

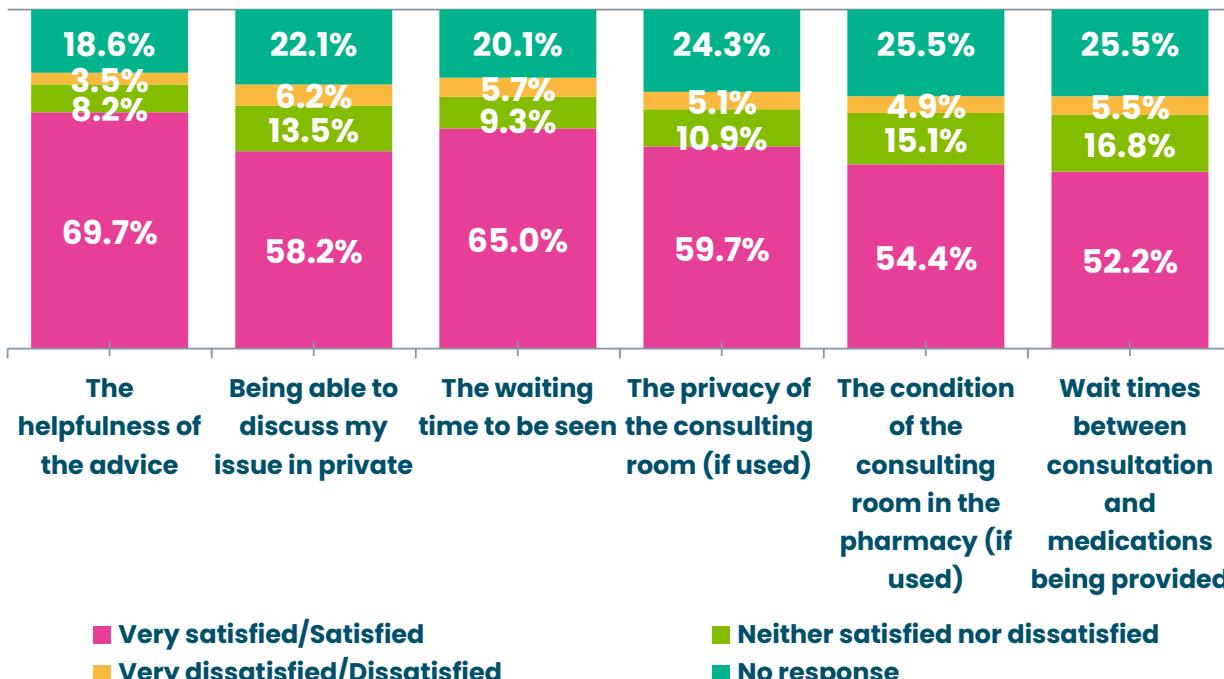
## Poll Results: Pharmacy Services

In January 2026, [Healthwatch in Sussex](#) sought experiences of people using pharmacy services, including [Pharmacy First](#). This repeated a poll we previously ran in [July 2024](#).

**548 people from across Sussex shared their views with us. We heard:**

- Approximately half our respondents were aware of the condition's pharmacies can treat and services they offer (e.g. vaccinations).
- The pharmacy treatments or services that respondents were least aware of were shingles, oral contraception, and uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTIs).
- Pharmacy services used most were Flu (46%) and COVID (35%) vaccinations. Least used, were stop-smoking services and emergency oral contraception (both 0.7%).
- If respondents had not used services offered by pharmacies, most would contact their GP (60%), a nurse at their local surgery (29%), or NHS 111 by phone (16%) instead.
- Respondents were most satisfied with 'helpfulness of advice' (78%) and 'waiting times to be seen' (74%). Respondents were least satisfied with 'being unable to discuss issues in private' (6%) and 'wait times to be seen' (6%).
- 31% of respondents were impacted by lack of available medication in pharmacies, 12% by pharmacy opening hours, and 6% by the physical accessibility of pharmacies.
- Respondents wanted more convenient opening times, more staff, shorter waits for prescriptions/medication, and better information on services pharmacies offer.

**If you used one or more of these services offered by the pharmacy, how satisfied were you with the following:**



## Respondents to our poll most frequently told us:

### They'd like to see pharmacies open longer and more flexibly (47 comments)

*"Being open outside working hours – e.g. at weekends, lunchtimes or early evenings – so that it's easier to access without having to take time out of work."*

*"Stop closing at lunchtime and have longer opening hours. I work full time, it's so frustrating to arrive to a closed counter. I have now switched to home delivery via [name removed] and my local pharmacy has therefore lost many years of business."*

### Their local pharmacy provided a quality service that met their needs (45 comments)

*"I would change nothing. They are very helpful and provide seating when I have to wait for a prescription. They are very supportive if I have a query. Brilliant!"*

*"My local pharmacy is very helpful, attention in the shop, private consultancy when required and home delivery of medicines."*

### Shorter waits would be valued, especially for prescriptions (44 comments)

*"The pharmacy I use is very busy ...however staff are very helpful and approachable It would help if you could be notified of when your medication is ready to collect. Invariably make special journey and queue waiting to find not ready or not complete."*

*"Get more organised when dealing with repeat prescriptions. Never ready altogether. Get an item here and there. What a waste of my time and there's."*

### Shortages of medication are frustrating (35 comments)

*"Repeat prescriptions are not always prescribed promptly, and sometimes items are not available because of supply problems, with a wait of two or three days before they come in. Curing these bottlenecks would be helpful."*

*"I would like the medication on my prescription to be available as requested! We should not have shortages!!!!"*

### Other common themes in feedback we received included preferences for:

- Improved communication with customers (31 comments)
- Better and more personalised customer service (30 comments)
- Greater privacy and confidentiality when speaking to pharmacy staff (20 comments)

### Tell us your experience

We always want to hear more about people's experiences of health and care services. Share your story with your local Healthwatch:

**Healthwatch Brighton & Hove:** [info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk) or 01273 234 040

**Healthwatch East Sussex:** [enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk) or 0333 101 4007

**Healthwatch West Sussex:** [helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](mailto:helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk) or 0300 012 0122