

Research by Healthwatch England has added to a growing evidence base that people recognise the pressures the NHS is under and want to help make it better by sharing their feedback.

The key to turning the public's willingness to provide feedback into useful insight is to keep it simple.

According to polling carried out by YouGov for Healthwatch England \*, 76% of adults in England would be interested in sharing their feedback with GPs to improve services but only 23% said that they had actually provided feedback. The most common reason given was that patients are unsure how to provide comments and raise concerns (37%).

Of those who had provided feedback to their family doctor, the most popular option was the traditional comments box (44%), followed by face-to-face feedback to GP practice reception staff (18%) and to GPs themselves (16%).

When those who had never provided feedback were asked which methods would encourage them to do so in future, 30% said they were mostly likely to respond to text or email follow-ups after a consultation, with 28% again opting for a comments box.

Interestingly, social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook were the least popular forum, with just 3% of those who had provided feedback choosing to do so via social media, and only 12% of those interested in giving feedback in future saying they would consider using such channels. This would suggest that using confidential channels is another key element of sharing feedback with GPs.

As part of the **#ItStartsWithYou** campaign, Healthwatch England is calling on GP practices, as the front line of the health service, to send a strong cultural signal to patients that the NHS is open and interested in listening to their views.

Healthwatch England is also encouraging GPs and other primary care staff to share their own stories - with us and with each other - to tell us how patient feedback has helped them to learn and improve the way they provide care.

**"Imelda Redmond, National Director of Healthwatch England, said:**

*"Up and down the country it is clear that people value their local doctors' surgeries and can see the pressure they are under. It is also clear they want to do their bit to help by sharing their experiences.*

*"People tell us they want providing feedback to be simple, clear and confidential. Healthwatch is here to help busy surgeries not only improve how they seek feedback but also help GPs and practices managers explain how this insight is being used to give people the care they want."*

**Dr Richard Vautrey, BMA GP committee chair, said:**

*"GPs value the daily feedback they receive from their patients in consultations and comments provided in the surgery. They always want to do the best for their patients and work in partnership with them, welcoming comments from patients about what is working well in the practice as well as good ideas about how services could improve. We particularly value the support of patients in working with us to highlight the impact of years of restricted funding on general practice and the wider NHS."*

\* The poll was conducted by YouGov on behalf of Healthwatch England. The total sample size for survey was 1808 adults weighted and representative of all English adults (aged 18+). Fieldwork was undertaken between 20<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017.