

# Hot Topic Survey

## GP Services

*"My GP is fantastic. Very responsive."*



**healthwatch**  
Nottingham & Nottinghamshire

November 2022

Made with VISME



Hot Topic is an engagement tool, in the form of a survey, that we conduct regularly to engage with the public, and understand their experiences with health and care services.

## Background



### Survey Design & Responses:

- Mixed-methods survey (qualitative & quantitative)
- 8 questions + demographic questions
- 399 responses were analysed for people from Nottingham & Nottinghamshire.

### Why GP Services

Following conversations with GPs from the Place Based Partnership (PBP) and the Local Medical Committee (LMC), we wanted to understand people's experiences of using and accessing GP services; in particular, **what worked well for them.**

# Q1: Have you contacted your GP Practice in the last 12 months?

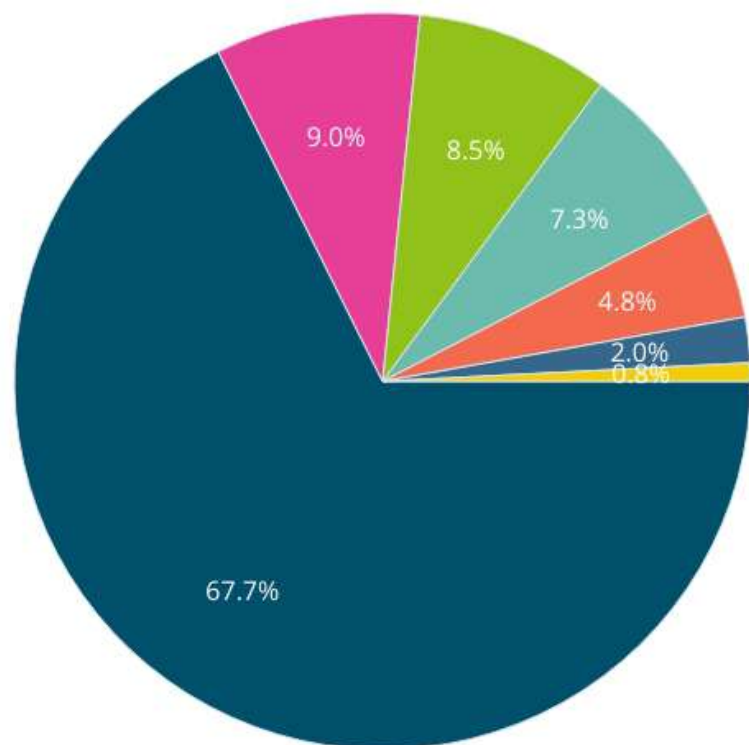
Out of 399 people who responded to this survey, 387 had contacted their GP in the last 12 months

97%

3%

Yes  
No

## Q2: What was the main purpose of your recent contact with your GP practice?



Appointment	67.7%
Prescriptions	9.0%
Something else	8.5%
Blood test	7.3%
Health check	4.8%
Test results	2.0%
Cancel an appointment	0.8%

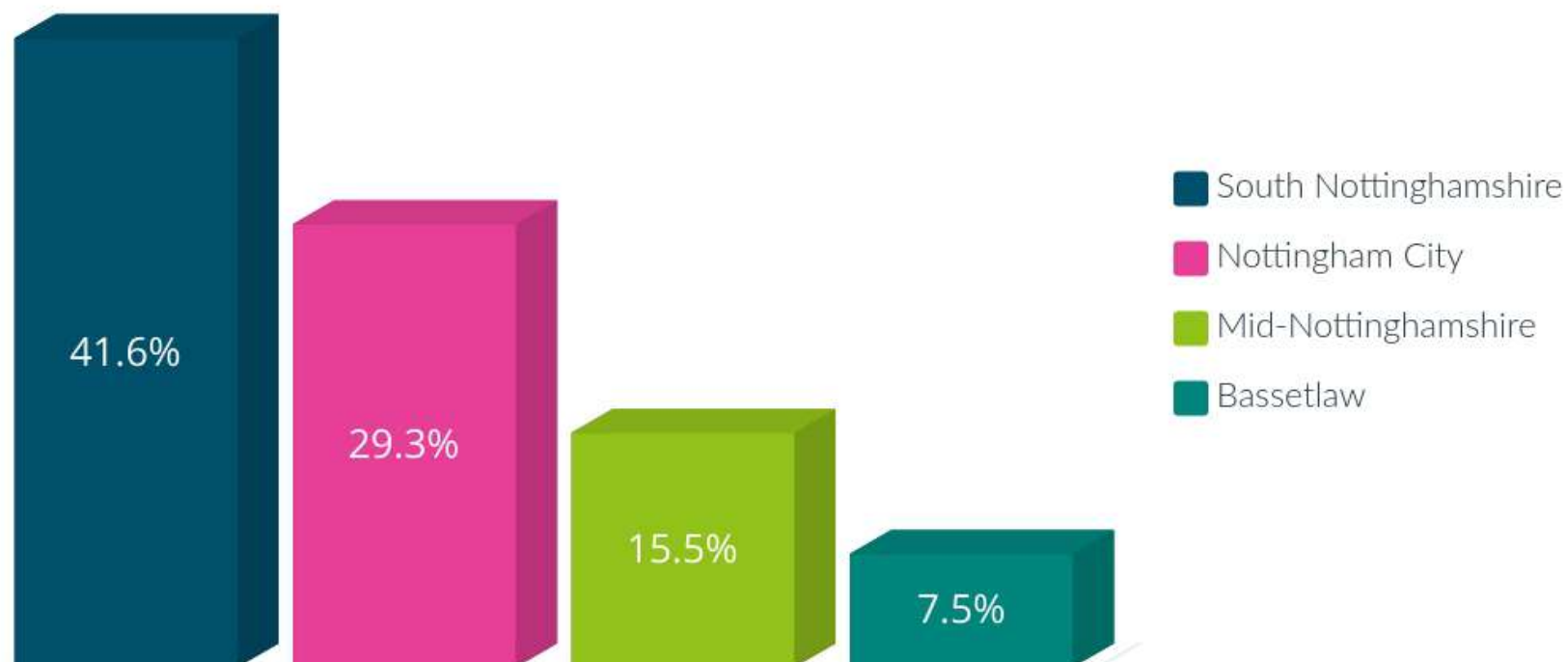
Out of 399, 270 people contacted the GP practice to make an appointment with a Healthcare Professional



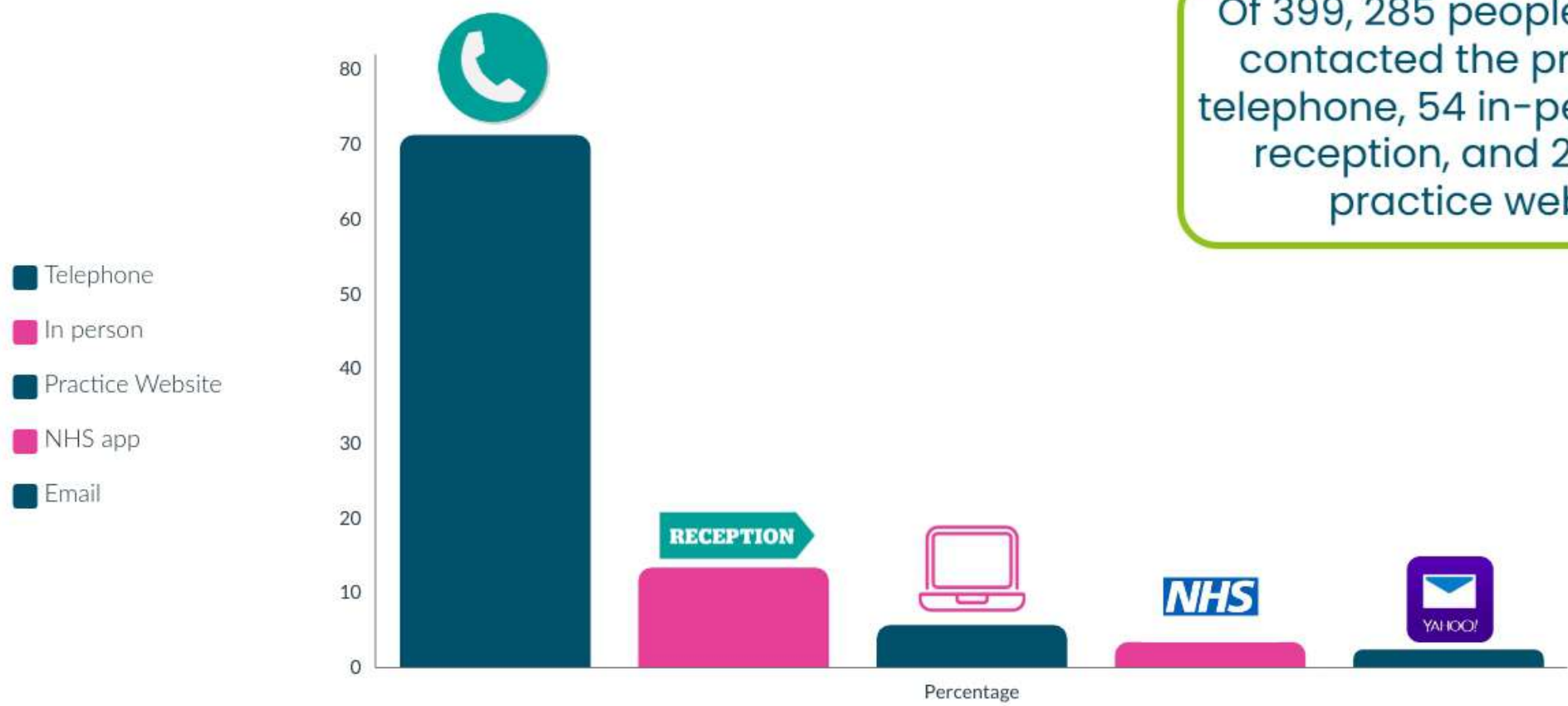


### Q3: What is the name of your GP practice?

We have grouped the responses into the four Place Based Partnerships (PBP) of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System



# Q4: In the most recent occasion you contacted your practice, how did you contact them?



Of 399, 285 people said they contacted the practice by telephone, 54 in-person at the reception, and 23 via the practice website.

## Q5: Did you get what you wanted from the most recent contact with the GP practice?

**Yes**  
**273**

Of the people who answered Yes, 32 people said they received their prescriptions.

### However

**15** people said they had to wait a long time on the phone.

**11** people said they had to wait a long time for an appointment.

**No**  
**126**

30	No appointments available
25	No face-to-face appointments available
17	Long time waiting on the phone
10	Long time waiting for an appointment
9	Not happy with staff skills/attitude
4	Didn't receive a call back

### Note

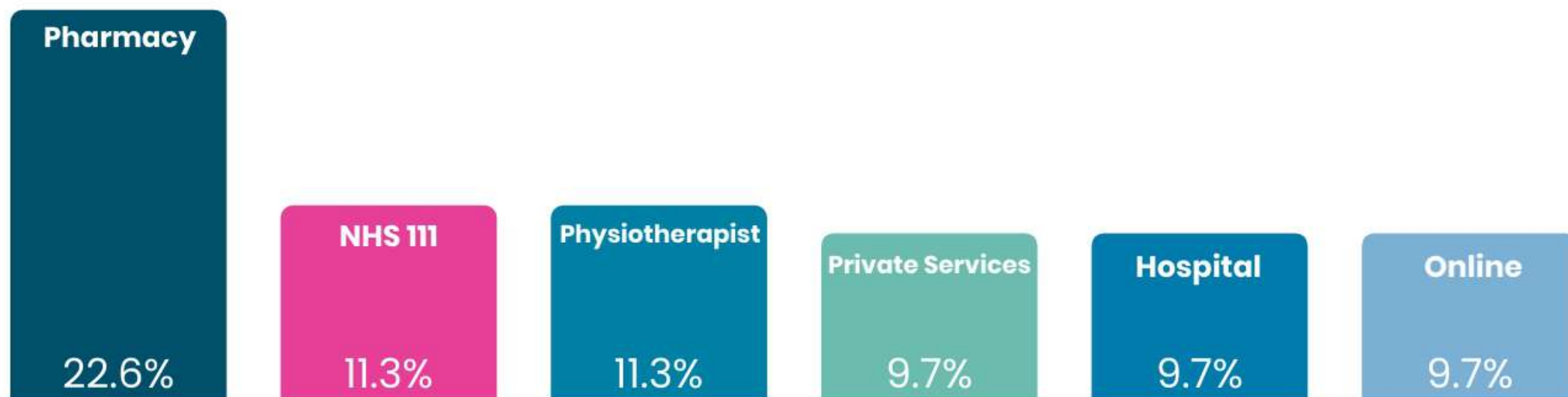
As this data shows, many people reported that they had to wait a long time on the phone, and/or waited a long time for an appointment.

## Q6: Did you contact any other services before contacting your GP Practice?

**No: 329**

**Yes: 62**

**Of the 62 people who contacted other services**





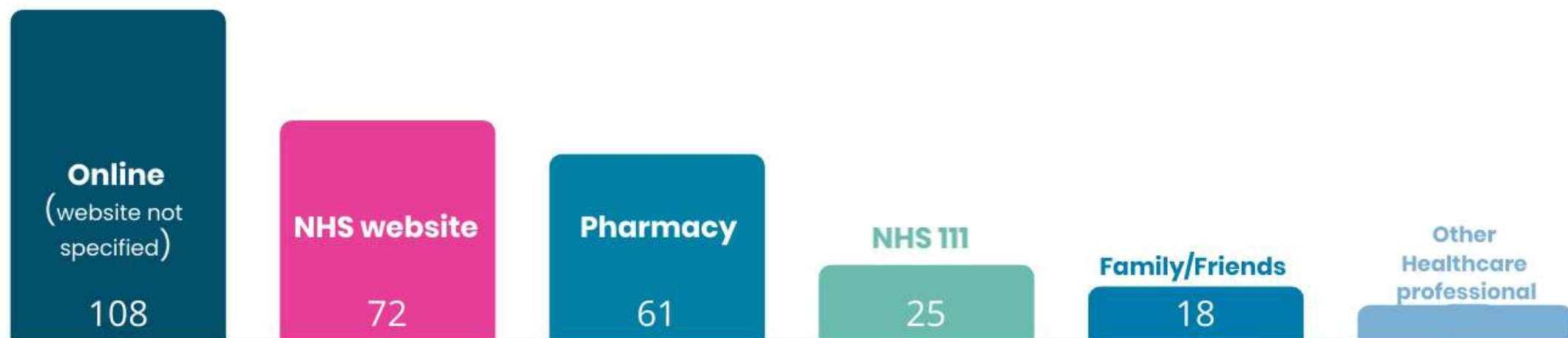
Q7: Before you contact your practice, do you tend to look for information and advice in other places for your health concern?

Yes I do: 257

No I don't: 142

**Of the 257 who answered with "yes I do", people told us:**

NB: The numbers in this chart are the people who told us where they look for information and advice, some people stated more than one source of information making the sum greater than 257



## Q8: What has worked well for you when using the GP Practice?

This was an open question, we grouped the responses into the following themes. The figures represent the number of people who stated that theme in their response.

58 – Staff skills & attitude



51 – Good service/quality of service

39 – Telephone services  
(appointments & booking)



35 – Face-to-face appointments



*"We have been with this surgery for over forty years. I have had three children during this time. Receptionists, nurses and doctors are all highly professional, efficient and caring. I have great confidence in the service they offer and recommend them highly."*



*"The staff are very friendly and always try to help."*

## Q8: What has worked well for you when using the GP Practice?

This was an open question, we grouped the responses into the following themes. The figures represent the number of people who stated that theme in their response.

28 - Quick response   
QUICK RESPONSE

25 - Online triage, consultations & booking system 

21 - Appointments availability 

20 - Prescriptions services 



*"Online appointments booking. Receptionists friendly and knowledgeable. Onward referral pathways fast."*



*"I've always been dealt with in a polite way, have been able to see a nurse or a doctor or have been spoke to by a doctor or nurse who has then decided whether or not I need to be seen!"*



## Discussion

### Challenges in booking appointments:

- Long waiting time on the phone
- Limited time-window to call
- No appointments available
- Waiting for a long time for the next available appointment
- Not receiving a call back.



*"I was told the only way to book an appointment is to call at 8.30 to see if there were any available appointments. I can't make that fit with my work schedule, and need to be able to plan in advance so I ended up not booking an appointment."*



*"Nearly an hour on hold before the call was answered and no appointments or call backs available."*



## Discussion

If booking appointments online is available, why are people are not using it?

**\*94%**  
**Of GP practices offer  
online booking**

**70%**  
**Looked for  
information online**



**71%**  
**Contacted GP by  
phone not online**

*\* We received responses about 115 different GP practices in this survey of which 7 do not offer online booking*

## Discussion

### Face-to-face, telephone or online appointments? What people told us?

**What has worked well for you when using your GP practice?**

*"Online appointment system, and telephone appointments"*

*"Talking face to face"*

*"Nothing at the moment. Hard to make a appointment, always full and a long winded auto phone system. Face to face rarely given. Not Dementia friendly"*

**Did you get what you wanted from your most recent contact with the GP practice?**

*"I would prefer this practice to embrace technology"*

*"Would have liked to discuss things face to face"*

## Discussion

### Contacting other services:

of 399, only 62 people contacted other services before contacting their GP practice. Is this the right approach to be followed by the public?



*"I didn't want to go to hospital with an issue that my gp could deal with. The pharmacist wasn't able to help and directed me to my GP. I ended up googling my symptoms and self treating."*



*"I prefer not to look at the internet and self diagnose like I hear so many do, i think if its serious enough to be causing concern etc. you should go straight to your GP"*



## Recommendations - 1 of 2

The system for booking appointments at their GP practices is not working for many people. **We recommend** that GP practices consider a range of options to improve booking systems:

- To reduce the pressure on phone lines, **we recommend** that GP practices increase their capacity in answering phone calls, particularly at peak times. This could be through recruiting more staff, and using appropriate telephone waiting systems (*Please refer to the example on the next page*).
- In accordance with NHSE's General Practice Contract Arrangements 2022/23 - March 2022, **we recommend** that GP practices ensure that online appointment booking is available, and make their patients aware of this option.
- To make booking appointments by phone more accessible, **we recommend** that patients can ring anytime during the day.
- In order to improve patient experience, **we recommend** that patients are able to book appointments in advance.
- Some GP practices have good appointment booking systems; therefore, **we recommend** that GP practice managers share successful approaches that have improved their booking system.



## Example - Improving Telephone Services

The Grange Medical Practice, in Huddersfield, shared what actions they have taken to reduce phone waiting times and increase the number of answered calls.

### The Practice did the following:

- Monitored phone waiting times and shared them with staff
- Shortened the introductory phone message to 30 seconds
- Recruited more Admin team members
- Installed new phone system
- Asked staff to ensure someone was always available to answer calls

### As a result:

	Number of Calls Taken	% Calls answered	Average phone wait time
May 2021	7440	60	8 min 40
May 2022	7484	76	5 min 29

	Number of Calls Taken	% Calls answered	Average phone wait time
June 2021	6528	58	9 min 17
June 2022	6775	72	6 min 28

percentage of calls answered relates to how many calls are picked up without the caller hanging up and deciding to try again or call back later, or try to contact the practice in a different way

For more details, check: <https://www.thegrangegrouppractice.co.uk/2022/07/26/heres-what-were-doing-to-improve-our-phone-waiting-times/>

## Recommendations - 2 of 2

- One reason for the difficulty in getting an appointment is the shortage of GPs. Different roles of healthcare professionals are now available in GP practices but many people are not aware of them or do not know how to access them. For this reason, **we recommend** increasing the public's awareness of the range of healthcare professionals, and the various services provided by GP practices and how these are accessed.
- People we surveyed differ in their views on face-to-face or online/telephone appointments. **We recommend** that patients are given greater choice over the type of appointment they want, i.e. in person, telephone, or online appointments. Where choice is not possible, the reasons for this should be explained.

## Demographics - 1 of 5

Age group	Number	%
Under 16 years	2	0.5%
16-24	12	3%
25-34	25	6.3%
35-44	45	11.3%
45-54	63	15.8%
55-64	66	16.5%
65-74	68	17%
75-84	36	9%
85+	3	0.8%
Not answered	79	19.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>

District	Number	%
Nottingham City	114	28.6%
Rushcliffe	59	14.8%
Gedling	50	12.5%
Broxtowe	46	11.5%
Mansfield	42	10.5%
Ashfield	37	9.3%
Bassetlaw	30	7.5%
Newark and Sherwood	21	5.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>

Gender	Number	%
Female	296	74.2%
Male	89	22.3%
Not answered	7	1.8%
Prefer not to say	5	1.3%
Non-binary	2	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Demographics - 2 of 5

Is your gender identity the same gender you were assigned at birth?	Number	%
Yes	371	93%
Not answered	16	4%
No	6	1.5%
Prefer not to say	6	1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>

Are you a carer?	Number	%
No	291	72.9%
Yes	89	22.3%
Not answered	19	4.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>

Sexual orientation	Number	%
Heterosexual/Straight	222	55.6%
Not answered	100	25.1%
Prefer not to say	34	8.5%
Asexual	15	3.8%
Lesbian/Gay woman	11	2.8%
Bisexual	10	2.5%
Gay man	5	1.3%
Non binary	21	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Demographics - 3 of 5

Are you cared for by someone?	Number	%
No	339	85%
Yes	42	10.5%
Not answered	18	4.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>

Are you pregnant or do you have children under 5?	Number	%
No	351	88%
Yes	22	5.5%
Not answered	18	4.5%
Prefer not to say	8	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>

Employment status	Number	%
Retired	142	35.6%
Full time	122	30.6%
Part time	63	15.8%
unable to work	31	7.8%
Not employed	13	3.3%
student	12	3%
Prefer not to say	12	3%
Not answered	4	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Demographics - 4 of 5

Preferred Language	Number	%
English	374	93.7%
Other	16	4%
Not answered	9	2.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>

Are you?	Number	%
Asylum seeker / Refugee	7	1.8%
Homeless	3	0.8%
Sex worker	1	0.3%

Ethnic Group	Number	%
White	324	81.2%
Prefer not to say	14	3.5%
Asian	13	3.3%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic	12	3%
Not answered	12	3%
Arab	9	2.3%
Black	9	2.3%
South Asian	5	1.3%
Iranian	1	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Demographics - 5 of 5

Do you live with any of the following?	Number	%
Long-term health condition	130	32.6%
Physical impairment	63	15.8%
Mental health illness	57	14.3%
Hearing impairment	51	12.8%
Visual impairment	26	6.5%
Prefer not to say	18	4.5%
Learning disability	15	3.8%
Social/Behavioural problems	7	1.8%
Total number with a disability/long-term condition	233	58%

Religion	Number	%
Christian (all denominations)	169	42.4%
No religion	93	23.3%
Atheist	50	12.5%
Prefer not to say	31	7.8%
Other	23	5.8%
Muslim	19	4.8%
Not answered	7	1.8%
Hindu	4	1%
Sikh	2	0.5%
Jewish	1	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>

Nationality	Number	%
British	319	79.9%
No answer	66	16.5%
Syrian	3	0.8%
American	2	0.5%
Libyan	2	0.5%
Iranian	2	0.5%
Albanian	1	0.3%
Estonian	1	0.3%
Canadian	1	0.3%
Irish	1	0.3%
South African	1	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>



## About Us

Healthwatch Nottingham & Nottinghamshire is the local independent patient and public champion. We hold local health and care leaders to account for providing excellent care by making sure they communicate and engage with local people, clearly and meaningfully and that they are transparent in their decision making.

We gather and represent the views of those who use health and social care services, particularly those whose voice is not often listened to. We use this information to make recommendations to those who have the power to make change happen.

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