



**Healthwatch Solihull Survey of
People's Experience of GP
Services in the Borough of
Solihull
Findings Report**

Contents	Page
1. Background to this Study and Report	2
2. Planning and Preparing the Survey	2
3. Methodology	2
4. Findings	3
5. Summary	7
6. About Healthwatch Solihull	7
7. Appendices	
1. Acknowledgements	9
2. IPSOS MORI GP Patient Survey	10

Disclaimer

It must be noted that this report is an indication of people's experiences with GP services in the borough of Solihull.

The report does not grade, rate or benchmark the performance of GP Services. The feedback provided from the questionnaire seeks to inform the reader about people's views and experiences and as such may reflect a subjective viewpoint. Therefore this report is not an evaluation of good or bad practice.

1. Background to this Study and Report

In 2014 Healthwatch Solihull produced a report based upon desk research evaluating the national GP Patient Survey, independently run by Ipsos MORI on behalf of NHS England. The “**Report into Local Peoples Satisfaction of GP Services in the Borough of Solihull**” dated November 2014 concluded that:

- “- there are pockets of good examples throughout the borough, with practices showing good practice where overall patient needs and the patient experience are given a high priority.
- there are pockets of dissatisfaction with GP services that should be explored in greater detail.
- the national issues with access to GP surgeries are reflected in Solihull, although some practices appear from satisfaction levels to be managing this more effectively.
- there is further work to do in exploration of the issues raised in this report...”

This report continues to build on the results outlined in the November report.

2. Planning and Preparing the Survey

Healthwatch Birmingham had already begun undertaking a GP survey and approached Solihull to collaborate with a cross border project GP Survey project. By adopting the same questions and using the same demographic taxonomy we provide the opportunity, if beneficial, to compare specific findings and trends with HW Birmingham as part of a larger regional picture. Therefore, in this context it was an opportunity to continue with the work outlined in the November report. However at the time of completing this report, no comparative data from Birmingham was available.

3. Methodology

The survey independently sought to obtain indications of peoples’ experiences of GP services in a number of areas including access, dignity, information and overall levels of satisfaction using a questionnaire consisting of 37 questions. It was not designed to provide a detailed analysis based on gender, age, ethnicity or disability.

The survey was distributed both electronically via our eNews and web site and also in paper format. Our engagement officers worked with third sector, partner and support organisations to inform people. Surveys were distributed at support meetings, public events and to some minority groups with participants being encouraged to complete and return the survey via pre-paid envelopes.

We received a total of 523 responses of which 81% were paper based with the remainder entered directly online. Females accounted for 70% of the responses with young people under 25 accounting for less than 10% of the responses.

The engagement plan was designed to ensure full geographic representation of the borough. The results were compared with demographic profiles of the population across the Borough provided by Solihull Observatory. The locality proportions for the survey were found to be very similar to the base proportions of the registered population.

4. Findings

Likes



Quality

82% of people responding were happy with the quality of care, treatment and service. A similar percentage would or were likely to recommend their GP to family and friends.



Confidence and Trust

86% of the people who responded had confidence and trust in their doctor. 91% of people stated that their doctor listens to them and 89% of respondent's indicated that they feel they were involved in the decisions about their care and treatment.



Surgery Staff

94% of people stated that staff treated them with respect.

85% of people responding stated that the staff were helpful and understanding and 91% of people responding stated that staff listened to them.

Observations



Making an Appointment

65% of people stated that it was easy to get through on the telephone whilst the remaining 35% did not find it easy.

191 (39%) of the total responses included a comment either in support of, or qualifying their "yes/no" answer.

The 41% of Comments in support of a "yes" answer included:

"Excellent service at all levels.... Reception staff helpful, interested and always considerate irrespective of work pressures"

"Always able to speak to someone"

"Very efficient service"

59% of the comments received were in support of a people who did not find it easy to get through on the telephone. 80% of the comments from people who did not find it easy concerned delays caused by phone lines being engaged, long "on hold" times, or long ringing delay before the phones are answered.

“Telephone lines open at 8.30 am. Can never get through! Average wait time with finger constantly on redial is about 1 hour...”

“Never get through phone lines always busy, never have any appointments left.”

“The phone rings out constantly”

“Sometimes I have tried to call at least 3 times (5 mins each) before anybody answers the phone.”

“kept waiting up to 20 minutes on hold on the phone”

“No it is not easy to get through on the telephone. Queue system in place which means you are on the telephone a long time...”

In addition, some of the “yes/no” answers were qualified with comments usually relating to peak time delays. Examples being:

“If people are able to telephone after 10.30am there is usually not a delay. Before this there may be a delay before the surgery responds”

“At most times. Can be busy early mornings. But the doctor always rings back.”

“The lines are very busy between 8 am and 8.30 am with people wanting “that day” appointments, it is better to wait until after morning surgery for routine matters.”

Time with the Doctor

85% of people feel they do have enough time with their doctor.

Of the remaining 15% who felt they did not have enough time with their doctor, 47% people left comments of which 60% of those comments indicate an awareness of time pressures with many comments including the word “rush” or “rushed”. Some typical examples being:

“They’re in a rush to see next patient.”

“Feel rushed, as they are always running late!”

“Appointments are always rushed because of the pressure the doctors are under.”

32% of the above total comments relate to people expressing a need for more time relating to complex or multiple issues.

“You may have more than one concern but are only allowed one symptom at a time.”

“Quite often have several issues to discuss but have been told to make another appointment for more than one issue.”

“Not always, depends on the problem.”



Car Parking

The survey asked questions in relation to the building. High levels of satisfaction were expressed with wheelchair/pram access, loop hearing facilities, waiting room, child friendliness, and location of toilets.

However 26% of people responding were unhappy with car parking. This is most noticeable where the surgeries are located in areas of general parking pressure such as near schools or shopping facilities.



Reception Area Privacy

Reception area privacy featured as a concern for over 56% of the people who responded, almost one third of them adding comments. Almost three quarters related to people stating that there was not enough privacy in the general reception area.

Typical comments in this respect included:

"The location of reception does not give enough privacy."

"A bit too open"

"... but space for a private conversation is limited..."

"The reception is located by ... and with the glass screen you have to speak quite loudly to be heard"

"Everyone can hear you talking to the receptionist"

However a few people were aware of confidential areas with typical comments such as:

"I believe there is a room available outside of reception for private discussions with staff but they are always busy."

"Although never needed to, I am aware there is a room you can request to speak in confidence."

"You can ask to discuss things in a private space but this in itself is conspicuous."



Timely Access

78% of people were happy with surgery opening hours whilst almost 56% of people stated that they could get an appointment when needed.

However, 15% of people stated that they could not get a same day emergency appointment.

In terms of surgery opening hours, comments were received from 122 people. Typical comments categorised include:

Evening or weekend opening

56% of the comments relate to a need for longer weekday hours or weekend access. Some typical statements are:

“Would like Saturdays back”

“Should have weekend access”

“Need late nights and more weekends”

“More evening and weekend appointments needed”

“But used to be open Saturday mornings which was useful as a back -up”

“but more late evenings would be beneficial as they are very popular”

Work Related

15% of the respondent’s comments specifically indicated that work pressures impacts upon their access to services.

“I work full time and need times available for non-emergency appointments out of hours.”

“Very difficult to get time off work sometimes. No flexibility at the surgery at all.”

“Not open long enough, especially when you are a working mum!”

Appointment When Needed

When asked “Can you get an appointment when you need it” 56% of the people responding said that they could and 44% stated that they could not. Additionally, of all the people responding to this question 47% left comments, with almost half of those comments reflecting the demand on services as a problem. Typical comments included:

“As long as you call at 8:00am. But sometimes all appointments are gone because people queue outside the doctors to get them before the phone lines open.”

“... all the appointments are gone before 9am so you can't see a Dr that day. But they are a busy surgery.”

“If I want to see my own doctor, I have to wait 2 weeks.”

“Have to wait up to 3 weeks minimum to get an appointment.”

“Most of the time with firm perseverance.”

Preference to See a Specific Doctor

11% of the comments indicate a preference to see a specific doctor which may impact upon the wait. Examples of these comments were:

“But only if willing to see any GP at practice or if willing to wait a length of time in order to see specific GP.”

“You have to wait two weeks to see your named GP.”

“If I want to see my own doctor, I have to wait 2 weeks.”

“Waited 5 weeks to see the doctor I want. Otherwise see anyone usually same day.”



Online Access

Access Online Records

70% of people were not aware that they could access their records online but 73% of people stated that they would like to.

Booking an Appointment Online

52% of the people stated that they could not or were not sure if they could book an appointment online and yet 50% of respondents who were not sure they could book online stated that they would use online booking.

5 Summary

Overall, high levels of satisfaction were expressed with the quality of care, treatment and service with together with high levels of satisfaction with the GP's and surgery staff.

Although the time with the doctor and timely access received high levels of satisfaction pressures on the system were apparent with the related comments.

Reception area privacy featured as a concern for over half of the people who responded.

6 About Healthwatch Solihull

Healthwatch is the consumer champion network for health and social care services as set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Healthwatch works at a local and national level. Each local Healthwatch is a statutory body and is represented at the local Health and Well Being Board. Healthwatch Solihull will listen to all views and enable local voices to be heard by taking them to policy makers, commissioners, stakeholders, providers and regulators.

‘Healthwatch Solihull exists to ensure that there are improvements in health and social care services for local people by providing a voice for local people that influences decisions and increases choice.’

Healthwatch Solihull is not only set up represent patient and public interests locally, it will also give local voices influence at the national level through Healthwatch England (HWE), who work with a network of 152 local Healthwatch organisations to ensure that the voices of consumers and those who use services reach the ears of national decision makers.

6.1 Our Vision

“Healthwatch Solihull will ensure that there are improvements in health and social care services for local people by providing a voice for local people that influences decisions and increases choice.”

6.2 Our Mission

- Healthwatch Solihull will be an effective, efficient and independent voice for local people
- It will be the trusted consumer champion for health and social care, representative of the diverse communities serviced in the locality and capable of providing intelligence - including evidence from people’s views and experiences
- It will be a strong voice for effective engagement and create a momentum of involvement leading to the development and improvement in person centred services
- It will provide information and signposting services to help people access and make choices about health and social care services and encourage participation and co-production
- It will signpost people to Independent complaints advocacy support if they need help to complain about NHS services
- It will be a robust, credible player in the local health and social care economy by demonstrating that it has the appropriate level of skills and competencies required to deliver its statutory functions to the highest possible level and support the delivery of a better health and social care outcomes

Appendix 1 - Acknowledgements

Throughout this review Healthwatch Solihull worked closely with other organisations and gratefully received assistance from our volunteers. We would like to formally acknowledge and thank the following individuals and organisations for all their hard work and assistance. We could not have completed this work without this support.

Organisations

SoLO, Solihull Carers, Signpost inclusion, Shirley Child Minders, You+ Three Trees Community Centre, Entraid, Stonham Housing, Age UK, Citizens Advice Bureau, Sunrise Living, Solihull Forum, NSVCA, Young Healthwatch, Solihull MBC Training and Development Department, Colebridge Trust Unit 21, and many others. The plan also included public venues such as libraries. Healthwatch Solihull is especially grateful to the Local Pharmacy Committee for distributing surveys to every pharmacy in the borough.

DHP Research

DHP Research supported Healthwatch in the analysis and the data preparation of this report.

Appendix 2 - IPSOS MORI GP Patient Survey

This survey and report follow on from the 2014 Healthwatch Solihull report based upon desk research evaluating the national GP Patient Survey, an independent survey run by IPSOS MORI on behalf of NHS England. This report has therefore included a brief synopsis in tabular form of relevant topics from the latest IPSOS MORI report published July 2015. (Ref: 05P-NHS-SOLIHULL-CCG from gp-patient.co.uk/slidepacks/).

Overall Experience of GP Surgery

“Overall, how would you describe your experience of your GP Surgery?”	
83% Good	6% poor

Access to GP Services

“Generally, how easy is it to get through to someone at your GP surgery on the Phone?”	
64% easy	33% not easy

“How helpful do you find the receptionist at your GP surgery?”	
85% helpful	13% not helpful

“As far as you know, which of the following online services does your GP offer?”				
Booking an appointment online, 36%	Ordering repeat prescriptions online, 30%	Accessing my records online, 3%	None of these, 8%	Don't know, 49%

“And in the past 6 months, which of the following services have you used at your GP surgery?”			
Booking an appointment online, 10%	Ordering repeat prescriptions online, 10%	Accessing my records online, 8%	None of these, 84%

Making an Appointment

“Overall, how would you describe your experience of making an appointment?”	
68% Good	16% Poor

Perceptions of Care at Last GP Appointment

“The last time you saw or spoke to a GP from your GP surgery, how good was that GP at each of the following?”				
Giving you enough time, 87% Very Good/Good	Listening to you, 88% Very Good/Good	Explaining tests and treatments, 85% Very Good/Good	Involving you in decisions about your care, 79% Very Good/Good	Treating you with care and concern, 85% Very Good/Good

“Did you have confidence and trust in the in the GP you saw or spoke to?”	
92% Yes	4% No

Satisfaction with the practice’s opening hours

“How satisfied are you with the hours that your GP surgery is open?”	
71% Satisfied	12% Not Satisfied