81); D2. Can you tell us what age you are? [STREET & EXIT] (81); D3. What gender do you identify as? [STREET & EXIT] (76); D5. Are you a Carer? [STREET & EXIT] (74); D6. Do you have a disability or a health condition? [STREET & EXIT] (15) – all excluding 'prefer not to say'



# Survey Results (1)

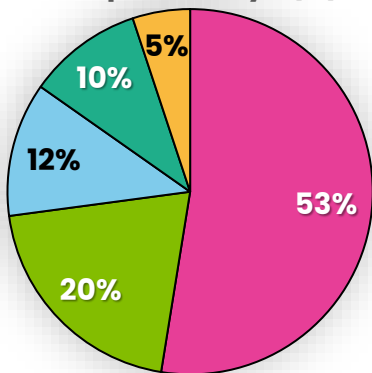
Medway residents that were interviewed in the street indicated that they visit Pharmacies often, usually to collect prescriptions and to purchase household supplies. Three in four people mentioned awareness of services offered at the pharmacy other than dispensing medication.

Most commonly known services were vaccinations, blood pressure checks, and over-the-counter medications, and health-related support and advice. There is still more work to do regarding raising awareness about service provision in the community pharmacy in order to help reduce the pressure on the wider health system. There will be further improvement following the introduction of schemes such as Pharmacy first, and expansion of blood pressure check service and contraception services.

26 people of the 81 respondents were aware that you can go to the pharmacy for health-related support and advice, however only 3 of respondents mentioned visiting their Pharmacy for this purpose. This shows the public need to be encouraged more to visit the pharmacy as first port-of-call when needing health-related support and advice.

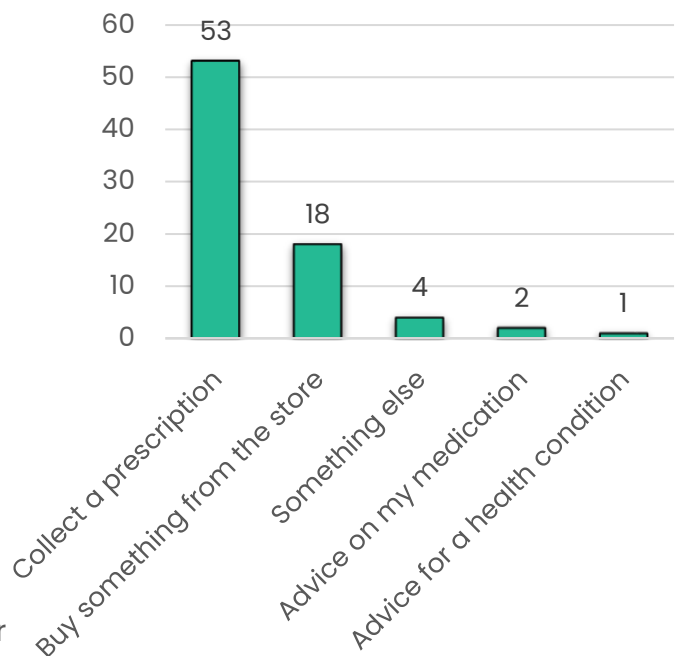
Of the three indicating that they went to the Pharmacy for advice, two decided to present at the pharmacy independently and one was directed there by NHS-111. This is an example of how people can be referred to a community pharmacy via different care pathways, following the NHS integrated healthcare system approach.

**When was the last time you used a pharmacy? (%)**



- In the last two weeks
- In the last month
- More than three months ago
- In the last three months
- Never / Don't Know / Can't remember

**What was the purpose of your visit?**

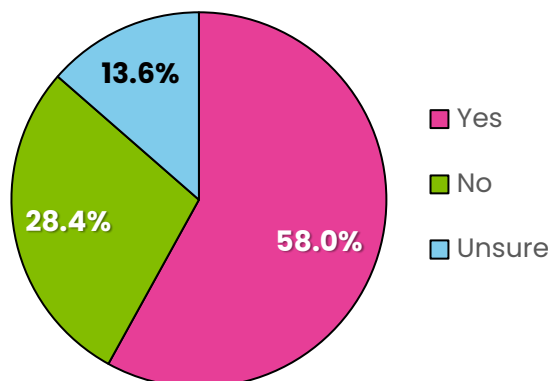


Q1. When was the last time you used a pharmacy? [STREET] (59); Q2. What was the purpose of your visit? [STREET & EXIT] (78)



# Survey Results (2)

Are you aware of services offered other than dispensing? (%)



Awareness of service	(f) /81
Support and advice	26
Vaccinations	17
Blood pressure checks	8
Toiletries and OTC medication	7
Smoking cessation	1
Health checks	1

“Help when I need it. It easier to speak to someone here than at a GP.”  
**Male aged 25-34 from Chatham**

“We go there if we ever have any problems.”  
**Asian/Asian British Male aged 16-24 from Chatham**

“I tend to use them for shopping not really think to ask them about things, so I don't really know what they do.”  
**White Other: Ukrainian Female aged 45-54**

Q4/5. Other than dispensing medications, are you aware of any other services that the Pharmacy can offer? [STREET & EXIT] (81)

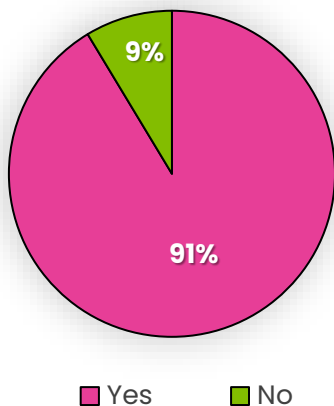
# Survey Results (3)

92.5% of those interviewed received everything that they needed from the Pharmacy. Six people said they did not get everything they needed. Two of those six people had issues with the Pharmacy receiving the prescription from the GP. Four out of the six said that this is because medication they required was not in stock, this was further raised in the feedback by respondents. This reflects the ongoing issue with medicines supply and fluctuations in drug prices across the country. This has a huge impact on community pharmacist workload and more work needs to be done on a national level to get this corrected for the benefit of the patients.

38% of residents spoken to were not entitled to free prescriptions. The respondents were then asked whether they were aware NHS PPC are available. The prepayment certificate was introduced with the aim of providing help with health costs, thereby improving access to medicine. Of the residents not eligible for free prescriptions, 2 in 5 were not aware they could purchase NHS PPC and therefore were supplied with the information to purchase a certificate for future use.

One respondent commented that “The repeat prescription process ...is very admin heavy, and I have to wait five days between ordering and collecting”. This feedback stresses the importance of using electronic repeat dispensing service. This service allows GPs to issue batch prescriptions of the same repeat items, these are held on the NHS Spine and can be called down by a pharmacy at the request of a patient. This therefore reduces the number of times a patient will request a new prescription from the GP, which in turn saves GP time and allows pharmacies to manage their workload. This is a good example of collaboration between GPs and community pharmacies for the benefit of patients.

**Did you get everything you needed from the Pharmacy? (%)**



“The Pharmacy had not received my prescription from the GP practice.”  
**Female aged 35-44 from Gillingham**

“They mucked my prescription up and sent it to the wrong pharmacy.”  
**Male aged 65-74 from Chatham**

“They didn't have all of my medication in, so I am having to go back this week.”  
**Female aged 35-44 from Rochester**

Q3. Did you get everything you needed from the Pharmacy? [STREET & EXIT] (81); Q4b. Are you aware of pre-paid prescription certificates? Those that answered 'No' to Q4a [STREET & EXIT] (25)

# Survey Results (4)

When asked how GP surgeries and Pharmacies can work better together, most people mentioned the issues they had with accessing their GP but felt that the Pharmacy worked well. People would like to see pharmacies able to hire more staff, and better promotion of services provided by the pharmacy outside of fulfilling prescriptions. Six percent (4/68) would like to see better communication by the GP surgery to the Pharmacy. Further research is needed to understand what additional improvements residents would like to see.

In conclusion, the results clearly shows that there is need to raise awareness on how community pharmacy can be utilised other than dispensing medication, but further work needs to be done to actually encourage residents to engage with pharmacies to make full use of their services. This can be driven by more prominent promotion of services, and better signposting from other providers. Further improvements need to be made regarding the communications between pharmacies and GPs, as respondent feedback suggests that this can lead to better outcomes.

GP and Pharmacy Relationship	(f) / 68
Pharmacy works well	27
More staff in Pharmacy	8
Promoting services available at the Pharmacy	5
Communication re: prescriptions sent from GP surgery	4

"The repeat prescription process seems over long. It's admin heavy, and I have to wait five days between ordering and collecting."

**16-24; Rochester**

"Prescriptions need to be better as the pharmacy and GP blame each other if something goes wrong."

**Male aged 75-84; Lordswood**

"It would be good if pharmacies made it clearer of what they can actually do to help. I'm not really aware of how they could help me, and I just end up going to the GP instead. If it was clearer as to what they offered that would be good and quicker than trying to get a GP appointment."

**Female aged 35-44; Rochester**

Q5/6 And finally, what could pharmacies and GP's do to improve the patient experience? *Those with an opinion* (68)

# Appendices



# Questionnaire – Street (1)



## Views on Pharmacy Services – Street Survey

Hi, my name is *[your name]* and I'm representing Healthwatch Medway today (show I.D. badge) – Do you have time for a quick chat?

Have you heard about us before? We are a health and social care 'watchdog', and we work to ensure that the views of Medway residents are shared to influence positive changes that address the community's needs.

Today we are asking people about your **views of Pharmacies and your awareness of how they can support you. It won't take longer than five minutes and all your answers are anonymous** and protected under GDPR.

We also have our signposting team here today, at the Nucleus Arts unit in the Pentagon Centre. They can help you if you want to share your story about your experiences of health and social care, or you are experiencing an issue and would like support. You can also contact us in a variety of ways (*give resident 'It starts with you' leaflet*)

May I ask you:

### Q1. When was the last time you used a pharmacy?

- In the last two weeks
- In the last months
- In the last three months
- More than three months ago
- Never / Don't Know / Can't remember (Go to Q4)

### Q2. What was the purpose of your visit? (*Do not prompt*)

- To collect a prescription (Go to Q3)
- To buy something from the store (Go to Q3)
- To get advice on my medication (Go to Q2b)
- To get advice for a health condition (Go to Q2b)
- Something else (please note in the box below)

PTO

# Questionnaire – Street (2)



**Q2b. Did you decide to visit the Pharmacy yourself, or were you directed there?**

- Decided myself
- Directed by III
- Directed by my GP
- Other (please note in the box below)

**Q3. Did you get everything you needed from the Pharmacy at your last visit?**

- Yes
- No – please provide detail below:

**Q4. Are you entitled to free prescriptions?**

- Yes (Go to Q5)
- No (Go to Q4b)

**Q4b. Are you aware of pre-paid prescription certificates?**

- Yes (Go to Q5)
- No – read information below and offer leaflet

*“The certificate covers all your NHS prescriptions for a set price. You will save money if you need more than 3 items in 3 months, or 11 items in 12 months.*

*The prescription charge in England is £9.65 per item. A Pre-Payment Certificate costs:*

- £31.25 for 3 months
- £111.60 for 12 months”

**PTO**

# Questionnaire – Street (3)

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**Q5. Other than dispensing medications, are you aware of any other services that the Pharmacy can offer?**

**Q6. And finally, what could pharmacies and GP's do to improve the patient experience?**

**We would like to take a few demographics, so we can be sure we are speaking to a variety of people from different backgrounds, you can refuse any of the questions...**

**PTO**



# Questionnaire – Exit (1)



## Views on Pharmacy Services – Exit Survey

Hi, my name is [your name] and I am representing Healthwatch Medway today (show I.D. badge) – Do you have time for a quick chat about your visit to the Pharmacy today?

Have you heard about us before? We are a health and social care ‘watchdog,’ and we work to ensure that the views of Medway residents are shared to influence positive changes that address the community’s needs.

Today we are asking people about your **views of Pharmacies and your awareness of how they can support you. It will not take longer than five minutes and all your answers are anonymous** and protected under GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).

**If located at Pharmacy on or nearby high street** – We also have our signposting team here today, at the Nucleus Arts unit in the Pentagon Centre. They can help you if you want to share your story about your experiences of health and social care, or you are experiencing an issue and would like support. You can also contact us in a variety of ways (give resident ‘it starts with you’ leaflet)

May I ask you:

### Q1. What was the purpose of your visit today? (Do not prompt)

- To collect a prescription (Go to Q2)
- To buy something from the store (Go to Q2)
- To get advice on my medication (Go to Q1b)
- To get advice for a health condition (Go to Q1b)
- Something else (please note in the box below)

### Q1b. Did you decide to visit the Pharmacy yourself, or were you directed there?

- Decided myself
- Directed by IHI
- Directed by my GP
- Other (please note in the box below)

PTO

# Questionnaire – Exit (2)



**Q2. Did you get everything you needed from the Pharmacy today?**

Yes

No – please provide detail below:

**Q3. Are you entitled to free prescriptions?**

Yes (Go to Q4)

No (Go to Q3b)

**Q3b. Are you aware of pre-paid prescription certificates?**

Yes (Go to Q4)

No – read information below and offer leaflet

*“The certificate covers all your NHS prescriptions for a set price. You will save money if you need more than 3 items in 3 months, or 11 items in 12 months.*

*The prescription charge in England is £9.65 per item. A Pre-Payment Certificate costs:*

- £31.25 for 3 months
- £111.60 for 12 months”

**Q4. Other than dispensing medications, are you aware of any other services that the Pharmacy can offer?**

**PTO**

# Questionnaire – Exit (3)

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**Q5. And finally, what could pharmacies and GP's do to improve the patient experience?**

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide their answer to the question.

**We would like to take a few demographics, so we can be sure we are speaking to a variety of people from different backgrounds, you can refuse any of the questions...**

# Questionnaire – Demographics



## Demographics

So we can see if people across Medway have different opinions, please provide your postcode, gender, age, and ethnicity.

- D1.** Postcode
- D2.** Gender
- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Other (Please specify if you wish): \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say
- D3.** Age Range
- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-15  | <input type="checkbox"/> 65-74             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75-84             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 85-94             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 95-99             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 | <input type="checkbox"/> 100+              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
- D4.** How do you describe your ethnicity?
- D5.** Are you a carer?
- Yes  No

**Thank you for taking the time to take part in our survey. Your answers will help us to shape the delivery of services for local people.**



**healthwatch**  
Medway



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