

# A&E Watch

## July 2021



# Introduction

## What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch Cheshire is the local independent consumer champion for health and care services, forming part of the national network of local Healthwatch across England. As part of our core activity we seek the views and experiences of residents of Cheshire East, and Cheshire West and Chester to help inform how health, care and wellbeing services are planned and delivered. The information we gather is then analysed so that we can identify and act upon trends and common themes by presenting our findings to decision makers in order to improve the services people use. We also share people's views locally with Healthwatch England who strive to ensure that the government put people at the heart of care nationally.

## What is A&E Watch?

A&E Watch is designed to gain a snapshot view of the NHS Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments in Cheshire. Healthwatch Cheshire undertake A&E Watch periodically to gain experiences of patients and understand why they attended and how they thought services could be improved. The purpose of A&E Watch is to explore themes emerging from the comments we have received about A&E during our regular general engagement activity. You can find our previous A&E Watch reports on our websites:

[healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports](https://healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports) and  
[healthwatchcheshireeast.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports](https://healthwatchcheshireeast.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports)



Leighton Hospital, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021

## July 2021 A&E Watch

In July 2021, Healthwatch were approached by members of the Cheshire A&E Delivery Board to undertake an A&E Watch across the three A&E departments located in Cheshire. This was in the context of unprecedented levels of attendance in the departments, and pressures across the whole health and care system. Through the independent conversations Healthwatch could hold, partners sought to better understand the reasons why people were attending, specifically whether they had attempted to access any other services prior to going to A&E. A&E Watch allows Healthwatch Cheshire to gather the experiences of individuals, which provides additional rich and detailed information, enhancing the statistics regarding A&E attendance.

### When and where was A&E Watch?

A&E Watch took place in each of the A&E departments in Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East: Countess of Chester Hospital; Leighton Hospital; Macclesfield Hospital.

To give a consistent snapshot of A&E departments, A&E Watch was conducted on the same days and times across Cheshire. We visited each department on four occasions throughout the week commencing 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021:

- Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July - 8.30am-11am and 4.30pm-7pm
- Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July - 1pm-4.30pm
- Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> July - 10.30am-1pm

This enabled coverage of each hospital over three separate days and captured the experiences of people visiting each department at different time periods during the day ranging from 8.30am to 7pm.



Macclesfield Hospital, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021

## Our Approach

Building on our established relationships with Health partners, Healthwatch Cheshire made contact with the key individuals who manage each of the A&E departments. We made the necessary arrangements to conduct our A&E Watch taking in to consideration the busy workload of staff, and the current guidance regarding infection prevention control measures. Seven members of the Healthwatch Cheshire team, along with 12 of our volunteers, held conversations at the three A&E departments and completed surveys with individuals whilst they were waiting to be seen. Survey results were input onto our computer system whilst we were in the department, ensuring a quick and timely turnaround to report on our findings.

This year's A&E Watch took place on what turned out to be the hottest week of the year so far, which contributed to the experiences of people we spoke to, and we thank Healthwatch Cheshire staff and volunteers, as well as hospital staff working in the departments, for their hard work and effort in very warm conditions.

This A&E Watch was the first that Healthwatch Cheshire has conducted since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, which meant that consideration had to be given to social distancing when having conversations with people and asking them to complete surveys, as well as all necessary measures such as the wearing of face masks and regular use of hand sanitiser.



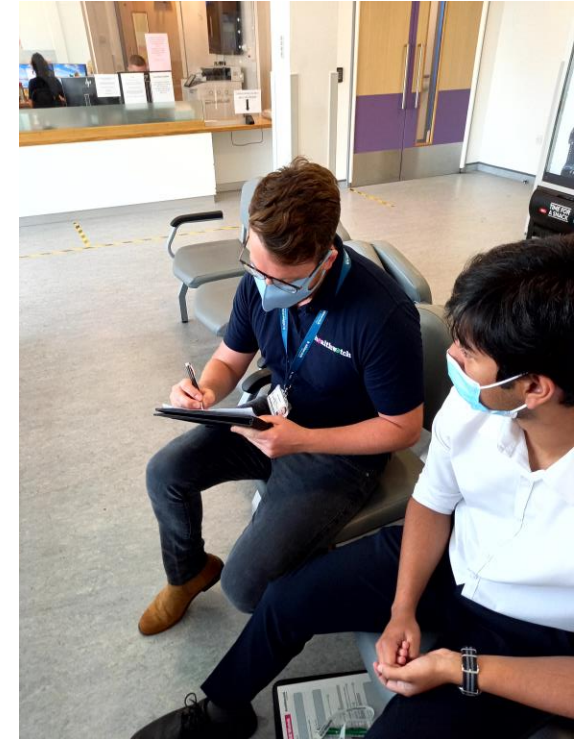
Macclesfield Hospital, 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021

## Who will this report be shared with?

The following report has been produced based on the responses from the 266 people who completed our survey across the four sessions at the three hospitals. All comments are reported exactly as provided.

A copy of the final report will be published on our websites, and sent to the below with the recommendation that the information is used to provide intelligence for the planning of A&E services in Cheshire:

- Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, East Cheshire NHS Trust, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.
- Cheshire A&E System Flow Group
- Cheshire A&E Delivery Board
- NHS Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- North West Ambulance Service (NWAS)
- NHS 111
- Cheshire East Council
- Cheshire West and Chester Council.



Countess of Chester Hospital, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021



## Summary of findings

The below consists of observations from Healthwatch Cheshire staff and volunteers, and findings from the **266 responses** to our survey:

### Why people told us they attended A&E:

- Across each of the hospitals, 71% of respondents told us they had not tried to contact NHS111 before attending A&E. Many people we spoke to were unaware that this was the process they were meant to follow. People who had been given an appointment to attend by NHS111 reported that they were told upon arrival in A&E that due to pressures on the department they would not be following appointments and people would have to wait the same as people who had just gone straight to A&E. It is noted that NHS111 offer a time of arrival rather than a specific appointment as A&E are unable to keep to specific appointments.
- 54% of respondents overall told us they had not attempted to go anywhere else before coming to A&E. People said this was for reasons such as a perception they would be sent to A&E anyway, or they thought it was more convenient and would be seen quicker, and a perception that they would not be able to get a GP appointment.
- Of those who had attempted to go elsewhere before A&E, 74% (83 people) said they had first tried to access their GP, with 58 of these people saying that the GP themselves had advised them to go to A&E. Other people mentioned being advised by receptionists to go to A&E due to a lack of GP appointments.
- A few people said they went to A&E because they were told they would have to wait at least 4 hours for an ambulance.
- Across all three hospitals, 69.1% of respondents told us they had not previously attended A&E in the past 12 months, suggesting that the majority of people are not repeat attendees.

## People's experiences of attending A&E:

- Generally people complimented the staff on their attitude, and were understanding of the busy conditions they were working in.
- This year's A&E Watch took place on what turned out to be the hottest week of the year so far. Of the three A&E departments, only the Countess of Chester had air conditioning in the department, which contributed to a difficult experience for people in waiting areas in Leighton and Macclesfield Hospitals, with long wait times and busy departments.
- In all three hospitals, people felt there was a lack of communication as to how long and why they were waiting for long periods, with not much understanding of what would happen to them next. This contrasts with our previous A&E Watch in January 2020 when waiting times were displayed on television screens and people felt well informed.
- However, across all three hospitals 78% (170 people) rated their experience in A&E as 4 or 5 out of 5 ('good' or 'excellent'). Water fountains were available, Rocket ice lollies were given to people in the waiting room on one afternoon at the Countess of Chester, and Leighton put bottled water out on a table to replace a broken vending machine in the Out of Hours waiting area. The friendly approach of staff and quick triage process was praised across the hospitals. There was lots of praise for the new A&E department at the Countess as being a nice environment for people.

## People's experiences of attending A&E cont.:

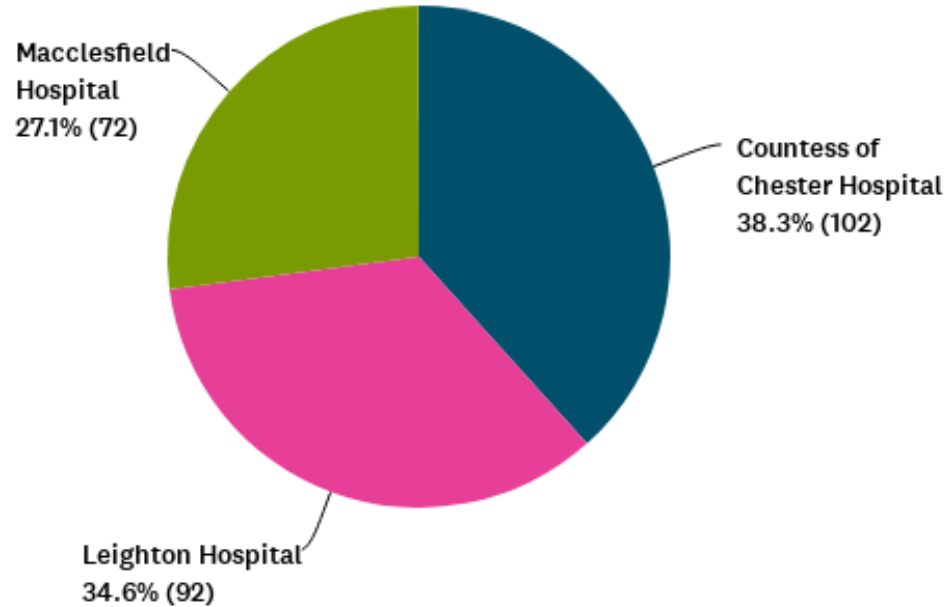
- It did not appear that COVID-19 social distancing protocols put in place by the hospitals were being followed successfully due to a large number of people attending the departments. Waiting rooms were often full, exceeding the limits on the number of people allowed at any one time that were self-imposed by the departments. Signs not to sit on seats were being moved by people so that they could sit down, and no cleaning of seats was taking place in between patients. There was also inconsistency within departments, with some toys but not others available in the children's waiting room at Leighton, and televisions in use at the Countess of Chester but not Macclesfield where the use of a remote control was deemed to be a COVID-19 risk.
- It was observed that due to building works at all three hospitals, only disabled car parking was available at A&E. There was no signage to suggest where else at the hospital people should park. As restrictions lift and more car parking is taken up at other parts of the hospital, this could provide a problem.
- At all three hospitals, privacy was an issue as people could be overheard at reception when arriving and asking questions.



# Survey results

## Which A&E Department did you visit today?

Answered: 266 Skipped: 0



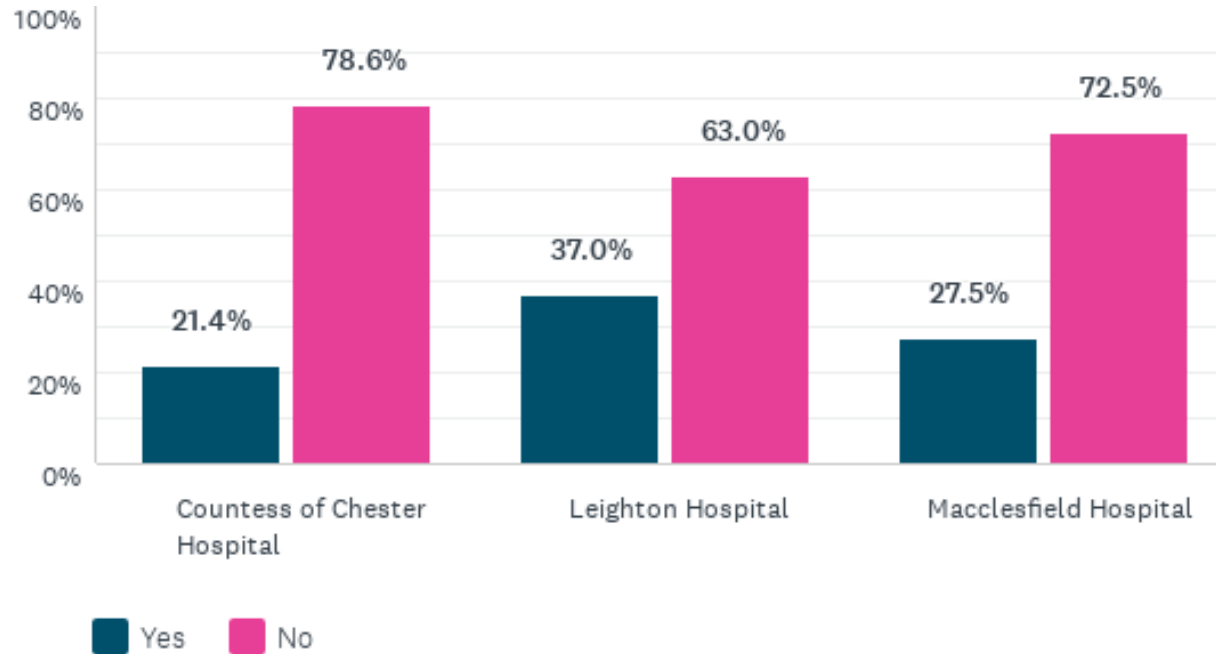
## What made you come to A&E today?

Responses to this question across the three hospitals included:

- Physical injuries to arms, shoulders, back, legs, hands, wrists, fingers, toes, feet such as suspected fractures and sprains, swellings, bumps on the head, animal and insect bites, falls, car and cycling accidents.
- Chest and abdominal pain, including suspected appendicitis, gallstones, kidney pain and hernia.
- Other conditions such as injuries to the eye, ear ache, chesty cough, rash, burns, nose bleed, vertigo, being sick, infections.
- Pregnancy issues and concerns.
- Baby having breathing difficulties, child with high temperature and shaking.
- Generally feeling unwell.
- Referrals from the GP due to issues such as a possible appendix problem, scans, and something being wrong with an ECG.
- Needing an X-ray and a perception that if they wait to be referred it could take months.
- To get some crutches.
- Return visits such as for physio

## Have you contacted NHS 111 before coming to A&E?

Answered: 259 Skipped: 7



Overall, 71.4% (185 people) told us they had not contacted NHS 111 before attending A&E.

## If yes, what did they advise you? Or if no, why not?

### NHS111 advised to attend A&E:

- *Nurse called me back and asked a number of questions then made an appointment time here. (Macclesfield)*
- *I rang when it happened on Saturday night but felt well and could eat and drink and swallow so they said to see how I got on over the weekend. (Macclesfield)*
- *Told me to go hospital to be seen by the doctor. (Macclesfield)*
- *Come to A&E. (Multiple people at Countess of Chester, Leighton, Macclesfield)*
- *They sent an ambulance to take me straight to A&E. (Macclesfield)*
- *Advised by NHS111 to come to A&E. Booked for 11am. (Macclesfield)*
- *Advised phoning ambulance, patient said no she could get here herself. (Macclesfield)*
- *Rang over weekend. NHS 111 sent an ambulance to the home. Mum who is a Nurse didn't think this was necessary but they sent one anyway. (Macclesfield)*
- *NHS 111 advised that I come to A&E to be seen as I may need further investigations. (Macclesfield)*
- *Go to hospital. (Leighton, Macclesfield)*
- *They advised me to ring an ambulance. (Leighton)*
- *They wanted to ambulance me but refused as I live 2mins away and my daughter drove me in. (Leighton)*
- *Booked me an appointment and told me to come to A&E. (Leighton)*
- *Come straight in he'd been ill overnight. (Leighton)*
- *Cover burn with damp towel attend A&E. (Leighton)*
- *Advised to come here. Ambulance would be 9 hours. (Leighton)*
- *111 were going to make an appointment but then suggested to just turn up. (Leighton)*
- *Yes, they said come in A+E for appointment at 6.15. (Countess of Chester)*

## If yes, what did they advise you? Or if no, why not?

### **NHS111 advised to attend A&E cont.:**

- *Went to the GP and tried minor injuries unit in Ellesmere Port - not open. 111 said to go A&E. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Go to hospital because of her previous medical history. (Countess of Chester)*
- *I called at 9am today and they said I could go to Victoria Infirmary or the Countess. (Countess of Chester)*
- *To come to A&E, I needed an ambulance but it was a 4 hour wait. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Advised to come to hospital they made an appt but hospital said they are not running appointments. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Told me to go the Countess, they made a 9am appointment. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Told me to take some painkillers bit if it continued to go to hospital. (Countess of Chester)*
- *They organised an appointment at 9am, however when we got here we were told they aren't doing appointments. We arrived at 8.30, triage 8.40. (Countess of Chester)*

### **Struggling to get through to NHS111:**

- *Couldn't get through. (Macclesfield)*
- *Terrible for trying to get through took 20 minutes. They said a gynaecologist would ring me back but she never did. So re-rang 111 and they said to just come to A&E. (Macclesfield)*
- *Rang back late after patient came to hospital. (Leighton)*
- *No success. (Leighton)*
- *Advised 8 hour wait for call back. Very nice but needed more rapid response. (Leighton)*
- *111 took the 'p' - 45 mins on hold to then cut me off. (Countess of Chester)*
- *They didn't answer. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Long delays - decided to come to A&E. (Countess of Chester)*



## If yes, what did they advise you? Or if no, why not?

### NHS111 advised to go somewhere else:

- *Go to GP. (Leighton)*
- *Go to pharmacist, doctors appointment was messed up. Made the choice to come. (Leighton)*
- *Tried to but referred to GP. (Leighton)*
- *About 4 weeks ago. Didn't really do anything at the dentist. (Leighton)*
- *Go to the pharmacy for a referral however I did not have look with this so they said call a GP and they had no appointments so the receptionist said to come here. (Leighton)*
- *Contact GP if symptoms don't improve, did this online. (Leighton)*
- *Yesterday advised to monitor. (Leighton)*
- *Advised to see dentist, if worse go to A&E. (Countess of Chester)*

### Did not think to use, or had not heard of NHS111:

- *Didn't think to use NHS111. (Multiple people at Leighton, Macclesfield)*
- *Just did not think to use NHS111 - thought it best to come to A&E where I would be seen. (Macclesfield)*
- *Looked on the NHS website for advice but didn't think to ring NHS 111, 'perhaps I should have'. (Macclesfield)*
- *Went on NHS Website and advised to call 111 or go to A&E. (Leighton)*
- *I have used them once before and found it to be a waste of time and resources. (Macclesfield)*
- *What's the point? They would only tell me to go the A&E. (Macclesfield)*
- *Not happy to use NHS 111 as not confident that they are competent to diagnose. She thinks NHS 111's job is to deter people from coming to A&E. (Macclesfield)*
- *Never used 111 before. (Macclesfield)*
- *Aware of NHS111 but didn't realise it could be used for minor injuries. (Macclesfield)*
- *Didn't feel 111 would help. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Didn't think of it, thought 111 was for Covid. (Countess of Chester)*

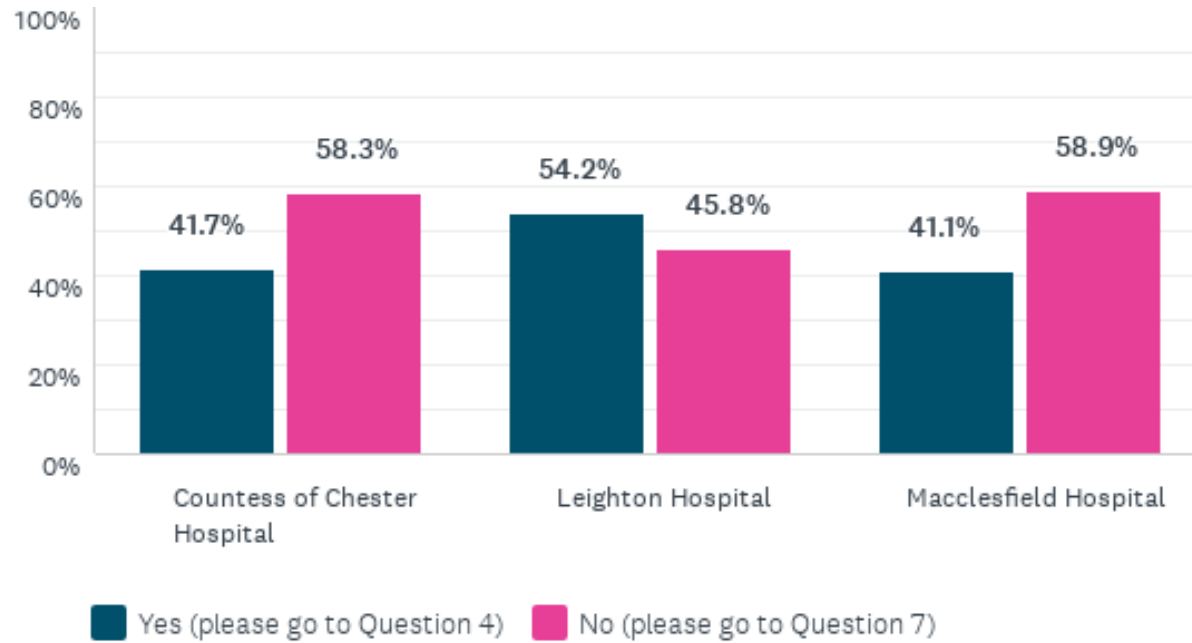
## If yes, what did they advise you? Or if no, why not?

### Other reasons:

- *Did it at work and work advised me to go to A&E. (Macclesfield)*
- *I was working close by to the hospital when I was bitten and a colleague thought it best to bring me to A&E. (Macclesfield)*
- *Rang GP for advice. (Macclesfield)*
- *Contacted my GP. (Macclesfield)*
- *I spoke to my GP instead. (Macclesfield)*
- *My first thought was to ring my GP. (Leighton)*
- *Felt that A&E was the best place to be after banging my head. (Macclesfield)*
- *Was not advised but family member felt it was warranted to attend. (Macclesfield)*
- *I thought I needed to come straight to A&E as it bled a lot. (Macclesfield)*
- *I'd had a procedure on my nose 4 days ago and so decided I needed to go back to the hospital to be seen by a Doctor as the bleeding hadn't stopped and was getting worse. (Macclesfield)*
- *I am self-employed and wanted to get seen. (Leighton)*
- *Saw the works nurse advised to come here. (Leighton)*
- *Was at the hospital for another appointment anyway so thought it would be easiest to come to A&E. (Leighton)*
- *Went via normal surgery, physically went in to GP. Triage Nurse. Walk in Centres only do dressing. (Leighton)*
- *Pain is unbearable so came straight here. (Leighton)*
- *I want to come physically to A&E to be treated directly. (Leighton)*
- *Partner is a nurse spoke to Doctor last week (with the same problem) was told to come to A&E if it happens again. (Leighton)*
- *Well I had heard about it but didn't see the point same as the doctors they would only say see the A&E. (Countess of Chester)*

## Have you tried going anywhere else instead of A&E?

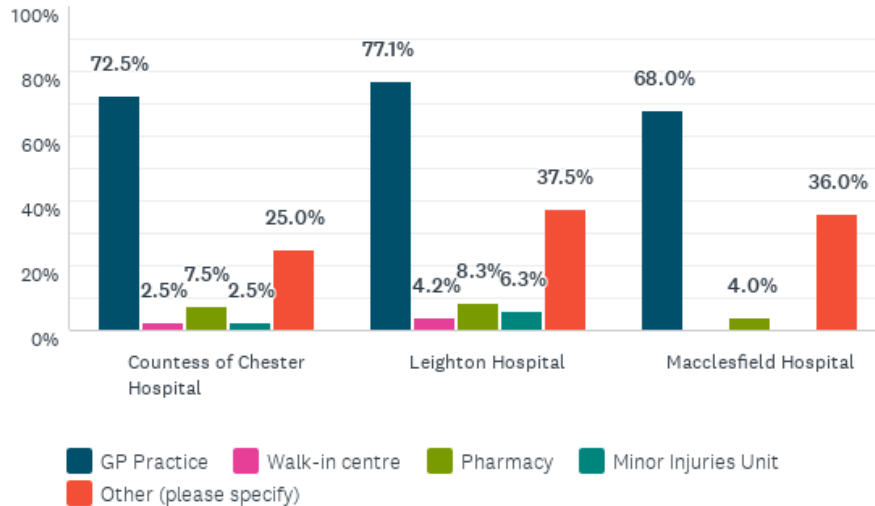
Answered: 223 Skipped: 43



Overall, 53.8% (120 people) told us they had not attempted to go anywhere else before attending A&E.

## If yes, where? (Please tick all that apply)

Answered: 113 Skipped: 153



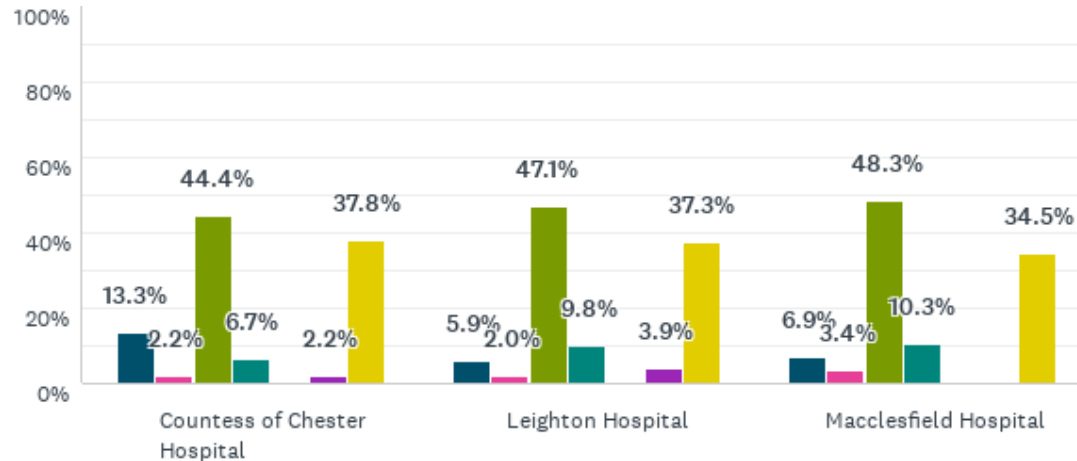
Across all three hospitals, 73.5% (83 people) told us they had attempted to access their GP before attending A&E.

‘Other’ responses included:

- *I went to the fracture clinic who advised me to come here. (Macclesfield)*
- *First aid at work. (Macclesfield)*
- *Tried minor injuries, but it wasn't open. (Macclesfield)*
- *Rang 999 at 5am told no ambulance come to A&E. 10am they sent an ambulance taxi. (Macclesfield)*
- *Out of hours in hospital. (Macclesfield)*
- *Phone call to GP. (Multiple people at Leighton, Macclesfield)*
- *I read my GP website which advised to contact NHS 111 which I did before coming to A&E. (Macclesfield)*
- *Clinic for procedure. (Leighton)*
- *Phoned paramedics for ambulance. (Leighton)*
- *Chiropractor. (Leighton)*
- *Northwich Infirmary. (Countess of Chester, Leighton)*
- *Dentist. (Countess of Chester, Leighton)*
- *Out of Hours. (Leighton)*
- *Online e-consult. (Leighton)*
- *Physio also saw her here previously. (Leighton)*
- *GP home visit (Countess of Chester)*
- *Social worker (Countess of Chester)*

## Why did you end up coming to A&E after trying elsewhere? (Please tick all that apply)

Answered: 125 Skipped: 141



Across all three hospitals, 58 of these people said that the GP themselves had advised them to go to A&E. Other people mentioned being advised by receptionists to go to A&E due to a lack of GP appointments.

- I couldn't get an appointment with my GP
- A Pharmacist advised me to come
- A GP advised me to come
- A Nurse advised me to come
- A Health Care Assistant advised me to come
- A GP Receptionist advised me to come
- Other (please specify)

## Why did you end up coming to A&E after trying elsewhere? (Please tick all that apply)

'Other' responses included:

- *Work first aider advised A&E attendance. (Macclesfield)*
- *Parents' decision. (Macclesfield)*
- *You can see it's an obvious injury. (Macclesfield)*
- *I could see how bad it was. (Macclesfield)*
- *Physio. (Macclesfield)*
- *Doesn't live in the area so hasn't got a GP. (Macclesfield)*
- *111 advised me to come to A&E. (Countess of Chester, Leighton, Macclesfield)*
- *Too uncomfortable. (Macclesfield)*
- *NHS 111 advised that I come. (Macclesfield)*
- *I couldn't get through to the GP on the phone. (Leighton, Macclesfield)*
- *GP appointment cancelled because of ill advice. (Leighton)*
- *Doctor didn't return my call. (Leighton)*
- *Clinic advised me to come. (Leighton)*
- *Needed urgent care. (Leighton)*
- *Not gotten any better. (Leighton)*
- *The GP wanted me to take a PCR before going to see him and the nearest test I could find was 43 miles away which was too difficult and inconvenient to get to. (Leighton)*
- *Pain is unbearable. (Leighton)*
- *Orthopaedic Dept at Leighton advised. (Leighton)*
- *Dentist advised. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Couldn't get an ambulance for emergency. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Fed up with virtual appointments/consultations. (Countess of Chester)*



## Why was this? Could you explain to us a bit more?

### GP Practice:

- *My GP thought A&E would be the best place to be seen. (Macclesfield)*
- *I rang the GP in the morning. He rang back in the afternoon and advised attendance at A&E as query appendicitis. (Macclesfield)*
- *As the bone was still stuck and my neck was swelling I was advised to go straight to A&E. (Macclesfield)*
- *Doctor said she should come to A&E. (Macclesfield)*
- *She thinks GP must have realised an x-ray might be required. Hence advice to go to A&E. (Macclesfield)*
- *Shoulder/clavicle swollen, pain level increasing. GP felt an x-ray was needed. Experiencing a little numbness and cannot lift arm. (Macclesfield)*
- *The GP thought it was best that I was checked out at the hospital. (Macclesfield)*
- *GP thought an X-Ray would be needed. (Macclesfield)*
- *They thought I might need further investigations. (Macclesfield)*
- *Phoned GP got an appointment for 3 weeks later. Pain in back and chest got worse so came to A&E. (Leighton)*
- *Referred for scan after GP appointment. (Leighton)*
- *Explained the issues to my GP, they advised I attended minor injuries unit, however there was no doctor present. I was asked to attend Leighton A&E. (Leighton)*
- *Rang GP at 8am, waited till 3.30pm. No GP response. (Leighton)*
- *GP advised patient to come here - couldn't give her an appointment. (Leighton)*
- *The GP was very concerned that the pain in my partner's back was so severe and that he had pins and needles in his buttocks and legs. He said (if untreated) the nerve could die and my partner wouldn't be able to walk and could end up in a wheelchair. (Leighton)*

## Why was this? Could you explain to us a bit more? Cont.

### GP Practice:

- *Two doctors missed previous issue which has resulted in need to come to A&E. Mainly because over the phone appointments aren't as comprehensive. (Leighton)*
- *GP didn't offer appointment - advised A&E. (Leighton)*
- *Doctors said they had no appointments so to go to A&E. (Leighton)*
- *Referred by GP this morning. (Multiple people at Leighton)*
- *Sent by GP for MRI scan. (Multiple people at Leighton)*
- *Doctor advised to go to Northwich Infirmary and they sent here. Had to drive to both places and now in big pain. (Leighton)*
- *Ongoing problem, sent photos to GP. GP contacted orthopaedics and they advised to come to A&E to see orthopaedic consultant. (Leighton)*
- *Receptionist suggested going to A&E but I wanted to double check so called 111. (Leighton)*
- *Called GP they advised me to come to minors. I was referred to A&E. (Leighton)*
- *Working in the house, put a nail through bottom of my foot. Local GP said to come here. (Countess of Chester)*
- *My GP referred me. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Doctor advised me to come - felt poorly outside the shops/ Dr's surgery in Blacon. (Countess of Chester)*
- *GP called hospital where she had hip operation and they said go to Countess for X-ray. (Countess of Chester)*
- *I have very sore legs so my doctor sent me to be seen as he didn't have any face to face appointments. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Doctors refuse to help, can't see a GP. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Dr referred me directly. (Countess of Chester)*
- *I was advised to attend after GP saw photos of my swollen arm. Because it was swollen all the way up my arm and red and hot I was advised to come to A&E as I may need antibiotics in my vein. (Countess of Chester)*

## Why was this? Could you explain to us a bit more? Cont.

### GP Practice:

- *Due to it being a pre-existing operation doctors felt I should attend A&E. (Countess of Chester)*
- *GP said they were too busy to see me so to turn up to A&E. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Had a phone call with my doctor who after hearing my concerns said I should get to a hospital so he made an appointment for me. (Countess of Chester)*
- *I tried to make appt a few days ago no chance, no virtual, no face to face, cant even send photos so I brought my son here. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Felt I needed to bring child to A&E they rang in advance for me. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Rang doctors on Wednesday and again today. Today advised to attend after taking pregnancy test at home. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Didn't ring back for 3 days. (Countess of Chester)*
- *It was more of an instruction after the GP spoke to the Countess. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Advised by GP to attend, on arrival were seen almost immediately. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Said if I didn't get better to go to A&E. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Yes I've been feeling unwell for a couple of days, I spoke with my doctor on the phone and said take paracetamol and if it didn't improve come to the hospital. (Countess of Chester)*
- *GP said I'd ring crisis number 0800 number. If rang 111 then would order an ambulance, they didn't explain other possible services. (Countess of Chester)*
- *First time told by my family to come here. Nurse then told me to come back if it gets worse. (Countess of Chester)*
- *No face to face GP appointments, had virtual appointment. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Have seen a GP face to face after waiting 2 weeks after a phone call. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Doctors have been brilliant in processing us to the hospital and it works so well. All the records had been emailed to the hospital so it felt like going straight through. (Countess of Chester)*

## Why was this? Could you explain to us a bit more? Cont.

### GP Practice:

- *4-star service from GP in Malpas - referral from GP. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Continuity has gone when you see your doctor or another doctor at the surgery why do we spend 9 minutes of a 10 minute appointment telling the doctor about my ongoing issues. (Countess of Chester)*
- *This visit need not of happened had the doctor seen my son either phone call/virtual or face to face. The surgery reception advised me to call 111 who made an appointment for me at 12.30. I'm here with son on time to be told the hospital are not running an appointment system. (Countess of Chester)*
- *The male was in a wheelchair as he cant put weight onto his leg problems 3 weeks previously he went to his GP and he just gave him medication. (Countess of Chester)*
- *A month ago I was in pain and could not set a doctors appointment as 3/4 of doctors were off sick. I have an appointment booked to see the nurse. (Countess of Chester)*

## Why was this? Could you explain to us a bit more? Cont.

### Pharmacist:

- *I was told that if it was still swollen and painful after 48hrs I should come to A&E to have it looked at. (Macclesfield)*
- *Chemist and meds - but didn't help, condition got worse. (Countess of Chester)*

### Hospital:

- *Advice from Bangor Hospital. (Macclesfield)*
- *On Thursday I banged my knee came in and they bandaged it then. I am here to see the physio today. (Leighton)*
- *Rang X-ray department, told to come to A&E. (Leighton)*
- *To meet with doctor in relation to previous visit here. (Countess of Chester)*
- *I was at an outpatient appointment with the physio and they sent me straight to A&E for an emergency MRI. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Dressing changed. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Been sent a letter to return after a previous visit. (Countess of Chester)*
- *A&E told me to come. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Too urgent, sent from Whiston Hospital. (Countess of Chester)*
- *In March she tried to make appointment to discuss arthritic hip. After 4-5 calls she was sent for X-ray and blood tests and got a virtual appointment to be told to take painkillers. She got worse and made another appointment to be told she had been referred to the countess with a 72 week wait. She was in pain and wanted a face to face appointment, but was told only virtual appointments available, only to be told she was depressed. Family have advised her to go private. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Went to Whitchurch day centre, minor injury unit. No x-ray service today 'not possible'. Possible minor damage so came here. (Countess of Chester)*

## Why was this? Could you explain to us a bit more? Cont.

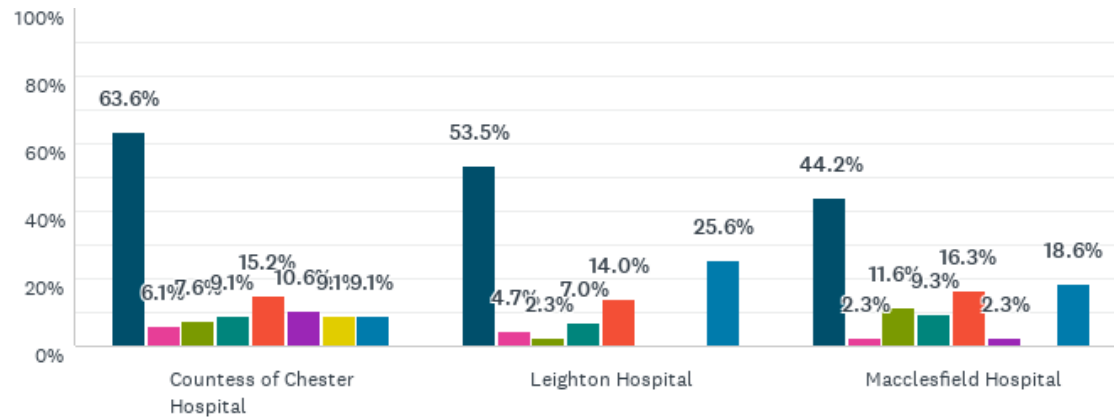
### Other health providers:

- *NHS111 advised. (Macclesfield)*
- *111 said I should be seen at the hospital I think its because I'm old. (Macclesfield)*
- *Advised by 111 service. (Macclesfield)*
- *Rang ambulance 9am, they rang patient back at 5pm and told here to come here. (Leighton)*
- *Started with shivering and high temperature early evening contacted 111 unsuccessful. Contacted paramedic who came out. No need for admission. Then contacted by OOH at 4.30am and told to come to A&E. (Leighton)*
- *Ambulance would be 10 hours. No answer at GP practice. (Leighton)*
- *Advised to ring 111 - advised to ring ambulance. (Leighton)*
- *Had chest pains after 10 minutes. Wife rang 111. (Leighton)*
- *Rang ambulance long wait. (Countess of Chester)*
- *To check whether he had broken anything. A GP could not have assessed this. (Countess of Chester)*
- *In a lot of pain. Advised by ambulance service/ 111 - long delays. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Directed to A&E by community health service. Told by receptionist that the Alcohol service would get involved, need a clinical department. (Countess of Chester)*
- *I'm not from this area. So I know if I had an eye injury at home, triage would assess me straight away. I'm really surprised I was put on hold on a 999 call. (Countess of Chester)*



## If you didn't try going anywhere else instead of A&E, why not? (Please tick all that apply)

Answered: 152 Skipped: 114



- It was too urgent/it was an emergency
- I've been here before
- Because it's more convenient
- I looked up my symptoms on the internet and felt I should come
- A friend or family member thought I should come
- I didn't think I would be able to get an appointment with my GP so didn't try
- I was advised to come back here by A&E staff previously if my problem continued
- Other (please specify)

Overall, 55.3% (84 people) of respondents who did not try going anywhere else thought that their issue was too urgent or was an emergency. 15.1% (23 people) said that their friend or family member thought they should go to A&E.

## Why was this? Could you explain to us a bit more?

### Couldn't, or perceived they couldn't, get a GP appointment:

- *I couldn't get a GP as they said it would be 3 days before a video consultation and before them seeing it, so I googled foot injuries and felt I needed to see someone. (Macclesfield)*
- *I'm in pain it doesn't seem right and the doctors are shut. (Macclesfield)*
- *GP said on telephone appointment that it would be not be able to see him until late afternoon, so sent to A&E. (Macclesfield)*
- *GP Practice has a recorded sent message by text to say don't come in as they don't have the staff because they have been pinged by the App. (Macclesfield)*
- *I couldn't get through to the GP on the phone so decided to come to A&E as felt I needed to see a Doctor. (Macclesfield)*
- *GP said they were too busy to see me so to turn up to A&E. (Countess of Chester)*
- *No answer on phone to GP. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Trying to get an appointment is very difficult. (Countess of Chester)*
- *GP process was too long, blood tests would be over 1 week, GP wouldn't see me, no appointments available. Dial 999 or call out paramedics, only option. (Countess of Chester)*
- *If I had contacted my GP practice they may have taken a few days to get an appointment with the GP for me. I may not have got through on the phone. A&E had said it was okay to return. (Countess of Chester)*
- *There's no point getting in touch with NHS111 or my GP because she can't get to see them as its either telephone or nothing. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Knew would have to wait until tomorrow as normally have to call at 8am for same day appointment. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Because it is so difficult to get a real appointment. I know people are busy but its harder than ever to get an appointment. (Countess of Chester)*

## Why was this? Could you explain to us a bit more? Cont.

### Work-related:

- *Work first aider advised A&E attendance. (Macclesfield)*
- *Finger bleeding and quite badly inured and work wanted me to come to A&E. (Macclesfield)*

### Personal choice and perception that they would be sent to A&E anyway:

- *I live in Leek so its closer and easier to Macclesfield than North Staffs. (Macclesfield)*
- *The child is 14 months and fell in the house banging its head, the injury bruising was clearly evident so parent took decision to attend A&E. (Macclesfield)*
- *It will need stitching. (Macclesfield)*
- *It's a visible injury. (Macclesfield)*
- *My hand was so sore, I damaged hand in work and felt I must get seen asap so 111 and GP were not even considered as they would have sent me here. (Macclesfield)*
- *My knee felt unstable after the injury and we felt A&E was the best place to be seen after an accident. (Macclesfield)*
- *Thought it was the best place to come following an animal bite. (Macclesfield)*
- *My Mum thought it was best that I came to A&E after hitting my head. (Macclesfield)*
- *I thought A&E was the best place to come with a twisted ankle. (Macclesfield)*
- *I felt I would be sent to A&E anyway and also want a prescription for painkillers and to be seen. (Macclesfield)*
- *The person worked for the NHS in Macclesfield so found it easiest to come to A&E. (Macclesfield)*
- *I live a mile away from the hospital my surgery is further so it makes sense to come to A&E as I will be seen.*
- *Thought it best to go straight to A&E to 'cut out the middle man'. (Macclesfield)*
- *Well I came down yesterday but they gave a waiting time of 4hrs I only live across the road so I went home. I couldn't be bothered coming back then so came now. (Macclesfield)*
- *The patient felt stitches would be required and so a waste of time trying to get anywhere as they would only be advised to go to A&E. (Macclesfield)*

## Why was this? Could you explain to us a bit more? Cont.

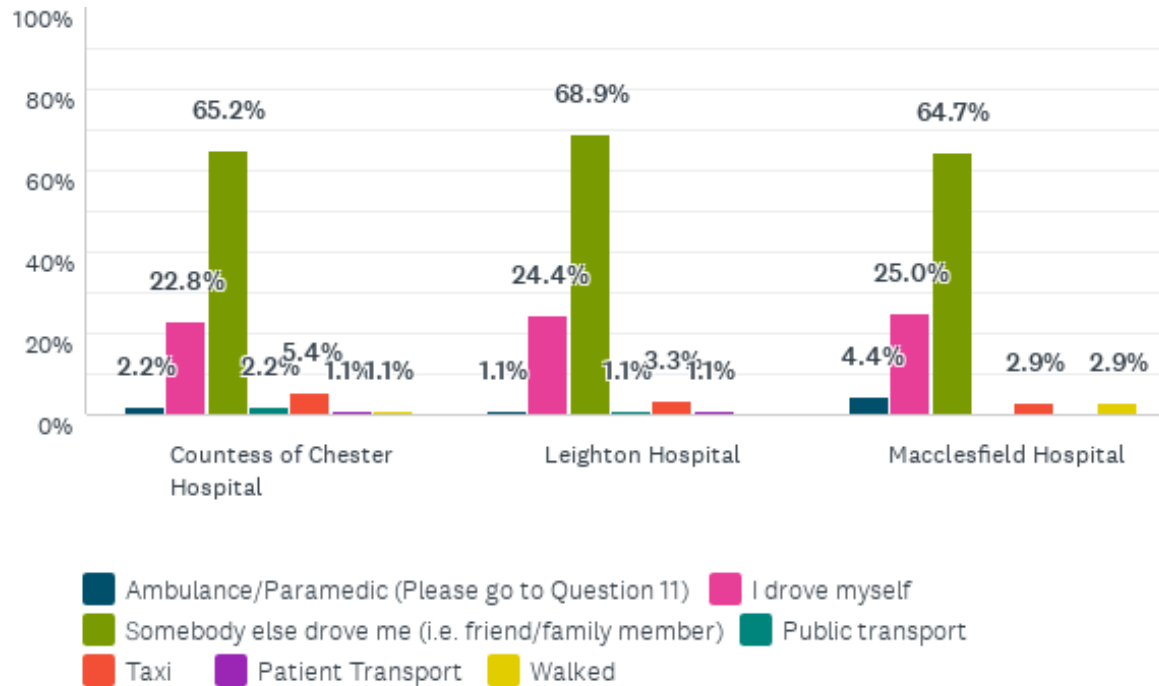
- *Just felt that the GP would have referred me to A&E so just came here. (Macclesfield)*
- *Felt this was an A&E case. (Macclesfield)*
- *Didn't go to GP as it needed quick action. (Macclesfield)*
- *Out of hours doctor in hospital on Wednesday night. Doesn't live in the area so hasn't got a GP. (Macclesfield)*
- *Worried about my wife so brought her here. (Macclesfield)*
- *Live in Northwich so not too close to an A&E. VIN does not seem to have very comprehensive services to go there. Leighton slightly nearer and would have gone there but the relative who took me to A&E lives in the Macclesfield area so went there. (Macclesfield)*
- *I have a problem that needs to be solved because I go away on Saturday for holiday. Coming to A&E was the only option. (Leighton)*
- *Clinic can see patient later this week and patient wants to be seen sooner. (Leighton)*
- *Because my skin condition looks infected. (Leighton)*
- *Concerned about chest infection. (Leighton)*
- *Requires infection on my knee draining. (Leighton)*
- *Couldn't stop bleeding. (Multiple people at Leighton)*
- *Stopped bleeding then started a lot. (Leighton)*
- *Elderly lady, had a fall and hit head. (Leighton)*
- *I have had a head injury and am worried because of the pain. (Leighton)*
- *Dad's a doctor. Tried first and left it 24hrs, not improved. (Leighton)*
- *Couldn't wait for 3hrs and for paramedics. (Leighton)*
- *Can't wait that long after the scan. Given pain killers but not enough. (Leighton)*
- *Pain in back and chest got worse so came to A&E. (Leighton)*
- *Didn't think it was that bad but it's got worse. Feels like it is far more than a sprain. (Leighton)*

## Why was this? Could you explain to us a bit more? Cont.

- *Pain too much not being resolved. (Leighton)*
- *High temp and shivering major surgery in January for stage 2 lung cancer. (Leighton)*
- *Happened yesterday thought it was a sprain got worse over night so came here. (Leighton)*
- *I'm only living here temporarily. (Leighton)*
- *Help with alcohol, no one seems to be able to help. Real issue. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Need a physical assessment. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Bad experience, where they wrongly diagnosed heart attack. (Countess of Chester)*
- *They ask very generic questions and the people asking them are not medically trained. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Knew I would need an x-ray, also have waited longer on 111 than A&E. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Too much blood! (Countess of Chester)*
- *Difficulties getting in and out of my bed due to the pain in my back and chest. Family concerned as I had a fall a few years ago where I fractured the vertebrae in my back. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Thought I would be able to treat the problem at home but the swelling has worsened and pain has not eased. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Migraines are unbearable, need stronger meds. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Foot painful to step on, increasing pain. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Too sore and worried about broken bones. (Felt strongly that a minor injuries unit should be available in Ellesmere Port). (Countess of Chester)*
- *Felt conditions were getting worse. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Previous condition I know to come. 2019 diagnosed and stent put in. On holiday and felt unwell. When the heart is mentioned they always say go to A&E. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Poorly for 3 days. Came straight here - I am his friend as he speaks very little English. (Countess of Chester)*

## How did you get here?

Answered: 250 Skipped: 16

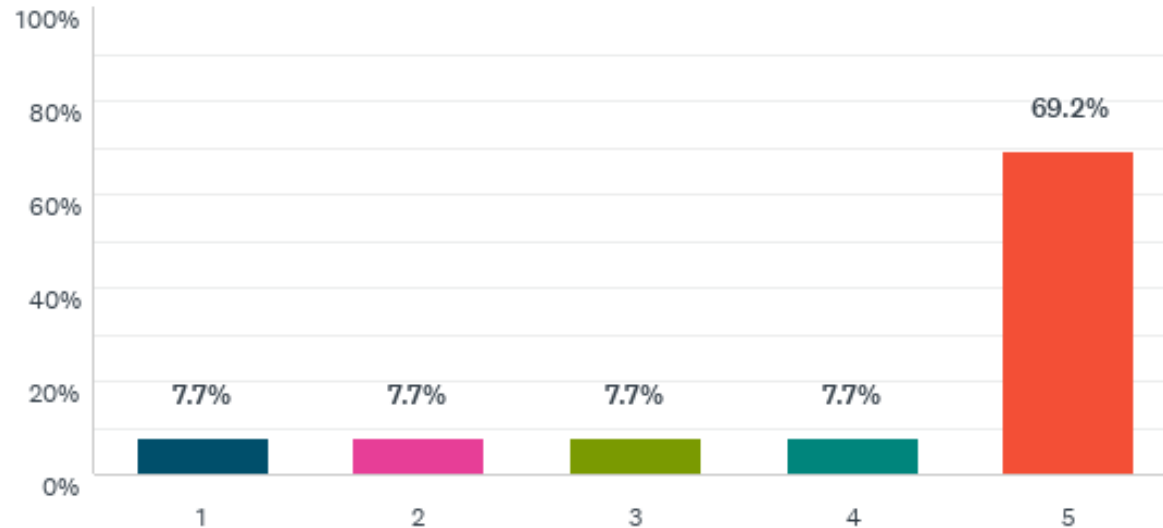


Overall, 62% (166 people) of respondents to this question were driven to A&E by a friend or family member. A further 24% (60 people) drove themselves.



## If you came by ambulance, how would you rate the care you received (1 being poor and 5 being excellent)?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 253



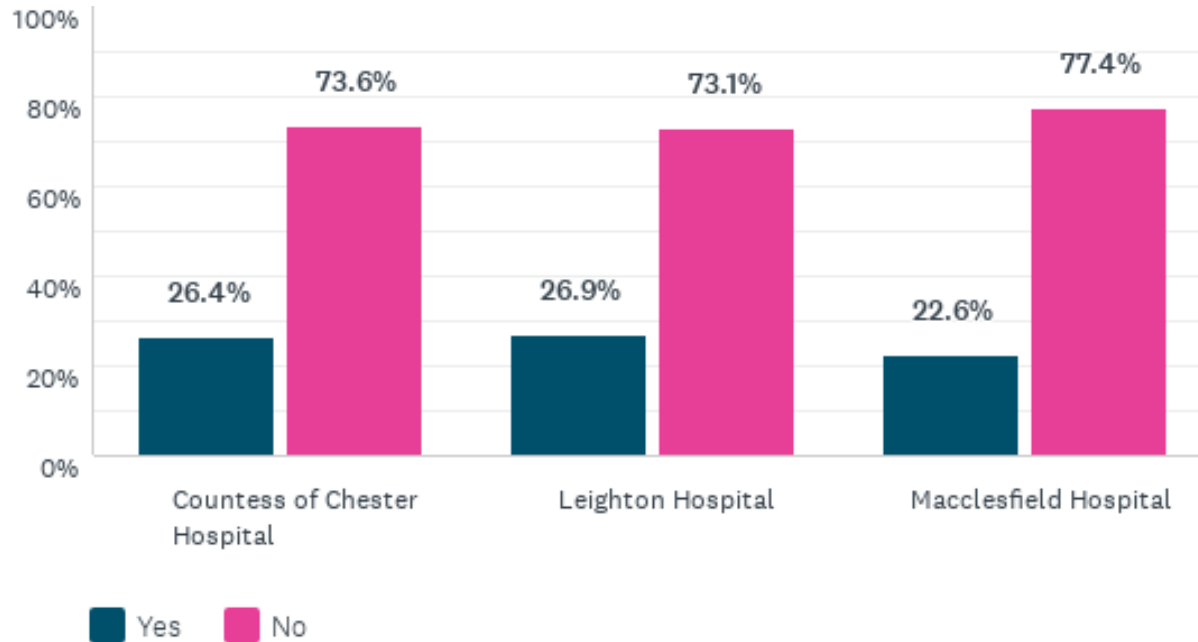
Due to COVID-19 guidelines and departmental pressures, Healthwatch Cheshire did not enter the areas where patients arrived by ambulance, and so only spoke to 13 people who said they had arrived by ambulance. 9 of these rated their experience as 'excellent'.

## Why would you rate your ambulance experience as you have above?

- *The ambulance arrived within 20 minutes. Ambulance staff were kind and helpful. (Macclesfield)*
- *Because they were very professional and catered to my needs as best as they could. (Leighton)*
- *Driver waited for us to get ready, had covid screens and face coverings, drove gently kind and courteous. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Took an age to get through, in the end we had to get a taxi. When I spoke with the ambulance they said they were very busy. (Countess of Chester)*
- *Brilliant. (Countess of Chester)*

## Are you being/have you been kept regularly informed about waiting times or delays at each stage?

Answered: 218 Skipped: 48



Across all three hospitals, 74.3% (162 people) of respondents to this question told us they were not being kept informed about waiting times and did not know why or how long they would be waiting.

## If yes, how? (Countess of Chester Hospital)

### Receptionist:

- *Was told 40 mins wait for triage when I checked in at the desk.*
- *Staff on reception desk. (Multiple people)*
- *Reception have told me what will happen and how long.*
- *The lady on reception explained about triage.*
- *I did go and speak to the receptionist to be told it would be 1 hour.*
- *Lady at reception told me.*
- *When arrived.*

### Other members of staff:

- *Nurses*
- *Asked the nurse on the arrivals desk. I was advised by the GP.*
- *Triage nurse.*
- *Been told how long triage and the waiting times.*

### Not been told/unsure:

- *Last time here, I was seen in 2 and a half hours. There used to be a clock in here - no more. The wait time is too long.*
- *Told would get assessment, but no waiting times - not worried.*
- *Not told what will happen, just to take a seat.*
- *Been here 30 minutes. No comms at all except that a colleague would get to me.*
- *Nothing except a Triage Nurse will see me.*
- *The GP said that A&E will be expecting her and they were.*
- *Told about Triage but not what happens after that.*
- *No nothing at all, want a clinical department on site.*

## If yes, how? (Leighton Hospital)

### Receptionist:

- *When asked.*
- *Told would be seen 'shortly'.*
- *Only when I checked in the desk told me.*
- *I booked in quickly but they just said I would be seen shortly.*
- *Advised at admission.*
- *I was told when I was booked in and triaged that there was about a 45 minute wait.*

### Other members of staff:

- *Verbally from nurse.*
- *Nurse explained.*
- *Being told my members of staff they have been dealing with me.*
- *I was told when I booked in and was streamed that it would be a short wait.*

### Tannoy announcements:

- *Via waiting room announcement.*
- *From the speakers.*
- *By loudspeaker.*
- *Tannoy.*

### Quick triage:

- *No need, I am being seen quickly.*
- *But booked in quickly and have already been seen by triage so just waiting to be seen now.*
- *But quickly booked in and soon streamed, and only waited 10 minutes so far.*

## If yes, how? (Leighton Hospital)

### Not been told/unsure:

- *No idea.*
- *2 people have seen me not been told the waiting time.*
- *Waiting for an hour, seen triage but no update.*
- *I have an appointment time, they are only 5 minutes late "not the end of the world".*
- *I wasn't given any waiting times.*
- *Booking in really quick and easy, seen by the streaming Nurse within 15 minutes, but not informed of any waiting times.*
- *No information given.*

## If yes, how? (Macclesfield Hospital)

### Receptionist:

- *Receptionist told me how long before I go to triage.*
- *The receptionist did tell me I'd be seen shortly.*
- *Well I've only been here 5 mins but reception told me.*

### Tannoy announcements:

- *Announced over the tannoy.*
- *Tannoy said 2 and half hours.*

### Quick triage:

- *Not long arrived, and was soon triaged.*
- *But only just got here - triaged in a timely manner - 'staff do a good job'.*
- *Only just arrived - triaged within 20 minutes.*
- *No but booked in quickly and not waited long before being seen in triage.*
- *Only just arrived, not been here long. Triaged within 20 minutes.*
- *Only just arrived - seen by triage within 10 minutes.*
- *Not had any delays, only waited 5 minutes to be triaged.*
- *Just arrived, so haven't had long to wait- seen by triage within 20 minutes or less.*
- *But just arrived and seen by triage within 15 minutes.*
- *Pretty quick at dealing with me. I am not waiting much to need a waiting time update.*

## If yes, how? (Macclesfield Hospital)

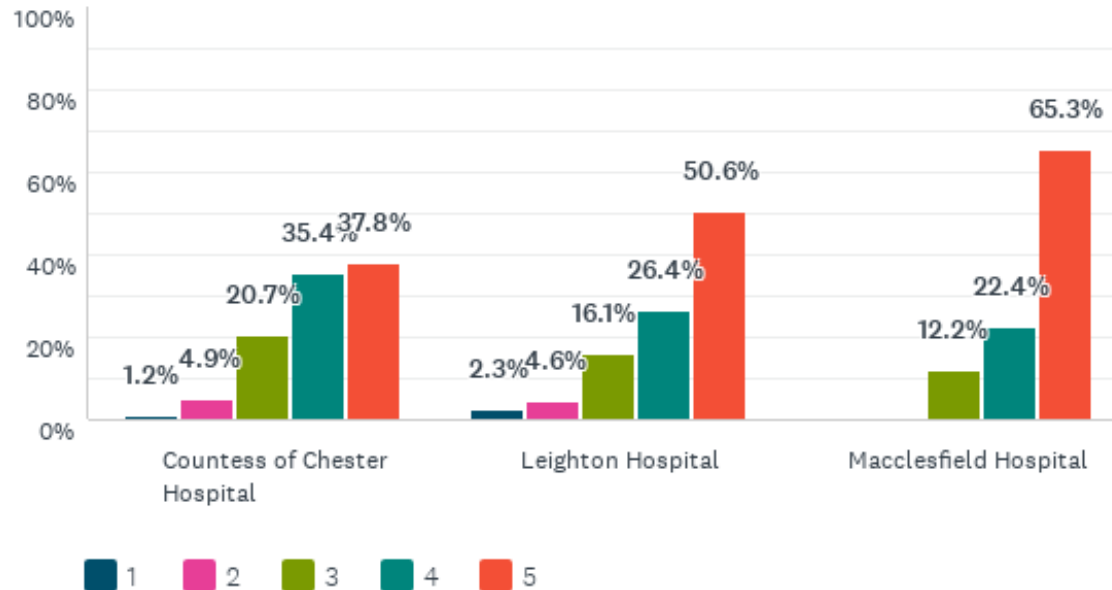
### Not been told/unsure:

- *No-one has said anything on how long it will be.*
- *Not about waiting they didn't mention anything.*
- *Been 30 minutes. Not triaged yet.*
- *Been in A&E 10 minutes, no update on waiting.*
- *Wasn't informed of waiting times.*
- *Reception said I would be called when they are ready.*
- *Reception didn't say how long the wait would be but she did say someone from the GP Out of Hours would come and have a chat with me.*
- *Been no notice given whatsoever.*



## How would you rate the service you have received so far in A&E (1 being poor and 5 being excellent)?

Answered: 218 Skipped: 48



- Across all three hospitals, 78% (170 people) rated their experience in A&E as 4 or 5 out of 5 ('good' or 'excellent').
- 5.1% (11 people) rated their experience as 1 or 2 out of 5 ('poor' or 'quite poor').

## How have you found your experience in A&E? - Positives (Countess of Chester Hospital)

### Care:

- *Within 10minutes arrival I was seen in Triage, I was offered codeine then went to x-ray. Again I was seen in 10 minutes, I was in minors for just 15mins they saw the results gave me some gas and air and re set my shoulder which hurt.*

### Staff:

- *Better than previously. The girl on reception is good.*
- *Helpful. Listen. Understanding, polite staff.*
- *Efficient. Covid secure, kind.*
- *Friendly staff, clean environment, comfortable temperature.*
- *Wonderful staff.*
- *Reception staff was lovely both time's I've been.*
- *Staff are excellent.*
- *Helpful, hard-working staff.*
- *Staff pleasant. Clean and tidy.*
- *Very welcoming/patient.*
- *Friendly staff. (multiple people)*
- *Informative, professional and friendly.*
- *Seen right away. Lovely staff.*
- *Impressed with the building and the set up. The chap on reception was so helpful he even charged my phone for me so thank you.*
- *The doctor I was seen by was really considerate and spoke to telling me all about what would happen. They wanted to keep me in until Monday for surgery but I am going home to come back for surgery.*
- *The receptionists have been with me this morning and all throughout the day, it is much appreciated. Also to all the nursing staff, Drs and support staff and everybody at the whole of the Countess of Chester thank you.*

## How have you found your experience in A&E? - Positives (Countess of Chester Hospital)

### Environment:

- *Very friendly and the waiting room is like an airport its very nice.*
- *Environment is cool and the receptionist is polite.*
- *The staff are fantastic, they have really improved since the new building. The new waiting room is good with plenty of room.*
- *Parking fine as have a blue badge.*
- *More space now.*
- *Clean. Impressed with 111 and being here within an hour.*
- *Clean and pleasant waiting area.*
- *Access to cold water (hot day). (Multiple people)*
- *Cool in here (its hot weather), clean. Attentive staff.*
- *Waiting area is cool (hot day), staff nice.*
- *Smart environment.*
- *Great room away from people with good facilities for children.*
- *Well organised, plenty of seating, Nice environment, Staff are courteous.*
- *Calm atmosphere, well organised, Lovely staff, pleasant surroundings, efficient treatment.*
- *Environment is cool and the receptionist is polite.*
- *Cool room, plenty of space.*
- *Big improvement to building, very modernised, still even give out iced lollies.*
- *Fine, the free lollies are good.*
- *Nice new room, clean and tidy.*
- *Its very cool in here the reception is clear especially when people are talking with their masks on.*
- *TV and vending machine Nice Healthwatch people.*

## How have you found your experience in A&E? - Positives (Countess of Chester Hospital)

### Being seen quickly:

- *Friend is being seen in triage quite quickly.*
- *Triage wait doesn't seem too long.*
- *Quick Triage.*
- *I was seen by the triage very quickly and then I've spent at least 9 hours in minors having my arm splintered.*
- *Seen straight away.*
- *Quick and efficient so far.*
- *Seen on time.*
- *Straight in when emergency last week, only been here 10 mins.*

## How have you found your experience in A&E? - Negatives (Countess of Chester Hospital)

### Waiting times:

- *3-hour wait for follow up after triage, I feel I need to be seen quicker with this issue.*
- *Very busy, waiting too long with cut.*
- *Took too long to get triaged considering the condition, no ambulance available when needed.*
- *Need an update either verbally or need to know waiting times. Could have done with a minor-injuries doctor.*
- *Waiting times too long.*
- *Waiting time, Better if could ring the eye clinic directly and get an appointment - as they know me - but not clear how to deal with this other than go straight to A&E.*
- *Long waiting times. (Multiple people)*
- *Not advised of waiting times.*
- *Been in A&E not seen here for over 2 hours now.*
- *A wait is always expected here at A&E, so, whilst it will be a period of time it isn't a negative I would call out.*
- *Waiting, not knowing.*
- *Waiting times - not been through to triage yet. I had to speak loudly at the reception, I am sure everyone knows my name.*
- *Only the wait, over 90mins waiting for blood results.*
- *The time waiting is long and without knowing why it is frustrating.*
- *Waiting to be informed as to what is happening. Would have expected to be sent to maternity rather than just waiting.*
- *Waited over an hour to see triage and it's for a head injury.*
- *Waiting, not knowing what the hold up is. The TV screens are showing only the BBC News.*
- *Timing and communication. Previous experience told 9 hours wait had to go home and see a GP within 2 hours.*
- *Just waiting is the issue, I am pregnant with bleeding so I'm very worried and nervous. I don't understand why I'm not at the maternity instead of being here. The appointments are ridiculous, why would I be told that I have an appointment then get to the hospital to be told they aren't doing appointments.*

## How have you found your experience in A&E? - Negatives (Countess of Chester Hospital)

### Environment:

- *No social distancing.*
- *Need a better coffee machine.*
- *Quite cramped, very busy.*
- *Very busy (but that's too be expected).*
- *Uncomfortable, loud, busy.*
- *Long queues, Small building doesn't cater for these numbers, 6 people outside the door in the queue.*
- *Too busy.*
- *Very busy.*
- *No appointment system what's the point.*
- *Previous experience not good, came with stomach pains, told nothing wrong. Still got issues now.*
- *Parking charges- Less to pay please.*
- *Found getting to A&E quite confusing.*

### Privacy:

- *Lack of privacy as the screen although has a microphone so people can hear everything.*
- *I can hear everyone who is coming in as its loud at the reception.*

### Staff:

- *Nurse was very sharp and eager to get me out. I did not feel I was looked after properly, therefore having to come back.*

## How have you found your experience in A&E? - Positives (Leighton Hospital)

### Being seen quickly:

- *Not here long been called twice, hopefully going soon.*
- *Always get seen. Haven't had to wait too long.*
- *Been here 1hr30 and have been seen a few times.*
- *Seen in triage quickly.*
- *Seen quickly on arrival friendly staff.*
- *Friendly all very helpful done within 10 mins.*
- *Moving quickly, fairly pleasant.*
- *All of the staff very nice. Booked in quickly.*
- *Been quick.*
- *Only been here 1hour and already seen.*
- *Saw Triage Nurse quickly.*
- *Got to A&E at 11.15am Been seen by 2 staff who took blood pressure and temperature. I took blood test still here at 1.45.*

### Ease of access:

- *Quiet depending on the wait. Staff nice. Saw sign.*
- *Familiar with Leighton, Kids were born here. North Staffs is closer but have never been to this hospital and prefer Leighton, it is nice, like going here.*

### Waiting area:

- *Receptionist helpful. Bright environment. Clean*
- *Cold water available. Polite staff.*

## How have you found your experience in A&E? - Positives (Leighton Hospital)

### Staff:

- *Do a good job when you get seen.*
- *Receptionist and triage helpful. Gentleman at the door was very helpful*
- *Someone available to help.*
- *Polite and friendly (multiple people).*
- *Good organisation. Clean. Friendly staff. Staff very professional.*
- *Efficiency of triage.*
- *Polite, helpful staff at reception.*
- *Very helpful staff especially when burst appendix previously.*
- *Polite friendly helpful.*
- *Friendly kind caring.*
- *Everyone has been wonderful.*
- *Friendly all very helpful done within 10 mins.*
- *"Sweet as a nut". Everyone is polite.*
- *Reception were pleasant and helpful.*
- *All of the staff very nice. Booked in quickly.*
- *Reception service average and triage service good.*
- *Excellent and caring.*
- *Seen quickly, good communication and efficient.*
- *Car park attendant helpful. Receptionist very efficient.*



## How have you found your experience in A&E? - Negatives (Leighton Hospital)

### Environment:

- *Abysmal. No air conditioning. Not being kept informed.*
- *Heat. Waiting.*
- *Very hot in waiting room. (Multiple people)*
- *Very warm in the waiting room especially for a child with a burn. Would be nice to know how long we might have to wait.*
- *Temperature too hot. No idea of waiting times*
- *TV not working to occupy time waiting.*
- *Car parking.*
- *Bad organisation.*
- *Seats too hard very cold due to shivering blankets thin.*

### Communication:

- *Poor communication - Why are different tests being done?*
- *Lack of detail regarding what you are waiting for.*
- *No explanation of what's happening and time taken.*
- *No information given.*
- *Quite a lot of duplication from staff on questions.*
- *Not good - the triage Nurse didn't have a good attitude towards me and was rude.*
- *Referral letter not received from GP.*
- *Following visit last week- not informed there would be a follow on at Rapid access APPV offered but it was on Wedding day. Patient was therefore discharged. Partner chased up appointment for another one.*

## How have you found your experience in A&E? - Negatives (Leighton Hospital)

### Waiting times:

- *Always busy.*
- *Been waiting for 4hrs.*
- *Queue for long wait to check in.*
- *Didn't realise would have to wait at A&E.*
- *Long waiting delay.*
- *We were instructed by our GP that he had rang through and that they were expecting us asap but we were waiting for 4 hours in A&E before they called him through.*
- *Long waiting times. (Multiple people)*
- *Waiting a while to be triaged.*
- *Possibly not giving a waiting time.*
- *Not been seen by anyone yet.*
- *Wait 6 hours.*
- *No guidance on how long to wait.*
- *The waiting times are not publicised.*
- *111 told them to get here quickly, on arrival to A&E told they have to wait.*

## How have you found your experience in A&E? - Positives (Macclesfield Hospital)

### General:

- *At least I will know if my foot is broken.*
- *Found it to do what its meant to.*
- *I'm really grateful that we have the NHS.*
- *What you would expect of an A&E.*

### Being seen quickly:

- *The service is quicker and its my first time in A&E.*
- *All good so far. Booked in quickly. Everyone very pleasant.*
- *Very good. Friendly and welcoming. Short wait to see triage nurse.*
- *All good. Simple and quick to book in and to be seen. Everything has been good.*
- *Really good as seen quickly.*
- *Very speedy at dealing with me. They have also put me into attend a fracture clinic soon.*

### Staff:

- *Staff are brilliant.*
- *All good. Staff on reception helpful.*
- *The staff are all good and do a good job.*
- *Staff are very friendly and helpful.*
- *I have been in and out with Covid earlier in the year and was on ICU - staff looked after me really well. I didn't think the virus was that serious until I got it, I was very ill.*
- *I really appreciate the service here, they are very patient and professional but they could be more informative although they are busy.*
- *The staff gave the child a teddy bear which kept the child occupied, the mother was very anxious but settled after having someone to talk to.*

## How have you found your experience in A&E? - Positives (Macclesfield Hospital)

### **Ease of access:**

- *Very good Receptionist polite and welcoming. Despite work being carried out in A&E found it easy to know where to go, how to get in, etc.*
- *Signage to find the department was helpful.*

### **Waiting area:**

- *Friendly, reception gave me clear advice and instructions although its difficult hear due to the screen and masks. The waiting area is clean and people are keeping distance and wearing masks.*
- *Friendly staff. Clean.*

### **Booking in process:**

- *Minimal disruption with building work. Booking in good and simple.*
- *Very good. Quick and easy to book in.*
- *Very good. Polite and helpful when booking in on reception.*
- *Its been ok. Good experience when booking in at reception.*
- *Quick on the desk booking in. The Nurse on triage was polite and informative.*
- *Booking in was easy.*

## How have you found your experience in A&E? - Negatives (Macclesfield Hospital)

### Environment:

- *Very little ventilation in here.*
- *So warm no air circulating very uncomfortable.*
- *It's very warm, I know building work is on going but wearing a mask makes it uncomfortable.*
- *Lack of air circulation its very hot.*
- *Very hot not enough fans.*
- *The seats could do with a clean.*
- *I would have liked to see social distancing still in place in the waiting areas, etc. This no longer seems to be in place.*
- *Patient was concerned regarding the social distancing as when it gets busier people are sitting closer, he has had his jabs but still has concerns for himself and family.*

### Privacy:

- *It is so difficult to talk to the receptionist, as there is a lack of privacy. Why can't they ask me to write my details down as I don't want people to know my personal details or things about me.*
- *It's a small waiting area and not private.*
- *Lack of communication. There is also a lack of privacy when booking in. The reception has a screen so firstly its hard to hear and they (the staff) struggle to hear us, so they open the door which defeats the object of the screen.*
- *Thinks it would be better if the receptionist didn't have to shout through glass (but appreciates importance of Covid-19 precautions).*
- *I think it is so wrong to be asked personal questions as to why I am here in full view and hearing of others, they don't know me and I found it very uncomfortable.*

### Communication:

- *Waiting times and the fact they have tv screens that do not work, what's the point?*

## How have you found your experience in A&E? - Negatives (Macclesfield Hospital)

### Accessibility:

- *Hard to hear what reception staff are saying with masks and the screen. Found the reception window was quite low and I had to bend down to speak to the receptionist which was hard on an injured knee.*
- *Not signposted well from the road, struggled to find A&E entrance and the best car park to park in - parked at the front. Car park machine confusing - in the end I realised that you pay on the way out but this wasn't clear.*
- *Parking in the drop off sections isn't great. However appreciates that building works are happening which affects this.*
- *Mobile service is bad.*
- *Got a bit lost coming in (refurb going on and signage not obvious).*
- *Not offered wheelchair (can't see any about).*
- *Couldn't hear through the screen at reception to answer questions. A telecom would have been good.*
- *The parking and signage needs to be improved I went to the wrong area following the yellow and green lines, friendly Healthwatch staff redirected me.*

### Children's waiting area:

- *No activities in children's waiting area. Not child friendly. Long wait for minor injuries and to be seen.*
- *No entertainment or space in children's waiting area.*

### Waiting times:

- *Too long to wait to be seen.*
- *If I have to wait for a long time as I have come from work.*
- *Just hope it won't be long.*
- *Waiting and worrying as baby is refusing fluids.*
- *Possible waiting time.*

## Additional Comments (Macclesfield Hospital)

### GP Practices:

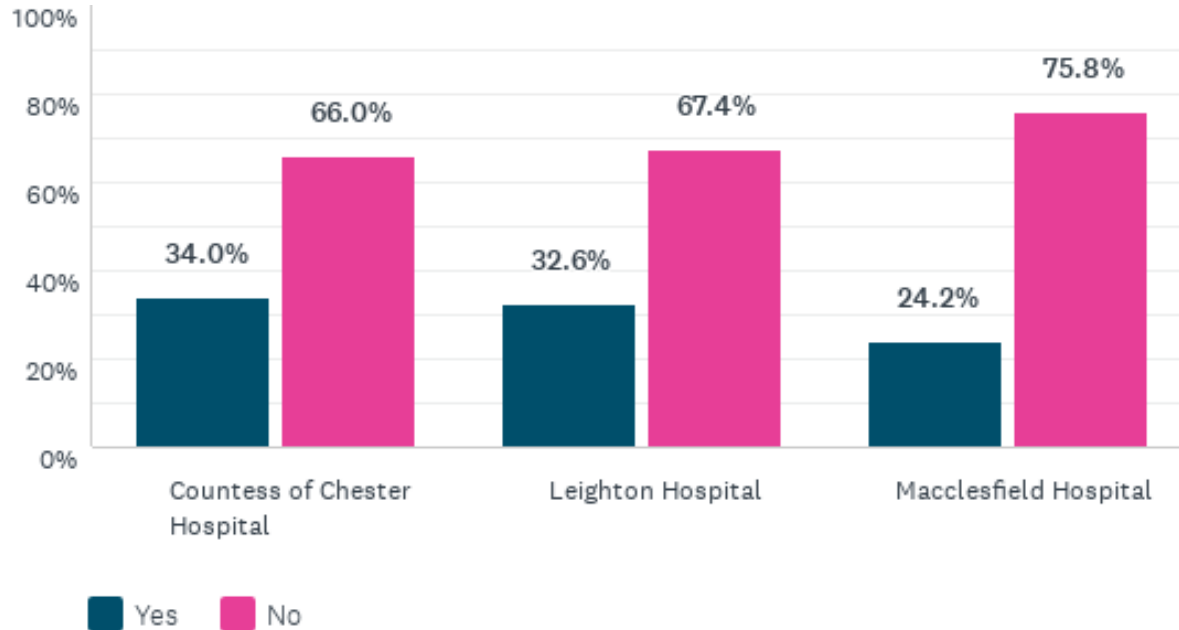
- *It seems daft that we have to wait 3 days before we can even have a virtual conversation, surely we should be seen quicker as this puts people in mind of NOT calling the doctor and just go to A&E where at least we know we will be seen.*
- *GP appointment difficult to get told - self isolating staff as reason. Patient very worried. Her friend said: She brought her husband last week had injury, the service was good, staff friendly was seen quickly.*
- *I'm an insulin dependant diabetic and have always found my care and staff to be very good. I rang my GP to tell them about the collapse at the weekend in case I need to be seen. Chatted to the GP and the Diabetic Specialist Nurse and they felt that I needed to come in.*
- *The GP out of Hours Nurse came to the A&E reception and said that it would be 2-3 hours until a Doctor could see me. This felt too long so I went home and my son will try to get a GP appointment for me at home instead.*
- *I guess I could have waited to see the GP but when it happens you panic a bit.*
- *Patient felt that had she tried to get an appointment she would have just been advised to go A&E as that's all they seem to do.*
- *The patient was feeling anxious and just wanted to be seen the waiting time for triage was 5 mins.*
- *Has 3 children, can't take time off work so put off coming hoping it would get better. Taken cocodamol but having little effect. Therefore felt it needs looking at. Feels she may have a chest infection, as a result of an injury. Did not think to contact GP as its difficult to get an appointment. Triage in less than 20 minutes.*

### Anxiety:

- *Hope they will be seen soon in quite a bit of pain.*
- *Mum more worries- single parent. Hopes to be seen quickly.*
- *Single parent, just needs sorting ASAP ,child epileptic. Seen GP who advised A&E X-ray. Hates hospital so hoping to be seen quickly. Triage less than 20 minutes.*

## Have you used A&E in the past 12 months?

Answered: 246 Skipped: 20

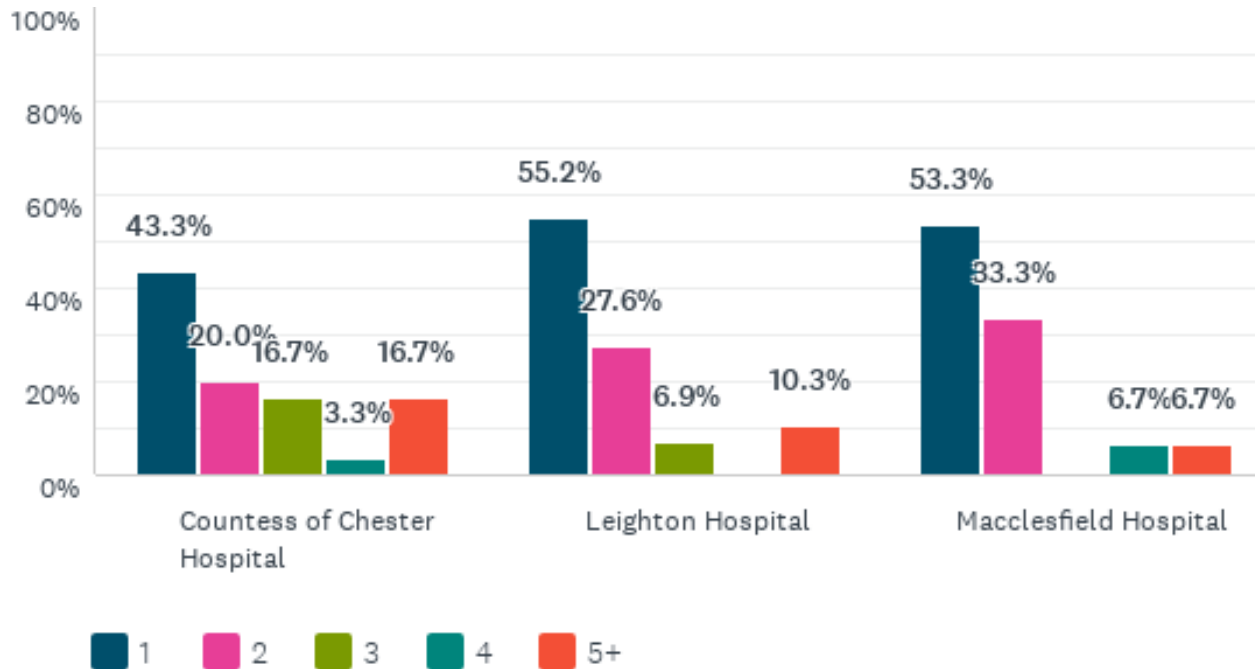


Across all three hospitals, 69.1% (170 people) told us they had not previously attended A&E in the past 12 months.



## If yes to visited A&E in past 12 months, how many times?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 192



Across the three hospitals, 75.7% of people who had previously attended A&E in the past 12 months had only attended A&E on one or two other occasions.

## Feedback from Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

*“The Countess of Chester NHS Hospital Foundation Trust would like to thank the Healthwatch team for your visit and review of our Emergency Department on our Chester site, we would also like to thank you for your feedback.*

*The level of information acquired demonstrates a thorough, insightful and competent approach to conducting a survey in an environment which can often contain distressed and anxious individuals. Their report is therefore to be commended and the contribution to the Cheshire urgent and emergency care (UEC) agenda is greatly valued.*

*Your comments and feedback from our patients using the Emergency Department is very timely as this helps us to identify the reasons for the increase in attendances and assists us in working with our Primary and Community Care colleagues to improve communication, increase awareness and focus on areas in which we can improve.*

*With regards the feedback received, we have reviewed the comments and where practicable will address the issues raised by the patients who gave responses.*

**Continued on next page**

## Feedback from Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust cont.

*In consideration of the numbers of patients who had contacted the 111 service prior to attendance at our ED we feel that there is a piece of work required to empower our population with the choice of where they would want to be seen, by the most appropriate service. One of the outputs of the survey is the indication that increased effort needs to be made to enable citizens to make an informed choice about where the appropriate care can be delivered. While a significant number of patients responded that they didn't feel that they would be seen quickly enough by their GP it is important to impart messaging that allows people to understand that from a longer-term care perspective it is often more worthwhile to seek an appointment in a scheduled way with one's own GP, rather than wait an indeterminate period of time in an increasingly busy emergency department.*

*The feedback also indicates a significant number of patients sent by their GP. This is common practice in terms of a professional judgement that indicates emergency care is required and is a normal part of activity in normal circumstances. However, the accompanying comments indicate that there are significant shortages of GP appointments, thus increasing the footfall in all three EDs. This would suggest that primary care is working at maximum capacity and that additional Primary Care/Urgent Care Centre/Walk in Centre facilities are required in the county.*

*This report will be discussed at Board level and distributed to all relevant teams in the Countess of Chester to ensure that all staff are aware of the issues raised and the actions that will be introduced to support the required changes that have been indicated.*

*A revisit would be very welcome after 2 - 3 months to reassess the reasons for the increasing attendances to our ED. Thank you again for this valuable report which will be fundamental in our efforts to deliver excellent care, and in the system's endeavours to ensure that patients receive the right care, in the right place, first time every time.”*

**David Coyle, Chief Operating Officer - Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**

## Feedback from Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

*“Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (which runs Leighton Hospital) would like to thank Healthwatch for visiting Leighton Hospital and speaking to patients to better understand their experience of our Emergency Department and most importantly, what we can do to improve it.*

*The feedback from the review is extremely welcomed and helpful and we are grateful for the insights that the Healthwatch team have provided in the report.*

*The Trust is extremely pleased to hear that 77% of its patients reported having either an ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ experience of the service in the Emergency Department.*

*The Trust will be using the feedback in the report from Healthwatch to make further changes and improvements to the service delivered in the Emergency Department.*

*The main point of feedback is in relation to the environment and we acknowledge that it is no longer fit for purpose or big enough. We therefore welcomed last year the decision to invest £15 million into the development of a new Emergency Department on the Leighton Hospital site. This new facility, which will provide a much better environment for patients and our staff, is due to open later in the year and will address many of the issues raised in the report. We are also investing in more people and looking at different ways to deliver urgent and emergency services in future to ensure that our services provide the best possible experience and high quality of care that patients should rightly expect of us.*

**Continued on next page**

## Feedback from Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust cont.

*The final report will be considered in detail by the Trust Executive Quality Governance Committee to ensure that all necessary and reasonable action is being taken, learning from the very helpful insights in this report, to further improve the experience patients have of emergency services at Leighton Hospital and across the whole organisation.*

*Once again, thank you for spending time to review our Emergency Department through the lens of our patients and for the extremely helpful feedback.”*

**Oliver Bennett, Chief Operating Officer - Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

## Feedback from East Cheshire NHS Trust

*“East Cheshire NHS Trust (which runs Macclesfield District General Hospital) would like to thank the Healthwatch team for your visit and review of our Emergency Department, we would also like to thank you for your feedback.*

*Firstly we would like to thank your representatives who conducted the review in a professional and unobtrusive manner, who all appeared to have a good understanding of the pressures on A&E especially in light of the building work currently being undertaken. The team were approachable and light-hearted and patients felt their approach to be helpful.*

*Your comments and feedback from our patients using the Accident and Emergency Department is always very welcome as this helps us to focus on areas in which we can improve.*

*It is encouraging to read that the service is rated by patients as excellent by 65.3% of patients attending, with a further 22.4% rating it as good.*

*With regard to the feedback received, we have now reviewed the comments and have put in place actions to help improve the areas highlighted below:*

*The three main areas of concern raised in the report are:*

- 1. Lack of air circulating, very hot*
- 2. Lack of privacy at triage/reception*
- 3. Lack of information with regard to waiting times*

**Continued on next page**

## Feedback from East Cheshire NHS Trust cont.

*We would like to assure you that we have now reviewed and addressed these issues and can confirm:*

- 1. A new reception area is currently under construction which will be air conditioned, and we are hopeful that this will be completed by the end of August 2021.*
- 2. As part of the building work underway, a private triage room is planned which will ensure that privacy and dignity for our patients at triage is maintained.*
- 3. With regard to waiting time screens, we are sorry that the existing screens were not working. This is due to the building work around the reception and triage area, and the screens are to be moved in the next week to the new area. In addition to this our patients are also advised to discuss any concerns they may have with a member of staff.*

*Please be assured that feedback from reports such as yours are always welcomed. These are discussed with our teams and at Board level to ensure that all staff are aware of the issues raised and the actions that have been introduced to support the necessary change. Any support would be welcomed to gain further feedback when the new area is up and running.*

*We would like to take this opportunity of thanking you and your team for your visit and feedback. If you feel there is anything more that we can do please do not hesitate to contact us.”*

**John Wilbraham, Chief Executive - East Cheshire NHS Trust**

## Feedback from NHS Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group

*“The Healthwatch Cheshire A&E Watch reports are such a rich source of insight and intelligence. The findings of the reports are being used by the CCG and our partners to inform how we address issues with people’s access to and experience of appropriate care.*

*Despite the easing of many COVID measures, the impact of the pandemic lives on for local health and care providers and we still need to do all we can to control the spread of the virus in clinical settings. We need to work in partnership with local people to make sure they get the care they need in a way that is safe and that supports our services to continue to recover from the pandemic.*

*We will be working closely with Healthwatch as we seek to engage with Cheshire residents and address the issues set out in the reports.”*

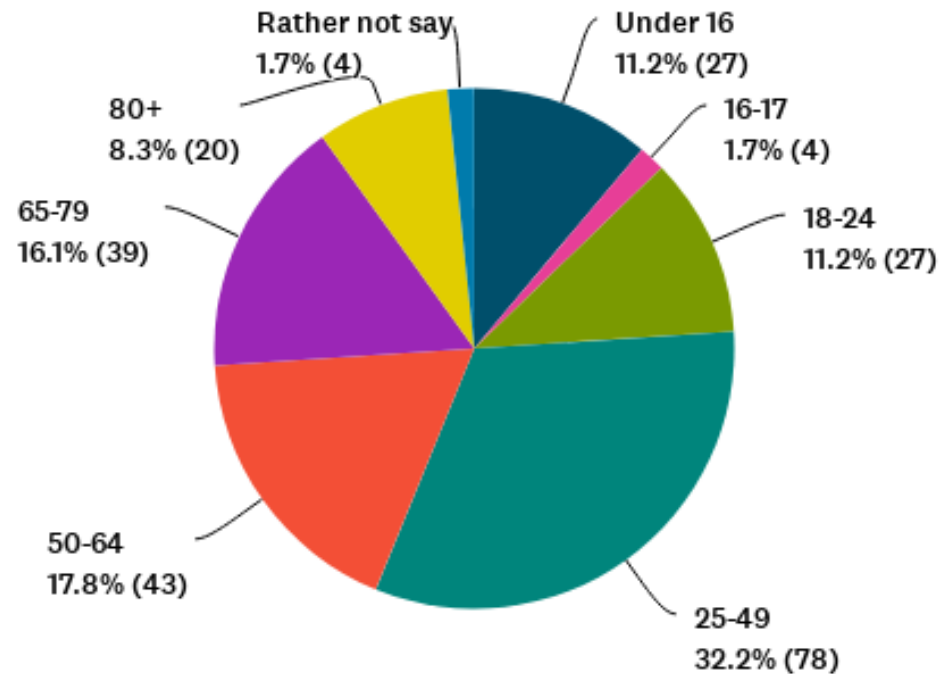
**Jacki Wilkes, Associate Director of Urgent and Emergency Care - NHS Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group**



# Appendix - Demographics of survey respondents across all hospitals

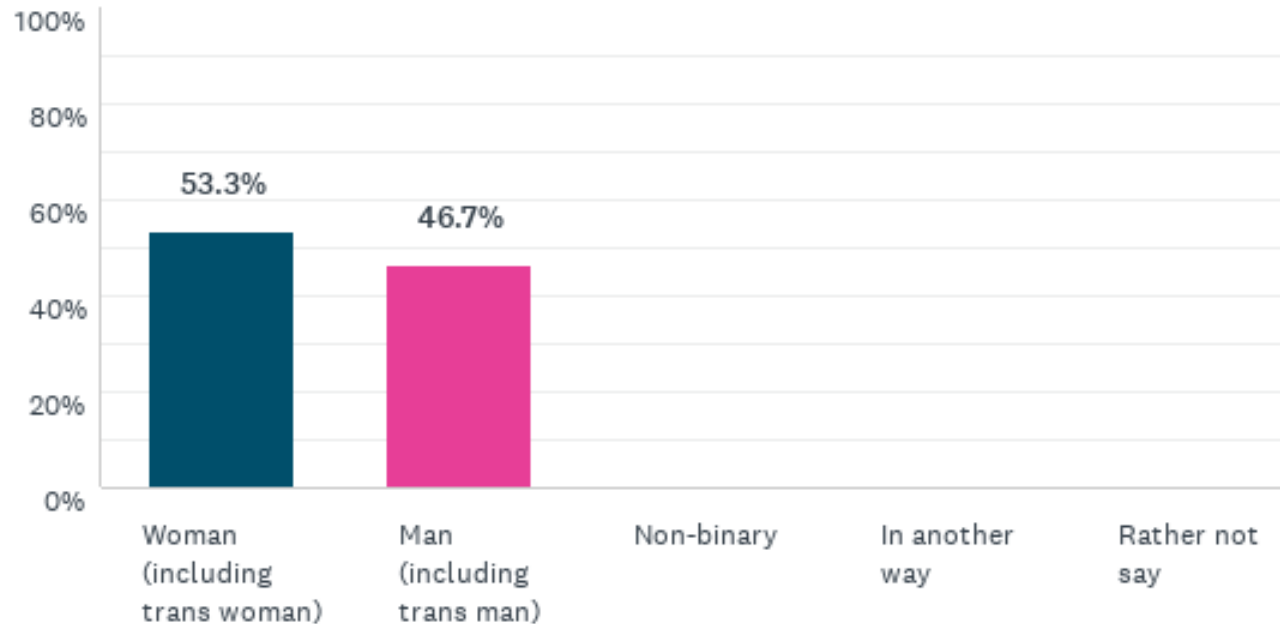
## Appendix - Age:

Answered: 242 Skipped: 24



## Appendix - Gender:

Answered: 246 Skipped: 20



## Appendix - Ethnicity:

Answered: 245 Skipped: 21

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Asian Bangladeshi	1.2%	3
Asian Chinese	0.4%	1
Asian Indian	0.0%	0
Asian Pakistani	0.4%	1
Other Asian Background	0.8%	2
White and Asian	0.0%	0
White and Black African	0.0%	0
White and Black Caribbean	0.4%	1
Other Mixed Background	0.4%	1
White British	91.8%	225
Black British	0.4%	1
White Irish	0.8%	2
Gypsy/Traveller	0.0%	0
Other White Background	2.4%	6
Other	0.0%	0
Rather not say	0.8%	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>245</b>

**Healthwatch Cheshire Feedback Centre can be found at:**



**[www.healthwatchcheshire.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchcheshire.org.uk)**

Or contact us on :



**0300 323 0006**



**Email: [info@healthwatchcheshire.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchcheshire.org.uk)**



**@HealthwatchCW and @HealthwatchCE**



**Healthwatch Cheshire CIC, Senson House, Denton Drive, Northwich,  
Cheshire, CW9 7LU**