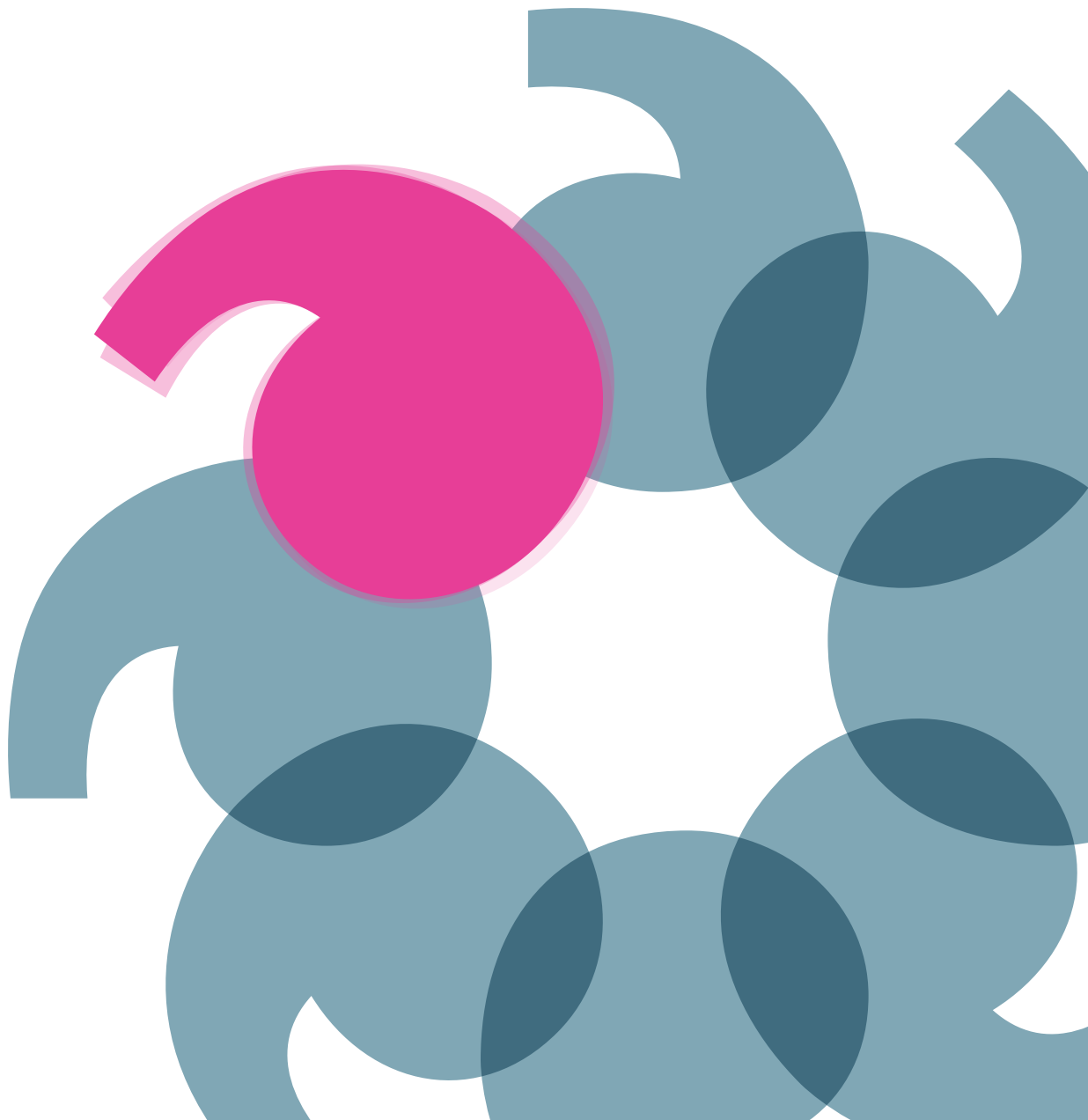


Pharmacy services in Islington

Awareness of additional services



Healthwatch Islington

Healthwatch Islington is an independent organisation led by volunteers from the local community. It is part of a national network of Healthwatch organisations that involve people of all ages and all sections of the community.

Healthwatch Islington gathers local people's views on the health and social care services that they use. We make sure those views are taken into account when decisions are taken on how services will look in the future, and how they can be improved.

www.healthwatchislington.co.uk

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Introduction

Pharmacists dispense and check prescriptions. They provide advice on how to take these medicines and on common side effects. Pharmacists also advise on minor ailments such as colds, skin conditions and allergies. These core services are commissioned by NHS England. Promotion is undertaken by NHS England via national media campaigns such as the Stay Well this Winter, the Use your High Street Expert, and the Self Care Week campaigns.

Community pharmacies also offer a range of additional services. In Islington these are commissioned by NHS England, by the local authority, or by Islington Clinical Commissioning Group, depending on the service in question. Responsibility for promoting these additional services sits with the relevant commissioner.

Research undertaken by Healthwatch Islington and partner organisations within the black and minority ethnic community has suggested that there is a lack of awareness of the full range of services available in pharmacies.* Healthwatch wants to better understand how local people of all ethnic backgrounds are using pharmacies. To help satisfy this aim, we carried out a pharmacy survey in the summer of 2017.

- ▶ We asked respondents whether they knew about the additional services available from pharmacies.
- ▶ We asked if they had seen the national campaigns promoting the role of pharmacy.
- ▶ We asked which channels they used to keep up to date with news about health services.

* [*Emergency department, general practice, or pharmacy services? Service user feedback on factors influencing choice.*](#)
Healthwatch Islington 2016

[*Community research 2016/2017. Black and minority ethnic groups accessing services in Islington,*](#)
Diverse Communities Health Voice 2017

What we did

We built a questionnaire using online survey software. We placed a link to the survey on the homepage of our website, and publicised it via our social media channels and our e-newsletter.

In addition, we sent the survey to our Healthwatch membership directly, either by email or by post depending on their preference.

We distributed paper copies of the survey at community events taking place across Islington in May and June 2017. We also encouraged Healthwatch training course participants to complete the survey.

Although most of the channels we used to promote the survey targeted Islington residents, being an Islington resident was not a requirement for completing the survey. However, the questions about additional services were asked specifically about pharmacy services in Islington.

In total we received 117 responses. Of these, 68 were written by hand. The remaining 49 were submitted online.

As can be seen, we promoted the survey to a number of audiences that were already engaged with Healthwatch. Some respondents from these groups may well have more knowledge of health and social care provision than is typical for the community as a whole.

Who we heard from

Sex of respondents			
Female	Male	Didn't say	Total
60	43	14	117

Age of respondents						
0-18	18-24	25-49	50-64	65 +	Blank	Total
1	2	30	35	36	13	117

Ethnicity of respondents	
Asian or Asian British	12
Black or Black British	15
Mixed - Any	4
White - British	45
White - Other	6
Other*	15
Didn't say	20
Total	117

*A number of respondents gave their nationality rather than their ethnicity. Their responses have been included within the category Other.

Survey responses

In the last 12 months have you used a pharmacy in Islington?

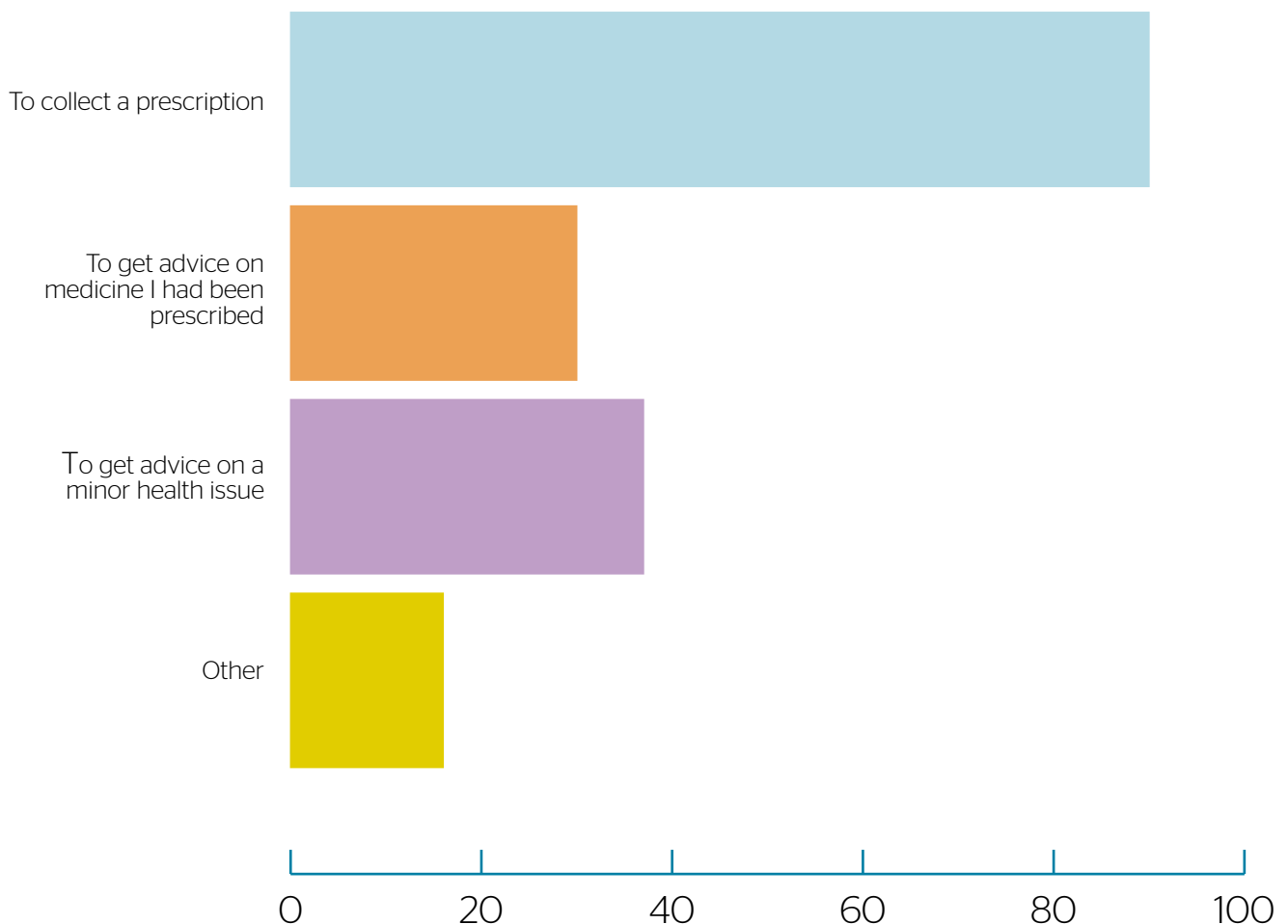
All 117 respondents answered this question. 104 said yes, and 13 said no. Those 13 respondents that had not used a pharmacy in Islington in the last 12 months were not asked the next question.

Why did you visit the pharmacy?

101 people answered this question. Respondents were able to select more than one answer. 90 respondents had been to the pharmacy to collect a prescription. This was by far the most popular response. 30 respondents had asked for advice on medicine they had been prescribed and 37 had asked for advice on a minor health issue.

Of the 16 respondents that gave another reason for their visit, only four appeared to have used an additional service. One had used the stop smoking service. One had received a flu shot. One 'ran out of medication on a weekend. Pharmacy gave me enough medication to see me through'. Another said 'my prescription was delivered', which may indicate use of the prescription collection or home delivery service.

A number of respondents (four) who gave another reason for their visit were in fact seeking advice on medicine or on health issues. Other reasons given included the purchase of over the counter medicines.



Did you know that a wide range of additional NHS services are available from many pharmacies in Islington?

Awareness that additional services were offered at pharmacies was high. Of the 114 respondents who answered this question, 88 said yes they did know and 26 said no they didn't. Although the question mentioned NHS services specifically, we were in fact asking about health related services more broadly (regardless of whether they were health services commissioned by NHS England, or public health services commissioned by the local authority). Respondents understood the question in the way that it was intended.

Which services did you know were available?

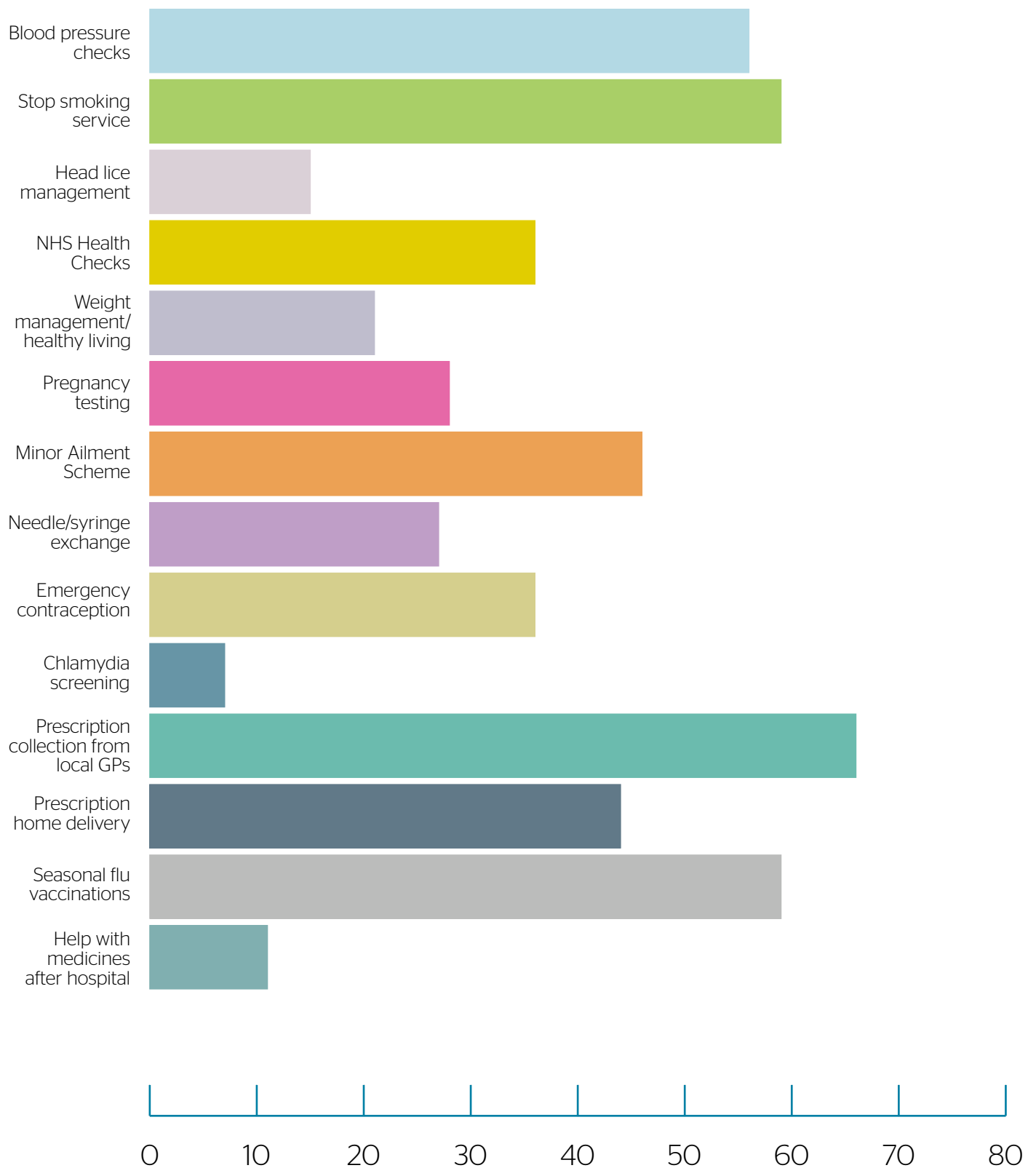
The most widely known additional service was the prescription collection service from local GPs. 66 of the 84 respondents knew that it was possible to collect repeat prescriptions directly from a pharmacy without having to visit the GP. It is possible that some respondents confused this service with collecting a prescription more generally. However, the other specialised prescription service, the home delivery service, was also quite well known (44 respondents knew about it).

The least well known additional service was the chlamydia screening service. Only seven respondents knew about it. However, the chlamydia screening service is only offered to people under the age of 25. Of the 117 people who participated in the survey overall, only three were under 25. This may go some way towards explaining the low profile of this service in our results.

- ▶ Seasonal flu vaccinations (59), the stop smoking service (59), and blood pressure tests (56) were all well known services.
- ▶ Less than half the respondents (36) were aware that NHS health checks are available at pharmacies.
- ▶ Awareness of the weight management and healthy living service was comparatively low (21).

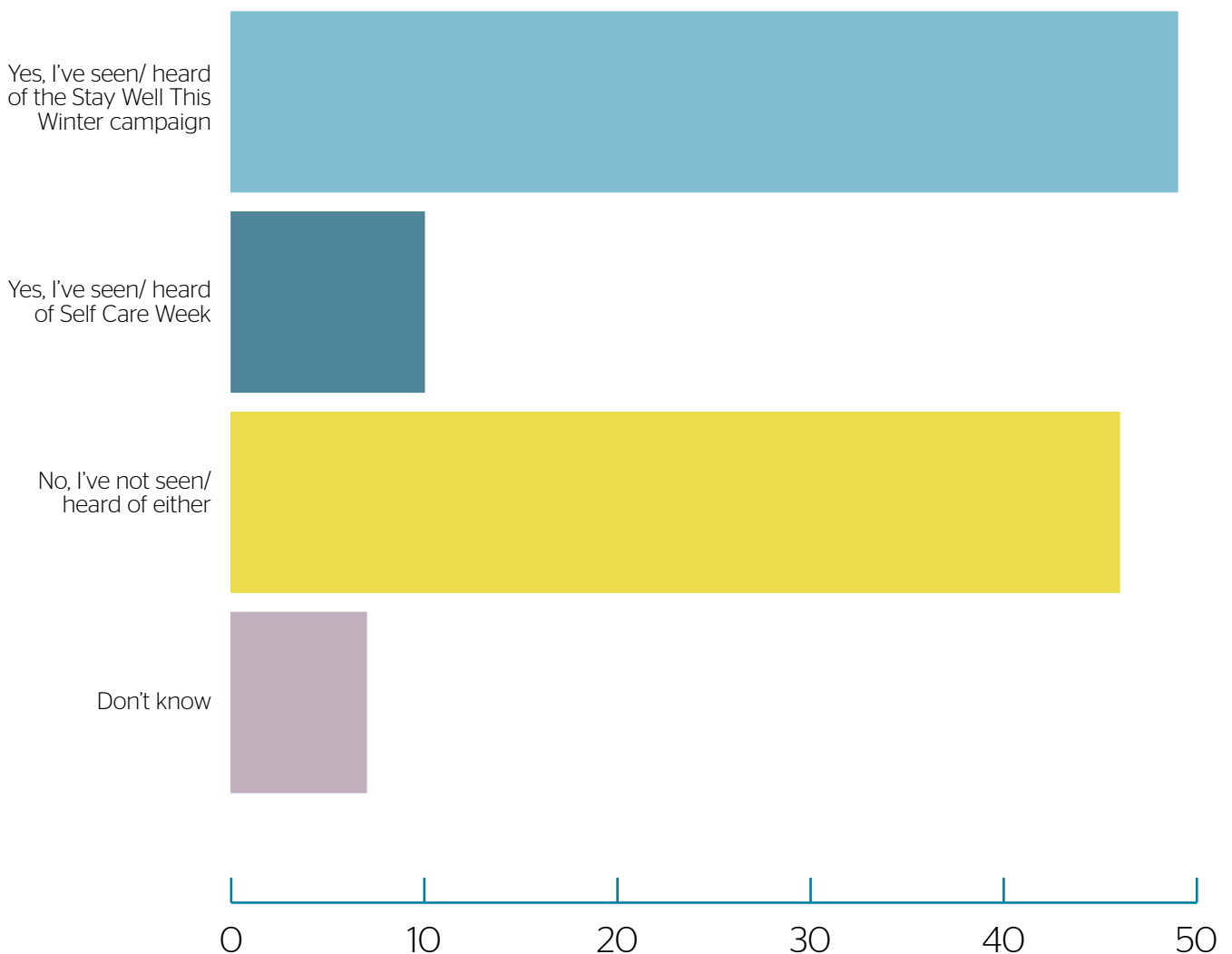
Which services did you know were available? (please tick all that apply)

Out of a total of 84 respondents, the number who knew about each service was as follows:



Have you seen/ heard of the 'Stay Well This Winter' campaign or 'Self Care Week'?

We wanted to get a sense of the impact that national campaigns promoting pharmacy use have had on the local community. The Use your High Street Expert promotion was delivered as part of Self Care Week. We asked respondents if they had heard of that campaign, or the Stay Well This Winter campaign. We included colour images and logos identifying the campaigns, in case the associations that had been made were visual. There were 105 respondents. Although the Stay Well This Winter campaign prompted some recognition (49), Self Care Week was much less well known (10).

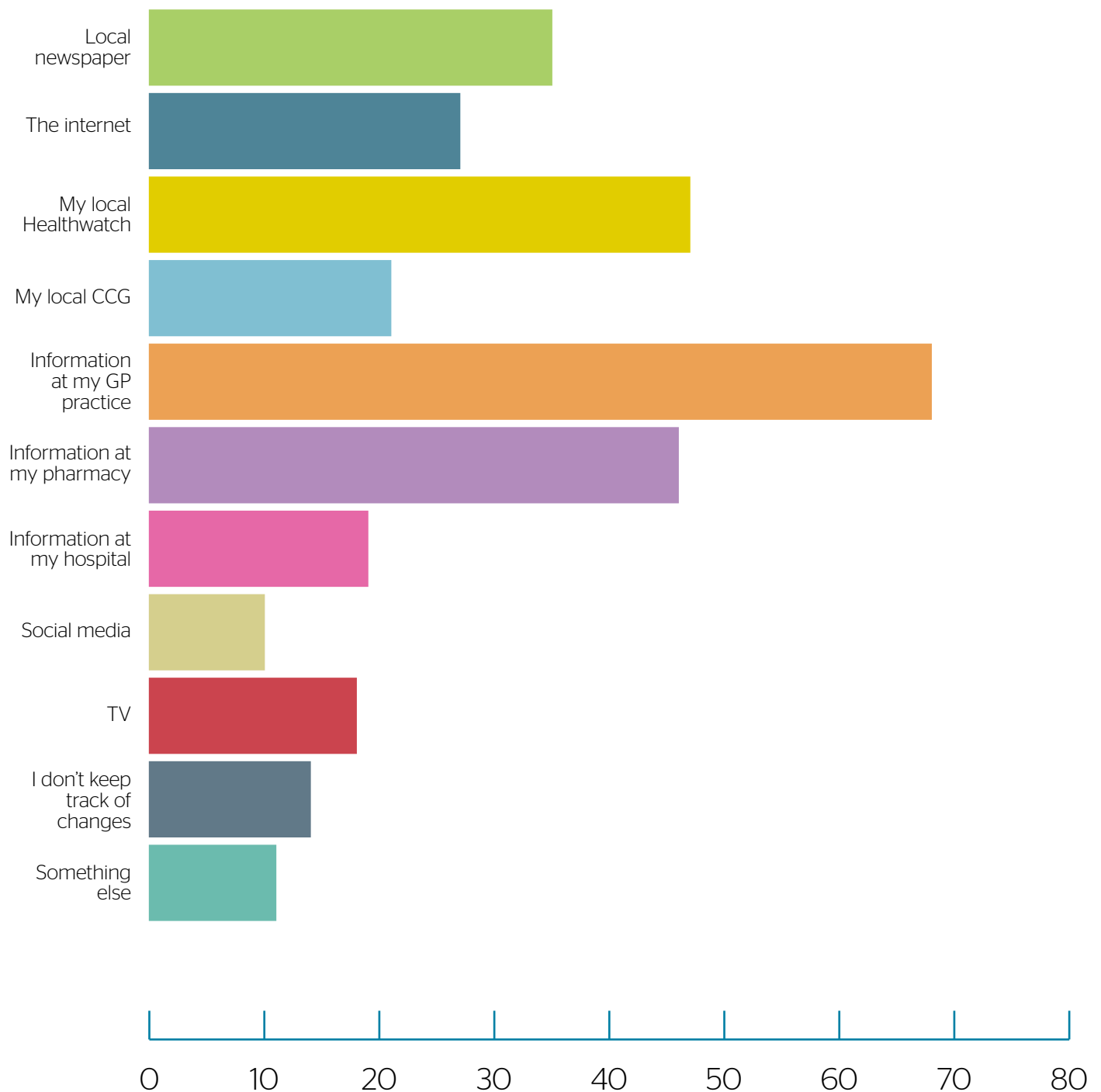


If you answered yes to either, did you know that these campaigns promote the use of pharmacy services?

Of those who recognised the campaigns, 33 respondents knew that they promoted the use of pharmacy services, whilst the remaining 26 respondents had not made that link.

How do you keep up to date about health services in your area?

102 answered. Respondents were able to select more than one answer. Information at GP practices (69) and pharmacies (46) were the most popular ways of keeping up to date about health services (My local Healthwatch was also selected by 48 respondents but since we sent the survey to people who were already engaged with Healthwatch, this particular response is not representative of the wider community). It is interesting to note that the internet (28) and social media (11) were not widely used.



Conclusion

- ▶ Just over three quarters of respondents (77%) were aware that additional services (over and above prescribing and advising on medicines and minor health issues) were available at pharmacies. However, some of these additional services were better known than others. Awareness of the weight management and healthy living service, for example, was fairly low.
- ▶ Less than a third of respondents from an engaged audience recognised the NHS national media campaigns as campaigns promoting pharmacy.
- ▶ The most effective way to promote specific pharmacy services is by making information available at local GP practices and in pharmacies themselves. Promotion that takes place online or via social media is less likely to reach the audience for whom it is intended.

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Islington

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