

# **Healthwatch Tameside**

## **Health and care feedback report**

**Survey data collected  
August 2021 to March 2022**

**Published in July 2022**

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[www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk)

@HealthwatchTame



## Introduction

Healthwatch Tameside is the independent consumer champion for health and social care in Tameside.

We listen to local people, and gather information about their experiences of using health and social care services.

We use this information to talk to the people who arrange (commission) the services and the people who provide the services. We can influence changes which will make these services better for everyone. If we hear about good practice, we encourage this to be shared. If you tell us about something that could be improved, we will talk to the people in charge about this too.

Any information we are given will remain anonymous. We are careful to share ideas in a way which will not identify any individuals.

We recently published a report about people's experiences of using health and care services [www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk/report/2022-03-22/general-feedback-report-2021](http://www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk/report/2022-03-22/general-feedback-report-2021)

The report was based on feedback collected between March and July 2021.

A new general survey was launched in August 2021, staying open for responses until the end of March 2022. This new report provides information about those responses.

The questions are the same as in the previous report. The format of this report is the same as the previous report, for easy comparison. There are many similarities between the two reports.

The survey was available to complete online, on paper, by QR code and over the phone. The number of surveys (97 in total) completed by each method was:

Online response – 59

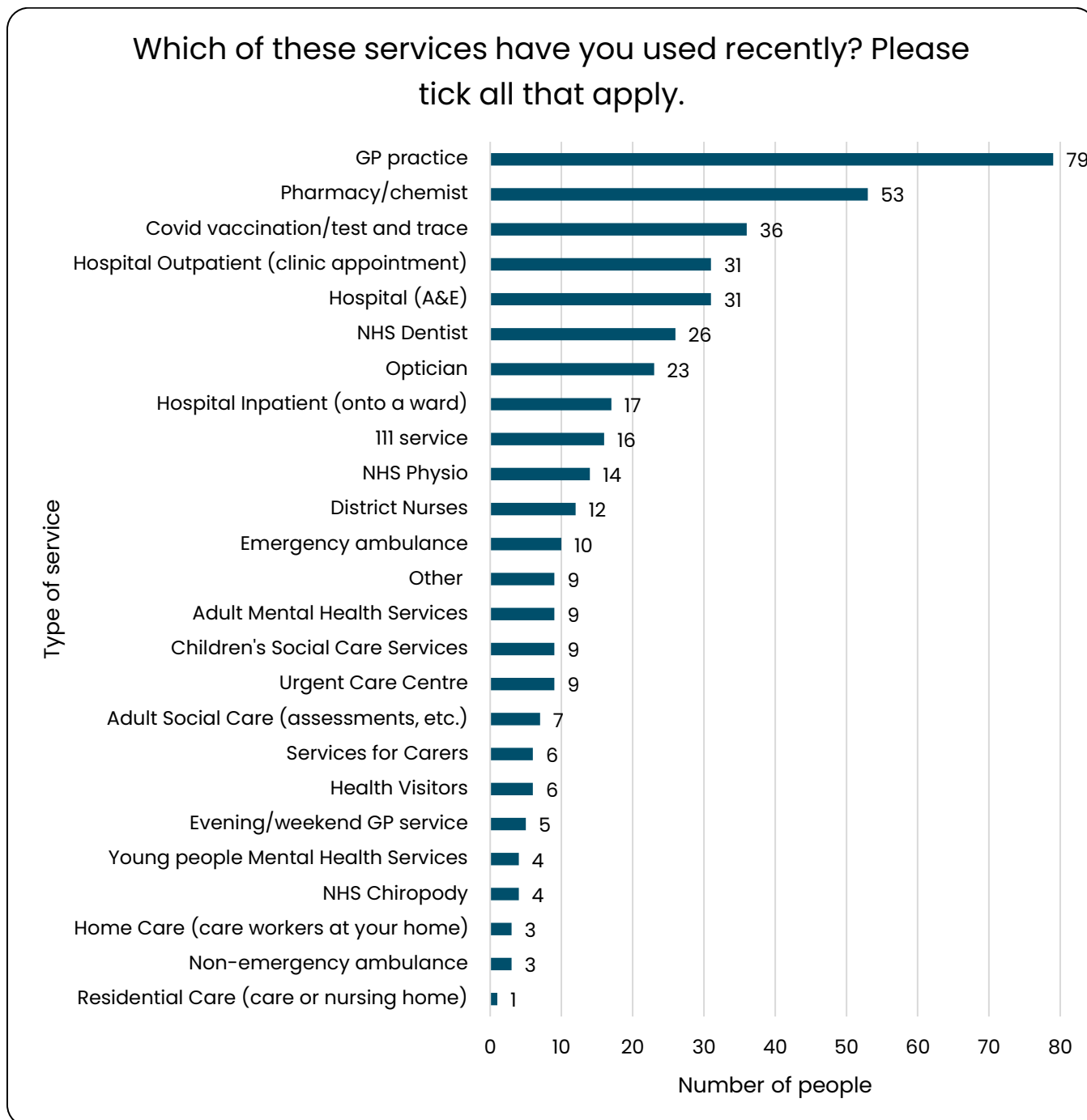
Paper responses – 35

Phone responses – 2

QR code – 1

A new health and care experiences survey was launched in April 2022. This can be completed online at [www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk/share-your-views](http://www.healthwatchtameside.co.uk/share-your-views). If anyone would like a paper copy, or to complete the survey over the phone, please call us on **0161 667 2526**, and leave a message on our answerphone. We will call you back.

The first question on the survey is – **Which of these services have you used recently? Please tick all that apply.**



'Other' includes:

Bereavement, Be Well Tameside, child and other vaccinations, community nurse, midwives, orthodontist, PCT drop-in centre, speech and language service.

The other questions included in this report are:

- **What were the names of the GP practice, hospital, and/or other providers used?**
- **What was good about the health and care services you used?**
- **What could be improved about the health and care services you used?**

We will look at the responses to these three questions all together. We will group them by type of service provided and whether the comments are positive or negative.

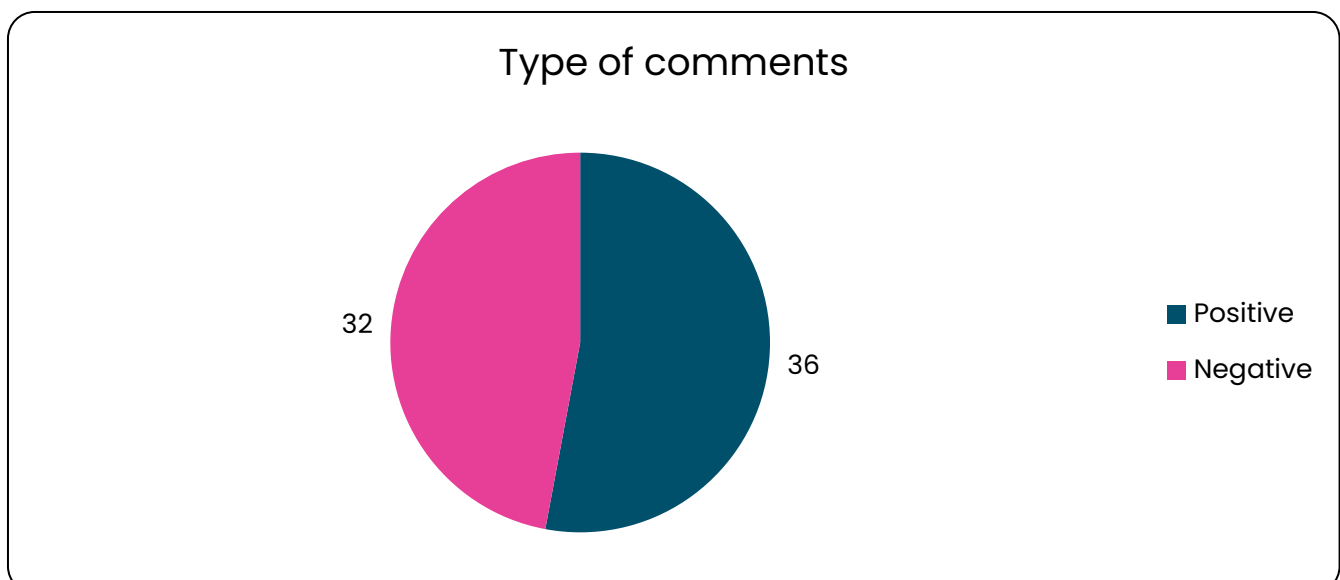
The final question is:

- **Have you delayed asking for medical help with anything, because of the COVID pandemic? Please tell us more. It is important people get symptoms checked out. If you have delayed getting help, and you still have symptoms, have you thought about getting help now?**

Where we have provided lists of positive and negative comments throughout the report, these are words and phrases used in the survey responses.

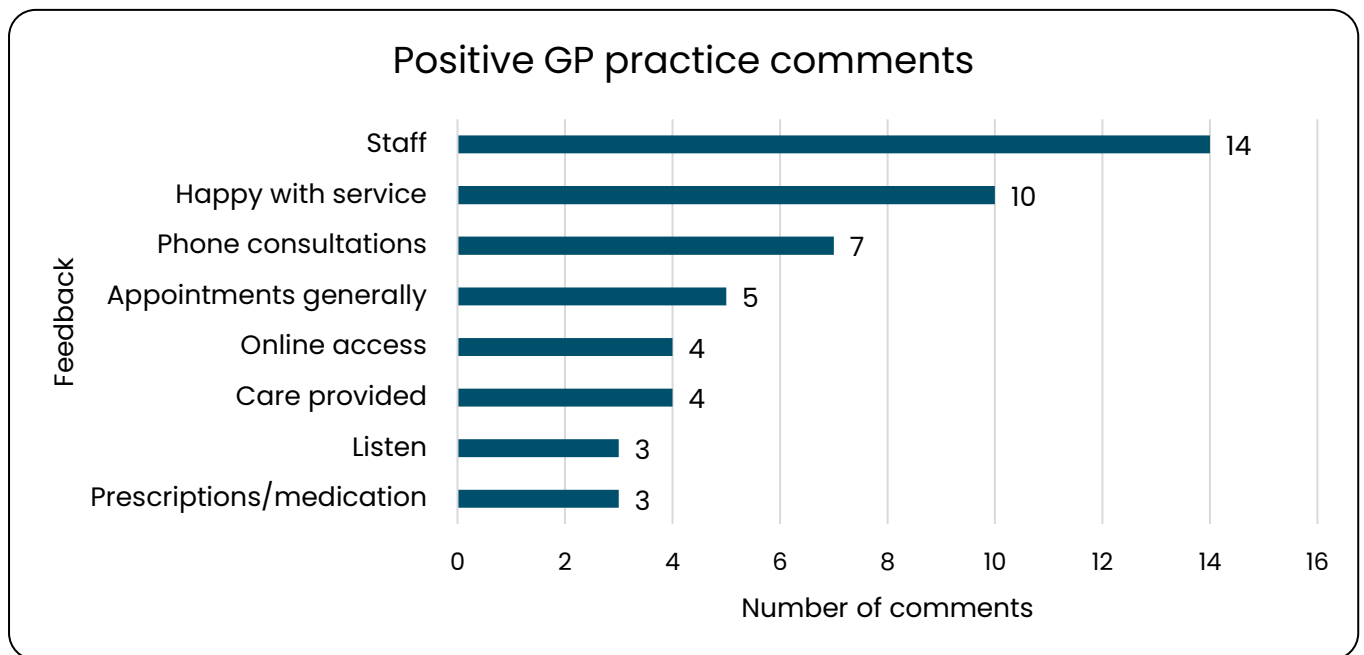
## GP Practices

Looking at the graph on the previous page, the number of people who had visited a GP practice was greater than any of the other services listed. The feedback about the experience of the visits was mixed, with both positive and negative comments. Some people told us about things that went well, and also things where they thought improvements could be made.



## Positive comments

Not everyone named their GP practice in their feedback. We will look at the comments split into themes, and not by individual practice.



Within the themes shown in the above graph, the feedback includes comments about:

- **Staff:**

- Friendly.
- GP good, very good, excellent.
- GP supportive.
- Helpful.
- Kind.
- Nurse took time for child to calm.
- Pleasant receptionist.
- Polite.

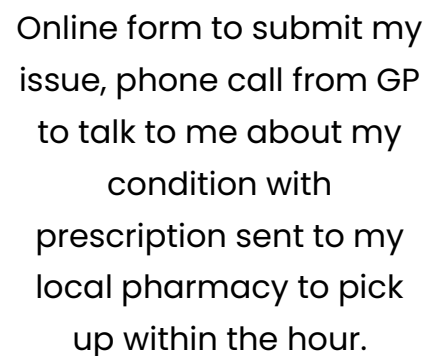
GP learned about syndrome that my child has got

- **Happy with service:**

- Generally happy with GP.
- Good service.
- Good with young child this week.
- GP excellent service. Always ready to see my son who has special needs.
- Quite good when you can speak to a doctor.
- Really well looked after.
- Services are good, once you can access them.

Generally good services (but long waiting times).

- **Phone consultations:**
  - Doctor is very helpful on the phone.
  - Excellent.
  - Good phone consultation and they will see you if you need to.
  - Telephone advice was good.
- **Appointments generally:**
  - Good appointment times.
  - GP came to my home at night.
  - GP sent 2 physios out as I'm classed as housebound.
  - Local services are easily accessible.
  - Saw the doctor.
- **Online access:**
  - Brilliant system - no waiting in a waiting room and most things can be sorted over the phone without the need to see a GP.
  - Prompt email response to an email enquiry I made.
  - Using Ask my G.P. is usually good.
- **Care provided:**
  - GP very supportive with my mental health.
  - Referrals.
  - Went to another practice for course of injections.
  - Were brilliant.
- **Listen:**
  - Good doctor who listens to me.
  - GP checked my wife and listened to her carefully which made her very satisfied.
  - Now a doctor is actually listening to me.
- **Prescriptions/medication:**
  - Excellent for repeat prescriptions.



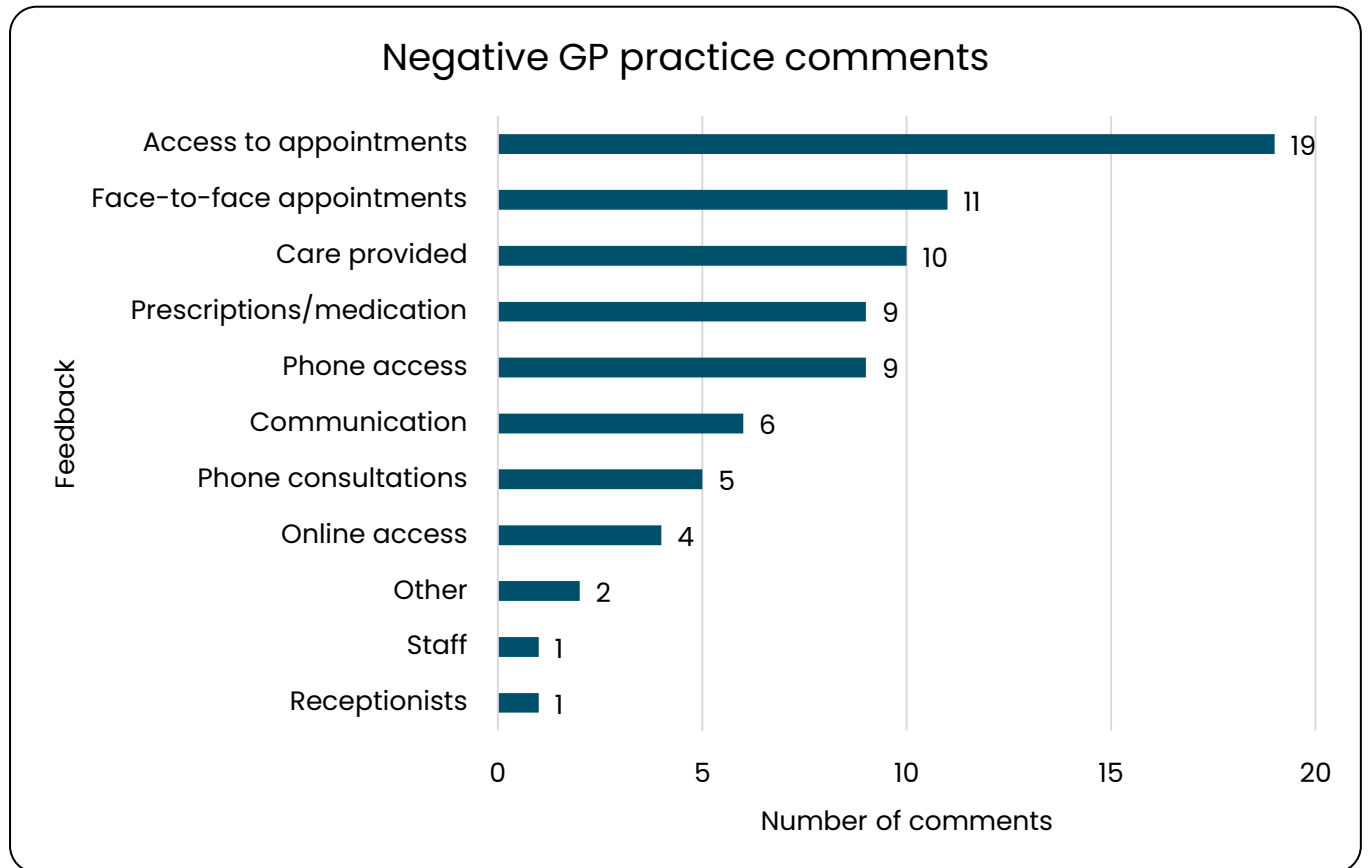
Online form to submit my issue, phone call from GP to talk to me about my condition with prescription sent to my local pharmacy to pick up within the hour.

Positive comments were received about the following practices:

Albion Medical Practice, Ashton GP service, Ashton Medical Group, Brooke Surgery, Clarendon Medical Practice, Denton Medical Practice, Droylsden Medical Practice, Dukinfield Medical Practice, Gordon Street Medical Centre, Go-to-Doc, Hattersley Group Practice, HT Practice, King Street Medical Practice, Lockside Medical Practice, Millbrook Medical Centre, Millgate Healthcare Partnership, Stamford House Medical Centre, Staveleigh Medical Centre, Town Hall Surgery, Waterloo Medical Centre, West End Medical Centre.

## Negative comments

As with the positive comments, not everyone named their GP practices. Here are the themes and comments. People provided longer responses when they were negative.



- **Access to appointments:**

- Been pushed aside by doctors at local GP for years - resulted in preventable hospital stay.
- Could not give me a telephone appointment until the following day so referred me to Go to Doc!
- Had to attend walk in centre with daughter as no appointments. Chest infection - she got sepsis.
- Have more GPs available - always difficult to get appointment.
- I don't have an emergency but need to see a doctor - only seeing emergency.
- I waited 50 minutes (making me late for work) to see practice nurse who only took blood and didn't have me booked in (although I had made an appointment). I still have hypertension and symptoms and have to make another appointment which could take three weeks.
- No annual reviews are taking place.



- People queue at 7am and they get served first.
- Should be able to book "ahead" GP appointments within the next two or three weeks - these are currently not permitted.
- Time and effort it takes to get through to the GP for an appointment is off-putting.
- Told to go to the walk in centre at Tameside Hospital.
- Too long to wait for appointments.

It is so difficult to get a GP appointment now that it can take me some days to organise one.

- **Face-to-face appointments:**

- Face to face appointments to discuss private matters.
- GP surgery is not interested and no face-to-face appointments.
- GPs need to do more face to face.
- Have face to face appointments, especially for elderly.

- **Care provided:**

- Adult daughter rang GP with mental health problem, told to get over it.
- Doctor refused to refer me to hospital after three unsuccessful attempts to carry out smear test due to excessive pain.
- Mother has got bad knees and needs injections. GP cancelled appointment and she won't go to hospital.
- The doctor asked to see a photo of the back of my throat - ridiculous, an impossible task. I managed to get a picture with the smallest section of my throat and sent it off.
- The yearly asthma check is no longer being done by a nurse and is a waste of time. They don't even check your breathing now.
- There are a lot of locums.
- Waiting for hip replacement - doctor refused to give adequate pain relief, which is making working difficult.

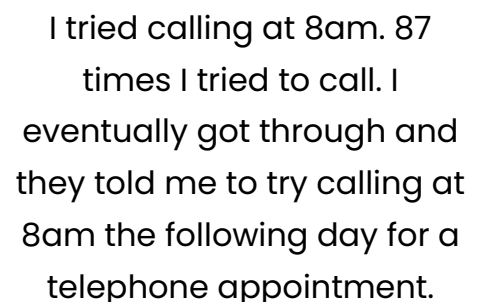
Need better follow up - I have been suffering from open sores on my legs now for almost a year. Just hope things start to ease up and we get back to being able to phone with a problem.

- **Prescriptions/medication:**

- After Covid I had a bad chest infection. I needed antibiotics. If I'd got them sooner it wouldn't have got so serious. Very poor service.
- Doctor messed up diabetes meds for 4 weeks out of 6. I did not have any medication.
- Doctor sent B12 injections - still got them at home, could not get appointment at nurse to have them injected.
- Had a recent issue getting prescription transferred from GP to chemist.
- I have been unable to get a medication review, which I was told I should have last April 2021.
- My adult daughter was refused antibiotics by a locum because she had had one course. Her chest infection had not cleared up and he did not offer appointment to check her out (she is asthmatic and gets bad infection).
- Trying to get an appointment - I only needed 5 minutes so I could get a prescription for antibiotics.
- Worried that prescription for pain relief would not be done before the weekend - reminded practice and completed after 4pm on Friday.

- **Phone access:**

- Can't get through. What's going on here? If you go into the surgery there is no-one there.
- Have more phone lines available to ring on.
- Have to ring out of hours.
- Having to call at 8am, then all appointments gone.
- I rarely get through on the phone for an appointment. I was 36<sup>th</sup> in the queue, waited on the phone for an hour to get to 1<sup>st</sup> in the queue, at which point I was cut off! I rang back, 14<sup>th</sup> in the queue, when I got to 1<sup>st</sup>, I was cut off again. Seems to be the normal.



I tried calling at 8am. 87 times I tried to call. I eventually got through and they told me to try calling at 8am the following day for a telephone appointment.

- **Communication:**

- Don't like getting text to tell me to go to pharmacy.
- Referred to MRI. Don't know which consultant or clinic. Asked GP for help, just given phone number - no one got back, no help.
- Too long waiting for call back.

- When my surgery changed its telephone number, I was not informed. It seemed the surgery had sent out text messages, which I did not receive as I do not use a mobile phone.

- **Phone consultations:**

- How can you tell GP over the phone what is wrong with me?
- They will not give a time, only sometime in a day. If you specify a time, they ignore it. If you miss their call, they won't ring you again. They should give a time as hospital consultants do.
- Trying to diagnose over the phone is a joke.

Should be given a choice of face to face or telephone GP appointments

- **Online access:**

- I sent an online request (a form not easy to fill in for an intelligent person so those with limited tech skills would be impossible) to speak to a doctor. I had heard nothing for some hours, so I decided to go to the walk in service at the hospital.
- Make online form easier to find on the practice website.
- Online not much use – only about 10 appointments available.

Had to wait 2 days for response – child in pain and had to fill in online form

- **Other:**

- Disappointed in GP system during pandemic. Patients were waiting outside surgery and only one chair.
- GP Practice arranged social prescriber who seems a good idea but I think is a waste of resources.

- **Receptionists:**

- The receptionist I spoke to cancelled my appointment and never told me.

The named practices where people felt improvements could be made were:

Albion Medical Practice, Ashton Medical Group, Brooke Surgery, Clarendon Medical Centre, Gordon Street Medical Centre, Hattersley Group Practice, HT Practice, Droylsden Medical Practice, Droylsden Road Family Practice, Haughton Thornley Medical Centre, King Street Medical Practice, Medlock Vale Medical Practice, Millbrook Medical Practice, Millgate Healthcare Partnership.

## COVID-19 (and other) vaccinations

The only comments were:

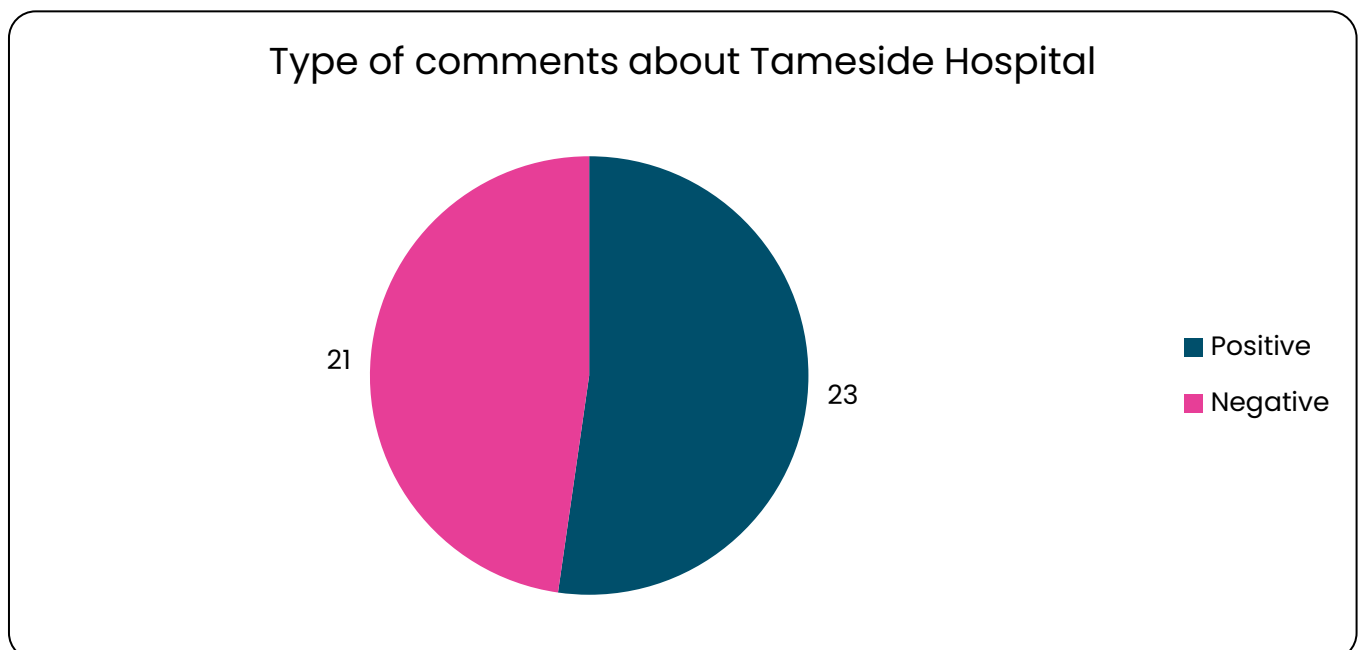
- Flu jabs are given in Hattersley, which is absolutely nowhere near where we live. Older people without transport really struggle.
- I was told to get a 4th Covid vaccination, as I am vulnerable due to COPD but my daughter had to drive me to Chadderton for this.
- They were great at delivering the COVID-19 vaccines but not able to provide pneumonia vaccine.

## Clinics

There was one comment about a clinic giving childhood injections. The mother said the clinic was clean and the nurse friendly. The son was scared of the needle, and mum said the no-nonsense approach of the nurse made her son more anxious and he refused to have the vaccine.

## Hospitals

The feedback received about hospitals was both positive and negative, and some people experienced both. Most of the comments were about Tameside Hospital, as shown in the following graph.



Other hospitals mentioned included – eye surgery at unspecified hospital, Manchester Children’s Hospital, Manchester Royal Infirmary, Oakland Hospital, Rochdale Hospital, mobile MRI scanner, Salford Royal.

The comments for these hospitals combined were:

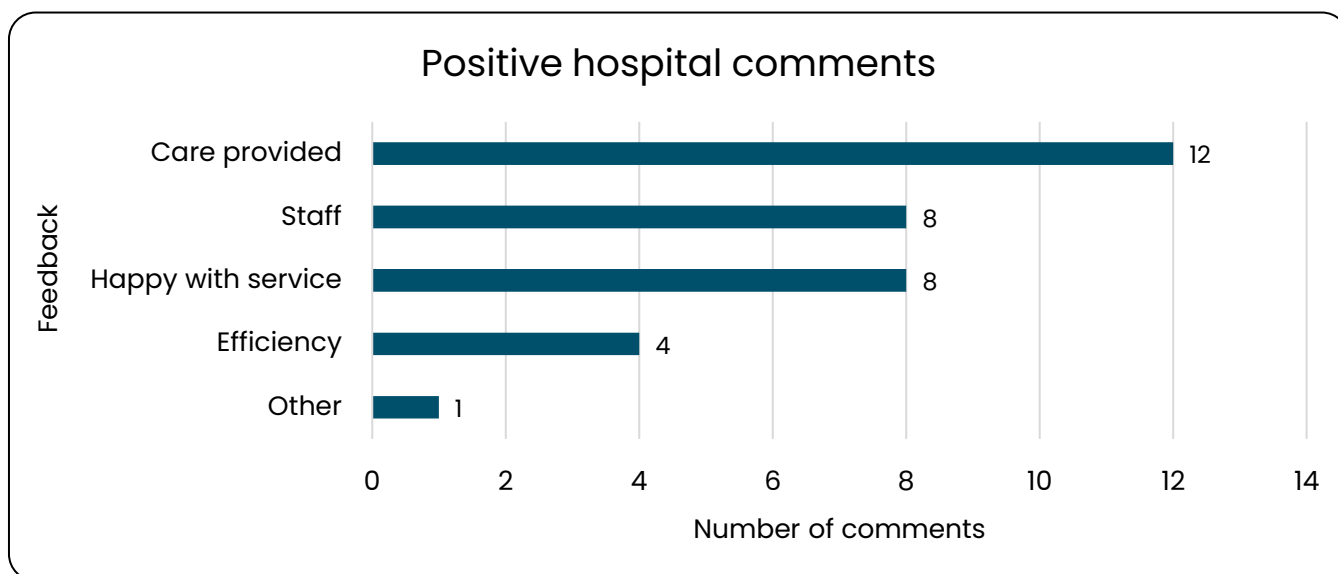
Positive – 3

Negative – 6

As with the GP practices, we will look at the themes of the comments for all hospitals.

### Positive comments

The following graph shows the themes which were mentioned in the survey responses.



Here are some of the comments from each theme:

- **Care provided:**

- A & E very good but very busy.
- A & E was fantastic when I was having palpitations.
- My consultant has been excellent in helping me with my rheumatoid arthritis. She has arranged a physiotherapy appointment for me.
- One hospital trip and I’m getting much needed treatment.
- Physios good.
- Referred to private hospital as NHS patient – happy with results.

- The nurse at the hospital removed my ear wax as I am partially deaf and agreed to see me every 3 months.
- Thorough care and investigation
- Urology very good, keep a check on me.
- Walk-in centre doctor provided antibiotics for tonsillitis (after not being able to get GP appointment).
- When eventually seeing consultant, he referred me for operation.

Couldn't fault the care I have received in all departments in the last 6 months.

- **Staff:**

- District nurses have been outstanding.
- Good bedside manner.
- Helpful.
- Midwives ok.
- Most of the staff in the hospital were great, as were the physio etc.
- Play therapist at children's A & E.
- Staff in A & E offered toys and activities where possible.
- Staff knowledgeable.
- Staff really great once I got to see them.

District nurses really good with son – treatment at home

- **Happy with service:**

- Hospital does an outstanding job.
- Hospital ok.
- Hospital really good.
- Overall, I was happy with the way I was treated.
- Referred to physio after accident.

- **Efficiency:**

- Efficient.
- No issues at all with the Covid pandemic, the hospital seemed very organised.
- Prompt.
- Short waiting times.

- **Other:**

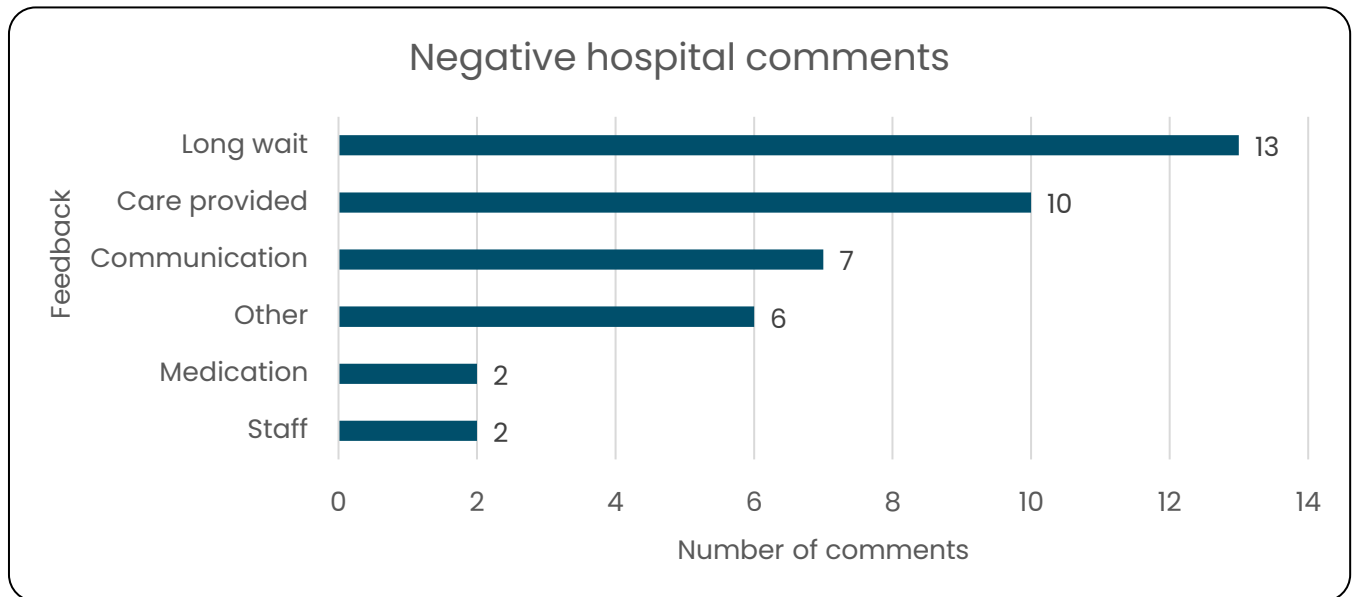
- Children's outpatient department had locked doors.

Some people included details of the hospital department they had received care from in their positive responses. These included:

A & E, audiology, dermatology, district nurses, ISCAN, midwives, physiotherapy, rheumatology clinic, scans, urology, walk-in centre.

## Negative comments

We have collated the negative themes, which are shown in the next graph



Here are some of the comments from each theme, with suggestions for improvements:

- **Long wait:**
  - **A & E:**
    - 5 hour wait in A & E for pregnant lady who had fallen, without triage.
    - A & E waiting room manic.
    - Need less waiting times in A and E.
    - There were over 100 people in A & E last Monday – this is unacceptable.
  - **Outpatients:**
    - Long delays for accessing services. Still awaiting appointment with outpatients.
    - Outpatient department had no safe, clean activities to amuse kids during the long wait.
    - Still waiting to hear from physio.
    - Waiting in ENT for an hour.

- **Surgery:**
  - Waited two years for cataract surgery, and still waiting for second eye. Not even had proper glasses to wear.
- **Care provided:**
  - **A & E:**
    - A & E ineffective, no attempts to diagnose real issues I tried to explain to them. Doctor took the easy option, he discharged me without written note. I was just a number to be fobbed off.
    - Actually see my child (under 5) in walk-in centre half an hour before they close and not tell me my option is A & E. It was neither an accident nor an emergency. No wonder A & E is busy with people who don't need to use it!
    - Pregnant lady unhappy that baby not checked (after fall) in A & E until she saw the doctor, then not very thorough.
  - **Inpatients:**
    - I'll phoned ahead to hospital – son had a temperature, suspected meningitis, but he was placed in Covid ward.
    - Had a GP home visit at night – should have been a hospital inpatient but no beds available.
    - Wife admitted to hospital for investigations – none done – then got a text when she got home to say she was Covid positive.
  - **Outpatients:**
    - Having to pay privately for earwax removal. Hospital need to address this urgently as some people cannot afford a private audiologist.
    - The whole service is shocking. Blood pressure of over 200 and heart monitor results still not received.
  - **Unhappy:**
    - Loads of problems, got complaint ongoing – will not deal with them, I go to another hospital.

Could not see a doctor on the ward from the Friday before the Thursday when I was discharged. Everyone came on that last day.



- **Communication:**

- Appointment cancelled on day of appointment.
- Doctor not listening to what I tried to explain.
- Hospital not listening to what my doctor said.
- I was referred to Hodgson Street car park for MRI scan, but when I got there, no-one was there.
- My son was given my diagnosis before me. I would have benefitted from knowing sooner and more directly.
- Poor communication meant that several people (15) made the same (very personal) examination of me.

Communication between teams the biggest issue

- **Other:**

- Electronic booking in system taking up half of waiting room.
- Had to travel as local hospital were unable to accommodate me.
- Not impressed with A & E, looked rundown and dirty. Only water available in public toilets. When I went in someone was vomiting, not hygienic. Waiting room at double the capacity stated on sign.
- Starlight boxes are not being offered by A & E department.
- There was a man wandering around A & E who was drunk with policemen following him. He came over to me a couple of times which was quite intimidating. The police should have taken him to a side room, kept him in a car or at least sat down next to him rather than let him wander around A & E.

Want us there at 9:30am, traffic is really bad that time in the morning, can't change appointment time.

- **Medication:**

- Kept sending son home in pain, giving medication he had to buy, instead of treatment.
- They (A & E) ignored the pain issue.

- **Staff:**

- Found some of the nursing auxiliaries a bit brusque at times, they appeared to have little gangs.
- There is little knowledge and patience among emergency care staff for children with SEN. This sometimes makes outcomes worse than needs be.

The areas of the hospitals mentioned in the negative survey responses include A & E, audiology, cardiology, ENT, inpatient, physiotherapy, walk-in centre.

## Ambulance

The number of comments about the various parts of the ambulance service is small:

Positive – 4

Negative – 2

Positive comments included:

- 111 brilliant.
- 111 have been ok.
- Emergency ambulance excellent.

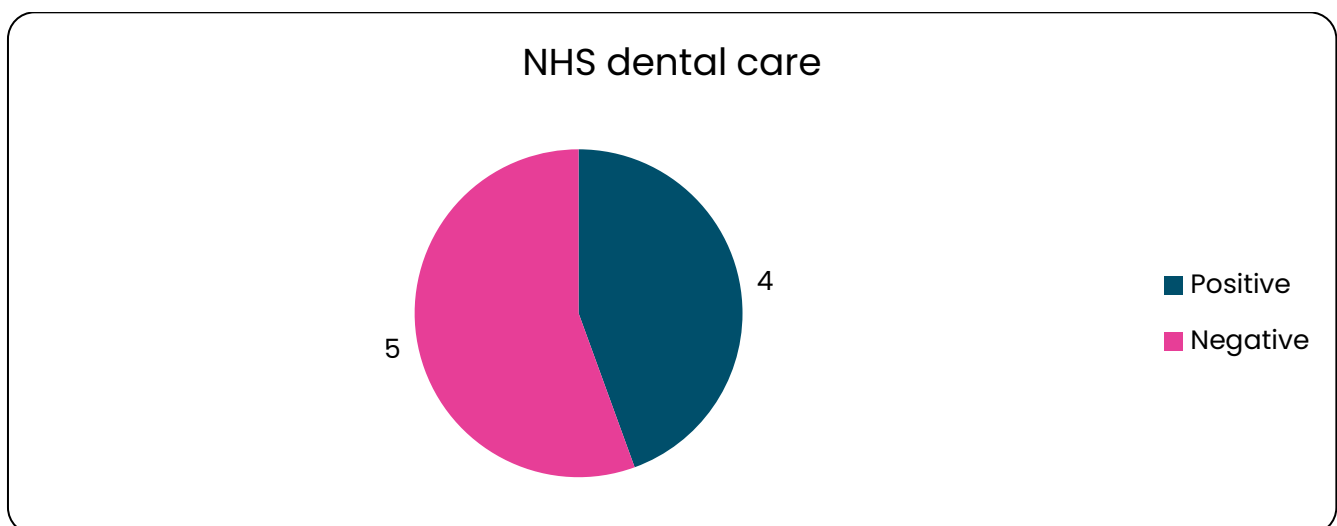
Negative comments included:

- Had to wait 1.5 hours for emergency ambulance to come, but good after that.
- Tried to ring Patient Transport, can't speak to anyone.

## NHS dental care

Although the question about services used (see page 4) specified use of NHS dentists, it is not clear from some of the comments whether these apply to NHS or private dentistry.

We have included all the comments in writing this report.



Positive comments included:

- Dentist good.
- Local services are easily accessible.
- Speedy appointment, friendly and holistic care by people who have their patients' interests to the fore.

Negative comments included:

- Getting a dental appointment was terrible – my dentist retired and the replacement was only taking emergencies until recently – and just found out she too is leaving.
- I have had to join a private dentist as I couldn't find NHS.
- I have had to pay for private treatment recently and the cost is absolutely ridiculous (compared to if you're an NHS patient). It seems you get penalised for not being an NHS patient – even if you can't get to be an NHS patient.
- Issues trying to find an NHS dentist.

Been waiting ages for dental treatment

Some comments did not specify the dental practice. The dental practices that were named included:

BUPA Dental Care Stalybridge, Dukinfield Dental Care, Penny Meadow Dental Practice, Simply One Dental.

## Opticians

There were only two comments about opticians, both positive.

- Good service.
- Local services are easily accessible.

Specsavers Ashton was the only optician named.

## Pharmacies

There were seven comments about pharmacies, all of them positive.

The comments included:

- Good service.
- Pharmacy brilliant.
- Pharmacy do an outstanding job.
- Pharmacy really good.

The pharmacies that were named were:

Adams Pharmacy (Mossley Road, Ashton), Ashton Primary Care Centre, Boots Mossley Road, Church Newton Heath, Cohens Chemist Denton, Tesco pharmacy Hattersley, Well Lockside pharmacy, Well Droylsden pharmacy.

## **Social care**

There were only two comments about care provision, one positive and one negative:

- ISCAN only ones who contacted me for my son - no one else.
- Was referred for wheelchair assessment (housebound) but not allowed one and have had to buy my own.

## **Mental health care**

There were only three comments about provision of mental health care, all of which were negative.

- Had CBT - did not seem long enough for it to work.
- Mental health services are poor.
- Mental health services don't exist, only online or told to read a book.

## **Test and Trace**

There were two people who commented on the Test and Trace service:

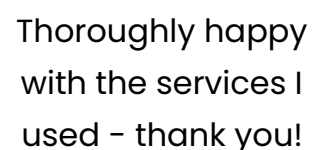
- Contacted on app and contacted via nursery.
- Told 3 different lots of isolation times, that is a joke.
- Test and Trace very demanding, insisting that phone is answered - when told working from home and busy.

## **Other comments**

In this section we have included comments and suggestions that are not about specific care provided, and include various opinions about health and care services.

### **Positive thoughts:**

- I love the NHS.
- They do a brilliant job - doing the best they can in a bad situation.



Thoroughly happy with the services I used - thank you!

## Suggestions to improve services:

- **Primary care:**

- Currently I'm paying a very high level of taxes for a very rigid Soviet style "you'll get what you're" given GP approach.
- GPs should not be allowed to take too many patients – they can't cope with appointment demands.
- GPs to work with community regarding location and use of defibrillators.
- Please, please sort out Doctor's surgeries and get them to resume normal service. Stop passing the buck to the Hospital. It really isn't fair.

There is loads of new housing going up but the doctors and dentists are completely full.

- **Secondary care:**

- I am awaiting two hospital procedures for pain, but this could possibly take years unless extra funds are given.
- More COVID-19 testing for people released from hospital. People at home may be high risk.

- **Staff:**

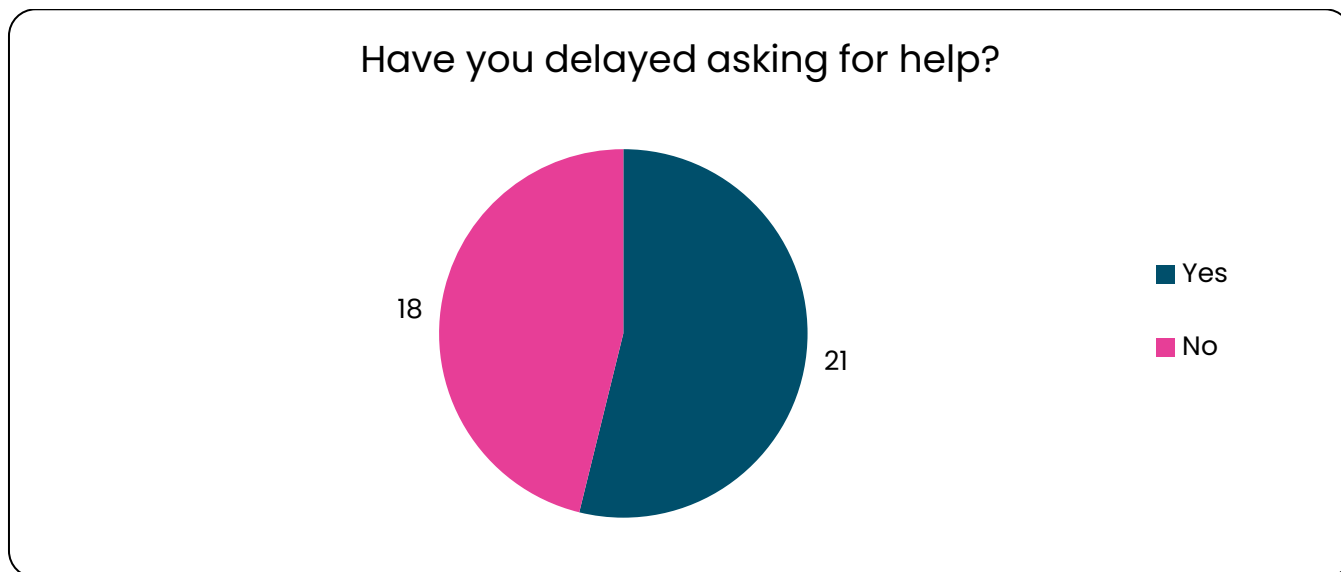
- Services need more staff.
- Staff have a lot to put up with that they didn't in the past (referring to lack of respect and abuse from patients or people in the street).

## Personal comments:

- Being told to isolate was good for my mental health (social anxiety) – now trying to get out to be with people is a problem.
- Feels quite pointless, resigned almost to what will be, will be.
- I do sometimes put off my own health needs.
- I don't bother with the doctor much if I can help it.
- I have problems but just have to persevere regardless. No point in phoning because no appointments are available. No annual reviews are taking place. God help us all because nobody cares. I have lost all faith in my doctors.
- Understand NHS overwhelmed.

## Delays asking for medical help

The final question on the survey asked about whether people had held back asking for help due to the COVID pandemic.



The types of care people said they had not asked for help with included:

- Back pain
- Ear infection
- Enlarged kidneys
- Eye treatment
- Knee pain
- Longstanding problem
- Menopause assistance
- Mental health
- Pain medication
- PTSD
- Routine problem
- Shoulder problem
- Smear test
- Steroid injection
- Stomach problem

Not everyone explained why they had delayed asking for help. From the responses that did explain, the reasons given for delaying included:

- Basically, if I don't think it will kill me, I will avoid the GP service. If I do think it might kill me, I'll go to A & E.
- Do not want to take urgent appointments.
- Don't want to bother GP.
- Due to lack of services in some areas I'm putting it off.
- Due to pandemic.
- I know there are people who need help more than I do.

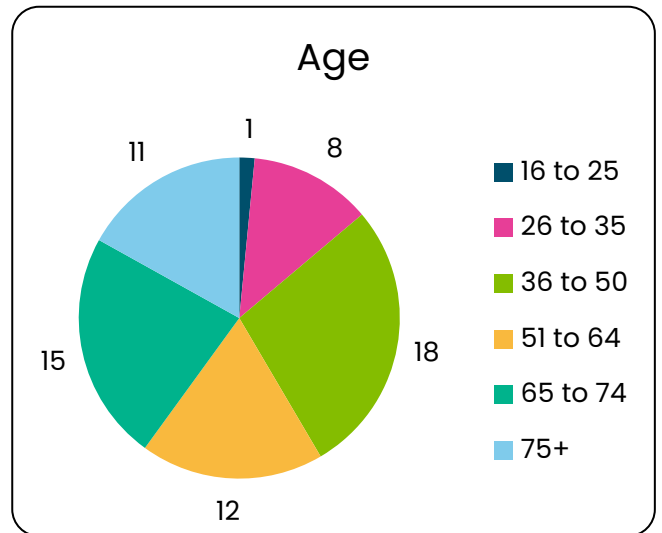
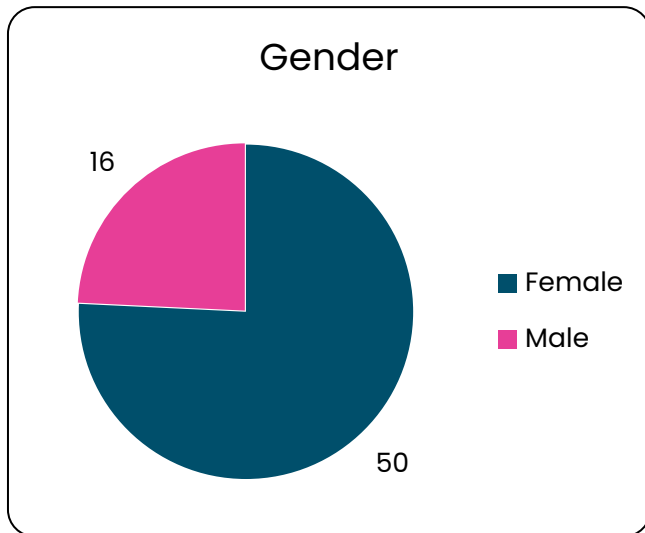
I have avoided the doctors because it is a nightmare trying to get an appointment

- I need something done to my eyes but am nervous about the care at the Eye Hospital and about getting to the hospital.
- I'm a carer, don't have time to get sick - son has Autism.
- Services have been cut and reduced. Beds needed for COVID.
- Too difficult to get an appointment.
- Want to contact but cannot get through.
- Wife had stroke, but she won't ring doctors - don't know how to help her with her recovery.

Some people told us what happened when they did decide to ask for help:

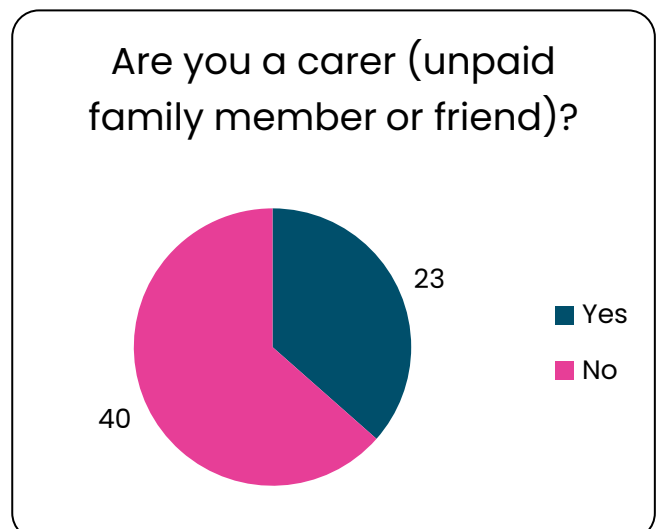
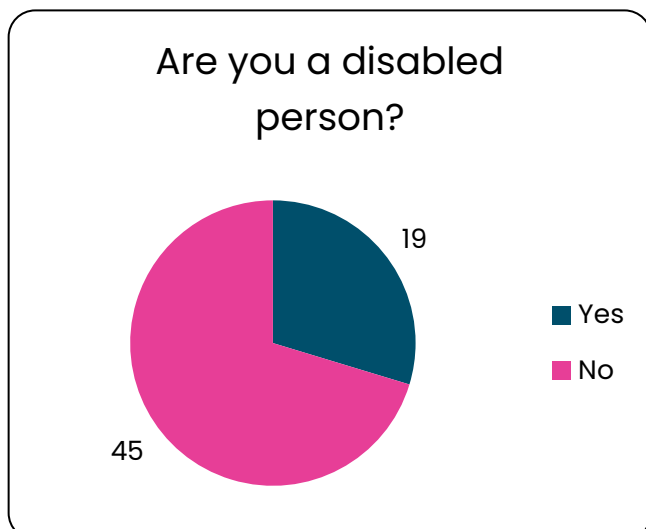
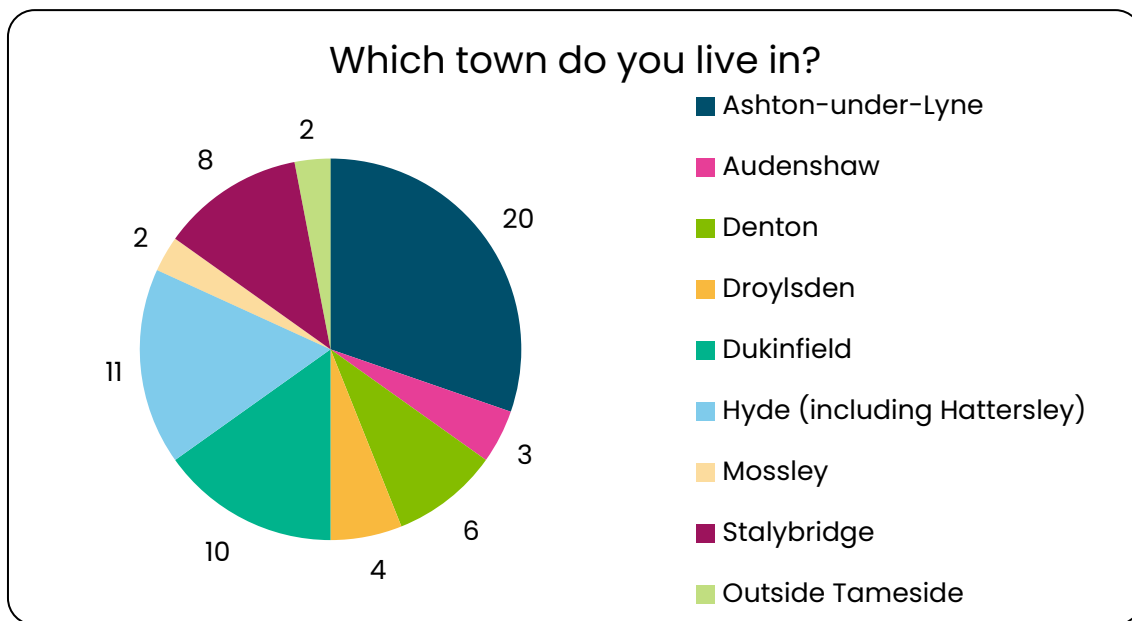
- Eventually contacted GP and has now been resolved.
- I don't like to keep contacting the doctors, but when I do need help, I feel that I deserve it!
- Mother delayed steroid injection for two years which is why she has walking stick now - only had injection yesterday.
- Now a doctor is actually listening to me.
- When I have eventually done so, the delays in waiting for help are as we are all experiencing very, very, long. I have to wait six months for a simple telephone call from a urology department, for enlarged kidneys.

## Demographics



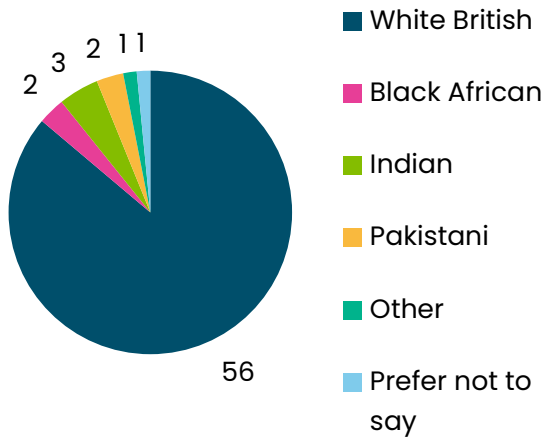
Is your gender identity the same as the sex you were assigned at birth?

62 people answered this question. All responded with 'Yes'.

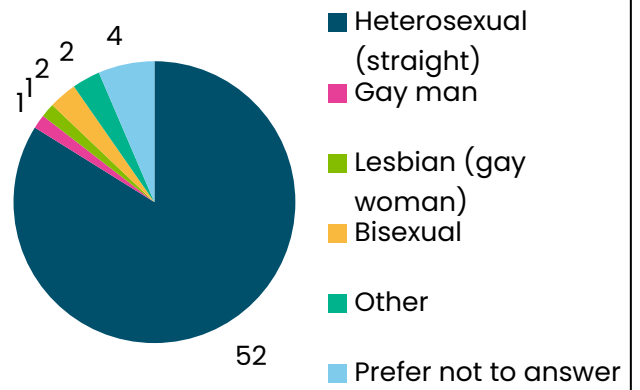




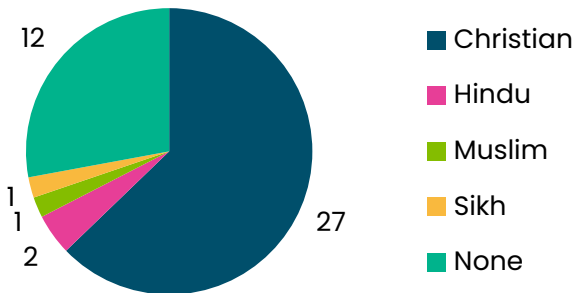
### Ethnicity



### Sexual orientation



### Religion



## Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who has supported Healthwatch Tameside in our work. This includes the people who complete our surveys, and the individuals and organisations who promote them.

We also thank our volunteers for the support they provide.