



# Pharmacy First



Engaging  
Communities  
Solutions

**healthwatch**  
Telford and Wrekin

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# Introduction

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin is the independent voice of the public in health and social care in Telford and Wrekin. 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 Telford and Wrekin 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 Telford and Wrekin who took part in the project by completing short survey.

# Methodology

This project was carried out using a survey methodology. The survey was available online and as a hard copy where required. We shared the survey through our network, social media and website. We also carried out face to face surveys with the public at a number of locations in Telford and Wrekin.

# Who took part

There were a total of 141 surveys completed by people from Telford and Wrekin. Of these the largest group of people (39%) said that they were aged between 25-49 years old. 25% were aged 50-64 years and 27% aged between 65 and 79 years old. A little under 7% were aged 80 or over and 1.5% were aged 18-24 years.

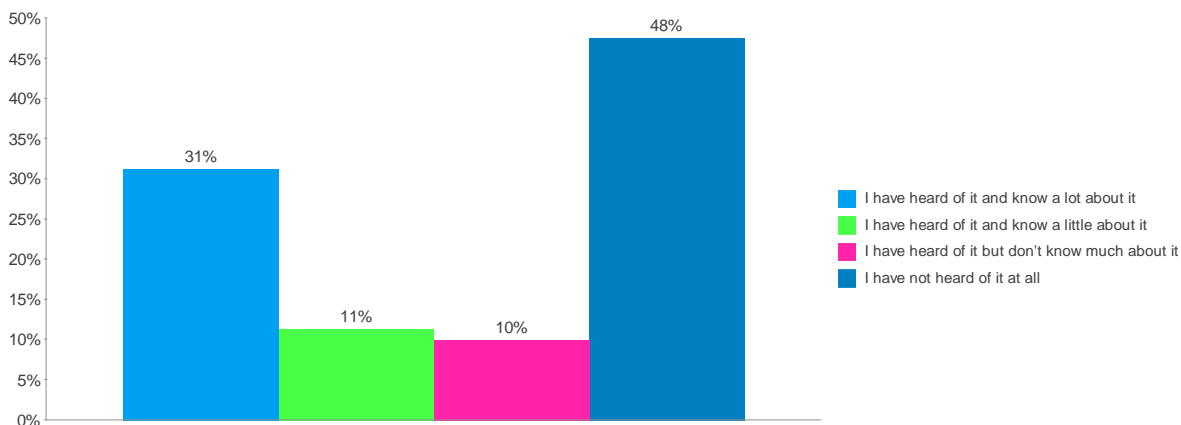
84% of the people who took part said that they were women and 15% said that they were men. Just under 1% said that they identified as non-binary.

82% of people said that they were from a White British background and 1% were White Irish. 6% were from an Asian/British Asian: Indian background and 1% from an Asian/British Asian: Pakistani background. 1% of people were from Black/Black British: African backgrounds and 2% from Black/Black British: Caribbean backgrounds. 4% of people came from mixed ethnic background and 2% preferred not to say what their ethnic background was.

45% of people said that they had a long-term health condition and 16% said that they had a disability.

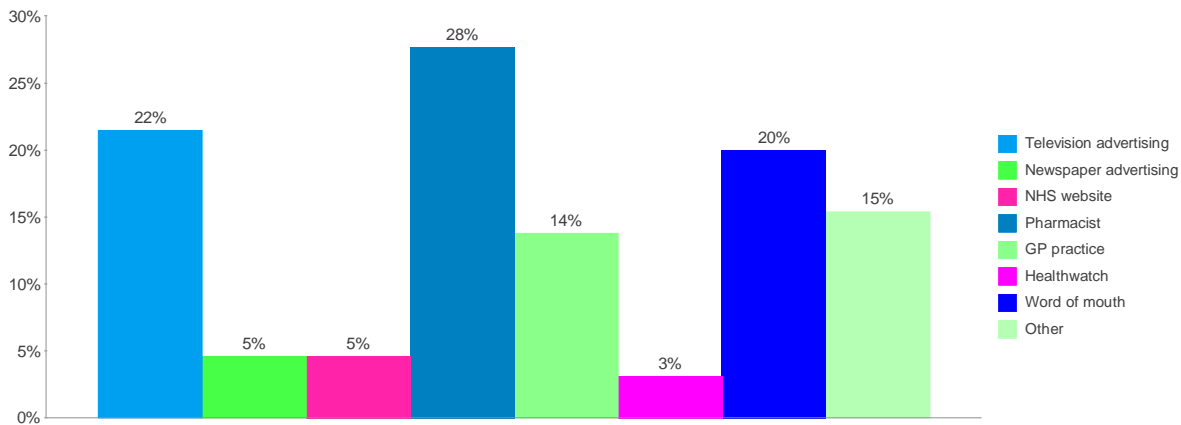
# Findings

How aware of Pharmacy First are you? Telford and Wrekin



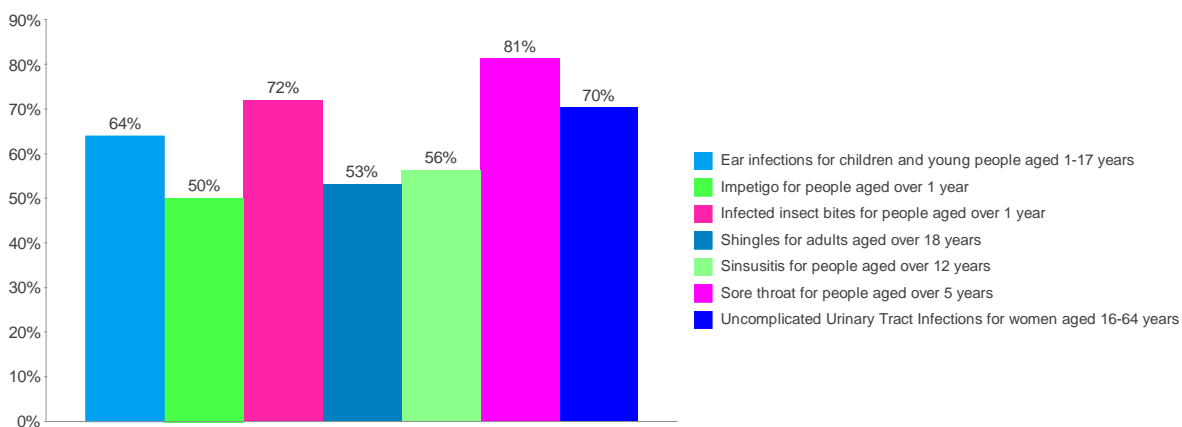
48% of people said that they had not heard of Pharmacy First at all whilst 31% said that they had heard of it and knew a lot about it. 11% knew a little about it and 10% said that although they had heard of it they did not know much about it.

If you have heard of the Pharmacy First service, how did you hear about it? Telford and Wrekin



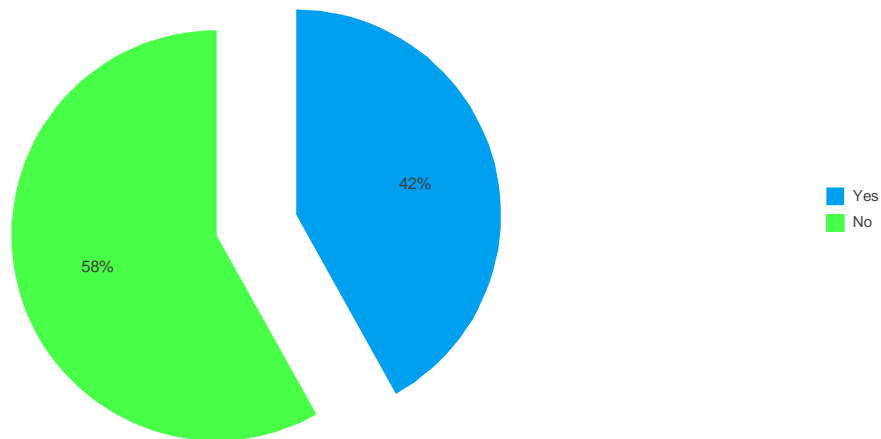
People who had heard of Pharmacy First were asked how they had heard of it. They were able to indicate all of the different ways in which they had heard of the service. 28% of people said that they had heard of the service from a pharmacist; 22% from television advertising and 20% through word of mouth. 14% of people said that they had heard of the service through a GP practice; 5% that they had seen newspaper advertising; 5% through an NHS website and 3% through Healthwatch. 15% of people also said that they had heard of the service through another means including local radio, through their employer, Telford Patients First Group and social media.

Which of the following services were you aware that Pharmacy First offers? Telford and Wrekin



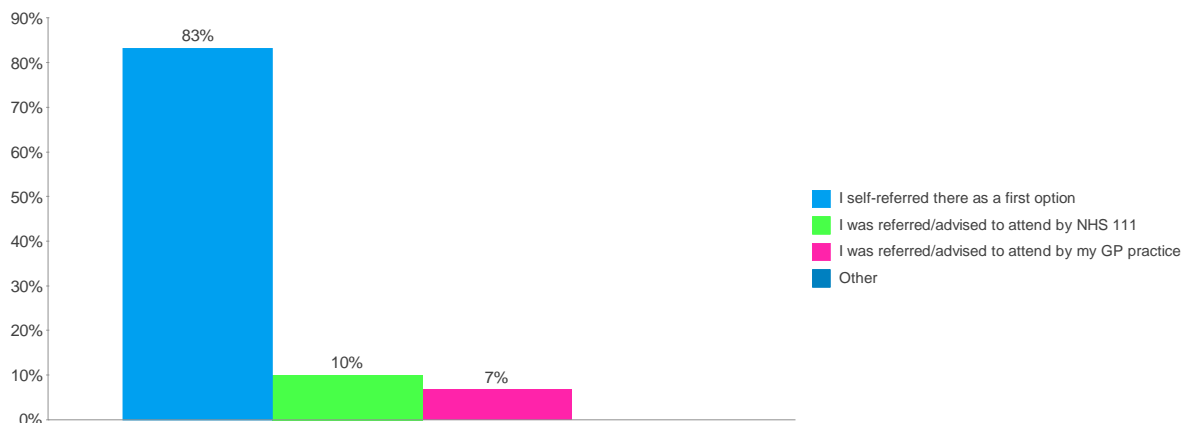
When asked if they had used the Pharmacy First service, 42% of people who answered the question said that they had done so.

Have you used the Pharmacy First service? Telford and Wrekin



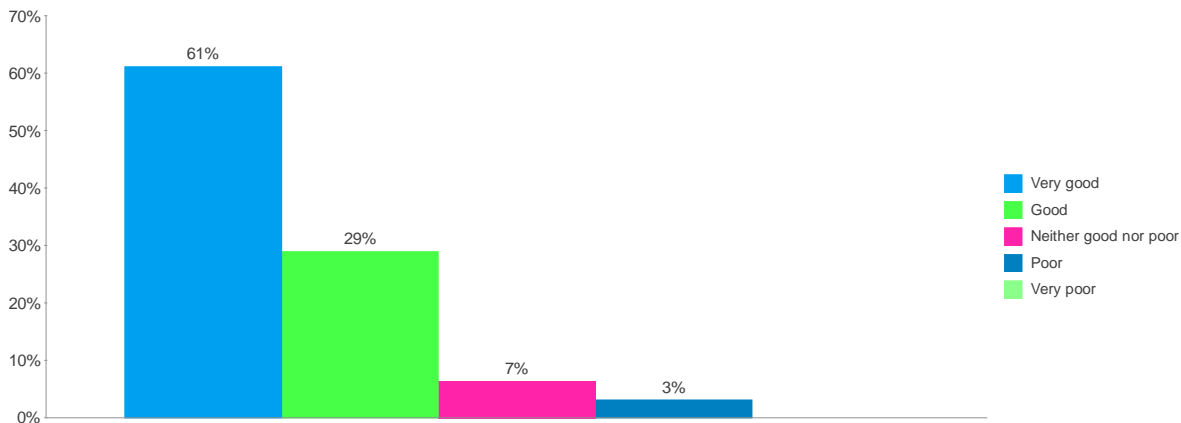
Those who had used the service were asked how they chosen to make use of the service rather than another service. 83% of people said that they had chosen to use the Pharmacy First service as a first option. 10% said that they were advised to attend by NHS 111 and 7% were advised to attend by their GP practice.

If yes, how did you choose to use the service? Telford and Wrekin



90% of people rated the service that they received from Pharmacy First as being very good or good. 3% said that the service was poor and 7% gave a neutral answer.

How would you rate the service you received from Pharmacy First? Telford and Wrekin



People were asked to give the reason for their rating of the service. Those who made positive comments said that service had been quick and efficient.

**‘Quick to be seen and treated.’**

**‘Quick and helpful way to receive antibiotics, no waiting.’**

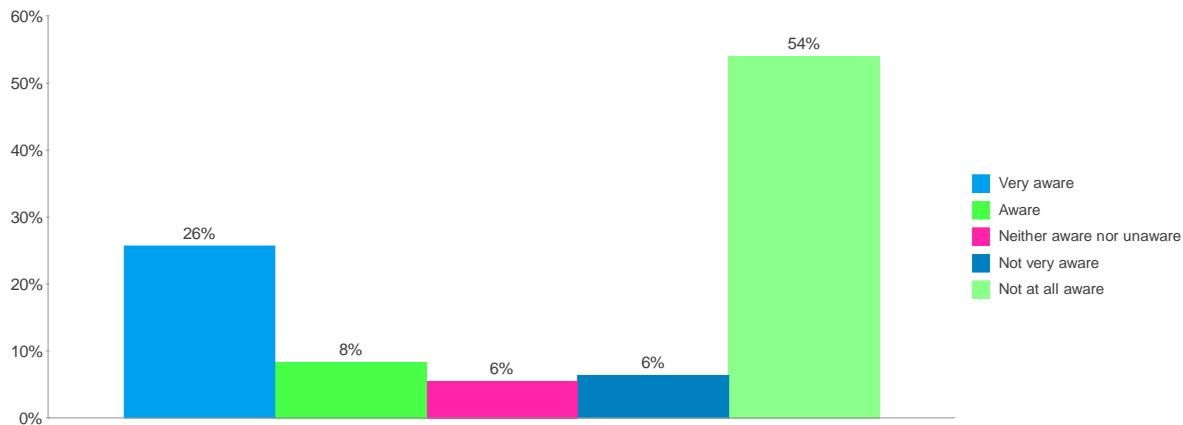
Although the number of people who had said that the service was poor was lower than those who had said it was very good or good, there were more negative comments than positive. The main comments were about the limitations of the Pharmacy First service and a lack of understanding on the part of others about those limitations.

**‘Pharmacists can only help certain patients. Once you tell them that you have a long-term condition, they always want to refer you back to your GP. The same with certain medicines you take, they cannot help you. GPs need to understand this before GP reception staff turn you away and tell you to go to the pharmacist first.’**

**‘Due to long term illness, won’t treat. Had the runaround from GP.’**

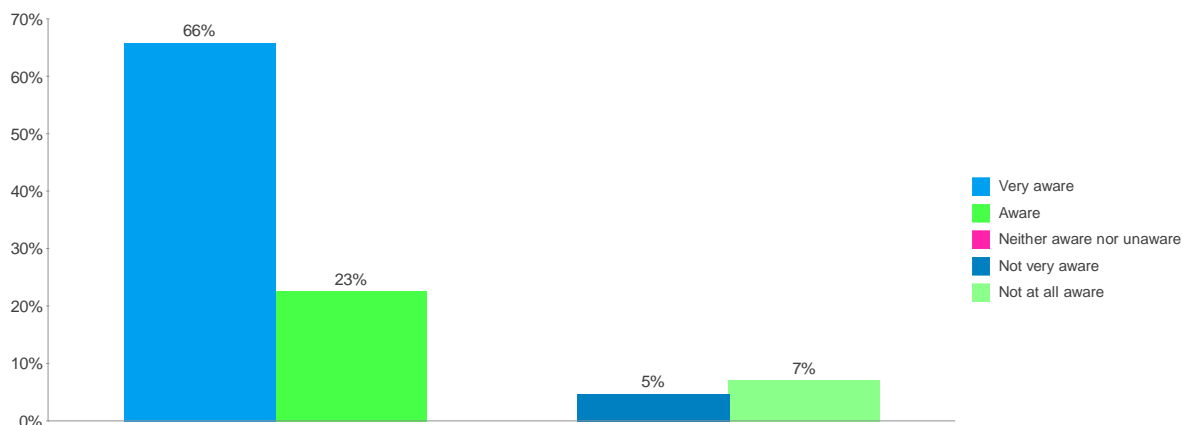
All people who took part in the survey were asked about their awareness of the other additional services that community pharmacies offered.

Appliance use review. Telford and Wrekin



54% of people had no awareness of the appliance use review service offered by community pharmacies and 34% were either very aware or aware of the service.

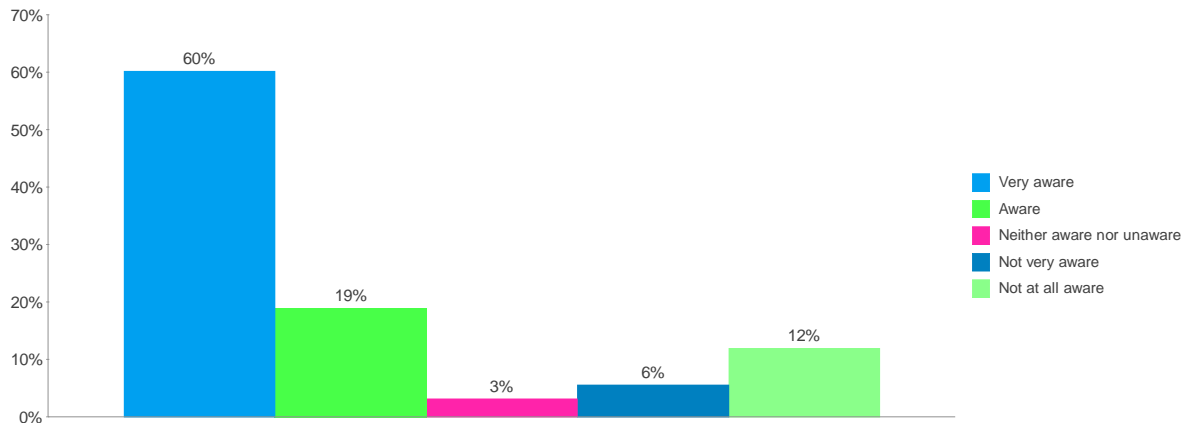
Flu vaccination service. Telford and Wrekin



89% of people said that they were either very aware or aware of the flu vaccination services and 7% were not at all aware of the service. The remainder were not very aware of the flu vaccination service.

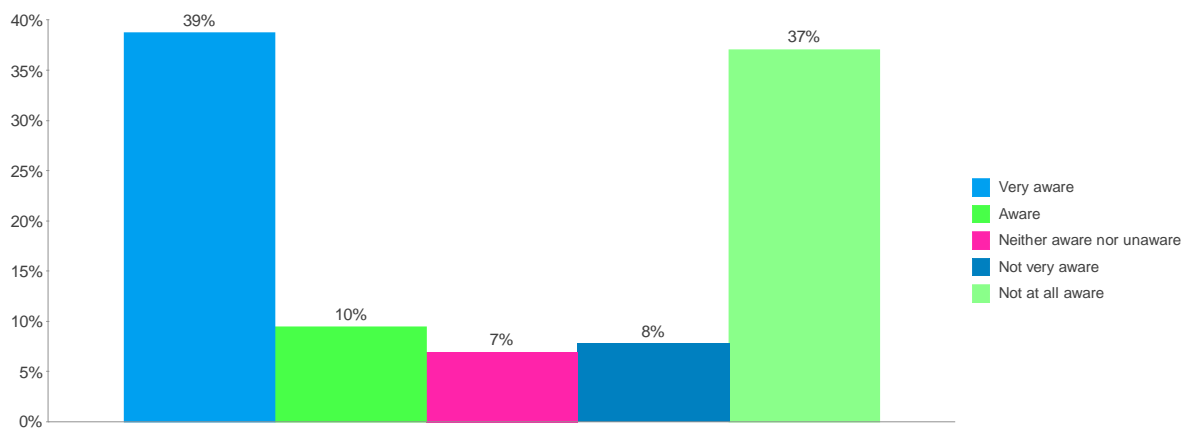


Blood pressure checks. Telford and Wrekin



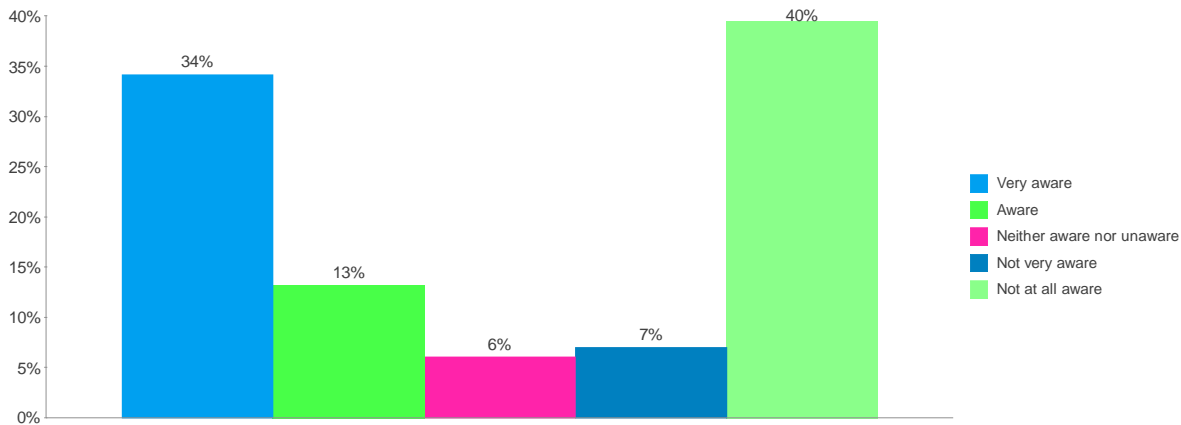
79% of people were aware that community pharmacies were able to offer a blood pressure check service. 18% said that they were either not at all aware or not very aware that the service was available at local pharmacies.

Lateral flow device service for eligible groups. Telford and Wrekin



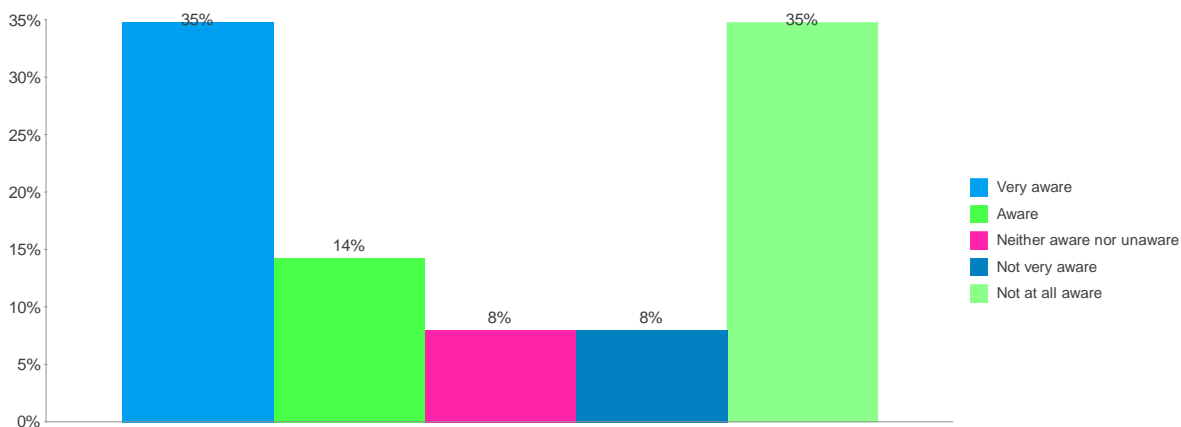
49% of people said that they were either very aware or aware that community pharmacies provide a lateral flow device service for eligible groups. 45% of people were either not at all aware or not very aware of the service.

New medicine service. Telford and Wrekin



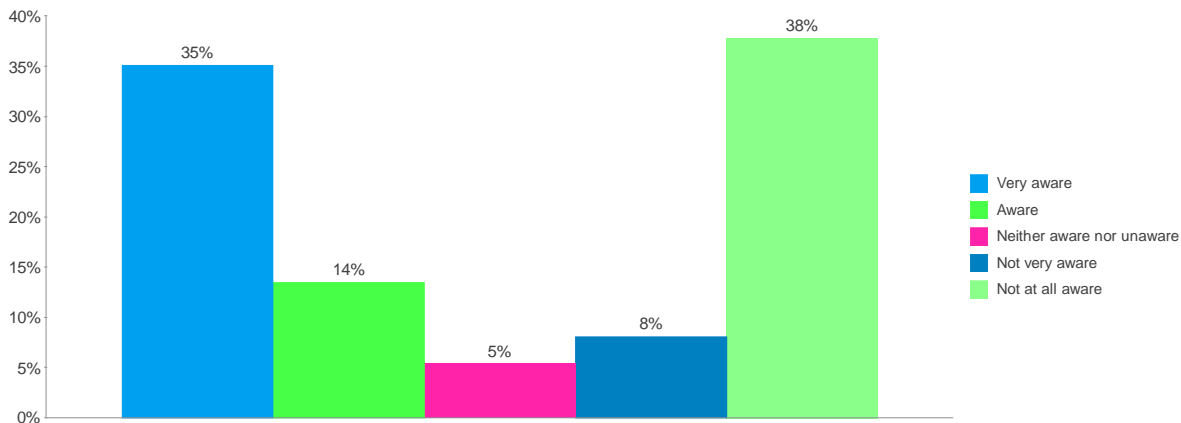
47% of people were aware or very aware of the new medicine service offered at community pharmacies and 47% were either not at all aware of the service or not very aware of it. There were a higher percentage of people (40%) with no awareness at all of the service than those who were very aware of it (34%).

Pharmacy Contraception Service. Telford and Wrekin



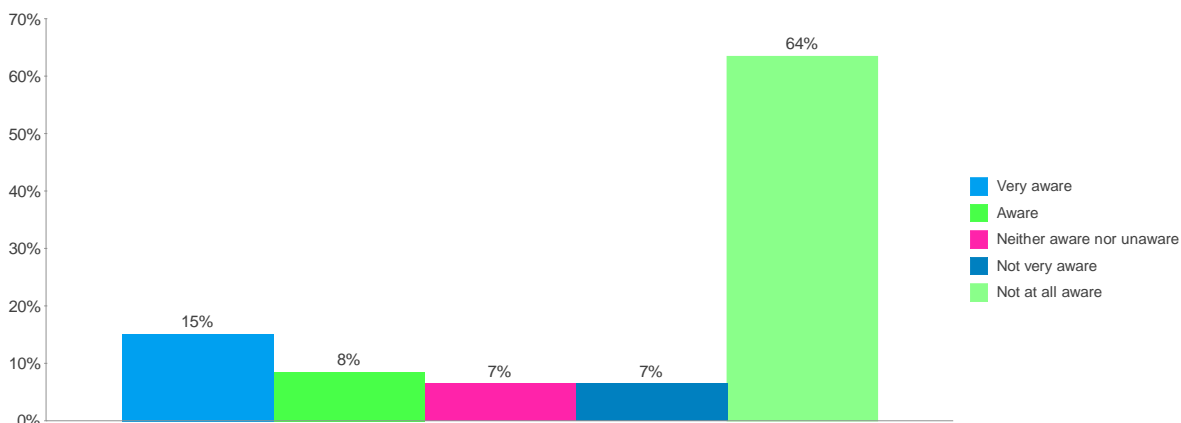
There were the same percentage of people who were very aware of the pharmacy contraception service (35%) than those who had no awareness at all of it (35%). There were slightly more people who were aware of the service (14%) than those who were not very aware of it (8%).

Smoking cessation service. Telford and Wrekin



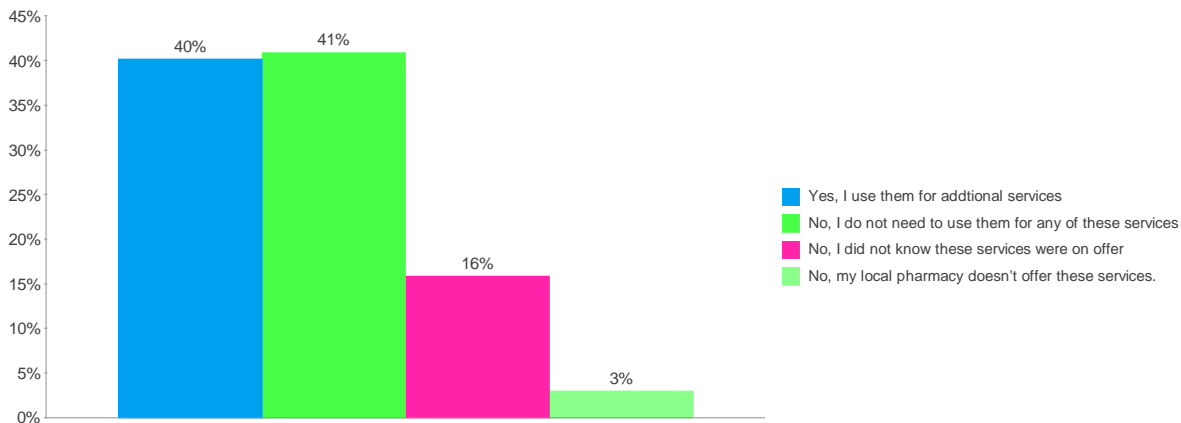
49% of people were very aware or aware of the smoking cessation service offered by community pharmacies and 46% of people were either not at all aware or not very aware of the service.

Stoma appliance customisation. Telford and Wrekin



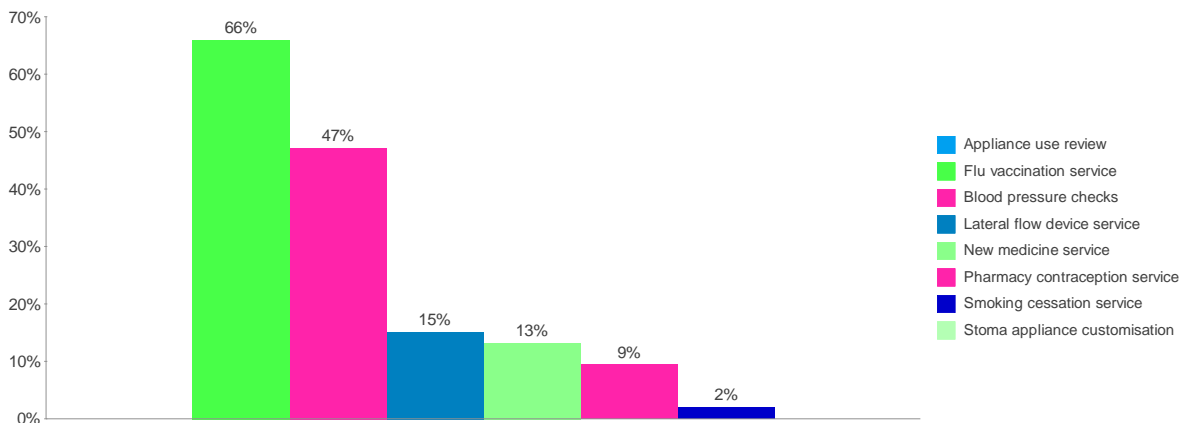
64% of people had no awareness at all of the stoma appliance customisation service and 15% of people said that they were very aware of the service.

Have you used your local pharmacy for any of these services? Telford and Wrekin



40% of people said that they had used their local pharmacy for additional services. 41% of people said that they had not used their local pharmacy for the services because they did not need any of the services on offer. 16% of people said that they had not used their local pharmacy for additional services because they were not aware that they were on offer and 3% said that their local pharmacy did not offer the services listed.

If yes, which services do you access? Telford and Wrekin



66% of the people who had used their pharmacy for additional services had used them for the flu vaccination service and 47% said that they had used the blood pressure checks service. 15% said that they had used their local pharmacy for lateral flow devices; 13% for the new medicine service; 9% for the pharmacy contraception service and 2% for the smoking cessation service.

# Conclusion

The number of people who took part in the survey was relatively small and therefore, the findings provide a snapshot of the opinions of those who took part. However, this was part of a larger scale project across seven local Healthwatch areas with over 700 participants and the findings from Telford and Wrekin mirror those from the larger scale project providing some reassurance that the results are representative.

Almost half of the people who took part in the survey said that they had no awareness at all of the Pharmacy First service, whilst 31% of people said that they had both heard of the service and knew a lot about it.

Those who had used the service were generally positive about the service that they received although there were some negative comments about the limitations of the service and poor signposting by GP practices.

Awareness of the services offered under Pharmacy First and the longer standing additional services offered at community pharmacies was variable with people being much more aware of treatment for sore throats, insect bites and UTI's under Pharmacy First and flu vaccinations and blood pressure checks under the additional services. Knowledge of some of the additional services such as the new medicine service were relatively limited and 16% of people said that they did not use the pharmacy for additional services because they were not aware that they were on offer.

# Recommendations

No.	Recommendation
1.	Knowledge of the Pharmacy First service was limited amongst people who took part in the survey and therefore, it is recommended that ways of promoting the service more widely are considered.
2.	People spoke about being referred to Pharmacy First when they were unable to help due to other health conditions. It is recommended that GP practices ensure that referrals to pharmacies are appropriate for the circumstances of the patient.
3.	People were lacking awareness of the additional services offered by pharmacies other than flu vaccinations and blood pressure checks. It is recommended that other services are promoted in a similar way to the flu vaccination service and blood pressure checks to raise awareness.

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The contract to provide the Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin service is held by Engaging Communities Solutions C.I.C.

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