

Healthwatch Knowsley Access to Primary Care

This document explores the findings of a six month study by Healthwatch Knowsley to ascertain the issues and good practice experience by people using GP and other Primary Care Services



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Executive Summary

Who?

Healthwatch is the independent community champion created to gather and represent the views of the public on Health and Adult Social Care services. Locally, Healthwatch Knowsley was asked by local community members to undertake a focused piece of work on accessing Primary Care in Knowsley.

Why?

Primary Care and the local GP are the gateway to accessing both health and community based services therefore the ability to gain an appointment within Primary Care, when needed is vital.

Nationally and locally the demand for health services has reached unprecedented levels and continues to increase. In response to this national picture the Chief Nursing Officer for England commented that:

“The National Health Service is one of Britain’s proudest achievements. And today its staff do a superb job treating record numbers of patients. Quite rightly, people want to protect our NHS when it is under pressure - but in doing this, they also need to allow it to change and improve.

Since 1948, the NHS has adapted itself constantly, and it must continue to do so as the world and our health needs will continue to change. We are now able to treat people with new drugs and clinical care that were not available in the past. As life expectancy increases, so do the ailments of old age, and there are now more people with chronic conditions such as heart failure and arthritis.”

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/2016/12/jc-local-proposals-health-care/>

Healthwatch Knowsley is keen to contribute to the solutions locally to help provide information and patient feedback that can lead improved access to Primary Care services for community members.

How?

Healthwatch Knowsley utilises outreach focused activities to hear from local community members regarding their views on Health and Social Care Services. During this piece of work we have used a variety of methods to find out local people’s views on accessing Primary Care services. This includes:

A call for evidence encouraging community members contact Healthwatch and share their experience of accessing Primary Care services. This activity encouraged community members to provide feedback using the Healthwatch Knowsley web-based feedback Centre. This also utilised social media avenues to encourage feedback.

To gain the views of a key audience who access Health services, Healthwatch Knowsley visited and presented at the roadshow activities for the Knowsley Older People’s Voice. This took place in September 2016 and 130 community members in total provided feedback about the Access to Primary Care piece of work.



Executive Summary

The local community college was visited on 8 occasions and throughout this activity and 46 patient experience feedback forms were completed by the students and young people from the Knowsley area. Healthwatch staff members also took the opportunity to encourage feedback through the Healthwatch Knowsley website.

Staff members from Healthwatch Knowsley also visited 10 GP practices and spoke directly to patients regarding their experiences of accessing Primary Care services.

6 formal Enter and View visits also took place at the two local Accident and Emergency (A&E) Departments who provide services to Knowsley residents. The aim of these visits was to understand from a patient perspective if the respondents had tried to access Primary Care services prior to attending A&E. (137 patients in total took part)

The above mentioned activities gathered a total of 783 Patient Experience comments which in turn has informed this report.



Recommendations

1. Healthwatch Knowsley to seek to work with Knowsley CCG to develop piece of work which looks in depth at people's preference in relation to access to primary care in Knowsley. Working closer with the established Patient Participation Groups in Knowsley linked to GP practices to both share the findings of this report and also to build on the understanding of what patients require.
2. A focused campaign needs to be undertaken to inform the community of the current pressures on primary care, the options available and raise awareness of the types of appointments that can be had with a GP. A theme within this could be addressing the misconception that a telephone appointment is not a GP consultation.
3. Explore the area of patient choice and how practices can work closer together to provide a range of options across a geographical area. For example promoting to patients that if they can choose to move to a neighbouring practice if they would prefer to access appointments in different ways. (Skype / telephone based or through sit and wait)

“Can never get through on phone to get an appointment, when finally get through no appointments left. if lucky to get appointment waiting for over 1 hour to 1 and a half for appointment. Even though I let the reception know my son was autistic and doesn't do waiting well. Once see a doctor, doctors are fab.”

“I need monthly prescriptions, however, I can get really good service or really bad service. Consistency would be great! When I phone to re-order I am questioned by the receptionist about if I am due them and I am often told I am not. I then have to spend 10 minutes explaining why I am right and they are wrong. By this time all staff and patients present have overheard the conversation. It makes me feel like I am trying to get my prescription before its due which I am not.”

Introduction

The General Practice Forward View (GP Forward View), published in April 2016, commits to an extra £2.4 billion a year to support general practice services by 2020/21. This is in response to the fact that General Practice is under an increasing amount of pressure. A rising workload, driven by increasing demand, which is also matched by growing patient concerns about ease of access to services provides a challenging picture.

In the Healthwatch England survey of people's priorities, which was carried out across the 152 Local Healthwatch in the Network involving 220,000 people access to primary care services came out as second highest priority to Mental Health services .

(<http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/news/peoples-top-five-health-and-care-issues-2016>)

The CQC and local Healthwatch - Working together in primary and integrated care briefing (Jan 2017) recognises the role Healthwatch and partners have to play in improving primary care. Once again this places patient experience and feedback central to the shaping of services moving forward.

“As regulator for health and adult social care services in England and health champion for local people, CQC and local Healthwatch have a crucial role in ensuring primary care is as good as it can be and that it works and responds to the needs and wants of the people and communities that use it.”
Primary and Integrated Care briefing (Jan 2017)

At a local level, Healthwatch Knowsley carries the role of helping to define what is referred to above as the “the needs and wants of the people and communities” who access primary care. Through community based engagement the experiences of patients provide a rich resource of feedback from which key information can originate. Using this information captured, the intention of this report is to help shape the future commissioning of primary care services across Knowsley.

The timing for this provides a real opportunity to again work closely with Knowsley Clinical Commissioning Group and in particular help to

“We want healthcare services to be more effective, efficient and inclusive, and wherever safe and possible to do so, for the services to be delivered outside of hospital, closer to people's home.” - Knowsley CCG



“It was a useful networking event, a good opportunity to meet key partners face to face and to pick up on the ground what's going on.” CQC
Inspection Manager

Introduction

support the development of Locality Working which is a key priority with the 2016/17 Knowsley CCG Transformation programme. Since the introduction of Healthwatch there has been a strong working relationship with Knowsley Clinical Commissioning Group and through representation on the Primary Care Committee and the Governing Body it is felt that Healthwatch has a robust route to help shape primary care locally.

The springboard for this piece of work was the Healthwatch Knowsley Annual Event held in July 2016. During the event the membership of Healthwatch and stakeholders were asked to help set the top priority for Healthwatch Knowsley for 2016/17. This was a vital activity in understanding the direction of travel that community members wanted Healthwatch to take and the key issue that needed to be addressed.

Based on patient experience information collated from community members in the period 2015-16 the following areas represent the most commented Health or Social Care areas:

- Access to GP/Primary Services
- Experience of Accident and Emergency Services
- Access Issues for people with a Physical Disability or Sensory Impairment

Having identified the top three commented areas, a voting process was then carried out with community members and stakeholders to identify which area should form the basis of a special enquiry.

The area that was identified was Access to GP/ Primary Care services. It was strongly felt that this is an issue that is constantly highlighted as a concern by both patients and professionals and is often the subject of media scrutiny.

“I booked online which was quite easy to do. The appointment had a wait of one and a half weeks - it would have been better if appointment had been nearer to the time when I needed it.”

“No problems - get home visits /consultation as I am housebound. Happy as don't have to wait in surgery.”

“I went to my doctors to discuss my condition. I had been trying since September to get an appointment as Mondays and Fridays are my only days I could attend. I was in the waiting room for 40 minutes. I had blood tests and was told I may need a scan.”

“Called for my 2 year old son to see the GP and was told I cannot get him in.”



Methodology

From July 2016 to February 2017, Healthwatch Knowsley conducted a series of visits to GP Surgeries and also to the two local Hospital Trusts to talk to people who were visiting the Emergency Departments.

At the GP Surgeries we asked people about their experience of making appointments and whether they felt that they were being offered appointments in a way that suited them. We also asked how long they had waited for an available appointment and if any alternatives had been offered to them. Feedback was also sought on quality of treatment, communication and accessibility of the service.

Healthwatch community members (Authorised Enter and View representatives) also visited the Emergency Departments of the two local Hospitals. Each visit was undertaken in the morning time and the Healthwatch team spoke to people in the waiting to be seen in the minors area of the department.



Legislation allows 'Enter and View' activity to be undertaken with regard to the following organisations or persons:

- NHS Trusts
- NHS Foundation Trusts
- Local Authorities
- a person providing primary medical services (e.g. GPs)
- a person providing primary dental services (i.e. dentists)
- a person providing primary ophthalmic services (i.e. opticians)
- a person providing pharmaceutical services (e.g. community pharmacists)
- a person who owns or controls premises where ophthalmic and pharmaceutical services are provided
- Bodies or institutions which are contracted by Local Authorities or the NHS to provide health or care services (e.g. adult social care homes and day-care centres).

During the visits and where appropriate we used questions to discuss how long people had been experiencing their symptoms, and whether they had considered any other options before attending the hospital and how long they had been waiting.

All the information, once anonymized, was uploaded to the Healthwatch Knowsley Feedback Centre in order to review and analyse the information and understand any clear trends.

This table provides details of the localities from where respondents reside. Please note that the people who have told us they live outside of the borough use a GP practice within Knowsley.

Locality	Number of Respondents
Cronton	1
Fazakerley	8
Halewood	47
Huyton	213
Kirkby	215
Knowsley Village	3
Non-Knowsley	9
Page Moss	2
Prescot	50
Roby	1
Stockbridge Village	37
Tarbock	8
Whiston	49
Total	643



What people told us...

Overall Satisfaction with GP Services

Healthwatch Knowsley continually reviews the patient experience satisfaction levels with all Health and Social Care services provided across the borough.

The Healthwatch Knowsley Feedback Centre analyses the information provided to provide a rating for these services. All respondents are asked to rate the service accessed from 1(terrible) to 5 (Excellent) and the results were as follows:

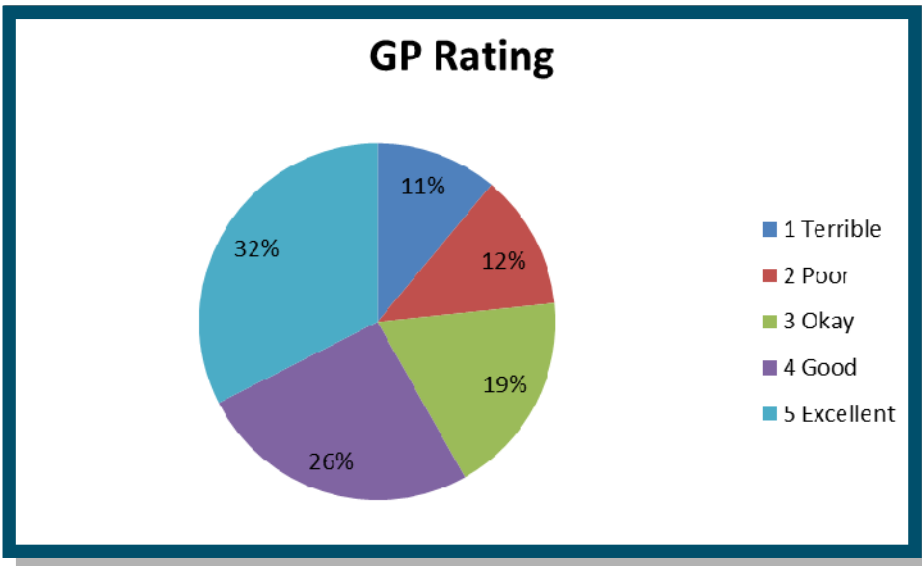
Rating	Number of Respondents	Average Rating
1 = Terrible	71	
2 = Poor	79	
3 = Okay	119	
4 = Good	165	
5 = Excellent	209	
Total	643	3.56

The analysis shows that over a third of patients who commented on the service they receive at their local GP Practice rated it as “Excellent”.

In July we formally launched a new feedback centre where people can tell us about the experiences of hospital care, Nursing and residential care, Primary Care Access, Pharmacies, Mental Health Services, Dentists, Opticians, Cancer Care, Podiatry and Walk-in Centres - any Health or Social Care Services.



The site is mobile phone compatible so in Real time people could leave a comment and rate a service whilst sat in the waiting room or following an appointment.

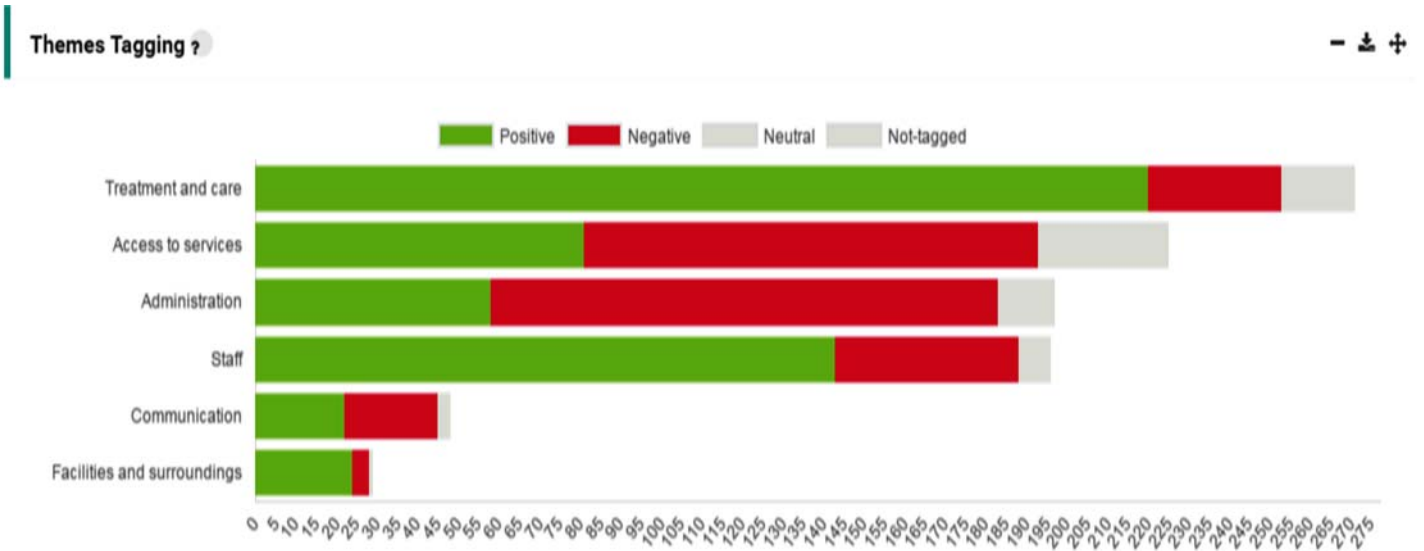




What people told us...

Further analysis is then carried out to find out what the key areas of satisfaction or concern are for people who use local services.

This information can be analysed to give further details about each aspect of the services provided. The themes highlighted for Primary Care services are shown below:



This gives a very clear indication that whilst the majority of people are telling us that they are happy with the treatment they receive and rate the staff quite highly they are experiencing issues with access to services and the administrative procedures at their practice.

What people told us...

Treatment and Care

Healthwatch is able to report that people viewed their experience of using their GP services as positive and they also commented on the quality of the services that they received. It is worth noting that even if people have had an issue accessing the service they still feel that they were cared for and listened to when they saw a clinician. People also comment on practice nurses and reception staff as having helped them when needed.

In all a total of 274 people commented on the treatment and care they received whilst at their GP service and of those people 220 told us that they had a positive experience of their service.

A further 143 people singled out the staff as being a real asset. Although there were individuals singled out in some comments it seems that across the board Knowsley enjoys high quality care from caring staff groups.

“Have to wait like with most GP's but if it is an emergency, they give you a quicker appointment, the doctor is really nice. Reception staff are good as well. On most visits it is around 5-10 minutes. The centre is spotless as well.”

“I've changed my GP to come here. My family has been under this GP for thirty years I'm happy with the service everyone is great. The reception the staff are great here it's a friendly environment and the doctors are easy to talk too.”

“The GP's are good and so are the reception staff. Staff always help me I am blind.”

“You mainly see the same GP but you can request to see the GP you want. I think the GP's are fantastic. The reception staff are really helpful too. I attend with my son, I am his carer.”

“From Receptionist, nurse, Doctor, all excellent”

“Great communication between GP and patient. Referrals to appropriate services very fast.”

“It is easy to get an appointment. My GP seems to listen and give me privacy. Everything I ask of them they seem to do.”

“Always difficult to get an appointment, however good care from GP when you do get to see them.”

“Our experience is that we are very happy with all the services. We are elderly and feel that we are well cared for”

“My partner has Spondylitis in his back and Cornerways are doing their best to help him or refer him as quickly as possible to other bodies, i.e. Consultants or hospitals who can.”

“It is easy to get an appointment. My GP seems to listen and give me privacy. Everything I ask of them they seem to do.”

“A very pleasant doctors surgery all the staff are very pleasant and don't make you feel like just a number.”

“Went to the doctors for a check up on my blood sugar levels, everything was fine, just waiting for the results. I attend the GP because I have COPD. Could not find any fault with the staff, I feel very looked after. The GP's have come out to see me when I have rang up.”

“Staff very friendly and helpful.”

“A very pleasant doctors surgery all the staff are very pleasant and don't make you feel like just a number.”

“A very pleasant doctors surgery all the staff are very pleasant and don't make you feel like just a number.”

“Satisfied with treatment - everyone very courteous and efficient”

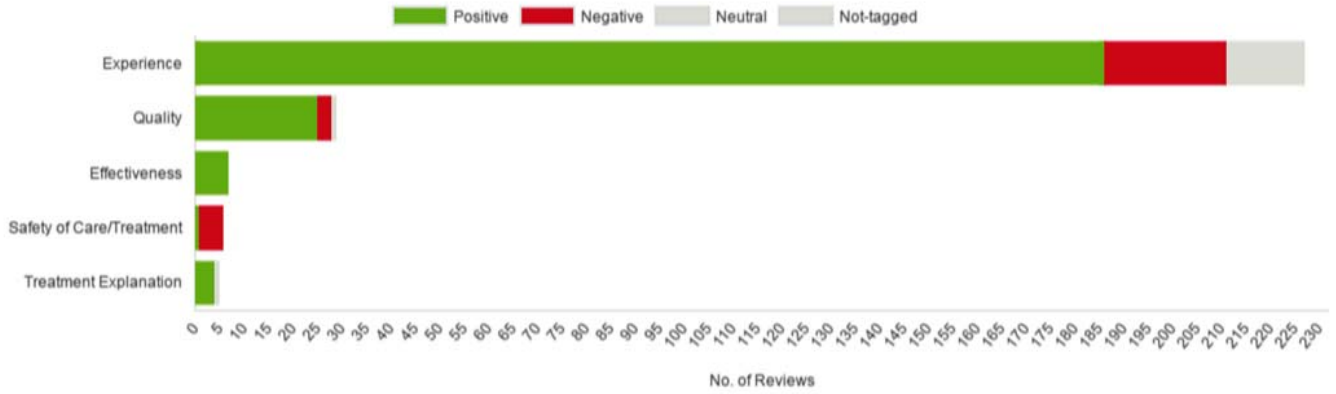
“Very good, doctor was very thorough, didn't feel rushed arranged for follow up tests great service overall”



What people told us...

Treatment and Care Themes have provided the following results:

Themes Tagging ?



Search:

Theme name	Reviews	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Not Tagged
Experience	227	82%	11%	7%	0%
Quality	29	86%	10%	3%	0%
Effectiveness	7	100%	0	0	0
Safety of Care/Treatment	6	17%	83%	0	0
Treatment Explanation	5	80%	0	20%	0%



What people told us...

Accessing Services

146 people told us about their experience whilst accessing GP services. Further analysis of the comments around Access to Services highlight waiting times and lack of access to services as people's key priorities.



Looking at the comments that relate to the theme of administration and the appointments process provides further insight as to what peoples' experiences are when attempting to access services at their GP.



What people told us...

Looking at the comments that relate to the theme of administration and the appointments process provides further insight as to what peoples' experiences are when attempting to access services at their GP.



Analysis of the comments received showed that by far the most negatively commented areas are access to services and administration. Further analysis of these comments highlighted three key themes:

- Difficulty using the appointment booking system (92 comments)
- A long wait for an appointment (110 comments)
- A long wait at the appointment (40 comments)

“Excellent service can usually get an appointment in the day but you have to queue up before 8am, otherwise you wouldn’t get one. Difficult to phone for an appointment as the lines are busy.”

“Only manage to get appointments 50% of the time usually get through to out of hours.”

“Arrived on time, was seen 40 minutes late. I had another appointment with someone else at the same building and had to take my 90 year old Mother home where the carer for Mum was waiting.”

“Issues with staff attitude. Problems getting the appointment time wanted - could wait up to 3 weeks for an appointment. Fax machine causes issues in getting prescriptions - waited for a week for a prescription.”

“I find it easy to get an appointment at my GP in Halewood - never have to wait long. Staff are nice and provide a good service. New surgery and clean environment.”

“Called for my 2 year old son to see the GP and was told I cannot get him in.”

“You can't get through on the phone”

“Good GP, hard to get an appointment.”

“Lovely staff but over 50 minutes wait to be seen.”



What people told us...

Booking Appointments

There appear to be several different appointment booking systems running across the borough and this means that people's experience and satisfaction can differ across the practices.

It also gives Healthwatch Knowsley some cause for concern as to the equity of access for people in different areas of the borough. For example one practice offers a telephone triage system, another has a combination of booked and drop in appointments (arrive and wait to be seen) and access to services through a mobile App is also available. We offer no comments on which service should be provided as our feedback suggests that people value the differing systems for a range of reasons.

It is appreciated that there is no "one size fits all" solution to the issue of booking appointments. This potentially poses the question is equity of access to be sought for (Each GP providing the same range of appointment options) or is developing a clear choice which will allow patients to access a primary care services in way they would prefer. As an example, a GP practice in Knowsley location offering an extended range of web based appointments in an area with another GP practice in the same area providing greater access to a number of arrive and wait to be seen slots.

In particular people tell us that they experience difficulties in getting through in order to book an appointment over the telephone. 105 people told us that they struggle to get through to the practice on the telephone and this can cause a level of frustration.

Positive waits

"Good here compared to other family members who struggle with other GP's. Easy to get appointment phoned at 11 got an appointment for 12:10 really good."

"Phoned up at 10:30 got an appointment at 11:50. That's was good for me got to Dr's had to sit there till 12:05 to see Dr but still positive."

"Can't ever get through"

"Phone lines open at 8am - constantly engaged you can also stand and wait from 8am to get an appointment. However with two young children at school age it is impossible to go in person at 8am and wait also to keep trying to get through on the phone is impossible."

"You have to be there at 8.30am for an appointment. You can't ring up, you are asked to come back tomorrow. Once I have got my appointment the GP and reception staff are good."

"I don't have to use my GP very often but when I do I find it's a 2 or 3 day wait for an appointment. Can't get to GP before 9.30am because my carers come before that time. Staff ok, clean surgery."





What people told us...

Wait for an Appointment

Comments covered a range of issues, and even when people described difficulties in accessing an appointment they still expressed satisfaction with their treatment when they received it.

Sometimes the reason for a delay in appointments are as a result of patient choice for example if a patient wants to see a specific clinician. This is obviously beyond the control of the practice but does still generate comments more information could be provided as to what sessions each GP is available.

Some practices offer a combination of booked and walk in appointments and this seems to suit some patients, whilst other practices offer a telephone triage system. This is still met with some resistance from patients who would prefer to see a doctor face to face, whilst suiting other people who find this way of working more convenient. The key issues with the telephone system seemed to be that people were concerned about privacy or did not recognise this as a proper consultation or appointment with a clinician, leading them to believe that they still have a long wait to see a doctor.

It must also be noted that 43 respondents reported that they had no issues with booking appointments and are happy with the system in place.

These comments came in particular from Kirkby residents, although some of the Huyton practices and one practice in Halewood were also rated highly for ease of access. However there was no notable difference in the satisfaction levels based on age or gender.

Waiting at the Appointment

A further area of concern that is raised is the waiting time when people arrive for their appointments. This was highlighted as a particular concern by parents of young children who can find this a very stressful situation.

The lowest satisfaction level (2.98 out of five) was from the 53 people who described themselves as a carer or relative whilst the 541 patients who were there independently appeared more willing to wait, scoring the service at an average of 3.66 out of five. However it is important to note that we also received comments from older people who found the chairs uncomfortable if they had to wait a long time.

“Walk in, no appointment necessary - 8.30am-10.30am each Monday and Friday. Ring at 8am for any urgent appointment.”

“Waiting time for doctor of choice can be several days, but once seen received excellent service with quick referral for blood test and x-rays.”

“Always behind on appointments and answering the phone. Always ok when I visit, however, it is hard to get an appointment and always behind. Appointment today was 9.40am - currently 10.10am and still waiting.”

“Difficulty getting an appointment - often waiting for 30 minutes in the waiting room. However, the GP does give you time during the appointment. I see the same GP all the time.”



Practices covered in the responses

The following information shows the number of comments against each of the practices in Knowsley.

Practice	Number of Responses
Camberley Medical Centre (Aston Healthcare)	8
Cedar Cross Medical Centre	17
Colby Medical Centre (Bluebell Medical Centre)	5
Cornerways Medical Centre (North Huyton Primary Care Resource Centre)	38
Dinas Lane Medical Centre	28
Dovecot Health Centre	1
Dr Kinloch and Dr Moran (The Halewood Centre)	14
Dr Maassarani and Partners (Towerhill Primary Care Resource Centre)	28
Gateacre Brow Practice	1
Gresford Medical Centre (Aston Healthcare Limited)	2
Hillside House Surgery (Dr Pervez Sadiq)	10
Hunts Cross Health Centre	4
Knowsley Medical Centre (Aston Healthcare)	6
Longview Medical Centre	18
Manor Farm Road Surgery (Aston Healthcare)	40
Millbrook Medical Centre	35
Nutgrove Villa Surgery	10
Park House Medical Centre	18
Pilch Lane Surgery (Dr M Soares' Practice)	9
Prescot Medical Centre (Dr Heath)	17
Primrose Medical Practice	2
Roby Medical Centre	6
Roseheath Surgery	4
St John's Surgery Ltd	6
St Laurence's Medical Centre (Dr RI King's Practice)	32
Stockbridge Village Medical Centre (Dr P Rigby and Partners)	37
Tarbock Medical Centre	16
The Bluebell Medical Centre (Dr Peter Ayegba)	32
The Halewood Centre (Aston Healthcare)	4
The Hollies Medical Centre	13
The MacMillan Surgery (St Chads Centre)	33



Practices covered in the responses

Practice	Number of Responses
Trentham Medical Centre (Dr VK Tewari's Practice)	13
Unknown GP Halewood	4
Unknown GP - Huyton	2
Unknown GP - Kirkby	6
Unknown GP - Prescott	5
Urgent Care 24 (Liverpool and Knowsley NHS Out of Hours Provider)	1
Whiston Primary Care Resource Centre (Aston Healthcare)	8
Whiston Primary Care Resource Centre (MK and NN Rahman, Cross Lane Surgery)	26
Wingate Medical Centre	78
Total	643



Comparison with previous reports

Comparing the findings with the 2006 and 2011 reports.

Reports on this subject have been produced by two of our predecessor organisations, Knowsley Local Involvement Network (Link) (2008-2013) and Knowsley Patient and Public Involvement in Health Forum (PPIF) (2003-2008). In addition NHS England and prior to 2013 the Department of Health have routinely commissioned organisations to carry out patient satisfaction surveys each year.

Although it is not always a direct comparison as prior to 2009 the survey only focused on the Directed Enhanced Services (DESS) known as the “Improved Access Scheme” and “Choose and Book”, without questioning the patients overall satisfaction with the services they were receiving. However we are including these results for completeness.

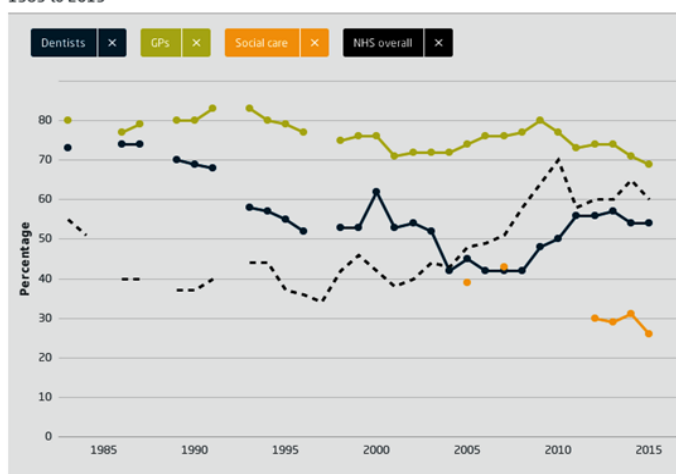
Overall satisfaction with GP Services

The surveys carried out in Knowsley show that satisfaction increased from 72.5% in 2006 to a peak of 80% in 2011, reducing to 74.08% this year. This is in line with the Kings Fund surveys, which show a steady increase in satisfaction from 2000 reaching a peak 2010 with a steady decline since then. The National Patient Survey shows satisfaction remaining constant at 88% throughout this period.

	2006		2011		2016-17	
	PPIF	Patient Survey	LINK	Patient Survey	Healthwatch	Patient Survey
Overall Satisfaction	72.50%	88.00%	80.00%	88.93%	74.08%	88.00%
Number of responses	917	824	337	1490	643	2342
Confidence 95% with a margin of error	5	5	10	3	5	3

(Satisfaction with access to appointments only <https://gp-patient.co.uk/surveys-and-reports#june-2007>)

Figure 4: Satisfaction with GP, dentistry and social care services - very or quite satisfied, 1983 to 2015



Questions asked: 'From your own experience, or from what you have heard, please say how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the way in which each of these parts of the National Health Service runs nowadays. First, local doctors or GPs?... National Health Service dentists?'; 'And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with social care provided by local authorities for people who cannot look after themselves because of illness, disability or old age?' (2012-15); 'From your own experience, or from what you have heard, please say how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the services provided to people who need this kind of regular help with looking after themselves, whose family cannot provide it?' (2005, 2007). GP and dentist questions not asked in 1984, 1985, 1988, 1992 and 1997. Social care questions not asked before 2005 or in 2006 and 2008-11.

Source: King's Fund analysis of NatCen Social Research's British Social Attitudes survey data



We then drilled further into the National Patient Survey data and although 88% of respondents rate their surgery as good or very good, in answer to the question “Would you recommend your GP surgery to someone who has just moved to the local area?” 79% of people responded that they would definitely (47% 1106) or probably (32% 754) recommend their practice. These percentages are similar to the percentages of people who told Healthwatch and our predecessor organisations that they rated their surgery as “Excellent” or “Good”.

(https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/public-satisfaction-nhs-2015?gclid=CNPqmY-3xNMCFUI_GwodNgwISQ)



Friends and Family Test

Friends & Family Test

The Friends and Family Test for NHS Knowsley CCG for the same period as this report (June 2016- February 2017) breaks down as follows:

Month	Total Responses	Percentage Recommended	Percentage Not Recommended	Extremely Likely	Likely	Neither	Unlikely	Extremely Unlikely	Don't Know
June	435	79%	6%	184	156	28	19	6	37
July	272	90%	6%	150	93	5	13	2	6
August	274	87%	3%	122	111	24	6	3	3
September	227	94%	3%	142	64	6	6	0	2
October	658	89%	7%	374	202	20	32	11	9
November	250	83%	5%	121	86	19	5	7	12
December	217	88%	7%	103	85	9	13	2	2
January	478	87%	5%	248	161	24	21	4	12
February	567	82%	7%	291	171	43	19	21	21
Totals	3378	85%	6%	1735	1129	178	134	56	104

(<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/friends-and-family-test-data-february-2017/>)

These figures have a confidence level of 3 and are therefore broadly in line with the findings of the current Healthwatch Knowsley Survey.

Friends and Family Data is not available for comparison to the previous reports as GPs were not required to collect this data prior to 1st December 2014.

Confidence Levels

Prior to sharing these results we have checked the level of confidence that we could have in the results using and assigned them an appropriate weighting using a sample size calculator from a mainstream survey tool.

(<https://www.surveymonkey.com/blog/2011/09/15/how-many-people-do-i-need-to-take-my-survey/>)

Respondents Needed at Error of ±3%, ±5%, & ±10%			
Population	±3%	±5%	±10%
500	345	220	80
1,000	525	285	90
3,000	810	350	100
5,000	910	370	100
10,000	1,000	385	100
100,000	1,100	400	100
1,000,000	1,100	400	100
10,000,000	1,110	400	100



Focus on Kirkby

Overall Satisfaction with Services

To try and understand more fully the experiences of people who access services we have undertaken a more focussed analysis on the feedback relating to the Kirkby area.

In total we have captured the experiences of 225 people who use GP services in Kirkby. This included visiting the practices to talk to patients in the waiting area, as well as collecting experiences from our regular outreach and engagement activities.

The practices covered are:

“Brilliant that all the Dr's are in one building. The Turn up and wait - service is really good. I am here to get my bloods done today linked to a diagnosis. The whole team at the GP practice are brilliant. I moved from another practice but could not get a appointment - moved for the "turn up and wait" - family members will move next.”

Practice	Number of Respondents
Dr Maassarani and Partners (Towerhill Primary Care Resource Centre)	28
Millbrook Medical Centre	35
St Laurence's Medical Centre (Dr RI King's Practice)	32
The MacMillan Surgery (St Chads Centre)	33
Trentham Medical Centre (Dr VK Tewari's Practice)	13
Unknown GP - Kirkby	6
Wingate Medical Centre	78
Total	225

Using the Healthwatch Knowsley Feedback Centre we can ascertain the satisfaction levels across the following domains across all the practices. The rating equal 1(terrible) through to 5 (Excellent).

Domain	Average
Rating	3.6
Quality of care	4.08
Quality of treatment	4.16
Staff	4.18
Cleanliness	4.46
Communication	4.03
Accessibility	4.19
Safety	4.39
Appointment (Waiting times)	3.65

Key Themes

Using the Healthwatch Knowsley Feedback Centre we can see that the responses captured across the Kirkby area are reflective of the borough in the themes that are identified as priorities. The majority of patients are happy with the care and treatment they receive and are also complementary about the staff but do report that they face issues when trying to access their appointments.



There are a range of appointment systems available across the Kirkby area with surgeries having a mix of options for patients. It is noticeable that even within the same practice different patients' have conflicting views across the appointments that are available and the means for accessing the service.

The following comments are taken from the same practice:

Comments relating to the old system of booking an appointment:

"I find it extremely difficult to access my GP. To get an appointment I have to stay awake until midnight and call the surgery's automated appointment line. I work full time. I have two young children so I find having to stay awake until midnight both tiring and unacceptable. When I ring during the day I can't get through to make an appointment. I can only have appointments on Monday's so this limits my access further. I worry I can't get appointments for the children. There are no nurse prescribers at this GP for when I feel it's not appropriate to utilise a GP. I came from Westmoreland in Aintree hospital grounds which was excellent. I've tried to get my family on the books of a different surgery and have been refused due to the fact that I am registered here - what happened to patient choice? I have to use St Chads options Dr's - totally inappropriate, I should be able to see my GP."

"I can normally get an appointment if I ring and ring at 8am for the same day but they can be limited times so can be difficult if you work and need an appointment to fit in with work or days off."

Comments following the introduction of a telephone triage approach:

"The GP I see is very good, a great listener and empathic. The receptionists are another matter; they can be very obstructive, make mistakes and not let the patient speak without interrupting. The phone for an appointment service is full of faults and not fit for purpose."

"I have no complaints about the doctors but the procedure to get an appointment is awkward. The doctor has to call you back and it's difficult if you are in a public place having to tell the doctor all of your symptoms while people are around."

"Takes ages to get an appointment. You have to explain to a receptionist what is wrong with you, and wait for a doctor to call you back to see if you need an appointment."

"The surgery is a good medical surgery - excellent. The only thing is the new system for phoning up - you can't get the doctors you are used to. Previous system was better."

"The new appointments system requires waiting in for hours for doctor to call back to see if its necessary for you to see the doctor."

"Very happy with help given to me on my health. Not happy with the ring back service in the doctors, waiting for doctor to ring back within 4 hours before seeing a doctor."



Focus on Kirkby

“I am 60 years of age and still working. You can only have a telephone appointment and speak to a doctor before you can have an appointment to come and visit the doctor. This is not acceptable, when you work you don't wish to discuss your symptoms in the office via telephone.”

Compared to the following:

“I haven't use GP for a while, my husband and daughter use regularly. When you have got to phone, not had any problems. One of the GP's is fantastic with children, takes time to listen to people.”

“Doctors always helpful. I use the GP app. Useful working around work.”

“Improved a lot since they have changed the way that you booked appointments. Before the other system wasn't working. Changed to mobile App where GP can call you back. A lot better service.”

“Easy to get an appointment. I am on a special care plan and waiting for an appointment to go to Whiston Hospital.”

Again the above range of comments show that ‘one size’ does not fit all but it seems that it would be unrealistic to expect that each practice provides appointment options that suit the whole patient list.

It should be noted that although it is not highlighted as a key theme patients in Kirkby are also very pleased with the improvements to their services since the new St Chads Building has been opened, giving them access to integrated services in a modern comfortable environment.

Looking specifically at a surgery offering a Telephone Triage and a surgery offering a Combination of options, it would appear that the majority of people prefer to have a range of ways to access the service. This is borne out in the comments that people have shared with us.

Telephone Triage

“New system is a phone consultation then the GP decides if you need a face to face appointment or not. No longer take automated appointments and it seems that the last couple of times I have rang it has only been for emergency appointments only. I preferred the automated booking system. Also, I have heard that some surgeries are considering Skype type consultations which is in my opinion ridiculous and I certainly will not take part in that if it goes ahead.”

“Not sure about calling doctor and waiting for call-back. Not sure if it works.”

“I am 60 years of age and still working. You can only have a telephone appointment and speak to a doctor before you can have an appointment to come and visit the doctor. This is not acceptable, when you work you don't wish to discuss your symptoms in the office via telephone.”



Focus on Kirkby

“Very good, doctor was very thorough, didn't feel rushed arranged for follow up tests great service overall”

“Doctor gave me plenty of time and let me explain everything.”

Combination Appointments

“Visiting GP with Daughter. Waiting time was a little long especially with small children but to be expected as GP offers a walk in service. GP always listens and offers good quality of care.”

“Would give this service a 5 but sometimes you have to wait, other than that it is really good. Staff friendly and helpful. I ask to see Dr Thong as he tells it as it is.”

“Always behind on appointments and answering the phone. Always ok when I visit, however, it is hard to get an appointment and always behind. Appointment today was 9.40am - currently 10.10am and still waiting.”

“You can get an appointment straight away. The staff are really nice - makes appointments easier.”

“Brilliant that all the Dr's are in one building. The Turn up and wait - service is really good. I am here to get my bloods done today linked to a diagnosis. The whole team at the GP practice are brilliant. I moved from another practice but could not get a appointment - moved for the "turn up and wait" - family members will move next.”

Recommendation

Although some people were pleased with the offer of an online booking “App” there was some frustration with not knowing when the Doctor would call them back. Furthermore people do not seem to recognise this as a consultation and therefore when they are offered a face to face appointment following this, they view that as a long wait for a first appointment rather than understanding that it is a follow up appointment.

Clearer communication is required to help patients understand the appointments systems and to help manage expectations.



Waiting in Accident and Emergency

As part of this piece of work Healthwatch visited the Accident and Emergency Departments in Aintree and Whiston Hospitals in October and November.

We attended in the morning to find out why people were visiting the department and if they had considered any other options prior to that. We only visited the Minors area, as we felt that was the most appropriate area to find the information required.

Date	Hospital
11 th October 2016	Aintree Hospital Emergency Department
17 th October 2016	Whiston Hospital Accident & Emergency Unit
14 th November 2016	Aintree Hospital Emergency Department
21 st November 2016	Whiston Hospital Accident and Emergency Unit
6 th February 2017	Whiston Hospital Accident and Emergency Unit
13 th February 2017	Aintree Hospital Emergency Department

In total we spoke to 140 people in the waiting rooms, 65 at Aintree Hospital and 75 at Whiston. Not everybody told us the reason why they were visiting, and we did not ask any personal questions. Of the people who told us why they were visiting the main reasons were:

Reason for visiting	Number
Referred by GP/Other Service	27
Didn't want to wait for an appointment	25
Accident/Emergency	15
Unhappy with treatment elsewhere	6
Unknown	67
Total	140

37% of people who gave a reason for visiting told us that they had spoken to their GP or another healthcare professional and had been advised to come to the Department. A further 34% told us that they had either not attempted to get a GP appointment or had been offered an appointment that they did not wish to wait for. A further 8% told us they had been to a primary care service and had not been happy with the treatment they received.

“Had an appointment arranged at the GP but couldn't wait for treatment so decided to come to A&E. Has done this previously as has a long term condition. They always look after the patient well here”

“Was sent to A&E by GP. Very impressed by speed. triaged within 10 minutes of arrival”

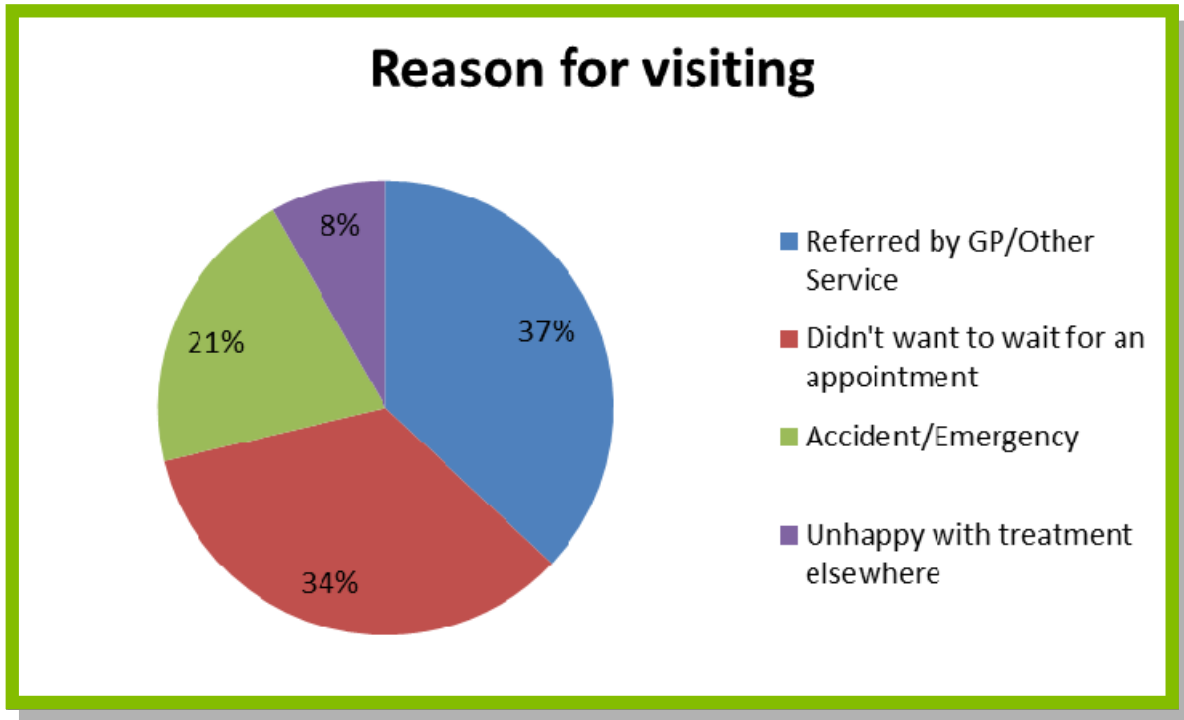
“Broken elbow - wait was so long last night, came back today. I came last night and there was a 5 hour wait so I went back home - came again this morning. Really good this morning seen within the hour, just waiting on x-ray results”

“Here with son. Thought about coming last week but decided to see if improved over the weekend. Had been to the GP two weeks ago but did not think the painkillers they prescribed were doing any good”

“Had come straight here as leg was really hurting. Had been waiting about 45 minutes, told would need an X Ray but no indication of how long the waiting time would be, just told to sit down and wait. Unhappy that had not been offered pain relief or any explanation about waiting times.”



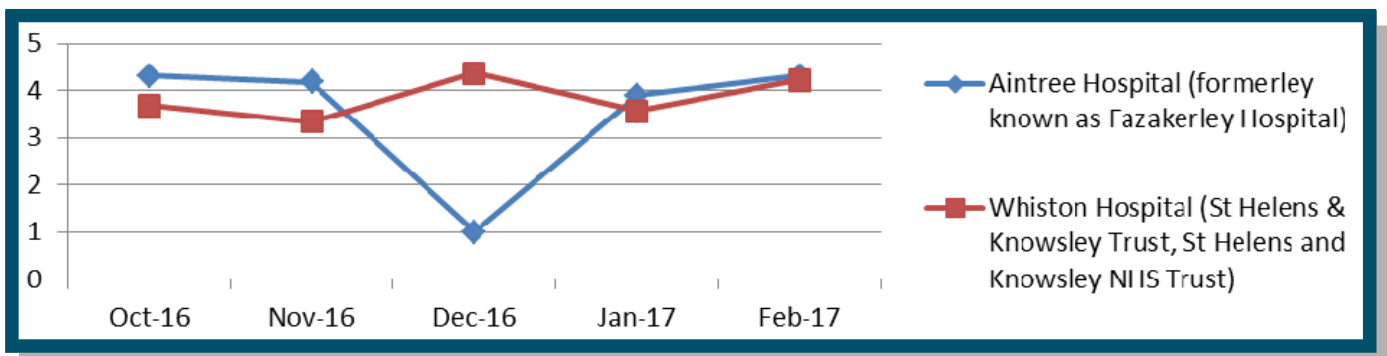
Waiting in Accident and Emergency



People told us varying experiences of waiting times, and this is undoubtedly due to the triaging system, however a consistent concern was the lack of information about how long the wait would be, with only two people telling us that they had been informed of the length of time they would be waiting.

Satisfaction levels with the Departments highlight the pressures that Aintree Hospital has been experiencing. Overall the Trust has a higher satisfaction level, however when viewing the ratings on a monthly basis it becomes apparent that as winter started to set in Aintree experienced pressures and Whiston appeared to cope better.

Average rating for the whole period	
Aintree Hospital	Whiston Hospital
4.13	4.06

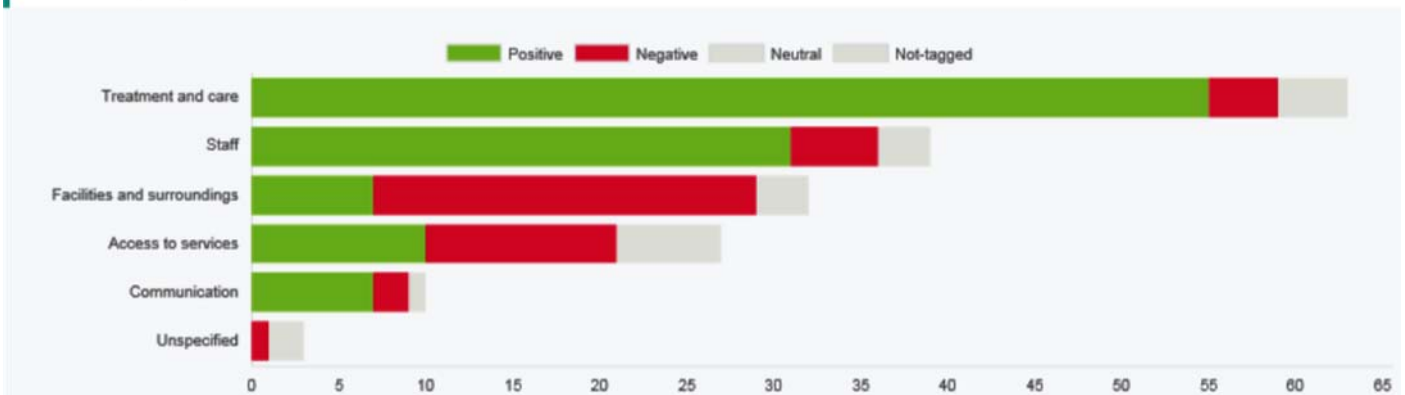




Waiting in Accident and Emergency

Aintree Hospital Emergency Department

Themes Tagging



The visits to Aintree took place in the new Emergency Department and as the illustration clearly shows 85% (55) of the people we spoke to told us that they were happy with the treatment and care that they received in the Aintree Emergency Department. This is particularly noteworthy as all of our visits took place at a time of severe Winter Pressure for the NHS. People also told us that they felt the staff were excellent. The design of the department means that it feels spacious and relaxed and the café area means that people who are waiting for a long time have access to food and drink which can be eaten at a table.

Concerns were raised about accessing the Department, both as a result of this difficulty in finding parking spaces but also in relation to the building work that was being undertaken during the course of our visits.

Although there were information signs showing the expected waiting times not everyone was aware of them and therefore many of the people we spoke to were unaware of how long they would have to wait.

On our final visit the Frailty Unit at had opened in the Department. Two of our visitors had the opportunity to look around it and were very impressed with the unit. Patients who attend and meet the criteria are taken through to the unit which means they do not have the stress of having to wait in a crowded and noised Emergency Department. A patient who had been recently discharged told us he was “annoyed with my children at first because I thought they had paid for me to go private”

Healthwatch intend to visit again at other times of the day and week to find out more about the services offered in the new Emergency Department.

“Really looked after me today at A&E. The staff and medical student was very good. Waited around 2 hours to be seen but the staff were lovely, really nice.”

“Parking a nightmare. Improve parking in A&E, need closer parking due to having to walk far to A&E - not very good when feeling unwell.”

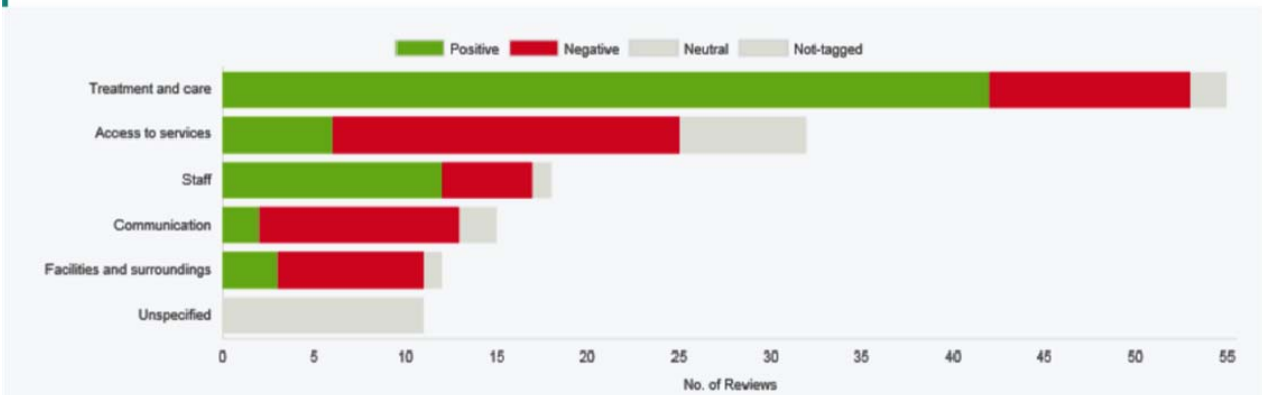
“Had a fall on Saturday - hurt my back and side, it is now worse. Rang the GP and was told to go to A&E. Parking is an issue, dropped off by my wife who will collect me later. Lack of waiting room display the waiting times - 2 screens but perhaps a screen at the far end of waiting area - UC 24 end of waiting area.”



Waiting in Accident and Emergency

Whiston Hospital Accident and Emergency

Themes Tagging



The visits to Whiston Hospital Accident and Emergency Department mainly took place in the main waiting room, however there was also one visit to the Ambulance Forward Wait area and the Children's waiting area and as the illustration clearly shows 76% (42) of the people we spoke to told us that they were happy with the treatment and care that they received in Accident and Emergency. This is particularly noteworthy as all of our visits took place at a time of severe Winter Pressure for the NHS. People also told us that they thought the staff were excellent. The design of the waiting area means that it can feel a little crowded and noisy, particularly with the radio playing.

Concerns were raised about accessing the Department; people told us they felt it was a long walk from the car park to the unit.

There were no information signs indicating how long people should expect to wait and nobody that we spoke to was aware of how long they should expect to wait and how the prioritising system worked.

The Children's waiting area was calm and tranquil with play areas suitable for all ages. The parents in the waiting area told us that they were kept well informed of what was happening and how long they could expect to wait.

In the Ambulance forward wait both ambulance and hospital staff were caring for the patients on trolleys. Ambulance staff told us that they have found the waiting times for handovers at all the accident and emergency departments a challenge but praised the staff for how they were dealing with it. The patients in this waiting area who were able to talk to us told us that they felt very safe and well cared for.

"I attended A&E and had to wait five hours. I noticed that people who had come in after me got seen before me. The other thing I noticed was staff kept calling the same names over and over and the people had already gone through for treatment. The staff and treatment I received was first class."

"Service is brilliant. Seen on time. Everything explained. Very happy - no complaints."

"Went to GP first but the treatment did not work as it stings and did not help so trying A&E as still in pain. Had tried to make an appointment at St Helens hospital eye unit but felt needed help more urgently than the appointment offered. A&E had said they would make an appointment with OPD but not happy so I am going to try St Pauls at the Royal"



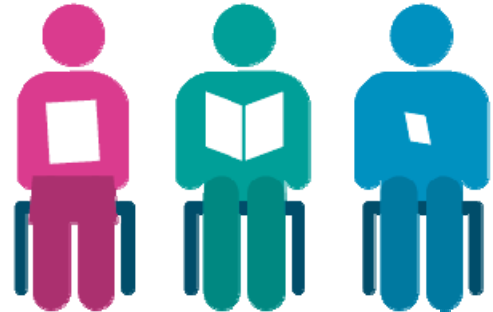
Conclusions

WAITING ROOM

The majority of the people who we spoke to told us that they were happy with the service they received through primary care services and their GP, however there are issues with both accessing appointments and waiting times potentially peoples' expectations.

It is clear that there is no one size fits all solution to the issues people raised as we received what on face value seem to be both positive and negative regarding the same appointment making systems.

However it is very clear that the appointment options that are available need to be made clear. Likewise there is a clear misunderstanding as to the purpose and function of a telephone consultation with most people viewing this as a triage and then say that they have a long wait to see the doctor, where as contact with a GP has taken place and the right option made available for the person.



There is further work to be done in ensuring that people understand the services that can be appropriately offered at the Hospital Accident and Emergency Department and what alternatives are available to them so that they do not have to sit and wait in the A&E potentially putting themselves in further discomfort and unnecessary waits. It would also be suggested that some peoples confidence in primary care services is low and the choice to attend A&E is as a result of that.

It is clear that this piece of work has just begun to touch on the key issues and more feedback is required from patients to further build on this. It is also vital to not lose sight of the real quality services that are provided day in and day out through dedicated members of staff. The issue discussed in the report has always been about demand and expectation and rarely linked to poor service.

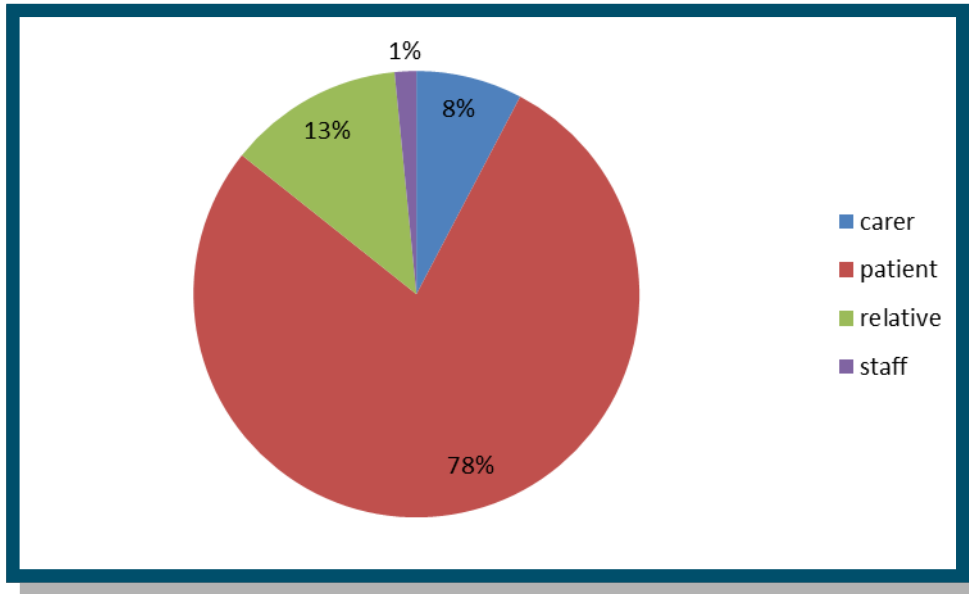
Healthwatch Knowsley would like to thank all of the people who took the time to speak to us and share their experiences with us during this project. We would also like to thank all the volunteers involved in helping us collect and compile the evidence that people shared.

Finally we would like to thank all of the staff at the surgeries and hospitals that we have visited, Their support and hospitality particularly at a time when the NHS was under such severe stress is greatly appreciated and the compliments that people shared about them was well deserved.



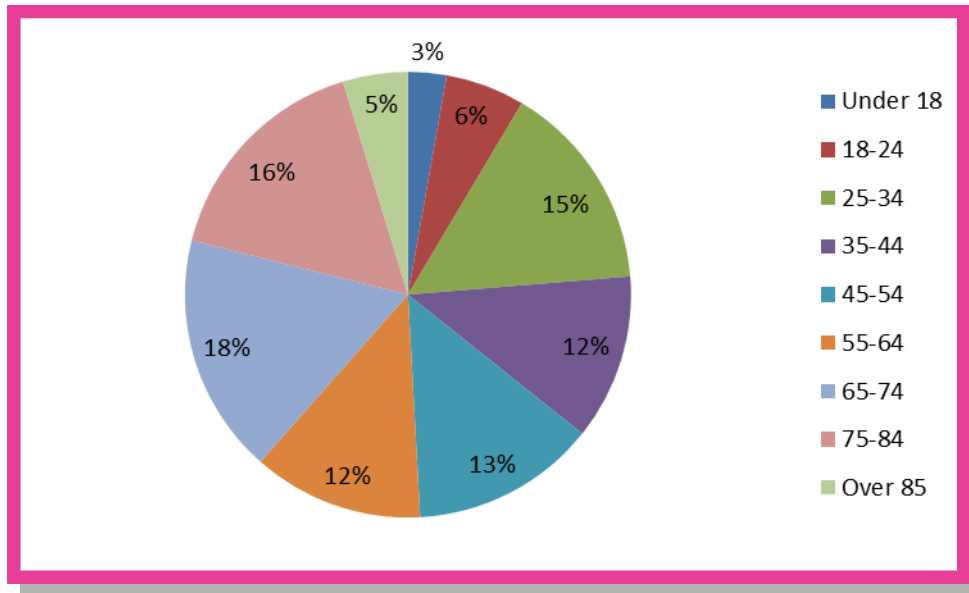
Demographics

In relation to your comments are you a:



Carer	Patient	Relative	Staff	Total
49	496	81	10	636

Age:

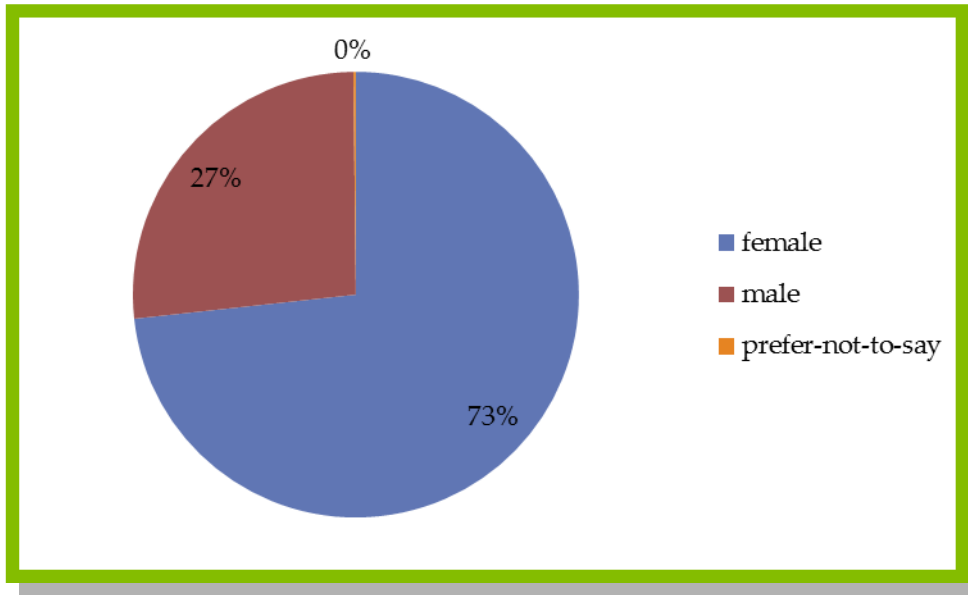


Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	Over 85	Total
16	33	87	69	77	71	100	94	27	574



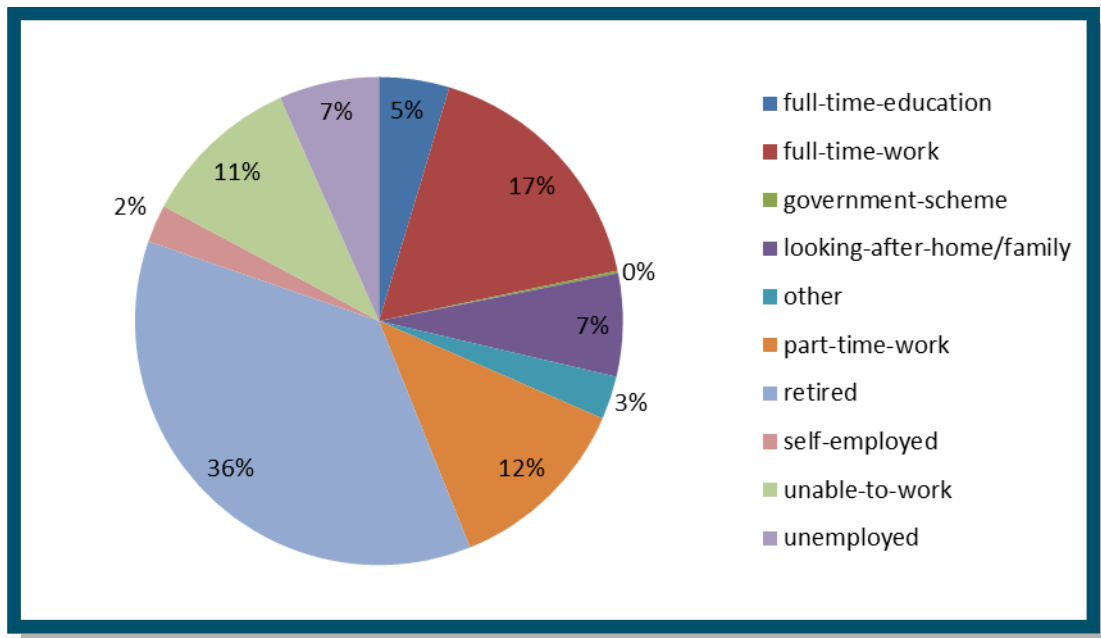
Demographics

Gender:



Female	Male	Prefer-not-to-say	Total
425	154	1	580

Which of the following best describes you situation?

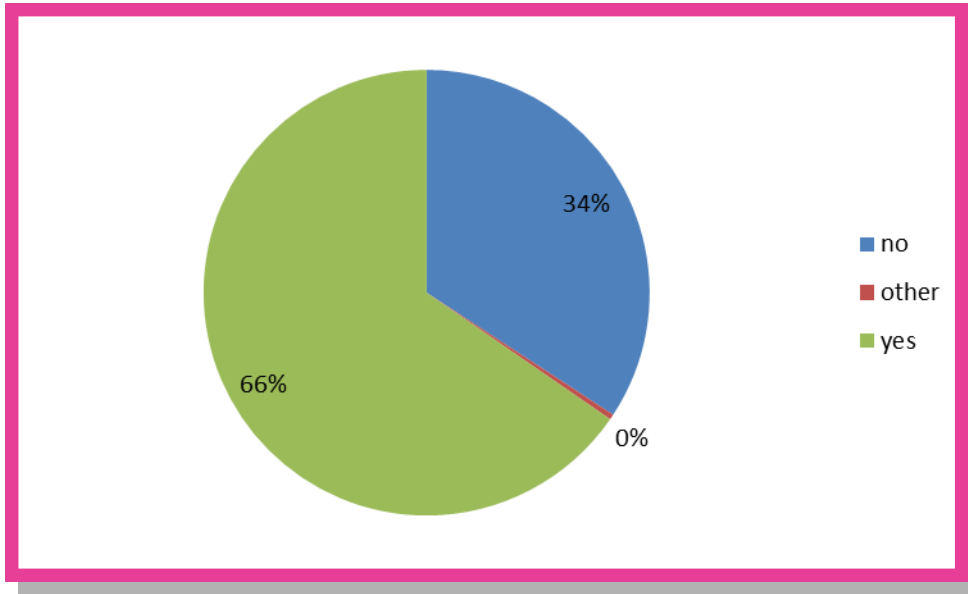


Full-time-education	Full-time-work	Government-scheme	Looking-after-home/family	Other	Part-time-work	Retired	Self-employed	Unable-to-work	Unemployed	Total
26	95	1	38	16	69	203	14	59	37	558



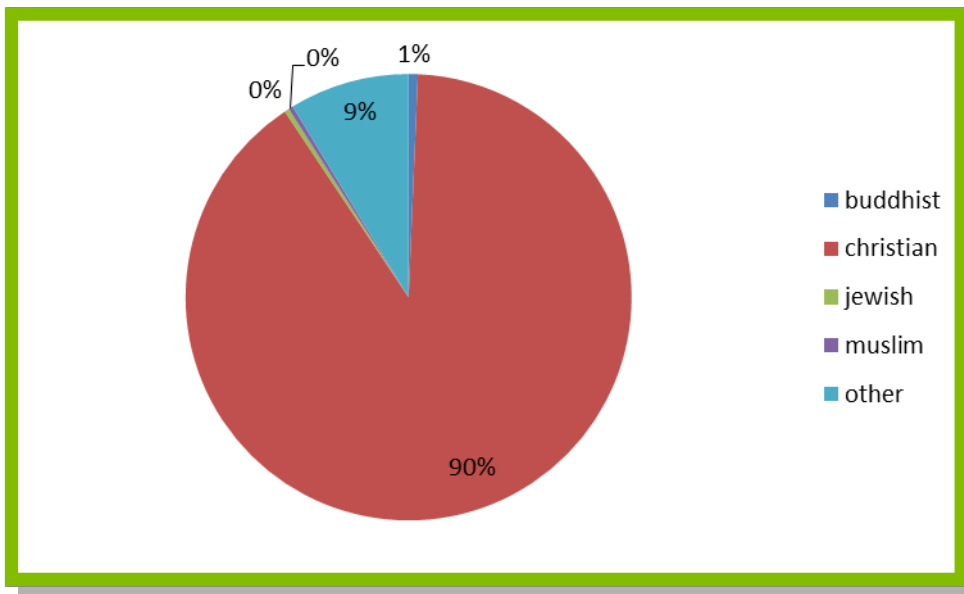
Demographics

Do you have a religion or belief?



No	Other	Yes	Total
179	2	342	523

What is your religion or belief?

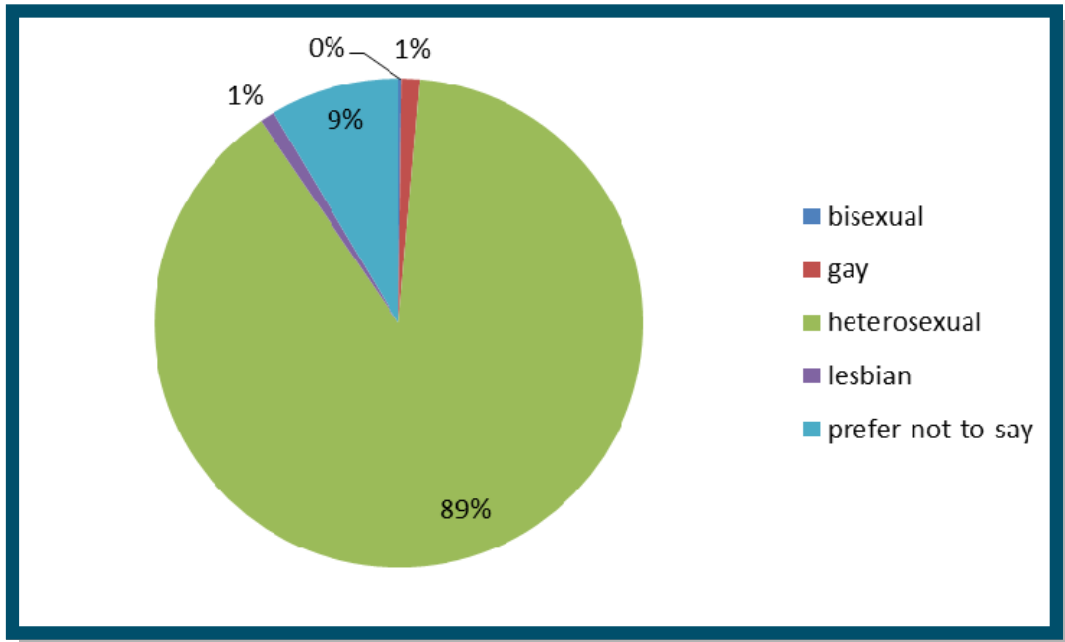


Buddhist	Christian	Jewish	Muslim	Other	Total
2	269	1	1	26	299



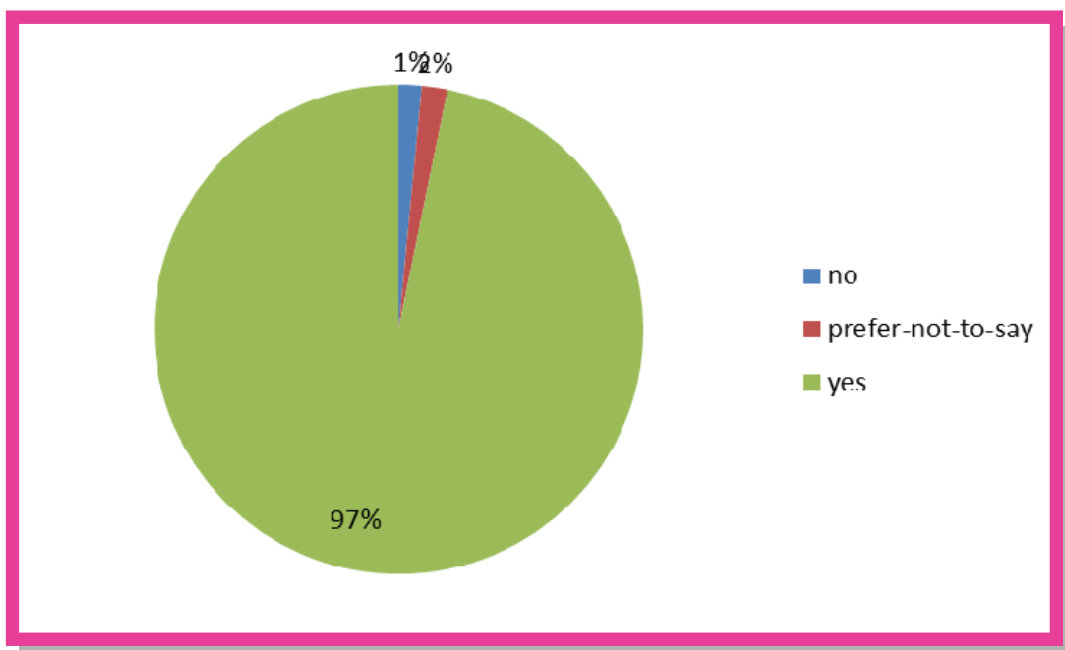
Demographics

How would you describe your sexual orientation?



bisexual	gay	heterosexual	lesbian	prefer-not-to-say	Total
1	6	449	5	43	504

Do you currently live in the gender you were given at birth?

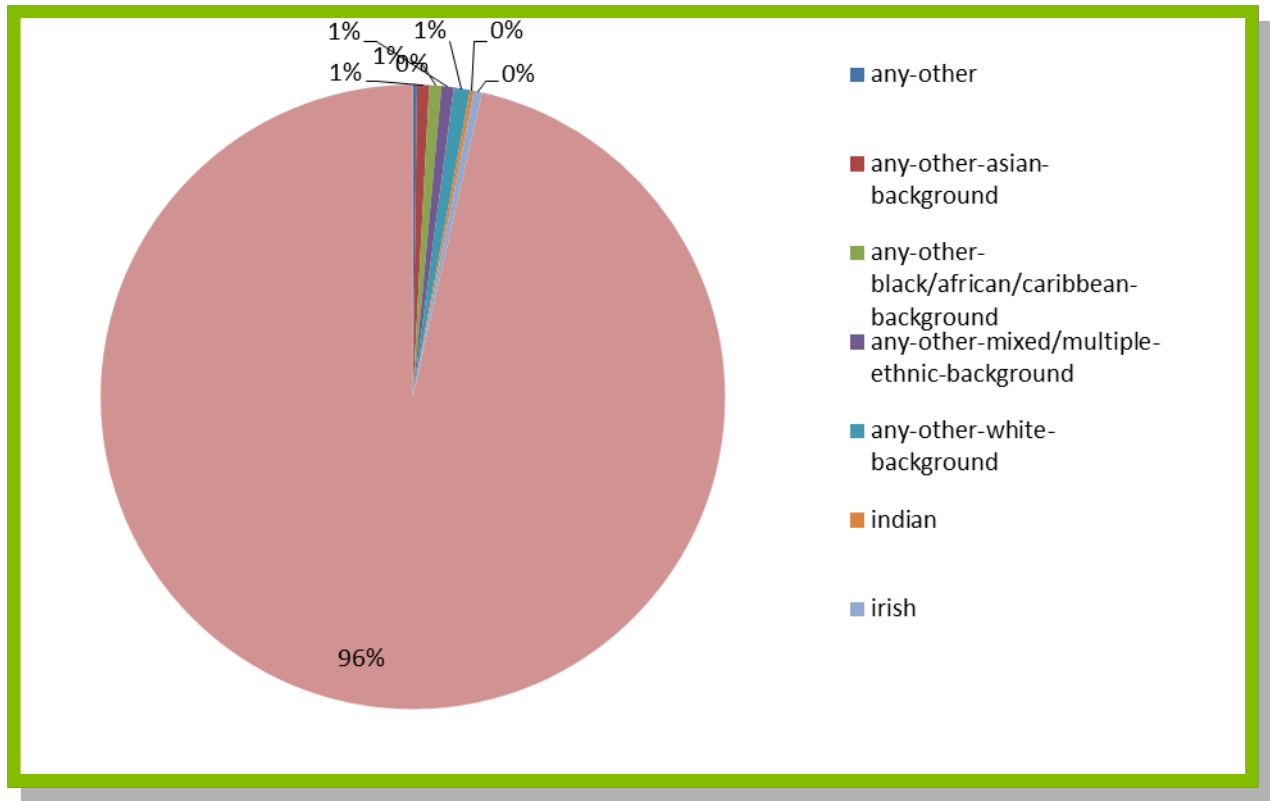


no	prefer-not-to-say	yes	Total
8	9	514	531



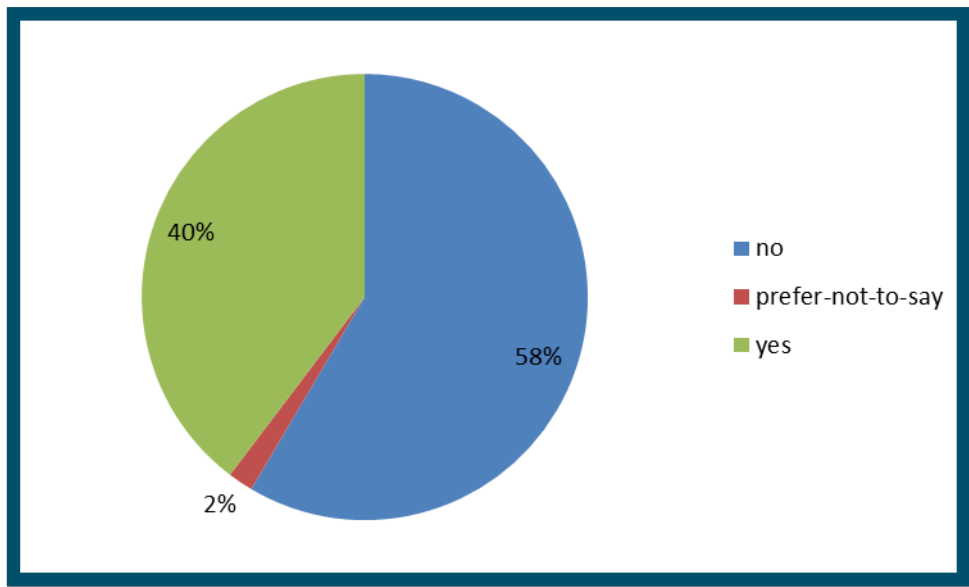
Demographics

How would you describe your ethnicity?



any-other	any-other-Asian-background	any-other-black/african/Caribbean-background	any-other-mixed/multiple-ethnic-background	any-other-white-background	Indian	Irish	white-english / welsh/scottish/northern-irish/british	Total
1	3	3	3	4	1	2	460	477

Do you have a disability?



no	prefer-not-to-say	yes	Total
320	10	217	547



Healthwatch Knowsley Feedback Centre

This report has been compiled using the new Healthwatch Knowsley Feedback Centre. This web based tool enables members of the public to rate the services that they use and provides real time analysis of the feedback, enabling early identification of trends and issues.



Contact us

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Or if you would like to share your experiences of Health and Social Care please visit our feedback centre at www.healthwatchknowsley.co.uk or telephone a member of the team.

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