



Access to Healthcare Report

January 2016

Between July and October 2015 Healthwatch Northumberland carried out a project to assess and understand issues people with sensory impairments, physical and learning disabilities face when accessing health services.

Healthwatch Northumberland would like to thank all those who took part; in particular we would like to thank the members of the Central Users Forum for their help with designing the Easy Read survey.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

During 2014-2015, Healthwatch Northumberland received feedback from members of the public across Northumberland which identified some people with sensory impairments, physical and learning disabilities, experienced difficulty accessing some health services in the county.

Healthwatch England reported similar findings nationally. Their study of 550 GP practices and feedback collected from 11,000 patients revealed that, 'despite overall satisfaction with primary care being high, there are significant issues for some – particularly for those who are deaf, blind or use a wheelchair' (*Healthwatch England; 2015*). In addition evidence collected by NHS England highlighted the fact that people with a learning disability experience worse health than other people across the country (*NHS England, 2015*).

To help combat this disparity NHS England published an Accessible Information Standard (2015) with the aim of ensuring that people with sensory impairments, physical and learning disabilities are identified, have their needs recorded and met. This standard states that all organisations that provide NHS or publicly funded adult social care must identify and record information on the communication needs of service users with disabilities by 1st April 2016. The standard must be fully implemented and complied with by 31 July 2016.

Under the Equality Act, 2010, all health and social care providers are required to make reasonable adjustments to ensure all people with sensory impairments, physical and learning disabilities are provided with the same level of service as non-disabled people.

The Equality Delivery System (EDS) is a generic tool designed for NHS commissioners and providers. The main purpose of the EDS is to help local NHS organisations, in discussion with local partners including local people, review and improve their performance for people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. By using the EDS, NHS organisations can also be helped to deliver on the public sector Equality Duty (PSED).

1.2 Demographics

Northumberland is a unique county in that 97% of it is classified as rural. The county is sparsely populated, home to 315,800 people, averaging 63 people per km² (*Northumberland County Council, 2015*). The 2011 census found that 65,000 (21%) of people in Northumberland classify themselves as disabled (*Census, Office of National Statistics, 2011*).

While unable to source records of numbers of people living with all specific impairments and/or disabilities, we know that an estimated 10,910 people in Northumberland are living with sight loss (*RNIB, 2015*). And in addition an estimated one in six people (52,633 people in Northumberland) have a hearing loss (*Action on Hearing Loss, 2015*).

2. Aim of Project

In response to local feedback the aim of the project was to:

- Collect more in depth feedback about the experiences of people with sensory impairments, physical and learning disabilities and identify whether there are any particular areas in need of improvement.
- Share any highlighted good practice with service providers.

3. Method

To gather a comprehensive view of issues relating to access to health services in Northumberland the project took a three-pronged approach and a range of methods were used to engage with people.

- 3.1 To find out what provisions health service providers have established for people with sensory impairments, physical and learning disabilities using a standard provider survey. The service provider survey was sent out by post or email to 175 health service providers - GP practices; dentists; pharmacies; opticians and hospitals in Northumberland.
- 3.2 To ask people with sensory impairments, physical and learning disabilities about their experiences visiting health services we used a standard survey which was also available in large print. Standard surveys were posted along with freepost envelopes and emailed with a freepost address to organisations who work with people who have sensory impairments, physical and learning disabilities. The standard survey was sent out to or completed during sessions with 73 organisations who work with people who have sensory impairments, physical or learning disabilities. It was also distributed to individual supporters and made available via our website and newsletter; as well as through community newsletters such as the CVA BV-ezine; and CANNY News.
- 3.3 An easy read survey was used to gather the experiences of people with learning disabilities. This was developed with the help of members of the Central User Forum, a group of people with learning disabilities who have worked with Healthwatch Northumberland previously to develop easy read documents. Healthwatch Northumberland and voluntary sector organisations provided support to individuals to complete the survey at drop-in sessions and group meetings. Some comments were noted by facilitators at these sessions.
- 3.4 We also held a focus group. A local deaf group contacted us as they were interested in participating in the project. The group told us that they would be more comfortable giving their feedback in a group setting rather than on a one to one basis. A sign language interpreter was commissioned by Healthwatch Northumberland to support their engagement and we arranged a focus group.
- 3.5 Issues raised and discussed at the Healthwatch Northumberland Access to Healthcare task group have also been included in this report.

4. Respondents

- 4.1 192 people participated in the survey, including:
 - 28 health service providers.

- 86 people with sensory impairments, physical or learning disabilities took part in the standard survey.
- A further 48 people with learning disabilities took part using the easy read survey.
- 30 people took part in the focus group. Note: this group was run with the aid of a sign language interpreter.

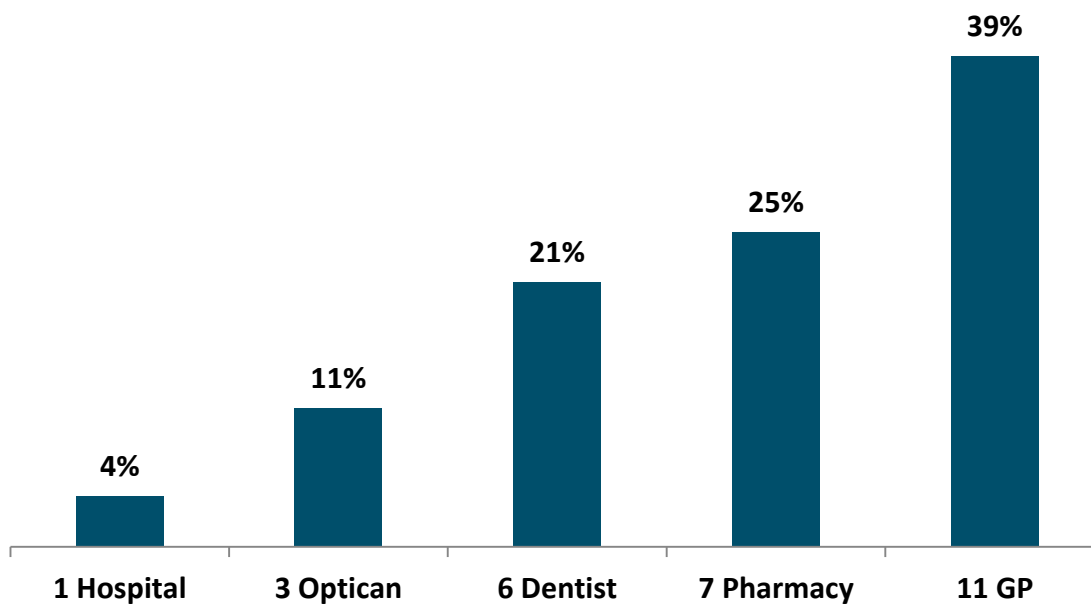
Survey Results

6.1 Service Providers

The survey was sent out to 175 service providers (56 GPs; 59 Pharmacies; 25 Opticians; 28 Dentists and 7 hospitals), and is attached as Appendix 2. 28 (16%) returned a survey.

Question 1: Please tell us which service you provide?

Graph 1: Health Care Service Provided by Respondents



Question 2: Location of responses from service providers

Healthwatch Northumberland divides the county into the same four operational locality areas as Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) – Blyth Valley, Central, North and West.

Table 1: Service Provider Responses by Area.

	GP	Pharmacy	Dentist	Optician	Hospital	Total
Central	2	5	2	0	1	10
Blyth Valley	2	1	2	1	0	6
West	4	0	1	1	0	6
North	2	1	0	1	0	4
Not stated	1	0	1	0	0	2
Totals	11	7	6	3	1	28

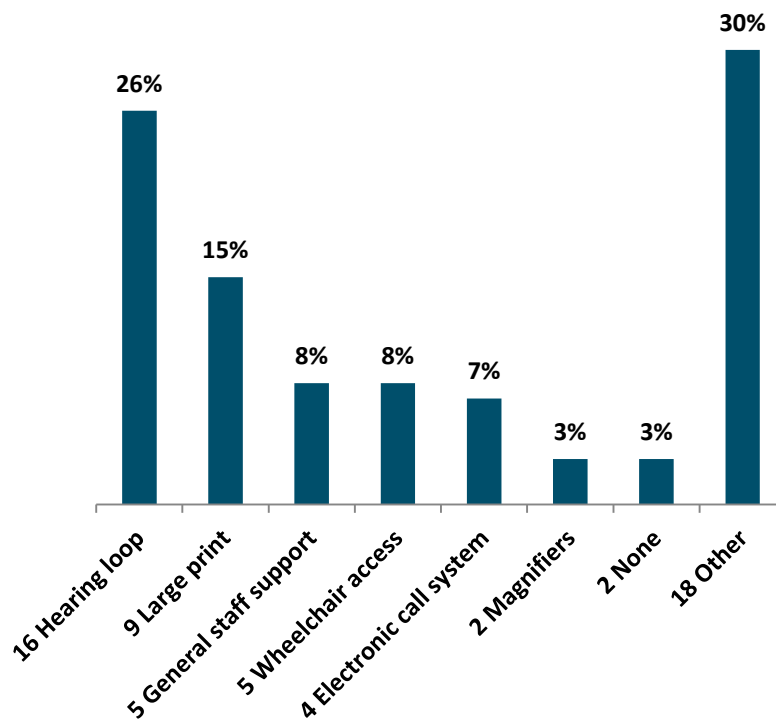
Question 3: What provisions does your service make around access for members of the public who have sensory impairments?

The most frequently cited resource made available by health services for people with sensory impairments was some kind of induction hearing loop 16 (57%). One of which provider stated their induction loop was portable.

Information in large print was the second most frequent response, 8 (28%) of the services stated that they offer this.

A total of 61 resources were listed. Some service providers named more than one resource, for example 20 providers cited two resources; and three providers named four.

Graph 2: Resources Available for People with Sensory Impairments



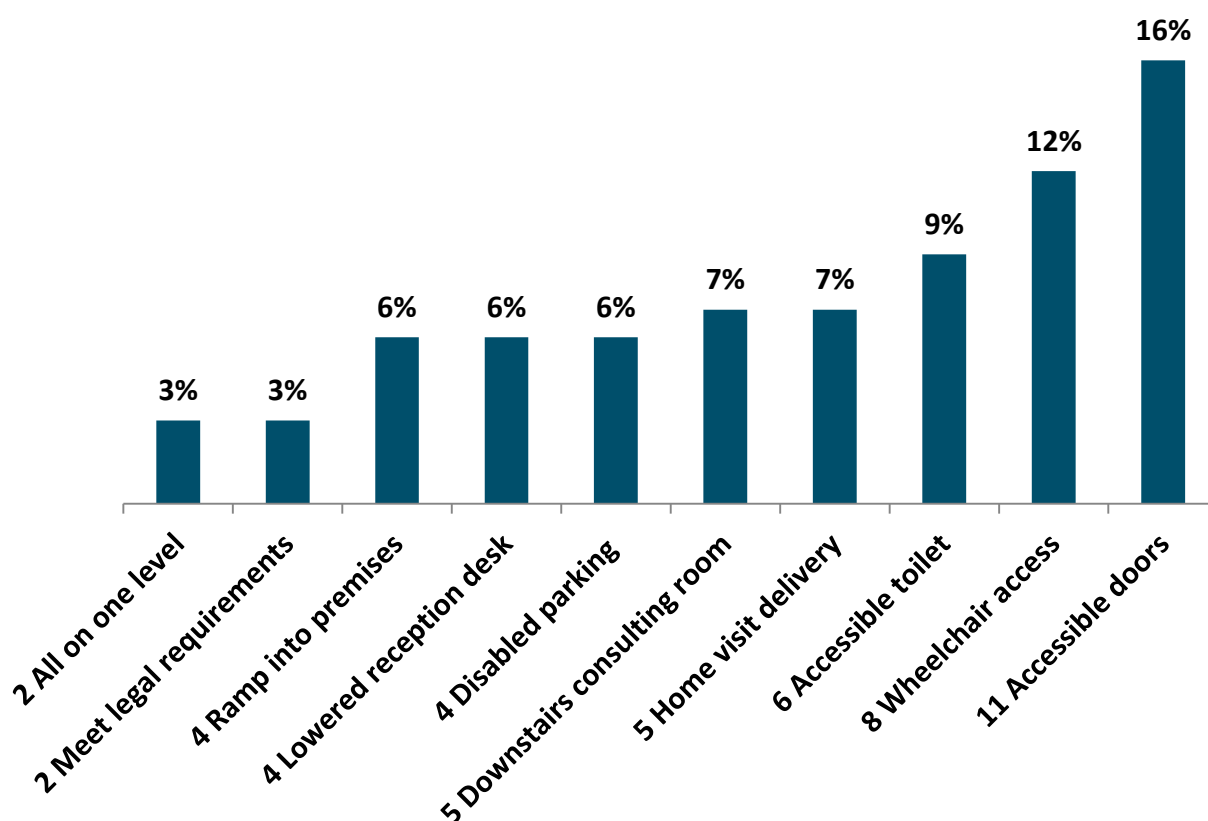
Note: List of the other resources cited can be found in the Appendix 1.

Question 4: What provisions does your service make around access for members of the public who have physical disabilities?

A wide range of responses were given by service providers with regards to the resources they provide for people with physical disabilities. For example, one pharmacist commented: ‘Wheelchair access, including in consulting room (tight squeeze, but we manage!)’

A total of 67 provisions were cited by 27 service providers. 27 respondents named at least one provision, 17 named two; 11 named three; 7 named four; 4 named five and 1 named six.

Graph 3: Resources Available for People with Physical Disabilities



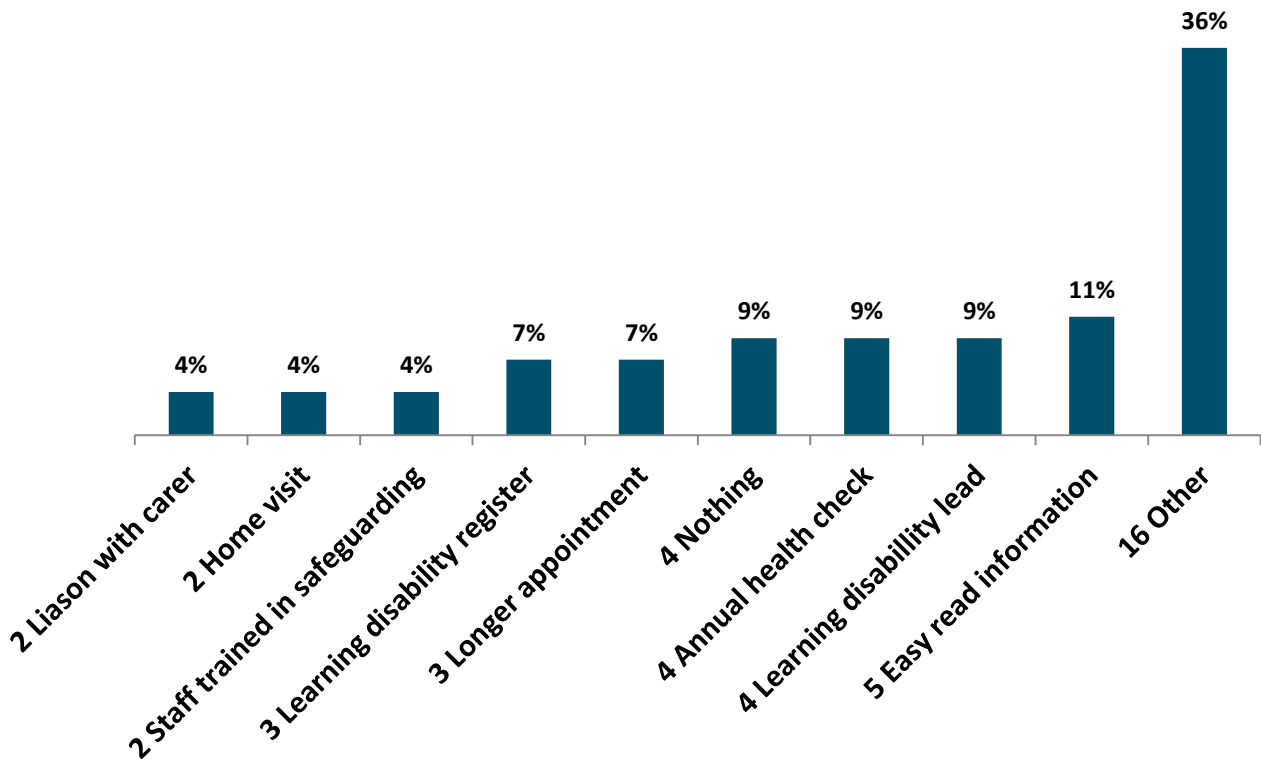
Question 5: What provisions does your service make around access for members of the public who have learning disabilities?

With regards to resources for people with learning disabilities the most frequent response given by service providers was the provision of easy read information. Four of the service providers stated that they provided nothing specific for people with learning disabilities.

One service provider highlighted a benefit of living in a small rural community. ‘Our staff are sensitive to the needs of all our service users, being a small village we know our patients well and recognise those who need extra assistance.’

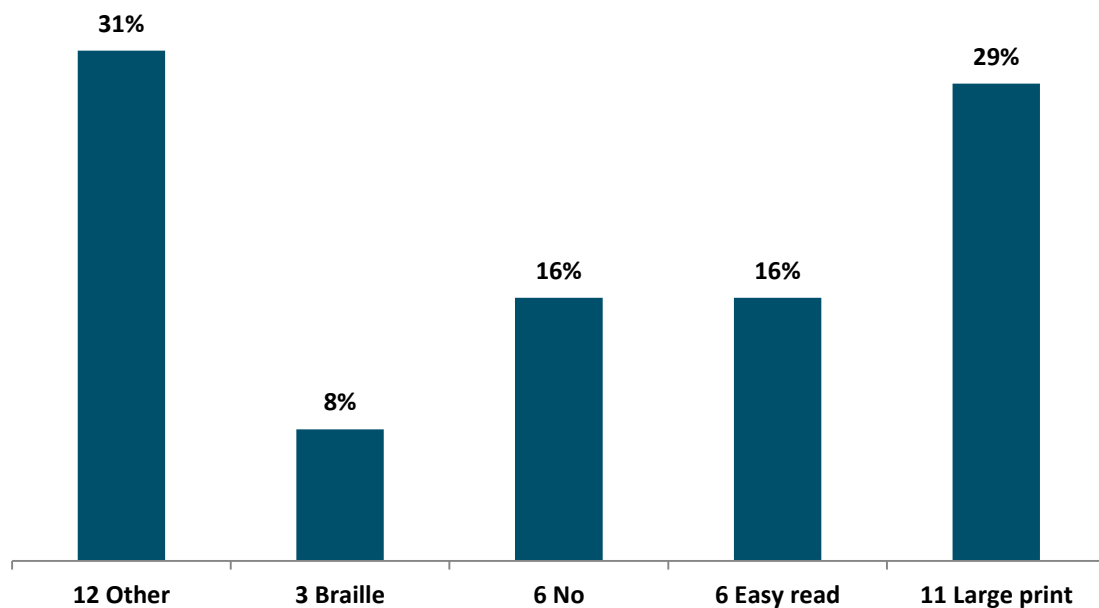
25 (89%) providers responded to this question, citing a total of 45 resources.

Graph 4: Provisions for People with Learning Disabilities



Question 6: Do you provide information in different formats to meet the needs of those with sensory impairment, physical or learning disabilities, and if so what are they?

Graph 5: Format Information Available



Question 7: Do you have a range of ways in which you contact patients with sensory impairment, physical or learning disabilities in order to make appointments and if so, what are they?

Telephone	11
Letter	7
Email	4
No	4
Text	4
Not Applicable to our service	4
Carer's make appointments	3
Follow up appointments made face to face	1
Online	1
Verbal and written communication inc BSL sign language interpreter	1

Q8: What type of training around sensory impairment, physical and learning disabilities is provided to staff within your services?

23 (82%) providers responded to the question regarding type of training offered. 5 providers didn't offer any training around sensory impairments, physical or learning disabilities, while a further 5 (18%) stated that their staff had undergone generic equality and diversity training. 16 (69%) cited other examples of training delivered – see appendix 1

Q9 Please provide any other comments you may have about access to health services for people with sensory impairment physical or learning disability.

Eight providers gave a response to this, three of whom stated that they would like more support/resources information to be made available to them.

The responses were as follows

- 'Reasonable adjustments will be made to support as required'.
- 'Language Empire provide language and sign language interpreters to the practice'.
- 'We let the patient guide us to the level of help they require'.
- 'Please send online resources for referene use in pharmacy'.
- 'Our service provides treatment for all'.
- 'It is important that enough time is allowed with these patients to obtain an accurate and satisfactory outcome as well as discussing the situation with themselves and guardian'.
- 'Poor availability/information available to us'.
- 'There is no funding or resources for any of the above from the NHS'.

Q10 Would your service be interested in working in partnership with Healthwatch Northumberland to help raise awareness and improve the experience of services users with sensory impairment, physical or learning disabilities.

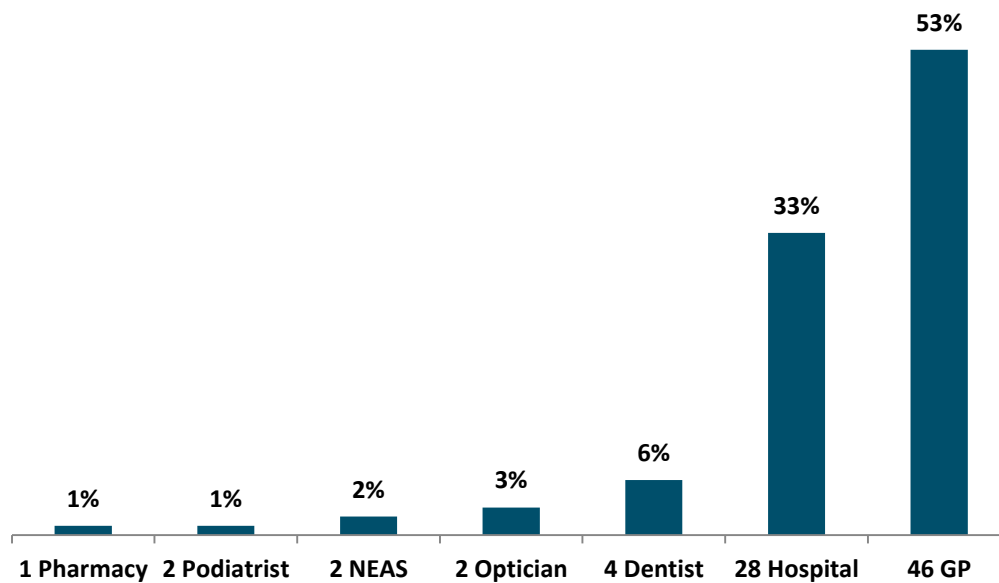
16 providers (57%) stated they were interested in working in partnership with Healthwatch Northumberland to help raise awareness and improve the experience of service users with sensory impairment, physical and learning disability.

6.2 Standard Survey

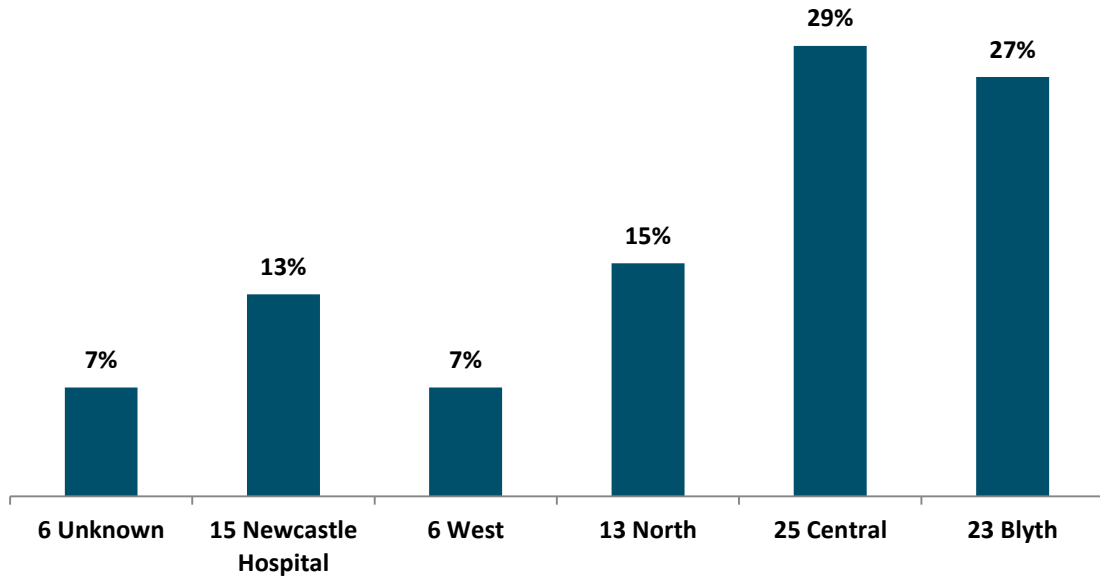
86 respondents completed the standard survey including 58 (67%) that completed the large print survey. The majority of these respondents had sensory impairments or physical disabilities. Where respondents identified the provider, these are included in Appendix 1. The survey is attached as Appendix 3.

Question 1: Please tell us which service your feedback is about.

Graph 6: Service Feedback Given On



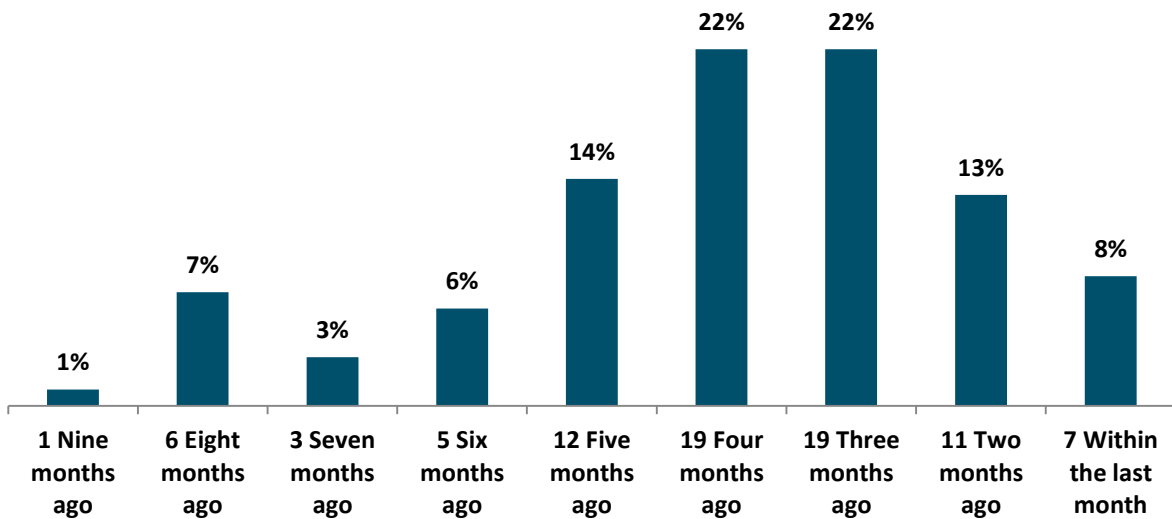
Graph 7: Location of Service



Q2: When did you use the service?

Most respondents had used the service three or four months ago, at the time they completed the survey.

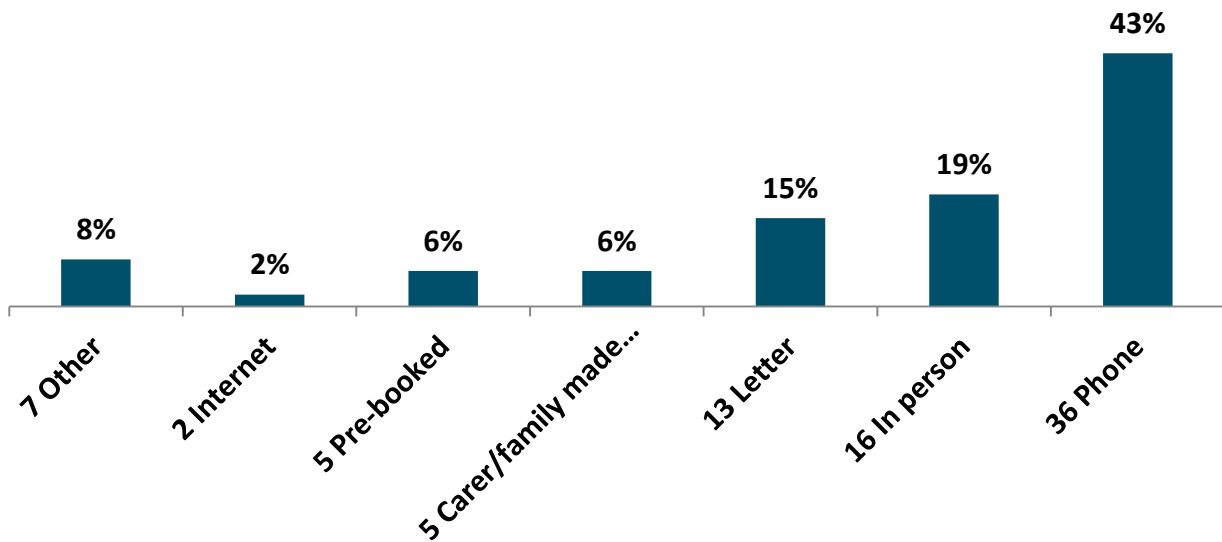
Graph 8: Month Service Used



Q3: Please tell us how you made the appointment (ie. phone, in person, via the internet).

The most popular method used to make an appointment was via the telephone, 36 (41%). Five respondents stated that they needed carer or family support in order to make their appointment. Three of the people who made the appointment in person added that they had tried on the telephone, but they had found it too hard.

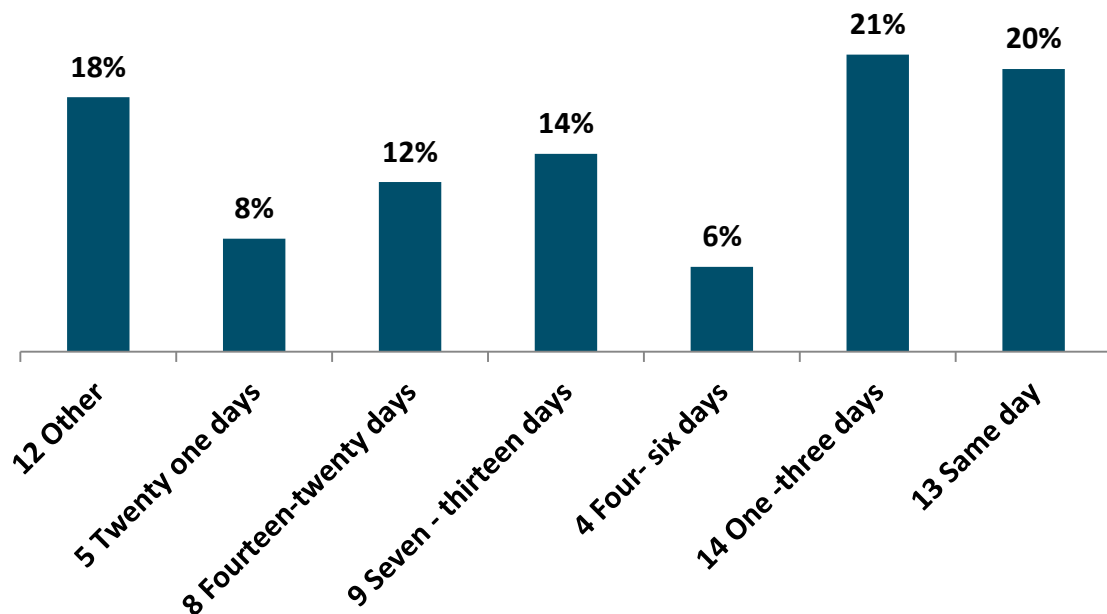
Graph 9: How Appointment Made



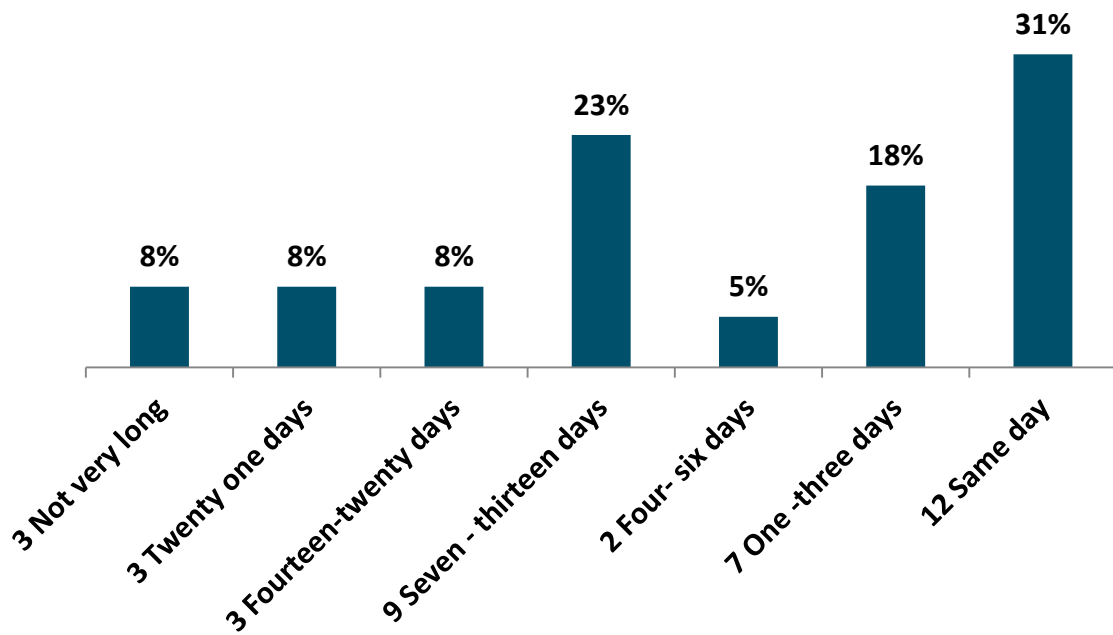
Question 4: How long did you wait for the appointment?

65 (75%) of respondents answered this question.

Graph 10: How Long Waited for Appointment – All Services



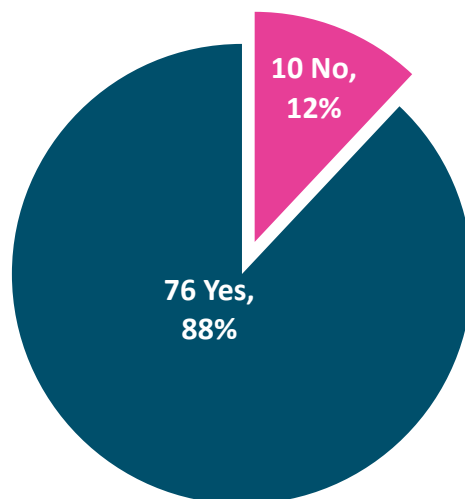
Graph 11: How Long Did You Wait to Get an Appointment with a GP?



Question 5 Thinking about your particular needs was the premises accessible for you?

76 (88%) of the respondents to the standard survey stated that premises were accessible to them, while 10 (11%) stated that they were not.

Graph 12: Was the Premises Accessible for you?



Q6: Please tell us how your particular needs were or were not met

Of the 76 who stated that the premises were accessible, 34 explained how.

How needs were met in terms of access to the premises

Was accompanied (including by family member or PTS driver)	8
Ground Level	5
Signage/directions	5
Home visit	4
Lift	3
General Access	3
'They come out to meet me.'	
'Auto opening doors.'	
'A bleep and name system for seeing Drs.'	
'Appointments are made to suit buses.'	
'Early appointments/immediate treatment.'	
'Staff are very friendly making us aware of ongoing tests and meetings.'	

How needs were not met in terms of access to the premises

Of the 10 that explained why their needs were not met, the most frequently cited reason was that of poor signage or directions.

The second most frequent response given as to why people were not able to access a service was that of issues relating to travel. For example one person said *'Its not easy to get to the hospital, I have to walk for over an hour.'*

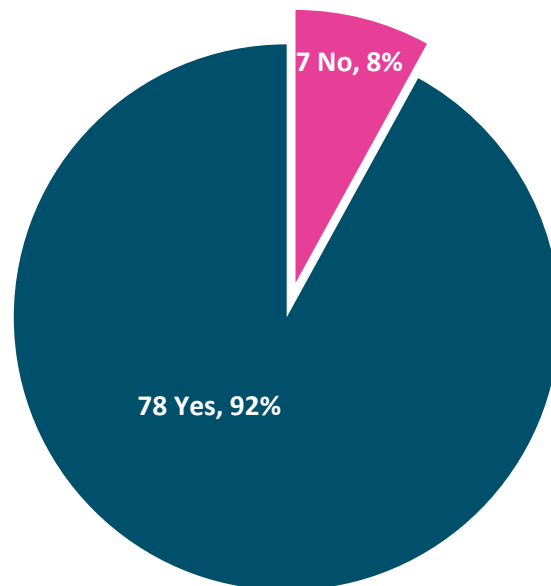
Another person with sight loss explained how difficult things could be when there is no adequate support available. *'Its very hard to get out after I have had the drops in my eyes. They won't book me a taxi and I can't pre-book one because you never know when you will be finished. Its a 5 minute walk to the bus stop, which is quite difficult especially as there is no crossing'.*

Signage/directions	3
Travel	2
Hard to access	3
Stairs	1
'I'm in a wheel chair, have to wait for a long time, staff are very busy which is hard if I need the toilet.'	1

Q7: Were your particular needs met during the treatment?

85 respondents answered this question. 92% of those said their particular needs were met during treatment.

Graph 13: Were your needs met during the treatment?



Q8: Please tell us how your needs were or were not met?

51 people explained how their needs had or had not been met. Of those, 38 explained how they had been met and 12 how they had not been met.

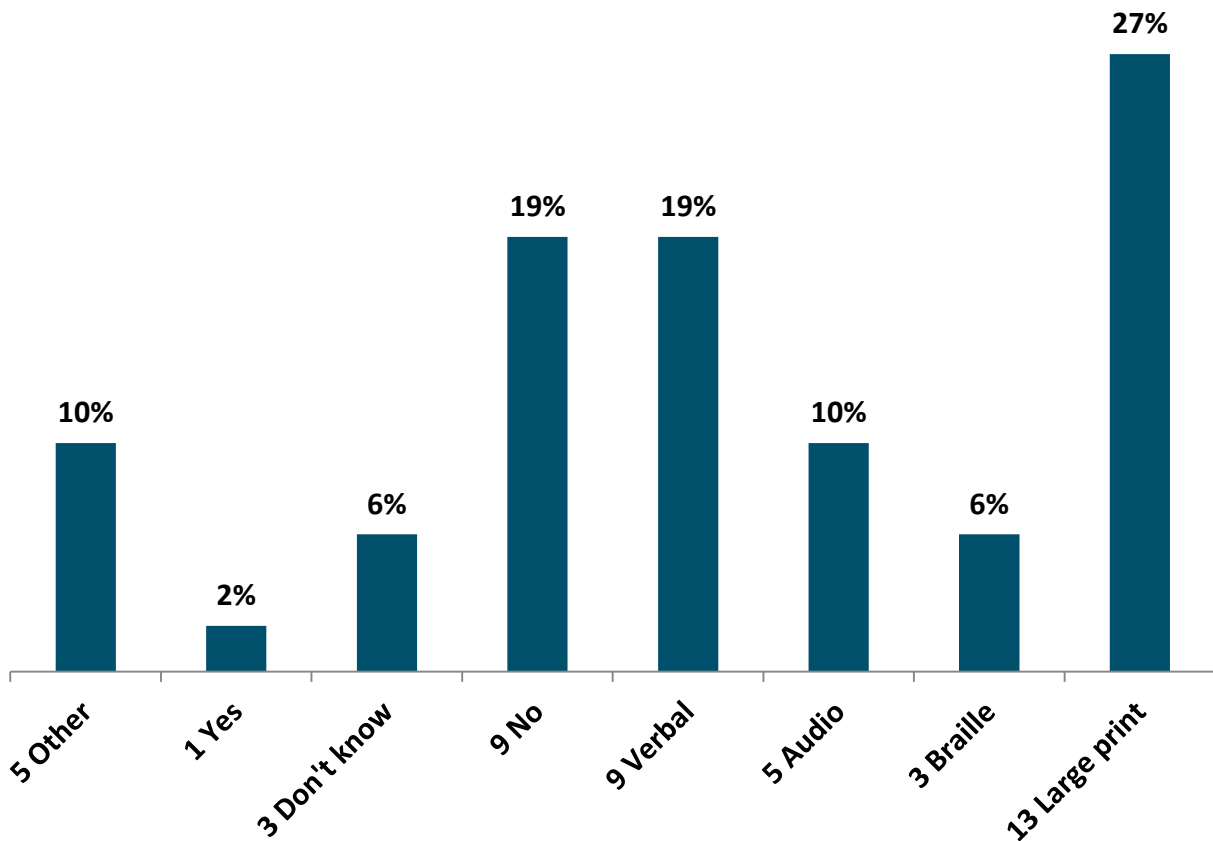
Most of the comments refer to clinical treatment and staff attitude/support. Details of all comments are attached in Appendix 1.

Q9: Was information about the service available in other formats.

When asked if the information was available in any other formats 42 people said yes, citing a total of 48 formats.

Of the 5 people who said 'other' only one explained further – they said 'I have sight loss, I magnified information.'

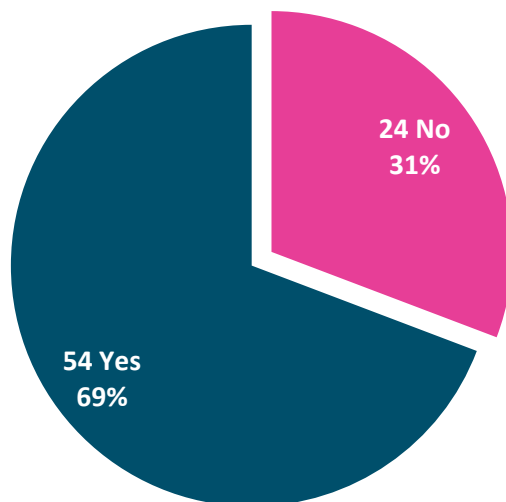
Graph 14: Other Formats Available?



Q10: Following your appointment were you given information in an appropriate format for you?

Of the 78 people who responded to this question, 54 (69%) said they were given information in an appropriate format. 24 (31%) of respondents stated that they were not given information in an appropriate format after their appointment.

Graph 15: Appropriate Format?



Q 11. Please tell us how your needs were or were not met

26 respondents explained how their needs were met in terms of information in appropriate format:

Verbal	17
Large Print	2
Clear instructions/information	4
'There is sometimes a notice that tells you how long you'll wait for your medicine.'	1
'I received a card telling me of my next appointment.'	1
'We were given guidance on where to get the glasses and what to do with the prescription.'	1
'Picking up my prescription.'	1

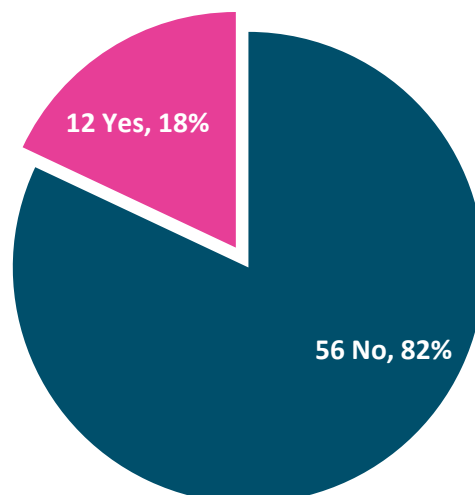
15 respondents explained how their needs were not met in terms of information in appropriate format:

Not offered an appropriate format	5
'I need it on a CD or memory stick.'	2
'Need a magnifying glass to read it.'	2
'I need to know about the progress on my report. Had to ring Dr to see if letter from hospital had come.'	2
'I could not access telephone system as I can't hear and was informed they do not use TXT service.'	1
'Couldn't understand the information they gave me.'	1
'Can understand, but unable to express self to the Doctor.'	1

Q12: Have you ever requested information from a health or social care service in a different format?

68 respondents answered this question, with 56 (82%) indicating that they had requested information in a different format and 12 (18%) indicating that they had not.

Graph 16: Requested Different Format?



Q13: If yes, what was the response?

15 people responded to this question, with six stating that they asked for information in a different format and received it. 2 people stated that they asked for information in a different format, but didn't receive it. 7 people who said they had not requested information in a different format, gave a reason, including lack of awareness, having support available from family or other sources and not wishing to take up too much of the provider's time. A full list of the reasons given is included in Appendix 1.

Q 14: Do you have any other comments about access to health services?

41 respondents gave positive comments and 19 people gave negative comments. These are wide ranging and include positive comments about identified services and locations as well as general comments about health services. Negative comments relate mostly to access, transport and communication issues. Appendix 1 includes all responses to this question.

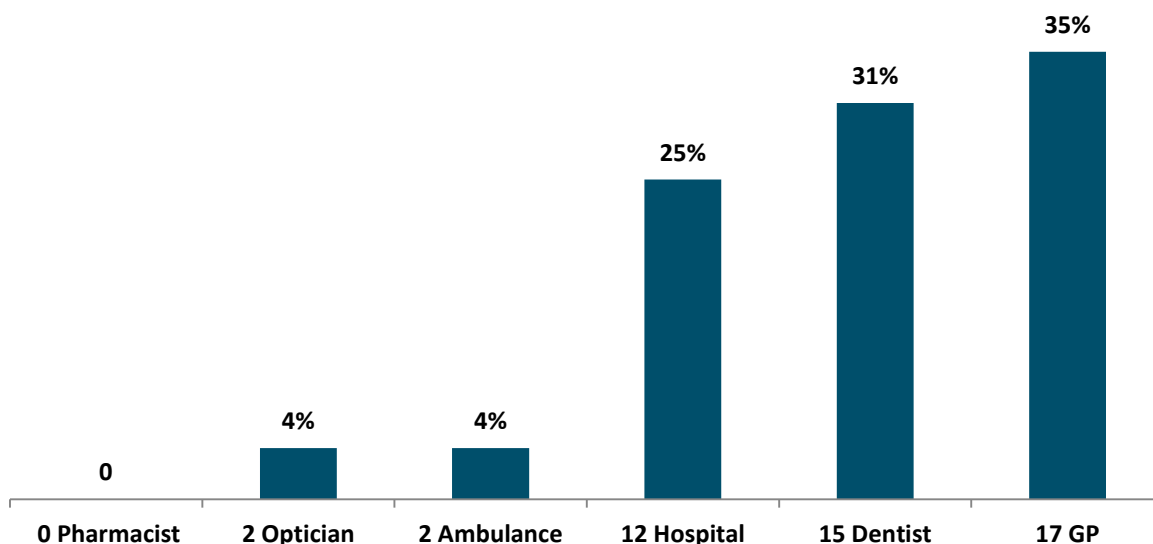
6.3 Easy Read Survey

48 people with learning disabilities took part using the easy read survey. The survey is attached as Appendix 4.

Q1: Which health service would you like to tell us about?

Feedback was mostly spread across GPs (17) dentists (15) and hospitals (12).

Graph 17: Service



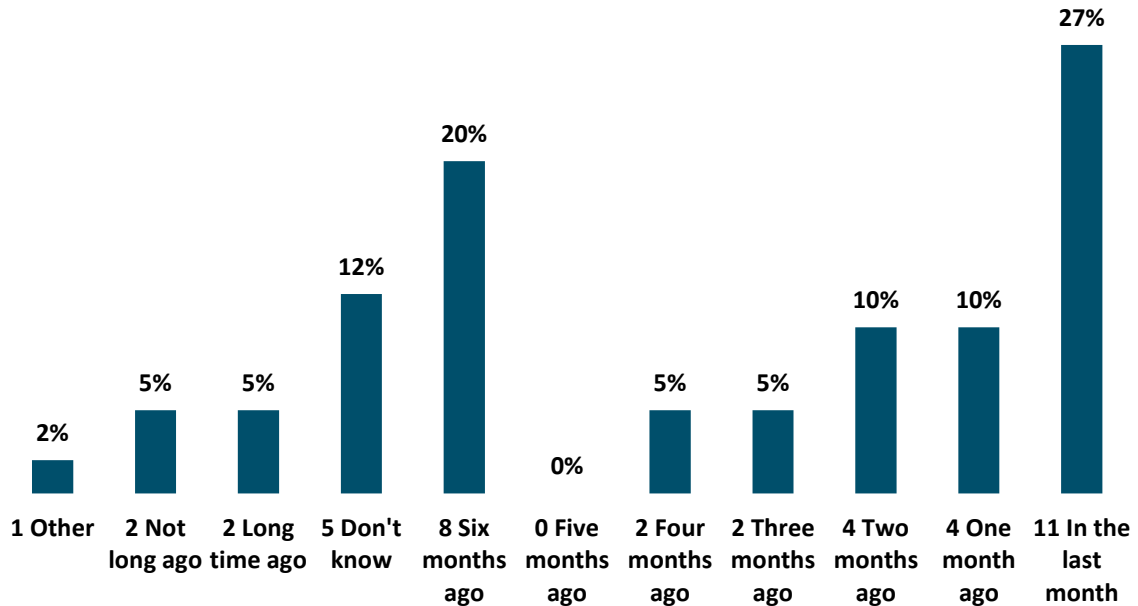
Q2: What is this service called?

35 people gave a response to this question. Full list of services named is included in Appendix 1.

Q3: When did you use this service?

41 people answered this question. Most had accessed the service within the last month or six months ago at the time they completed the survey.

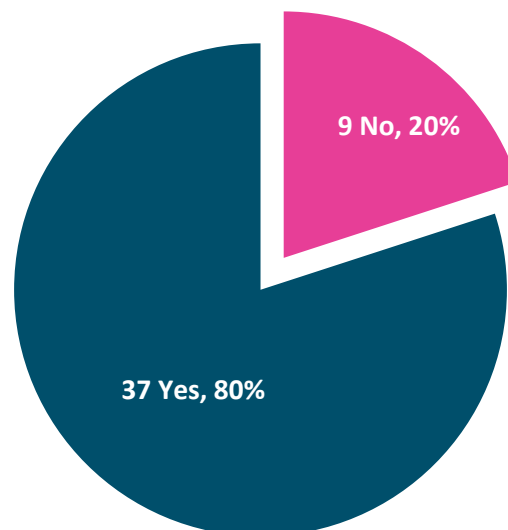
Graph 18: When did you use this Service?



Q4: Did you have to make an appointment?

46 people answered this question, 37 (80%) did have to make an appointment.

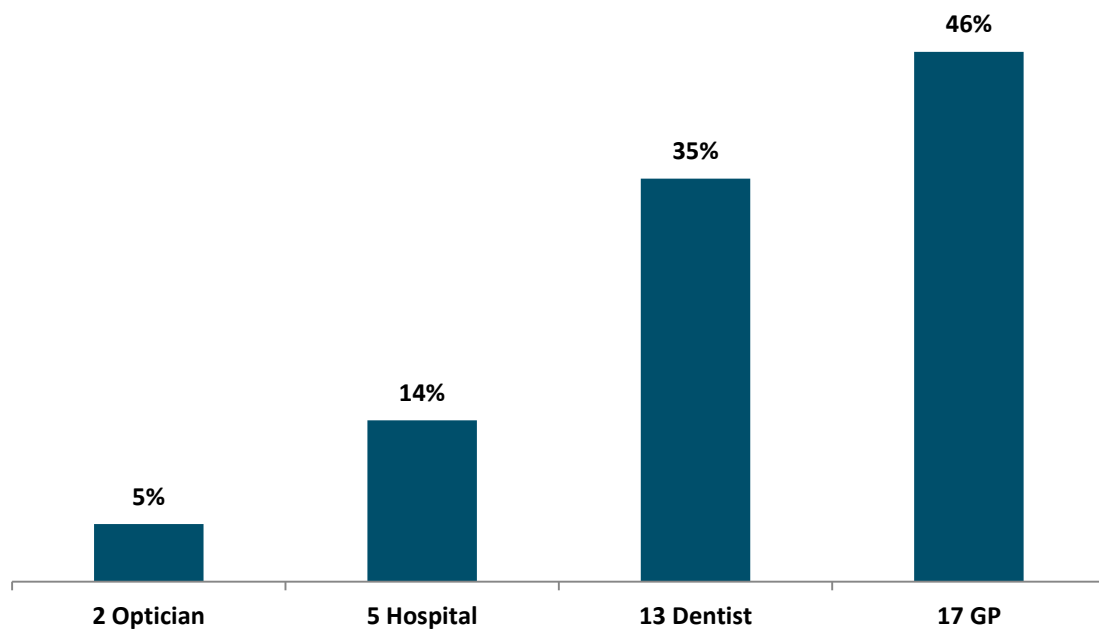
Graph 19: Appointment Made?



Q5. If yes who did you make the appointment with?

37 People answered this question.

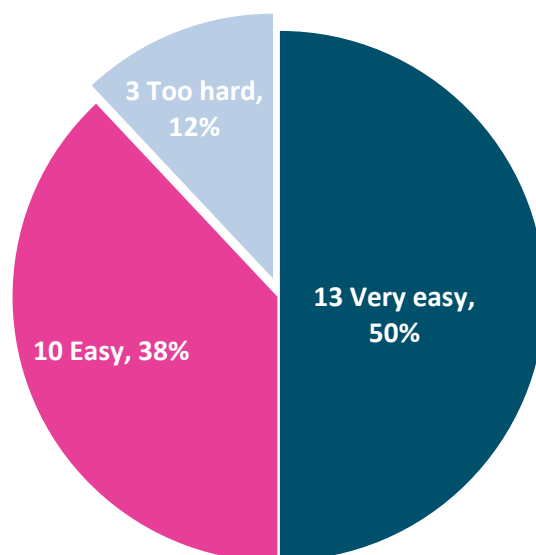
Graph 20: Who did you make the appointment with?



Q6: How easy was it to make an appointment?

26 people answered this question, 11 of whom stated unprompted that they had received help from a member of staff, a relative or a carer.

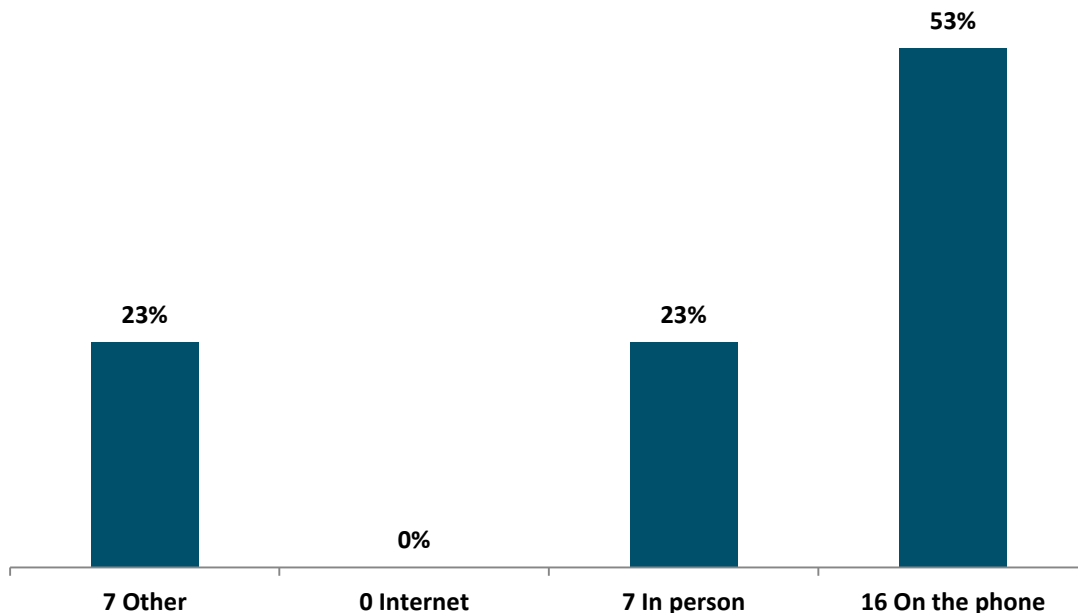
Graph 21: How Easy Was it to Make an Appointment?



Q7: How did you make the appointment?

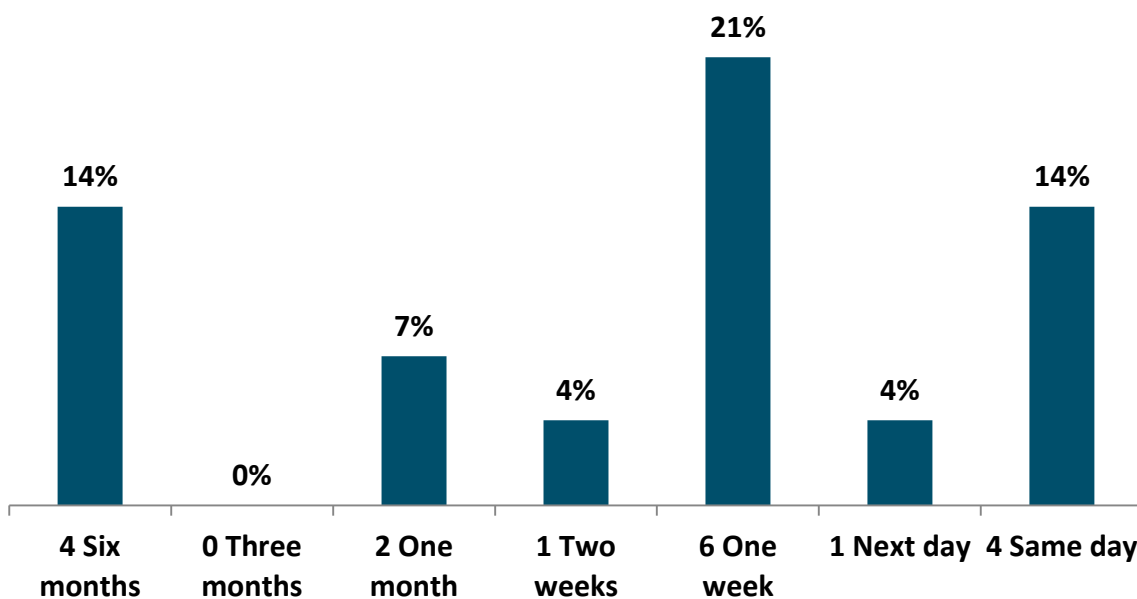
16 of the respondents stated that the appointment was made over the phone, some appointments were made by family members or carers. One respondent told us, 'It was too hard, brother did it.' For a list of all 'other' responses, see appendix 1.

Graph 22: How was the appointment made?



Q8: How long did you have to wait for your appointment?

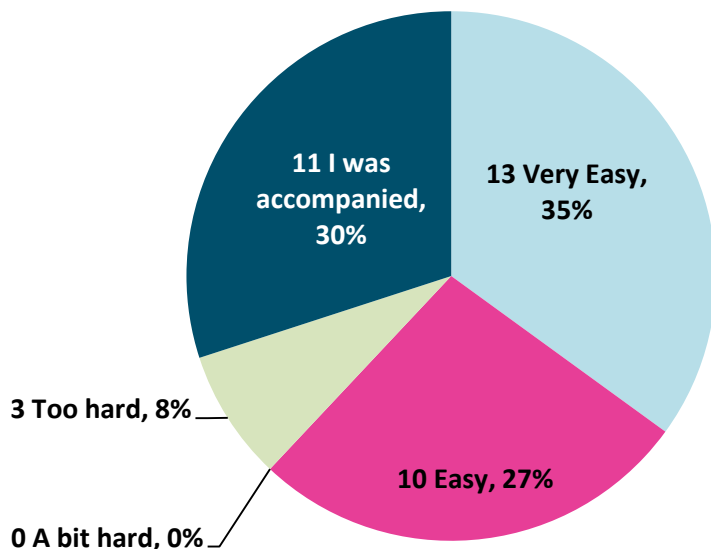
Graph 23: Length of Time Waited for Appointment



Q9: Was it easy or hard for you to access the service?

37 people answered this question.

Graph 24: How Easy or Hard was it to Access the Service



Q10: If it was easy what made it easy?

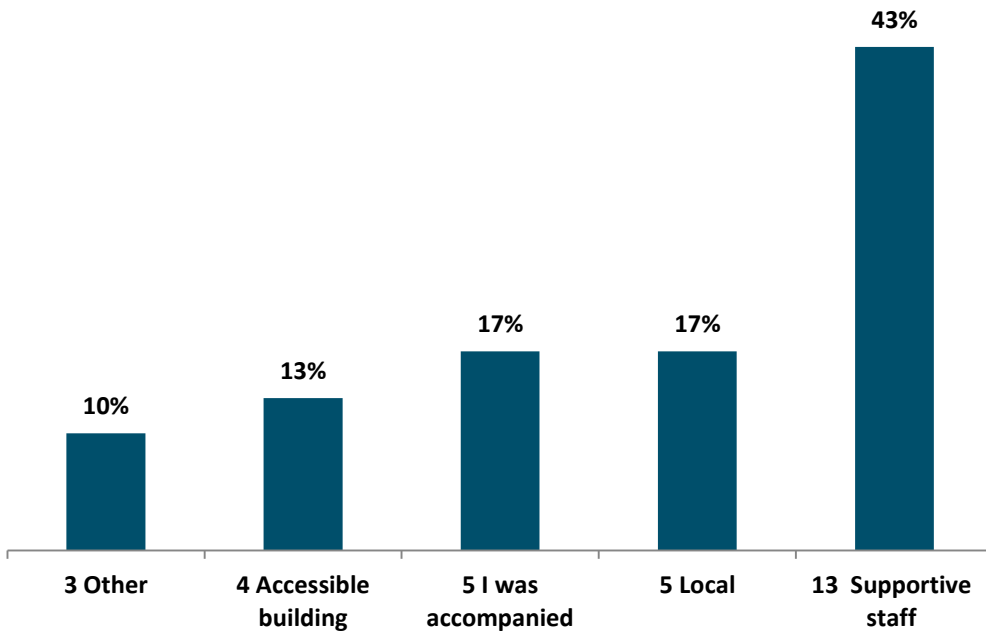
13 of the 30 responses given to this question thought that the friendliness of staff is important. One example given by a respondent highlighted this *'The driver and paramedic were very nice. They chatted to me all the way. Got me on board; calmed me down; explained everything – why they were there, what was going to happen and what I should expect.'*

5 respondents stated that they were accompanied by a family member, friend or carer. One woman explained the difference being accompanied made to her, *'I went in with mum, but I am scared to go in on my own. Don't like, not a great place.'*

5 others felt that the fact that the service was close to their home made it easy to access.

Only 5 respondents stated that it was a bit hard or too hard to access the service and of those only 3 people explained why. One said that it was because they could not get an appointment, another did not like having to wait to be collected whilst the third stated it was because they struggled with stairs. The full list of responses is included in Appendix 1.

Graph 25: What Made the Service Easy to Access?



Q11: If it was hard why was that?

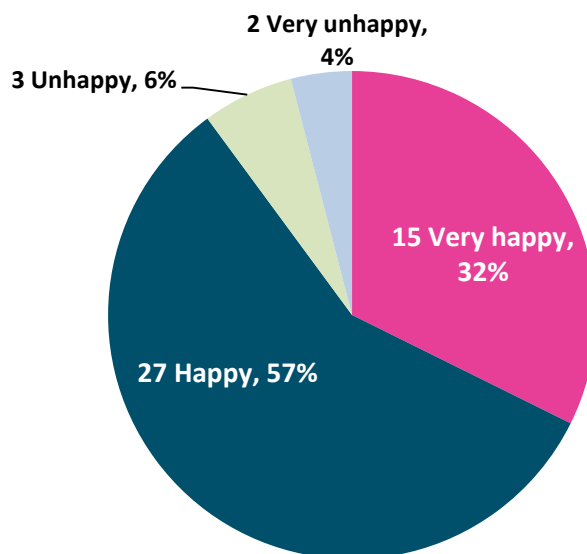
Three people explained why it was hard to access the service:

- There were no appointments available.
- ‘Sometimes I go upstairs if I have to – it can be hard.’
- ‘You have to wait for people to come and get you.’

Q12: Were you happy with your treatment?

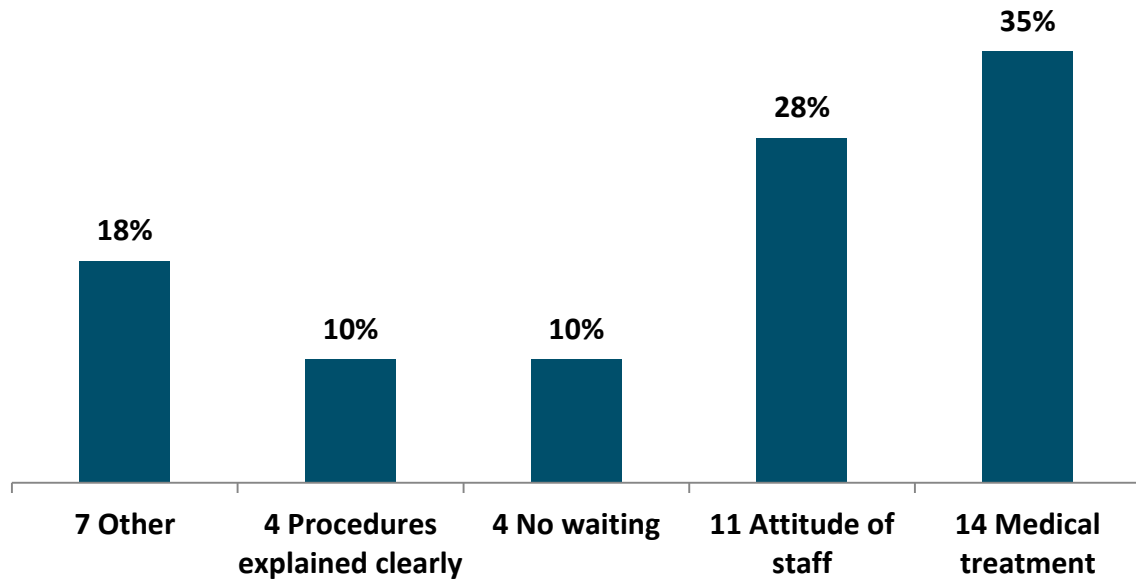
45 people answered this question.

Graph 26: Happy with Treatment?



Q13: If you were happy what was good about the treatment?

Graph 27: What was good about the treatment?



41 of the respondents stated that they were happy with the treatment they received, some of whom were happy because the medical treatment had made them better. 15 respondents felt that communication was key. Friendly, supportive staff and clearly explained procedures were important. Responses included, *'Give you plenty of time – felt safe and comfortable.'* *'Make you know what's going to happen.'* Four of the respondents felt that the timing of their appointments was important, not having to wait was seen as a positive.

Q14: If you were unhappy with the treatment, what made you unhappy?

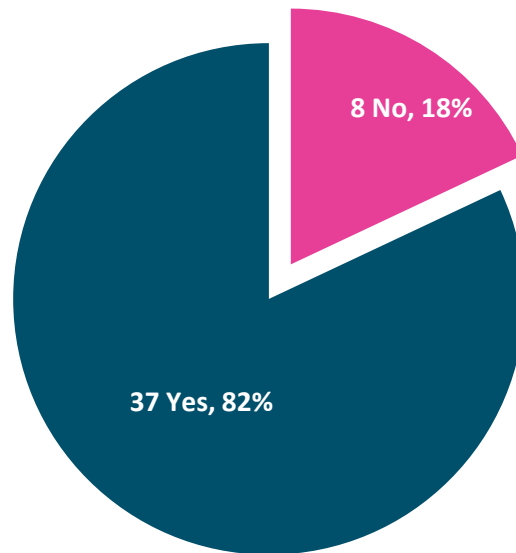
Four people said why they were unhappy with the treatment. The reasons given were:

- 'Didn't get much information about it and not straight forward answers.'
- 'Had to wait an hour.'
- 'Because I worry about things too much.'
- 'Because it was out of my routine; although staff are lovely to me. It is very hard to get an appointment.'

Q15: Were you given any information?

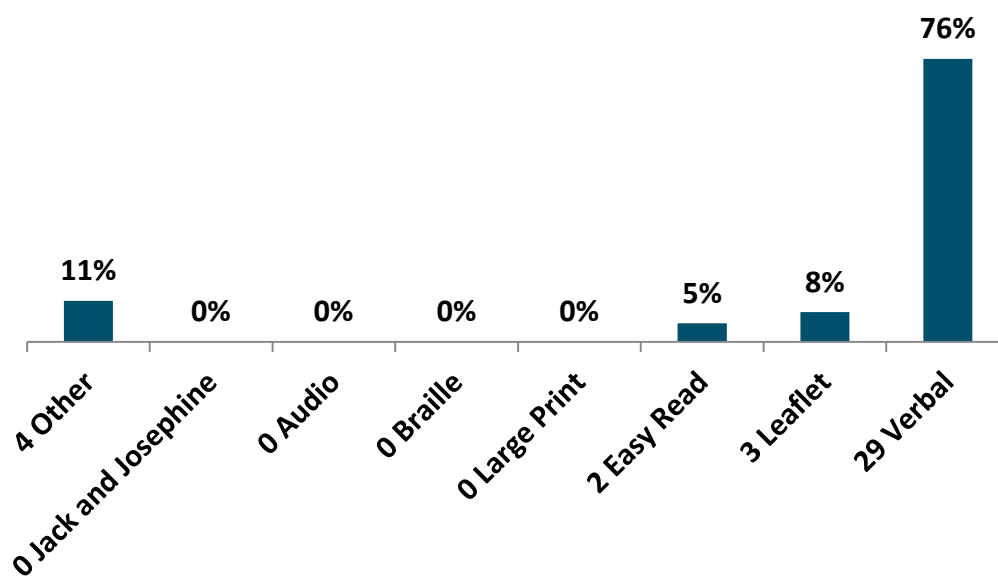
37 had been given information.

Graph 28: Information given?



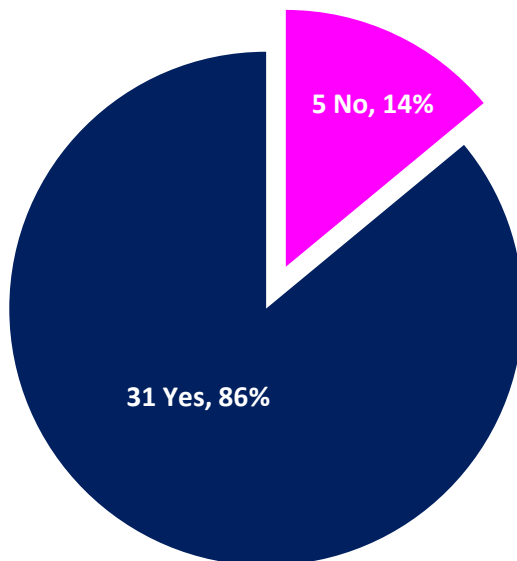
Q16: How were you given the information?

Graph 29 Information Format



Q17: Could you understand the information you were given?

Graph 30: Understood information?



One reason respondents gave for not being able to understand the information was that they felt they needed more time to process what was said to them.

Q18: If no what would have made it better?

Three people explained what would have made it better?

- *'I didn't understand what the optician said.'*
- *'Sometimes I can't understand what she was saying – I told her and she tried to explain it better.'*
- *'More time to process.'*

Q19: Do you have anything else you would like to say about the health services?

30 people commented when asked if they had anything else to say about health services – the majority of those who responded gave a positive response. Positive comments focussed on the fact that the staff were friendly and helpful or had made them better.

5 (16%) respondents gave negative comments of which some focussed on dental treatment and the fact that it had hurt. One stated that she didn't like going to see her GP at the moment because he was male. Please see appendix 1 for full list of comments.

Many of the carers/enablers who assisted with the filling out of the survey said that they thought the services they had encountered while supporting someone with learning disabilities were good. However, one was keen we record that, *'Sometimes it is difficult to get a Dr out for a home visit. When we asked for a home visit recently he didn't turn up three times. We didn't even get a call to say he wasn't coming.'*

One carer stated that they had supported a person with learning disabilities in A&E and thought it was, '*Fantastic*' – they were particularly impressed that the person she was supporting was attended to every half hour.

6.4 Focus Group

Members of a deaf group were engaged in the process with the help of a sign language interpreter. As a whole they decided that they would be more comfortable giving their feedback as a group rather than on a one to one basis. In total 30 people with hearing loss or who are deaf, and members of their families/carers took part.

6.4.1 Accessing appointments

Some people within the group identified issues with regards to making appointments. They pointed out that not only were they unable to use the phone, but many were also unable to use or access a computer and so unable to book appointments online. One woman commented '*My teenage son needed counselling, but he was given phone numbers to call for help – he can't use them!*'

Other participants highlighted the fact that even when resources are put in place to support people with hearing impairments or deafness to access services, there is little awareness of it. For example, two people during the focus group discussed the issue of accessing emergency care and discovered from another participant that there is a 999 text service for deaf people – however no-one in the group knew how to register for this service.

6.4.2 Attending Appointments

Several of the participants cited waiting rooms as being a problematic area for them. They explained that they were often called for their appointment, by the receptionist or health professional, but they were unable to hear. One participant said that when his dentist calls the name of the next patient they stand round a corner and so preventing any opportunity to lip-read, he added that his dental record shows that he is profoundly deaf.

Another man spoke of his frustration that despite its specialism the Audiology and Hearing Aid service at the Freeman Hospital still often called the name of the next appointment. One respondent added that there was no LED screen at the new Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital. They also pointed out that the staff often call out names from behind a row of chairs– consequently they are facing the back of patients heads; denying the opportunity of lip reading.

6.4.3 Communication

Members of the focus groups stated that one of the most frustrating issues for them was that of attending an appointment and finding the GP typing on their keyboard or looking at their computer screen and not looking at them whilst speaking to them. One participant stated that when he visited his GP practice '*the receptionist waved at me that my usual Dr was off and asked if it was ok for me to see another Dr. I thought it was fine as I only*

wanted some tablets. When I entered the room the Dr was speaking to the keyboard. I had to stop him and tell him I was deaf. He said it wasn't his job to know that.'

One deaf couple explained how frightening the inability to communicate with emergency services could be, when they may be unable to explain what is wrong or understand what is happening to them but there is no time to arrange an interpreter.

In addition the lack of understanding with regards to poor communication during medical procedures was cited as being frustrating. One respondent stated that not knowing how long to hold his breath when having an xray and being unable to hear instructions when being given a scan could be problematic. Another young man had added that he had continued to hold his breath after an xray because he had not been told he could move. In some instances such poor communication can be frightening – one man informed us that having a catheter or stoma fitted can be very distressing if an explanation of the process is not communicated to the patient.

One teenage participant described his hospital stay for an operation. He stated that when he was in hospital the nurse did not wake him up to carry out a procedure and with no warning had carried out a pre-epidural ice test. The young man stated that he woke up screaming with shock. Another respondent stated that often there is no proper pre-arranged signal given with regards to when the health professional is actually going to give an injection or take blood.

6.4.4 Interpreters

Whilst the use of a sign language interpreter can help with communication, many members of the focus group felt that when an interpreter can be pre-arranged it is often not as helpful as it could be. They discussed how, on occasion, an interpreter can be helpful during a consultation whilst in other instances the interpreter can add to the frustration and communication difficulties. For example, one person had not felt confident after the interpreter they had been placed with at the RVI got their name wrong. They continued to explain that a patient has to rely on the interpreter to translate what they are saying exactly, including symptoms and other related issues as well as translate clinical terminology back to them. Another participant added that not only are there many different forms of sign language, there are also different dialects, even within BSL, as well as general barriers to communication/understanding and interpreters.

Interpreters are booked for a limited period of time. The participants stated that this makes them feel pressured to rush through everything.

One enabler explained how difficult this can be when she is translating for her deaf/dumb/blind partner. She stated that they communicate by writing on each others hand and waiting for each other to reply. Inevitably this can take time, and often she is made to feel that she is wasting the medical professional's time.

Another key issue that was highlighted by the group with regards to having an interpreter/enabler was that relating to privacy. Many stated that the fact that you have

to have someone translate for you inhibits privacy. One female enabler, for example, stated that she supports a man and appreciates that there will be issues that he would not want to discuss through her. Several members of the group felt that this was even more uncomfortable when the interpreter was a different gender to you. Also, the interpreter assigned to an individual can be inappropriate for other reasons such as age. One young man not only felt uncomfortable because the person he had been assigned was a different gender but also because he felt they were far too old to understand what he was talking about.

6.5 Issues raised through Access to Healthcare Task Group

6.5.1 In the months prior to the surveys being circulated, issues relating to access to services had been discussed by Healthwatch Northumberland's Access to Healthcare Task group, based on feedback received from the public through engagement work, particularly from people who are blind or partially sighted.

6.5.2 Specific issues identified included difficulty accessing premises independently, signage and lack of awareness of the patient's individual needs, for example nurses on a ward where a visually impaired patient was admitted being unaware of this information and not explaining procedures appropriately.

6.5.3 Signage in hospitals was raised by people with visual impairments as a particular area of concern.

6.5.4 People who are blind or partially sighted also raised access to information as a particular problem, for example access to patient records. People from this group also identified concerns that the opportunity to comment on draft Quality Accounts was not open to them. This was despite draft documents being published stating that audio versions of the documents are available when they had only been made available after the consultation period had ended.

6.5.5 Medication packaging had also been highlighted as an area of concern. Some medications have braille labels which are then covered over with stickers so that the braille cannot be read. However, patients from this group also commented that not everyone who is blind or partially sighted is able to read braille. Patients have also highlighted that some packaging for different medications to treat different conditions can look very similar. This has caused concern for other patient groups.

Conclusions

Responses

There was a low response (16%) from health service providers. This was disappointing considering surveys could be returned online and by freepost.

There was an equally low response from voluntary and community service groups and organisations working with disabled people and it is unclear whether this was because access is not an issue for the individuals they are working with.

The level of individual responses was lower than expected in light of the level of promotion of the project. This may be due to people in the target groups not, in the main, having major concerns about access to services.

Service Providers

The number of providers indicating that they identified or recorded patients who have a sensory impairment, physical or learning disability and required adjustments was very low. However, most provide hearing loops, information in large print and have wheelchair accessible premises.

A high proportion of service providers said they had designated learning disability leads and provided information in easy read format. A small number reported they did not make any additional adjustments for people with learning disabilities.

Five of the 23 service providers stated that they did not offer any staff training. Several of the service providers identified the need for more staff training.

Standard Survey

Many of individuals who completed the standard survey reported they found the premises services were located were accessible. Poor signage/directions and issues relating to travel were highlighted as barriers to access.

The most popular method identified through the standard survey to make an appointment was by phone. The issue of the reliance on telephone systems for accessing appointments was highlighted as a barrier for some people.

Almost a third of respondents stated that they had not been given information in an appropriate format after their appointment. Of those who did receive it in an appropriate format the largest number stated that they were given the information verbally. Some respondents said they had not requested information in a appropriate format, reasons given highlighted the fact that some people do not have the confidence to ask, others indicated that they expected that they would be given appropriate information if it were available.

Almost all respondents to the standard survey stated that they felt that their needs had been met.

Easy Read Survey

Over half of those who completed the easy read survey said the service was very easy or easy to access. However many added they were usually accompanied and indicated the support of staff was the most important thing for them when accessing a service.

Many also indicated that it was either easy or very easy to make an appointment however this included a small number who also stated that their appointments were made by a family member or carer.

Most of the respondents to the easy read survey stated that they were either very happy or happy with the treatment they had received.

Focus Group

People told us that access to interpreters for a limited time only can cause other difficulties. The need for extra time for interpretation was highlighted as an issue for this group. Other concerns related particularly to the age and gender of interpreters and their ability to translate medical terms.

Lack of awareness or acknowledgement on the part of health professionals that the patient is deaf or hard of hearing was identified as a concern.

Issues raised through Access to Healthcare Task Group

The design of premises, access to services and information provided can all create barriers for people with sensory impairments. The lack of availability of information in appropriate formats to meet individual needs is a particular issue of concern.

Lack of awareness or acknowledgement on the part of health professionals that the patient is blind or partially sighted was identified as a concern.

Medication packaging can cause difficulties for patients who are blind or partially sighted as well as for other patient groups, particularly where packaging for different medications is very similar.

Common Themes and Issues

Overall, most respondents were happy with access to services and information provided, however, there were some service users and carers who were not. The main concerns emerging from the project are around access to services for people with sensory impairments.

Respondents to both surveys and those who participated in the focus group identified that they needed family or carer support to access services. Whilst this offers an easy solution to communication barriers for service providers, it can also preclude privacy of the individual receiving treatment.

Feedback highlighted barriers to accessing services can be a result of a lack of awareness of health service staff of the individual needs of the patient and allowing sufficient time to meet their individual needs.

The results of the survey indicate that there is a lack of understanding of the communication needs of some of the groups that we worked with. Many respondents identified the waiting room to be a particularly problematic area, particularly for those with sensory impairments.

A number of examples of good practice were identified through the project.

Recommendations

1. Health Service providers make available to the public their plans including timelines for implementing the NHS Accessible Information standard.
2. Health Service providers publish their response and make available plans to implement The Equality Delivery System 2.
3. Access to appropriate interpreters be made available by Health Service providers to meet the access needs of people who require support and interpreters be made available for the length of time required by the patient.
4. Appropriate means of access to services should be provided to meet all individual needs, including communication methods, access to premises, appropriate support when receiving treatment and accessible information. Consideration to be given to the protected characteristics as detailed by the Equality Act 2010.
5. Health Service providers actively promote the availability of and access to information in different formats including, if not readily available, a timeframe for availability.
6. Healthwatch Northumberland continue to work with sensory impaired patients and service providers to address issues they raise.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Other Responses Given

Please note: Comments are listed as written on survey responses

Page 8 Q3 Graph 3: Resources Available for People with Sensory Impairments

List of 'other' resources cited.

- Reasonable adjustments made.
- Language Empire provide BSL interpreters to the practice.
- No threshold and double width front door.
- Different coloured walls – blue-purple-orange.
- Domiciliary visits if necessary.
- Member of staff who can use sign language.
- Information in various formats.
- Clear protective glasses for patients who need to lip read.
- Domette boxes.
- Guide dogs allowed.
- Medicine boxes have braille.
- Sign language could be arranged if needed.
- Written instructions for eye tests of people with hearing loss.
- Disabled Parking.
- Call system is personal – i.e. GP or nurse calls patient by name.
- Email communication for the hard of hearing.
- Downstairs consulting rooms.

Page 9 Q4 Graph 4: Resources Available for People with Physical Disabilities

List of 'other' resources cited

- Widened garden path for wheelchair access.
- Staff awareness.
- Call for assistance bell at appropriate height.
- Help where required.
- Dedicated seating area.
- On site wheelchair.
- Mobility scooters welcome.
- Weather permitting we have a door always open policy.
- Assistance offered.
- Credit card machine can be lowered and given to wheelchair bound.
- Doorbell to alert reception to open door.
- Entry button on window.
- Range of seating.
- Lifts.
- Call aids.
- NHS minimums apply.

Page 10 Q5 Graph 5: Resources Available for People with Learning Disabilities

List of 'other' resources cited

- Allow their carers or family in with them.
- Guidance and assistance.

- Our staff are sensitive to the needs of all our service users. Being a small village we know our patients well and recognise those who need extra assistance.
- Any help we can give will be given.
- Our services provide for all disabilities.
- We treat people with LD and refer to Newcastle Dental Hospital if treatment under sedation/options are necessary.
- Reception will help with all forms that need completing.
- All legal requirements met.
- Capacity to accommodate carers in waiting room.
- Access to carer support.
- Alerts on clinical system.
- Tolerance for home visits low. Encouraged to attend with carers.
- Specialist staff and specialist services.
- When can, advise carers of when the shop is quietest so they can book an appointment to suit.
- Assisted shop if required.
- Reasonable adjustments to appointments.

Page 10 Q6 Graph 6: Format Information Available

'Other' responses cited

- Video.
- Leaflet.
- If requested would try to access.
- Our standard leaflets are easy to follow.
- Verbal to patient or relative.
- Audio.
- We do not have a great deal of information and will deal with individuals as required.
- Website.
- Check-in in large text and can be formatted to be audible for vision impaired.
- Have investigated braille – problematic.
- App.
- DDA loops.

Page 11 Q8: What type of training around sensory impairment, physical and learning Other examples of training delivered?

Service specific including e-learning, 1:1 group etc re sensory, LD, autisms etc.

- Two members of staff have completed the online BSL course.
- Only an Optometrist or dispensing optician would serve the above patients, or they would be supervising an experienced member of staff.
- Informing training given to staff, provided by staff and patients from outside services, learning disabilities and blind etc.
- Training on the use of the hearing loop.
- Staff induction.
- DDA training.
- Verbal discussion and feedback.
- Statutory NHS training.
- Vulnerable adults.
- Dementia Friends session.

- In the past had someone blind/partially sighted come in.
- Local public health training.
- We have a disability access survey.
- Other training limited.
- In past we had a meeting with people with learning disabilities
- Healthy Living programme.

Standard Survey

Page 12 Question 1: Please tell us which service your feedback is about.

GP:

- Bedlingtonshire Medical Surgery, Bedlington.
- Belford Medical Group, x3
- Brockwell Medical Group, Cramlington.
- Burn Brae, Berwick x2.
- Collingwood Medical Group, Blyth.
- Elsdon Avenue Medical Group, Seaton Delaval.
- Forum Family Practice, Cramlington x5.
- Glendale Surgery, Wooler.
- Greystoke, Morpeth.
- Guidepost Health Centre, Choppington.
- Haltwhistle Medical Group, Haltwhistle.
- Infirmary Drive Medical Group, Alnwick x2.
- Lintonville Terrace, Ashington x2.
- Marine Medical Group, Blyth x3.
- Rothbury Practice, Rothbury x2.
- Seaton Park Medical Group x4.
- Station Medical Group, Blyth x4.
- The Bondgate Practice, Alnwick x2.
- Village Surgery, Cramlington x2.
- Waterloo, Blyth.
- Wellway, Morpeth x2.
- White Medical Group, Ponteland.
- Practice Nurse
- GP
- Medical group

Pharmacy:

- Co-op Pharmacy, Infirmary Drive, Alnwick.

Dentist:

- Cramlington Dental Practice.
- Grants Dentist, Cramlington.
- Market Street Dental Practice, Alnwick.
- The Mount, Morpeth.

Hospital:

- Berwick.
- Freeman – Audiology x2.
- Freeman– Outpatients.

- Freeman x3.
- Hexham A&E.
- Hexham.
- Hospital.
- NSECH.
- RVI – Childrens Department.
- RVI – Eye Dept x3.
- RVI x3.
- Wansbeck General Hospital – Cardio.
- Wansbeck General Hospital x 9.

NEAS

- Patient Transport to the Freeman
- Ambulance to Wansbeck General Hospital

Optician

- Specsavers, Morpeth
- Morpeth
- Specsavers, Cramlington

Podiatry

- Morpeth podiatrist.
- Podiatrist Forum Family Practice Cramlington.

Page 17 Q8 Please tell us how your particular needs were or were not met?

Were met

- They can do paperwork for me if my hands are twitching too much.
- Paper work is generally done on computer which helps as I can barely write and sign things (my hands twitch).
- Staff helpful; and they knew I had sight problems.
- We discussed sciatica; I've been referred for a CT scan. The nerve is seized by the disc.
- Highly skilled staff.
- I was sent for an x-ray.
- Very good - all wonderful at the surgery.
- I went in at 3.30, I saw a Dr, two nurses and had an X-ray and was home by 5.30.
- Very good, they make copious notes and have increased the number of appointments I have.
- Satisfactory.
- I was prescribed steroids.
- They are doing everything they can. They changed the strength of the eye injection.
- Very good.
- Referred me to hospital.
- Tests, ECG etc. and referred for MRI scan.
- Staff sorted me out.
- They did everything – scans etc.
- Having blood clots on the lungs the care I received was excellent.
- My needs were fully met and I have no complaints about the service I received.
- Even though they are not able to do anything for my eyes they did examine me etc.

- My existing aids were updated and audiology graph showed that my hearing loss had deteriorated and that it needed digital adjusting.
- Repairs to hearing aids carried out while I waited.
- They were lovely even though it was painful. The surgeon was kind – he even made a few jokes to relax me.
- I assume that I am being given the right medication for my heart.
- I have complex needs and they gave me different orthotics for when my oedema swells up.
- Hearing aid check and examination – all needs met.
- Son in law/daughter were able to translate.
- I was able to talk to them about everything.
- Follow up phone call three days later to verify that treatment was progressing satisfactorily.
- Dr is good.
- The Dr was very helpful.
- It varies.
- The Dr was very helpful.
- Treated with dignity, respect and understanding.
- My needs were met by the treatment given by the podiatrist and advice given if any further treatment needed.
- Consideration given to me as partially sighted.
- Consideration given to me as partially sighted.
- Treatment was fine.

How not met

- I had a fall. A friend called the Dr, who refused to come out and see me because he couldn't give me any more painkillers. I was in agony. Not gentle with me when he did see me. I will have a short life I said they might as well give me an injection and put me to sleep. The Dr just closed his file and left. He was very unfriendly and uncaring. In the end I saw a different (lady) Dr who told me that my spin was broken. It took three months - I heard it crack so why didn't the Dr believe me?
- Our daughter received anti-biotics for her ear-infection, but only after being in pain for a couple of days, we were initially refused and appointment on triage. We were told that she has to managed pain and that they prefer the ear drum to get perforated. Why would they wait to treat that when they could prevent it and save money?
- Eventually they thought I'd had a heart attack, I was horrified when the nurse said they would do an ECG.
- When they found the machine - I took this to mean they only have one!
- I was told after the tests that there is nothing they can do for me - it's frustrating.
- I waited a while; the Dr checked me all over and prescribed me a cream. However the chemist had to order the cream in because they didn't have it in.
- Went for pre-op assessment on Thursday for knee replacement surgery due Monday. Snr Nurse checked tablets - 1 of them should have been stopped 7 days before so surgery cancelled. Next date is November. Carried out lots of tests - found nothing wrong.
- Dr is taking me off one of my tablets to see if it helps.
- Delays in treatment due to no available emergency appointments at the practice. This prolonged my suffering with extreme pain due to a tooth that needed extracting.

- Just talked to me, but the Dr was on the computer the whole time. They can't listen at the same time as type.
- I could not access telephone system as I can't hear and was informed they do not use T.X.T service.
- I was shocked by the number of shots by the laser - 79 in all

Page 20 Q13: If yes, what was the response?

- Yes, I did and they gave it to me.
- Thompsons @ Alnwick: Eye tests are carried out using pictures and sounds, it is adapted. So for example barking for a dog. Then we asked RVI to also use pictures for communication. Now they do. But GP doesn't use them.
- I asked for large print from North Tyneside and they do send it.
- Asked for large print information about the new hospital and it was sent to me.
- I request large print.
- Received information in large print.
- Yes I asked, but I didn't get it.
- I asked the DSS for benefits info in braille but did not receive it.
- None.

No, I haven't asked because ...

- I have never been offered to have my letters from the hospital in large print. I have to get support from my family and the blind club to read them.
- Not really thought to ask - some do it automatically.
- I have various equipment through the NCBA.
- No because I feel guilty about asking and taking up too much of their time.
- Because not really good for me.
- Large Print - I am sure if they do large print they would give it to me. I don't think I have had anything in large print form the GP.
- Was not aware of it.

Positive

- The health service is good in Alnwick Marks out of 10 (where 10 is good and 0 is poor) I give 8.
- They are usually ok - I think they try their best.
- I had an operation at the freeman last year and they went out of their way to transfer me to Rothbury after so I could be close to my husband who I am a carer for. They were very, very good. I have additional need for many services as I have Parkinson's, diabetes and am in remission for cancer. I am also a carer for my husband and I think the health services are all very good.
- It is difficult to get and appointment especially for kids, but when you do the problem gets solved quick.
- Personally I think that the acute centre at the hospital is working really well as the waiting time to see a Dr is shorter.
- The dentist comes to the house.
- I have never had any problems with health or social services - they have seen me through eight heart attacks.
- Child and parent friendly service. Easy access. Friendly and professional staff.
- Alright to go to Blyth Community Hospital for an X-ray.
- No complaints.

- I have check-ups at the RVI eye department every 6 months and they are very helpful. The green and black signs have made getting to the eye department a lot easier. It used to be difficult to get in and around the hospital, but not now.
- Pretty well served. Finding out how to get support when first diagnosed was an issue.
- To get my hearing aid fixed I have to go to Wansbeck General Hospital.
- The hospitals are pretty good. I find GP ok – but I know others struggle to get appointments.
- We are very well served with our GP service. I am happiest with a home visit. My Dr came for a visit and I needed anti-biotics, she came with them so I didn't need to go to the chemist.
- Local GP visited me at home, they are very good. I think we have a better service here than they have in the town.
- Fine, lovely.
- No complaints.
- After my stroke I was sent to Wansbeck. I told the Dr I was claustrophobic and they were great at putting me at ease.
- I cannot fault any treatment I have received at Wansbeck or North Tyneside.
- I am really satisfied with the health services I need to attend to.
- Everyone is kind. I have a very good Dr
- The Freeman meets all my needs – outstanding NHS service.
- Very good service. Very friendly and easily understood when being talked to. Could hear what was being said. Time taken with us and repairs done while waited. All very much appreciated.
- Very good.
- Infirmary Drive GP – Brilliant. You can order prescriptions on line and then the chemist will send a text to let you know the prescriptions are ready. I also like the fact that I can make an appointment over the telephone.
- I am happy with access I have to health services and with the service I receive.
- This is about access to outpatients at Wansbeck General Hospital Audio and Eye Departments – both excellent.
- Very happy with the services I get.
- It's fine for me because they visit me at home. I'm lucky.
- So far 99% of appointments and treatment have been very satisfactory. I also have the benefit of a pharmacist who is available for information on some treatments, such as flu jabs. As a backup for Doctors.
- Good experience.
- Happy with the service received.
- Good experience, good Dr. Happy with the service.
- They are all very helpful to me.
- My son has complex needs. Lintonville medical group is fantastic. He sees the same GP every time. GP will return calls the same day if I need advice. Excellent service.
- I don't have any problems.
- No complaints whatsoever. I am very happy with the service I receive from this department every time I need to use it.
- We do not have any complaints about National Health Service.
- Alnwick Social Service, Outstanding work. Unable to help with my sons needs at current time as he is a new born, but told to phone anytime if I need help.

Negative

- You used to be able to get the car right up to the front door at the GP Practice in Belford, but they put bollards up so you can't do that anymore.
- There are so many questions with PTS. They told me they couldn't help because they weren't able to transfer me from my wheelchair. So I had to call the GP, when I called PTS again they said it wouldn't be a problem.
- Easier way to get a referral for OT. More information about mental health problem and where to look for help. Shorter waiting list. Helpline.
- I was at NSECH two weeks ago – emergency. I received no follow up about what had happened to me, or who I was supposed to make appointments with. My GP had to chase it up for me. I have now got two out of three appointments sorted but still waiting for the third. The clinical side was very good, the problem was with admin.
- I would like to complain about transport to take me to hospital at Ashington Wansbeck. I get there, but have to wait for someone else to bring me home which can be quite a long time.
- It's very expensive to get a taxi to the hospital all the time.
- I have a guide dog and I usually see a particular Dr at the RVI, but she was scared of dogs, so during my appointment she was busy watching the dog. I did call and mention this and was told they would make sure somebody else is there when I have my appointment with the Dr. However; she has not been there at recent appointments.
- In hospital you have to keep informing people that you are blind because the staff change so often
- It takes a long time to get to see a Dr, and then you only have 10 minutes. By the time I get to see them I have 2-3 issues to discuss. However they are happy enough to talk about more than one thing.
- I wish the GP practice (Seaton Park) would improve their system for initial contact, especially on the telephone. It's desperately difficult to try and get hold of them especially first thing in the morning.
- If you want to see a particular Dr it is often 2 or 3 weeks unless it's an emergency.
- I have in the past sent info to my GP surgery from RNIB about adaptations for blind/visually impaired. I don't know if they did use any of it or not, but I did not hear anything back from them about it. My GP practice has a computer screen you have to touch to register for your appointment which is no good if you are blind or visually impaired. So I have to have someone with me.
- Do not understand how I can be told the first time it is two weeks until I can have an appointment to see the Dr and the day after I get one the next day, but having to go back and forwards as well.
- The main problem is getting appointment for the Drs. Have been going to RVI cancer hospital for 18 years and had no problem.
- Could be easier to see the Dr. You can't ring in for a repeat prescription any more. You have to tick boxes on a form, but I can't see it to fill it out.
- This is not just my GP, but most health services. They do not use TXT service for hearing impaired people.
- Blyth Valley Disabled Forum Home Care gave my husband his evening tablets in the morning!
- Health service good as a whole, but don't always meet my hearing loss/sight loss needs
- Wait for ages to be seen.

Easy Read Survey

Page 20 Q2 - What is this service called?

Hospital

- Berwick
- Blyth Community hospital
- Blyth Community Hospital
- ENT Freeman
- RVI x2
- Wansbeck General Hospital x3

Dentist

- Berwick Dentist x2
- Butterworth Dental Practice
- Dentist 32
- I Like My Smile, Milburn Road, Ashington
- Richard Parker, Battle Hill Hexham
- Vine Hall Williamson
- Williamson and Vine - Blyth x2

GP

- Bedlington
- Coldstream medical practice
- Cramlington
- Greystoke
- Morpeth
- Rothbury GP x4
- Selegate Medical Practice
- Union Brae Berwick
- Waterloo
- Wellway
- Mr Docarde
- Don't Know

Page 23 Q7: Graph 25 How did you make the appointment?

Details of 'other' responses:

- In person and on the phone x4.
- Sent me an appointment.
- Too hard and so brother did it.
- Tried to make an appointment 6 times – they kept saying come back in two weeks. Was told to do it online, but I can't do it online. If my carer made the appointment on line for me then I wouldn't be included in the process. It is important that I am.

Page 24 Q10: If it was easy what made it easy?

- Sit down. Asked me to come to the counter.
- Easy to get to, local. Appointment was on my day off.
- Local and close.
- It's not far from home to hospital and I walked there with my mum. My social worker collected me and I came back to the day centre.

- I could walk there.
- Nice and helpful people.
- Went inside.
- Flat surface, wide doors, good disabled access.
- Talked to me when bloods taken.
- Easy to get to.
- In my local town.
- Staff were friendly.
- People were nice and friendly.
- I could go down the steps myself.
- Staff were nice.
- They help me.
- Because they know me.
- Woman nice. Easy to read/choose pictures.
- Dad took me in the car.
- I went in with Mum but I am scared to go in on my own. Don't like; not a great place.
- There were a few steps – but they were ok.
- I got a lift with my friend and walked into the practice.
- Friendly.
- Nice and friendly. I like the nurse.
- Friendly - talk to me. They have plenty of nurses and plenty of Drs.
- The driver and paramedic were very nice. They chatted to me all the way. Got me on board, calmed me down. Explained everything – why they were there, what was going to happen and what I should expect.
- I can use the stairs.
- Big sign saying waiting room, you have to go up the stairs.
- Accompanied by staff/carer

Page 28 Q19 Do you have anything else you would like to say about health services.

- Very good very understanding.
- Staff are very friendly, but I waited two hours after arriving for my blood tests.
- It is not all that helpful.
- No waiting time.
- All very good.
- Very happy with service.
- The Drs and dentist are quite good. I go regularly to the hospital to get my feet done. I am able to go on my own.
- They should talk to me. My hearing aid keeps coming out and I can't put it back in.
- I don't like the dentist it's sore.
- Ambulance takes ages to pick up sick people and should be more quicker because it is a matter of life and death.
- The hospital looked at my heart and made me better. Nice to me.
- Dentist took tooth out when it was in pain. See Dr often as diabetic – Don't like seeing the Dr at the moment.
- Because I don't like male Dr. like to see a woman. Ok with man who does feet because have seen him for a long time.
- Happy with what the Drs are doing for me.
- I scream my head off going to the dentist. It hurts when they took a tooth out. Dentist not nice doing that.

- I like going to see my Dr in Widdrington. They're nice.
- They gave me an injection.
- I like going to see the Dr. I have a cup of tea and a biscuit. I stayed one night in hospital and somebody came to visit me.
- I ran out of cream which I get from the chemist myself – supported by my carer.
- Some of the rooms are upstairs – if we are talking the wheelchair we have to ask to be seen in a room downstairs.
- Happy to talk to Dr Joyce the psychiatrist.
- Also visits the Waferin clinic @ Blyth Community hospital every 6 weeks.

Comments from Carers

- I was very happy with the services.
- Would have been easier to get an appointment. Don't feel under 18s are being given priority. Limit waiting time.
- It's all very good.
- Drs can get very personal; you can ask the person who is with you to leave the room. Dr is a nice person. Dentist is a nice person.
- Chiropodist - nice. Dr Guidepost Medical Centre – nice
- Carer supported all the way through A&E – thought it was fantastic. LD respondent was attended to every half an hour.
- Sometimes it is difficult to get a Dr out for a home visit. When we asked for a home visit recently he didn't turn up three times—we didn't even get a call to say he wasn't coming.
- As the manager finds the staff at the dentist very friendly and helpful. They know everyone in the ILS. Has no problem making appointments.

Appendix 2

Accessibility Project (Service Providers)

Healthwatch Northumberland is working on a project to find out the experiences of people with sensory impairments, physical and learning disabilities who live in Northumberland, about access to health services. Health services include Hospitals, GP, Dentist, Pharmacy, Opticians & Ambulance Service.

The project has been developed following feedback from some members of the public who have contacted us about their experiences. In response, we would like to look at this issue in more detail. As part of the project we are also asking service providers about ways in which they engage with people with sensory impairments and what practical assistance is available to them. We are gathering information during June and July 2015 and a report will be produced and distributed to service providers during August 2015, which we hope as well as identifying any areas which could be improved, will also highlight examples of good practice.

<p>Please tell us which services you provide (i.e. GP, Dentist, Optician, Pharmacy etc.)</p> <p>Contact Address:</p>
<p>What provisions does your service make around access for members of the public who have sensory impairment? (visual impairment or hearing loss)</p>
<p>What provisions does your service make around access for members of the public who have physical disabilities?</p>
<p>What provisions does your service make around access for members of the public who have learning disabilities?</p>

Do you provide information in different formats to meet the needs of those with sensory impairment, physical or learning disabilities, and if so what are they?

Do you have a range of ways in which you contact patients with sensory impairment, physical or learning disabilities in order to make appointments, and if so, what are they?

What type of training around sensory impairment, physical and learning disabilities is provided to staff within your service?

Please provide any other comments you may have about access to health services for people with sensory impairment, physical or learning disabilities.

Would your service be interested in working in partnership with Healthwatch Northumberland to help raise awareness and improve the experience of service users with sensory impairment, physical or learning disabilities?

- Yes
- No

Contact details:

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return to:-

Freepost RTLX-SYBA-UTAA
Healthwatch Northumberland
Adapt NE
Burn Lane
Hexham
NE46 3HN
Using the envelope provided.

Accessibility Project

Healthwatch Northumberland is working on a project to find out the experiences of people with sensory impairments, physical and learning disabilities who live in Northumberland, about access to health services. Health services include hospital, GP, Dentist, Pharmacy, Optician, Ambulance Service.

The project has been developed following feedback from some members of the public who have contacted us about their experiences. In response, we would like to look at this issue in more detail. The information we gather will be shared with those who commission and deliver services.

We would be grateful if you could complete this questionnaire next time you use a service or about your experience if you have used a service in the last six months.

Please tell us which service your feedback is about (including the name of the hospital or practice).

When did you use the service? _____ Month _____ Year

Please tell us how you made the appointment (ie phone, in person, via the internet)

How long did you wait for the appointment (ie the number of days from the day you made it until the day of the appointment)? _____ days

Thinking about your particular needs, was the premises accessible for you?

Yes No

Please tell us how your particular needs were or were not met.

Were your particular needs met during treatment?

Yes No

Please tell us how your particular needs were or were not met.

Was information about the service available in other formats?

Large print

Braille

Audio

Other _____

Following your appointment, were you given information in an appropriate format for you?

Yes No

Please tell us how your particular needs were or were not met.

Have you ever requested information from a health or social care service in a different format?

Yes No If Yes, what was the response?

Do you have any other comments about access to health services?

Thank you very much for completing this survey. Please return to:-

Freepost RTLX-SYBA-UTAA
Healthwatch Northumberland
Adapt NE
Burn Lane
Hexham
NE46 3HN

(no stamp required)

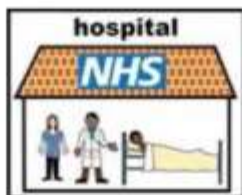
healthwatch

Northumberland



Healthwatch Northumberland wants to find out what you think of health services in Northumberland.

Health services include



Hospital



Doctor



Dentist



Chemist



Optician



Ambulance



Your views will be shared with those who are in charge so they can make services better.

1

Please draw a circle around your answer.

Which health service would you like to tell us about?



Hospital



Doctor



Dentist



Chemist



Optician



Ambulance

2



Please write in your answer.



What is this service called?

3

Please draw a circle around your answer.



When did you last use this service?

In the last month

1 month ago

2 months ago

3 months ago


4 months ago


5 months ago


6 months ago

2

4 Please draw a circle around your answer.

 Did you have to make an appointment?

yes 

no  **If no please go to question 9**


5 Please draw a circle around your answer.





yes  If yes who did you make the appointment with?

Hospital Doctor Dentist Optician

6 Please draw a circle around your answer.

 **appointment** How easy was it to make an appointment?

Very Easy Easy A Bit Hard Too Hard

7 Please draw a circle around your answer.



How did you make the appointment?



On the phone?

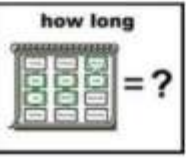


In person?



On the internet?

8 Please draw a circle around your answer.



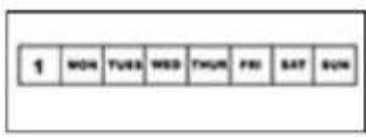
How long did you have to wait for your appointment?



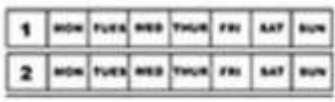
Same day



Next day



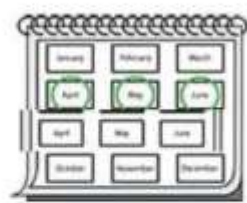
1 week



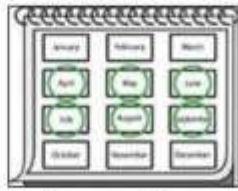
2 weeks



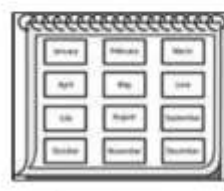
1 month



3 months



6 months



Longer

9 Please draw a circle around your answer.



Was it easy or hard for you to access the service?



Very Easy



Easy



A Bit Hard



Too Hard

10 Please write in your answer.



If it was easy what made it easy ?

11 Please write in your answer.



If it was hard why was that?

12 Please draw a circle around your answer.



Were you happy with your treatment?



Very Happy



Happy



Unhappy



Very Unhappy

13 Please write in your answer.



If you were happy what was good about the treatment?

14 Please write in your answer.



If you were unhappy what was bad about the treatment?

15 Please draw a circle around your answer.



Were you given any information ?



If no please go to question 19

16 Please draw a circle around your answer.



How were you given the information?



Leaflet



Easy Read



Large Print



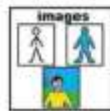
Braille



Spoken



Audio



Pictures



Jack and Josephine

17 Please draw a circle around your answer.



Could you understand the information you were given?

If yes please go to question 19



18 Please write in your answer



If no what would have made it better?

19



Please write n your answer.



Do you have anything else you would like to say about health services?



Thank you very much for completing this survey.



Please put it in the envelope we have given you

You do not need to put a stamp on



then put it in the post.

healthwatch
Northumberland

8

healthwatch Northumberland

Burn Lane
Hexham
Northumberland
NE46 3HN
Tel 03332 508 468
www.healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk

A project delivered by

