

Emergency Department attendance

20–29 year old's in Wakefield District

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About Healthwatch

Healthwatch Wakefield is your local health and social care champion for the District. From Overton to Knottingley and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We have the power to make NHS leaders and other care providers listen to what you have to say. We also offer information and advice to help you to get the support you need. Our service is free, simple to use and can make a real difference to people in Wakefield District and beyond.

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Background

The covid pandemic has changed the way in which people use health services. There was an initial drop in attendance at Emergency Departments from March 2020. This was followed by a sharp increase in patients attending Emergency Departments since April 2021, with the largest rise in demand being from children and young adults.

Healthwatch across West Yorkshire were asked by the Urgent and Emergency Care Board, within the West Yorkshire Partnership, to produce an insight report into the behaviours of young adults aged around 20–29 years who attended Emergency Departments, for non-emergency needs within the last three months. The aim was to provide a better understanding of the behaviours and motivations of this group. The Board also wanted to understand the awareness that this group currently have of alternative care services and their experience of accessing them.

Healthwatch across West Yorkshire carried out this research and Healthwatch Leeds produced a West Yorkshire wide report covering Bradford and Craven, Calderdale and Kirklees, Leeds, and Wakefield.

The term 'non-emergency need' means that the person could be treated and receive more timely and appropriate care in other care settings or remotely through digital or telephone health services such as NHS 111.

This report takes information gathered for the original West Yorkshire report and picks out the data which applies to Wakefield District Hospitals, i.e., Pinderfields and Pontefract.

Methodology

From October to November 2021, Healthwatch worked alongside their local hospital trusts to tailor the engagement approach to each locality. Some trusts felt that a junior doctor could select patients to take part, other trusts suggested postcards for Emergency Department staff to hand out to specific patients. Healthwatch Leeds led this project and created the postcard template below.



Postcards were given out in November and December 2021 as well as the project being promoted via social media.



The Social media advert linked to a short webform requesting people to enter their contact details, for Healthwatch to complete the telephone surveys with them. Due to low uptake this was later changed to a link to an online survey and an increase in response rate was then seen.

Findings

Across West Yorkshire, 313 responses were received from people aged 20–29, who had used Emergency Departments for care and treatment between November 2021 and February 2022. Fifty of these responses were from Wakefield hospitals with 33 being from Pinderfields Hospital and 17 from Pontefract Hospital.

Why people had attended the Emergency Department

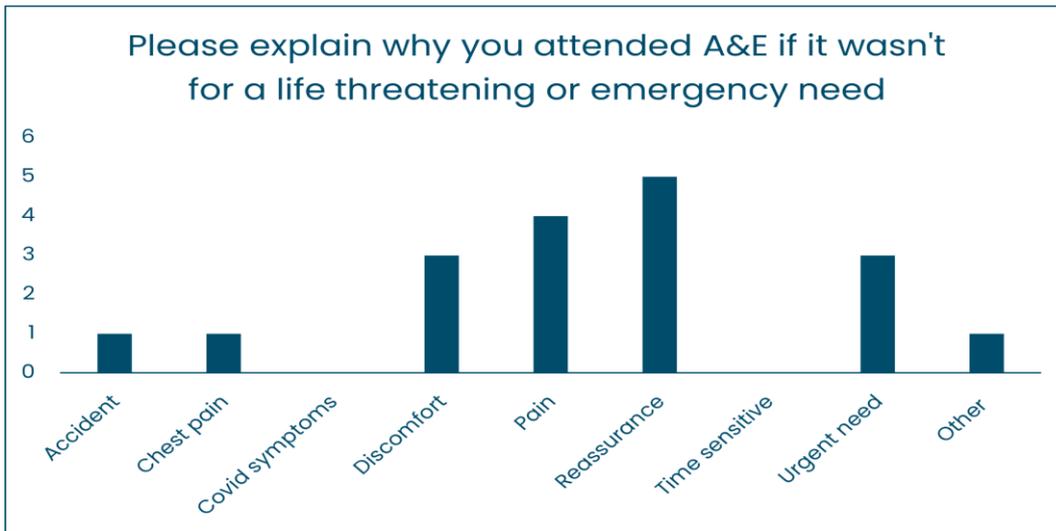


Chart: Please explain why you attended A&E if it wasn't for a life threatening or emergency need

The response rate for this question was very low, with only 19 out of 50 people giving a response. A range of responses were given with 'reassurance' being the most common reason given followed by 'pain' and 'discomfort'. This is a similar picture to the findings for West Yorkshire as a whole where reassurance was the main reason given for attending the Emergency Department.

Emergency Department visit timeline

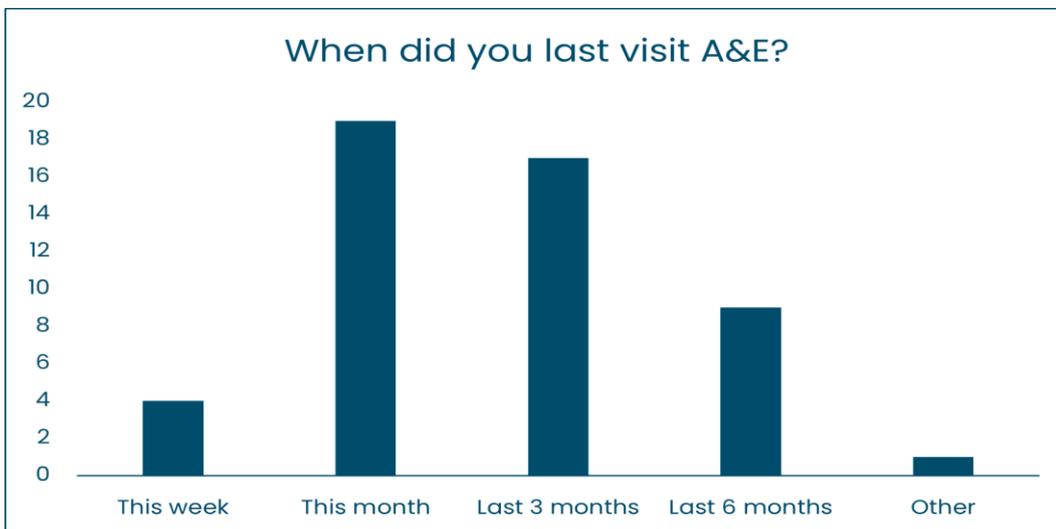


Chart: When did you last visit A&E?

Across the Wakefield district, 80% of respondents had visited the Emergency department within the past three months. Again, this shows a similar picture in Wakefield District as across West Yorkshire where 83% of respondents had visited the Emergency department within the last three months.

GP registration



Chart: Are you registered with a GP?

Of the 50 respondents to this question, 26 people (52%) were registered with a GP surgery and 15 people (30%) were not. This is again in line with the response across West Yorkshire, where 55% of respondents were registered with a GP surgery and 35% of respondents were not.

Alternative health services

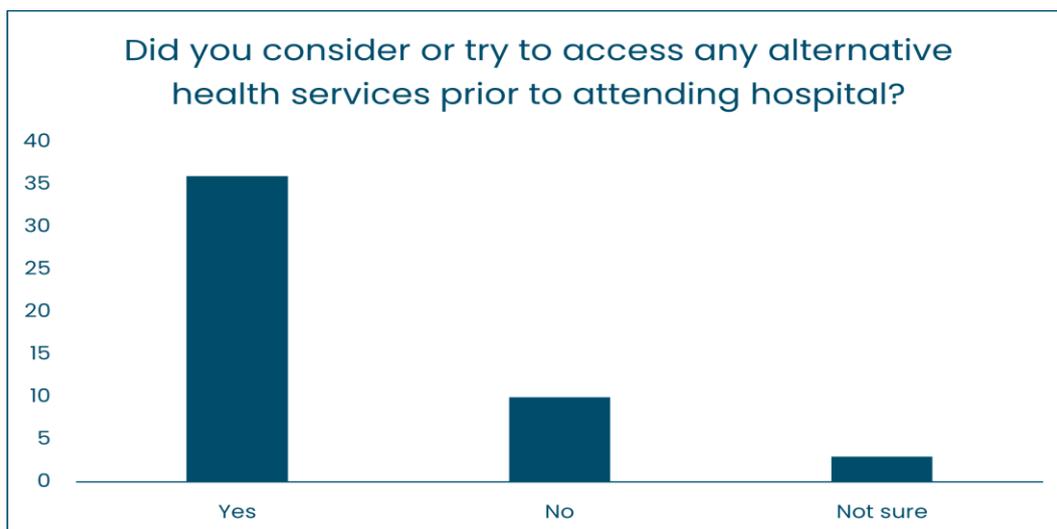


Chart: Did you consider or try to access any alternative health services prior to attending hospital?

As was the case across West Yorkshire, the majority of Wakefield respondents (72%) had considered or tried to access alternative health services prior to attending Emergency Departments. This is very similar to the figure across West Yorkshire which was 75% of respondents.

60% (30 people) of respondents had been advised to attend Emergency Departments by NHS 111, google searches, GP, pharmacy, or social media. This is again very similar to the figure across West Yorkshire which was 68% of respondents.

Waiting times



Chart: Before you visited the hospital, did you think about the waiting time you could experience?

Most people (42%) did not think about the length of wait they may experience at the Emergency Department. However, a large proportion (34%) had considered this. The remaining respondents were unsure. This is slightly different to the figures across West Yorkshire where most people (53%) had thought about the length of waiting time they could experience and (34%) had not considered this.



Chart: How long was your wait in the hospital / A&E department?

Of the 49 respondents to this question, 82% were seen within four hours of arriving at the Emergency department. This is nearly the same as across West Yorkshire where 83% of respondents were seen within four hours.

Over half of all respondents stated that their waiting time would deter them from using Emergency Departments in the future both for the Wakefield District respondents and the West Yorkshire respondents.

70% of the Wakefield District respondents had seen information about alternatives to Emergency Department treatment, this is the same percentage as the respondents across West Yorkshire.

Reliable sources of information

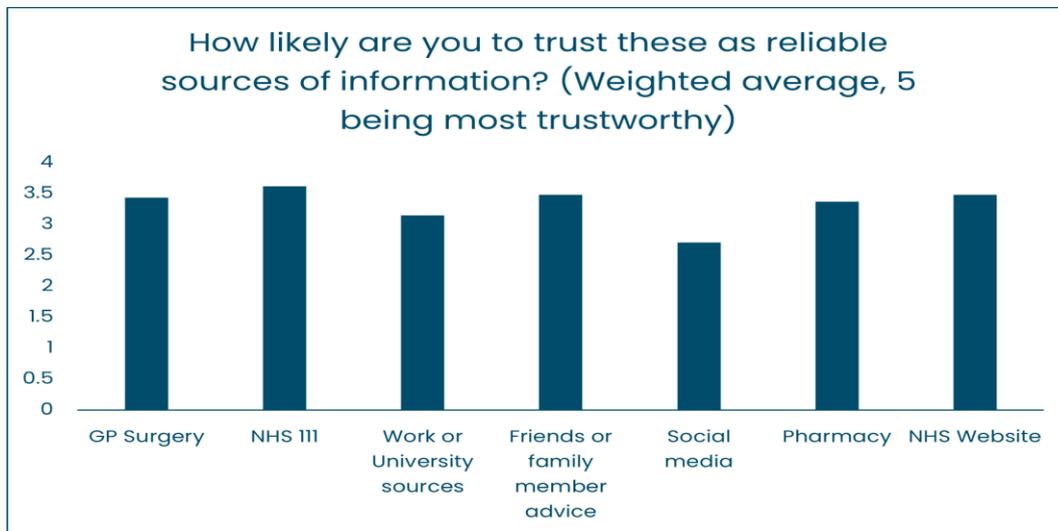


Chart: How likely are you to trust these as reliable sources of information? (Weighted average, 5 being most trustworthy)

As with the West Yorkshire data, Wakefield respondents judged NHS sources to be most reliable and social media to be least reliable. Respondents from the Wakefield district rated NHS 111 an average of 3.6 out of 5 for being trustworthy, across West Yorkshire the figure was 3.51. Wakefield district respondents rated social media as 2.71 out of 5 for being trustworthy, West Yorkshire respondents rated social media slightly higher at 3.1 out of 5.

Preferred health and care methods

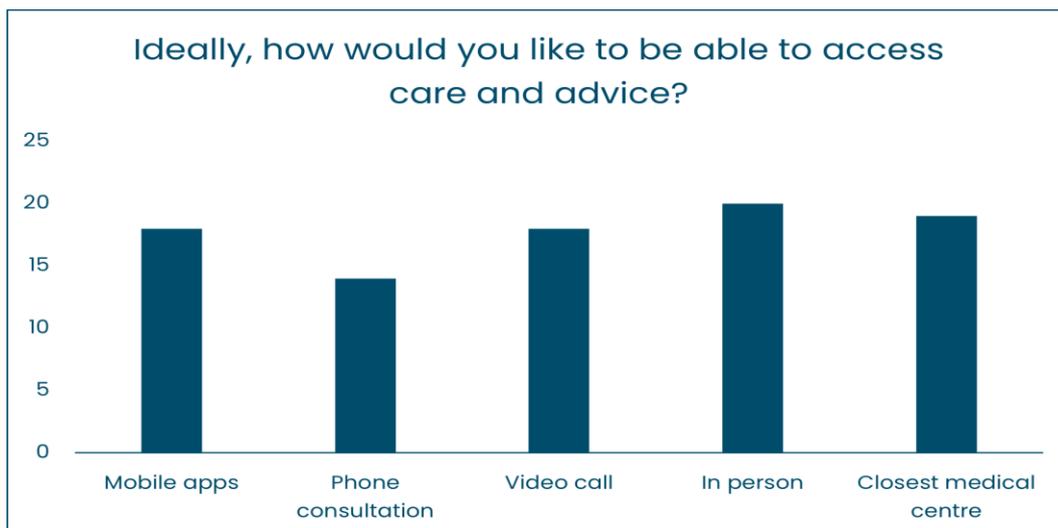


Chart: Ideally, how would you like to be able to access care and advice?

Survey respondents were able to select multiple options when asked about their preferred method of access to care and advice. Across the Wakefield district 'in person' and 'at the

closest medical centre' were chosen as being slightly more important than the other options. Phone consultation was the least popular option with the Wakefield district respondents with 14 people choosing this as one of their preferred methods of access to care and advice. In contrast, across West Yorkshire telephone appointments were the second most popular method of access to care and advice.

Informing future decisions

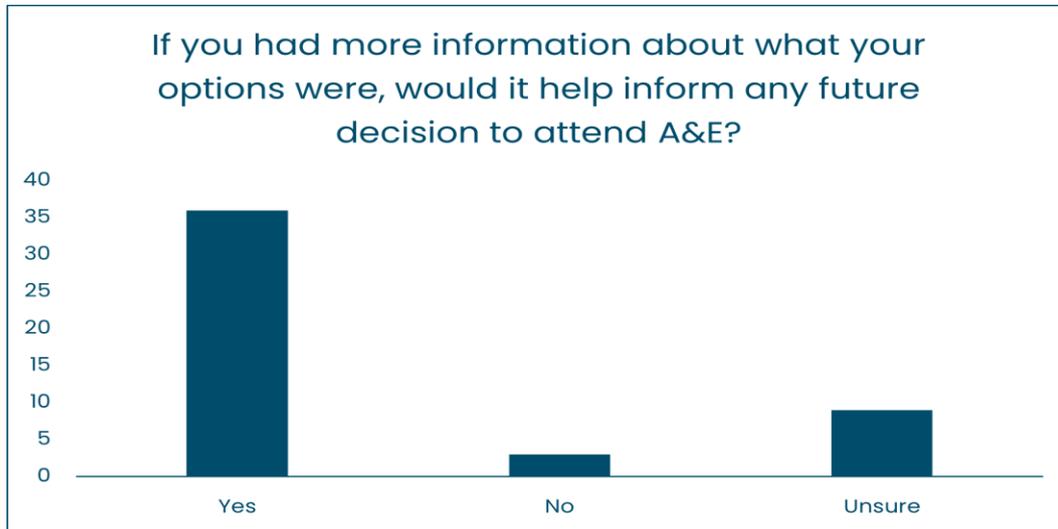


Chart: 'If you had more information about what your options were, would it help inform any future decision to attend A&E?'

75% of respondents across the Wakefield district indicated that if they had increased information about their options, it would inform their future decisions around attending Emergency Departments. Across West Yorkshire this figure was slightly lower at 69%.

Geographical findings

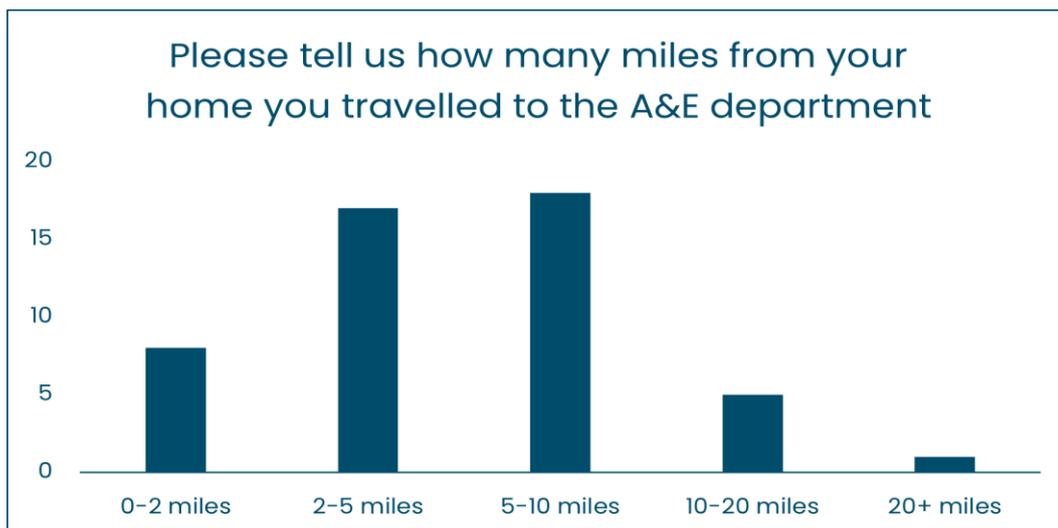


Chart: Please tell us how many miles from your home you travelled to the A&E department
 Compared with people across West Yorkshire, who travelled an average of 2-5 miles, these Wakefield District respondents had travelled further on average 5-10 miles.

Demographics

When considering the 50 respondents for the Wakefield District we can see that three people said that they had a long-term condition. Twenty-one were autistic, six were deaf or hearing impaired, four had a physical or mobility impairment and six had a mental health condition.

Twenty-two of the respondents were carers.

One person said that English was not their first language.

These demographics are in line with the findings across West Yorkshire in that nearly half of the respondents were autistic, and nearly half of the respondents were carers. None of the Wakefield respondents said that they had a learning disability whereas in the West Yorkshire sample 10% of people had.

For a further break down of demographic data please refer to the full West Yorkshire report.

Conclusion and recommendations

The findings from the Wakefield District respondents are very much in line with the findings across West Yorkshire, therefore the recommendations are the same. The below recommendations are taken from the full West Yorkshire report:

We would recommend the Urgent and Emergency Care workstream of the West Yorkshire Partnership continue to look further into hospital trust data sets which could explain the:

1. Increase in other health professionals or services referring to Emergency Departments.
2. Waiting times within Emergency Departments.

Healthwatch in West Yorkshire are committed to continue to support the workstream with this exploration. We would recommend that further work is completed with carers and people with autism to ensure that they are registered with their local GP so they can access local services in a timely manner. We would also suggest that additional communications are provided to this age group, particularly:

1. Those whose first language is not English, especially translated documents providing information on alternative services to Emergency Departments
2. Information to the general 20-29 cohort around symptom-checkers and where different conditions can be treated. Suggestions directly from people aged 20-29 years including reassurance via apps, infographics and websites including illustrations.

To conclude, we would also like to recommend that Healthwatch across West Yorkshire is more widely publicised by partner organisations. People aged 20-29 suggested that they would like to be able to access patient reviews for alternative healthcare services and services closer to their home; the option to leave reviews and read reviews for any health or social care service is available on Healthwatch websites:

www.healthwatchwakefield.co.uk

www.healthwatchbradford.co.uk

www.healthwatchleeds.co.uk

www.healthwatchcalderdale.co.uk

www.healthwatchkirklees.co.uk



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