

**Woodview**  
**Child Development Centre**  
Specialist Children's Services



Satisfaction Survey Report  
April 2021

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## Introduction

### What we did

In 2018 Healthwatch Halton published a report on services provided from the Woodview Child Development Centre. This report highlighted concerns raised by parents of children and young people using these services. Recommendations in the report called for a range of improvement across the service.

A formal response to the report was received from Bridgewater Community NHS Healthcare FT who committed to a range of Quality Improvement Work across the service.

*'Bridgewater aims to provide the highest quality care in the communities we serve and we are deeply concerned by the experiences that some families have received when using our services at Woodview Child Development Centre (Woodview CDC). We sincerely regret the frustration and upset this may have caused. The Trust's senior leadership team has already started working with staff and families to put together a robust action plan to address the issues raised by both this report and individual complaints. We will also be carrying out a full internal investigation.*

*Implementing a single point of contact at the centre for every family.*

*Refining referral processes to reduce waiting times.*

*Improving staff training to ensure services work together more effectively so families are only asked once for information.*

*Ensuring staff communicate more clearly with families about their child's care, the referral process and how to make a complaint through additional staff training.*

*Improving satisfaction rates by holding a joint event with Healthwatch Halton for families so they can help inform our improvement plans.*

*Speeding up the time it takes for children to receive a diagnosis by greatly increasing the number of panels held for clinicians to come together to discuss individual cases.*

*Rolling out a shared electronic patient record system across Woodview CDC so records are managed more efficiently and patient record sharing between services is improved.*

*We will continue to monitor the delivery of the actions until we are confident and have the required assurance that all the issues have been resolved'.*

A formal response to the report was also received from NHS Halton CCG, the commissioners of Children's Specialists Services for Halton.

*'We welcome the Healthwatch Halton report and have taken the findings extremely seriously. Patient experience feedback is invaluable in ensuring the quality, safety of services we commission are of a high standard.*

*'The issues identified are totally unacceptable and as the responsible commissioner of local health care services we are working closely with Bridgewater Community Health Care NHS Foundation Trust the provider of the service as they implement the improvement plans.'*



During the past 18 months Healthwatch have been kept regularly updated as a range of quality improvement work has been carried out across the Children's Specialist Services, with all recommendations in the Trust's action plan being now being met.

In July 2020 Healthwatch Halton were approached by NHS Bridgewater Community NHS Trust to look at the possibility of carrying out a further patient engagement project on behalf of the Trust to look at patient satisfaction levels with Children's Specialist Services from Woodview Child Development Centre.

As the pandemic and lockdowns during 2020 had halted 'normal' service from the centre the decision was taken to focus the survey on families who had received appointments just prior to lockdown in February 2020.

550 letters were sent to families who had appointments during February 2020, inviting them to feedback on their experience of the service at that time through an online survey.

This initial letter was followed up over the next month with text messages encouraging people to take part and give their feedback through the survey.

In total 55 responses were received. The number of people that took part in this survey was relatively small but comparable to those received for the 2018 survey, and as such the results should be taken as a snapshot of the views and experiences of these individuals, rather than as generalised findings about the service.



## What services operate from the Woodview CDC?

### Children's Physiotherapy Services

Physiotherapists assess and work with children who have gross motor skills difficulties such as gait, balance, coordination. These can be children with an underlying neurological, orthopaedic, congenital or developmental condition or children with no known diagnosis. Physiotherapists assess and provide equipment for standing and walking where appropriate, along with orthotics to improve a child's quality of movement. The physiotherapy team also work with children with respiratory conditions such as cystic fibrosis and asthma. Physiotherapists work closely with the multidisciplinary team in the community and hospitals.

The service is delivered in the community, schools and at home.

### Children's Occupational Therapy Service

Occupational Therapists assess and work with children who have functional difficulties related to fine motor tasks and activities of daily living. This can be children with an underlying neurological, orthopaedic or developmental condition or children with no known diagnosis. OTs also assess and advise on equipment, such as for seating or toileting, in schools and nurseries. Occupational Therapists work closely with the multidisciplinary team in the community and hospitals.

The service is delivered in the community, schools and at home.

### Community Paediatric Service

Community Paediatricians are doctors specially trained and experienced in child health who see children outside a hospital. The Community Paediatrician will assess, investigate and review children and young people (CYP) for conditions including long term disability (e.g. cerebral palsy and learning disability), developmental delay with neuro-disability, neuro-developmental problems (e.g. ADHD and autism), genetic conditions and children taken into care or being fostered or adopted. The Service contributes to Education, Health and Care plan when a child is known to the service and a paediatrician provides medical leadership to the MDT pathway.

The service is delivered in various community health clinics.

### Neurodevelopmental Nursing Team (NDNT)

The Neurodevelopmental Nursing Team (NDNT) works with children aged 0-19, with a diagnosis, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Global Developmental Delay (GDD) Cerebral Palsy and learning disabilities. Our service delivers holistic child-centred assessments to determine the level and type of support children and young people (CYP) and their families require. We offer expert support to manage behavioural issues, sleep issues and provide positive parenting strategies. The specialist nurses work closely with parents/carers and other professionals to offer advice and strategies to encourage a consistent approach to support CYP at home and in different settings. The Service facilitates ADHD and ASD workshops to provide post diagnostic information and support and is also able to provide relevant training for other professional professionals.

The service is delivered in the community, schools and at home.

### Multi-Disciplinary Team

The Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) is a group of specialists from Health and Education working with children and young people (CYP) with complex needs in the Borough of Halton.

The role of the team is to provide or review specialist multi-agency assessments for CYP presenting with suspected Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD); the team have developed a pathway and adhere to the NICE guidance for Autism. The Assessment Team (MDT) meets weekly to discuss children's assessments and the meetings are prepared, coordinated and chaired by a MDT Case Co-ordinator and Case Worker. The MDT Co-ordinator and Case Worker act as a first point of contact for families and professionals, and work with the



assessment team to ensure that the process is completed with minimum waiting times. Throughout the assessment process the Co-ordinator will ensure that families are updated following MDT meetings, and provide advice and signing posting to local services including other agencies if indicated. The pathway and data collection is supported by an MDT administrator.

Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is commissioned to provide the co-ordination and administration for the MDT pathway. The Co-ordinator oversees the process to ensure that CYP receive child-centred, timely multi-agency co-ordinated services, from the point of referral to feeding back the conclusion of the multi-agency assessment.



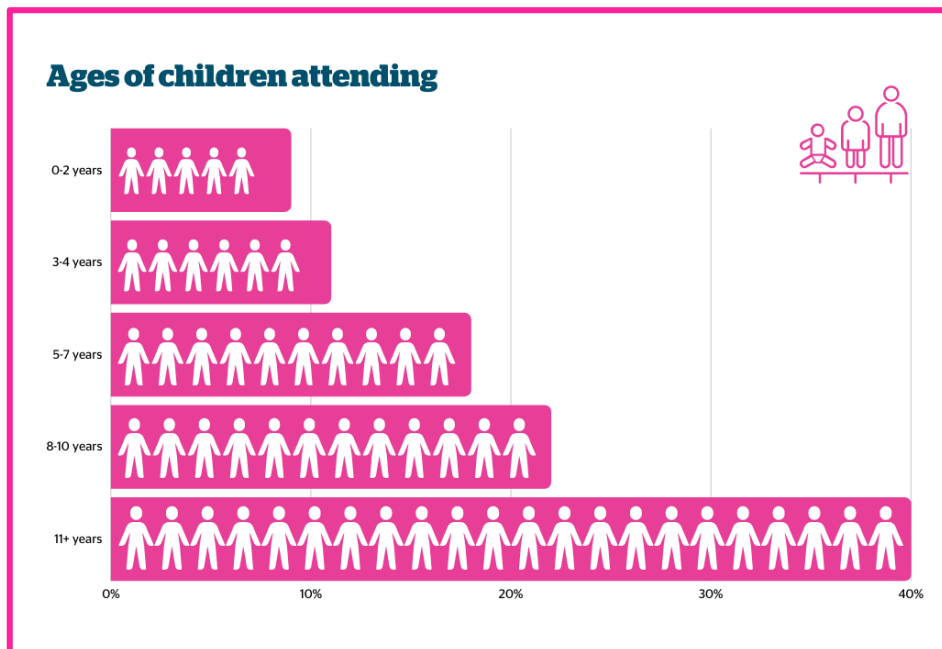
## Feedback and Findings

55 people took part in the survey.

Participants were asked to say which particular service their child's appointment was with.



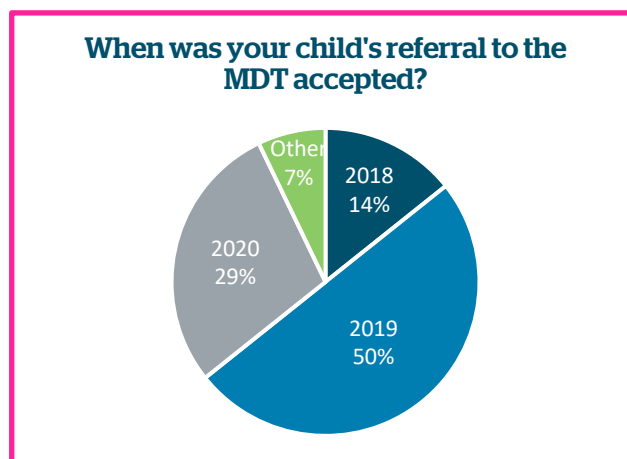
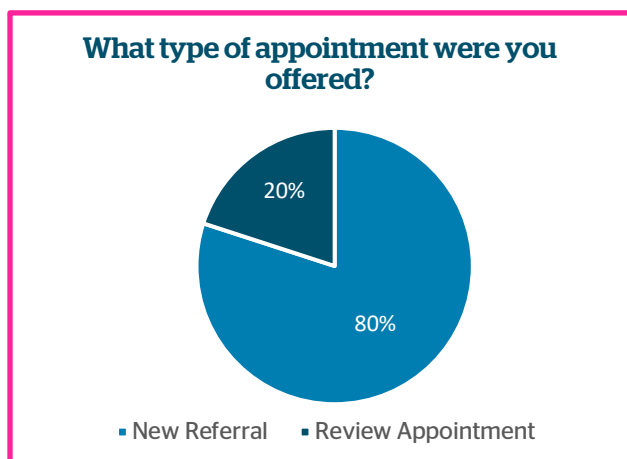
26% of respondents attended appointments with the Multi-disciplinary Assessment Team, 22% saw the Occupational Therapy service, while another 20% attended Physiotherapy appointments. 18% said their child's appointment was with the Community Paediatrics service while the remaining 15% saw the Neurodevelopmental Nursing Team.



The ages of children attending appointments ranged from under 2 years old to over 11 years old.

20% of children were under 5 years of age, 40% were aged between 5 and 10 years old, and the remaining 40% were aged 11 years or older.





Participants who stated their appointments were with NDNT, OT, CP or Physiotherapy were asked to state what type of appointment they had been offered, either an initial appointment for a 'New Referral' or a 'Review Appointment'.

80% responded that they were attending a review appointment, with the remaining 20% attending a new referral appointment. Those participants who said their appointments were with the Mult Disciplinary Assessment Team were asked when their child's referral to the MDT was accepted. 50% of referral were accepted in 2019 with a further 29% in 2020. 14% stated their child's MDT referral had been accepted in 2018.

7 participants said they had been informed that their child's MDT assessment had been concluded.





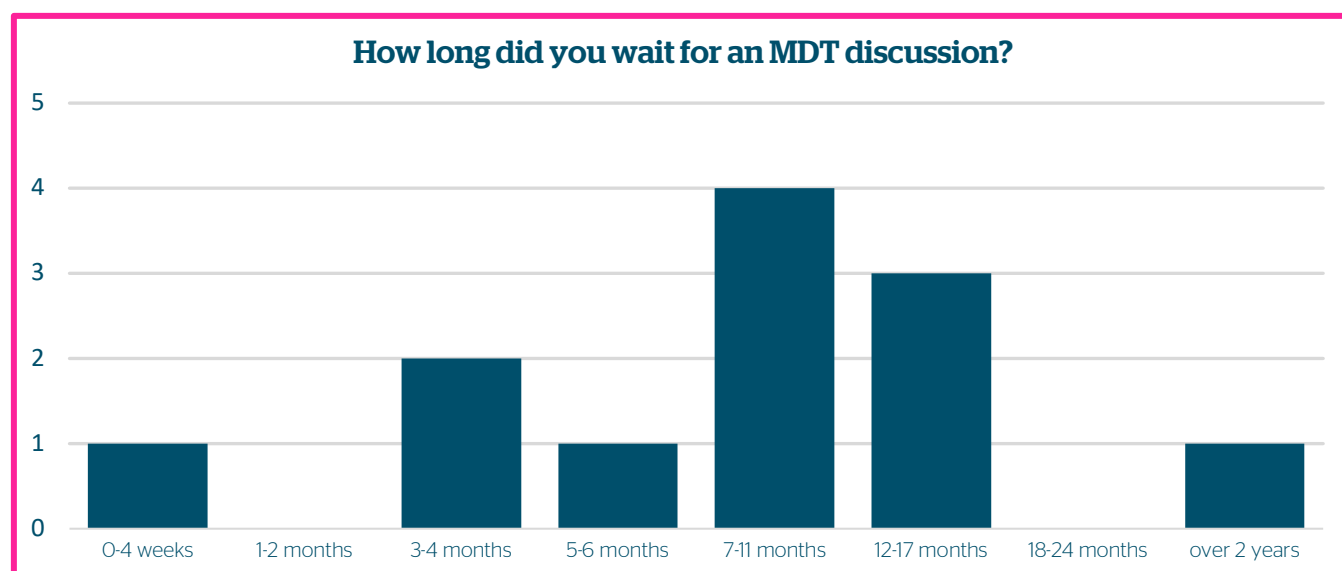
## Waiting times

Parents bringing their children for a new referral or for an MDT appointment were asked to say how long they had waited for their appointments.



8 respondents had attended a new referral appointment. 5 of these had appointments with Occupational Therapy, 2 with Community Paediatrics and 1 with the Neurodevelopmental Nursing Team.

4 of the 8 appointments took place within two months of the referral, a further 3 participants waited between 3 and 6 months for their appointment, with one further participant stating they had a wait of more than 2 years for their appointment.

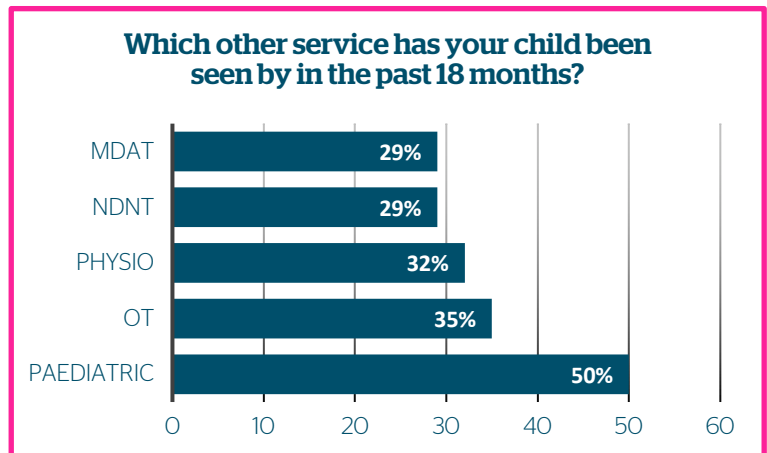
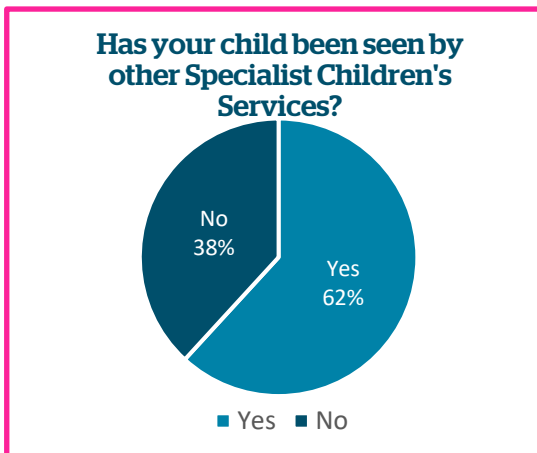


Of the 14 participants who were attending for an MDT discussion, 4 had waited up to 6 months, with a further 4 people waiting between 7 and 12 months for the appointment. 3 participants said they waited between 12 and 17 months, with one further person saying they had waited over 2 years the MDT appointment. 2 participants failed to answer the question.



## Additional appointments

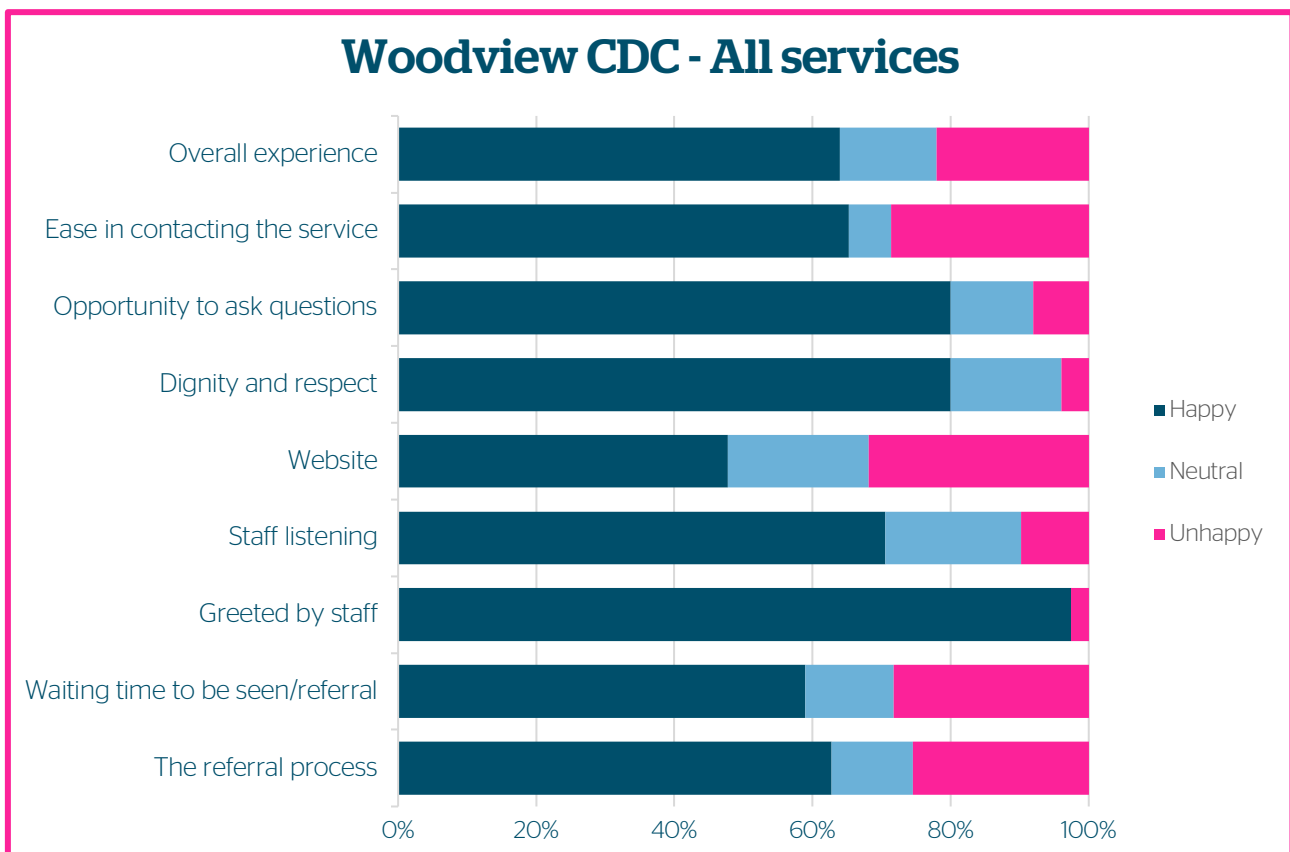
In addition to the main service seen at the appointment in 2020, 34 respondents said their children had also attended appointments with one or more of the other services at Woodview Child Development Centre during the past 18 months.



Of these, 50% told us they had attended appointments with the Community Paediatric service, while 35% had also attended Occupational Therapy appointments. 32% had attended physiotherapy appointments while 29% saw the NDNT team or the MDT team.

## Patient Experience

The survey then asked participants to rate how happy they were with various aspects of the service they'd used, on a scale from 'Very Happy' through to 'Very Unhappy'.



## Woodview Child Development Centre Specialist Children's Services



**64%** rated their overall experience as positive



**65%** told us it was easy to contact the service

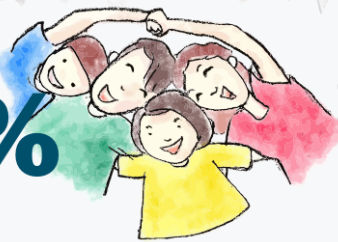


**58%** were happy with the length of wait for an appointment or MDT discussion

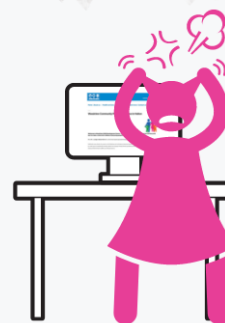


**63%** were happy with the referral process

**98%**



were happy with the way they were greeted by staff



**32%**

were unhappy with the service website



While there have been many positive changes and improvements made since our report in 2018, more than 1 in 5 parents are still highlighting dissatisfaction with aspects such as the referral process, waiting times and contacting the service.



## What service areas were you satisfied with?

In our previous report in 2018 respondents had struggled to highlight any aspects of Woodview services they were satisfied with.

Responses to this survey have been more positive, with many participants praising the staff at the centre for their positivity. 98% of respondents were happy with the way they were greeted by staff. One parent told us, *'All of the staff are very polite, helpful and patient even when a toddler doesn't want to do anything for them'*, while another said, *'Very professional and friendly staff, helpful and listen to any issues you're having'*.

67% of respondents told us they were happy with the way that staff listened to them. One parent explaining, *'I received a great professional service and was satisfied with my telephone consultation call. All my questions were answered, and my son is happy on the medication he was prescribed'*.

Another parent told us, *'...was seen by Dr L. She is very thorough. She gives you the time to ask questions, explains everything so that you understand. She is amazing!'*

Respondents were generally positive on the opportunity they were given to ask questions, with 74% being happy, while another 11% were neutral.

*'We are really grateful for the support and guidance offered for our daughter. She is progressing and we are pleased with the care she is receiving'*.

For the majority of respondents, their experience of using services at the Centre was generally positive across most areas with 64% being happy with the overall experience and another 14% giving a neutral response.

One parent, whose child had been seen by a number of the services said, *'My little girl loves seeing her professionals at Woodview, she has built great relationships with her key workers especially her physio SC who is amazing!'*

Another respondent told us that services had, *'improved loads'*.

Individual services and staff received positive feedback with Physiotherapy and the Occupational Therapy team being highlighted by one parent who said: *'My son comes to clinic to see Leanne his occupational therapist, we've been having a couple of problems with his back recently, and to get in touch with Alder Hey hospital who he is under hadn't been the best to be honest. I find whenever I need to speak to Leanne, I always get a phone call from her, and problems are solved and definitely dealt with. Leanne and Gemma, my son's physiotherapists are fab, they are excellent at their job roles and I couldn't ask for better support and service. They have both been extremely helpful and supportive to me and my family, through good and bad times... They make him feel so comfortable, and always have a laugh and a giggle. Staff are great and I couldn't ask for anything more. ...I find the service to be excellent staff are fab, keep up the good work'*.

Another parent praised the physio team for a *'Really careful assessment. It didn't feel rushed, the Physio asked a lot of questions and I felt very happy that nothing was missed'*.

The NDNT team were praised by one respondent who commented, *'I was most satisfied with the neurodevelopmental team who listened and gave good advice actually getting to know my son and what is best for him'*.

Another parent spoke of their NDNT appointment saying, *'Very professional and friendly staff, helpful and listen to any issues you're having'*.



## What service areas were you dissatisfied with?

### Referral process and waiting times

While the majority of respondents were happy with waiting times or referral times, 25% (12) of respondents stated they were unhappy with the waiting times, with one participant explaining, *'My son had to wait nearly 12 months for his physio to begin'*. One respondent called their waiting time of more than a year for an MDT assessment *'a disgrace'*.

28% (13) of respondents also stated they were unhappy with the referral process.

There were a number of very similar comments of general dissatisfaction focussing on the assessment and referral process for MDT. One respondent told us, *'My child was referred twice as his first referral was lost in the system...hence why things took so long. He was then re-referred and the MDT assessment took about 12 months.'* Another parent made similar comments, saying, *'The referral process is horrendous. Files being lost has hindered help for a minor'*.

One parent explained said, *'I knew he had his final assessment, and it was due to go to the MDT, but expected it to be at least 6 months after but was informed by letter less than a month later, but that's how I found out, no phone call or offer of further support'*.

The sentiments in the previous two comments were echoed by another parent who stated they received, *'No updates regarding the MDT, I had to chase appointments myself. Started process when child was 3, he is nearly 7 and still no diagnosis'*.

While praising a Doctor in the Community Paediatric team, one parent said the follow up left a lot to be desired, saying, *'However since then nobody seems to know what the other hand is doing, and my son is not getting the care he needs. The occupational therapist does not listen and wrote a report that could have been for another child. My concerns are not being met nor my son's difficulties'*.

### Communication and Information

While we noted much improved satisfaction levels, many participants still had issues communicating with the service. More than 1 in 5 respondents said they were very unhappy with the ease of contacting the service.

*'Poor communication been told a number of times someone will call me. I'm still waiting nearly 7 months on. Told to contact certain members off staff however they are never available and don't ring back when promised. My child is still not receiving the help she needs and is still struggling daily with no help or support other than from me'*.

Some respondents felt let down by a lack of communication from Woodview services, with one parent stating there were, *'months between appointment without any communication'*. Another participant said there was, *'Poor communication'* and a *'Lack of contact with parents'*.

One parent, while being unhappy with waiting times for the Multi-disciplinary Assessment Team, said, *'I wouldn't mind waiting as long as I knew he hasn't just been missed'*.

Many participants felt that services could do more to keep them informed, updated and feeling supported. One parent explained to us, *'In my personal opinion once I have been given a diagnosis that's it. You are left high and dry and basically left to 'deal' with it. Some follow up appointments or simple leaflets with advice would be helpful. My son has had a diagnosis of ASD and ADD and yes, I am having 2/3 appointments a year and my son is seeing staff from OT in school (when possible) however I don't get any information nor advice of how he is getting on. I don't know if this is in-line with his ASD or ADD and when I tell them in sessions, they have to write this down each time as if they are unaware of his diagnosis'*.

One respondent highlighted their dissatisfaction over a lack of information from the service, stating, *'When assessments were done I had no paperwork till I asked and I was given different information on separate occasions'*.



Another respondent whose child was seen by the Occupational Therapy service told us, *'When my son was first diagnosed with SPD we got lots of information and a plan in place to visit school and nursery ...this never emerged and then he was discharged'*.

## **Website**

While more than 30% of respondents who had visited the service website stated they were unhappy with the service website the survey gained very little in the way of direct comments regarding the website, either good or bad.



## What do you think could improve the service that was provided?

Participants were asked to give their views on possible improvements they would like to see at the service.

Improvements suggested by participants in this section generally relate to the main issues that participants said they were dissatisfied with.

### Communication and Information

While we noted a number of positive comments in the feedback regarding improved communication between services and parents, this area also came out as one of the main bugbears for many respondents, and an issue they would like to see improvements in.

While we have seen an increase in positive feedback from participants about contacting the centre itself, there were some who highlighted the telephone system as still in need of improvement, with one parent saying, *'...better phone operation so you are able to contact the person you need'*.

For some there was a feeling of not being listened to by the service, with one parent saying, *'People actually listening to my concerns rather than being told after one appointment my child doesn't need help'*. Another participant asked that *'Families be listened to and what is said taken into consideration, irrespective of school's viewpoint'*.

Participants were concerned over a lack of communication around the assessment process, with one telling us they would like, *'Better communication and ensuring all assessments are carried out or at least let parents know if they will not be going ahead at the moment due to the current situation'*.

Some felt there was room for improvement when communicating MDT decisions, with one parent saying, *'When a decision is made, I feel you should be informed as well as a letter sent out'*, while another echoed this asking for, *'A phone call from MDT on decision reached'*. Another person described, *'a lack of communication on the process'*, saying, *'I felt like I was constantly chasing'*.

Many comments highlighted a need for *'better communication'*, keeping parents informed and updated, with one participant asking for, *'Better skills in keeping parents informed'*, while another made a plea to *'perhaps contact parents who desperately need help'*.

Another respondent offered, *'praise for the professionals I have seen to carry out assessments were wonderful'*, but added, *'just keeping me updated was slow and confusing'*.

One parent suggested improvements needed to be made with in-house communication between professionals to save time within appointments, *'More communication between paediatricians, paediatrician, OTs etc. Read the patients notes before an appointment so your appointment time is not being wasted on repeating yourself and your child's condition. Follow-ups made sooner than 3/6 months to ensure that their care/follow up treatment has taken place or in progress'*.

### Waiting times /Appointments

We noted mixed results regarding waiting times for appointments and assessments. While 58% were happy with the waiting times, 28% stated they were unhappy. One parent told us there were *'...months of waiting lists'*, saying, *'This is not helping my daughter'*.

Some called for shorter waiting times and for the service to *'Speed up the processes'*. One respondent suggested, *'more in-depth observations when under the multi-disciplinary team, so that they see the child more often and even make a relationship with that child, so they are able to give the right diagnosis'*.



## Location

A new location for the service.

Some participants highlighted difficulties in getting to Woodview for appointments for parents using public transport and wondered if a better location could be found. Transport difficulties are compounded for families living in some areas of Runcorn and Widnes who use public transport.

There were calls for some parents for clinics to be run for children in Runcorn as well as Widnes.

## Staffing levels / Funding

Some respondents felt the service was under pressure and needing more staff, with one calling for more physiotherapy staff, *'I think there needs to be more physiotherapists if the average wait time was as long as ours.'*

Another stated, *'You are clearly underfunded and that is a shame. What should be a great service offering support often left me feeling dismayed.'*

This was echoed by another parent who told us, *'To be honest it isn't the staff. The problem is clear, it is massively underfunded.'*

## Parental support

Many respondents felt the service could do more to involve and support parents and carers.

One parent, whose child had an appointment with Occupational Therapy, told us there needed to be, *'Time for the parents, I understand it is about the child, but it is us as parents who need the help to understand and the best techniques advice to help us help our children.'*

Another respondent whose child was seen by the MDAT asked for parents to be given *'a target sheet care plan of action'*

## Medication

One parent explained they would like to see, *'Online services to order medication would help keep track of when the prescription was signed instead of having to keep checking with the pharmacy.'*





## Patient Stories

As part of this project we contacted a number of respondents who said they'd be willing to give some additional feedback on their experiences. The names of participants have been changed.



### Rebecca's story

Rebecca explained that her child was first referred to the Woodview services by her GP and explained that her child is also under the care of Alder Hey Children's Hospital.

Rebecca talked us through her experiences of using services at Woodview. Rebecca feels that the staff she has seen at Woodview have been very supportive and she has had a very positive experience. Rebecca said, *'I would say I find the care and support at Woodview more positive than Alder Hey. As my child had been experiencing problems with his back, I decided to contact Alder Hey Hospital and was not happy with the result.'*

Rebecca told us her child was under the care of the Occupational Therapy service at Woodview. Rebecca explained that if she ever had a concern and needed to call the service her child's Therapist, Leanne would respond quickly with a follow up call as *'she is very responsive'*.

During treatment at Woodview, it was identified that Rebecca's child would need some additional equipment for school. Rebecca told us this was organised very quickly despite the lockdown saying, *'I thought it would take months but thanks to Gemma and Leanne it was all done within two weeks which was absolutely brilliant. I have found my whole experience of using the Woodview services very good.'*

Rebecca said that her experience of dealing with other staff at Woodview during appointments and telephone calls she was equally good.

Rebecca discussed the physiotherapy service and the therapy her child has been receiving. She told us, *'My child's physiotherapist is Gemma and she is equally caring and excellent at her job; in my opinion I could not have asked for better support and service, they are excellent at their job roles. They have both been extremely helpful and supportive to me and my family, through good and bad times, and they make my child feel so comfortable. The staff are great, I could not ask for anything more, I would like to say a big thank you to them all.'*



## Carole's story

Carole's child was referred to Specialist Children's Services via a school referral.

Carole told us the referral process was a lot quicker than she had been led to believe by other parents she had spoken to. She stated that she was more than happy with the speedy referral. She was '*pleasantly surprised*' to be offered a personal one to one / face to face appointment at the Centre. The appointment was just for her with no child in attendance. She found this very beneficial and wanted to relay her thanks at this appointment, it gave her the opportunity to '*tell*' her child's story from her viewpoint.



Following the initial referral, they were given an appointment with a Doctor at Woodview. Carole was very complimentary about the doctor and her manner with her child.

Carole suggested that it may have helped smooth the process if she had received information as to what would or could happen at that appointment. Carole and her child were quite nervous on the day and anxious in the days leading up to this appointment.

A speech and language appointment was also offered, but Carole did not feel her child had speech and language issues, but fully understood this was part of the initial referral process.

Carole stated that her child was not initially referred for Occupational Therapy support and she struggled to understand why. She told us that as it transpired, this is what her child needed and has since benefited greatly from, with Carole sending many thanks for this service. Carole believed this additional referral request slowed down the diagnosis process and felt it would be better to apply for a referral to all departments and avoid delays.

Carole stated her child's diagnosis was only confirmed by letter. She would have liked to receive this news '*in person*' and be able to talk through the next steps rather than be informed only by letter, which she found distressing.

Carole would have also preferred her partner to be able to attend a face to face meeting where the diagnosis was discussed, allowing for her partner's personal input with a clear explanation of the diagnosis given, what the attributes may be and how best to work together as a family to support their child.

Carole contacted Woodview and was put in touch with someone who spoke with her over the phone, but she feels that this could have been handled better.

Carole would like to see the service improve the information and support available following a formal diagnosis and subsequent discharge. She mentioned a need for practical advice such as:

- details of barbers / dentists who have experience of working alongside autistic clients, recommended school supplies, things or situations to avoid, how to deal with melt downs).
- Signposting to practical support and other parent support e.g CHAPS,
- Where to get help with EHCP forms etc.

Carole stated that the staff always seemed very busy and felt that as a result some messages weren't passed on and it took a long time for people to return calls. However, she did reflect that all staff she encountered at the Centre were very polite, understanding and supportive and the issues she had encountered were not complaints but mainly notes for improvement, moving forwards.



## Jane's story

Jane told us that her child had been in mainstream school and really struggling, so the school made a referral to Woodview.

Jane spoke of her dissatisfaction regarding the visits her child had received whilst they were on school premises. Jane believed the visits were too brief and didn't provide a real opportunity to assess her child for a prolonged period of time, thus not allowing the real difficulties with social skills and behaviour to manifest.



The report Jane received as a result of these visits, stated there were no concerns with her child's communication skills, which she felt highlighted that he had not been observed in depth, due to the severe defiance issues and real concerns regarding their struggle to communicate effectively. Jane said her child is unable to express how they feel, and this reflected in the way they treat peers, any adults and school staff.

Jane stated she was very pleased with the Occupational Therapy department, and gave special thanks to Sammy, Sarah and Rachel. Jane also reported that her initial wait for an appointment wasn't too long (5-6 months), but felt that the subsequent wait for additional services were too long.

Jane spoke about difficulties she has had leaving messages and voicemails with the reception staff, as these messages were either not passed on, or people do not respond. She said this was apparent when her child's physiotherapist did not attend (or send prior apologies for not attending) one of her child's EHCP reviews, this was a direct result of not being able to contact the physiotherapist, despite messages being left with reception staff.

Jane said she would like to see improvements in the handling of phone calls to the centre to *'ensure you to be able to contact the person you need'*.



## Sarah's Story

Sarah told us she has a child who struggles with social communication and educational development.

Sarah was complimentary about the service received up to the point around October 2020, from which time onwards she told us she has encountered many difficulties accessing the service.

She mentioned specifically that Physiotherapy had been '*an amazing experience*', from which her child had benefitted greatly. She also commented that although the initial attempts to contact staff on phones was often problematic, once she had access to the staff, in the majority of cases they were friendly and helpful.

Sarah's main complaint is the process of trying to speak to someone at the centre. She explained that the phone is not always answered and when it is sometimes the phone cuts off part way through conversations. Sarah told us that when she left messages, often nobody would return the call.

Sarah said she had been told that she needed to contact the centre every two weeks to progress/chase the progress of her appointment and feels this is something that the service should be doing proactively to help her - rather than the onus being upon her to chase them.

Sarah said she was very frustrated with the service when a Speech and Language therapist assessed her child during a 15-minute observation in an educational setting. The therapist indicated that the child's needs were not as severe as thought, and a referral was stopped to the MDT. She indicated at this point that she wanted us to say to the service that she wished for more understanding from staff that each child is different, but also sexes are differing, both in the ways the issues present and also the way those sexes cope/mask those differences.

Sarah wanted to highlight to us that not all departments had issues.



## Covid-19

While the survey questions focussed on appointments held just prior to the Covid pandemic, some respondents gave very positive feedback on accessing services during the pandemic which we believe needed to be highlighted.

- *'Hannah is brilliant- even during covid she showed my daughter her face on the drive before going back and putting all her PPE on so not to frighten her'.*
- *'With Covid it has been hard getting reply's from the paediatric Dr's, but office staff have really helped with this by solving issues and getting back to me'.*
- *'Services were great we especially at this pandemic times, the staff friendly caring and informative'.*
- *'I felt safe as everywhere was very clean'.*
- *'I am generally satisfied with the service that my child is getting in all areas but I just wish there was more support for both department and the child so neither don't suffer like they have during the covid 19 pandemic'.*
- *'There is no service that I am dissatisfied with as it is hard to do face to face consultations at the moment with COVID going on'.*



## Summary and Recommendations

We'd like to thank everyone who took part in this survey for taking the time to giving us their views and experiences. We'd also like to extend our thanks to Jane Kinsella, Clinical Services Manager for Specialist Children's Services, for her willingness to engage and support the work we've undertaken on this project.

### Our thoughts

In 2018 the responses received to our survey highlighted a struggling service failing to meet the needs of many young children in the borough. Both the service provider, Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS FT, and the service commissioners, NHS Halton CCG, took on board the concerns raised by Healthwatch Halton. An action plan was developed and during the past 18 months a range of quality improvement work has been carried out.

We believe the results of our current online survey show a service that is taking positive steps forward from the position we saw in 2017/18.

While there are still aspects of the Children's Specialist Services that have plenty of room for improvement, we are pleased to see a general increase in the satisfaction levels from families using the service.

We'd now like to know what steps the Trust and the commissioners are planning to take the service forward to one that consistently provides an 'Excellent' service for children in the Halton area.

### Parental support

In 2018 we suggested, as a starting point for parents that we'd like to see the service provide a guide to what to expect from services at Woodview.

#### 'A simple promise to parents'

- Again, we'd suggest the Trust look at providing a 'parents guide', both online and printed, to parents bringing their children in to any of the services within the centre.
- What services can and can't do for their child and the timescales to expect for treatment.
- How the service can support parents to be kept involved in the care, treatment and support of their children;
- To provide information to parents on support groups and local and national organisations that can offer help or support.



In addition, in line with suggestions from survey participants, we would like to see a focus on improving:

## **Communication and Information**

### **1. Website**

Speak with service users to find out what information and support details they would find useful on the service's webpages.

### **2. Call handling**

Review the current phone call handling system to find ways to improve the current patient satisfaction levels with message handling.

### **3. MDT communication**

Review the way that MDT decisions are communicated to families. Consider asking this question early in the process.

### **4. Waiting times**

While we are aware that the waiting times may not be outside national averages, we would encourage the provider and commissioner to review the current system and see where improvements can be made to reduce the current waiting times.

### **5. Staffing levels / Funding**

While fully understanding that the NHS doesn't have unlimited funds and resources we would hope that NHS Halton CCG will carry out a review of the current service provision for Specialist Children's Services to ensure it has adequate funding and additional staffing if needed to meet patient needs.

### **6. Location**

This is a more long-term recommendation. Feedback we've received in this survey and from parents who've accessed service at Woodview in the past suggests that its location, and the building it is housed in, is not necessary ideal for the service it provides across the borough. At present, using public transport for an appointment at Woodview could mean a journey time of more than 40 minutes from some areas of Widnes and more than 1 hour from areas of Runcorn.



## Response to the report received from Bridgewater Community Healthcare

We wish to thank Healthwatch for their work in producing this report. We also thank the many families for giving such important feedback.

Patient satisfaction is hugely important to us at Bridgewater Community Healthcare. Where we have fallen short in this, we're very sorry for any upset this may have caused.

Although we are never complacent, we're pleased the report has found there has been great improvement in the level of parent satisfaction across Children's Specialist Services following our extensive improvement programme. We would also like acknowledge and thank the dedication of our staff many of whom have gone over and above during the pandemic.

As the NHS begins its recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic, we remain truly committed to the young patients needing our support today and those new patients we are yet to meet in the future. There has never been such an important time for NHS community services to show their patient value, flexibility and resilience.

We will continue to work closely with the local families we care for as well our commissioners, our partners and our Healthwatch colleagues by engaging with them where we can to further drive patient quality, satisfaction and experience.

Our Patient Services Team is available to talk to if families have any further worries, questions or compliments about our Children's Specialist Services or indeed any service we provide. Please do contact them, in confidence, by calling 0800 587 0562 (9am - 5pm, Monday Friday) or by emailing [bchft.patientservices@nhs.net](mailto:bchft.patientservices@nhs.net).

**Colin Scales**

Chief Executive

**Karen Bliss**

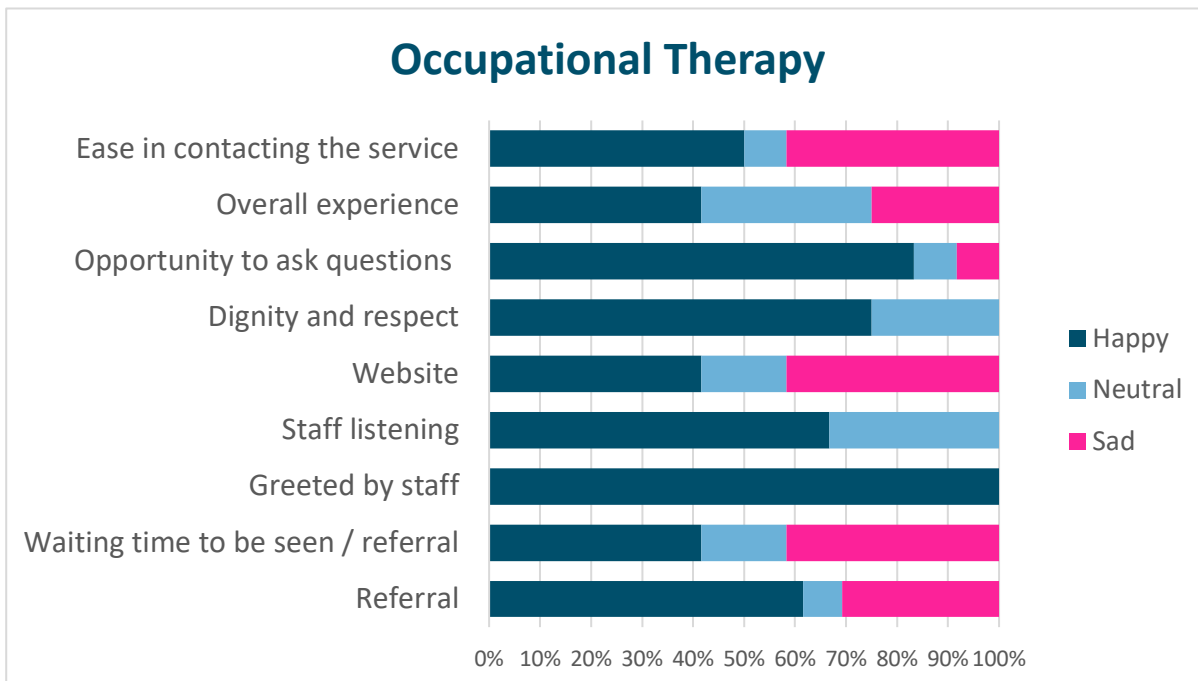
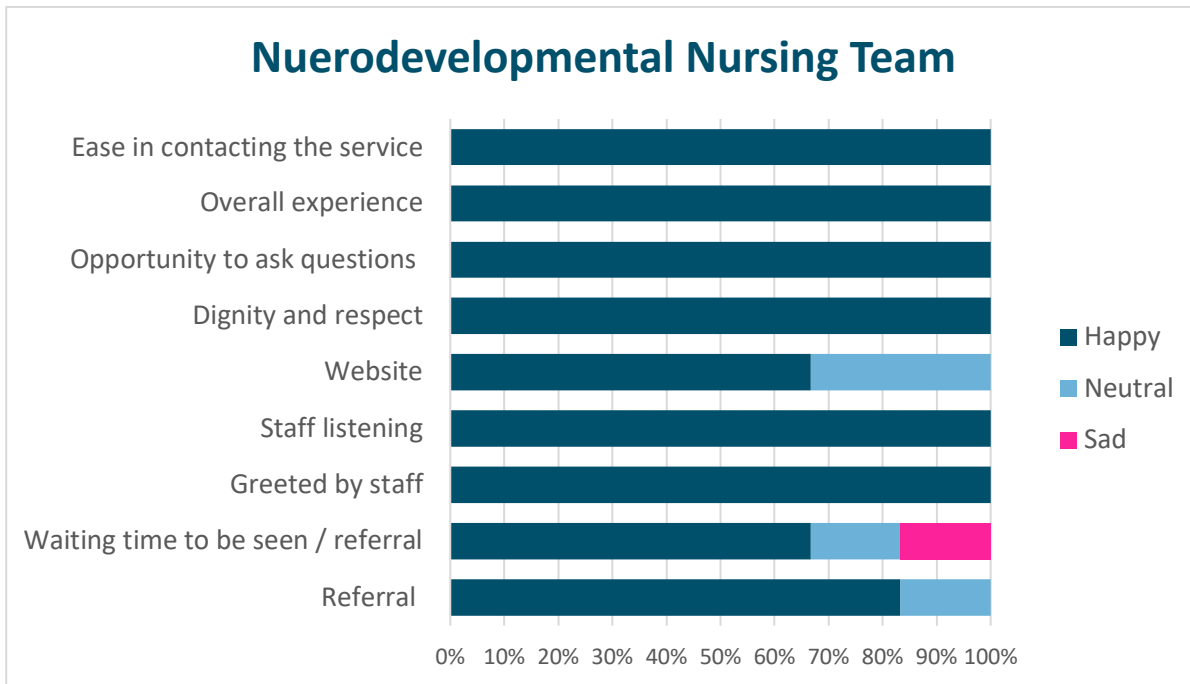
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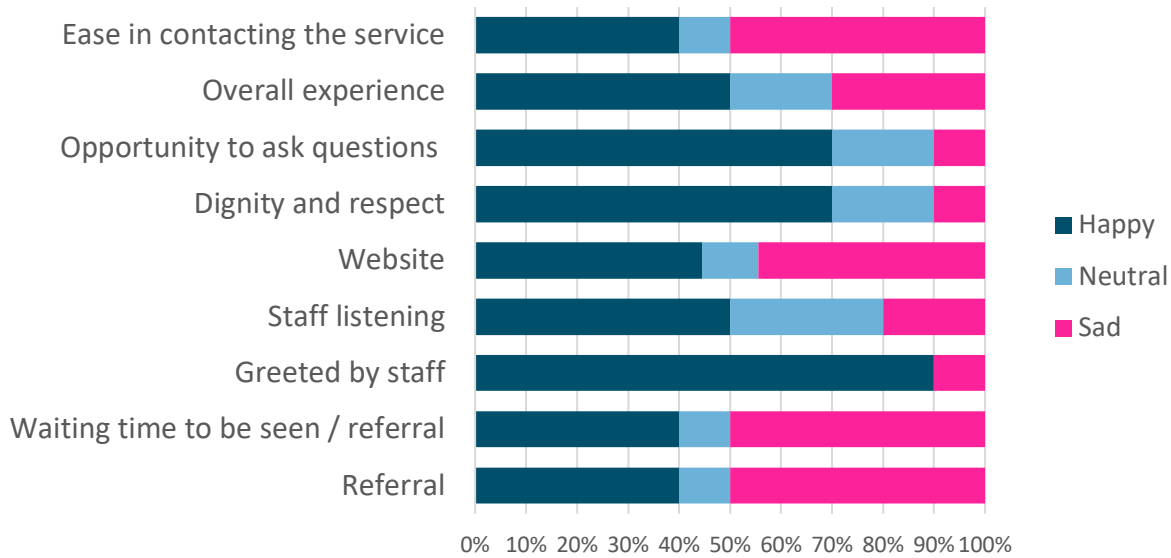


## Appendix 1

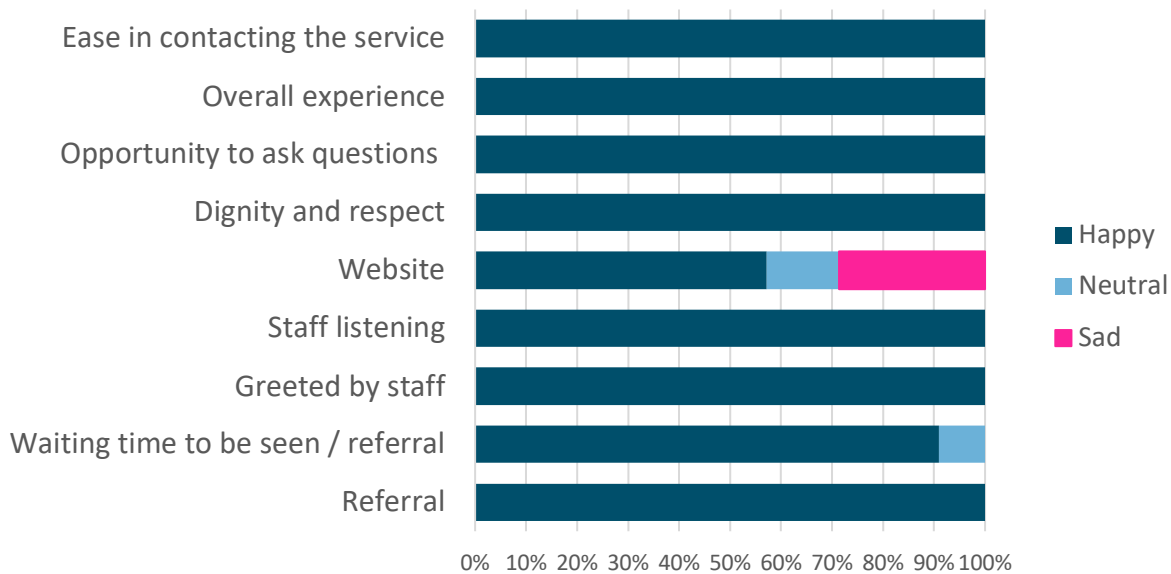
### Individual service satisfaction results:



## Community Paediatrics



## Physiotherapy



## Multi Disciplinary Assessment Team

