



**Blackpool
South Primary
Care Network**
Insights from patients





Introduction to Healthwatch

Healthwatch was established in April 2013 as part of the implementation of the Health and Social Care Act (2012). Healthwatch Blackpool is the independent consumer voice for health and social care, listening to the views of local people on issues that matter. Our ultimate aim is to ensure that local people have a voice, acting on feedback and driving change.

Healthwatch Blackpool: Our Approach

- Listening to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- Including everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
 - Analysing different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- Acting on feedback and driving change.
- Partnering with care providers, government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

Introduction to the project

Healthwatch Blackpool is committed to understanding and addressing the experiences of local residents regarding health and social care services. The aim of this project is to gather valuable feedback from patients registered at South Primary Care Network (PCN) practices, encompassing Highfield Surgery, Stonyhill Medical Practice, Arnold Medical Centre and Abbey Dale Medical Centre, representing a patient population of approximately 37,000 individuals.

Through an independent engagement exercise, we provided a platform for patients to share their firsthand experiences, enabling us to effectively assess the strengths and areas for improvement within each practice.

By gathering and analysing patient feedback, Healthwatch Blackpool aim to provide each practice with actionable insights that can inform their decision-making processes, prioritising the needs of their patient population. This insight will help shape health and care services in the South PCN area.



Methodology



An online survey was developed, capturing both quantitative and qualitative feedback. This focused on various aspects of patient experience, including overall satisfaction, appointment accessibility, the role of different healthcare professionals, enhanced access, feedback mechanisms, the role of technology and long-term condition management.

This survey was distributed to patients via text from each corresponding practice, alongside posters displayed in the waiting areas of each surgery. A QR code was shared on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, in which patients were encouraged to scan, encouraging participation.

To further enhance feedback collection, Healthwatch Blackpool representatives actively engaged with patients during designated Patient Engagement Days, held within waiting areas. Over the course of four weeks, the Healthwatch Blackpool team assisted patients in completing the survey face-to-face. Where patients were unable to complete the survey in the waiting rooms, callbacks were conducted to ensure as many patients as possible had the opportunity to have their voices heard.



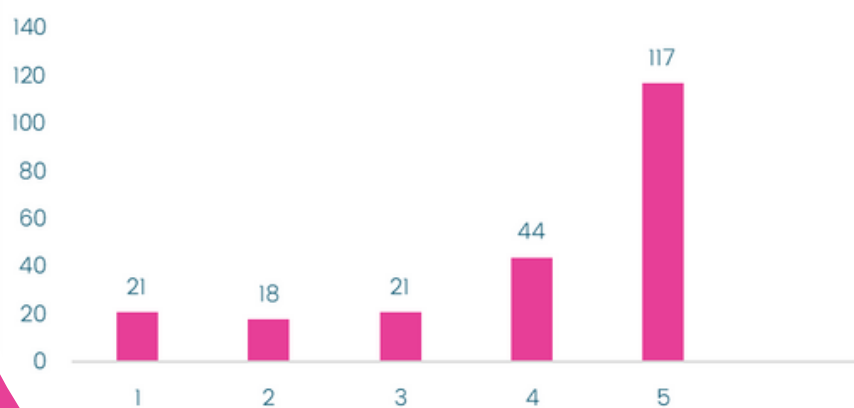
Highfield Surgery
Insights from patients



Feedback from 223 patients



How would you rate your overall experience of the GP surgery?



A spotlight on the positives

One hundred and twenty two patients of Highfield surgery felt that the reason their experience was positive was due to the staff in the surgery. This ranged from GP's and nurses to receptionists with staff being described as 'polite', 'helpful', 'professional' and 'compassionate'.

"They are the best GP's you will ever find, they are complete role models in terms of empathy, friendly and extremely patient yet very professional."

"The staff on the counter are brilliant. I struggle to hear and they speak up when they call me so I can hear."

"The staff at the practice are brilliant always going above and beyond from appointments through to referrals with a very friendly attitude. Thank you."

Eleven patients stated that their positive experience was due to access to healthcare within the practice. This included compliments regarding the triage system, same day telephone appointments, access to in-person appointments and referrals to the hospital.

"They always have same day telephone appointments, if you need to be seen it can be in as little as an hour and any problems are normally resolved the same day. I work in a Pharmacy and hear horror stories everyday of how long people have to wait for appointments."

"Whenever I have phoned the surgery for advice or needed to see a health professional, I have always been dealt with promptly by extremely courteous receptionists. You will receive a return call from a Doctor or Nurse Practitioner who will assess your situation and more often than not will get a same day appointment."

"Brilliant triage system to book appointments, appointment booked for a routine appointment in a reasonable time scale."

Fourteen patients cited other reasons as to why they had a positive experience within the practice, with some patients simply stating "excellent practice" and "good". Other patients cited the layout of the practice, access to prescriptions and communication as contributors to their positive experience.

"Everybody is polite, helpful and the building is easy to navigate. All my requirements are fulfilled."

"Great communication."

"Have been with this surgery for 17 years and have never had cause for complaint of any kind."

"I appreciate how fast repeat prescriptions are signed off as well."



Improvement ideas

Sixty two patients felt improvements could be made to appointment bookings, with the main issues being around appointment availability. This included the ability to book appointments in advance or using technology, such as online systems.

“The possibility to book advanced appointments via app.”

“More evening or weekend appointments.”

“Ability to get an appointment within two weeks for a general issue or sooner if the problem is impacting on daily life.”

“Having to book routine appointments four weeks in advance is a big problem.”

“Being able to get faster appointments with a GP, but I feel this is, unfortunately, a problem of the times.”

Thirty one patients stated that improvements could be made to staff, including the need for increased numbers of staff or further training. There appeared to be an emphasis on the need for empathetic treatment by all members of staff, from receptionists to doctors.

“Everyone should be up skilled in empathy.”

“More staff.”

“To make sure receptionists are very aware of correct procedures.”

“Sometimes the doctors can be a little vague and this makes me think there's a lack of knowledge.”

Eighteen patients shared that improvements could be made to communication, in particular the surgery communicating test results to patients or ensuring that verbal communication is clear and informative.

“I handed in an ECG and the receptionist walked away with it without saying a word and disappeared so I ended up leaving without knowing if I will be contacted for results.”

“When they do their call back, it would help if they could give an idea of time – whether it will be morning or afternoon, they just say within 3 days but when you work/have kids etc. it can be difficult.”

“Also I had a recent test and no one let me know the results. I think for things like testing for cancer, a patient should be told one way or another to avoid anxiety.”

Fifty eight patients felt that there were no improvements to the practice needed, with some simply stating “nothing”, “not that I can think of” or “not in my opinion.”

What matters most to patients

The most common response to this question related to wait times, with seventy two patients identifying that short wait times, both on the phone and for appointments, was the most important thing to them.

“I wouldn’t seek a gp appointment unless I really needed one. Therefore I would expect to be seen quite soon from contact with surgery.”

“Prompt service even just to chat problems through. Waiting seems to be the norm now.”

“No waiting in reception as I suffer mental health and get frustrated easily.”

“Getting hold of them reasonably quickly. When I rang the other day 8.15, by 9.15 I had a triage call to come into doctors. Not bad at all really. Sometimes it's a lottery, and you don't always get in that day, or sometimes the following day. Once I had to wait 3 days.”

Sixty seven patients felt that getting to see a doctor and accessing appointments was of the most importance to them, including access to out of hours appointments and the ability to book appointments in advance.

“Advanced appointments. I work 60 miles from where I live so I am unlikely able to make same-day appointments.”

“Out of hours routine appointments.”

Fifty six patients at Highfield surgery stated that the way staff treated them was what mattered most. The most common theme was the importance of patients feeling listened to, with sixteen patients highlighting this. Other responses mentioned the importance of friendly and professional staff.

“That people listen. I have mental health problems and when I’m poorly it severely impacts this and I get very frustrated easily. It’s no one’s fault but having someone that can listen properly makes getting better so much easier.”

“The way they treat you. They don't treat you like a number, they treat you like a person when you come here. I've been with them 50 years.”

“Friendly voice, professional manner and an attitude to want to make sure you feel safe and you matter.”

What matters most to patients

Twenty nine patients believed that quality of healthcare was what mattered most to them when accessing GP services, with an emphasis on confidence in the care provided and that the correct referral pathways will be followed.

“Getting the right care.”

“Getting a good service and seeing someone that knows what they are doing and wants to actually help.”

“I also think it’s important that they keep track of your case if you are referred to other services and chase things to ensure diagnosis is achieved.”

In addition, some patients felt that access to their medical results and records was also of importance.

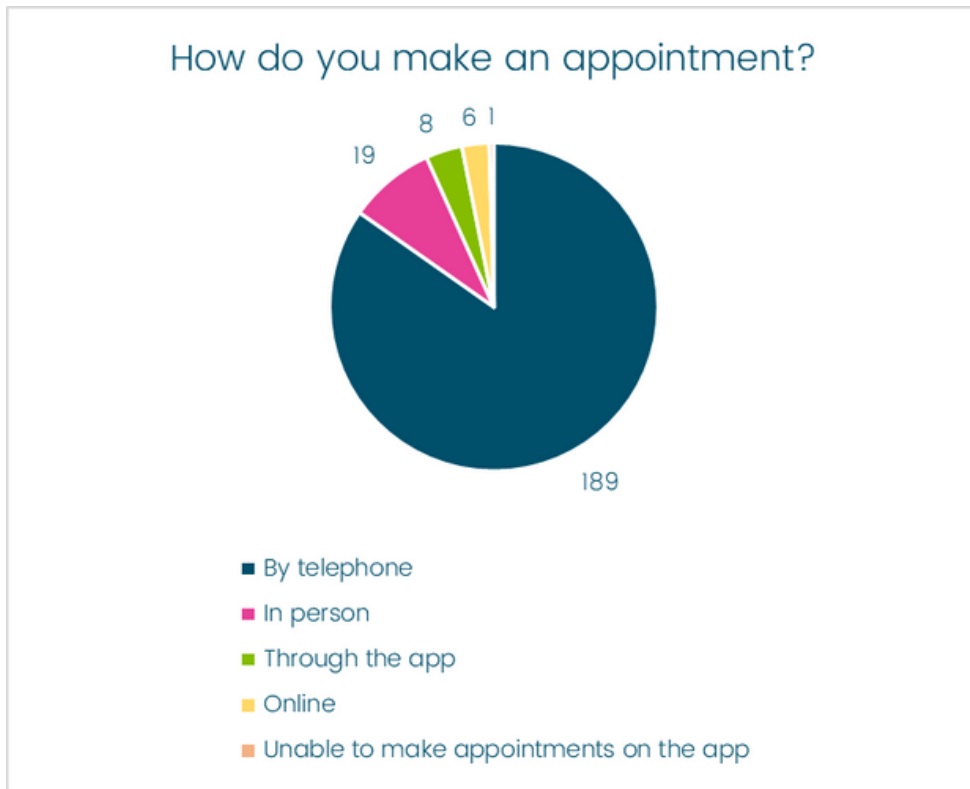
“Medication order and delivery, appointment times, results in the MyGP app.”

“My health and people understanding what's wrong with me.”

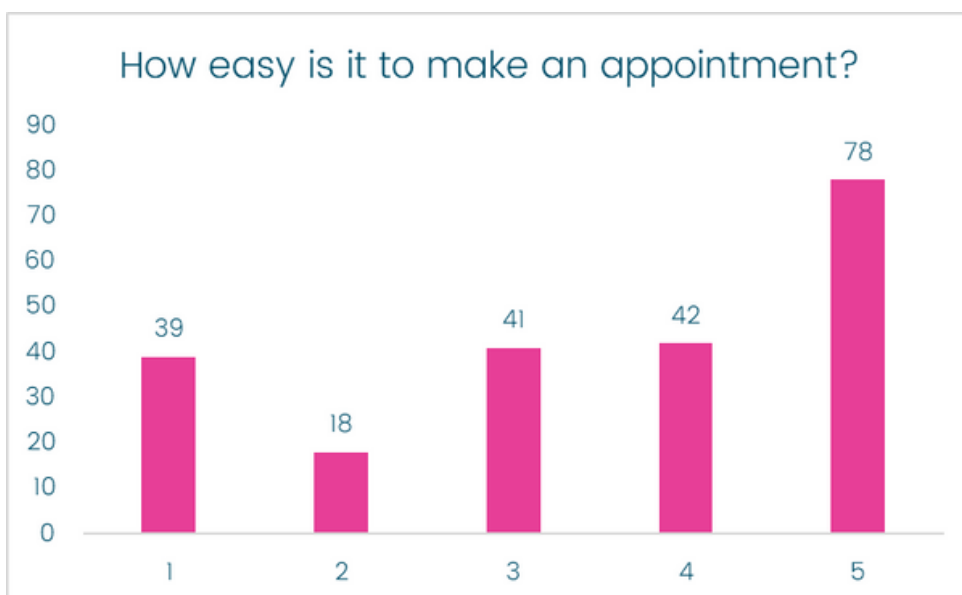
“Being able to see my results and records.”

Appointments

Making appointment

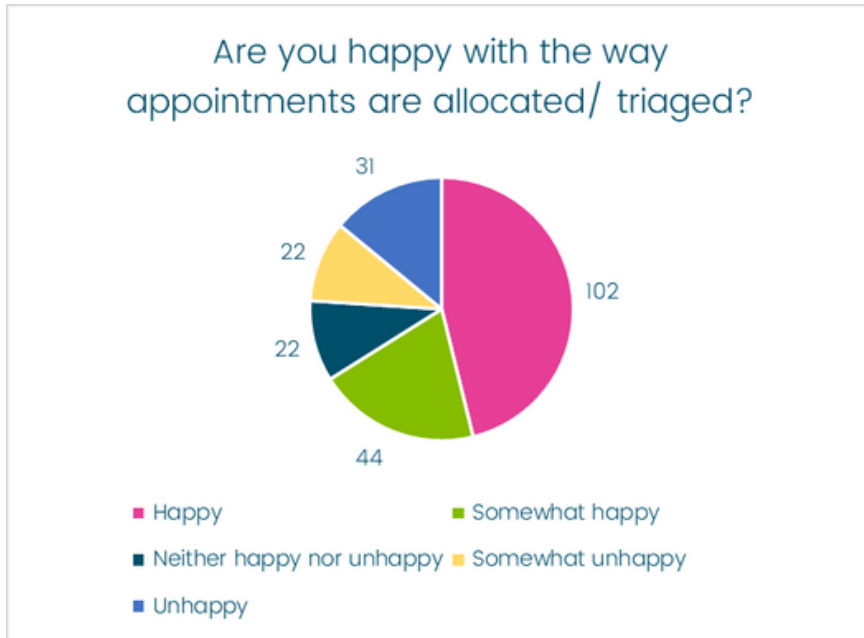


Ease of appointment booking



Appointments

Appointment allocation and triage



Patient feedback

Sixty six patients responded to this question by highlighting the issues patients have faced with the appointment/ triage system, with common themes relating to availability of appointments and wait times, both for appointments and on the phone.

“Constantly being told call back in the morning just to get an appointment - I have to be sat by the phone at 8 in the morning and be on hold to get through then to be told there’s no appointments and made to feel like you’re not worth anything. You should be able to book an appointment with a doctor even for the following day or sometime, these doctors can’t be busy constantly.”

“Being booked solid for two weeks in advance is just unacceptable. A serious condition could progress from urgent to critical in that time.”

“Explaining medical conditions to non-medical professionals doesn’t always work.”

“Feel like you have to beg for an appointment and have to disclose your personal and private issues to a female receptionist if you are male is somewhat embarrassing.”

Appointments

Patient feedback ctd.

In contrast, twenty patients commented positively on how appointments are allocated, with patients describing how the appointment/ triage system allows the surgery to offer timely appointments.

“I am very happy with the response by the practice when I have requested an appointment including routine and urgent.”

“On one occasion I contacted the GP about an urgent health issue and I was seen within 30 minutes for a face to face appointment in the surgery.”

“The triage system for acute illness is excellent.”

Twelve patients responded to this question with generally positive comments, particularly regarding staff at the surgery.

“The staff are always really helpful and if they can't get you an appointment I've had them ring me back when they could.”

“I think Highfield surgery is amazing and the whole team work hard to ensure needs are met in a way that is caring, kind and effective.”

“The receptionist was great listening and taking notes of the issue.”

Other comments included further feedback regarding the way prescriptions and repeat prescriptions work, issues with the GP app and online booking system, and feedback on the time it takes to be notified of results following medical examinations.

“Those patients who are on a regular monthly prescription, like myself, enter the details on computer every month. No doubt the pharmacy staff are tied up every month time-wise. Could the system be streamlined in some way by providing an automatic monthly print sheet for the pharmacy? Perhaps this has already been perceived and in current practice - Only thinking of the pharmacy staff who always appear to be under pressure.”

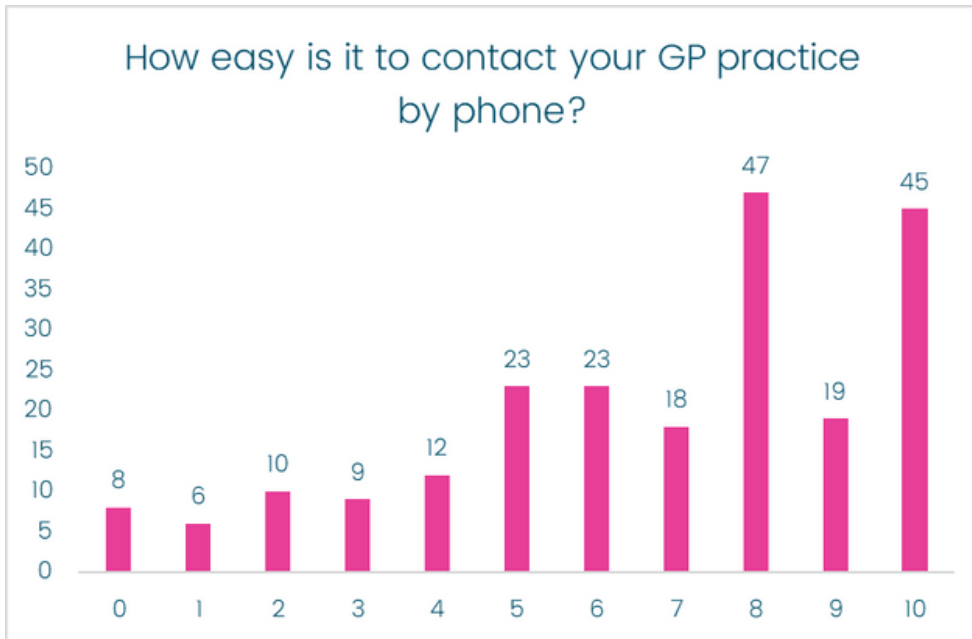
“There are never any appointments available on line and haven't been for many months. If I don't need to urgently see my doctor I would prefer to be able to book on line.”

“The app never works and it would have been my preference to use.”

“Too long for some results to get back as so many involved.”

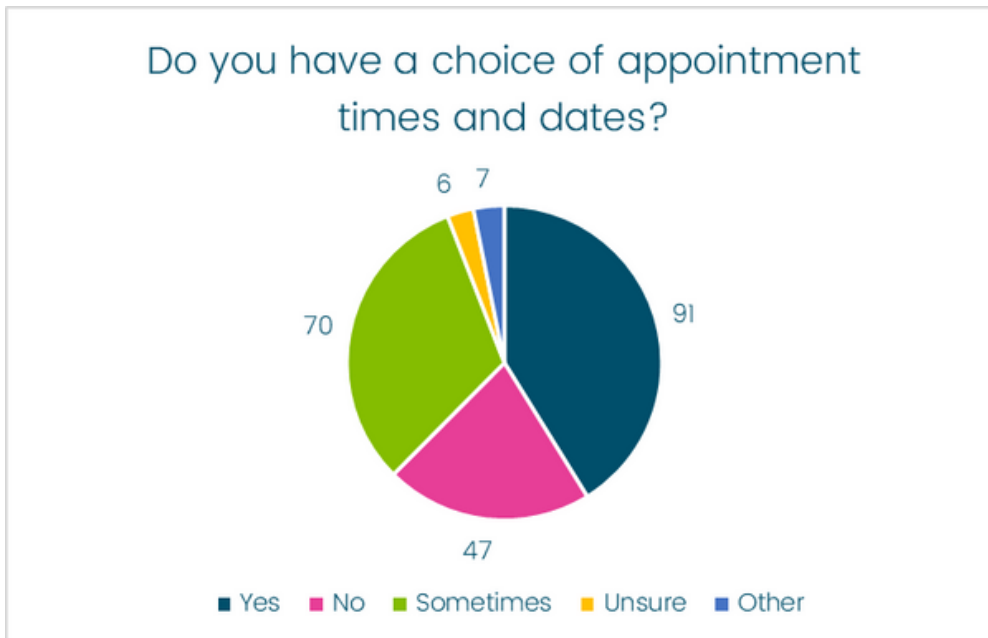
Appointments

Contact via telephone



On average, patients rated ease of contacting their GP by phone as 7.

Appointment choice



Appointments

Patient feedback

In response to this question, twenty seven patients further elaborated on how they were offered appointments by Highfield practice, and how this was a positive experience where they are offered multiple appointments to suit their needs.

“If it's not suitable they will do their best to sort you another appointment.”

“Times when the appointment offered is not acceptable has always been respectfully taken into consideration i.e. Holidays already booked, funeral dates, scheduled meetings, etc. and another date agreed.”

“Advised on the phone of available times for after work hours.”

Forty two patients responded negatively when asked this question, highlighting some of the difficulties they faced with flexible appointment times not being offered, or appointments not being offered at all.

“I had no choice and was vulnerable and helpless.”

“I was told I couldn't get an appointment after work as “you need to accept appointments when they are available, not when you can attend”. I work clinically for the NHS and I needed to attend after my shift due to the examination I required. There are often reasons people ask for early/late appointments which relate to their symptoms.”

“Just called for a general appointment and was told no, you will be added to a list to see if the doctor thinks you need an appointment. Absolutely disgusting really.”

Twelve patients provided a mixed response when asked this question, with many feeling that choice of appointment sometimes occurred and was dependent on a multitude of things, such as member of staff, how busy the surgery is or how urgent the medical problem is.

“This is dependent on the member of staff. For my little boy appointments have been quick but for myself they can be very long to wait regardless of the reason for an appointment.”

“Depends on how busy the surgery is. Sometimes it's been a wait of 3 weeks to see any GP.”

“Automated answer service message so long now before one can speak. Usually good considering very busy practice. However as explained earlier can be frustrating.”

Technology

Technology use

When asked their thoughts on technology within the GP practice, thirty four patients stated that they actively use the technology available, and that this in some way enhances their patient experience. This ranged from satisfaction with the technology used within the surgery, such as the sign-in app, to utilising the GP app to order prescriptions online.

“I’ve used the app and the machine on the wall, all for it. Makes it more efficient.”

“I think the system is simple and easy to use, I really like the system for online prescriptions.”

“I personally find it easy to use the NHS and patient app. I use them for repeat prescriptions and checking my appointment date, time and GP I will see. I also particularly like the reminder text as these are really helpful. Hopefully they cut down on missed appointments.”

Others discussed how video calls are well utilised to avoid unnecessary appointments.

“I embrace technology. We have used the service by sending photos of rashes etc. – it was very effective. I don’t understand why more telephone consultations can’t take place. If really necessary they will then ask for you to go in.”

“Video calls proven useful during covid as long as personal examination not necessary.”

Twenty five patients commented on how the appointment booking technology used by the practice requires improvement, with patients sharing their experiences of trying to utilise this service.

“I picked this surgery because there was option to book an appointment online, the service doesn’t seem to work.”

“I think online access is a great way to access the doctor but Highfield have no appointments available anytime I check.”

“I would like to be able to easily book via the app but it’s very hit and miss, with sometimes no appointments available. So I end up calling.”

Technology

Technology use ctd.

Twenty three patients suggested improvements that need to be made to the way the surgery uses technology to further enhance their patient experience. Some patients suggested how GP's could utilise technology to improve information sharing, both between patients and GP's, and referrals to other healthcare services.

"We got a text message from the surgery recently to ask us in for a hypertension review. I phoned, we got an appointment, but we could have done with additional info to say that we needed to bring a urine sample. We didn't know this until we arrived, and therefore weren't able to be prepared, and had to return to the surgery with this. Would have helped to have been informed beforehand."

"Invest in a computer system that allows a GP to email a consultant directly. My GP practice would rather the patient contact the consultant secretary so they can ask the consultant to write a letter to give to the secretary to give to the patient to give to the receptionist to give to the GP. See where I'm going!"

Others suggested that improvements need to be made to the phone lines/ triage system to improve the patient experience.

"To get a triage system and more receptionist to carry this out."

Some patients highlighted how technology could be utilised better to access prescriptions more easily or regularly.

"It would be great to request medicine not on repeat prescription on the app. I use creams for eczema etc. and inhalers but I can't order them on the app. I think emails feel a bit outdated."

"Prescriptions to be issued that are in stock and available."

Others felt it was important that technology allowed them to access their medical records.

"Make it easier to navigate and able to access my records."

Nineteen patients raised concerns around some patient's access to technology, in particular elderly and vulnerable patients.

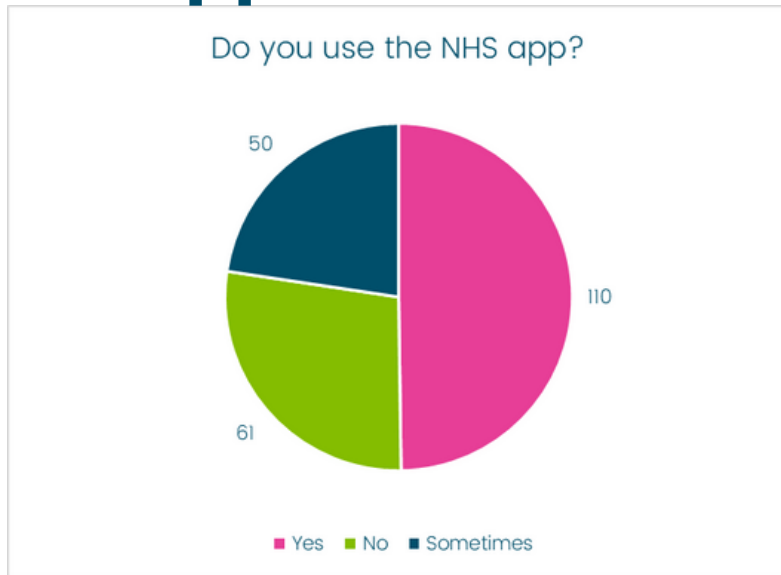
"I am all for it but there is a need for someone to explain it to the older people who have not grown up with it."

"I struggle with this as I'm my daughter's carer and can't remember log in details and meds, it's easier for me to do it over the phone."

"You need to be careful as increase the use of technology blocks out a generation that is not able to or simply do not have access to technology."

Technology

NHS App



NHS App- How patients find it

Of those that use the NHS app, fifty four patients provided a positive response when asked this question, with statements such as “good”, “great” and “easy” used to describe their experience. Some patients elaborated further.

“Straight forward. Good to see NHS embracing technology.”

“It’s easy to navigate, easy to read and useful when looking for basic information.”

“Good, I appreciate being able to see blood results without having to contact GP practice.”

Fifty patients provided a neutral or mixed response to this question, describing their experience as “ok”, “fine” and “average”. Mixed responses appeared to be mainly in relation to the inability to book appointments via the app, and the impact of this on their experience.

“Unable to access GP appointments through it. It is ok for ordering repeat prescriptions.”

“Relatively good, only issue is when you cancel an appointment it doesn’t allow you to re book online”

“No appointment but love I can see my results on there and love it for repeat prescription.”

Fifteen patients provided a negative response when asked this question, with patients describing their experiences as “useless”, “rubbish”, “clunky”, “complicated” and “confusing.” Some patients highlighted the issues they have faced when using the app.

“It doesn’t allow me to order or request other prescriptions such as HRT which is annoying.”

“Can’t add my husband to my app as he does not have a phone and cannot get my medical records.”

Technology

NHS App – What stops patient use

The most common reason for patients not using the NHS app was due to usability, with seventeen participants citing this reason.

“I order my prescriptions online but that's about it. We are older now and find it technical.”

“I haven't a clue how to get it. I don't even know if I have the tech.”

“Not so good at technology.”

A further thirteen patients cited accessibility issues as the main reason they do not use the NHS app.

“I don't have access to the internet.”

“I am partially sighted. My wife helps me.”

“Used it when in Midlands but since coming here not able to register in spite of help from the practice.”

Seven patients stated that it was their own personal preference to not use the NHS app, with the majority of responses mentioning dealing with their health queries either via telephone or face to face.

“I believe NHS front line services should be person led not AI or IT led. To help build up rapport.”

“I prefer to ring and make an appointment over the phone.”

“Prefer personal service.”

Additional Roles Awareness

	Yes I'm aware of it and use it	Yes I'm aware of it but don't use it	No I am not aware of it
Mental health nurse	10	48	138
First contact podiatrist	13	28	152
First contact physiotherapist	27	34	134
Social prescribing workers	7	32	156
Health and wellbeing coach	36	6	153
Pharmacist	92	42	66
Cancer care coordinator	7	39	147
Paramedic	16	49	126
Dietitian	11	42	139
Trainee associate psychological practitioner	2	27	164
Pharmacy tech	22	40	136

Additional Roles

Use and experience

The most popular answer related to the pharmacist, with thirty one participants stating they had used this service and subsequently describing their experience. However, it is clear that the majority of these responses are describing a patient's community pharmacy and not the pharmacist within the Practice. The feedback regarding the pharmacist is positive overall.

"The pharmacist is brilliant and goes above and beyond."

"In house pharmacist is always very knowledgeable and helpful source of information about drugs. Wish they were more accessible."

"Pharmacist's takes too long to call you back."

"I use the pharmacist with great success so far."

Fourteen participants said they had used the physiotherapist and on the whole, experiences were positive, with only one individual describing their experience as negative.

"Physiotherapist seen within three days excellent."

"Physiotherapy multiple times always very good."

Eight participants had used podiatry services, with all participants responding positively regarding their experience.

"Podiatry twice both times very good."

"Podiatrist very good seen quickly."

Six participants stated that they had used mental health services, and again all participants appear to have had a positive experience.

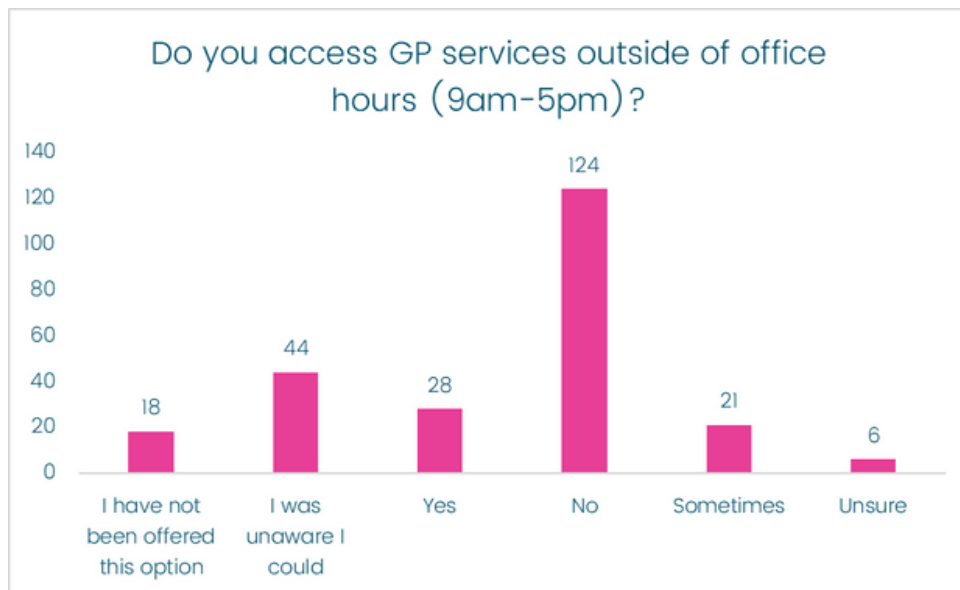
"Thought the mental health nurse was really good. It was her that did social prescribing for us."

"Mental health nurse excellent, my wife used them."

Sixteen participant's were either unaware of the services listed, or had never used them.

Enhanced Access

Feedback from patients



The majority of patients were happy with their enhanced access at South Shore Primary Care Centre, with fifty three participants answering “yes”, “happy” and “satisfied.” Some participants provided further detail regarding their experiences.

“Yes, I was given a telephone appointment on a Saturday through enhanced access. Very useful service.”

“Yes. It’s allowed me to take my son to appointments outside of school time so it doesn’t disrupt the school day.”

“Yes, please keep the good work going with smiles and laughter to help the day.”

Four participants provided a mixed response to this question, stating that they had used the service and were generally happy, however there were issues raised regarding appointment availability.

“Generally yes until the recent changes or appointment change I’ve never had a problem accessing a doctor before?”

“Yes I am happy but would like to see Saturday morning appointments.”

“Yes. However I do believe the centre should be open on weekends and week day evenings until 9pm, for those who don’t work office hours. Also open from 7:30am week days. It’s kids at school. Schools go mad if you take them out for an appointment but then the surgery will give you an appointment in school time. And so you either get attitude from the surgery or the school. I think they should also be considerate to those who work. The number of time I see individuals who don’t work (elderly and unemployed – I ask them) at early morning appointments and I and people I know who work, can’t get an appointment before work.”

Enhanced Access

Feedback from patients ctd.

Twelve participants stated that they were unaware of enhanced access, with some stating that they have used other out of hours services instead.

“We were not aware this was an option. We use the walk-in centre outside of these hours.”

“I didn’t know I could ask for it. I have had appointments outside that time but I didn’t know I could ask for them.”

“I was not aware you could get your own GP through extended access. I thought it was just paramedics or up to the Vic.”

Ten participants suggested improvements to this service, which ranged from appointment preferences to requesting better parking facilities.

“I would like to see my own GP out of hours - not locums.”

“It would help to know what services are available.”

“Better time slots.”

Seven participants stated that they were not satisfied with access to enhanced services, with respondents citing issues such as an inability to book early or late appointments or that this service is often “too busy”.

Staying Well

Feedback from patients

When asked this question, one hundred and twenty five respondents cited exercise as being the reason they stay fit and well. The most common form of exercise was walking, which included dog walking. Other forms of exercise including gym, cycling, swimming and tennis were also mentioned, to name a few.

“Keep active. Have children and dogs who need plenty of exercise!”

“I walk every day - to and from work 1 1/2 miles 5 times a week. I am also a member of Victoria Hospital Walking Club and we meet once a month.”

“Just started back the gym and aqua water aerobics.”

Sixty three participants felt that maintaining a healthy diet contributed to overall wellness. Patients mentioned avoiding junk food and trying to maintain a balanced diet, as well as being involved in weight-loss programmes.

“Starting to eat better after concerns from doctor and nurse.”

“Healthy eating and fresh 6.”

“Eat well and no junk food.”

Engaging in hobbies and socialising was mentioned by eighteen participants, with many citing activities such as gardening, housework and DIY keeping them active and healthy.

“I attend 3 choirs and other social activities which I think help to maintain good mental health.”

“Love my garden - too old to be bouncing about like Olga Corbutt.”

“I have a good social life, got a support network and neighbours.”

Eleven patients stated that working and/or volunteering kept them fit and healthy, with some describing their work as “physical” and “being on my feet all day”.

Ten patients felt that keeping up with their medication and attending regular GP checks or appointments to monitor their long term health condition, contributed to them keeping fit and well:

“Just by being aware of any bodily changes, exercise and addressing any medical conditions with the appropriate treatment.”

“I recently had a heart attack so attending Cardiac Rehabilitation programme.”

Staying Well

Feedback from patients

A small minority of patients stated that reducing or completely avoiding alcohol and smoking allowed them to feel fit and well.

“We don't drink much either. We gave up smoking in the 70s.”

“I don't smoke, drink moderately.”

Giving Feedback

Giving feedback to the practice

In response to this question, sixty five patients stated that they had never given feedback on GP services. Many participants shared that they had never been asked for feedback, and that completing this survey was the first time they were given this opportunity.

“No, this is the first time.”

“I don’t really but they work so hard and try and help people.”

“No, because I'm afraid my opinions may make the service even worse than what it is.”

“We have never been asked for feedback and don't know how to give it.”

Twenty patients shared that they have provided feedback via surveys in the past, with some stating they have been asked for feedback regarding specific services offered by the practice.

“I filled out a questionnaire for my physiotherapist last week.”

Others described how they have only ever provided feedback when they have been asked to do so, with many sharing that they have responded to text messages sent by the surgery.

“I usually complete the questionnaire which is sent following any contact.”

Ten patients shared that they provided feedback verbally, either directly to the GP or surgery support staff. Nine patients stated that they have provided feedback online in the past, either via the Highfield practice website or via review platforms. Other methods of feedback included in writing, via email, via text or feedback forms present within the surgery.

“I have done previously when I have received an exceptional service. Also when quick intervention lead to a very prompt diagnosis of a serious problem I unknowingly had. Feedback was sent via email to the surgery.”

“I have done so, usually by feedback forms at the surgery.”

Giving Feedback

Could anything make giving feedback easier for patients

Of the patients asked, fifty patients felt that there was nothing that could make giving feedback easier. Sixteen patients felt that a survey or questionnaire would be the easiest method of feedback, with some finding the survey they completed with Healthwatch to be adequate, whereas others felt this survey was too lengthy, suggesting shorter surveys in the future.

“On line questionnaires like this.”

“Less lengthy questionnaires.”

“Being given a short questionnaire now and again.”

Seven patients felt that having the ability to provide feedback via email would be the easiest method, with some expressing how they had used this method in the past. Others suggested that questionnaires could be sent out via email, with others suggesting that this could be done quarterly.

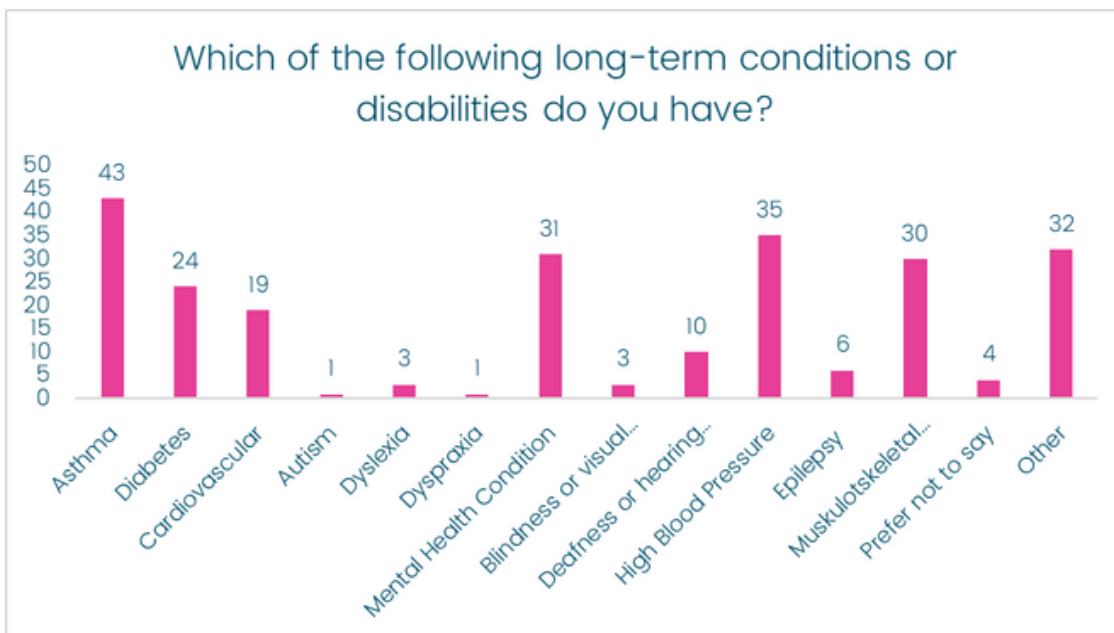
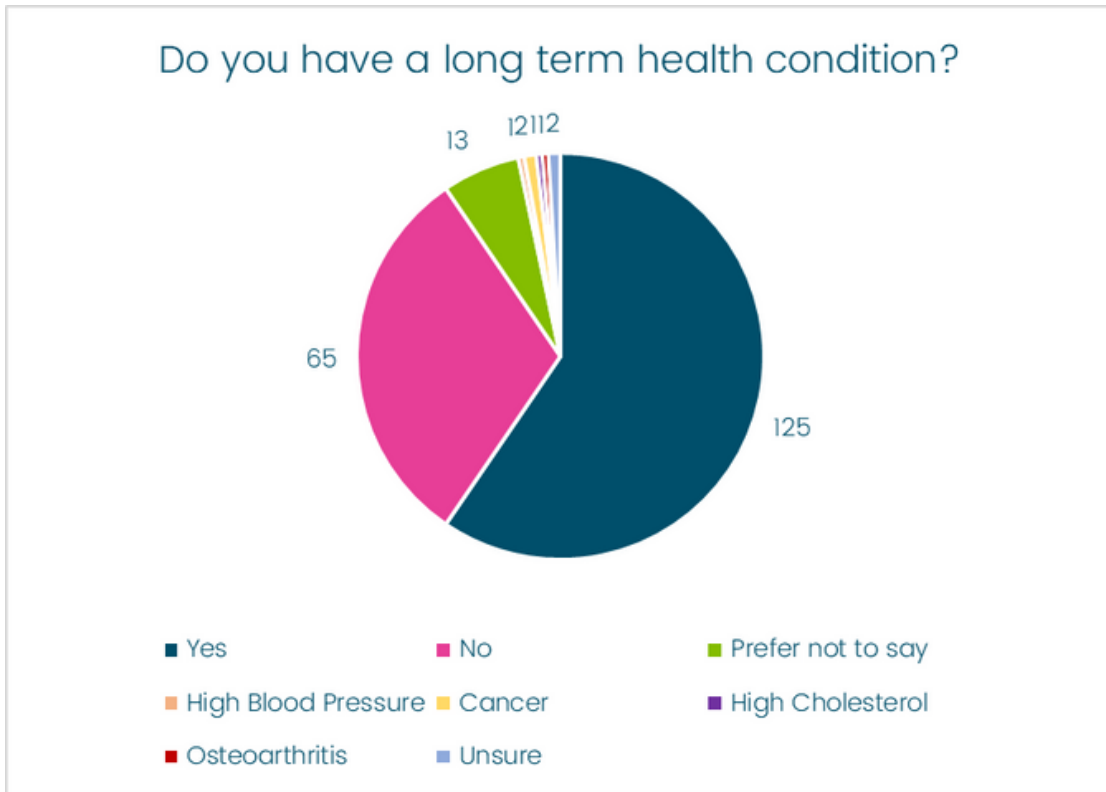
Four patients suggested that the easiest method to provide feedback would be via text.

“You should send a text after each appointment with just questions about that specific appointment, that way people can give honest real time feedback on that appointment and the provider they have seen.”

A further four patients said that they would prefer to simply be asked for feedback, with this being face to face within the surgery. One patient stated “A piece of paper, a pen and a box.”

Other responses included general praise for the surgery, with one patient stating that, in their experience, the surgery has been very receptive to feedback. Other suggestions included a dedicated patient helpline for feedback and the use of a feedback button on the website. A small minority of patients stated that they had never been asked for feedback and that they would not know how to provide this.

Long Term Health Conditions



Long Term Health Conditions Management

Seventy three patients cited medication and prescriptions as the method used to manage their long-term condition.

“I’m on tablets. I get them in a pack ready for me.”

“Keep taking the pills and live a normal life.”

“Take medication. Haven’t been given any other help or direction.”

Twenty three patients stated that regular monitoring through GP appointments, blood tests and hospital appointments allows them to manage their long term health condition. Patients cited medical services such as asthma nurse, consultations at the Gateway centre and 6 monthly/ annual checks at the GP surgery.

Nineteen patients felt that management was attributed to lifestyle choice, in particular healthy diet, regular exercise and avoiding alcohol.

Fifteen patients stated that they managed their long-term condition themselves, with many saying they simply “get on with it” or “persevere”. Others felt that researching and understanding their condition helps them to manage it better.

“I employ mindfulness principles and manage the condition as best as I can.”

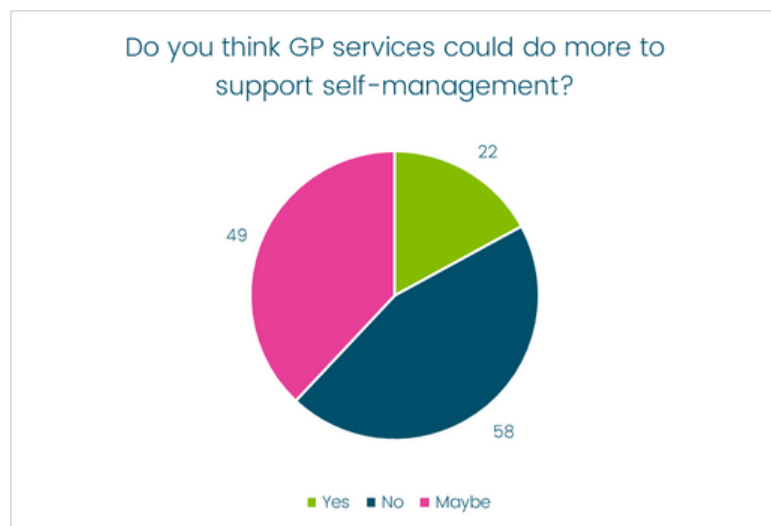
Eight patients stated that they were not currently managing their condition and felt that they were “struggling”. Five patients reported that they relied on support from family members in order to manage their health condition.

“With Dementia, I help my husband all the time now. With his sleep apnoea, at night, he has to have a mask on his face, but becomes confused, so I have to do this every night and morning for him. We don’t have outside support, we just manage everything ourselves.”

“Badly, this is why I need my husband’s support with the GP.”

Long Term Health Conditions

General Practice and self management



The most popular response to this question was the use of additional provisions to help support self-management, with seven patients feeling that more regular GP check-up and referral to other health care services would be beneficial.

“I don't know how, but maybe they could have followed up with someone to advise me how to cope with my current short-term condition. Self-management starts with ourselves though, and we have to manage our conditions as best we can.”

Four patients felt that raising awareness of additional services to support self-management, as well as increased education around conditions, would help them to manage their conditions better. Raising awareness of some key services were suggested.

“More publicity about social prescribing.”

“More information about mental health services.”

Six patients felt that communication could be improved, both between staff and patients and in terms of continuity of care.

“I have been for a heart monitoring thing at the doctors months ago and was told I will get a letter from the hospital to go for a full ECG. Called the surgery and the non-medically trained receptionist told me my heart was fine. All good love was what I was told. And I'm just supposed to believe that without speaking to a doctor. So round and round we go.”

Other comments included calls for more staff to decrease pressure and provide better services and the introduction of support groups within the surgery for those managing long-term conditions.

Other comments or suggestions

Highfield Surgery

Nine patients suggested further improvements, such as “shorter surveys” to provide feedback, a dentist within the surgery, “easier wording on results” and “empathy”.

Seven patients wished to provide further positive feedback about the surgery.

“Thanks to the medical receptionist team. They're wonderful! Kind, compassionate and helpful.”

“Remember you all do a fabulous job. I recognise the systems can be challenging.”

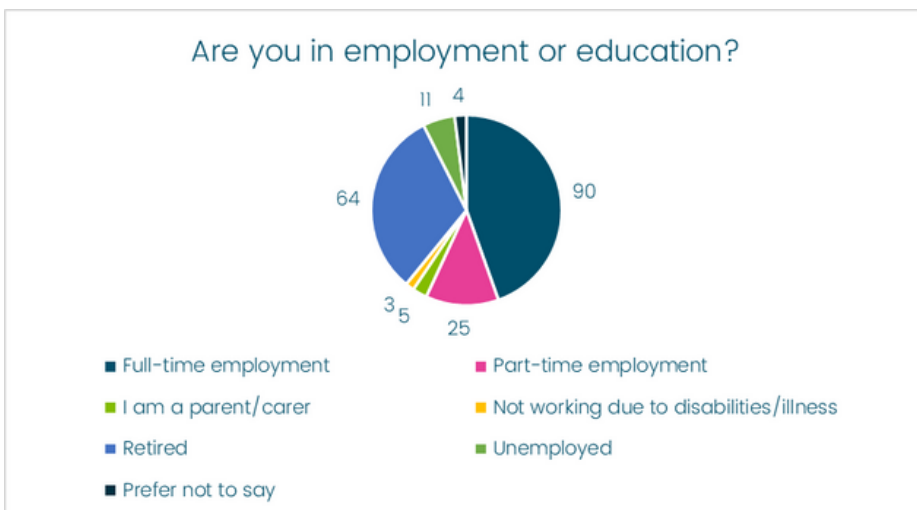
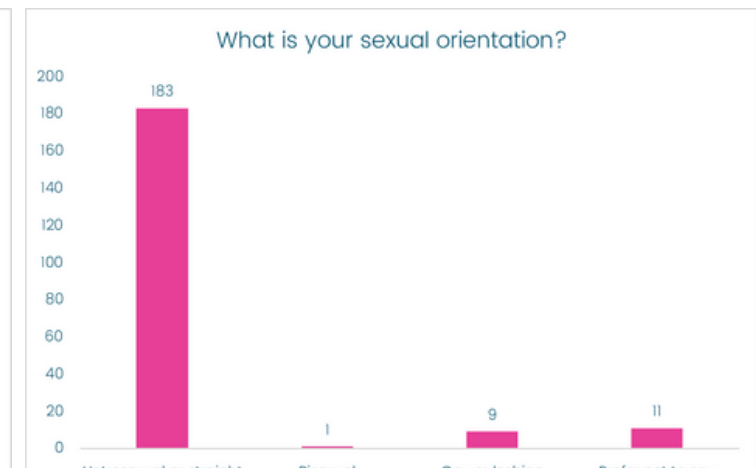
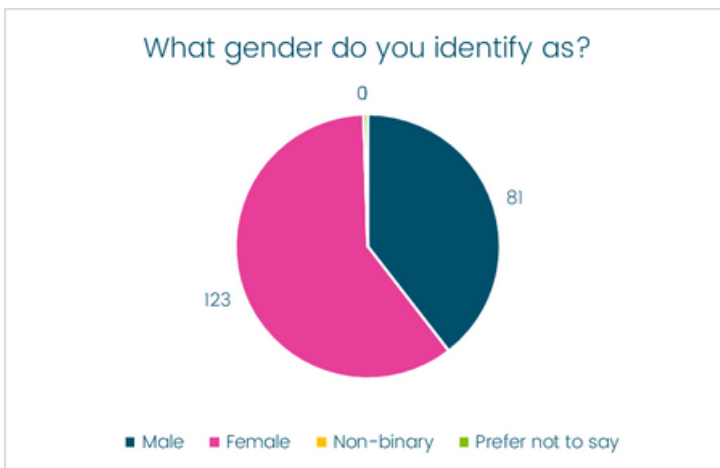
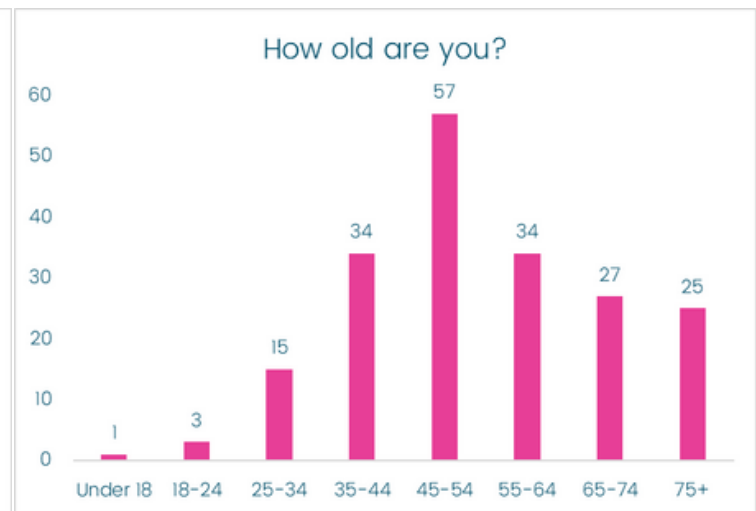
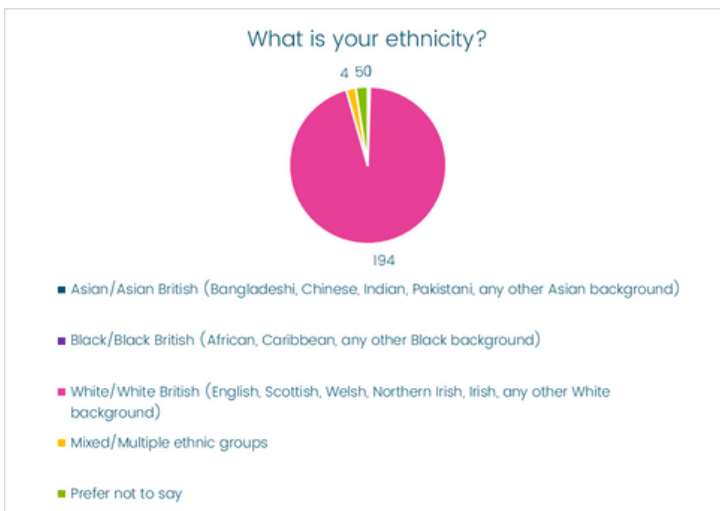
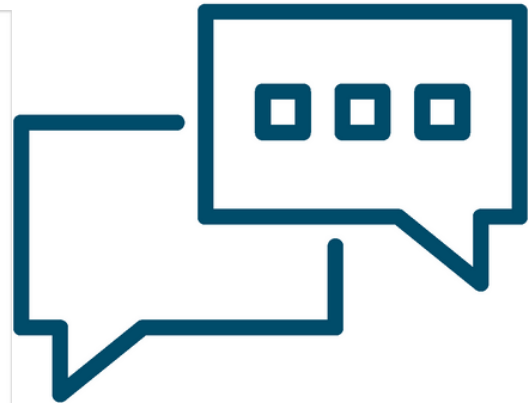
“Our practice is mainly very good – especially compared with other local ones which friends and associates experience.”

Six patients wished to provide further feedback regarding appointments, with some requesting more evening and weekend appointments for those who work. Other feedback simply called for more appointments generally.

“Stop directing people to already pressurised services like 111 and walk in. Allow people to book appointments. Stop directing people away.”

“Return to providing the service as it was pre-covid, where you were able to see a GP rather than be diagnosed over the phone and whether what the issue/problem is, is deemed worthy of an actual appointment with a GP.”

Demographics





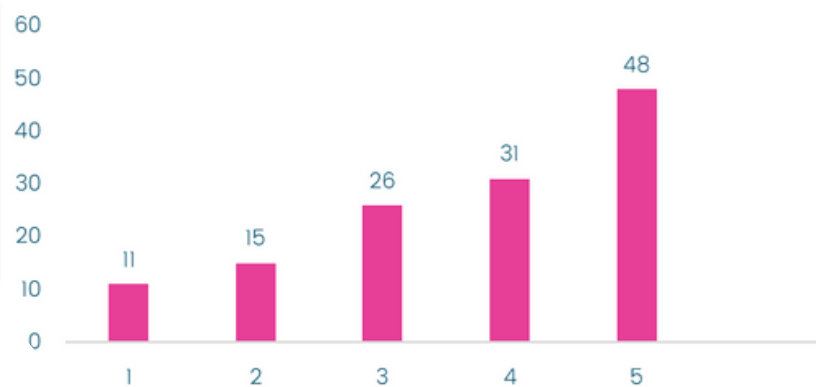
Stonyhill Medical Practice
Insights from patients



Feedback from 132 patients



How would you rate your overall experience of the GP surgery?



A spotlight on the positives

The vast majority of positive responses related to staff, with sixty four participants sharing excellent feedback about staff in a variety of different roles. Staff manner is frequently described as friendly and helpful, as well as staff going the extra mile when speaking to and treating patients.

“Staff are mostly approachable, professional and helpful. I have experienced excellent patience from nursing team during appointments.”

“The people who answer the phones are kind and helpful.”

“All staff are very thoughtful, caring and professional.”

“My Dr treated me with the upmost respect and care. She saw me as a person not just a patient. I was made feel completely at ease.”

“Always go out their way and do their best to help me.”

Another popular theme from twenty eight respondents was the speed and efficiency of staff, specifically when allocating appointments or dealing with medical concerns.

“Never struggled to get an appointment. Always fast with referrals to specialist services. Very happy with GP practice.”

“I really struggle with my mental health and whenever I need an appointment they always get me seen the same day which is really helpful.”

“When I ring I usually get through within a few minutes and directed to the right solution.”

“Always get appointments and don't have to wait ages.”

There were some explicit positive stories shared regarding clinical interventions that patients have experienced or ways in which the surgery has adapted their approach to suit someone's needs.

“They are very understanding of my disabled daughters needs and always try to arrange things so she won't get stressed.”

“The nurse who was doing bloods noticed I was struggling mentally and referred me to the counsellor, that was positive that she noticed it.”

“This surgery is brilliant with housebound patients. I've had more done since being with stoney hill surgery.”



A spotlight on the positives ctd.

“Never struggle to get appointment like I hear from other surgeries. Have had alternative suggestions, eg. Chiropracist, physiotherapist, when doctors appointment not available.”

“They've gone above and beyond at times. Especially when my daughter was extremely ill... the doctors stayed past closing waiting on an ambulance that did not show. But the fact they stayed was a positive experience for us.”

Furthermore, some additional positive responses related to the technology used by Stonyhill, the premises being clean and overall outstanding experiences.

“Clean environment and efficient.”

“Brilliant online services.”

“I cannot say enough really good practice.”

“I like how the telephone system tells me what number I am in the queue and I've never had to wait too long.”



Improvement ideas

Twenty four participants stated that Stonyhill does not need to make any improvements.

The key suggestion for improvement, mentioned by thirty one patients, was regarding the availability and method of accessing care, with specific mention made to being unable to make appointments via the app and the limited availability of the prescription line.

“Be able to book appointments without a phone call I work in the NHS and it's really difficult to call and wait in a 30min queue when the hospital has no signal and your trying to slot it between your breaks.”

“Maybe lengthen the hours that you can talk to the prescription line. At the moment it only has a 2 hour phone slot for advice and information.”

“You can't book appointments through the app which I would like to be able to do instead of calling and sitting in queues on the phone.”

“It's so difficult working full time to speak to the prescription line between 10-12 and there is no other option. Could you offer an online service to get information or allow email correspondence.”

Additionally, twenty two responses referenced improved staff attitude, with some appearing dismissive and unfriendly. There is a predominant subtheme regarding receptionists and their role, with some patients feeling reluctant to discuss certain issues when trying to book an appointment.

“On some matters I don't feel respected or heard, as a woman (AFAB) I have often felt my medical problems weren't taken seriously. Particularly during pregnancy and baby loss. Ensure all staff are updated with how to handle miscarriage/baby loss with compassion.”

“Receptionists need to be kinder. Quite often end up in tears after just trying to book an appointment. Just a really poor attitude last time I tried to book an appointment.”

Alongside this, seventeen patients have struggled with waiting times at Stonyhill and have proposed improvements, both when waiting to get through via the telephone and the wait for an appointment.

“Be on time for appointments. Offer more appointments. Communicate better if there are delays in appointments to avoid long wait times.”

“Took ages to get through on the telephone and also to make an appointment.”

“It's impossible to get an appointment, my last one took me 3 weeks from first speaking with the receptionist to getting an appointment with a doctor. Totally unacceptable.”

Improvement ideas

Furthermore, communication in general has come through in various themes, with suggestions to improve including following up with patients, speaking in plain English where possible and communicating better with secondary care services.

“For me, being able to understand some of the doctors as well because they use a lot of jargon and words I don't understand.”

“Communication, when referrals have been sent off etc.”

“If the reception staff could be given access to your hospital results that would be good because the hospital haven't got back to me with results from May 2022 yet!”

“When waiting for a phone call appointment, please ring a couple of times. I have children and can't always answer the phone straight away.”

From a clinical perspective, some participants have suggested additional provision is required and increased consistency in staff to improve outcomes for patients.

“Yes hire more doctors they just want you in and out in 20 minutes I've had a back problem for 2 years constant back pain that never goes away and I've been in countless times yet I'm still no closer to finding out the problem so I've decided to pay for a private MRI.”

“I rarely get to see the same doctor and I have to wait around 3 weeks for an appointment which isn't good. I would like continuity with the same gp.”

“Provide feedback regarding blood tests. Provide annual dates for my AF tests which is now over 12 months overdue.”

“Consistency of the GP you see feels like something of years gone by. I've probably seen 6 different doctors the last six times I've been. This leaves you with the feeling that no GP actually knows about your long term health.”

Alongside the above themes, other individual suggestions have been made by patients.

“Hand gel. I can't see any when I've finished using the screen to book myself in for my appointment on arrival. The amount of people that use it it can't be hygienic.”

“Raise deaf awareness.”

“The only negative thing I've experienced was the cleanliness of the toilet when asked to provide a urine sample but that was the one at the top of the stairs the ones actually in the practice by the consulting rooms were of better cleanliness.”

“Comfier chairs in the waiting lounge.”

What matters most to patients

The most important thing for patients when accessing Stonyhill is for them to be met with kindness, compassion and for their voice to be heard, as stated in thirty eight responses. A strong desire to be “listened too” came through time and time again.

“That they listen to me and actually take the time to try and understand what I’m saying.”

“Being informed and treated like a person and not a NHS number.”

“That I don’t feel hurried in my appointment. I feel they’ve got all the time in the world for me.”

“Trustworthiness, gp’s and nurses that take time and care when you’re informing them of your condition.”

“Doctor trusting that I know my symptoms and not being dismissed.”

Secondly, thirty three participants referenced speed of appointments, with short waiting times and prompt responses mattering most.

“Seeing the appropriate medical professionals within a reasonable time frame.”

“Quick turnaround when needing an appointment.”

“Being able to see the GP without waiting weeks.”

In addition to this, twenty eight responses stated that being triaged to see the correct professional who can do what is required relative to the individual’s needs is important. A particular emphasis was placed on consistent care that results in better experience and outcomes for the patient.

“Been seen in accordance with the severity of the problem.”

“That the staff know what they are doing when it comes to problems and they are patient and understanding and can direct me to what I need.”

“Continuity and not have to go over the same things.”

“To have access as often as required, for help or advice, appointment if necessary.”

What matters most to patients

Ctd.

A variety of appointments and different methods of booking the appointments are desirable, with flexibility being a common theme.

“Being able to book appointments on gp app.”

“Easy to use services for all. I don’t mind online services but my ageing parents prefer to speak to someone.”

“Wide variety of appointment times to cater for workers and childcare arrangements.”

Alongside this, effective communication also matters to patients, which in turn builds confidence in Stonyhill services.

“Communication of information and feedback on results, you have to chase everything yourself.”

“There’s one doctor here i would never see again, i was having terrible pains going on for 8–9 months, was told he would keep a close eye on it and he’s never bothered getting in touch. Lost a bit of faith from that.”

“Good/strong levels of communication and awareness to next steps and agreed timelines to facilitate.”

Some other suggestions of what matters most to patients included the following.

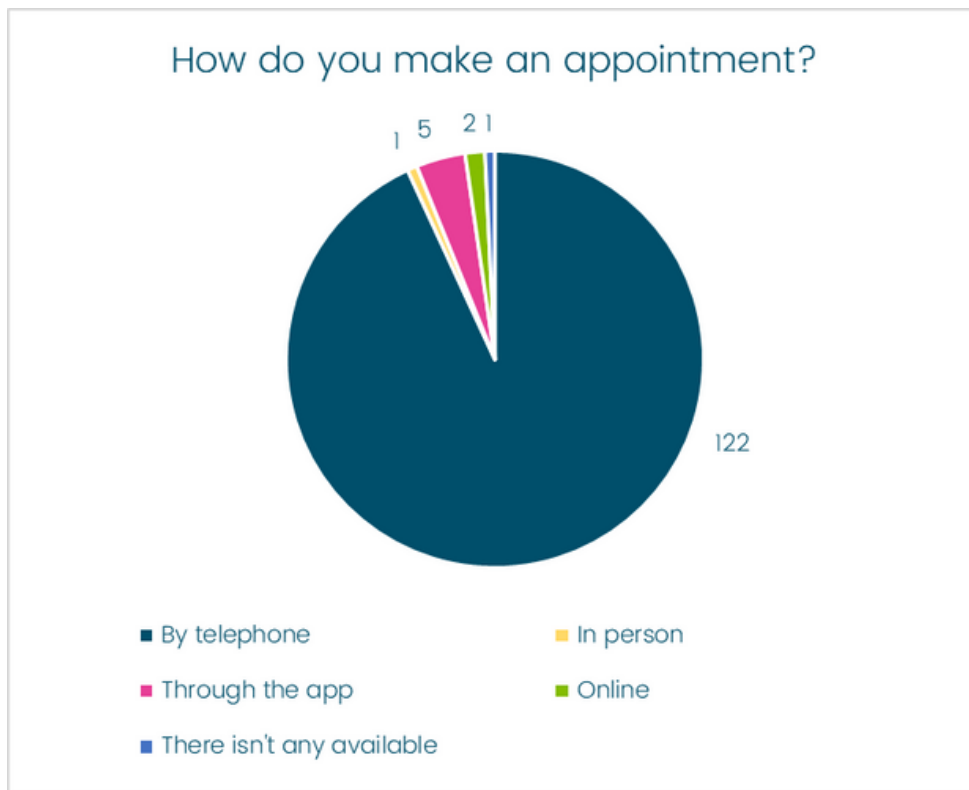
“Cleanliness and privacy.”

“Appropriate referrals to specialists.”

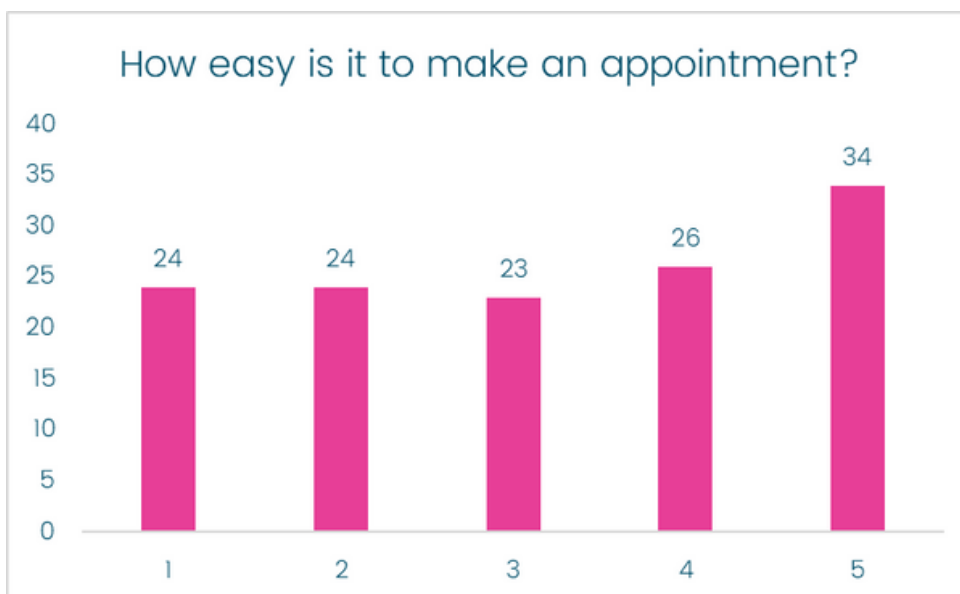
“Knowledge of the team.”

Appointments

Making appointments

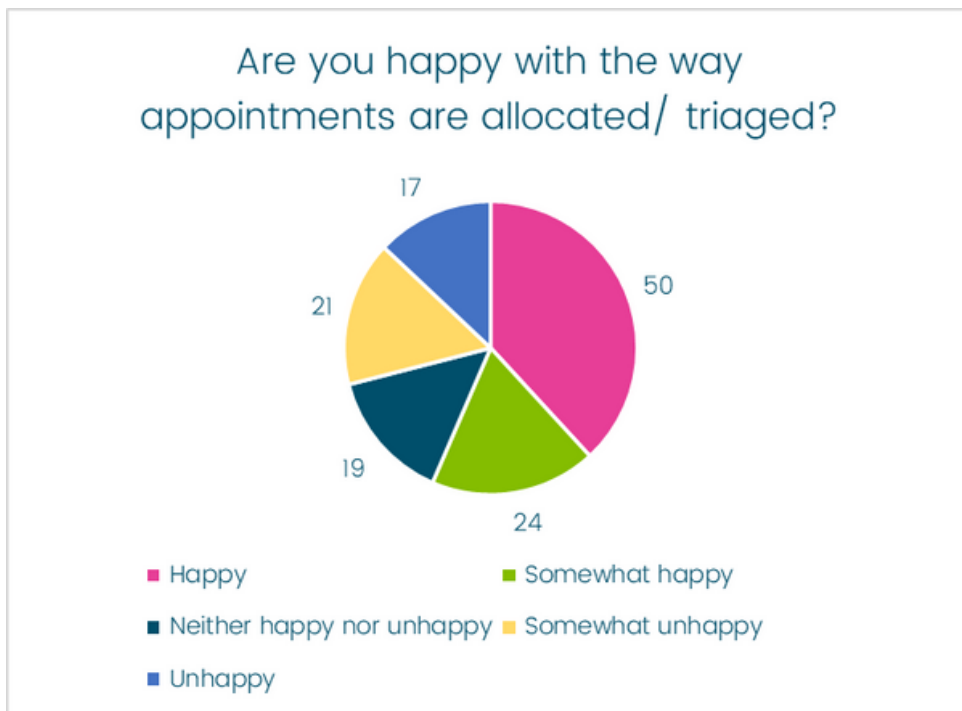


Ease of appointment booking



Appointments

Appointment allocation and triage



Patient feedback

Twenty three respondents described positive experiences regarding the appointment system at Stonyhill.

“The receptionists are very helpful and I always get to see or speak to the right person.”

“They are good at giving appointments based on priority and they know to treat mental health as a priority which is really good.”

“Yes I understand its most serious first I never have a problem getting an appointment the same day.”

“I have always been booked the most appropriate appointment or been given appropriate advice/signposted.”

However, forty five patients shared negative experiences, with twenty six of those involving long waiting times to get through or to be allocated an appointment.

“I rang in the morning and was put on the triage list. At 3pm I still hadn't been called back. It left me anxious all day, afraid of missing the call back”

“Having to phone at 8am to get an appointment, end in a queue for ages then you have to wait for a phone consultation before being offered an appointment. Just feels a long process especially when you feel unwell.”

Patient feedback Ctd.

“There isn't enough people on the phone's and they can only make so many appointments at a time – you can sit for half an hour waiting in a queue.”

Additionally, some individuals would like the option to book an appointment through the app, as this was expressed in eleven responses.

“It's not easy to make appointments because you always end up waiting in the queue. It would be easier if I could do it through the app.”

“Should be able to book appointments through the my gp app instead of phoning for one and waiting for it to get triaged.”

Nine responses were mixed, with patients recalling varying levels of experience with each attempt.

“You never know who you are going to get in the end of the phone, all staff members I speak seem to follow/allow different processes.”

“I will ring for an appointment and the staff are very helpful, but there is never any availability. I get told to ring back on a certain day, and I do, but then all the appointments are taken.”

“Sometimes it's alright sometimes it's not, it just depends on whose on the phone.”

For those with a preference of appointment type or who they have the appointment with, the experience is more often than not a negative one. With that being said, different patients have different preferences and so patient choice appears to be important.

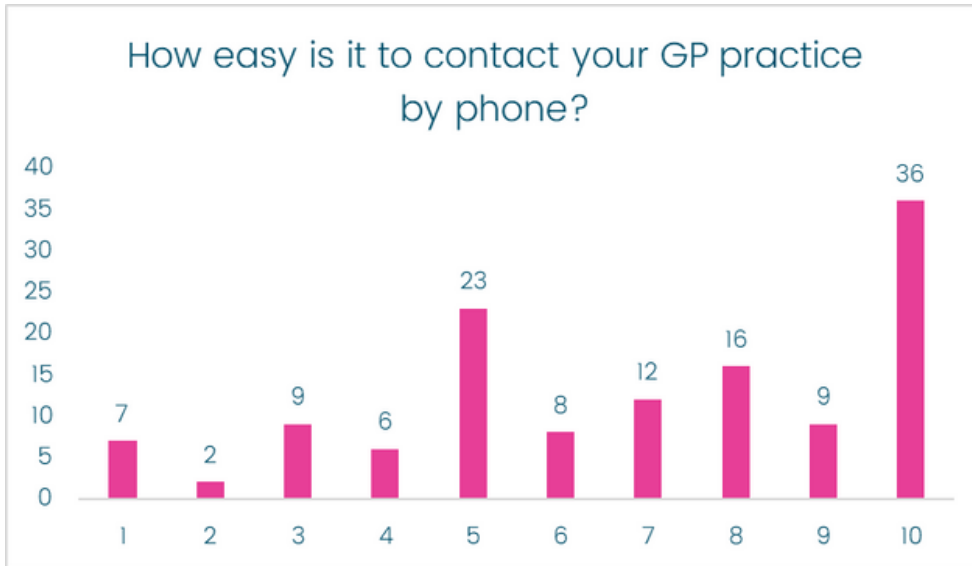
“Numerous times I have called to make an appointment and then received a phone consultation. I don't go to the doctors often so would appreciate being seen face to face when I do have a problem.”

“I've always phoned up and spoken to reception and been allocated a phone appointment and then invited in to the surgery if necessary which in my opinion is a more streamlined service, but I understand for older patients this may not be suitable.”

“You will be fobbed off with a nurse or a phone appointment in a week if you are lucky, I find going to the walk in centre at whitegate drive is far better, and a more professional service.”

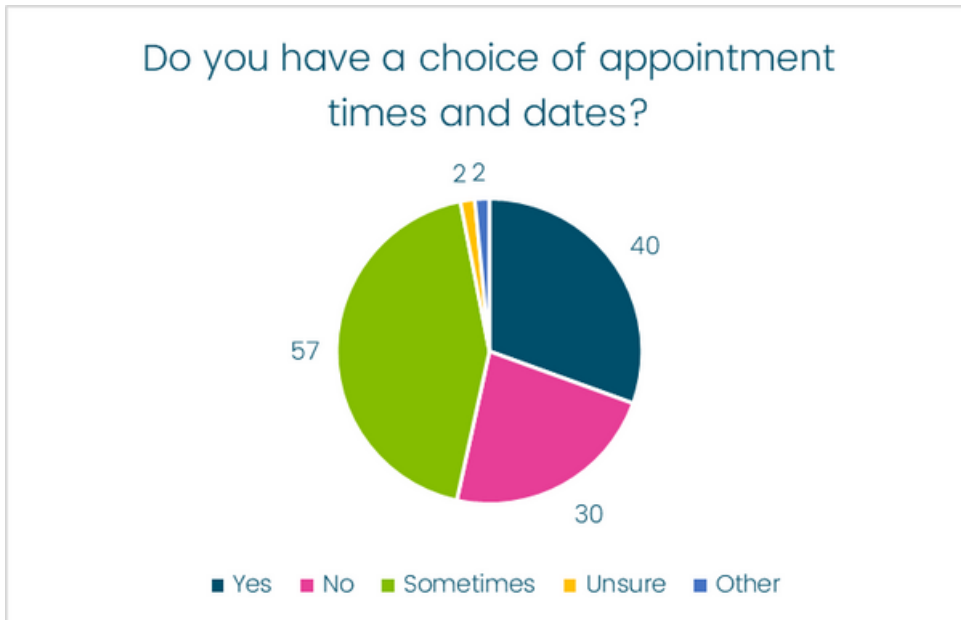
Appointments

Contact via telephone



On average, patients rated ease of contacting their GP by phone as 6.9.

Appointment choice



Appointments

Patient feedback

For those who responded yes, it is clear that multiple options have been given or an alternative provided when one date cannot be attended.

“If I say I can't attend that appointment they arrange another.”

“They ask when I can get in or if there is multiple to choice from they ask which is most convenient for me.”

For those who responded no, many reported not being given a choice and there being a long waiting time for the appointment.

“It's usually a 3 week wait time and there aren't many appointments to choose from. This is phoning at 8am and waiting to get through.”

“Call for an appointment to be told that the doctors diary is not open in advance and need to call again first thing in the morning to get an appointment.”

For those who responded sometimes, experience appears to be varied dependent on appointment type and who the appointment is with.

“Sometimes it will be an on-the-day appointment, but apart from that, I am usually offered a choice of day and time to suit me.”

“Depends on who u seeing, getting to see the doctor is hard but if u need a nurse it's better.”

In addition to this, there is positive and negative feedback relating to receiving an appointment that is convenient, particularly when considering working hours. There appears to be varying levels of knowledge and allocation of enhanced access appointments.

“I need an annual blood test and the receptionist recently checked my available and when she couldn't offer an appt within a couple of weeks she went to the out of hours service. I appreciated her effort.”

“I work Monday-Friday 8-4 so there is never really many appointments offered to me.”

“I like how more appointments are now available in the mornings and evenings, making it more practical for work.”

“Difficult to get an appointment if you are employed.”

Technology

Technology use

Feedback regarding technology was extremely mixed and appears to fluctuate dependent upon the needs of the person and the technology in question. For those who have positive opinions on the use of technology in GP services, this is typically due to it increasing accessibility of the support available.

“I think the use of technology is fantastic in surgeries and if it means more people have access to medical attention when they need it the better.”

“My GP is amazing saves time and resources.”

“Love tech much better and quick to use. Online gp appointments preferred if not necessary to see face to face.”

“It's really easy to use, I don't have any issues with it.”

With that being said, patients have highlighted that it is easier for some people to understand and navigate technology than others, or some people simply do not have the option to access it. Therefore, this creates barriers for some patients at Stonyhill and recommendations have been made on how to overcome this.

“I never use apps, I have learning disability. So its not convenient for me. I get upset when im unable to speak to someone about something as important as my health.”

“There should be an age and ability cut off where older people and those with restricted ability shouldn't have to be forced to use technology.”

“Happy to use online services but confused as to whether to use the NHS app or My GP app or Patient Access!!”

“Maybe more monitors. However to show the older people how to use them would save time.”

For those who have access to digital technology, there is a clear indication that patients would like to utilise this provision even further, particularly to book appointments via the app.

“To have the ability to book an appointment on my gp app would be good.”

“Have a option to chat with a doctor or nurse via an app or text.”

“Being able to book appointments online would be helpful. The app offers this but never any appointments to book.”

Technology

Technology use ctd.

In addition, there were also distinctive responses put forward by participants regarding the use of technology, with some being positive and others proposing new ideas.

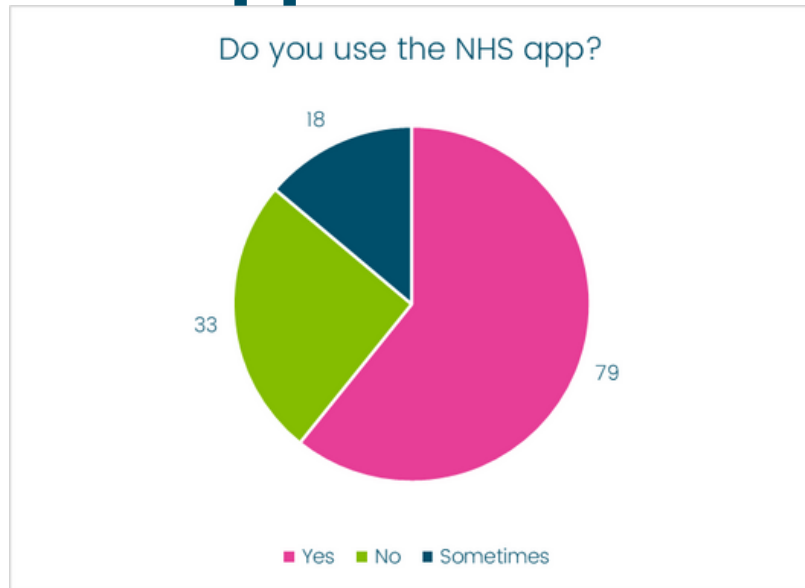
“I like the use of the digital monitor to sign in for your appointment, and using GP access app for messages and updates. Text messages being sent to your phone is another welcome service.”

“Beware of how you can access things like fit notes through the NHS app rather than having to collect or phone to have them emailed which is all unnecessary when accessible through the app. The practice should and could promote its benefits/use and cut down on administrative duties which could be avoided making service more efficient.”

“AI for administrative work and appointments although you will struggle to find any staff willing to be trained up in the use of this technology.”

Technology

NHS App



NHS App- How patients find it

It must be noted that it is unclear for some patients whether they are referring to the NHS app or the My GP app.

The majority of respondents find the NHS app a positive tool, with sixty references made to this being useful. Within this, seventeen patients used the word "easy" when describing the app.

"Helpful and easy to navigate."

"Easy to use and informative."

"Good for ordering prescription."

On the other hand, fourteen participants provided negative feedback, with some describing it as "temperamental", "deplorable" and "pretty pointless." A few patients made it clear that they do not trust app's developed by the NHS because of previous negative experiences.

"Never able to make appointments or order prescriptions through it."

"Not very useful as not all the information is on there."

"Has very limited facilities. Also got phishing messages from Covid app which demonstrates how badly developed that was!"

Technology

NHS App – How patients find it ctd.

There were a total of seventeen responses stating the app has limitations, particularly around the information and what you are able to use it for. There appears to be further scope for development in order to utilise the app to its full potential, despite patients still having a positive experience overall.

“Good although my medical history is incomplete.”

“User friendly but cannot use all the functionality.”

“Good but not everything is on the view gp notes etc for the patient to view. No message service to send enquiries to a representative nurse or gp. No booking availability on the app.”

“Very good now I understand it better, it’s uses and functions. Does not hold all the information and is certainly not correct from a medical history perspective. But again correspondence has been missed or back loaded incorrectly from dates/times/diagnosis perspective.”

Technology

NHS App – What stops patient use

The predominant reason for patients not using the NHS app is because they can't use or do not have access to technology in order to do so.

“I don't have any apps on my phone cos it's a hand me down and too old for some operating systems.”

“Don't have access to technology.”

“I need to be shown.”

“Phone short of storage space.”

Alongside this, some people cannot operate the app, despite having it.

“I can't get it to work.”

“I can't even remember the passwords but my wife does.”

Some responses suggest people do not consider the NHS app when accessing care, and others did not know that it existed.

“Never really thought about it.”

“Never heard of it, what would I need it for?”

In contrast, for people who have tried the app previously, some have since stopped using it due to a negative experience.

“It was extremely slow and I couldn't make an appointment within next 2 weeks.”

“Always says no appointments available.”

Additional Roles

Awareness

	Yes I'm aware of it and use it	Yes I'm aware of it but don't use it	No I am not aware of it
Mental health nurse	13	39	74
First contact podiatrist	11	16	96
First contact physiotherapist	11	22	90
Social prescribing workers	7	28	88
Health and wellbeing coach	8	29	83
Pharmacist	58	23	43
Cancer care coordinator	26	8	89
Paramedic	27	34	63
Dietitian	10	36	77
Trainee associate psychological practitioner	8	21	94
Pharmacy tech	16	26	78

Additional Roles

Use and experience

Some individuals provided comment stating they did not know about these roles, or haven't heard of them before.

"I am aware of what all of these professions are, however didn't know they were all attached to the surgery."

"No idea if I have used them or not as I don't know what they are."

For those that have used one of these roles, most provided feedback on the pharmacist and pharmacist technician, with nineteen comments made and the majority positive. With that being said, it appears there may be some confusion between the pharmacist within Stonyhill and the pharmacy in which the patient collects their prescription, meaning not all feedback may be relevant.

"The pharmacist was very good to help me trial different pain medications."

"Pharmacist and pharmacy tech are ok and phone me if there is any changes to prescription."

The next role with eight patients providing feedback is regarding the physiotherapist, which again has primarily positive responses.

"I dont understand the question but I have seen a physiotherapist in the surgery. She was helpful and sent me for Xrays."

"Saw physiotherapist. Very nice and helpful."

"Physio was quick but wait for treatment was months."

Similarly, the five people who have used the paramedic providing extremely positive feedback.

"The paramedic has provided excellent support and treatment to my daughter."

"Paramedic always fantastic."

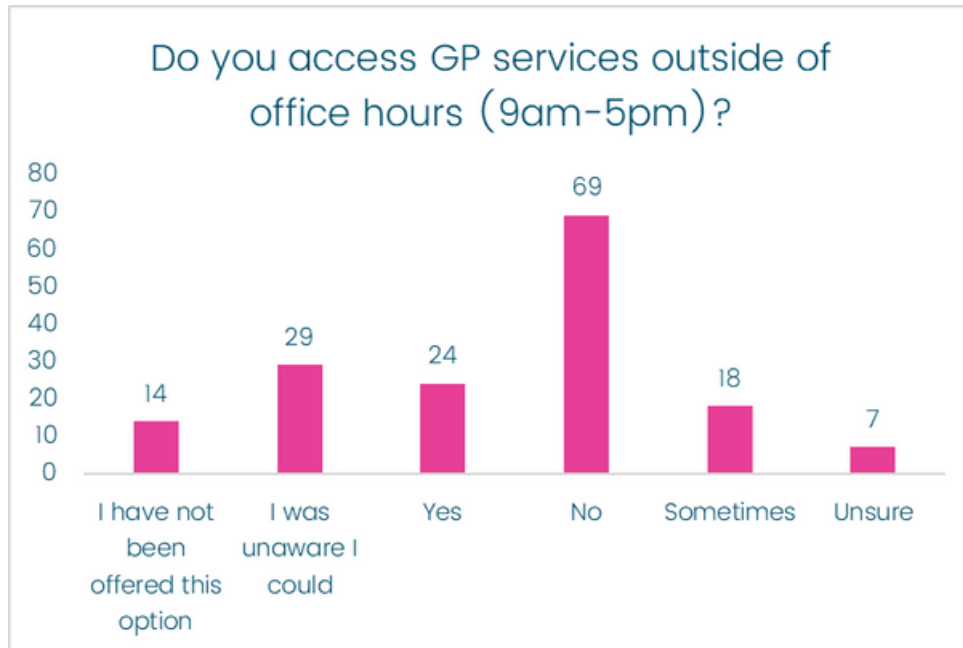
The feedback from five patients regarding the mental health nurse was mixed, with the negative aspect of the response generally relating to time factors.

"Mental Health Nurse. I have had a couple of appointments, and she does a Saturday clinic, but I can never get an appointment with her."

"Mental health counsellor - sometimes feel rushed, late being called in, I get about 20 minutes for an appointment, it doesn't ever seem long enough, it is helping me seeing him, I like seeing someone impartial and genuinely do feel better, but it's just long enough."

Enhanced Access

Feedback from patients



Twenty five patients are satisfied with enhanced access, in comparison to twelve participants who have not heard of it or used it to provide comment.

“Yes - got my smear test same day I called for appointment! Wonderful.”

“Yes much better than the GP I last saw.”

“Only just found out about it.”

“No idea never used it. Didn't know it existed.”

“It's local yes.”

Some people made suggestions as to what they would like to see from enhanced access going forward.

“I struggle to get an appointment with the mental health nurse, but satisfied with everything else.”

“I've used it, however I arrived at an appointment for a depo, and they did not have the medication I required and nothing was said to me that I was required to bring my own medication to the appointment.”

“Mostly satisfied. It would be helpful and more accommodating to have more appointments available.”

“The nurse prescriber wasn't friendly and very dismissive but the convenience was great.”

Staying Well

Feedback from patients

The majority of responses show physical activity as the main approach, with seventy three participants keeping themselves fit and well through exercise. Walking is a clear preference for many, presumably due to the accessible nature of this, both physically and financially.

“I have a toddler and 2 dogs, walk too and from my car for 10 minutes for work 5 days a week. I try to do some weights and activity at home too.”

“I exercise and do what walking I can. I have Lymphedema in both legs.”

“Go on family bike rides and walks a few times a week or when we have time to and try to do some weights or non equipment exercise when I have time at home.”

In addition, thirty nine participants highlighted diet as an important element in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, with people trying to be mindful they are consuming varied and balanced foods.

“Try to have a balanced diet.”

“My main meals are fresh and balanced but I am terrible at snacking.”

“Eat a varied diet.”

Taking care of yourself through adequate sleep, drinking more water and reducing cigarette/alcohol consumption has resulted in patients feeling fitter. As well as this, in order to stay well mentally and emotionally, participants shared the importance of having hobbies and making time for activities that facilitate positive wellbeing.

“Meditation and colouring for my wellbeing. I have limited mobility due to health conditions.”

“Manage stress levels. Aim for appropriate sleep.”

“Limited alcohol and non smoker for 15 years.”

“I take vitamins/supplements.”

“Gardening, travelling and model railways.”

Furthermore, having responsibilities that keep people busy are important, whether that be through work or personal life.

“Active job.”

“Look after my wife who has leukaemia.”

“Working hard.”

Staying Well

Feedback from patients

Some participants shared that they do not take any measures to keep themselves fit and well. As such, barriers to doing so were highlighted by patients that include physical, mental and financial factors.

“I don’t. Sometimes I just eat and eat. I struggle with motivation for the gym. I don’t like new things and struggle with change, I don’t have the confidence to reach out to things on leaflets. I have to mask sometimes.”

“Try but issue with awaiting operation on legs, pain in body and cognitive issues. More than happy to have help with dietary. If I could afford to go regularly swimming I would as told this may help joints and muscles.”

“I’m housebound & have chronic illnesses / disabilities. I never leave my home only to go hospital on patient transport.”

Giving Feedback

Giving feedback to the practice

The majority of responses demonstrate that patients have not provided feedback on Stonyhill services prior to this Healthwatch Blackpool engagement. Some patients shared their reasons for this.

“No one has ever asked me.”

“No I stopped as they never took it on board.”

“No, I didn’t know I could.”

“Not really only if I am asked by a organisation.”

For those who do share their feedback, the primary methods included surveys, links sent via text and email, comment cards or directly in person.

“Via surveys like this and I have emailed or used Facebook messenger before now.”

“If they ask when I attend I do it’s usually through email or app.”

“Directly to the Dr or nurse.”

Giving Feedback

Could anything make giving feedback easier for patients

Most participants are unsure what could be done to make it easier to give feedback. For those with suggestions, the majority stated surveys are the easiest format, either sent out via text, online or paper copies in certain circumstances. Some responses specifically referenced the app as a way of collecting this information, providing the data is protected and secure.

“Surveys like this after appointments.”

“Paper forms should be available for people like myself with learning disabilities in large format & maybe sent to our homes.”

“Online forms like this one, or via a text.”

“Having faith in NHS apps that my responses/data isn’t being sold or used without my consent.”

Other participants put forward ideas regarding handling complaints and adopting approaches used in other settings.

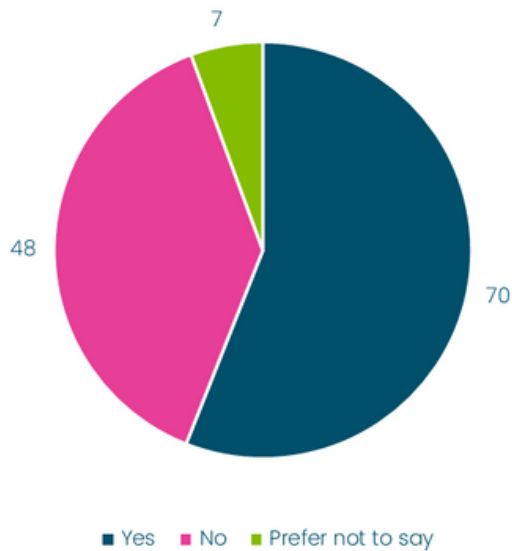
“A press button on exiting like happy to sad as you see in airports.”

“Information on where I could do this. I would have made complaints if I knew where to go.”

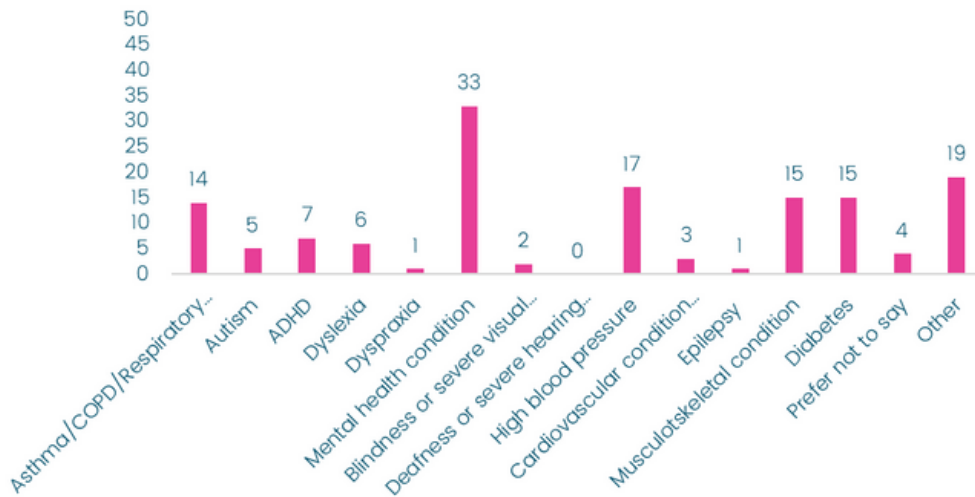
“Anonymous suggestion box in the building.”

Long Term Health Conditions

Do you have a long term health condition?



Which of the following long-term conditions or disabilities do you have?



Long Term Health Conditions

Management

The majority of respondents manage their long term conditions through prescribed medication. As well as this, utilising the support from professionals and taking on board the advice given has been useful for some patients.

Some combine this with taking care of their mental health and wellbeing, adopting a restful approach to avoid burn out. Caring for the mental and emotional side effects of having a long term condition is clearly vital for some patients. Additionally, ensuring people are eating healthily and exercising where possible has been highlighted as an important method of managing conditions.

“Combination of medication and taking care of my wellbeing to stay calm and distract my mind.”

“Pacing techniques, mindfulness techniques and controlling my work life balance.”

“Medication, rest, reiki, adapted my lifestyle to suit.”

“Concordance with prescribed medications alongside natural remedies and holistic approach. I take responsibility over diet, exercise and wellbeing. However, the impact of some conditions can effect home life, confidence and self-esteem.”

In contrast to this, some people appear to be struggling with managing their long term condition and a lack of support from services.

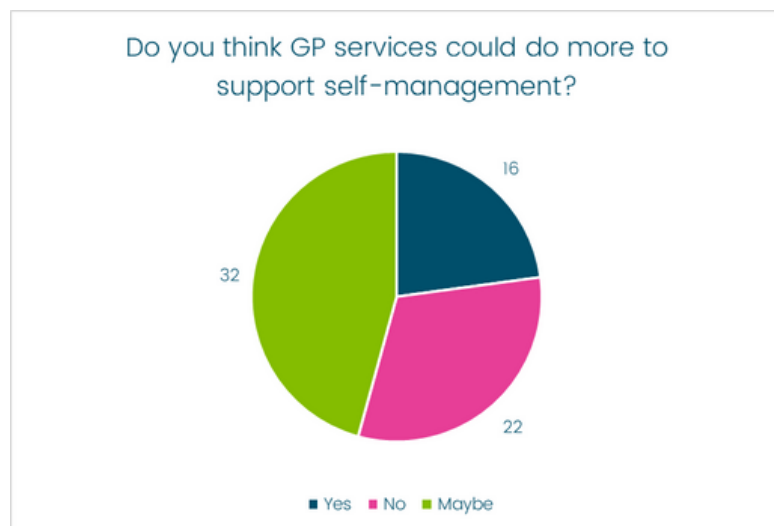
“Hard been asking for a plan of what's going on as I'm so confused most of the and forgetting what's happening.”

“On my own now I didn't want to be on meds anymore but its too hard to access any other help.”

“I don't. I don't know how to.”

Long Term Health Conditions

General Practice and self management



Patients would like to feel heard and understood when discussing the impact of their long term condition on their mental health and wellbeing. Some specific suggestions included offering support groups or an appointment with a professional who can listen to the patient's feelings.

“Support on how your feeling. How this condition effects your mental health, the side effects and how to manage them. I've had nothing offered to me and sometimes feel so low I could just cry for no reason.”

“They've never really asked about MH or life balance.”

“More understanding of living with fibromyalgia and chronic pain.”

Alongside this, additional provision to improve the management of long-term conditions within a medical setting has been suggested, to in turn improve a patient's ability to self-manage effectively.

“Annual check up/ MOT- bloods review/ PHM.”

“More face to face appointments with continuity of the same doctor to be seen.”

Participants believe clear communication and raising awareness of the services and support available to patients will result in them being better equipped to manage their own care.

“Maybe to make patients more aware of all the services previously listed as I wasn't aware of some.”

“As above a plan of action between the patient and health practitioner what's happened, going to happen, expected of the patient, following up required of the current conditions and if help needed. This could be done through a what's app or the GP app message service.”

Other comments or suggestions

Stonyhill Medical Practice

Some respondents took the opportunity to share additional positive feedback and this should be celebrated.

“Receptionists are really good and helpful. I hear many complaints from others about GP receptionists but I never have that problem at my surgery. I find them very professional and helpful.”

“Stoneyhill is the best doctors I have been with. 100% would recommend.”

“I really like the Stoneyhill medical I have always had a good experience with all the staff.”

In contrast, other participants suggested areas for improvement regarding staff manner and the way in which patients are treated.

“Ask some of the GPs and lead nurses to be more approachable to patients needs.”

“I think cases need reviewing and lessons planned. I have had systemic issues of failure without apology and never been offered support I have needed without me having to beg and chase directly.”

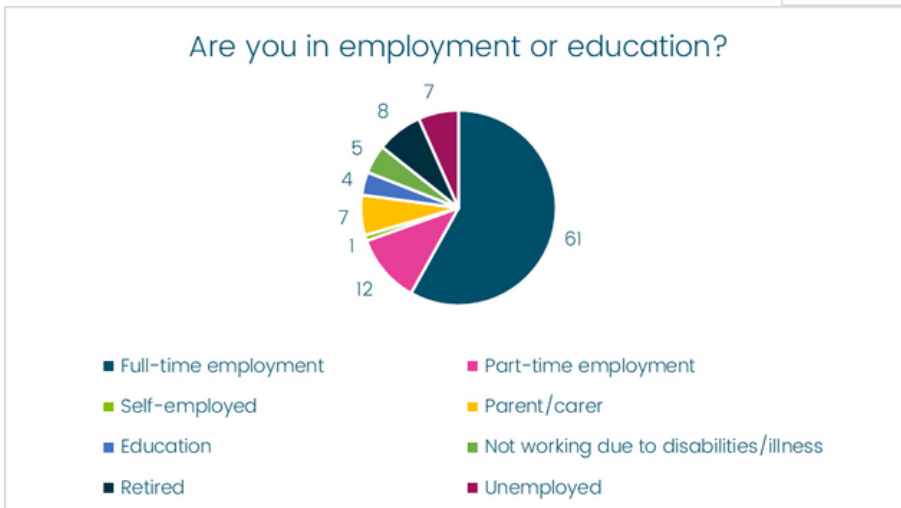
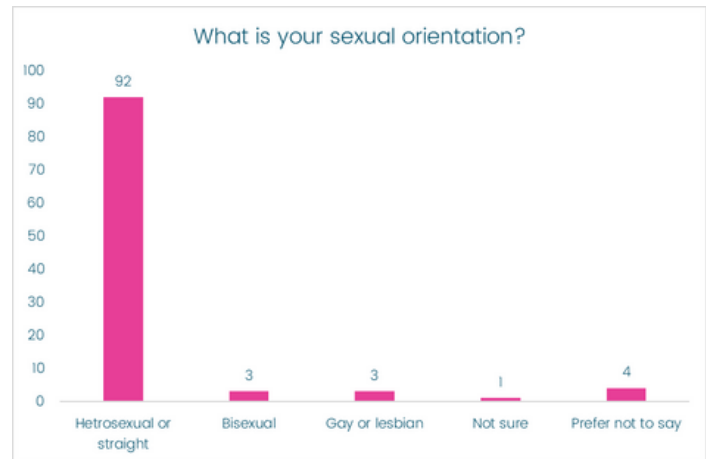
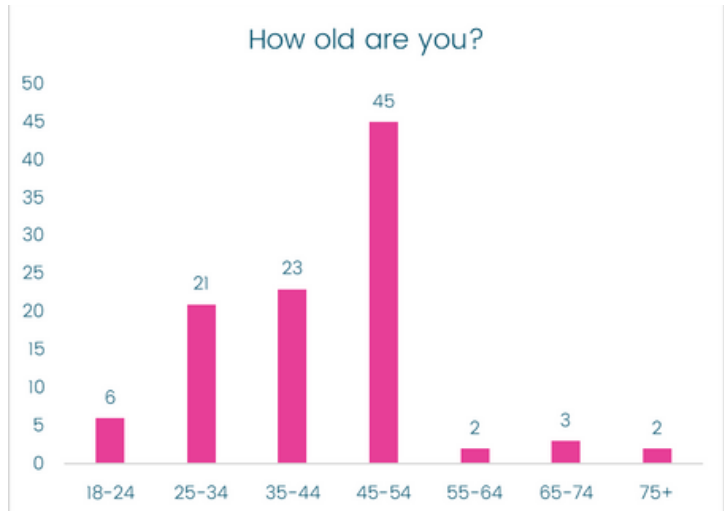
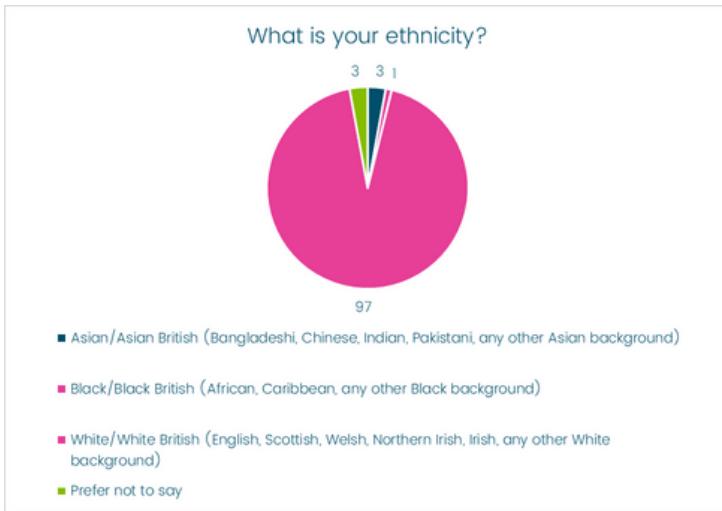
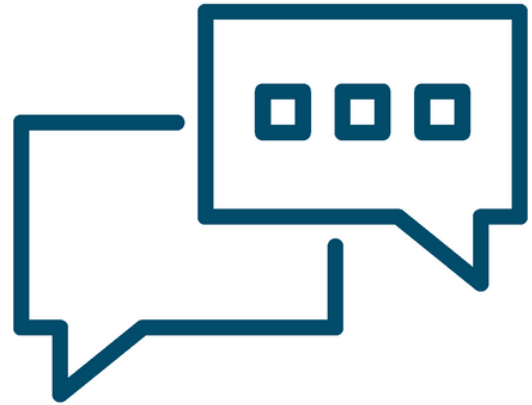
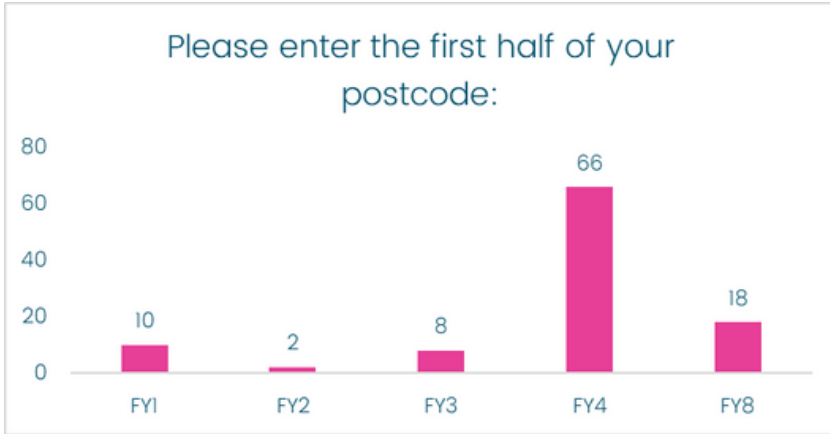
“This practise needs to put patients at the heart of what they do and not just profits!”

An additional improvement highlighted by patients at Stonyhill is regarding communication, with a particular emphasis on patients being kept informed.

“More follow up.”

“I went to walk in centre for a hole at the back of my ear. The nurses there took swabs and bandaged it for several days and said that my GP would be sent the results of the swab and come back to me. Nobody ever came back to me.”

Demographics





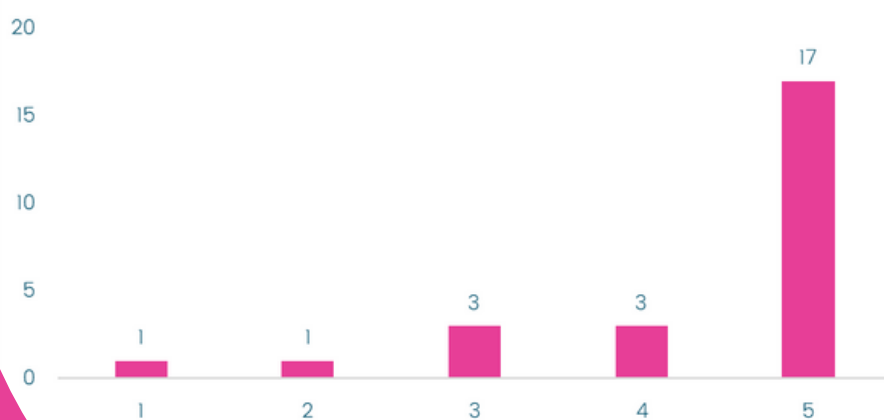
Arnold Medical Centre
Insights from patients



Feedback from 27 patients



How would you rate your overall experience of the GP service?



A spotlight on the positives

When patients were asked what was positive about their experience with Arnold Medical Centre, eighteen individuals referenced staff manner and attitude. Feedback was given in relation to GPs, nurses and receptionists, with staff being described as “polite”, “helpful”, “nice” and “friendly”.

“It's the receptionists – they're all very polite and understanding.”

“They are always so accommodating to get you in and give you the best care once you have seen the doctor.”

“The GP surgery is a friendly team. You can always get in to see the friendly doctors and nurses and the reception team are always happy to help.”

“Everything from reception, nurses and GPs – kindness, professionalism and communication.”

“Receptionists are lovely and doctors are trusted.”

In addition, six patients voiced positive feedback in regards to appointment accessibility at Arnold. Individuals highlighted the speed in which they can book face to face appointments, alongside short waiting times via the telephone.

“It's an amazing practice! Always feel so welcome and it's never too busy! Can always get a same day appointment within the hour for my son. It's great.”

“Every time I call the phone is answered within 10 minutes. The staff are always polite and appointments are never delayed longer than 5 minutes. Such a better experience than the doctors I had when I lived in Warrington.”

“Polite, clean and can always get appointments when needed.”

A further two patients commended the after care and post-appointment process, highlighting a diligent and professional service.

“They are always so accommodating to get you in and give you the best care once you have seen the doctor.”

“Have always being attended to nicely, and they follow up with one's treatment to make sure everything is alright.”



Improvement ideas

When patients were asked how their experience with Arnold Medical Centre could be improved, seven individuals felt that no improvement was required.

In contrast, seven patients highlighted issues in relation to appointment accessibility. Some individuals felt frustration due to experiencing lengthy waits when attending appointments. Other participants made recommendations in regards to the booking of appointments, expressing a need for this to be available via other platforms, such as the app, to facilitate patient convenience.

“Be able to book appointment through the app.”

“Some of the appointment setup is hopeless, when you come for an appointment at 10.45 and it isn't until 11 o'clock.”

“The appointment system needs to be better.”

“Online appointment booking would be fantastic.”

“The first time I waited 40 minutes over my time.”

“Face to face appointments with doctor.”

One individual voiced the need for a specific doctor to be allocated to each patient, enabling continuity of care.

“I know you can't always have your own GP, but would prefer to have my own GP to know I was seeing. It would help me as they are aware of you're medical history.”

Three patients felt that doctors becoming more personable, engaging in open conversation and demonstrating empathy during appointments would improve their experience at Arnold.

“The doctor I spoke to was extremely rude. She made me feel as if she had no time to talk to me. Never took me seriously and had absolutely terrible bedside manner. To have someone that you are meant to trust treat you in this way is appalling. If I choose continue with this GP practice, I will never speak to this doctor again. Absolutely disgusted.”

“When I explained what my pains were/itching I was met with ‘What do you want to do about it?’ in a very abrupt manner. I thought how I am supposed to know, that's why I'm coming to you. Generally a friendly manner would improve the practice.”

Improvement ideas

In addition, two patients shared areas for improvement in relation to data, GDPR and GP communication with secondary care. Individuals highlighted errors in protocol and data accuracy, contributing to feelings of frustration.

“The administration side needs to improve. When my husband was in hospital at the Vic due to heart problems, they said we would get letter in a few days. I phoned the hospital and they couldn’t understand because he wasn’t down for anything. We were told to re-refer through the GP. The GP didn’t want to do it again. I had to fight for it. The communication between GP and hospital needs to improve.”

“They also sent my details off to Birmingham thinking I was dead but it was another person of the same name. They also had someone else’s details on the computer.”

What matters most to patients

When patients were asked what matters most to them when accessing GP services, eleven individuals referenced staff demeanour and personalised care. Respondents expressed a need for staff to show compassion, empathy and active listening skills.

“A caring doctor who listens to your needs.”

“Friendly staff and great care.”

“Professionalism, good communication, listening skills, empathetic and compassionate.”

“When I come in generally speaking you are treated nicely. One nurse in particular is superb. The nursing side of it is really good. Appointments being on time. The office manager has always been very pleasant.”

“That I am listened too and not rushed out of the door.”

“The way you are treated.”

“A calm doctor who doesn’t make me feel bad for coming to the doctor.”

Similarly, four patients stated that feeling believed and receiving the correct treatment mattered most to them.

“I get a reason or solution to my problem.”

“Right treatment.”

“That I get help I need and also they believe me because one time they didn’t believe me.”

“Someone who takes me seriously regarding my daughters care and listening to my concerns.”

In addition, four patients stated that efficient accessibility to GP appointments mattered most to them, voicing the need to be able to see a doctor when required.

“Ability to get an appointment.”

“Being able to get through to my GP whenever I need his service.”

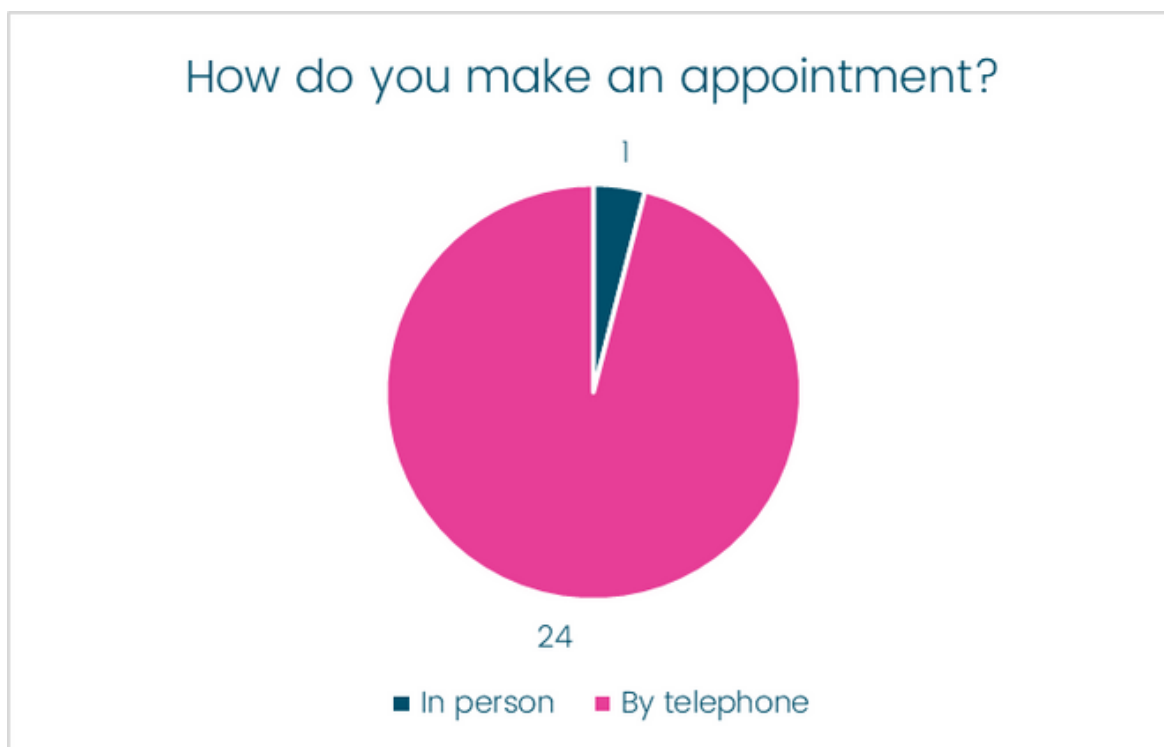
“That I get an appointment.”

One individual stated a preference for specific communication methods to be utilised.

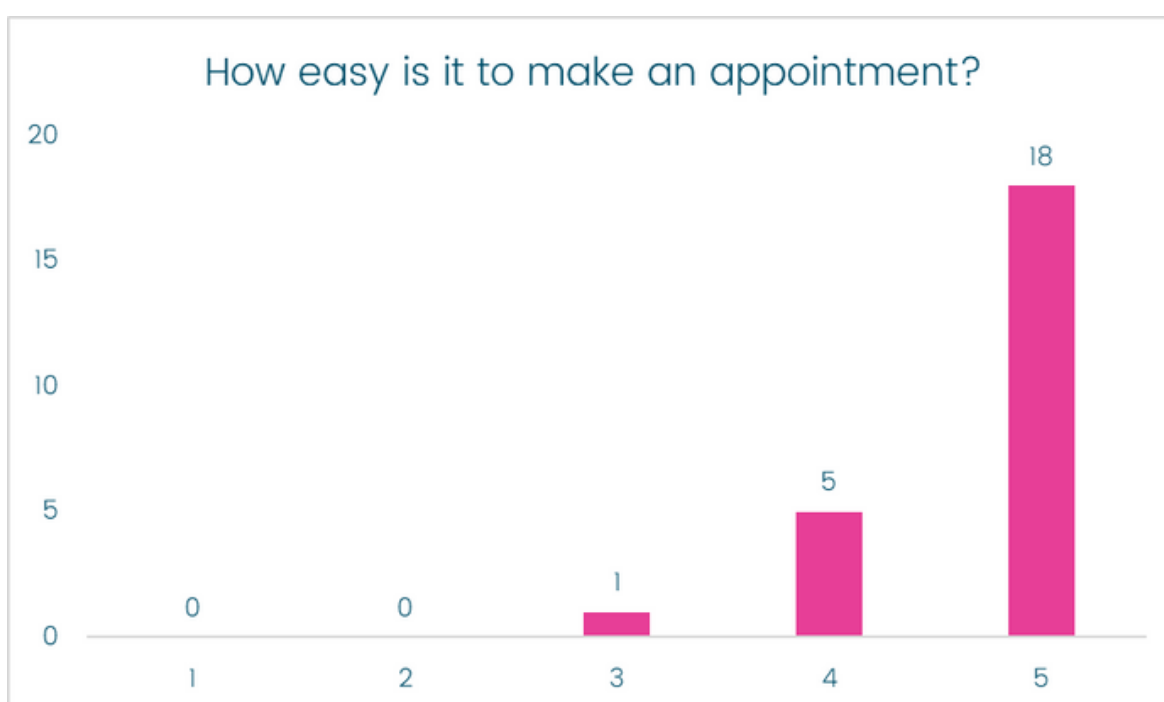
“Trying to keep up with information about my health condition. Through the post would be better for me.”

Appointments

Making appointments

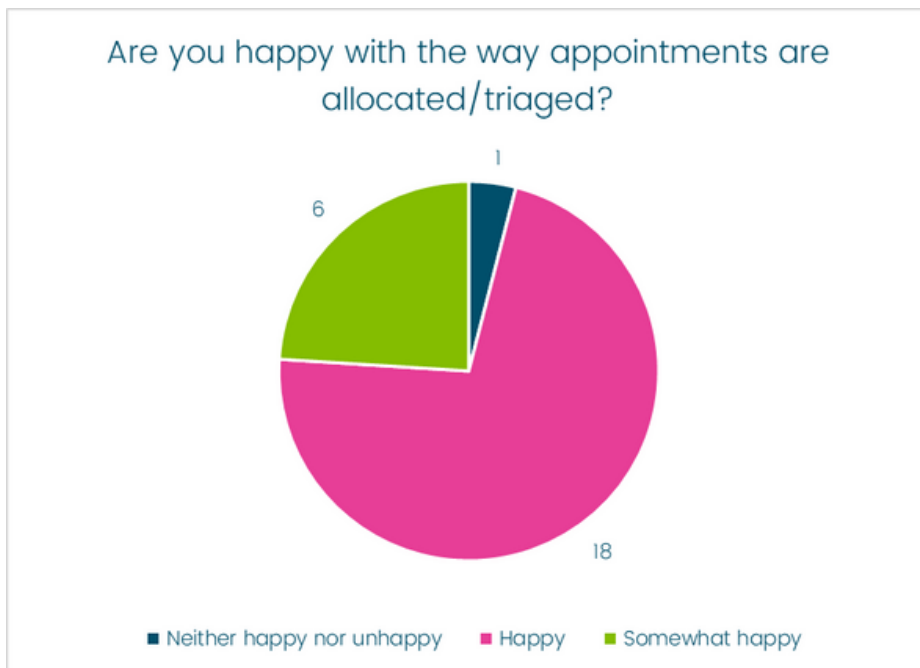


Ease of appointment booking



Appointments

Appointment allocation and triage



Patient feedback

Six respondents felt happy or somewhat happy with the way in which appointments are allocated and triaged, primarily due to the ease in which they can access appointments. More specifically, one patient made reference to the speed in which the phone is answered, sharing positive feedback to celebrate.

“No further comments on appointments everything first class.”

“I’ve always managed to get appointment. The longest I’ve waited is around 15 minutes.”

“Never ever had a problem regarding any appointments.”

“The telephone appointment is easy when I feel unwell and can’t move from the house but I do prefer face to face appointments.”

“Phone is always answered quickly and efficiently.”

In contrast, one individual voiced the need for appointments to be available to book via online platforms.

“Online please.”

Further to this, one patient voiced their frustrations regarding the triage process.

“Didn’t like the pre-appointment phone call because there was no point in it, I had to come in anyway.”

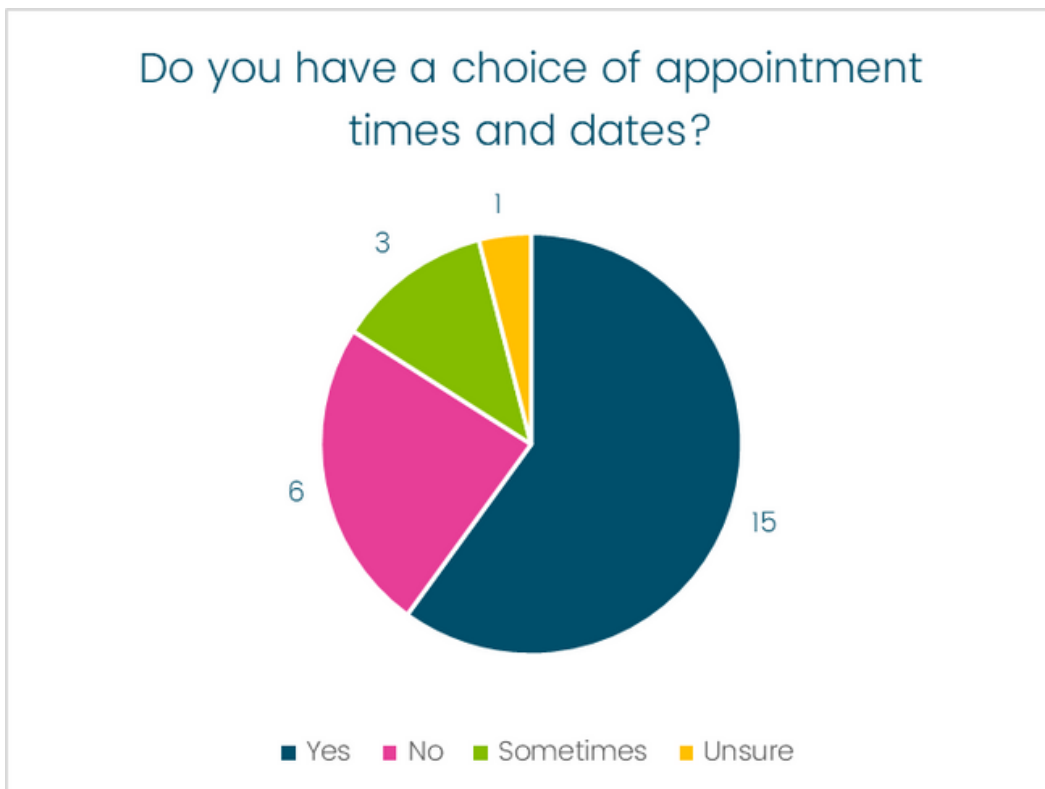
Appointments

Contact via telephone



On average, patients rated ease of contacting their GP by phone as 8.2.

Appointment choice



Appointments

Patient feedback

Most participants were satisfied with the appointments provided to suit their needs.

“They will always try there best to give appointment to patient's preference.”

“Always get appointments to suit my timetable.”

“They say ‘does that suit you?’ so there is somewhat of a choice.”

However, two patients found that they could not easily get appointments to suit them, unless it was urgent.

“Not unless it's urgent.”

Furthermore, one individual raised concerns about the confirmation of an appointment.

“One time they offered me an appointment and I said I couldn't do it but they kept sending me text reminders for it.”

Technology

Technology use

The majority of respondents from Arnold Medical Centre thought that the use of technology was positive and beneficial to patients. This was particularly true for appointment booking and check-in at surgeries.

“I use the check-in screen and find it alright – it’s easy to use.”

“Our doctors is very good as there is easy access to the app to do everything you need.”

“On-line access is OK and my parents can do it.”

“We cope well with it and personally wouldn’t change anything.”

Additionally, one individual liked the use of telephone appointments as it was convenient and allowed for a quick diagnosis.

“Telephone doctor appointments are amazing and convenient if you describe your symptoms and it is something they can diagnose over the phone then they will. It’s great as it helps more clients to be booked in.”

With that being said, five participants raised concerns about the use of technology in GP services, particularly when considering those who are digitally excluded.

“What if the network goes down – how would you use the technology?”

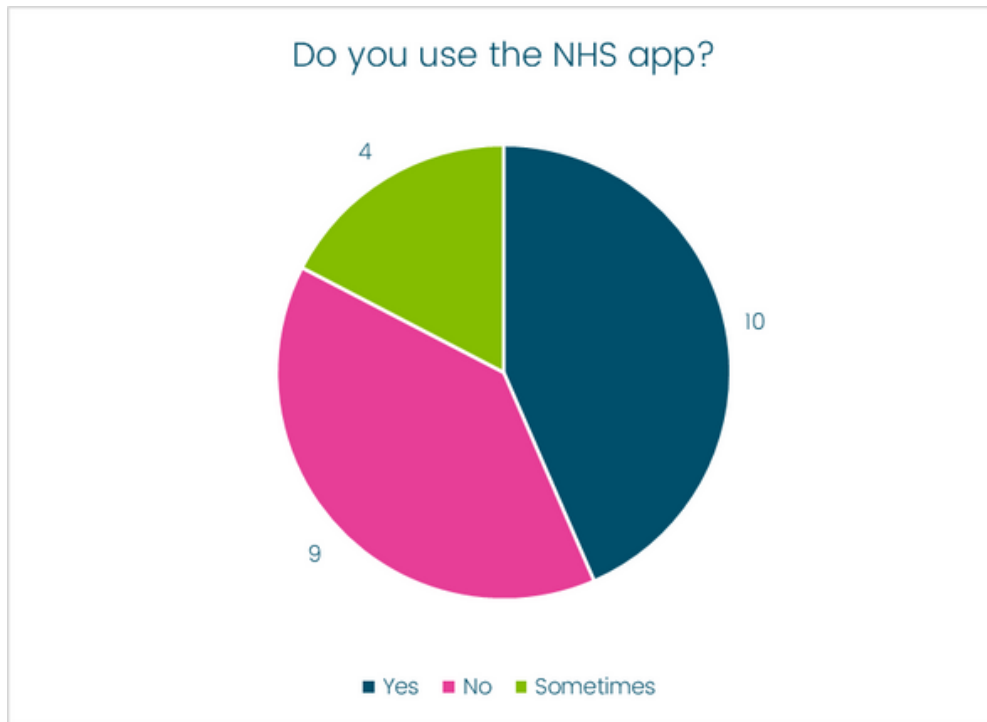
“Other people, such as the elderly, may not be able to use technology as easily.”

“Not everyone is able to use any technology.”

“You can tell sometimes, they (GPs) are Googling things on screen when you are in an appointment which I find quite off-putting.”

Technology

NHS App



NHS App- How patients find it

Five respondents feel the NHS app is difficult to use or does not fulfil what is required.

"Complicated."

"Confused sometimes with it, because it seems to repeat the same questions."

"I can't book appointments on it for my GP."

"I can't use it because of my lack of understanding."

In contrast to this, four patients found the NHS app convenient and easy to navigate.

"Easy to use."

"Very easy."

"All on my phone."

Technology

NHS App – What stops patient use

The most common reason for patients not using the NHS app is because they do not know how to navigate this and are hesitant to learn.

“I’m 85.”

“I don’t know how to go about it.”

“I really don’t know how to.”

A further reason participants provided for not utilising the app is because they try to avoid technology.

“I stay away from technology myself.”

“Want to speak to a person.”

Additional Roles Awareness

	Yes I'm aware of it and use it	Yes I'm aware of it but don't use it	No I am not aware of it
Mental health nurse	3	8	11
First contact podiatrist	3	7	12
First contact physiotherapist	4	6	12
Social prescribing workers	1	4	17
Health and wellbeing coach	1	6	15
Pharmacist	11	7	4
Cancer care coordinator	1	7	14
Paramedic	4	6	12
Dietitian	2	5	15
Trainee associate psychological practitioner	1	4	17
Pharmacy tech	3	4	15

Additional Roles

Use and experience

Three patients provided feedback about pharmacy services, as opposed to the pharmacist employed via the PCN. The following quotes display the confusion and lack of knowledge around the pharmacist and pharmacy tech.

“Pharmacy do my meds.”

“Pharmacy was friendly.”

Two patients had seen the podiatrist and found them to be excellent.

“Podiatrist is first class.”

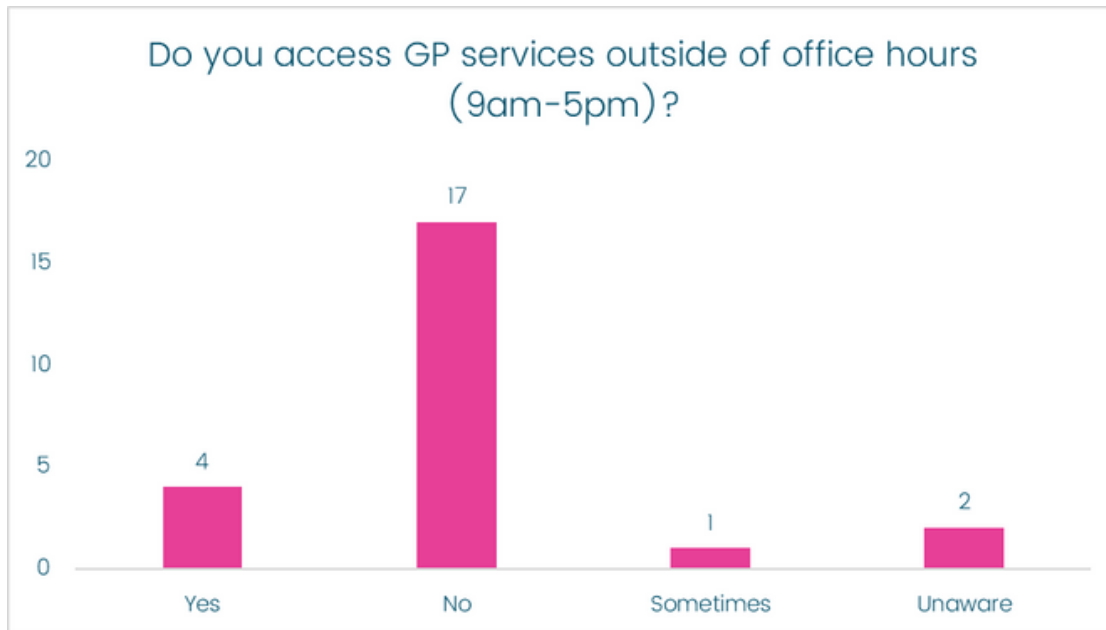
A further two respondents had visited the physiotherapist, with one finding them to be “first class.”

“The new physio referred me to someone higher up because I needed intensive treatment. I thought it was handy having them in the surgery.”

Another patient had visited the mental health nurse who helped them to get the therapy and support they needed.

Enhanced Access

Feedback from patients



Three patients were satisfied with the enhanced access at South Shore Primary Care Centre.

“They try and allocate you the proper service.”

Despite this, one patient felt dissatisfied with the service at Arnold.

“They should stop asking the question ‘what do you want me to do about it?’ and provide a solution or reason.”

Staying Well

Feedback from patients

The predominant method used by patients to keep fit and well is through exercise.

“Doing the chores around the house.”

“Dog walking twice a day.”

“6/7 gym classes per week.”

“Regular walking.”

“Swimming.”

“Zumba.”

Alongside this, another frequent way in which participants stay well is through a healthy diet and reducing consumption of unhealthy substances.

“Eat well, a balanced diet.”

“Eating healthy meals.”

“Get enough food, restrict caffeine intake.”

“Cook every day – no takeaways.”

“Don’t smoke and don’t really drink.”

However, three patients do not feel they manage to stay fit and well.

“I don’t stay fit and well. I have support workers who come and help me and a puppy that keeps me happy.”

“I struggle due to my mental health.”

“I have become a hermit since COVID.”

Giving Feedback

Giving feedback to the practice

When asked how feedback is given in regards to Arnold Medical Centre, three patients do so via questionnaires.

“Through the link that is sent to me after my appointment.”

Alongside this, two patients provide feedback via other means, such as social media or the Patient Participation Group.

“I’m in the patient forum group, every 6 weeks we go to the Molyneux Centre and chat about our experiences.”

Another respondent stated they have not previously provided feedback, but they would be happy to provide feedback in the future, preferably via text message.

Giving Feedback

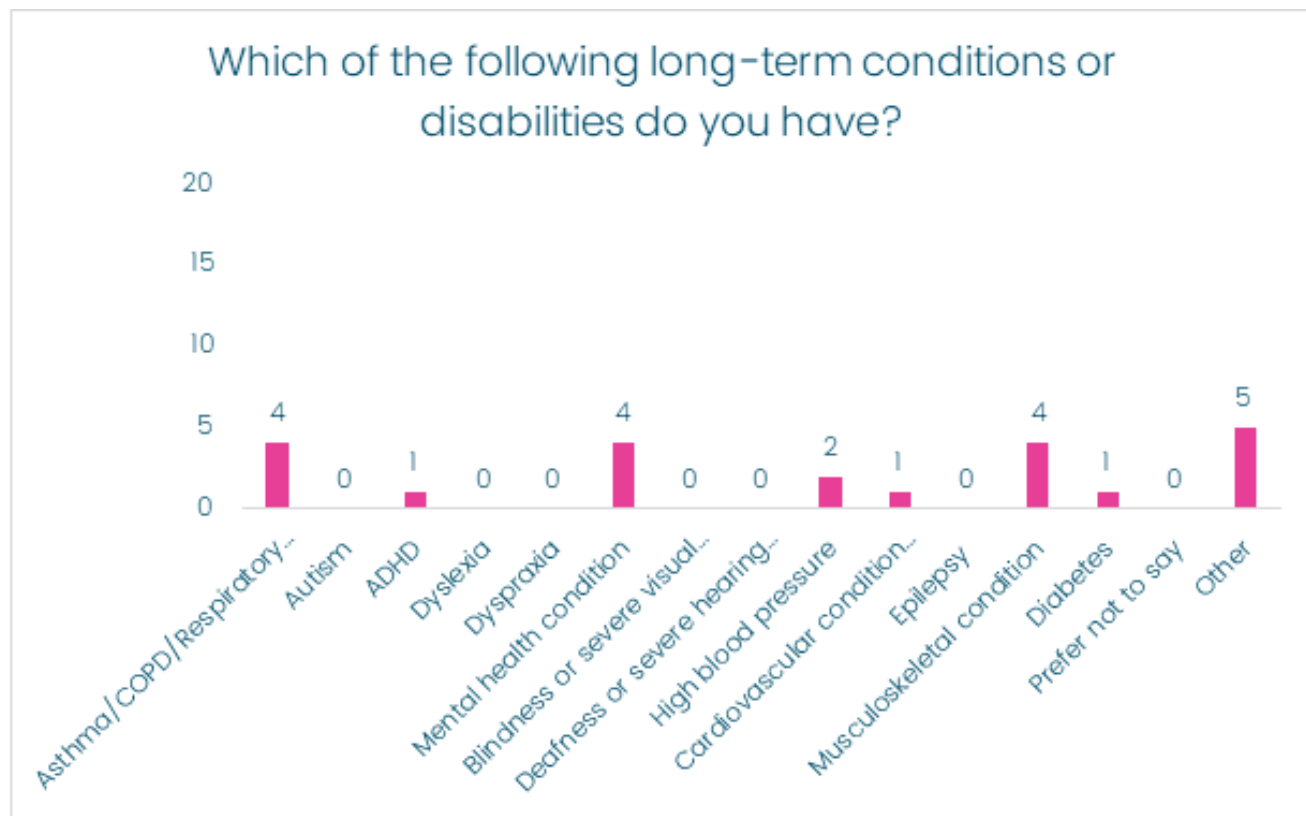
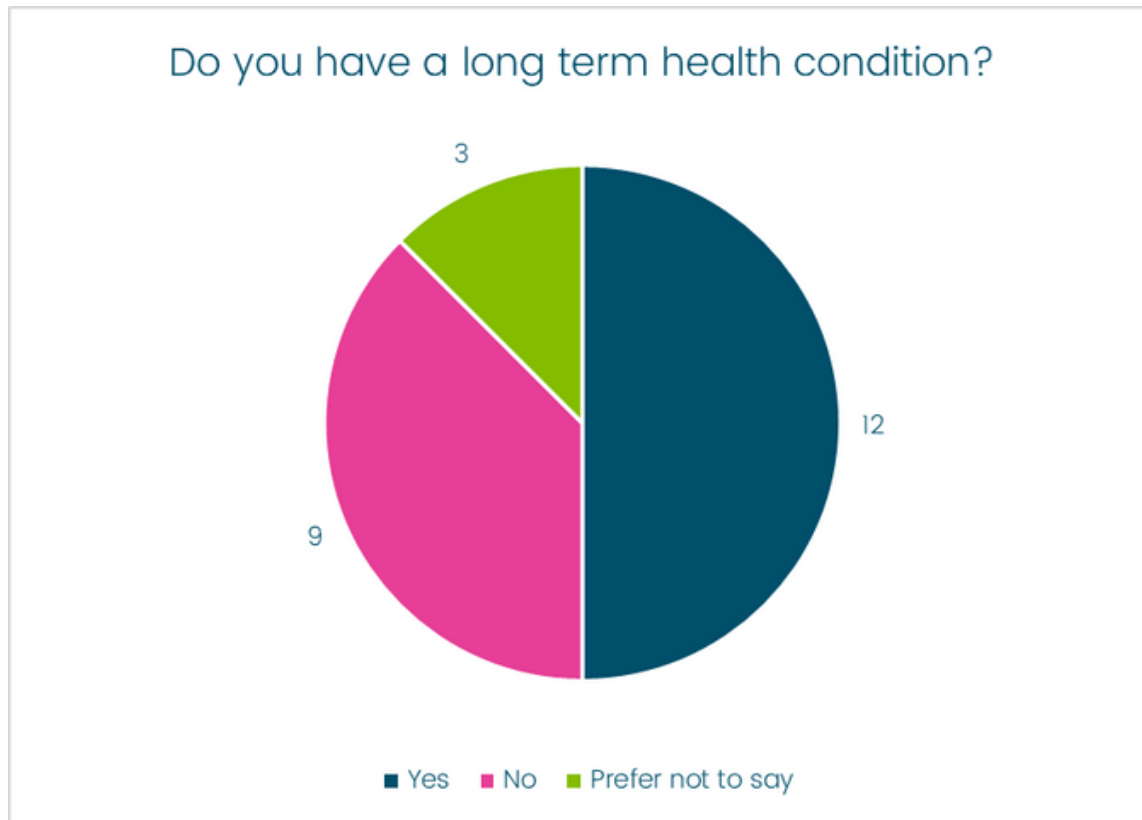
Could anything make giving feedback easier for patients

Five participants are happy with the process for providing feedback and do not feel that anything would make this easier.

Despite this, one patient voiced their struggles with completing questionnaires.

“Sometimes I don’t understand questions as words all run into one.”

Long Term Health Conditions



Long Term Health Conditions Management

Primarily, responses suggest that patients manage their long-term conditions using regular prescribed medications.

“I am on long-term medication, managed by the GP.”

In addition, some patients have additional support and/or focus on their mental health.

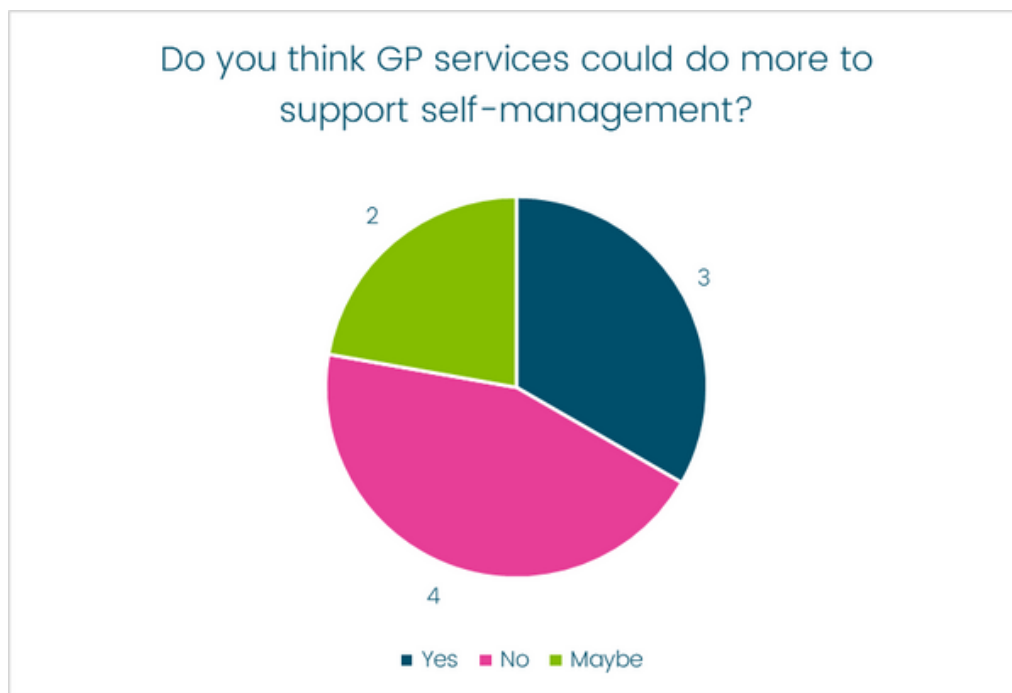
“I have an adult social care worker and go to a mental health group at Blackpool Football Club.”

“I keep active and try to keep a positive mind set.”

Other patients manage on their own and utilise personal connections.

Long Term Health Conditions

General Practice and self management



Three patients felt that detailed advice about how to best manage various conditions would be beneficial.

“Advice about diet, exercise and complications that may occur...”

“More help with diabetes.”

“More leaflets about people’s conditions.”

Furthermore, one respondent would benefit from this information being provided in leaflet form, available in large print.

“...so they can read it and help themselves. Best to have it in large print as well so it’s accessible for everyone.”

A further suggestion was for discussion groups to be promoted or arranged, facilitating support.

“Have organised small groups, this would be good for any conditions. People wouldn’t feel alone which would be beneficial mentally and would provide more understanding of how to cope on a daily basis.”

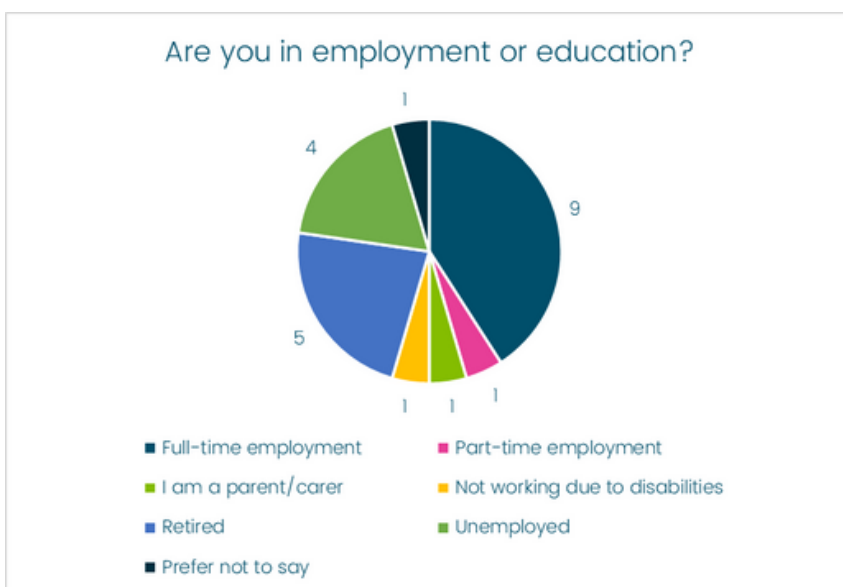
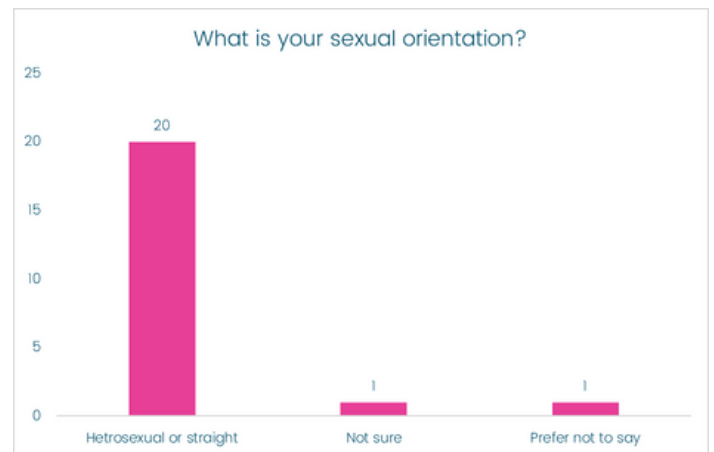
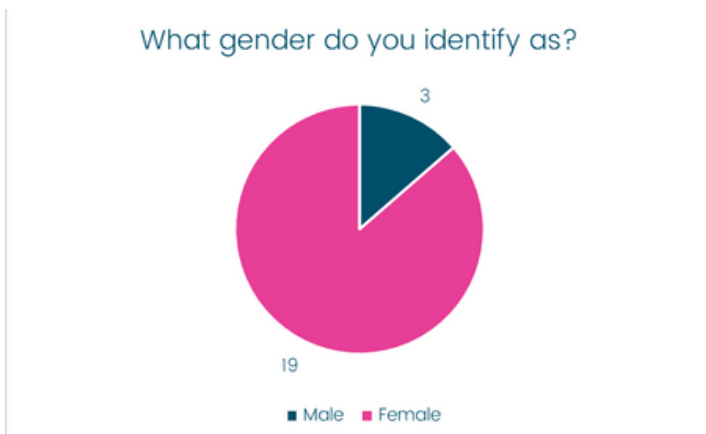
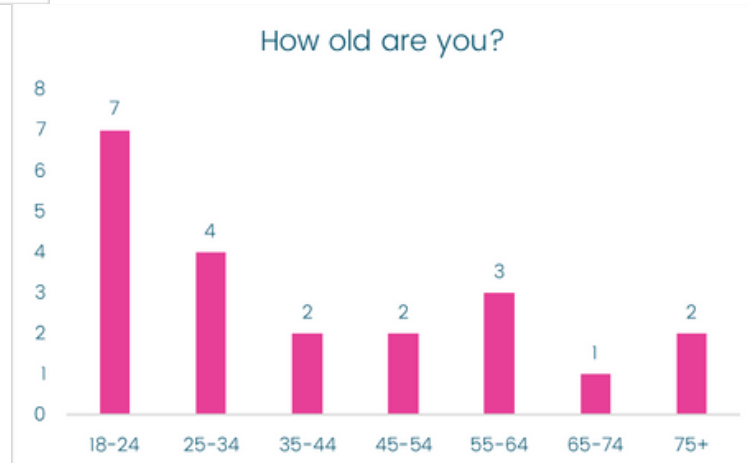
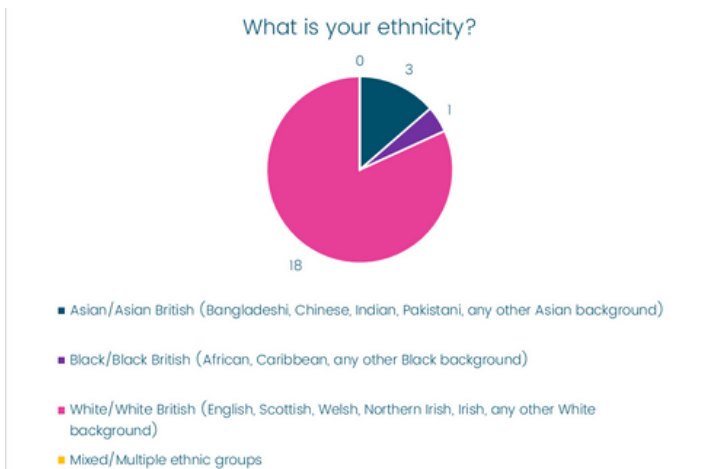
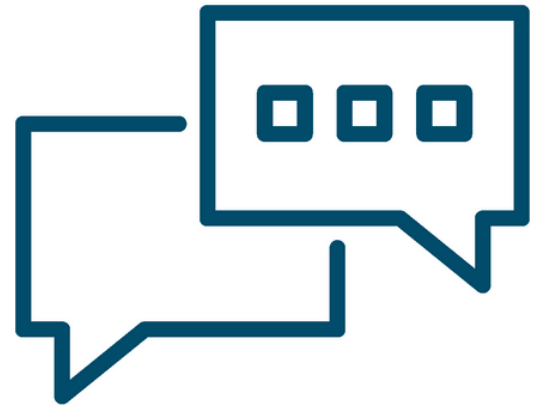
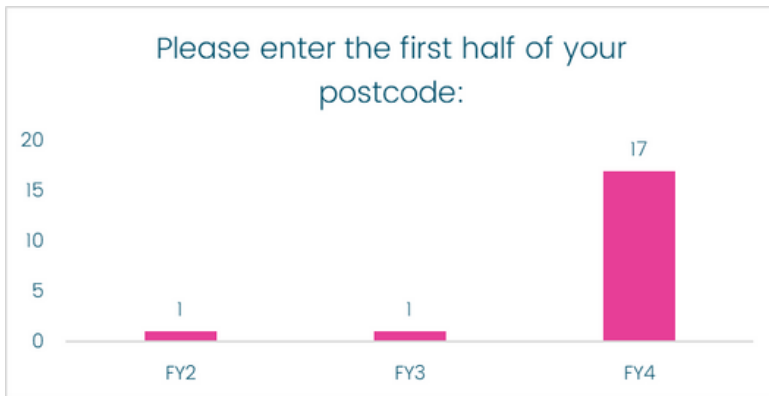
Other comments or suggestions

Arnold Medical Centre

One patient provided additional feedback.

“They say they have a dietician but I've never been offered this service. I would use the dietician if I was offered it. The medication I'm on promotes weight increase, but I'd love some support around this to help manage my weight and eat healthily.”

Demographics





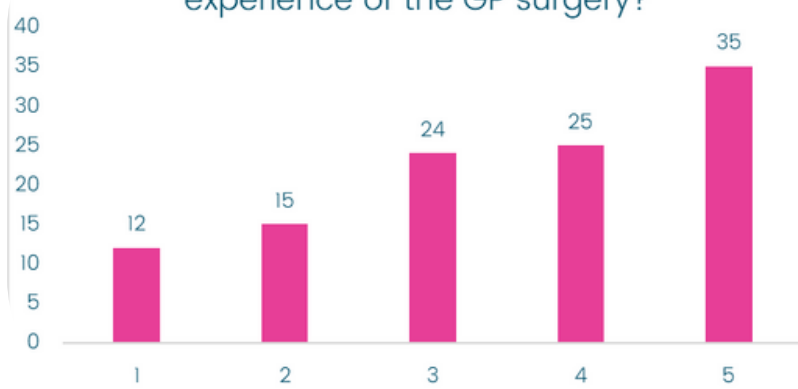
Abbey Dale Medical Centre
Insights from patients



Feedback from 111 patients



How would you rate your overall experience of the GP surgery?



A spotlight on the positives

When patients were asked what was positive about their experience with Abbey Dale Medical Centre, fifty-nine individuals referenced helpful staff manner and attitude. Seventeen of these individuals made specific reference to positive interactions with nurses, and fourteen patients acknowledged friendly reception staff. Patients stated that staff were “polite” and “approachable”.

“Receptionists are really friendly and helpful, especially when you feel worried.”

“Brilliant staff and my doctor is amazing very professional.”

“The staff are always friendly and really take the time to listen to me.”

“I especially want to mention a nurse at the practice. She has been a huge help to me over the past year, and I cannot praise her highly enough.”

“The staff on reception, the doctors and nurses are all really helpful.”

Sixteen individuals stated that easy access to appointments made their experience at Abbey Dale positive. Patients noted short waiting times, appointment availability at very little notice and proactive staff who try and facilitate accessibility where possible.

“I’ve always been given an appointment for within a week (at most), usually the next day if it’s a new thing. I feel looked after by the practice and that goes a long way on its own.”

“You can always get an appointment at Abbey Dale, they are very accommodating and I’ve found most of the practitioners there wonderful to deal with.”

“The staff always try to get you an appointment at the practice as soon as possible.”

“Can always get an appointment when needed.”

Nine patients expressed satisfaction with feeling heard by their GP, receiving clear communication and experiencing an efficient service.

“Communication is excellent with the surgery.”

“My named GP is very proactive and listens to me.”

“Listen to your problem intensity.”

“Very efficient.”



A spotlight on the positives

Furthermore, six patients felt their experience was positive due to the efficiency they encounter when ordering prescriptions, highlighting the ease with which this can be done.

“Ordering my prescription is quick and easy.”

“Prescription ordering line and the paramedic who listens to you.”

“Prescription service is fast and efficient.”

“Repeat prescription work flawless.”

Two individuals noted that Abbey Dale is highly regarded for being “very clean and tidy”.



Improvement ideas

When patients were asked how their experience with Abbey Dale Medical Centre could be improved, twenty-eight individuals stated enabling quicker access to GP services, with patients currently experiencing long waiting times and a lack of available appointments. Three of these individuals made specific reference to limited availability outside of school and work hours, highlighting a gap in knowledge regarding enhanced access. Four patients voiced their preference for face to face appointments.

“It would be helpful if they can consider how people can get an appointment after 3.00pm. My husband has found it very difficult at times to see a GP due to his working hours and traveling home. He has had to take a day’s holiday sometimes to do this just to see a doctor.”

“Being able to get appointments for doctors that aren’t 2 weeks further in to the calendar.”

“Face to face appointments returning, shorter waiting times for even a telephone appointment, our practice is currently 3-4 weeks before you can even speak to someone.”

“Getting to see a doctor and an appointment is shocking.”

“Waiting times to see a GP are totally unacceptable. Two weeks for a telephone consultation or four weeks for a face to face is just not good enough and desperately needs to be improved.”

“The way patients are dealt with when trying to make appointments has improved but sometimes you need to plan being ill 3 or more weeks in advance for appointments.”

Sixteen patients felt that doctors becoming more personable, actively listening, and demonstrating empathy during their interactions would improve their experience at Abbey Dale.

“Teach the doctors empathy, develop a patient-doctor relationship and a basic Bedside manner.”

“Doctors could act like they are interested in what you’re saying a-bit more instead of fobbing you off after 3 minutes.”

“I believe some GP’s need to remember that patients are humans and it might be their 16th appointment of the day but it is the patients 1st. Empathy and general eye contact would be nice rather than talking to us whilst looking at the screen.”

“Drs listening and hearing what is being said and not just palmed off.”

“Yes more doctors ... Less patients... And doctors that actually listen to the patient.”

“Sparing you a minute to explain things and actually listening rather than talking over you and typing away in the computer.”

Improvement ideas ctd.

In addition, seven patients expressed a need for an improved booking system, with some individuals suggesting the online appointment booking option be reinstated, providing convenience and ease. Individuals voiced that this would help to alleviate existing challenges in accessing appointments via the telephone, often facing long waiting times.

“Also hard to get an appointment now. It was so easy to book it online via MyGP App.”

“Online booking for appointments.”

“Put the online appointment back on line so we don’t have to wait forever in a queue to get through.”

“The ability to book appointments through the app would be most useful to me personally.”

Further to this, six patients felt that improving prescription management would help improve their experience at Abbey Dale. Providing options for prescription pick-up at the surgery, improving turnaround time, ensuring accurate notifications are sent and careful attention to detail in repeat prescriptions were voiced by patients, enabling for a more efficient service.

“Maybe still allowing you to pick your prescription up from the surgery as designated pharmacy not always open later especially if you work till 6pm.”

“Quicker turn around with prescriptions being sent. Last order took 5days before being able to collect.”

“Don't tell people their prescription will be ready and then not have them signed off.”

“The time it takes to get the script.”

“Take more care when doing repeat prescriptions. So many times things missing.”

Three patients expressed a need for prompt test results, communicated clearly by qualified staff, in a timely manner.

“I do find it crazy that when you ring after 2pm as instructed to get test result, they aren't qualified in their own words to give you your results and I think it would make sense after 2 pm, the phone extension was covered by somebody that could actually explain your results to you.”

“Please give results out, I had a suspicious lump removed months ago, I was told I would receive my results within 2-4 weeks and heard nothing back, I kept ringing and every time I got through after waiting on the phone, they told me they have nothing for me. Even if it was not considered serious I would like to know what this lump was as I am now left with a scar on my back and I am still upset as I have no answers.”

“Would like my detailed blood results. There's no specific numbers provided.”

Improvement ideas ctd.

Other feedback related to the management of long term health conditions, including reducing waiting times and more frequent medication reviews.

“The physio waitlist is currently very long and I’m unable to exercise while I wait as it seems to be worsening my knee pain. I appreciate this is an NHS-wide issue.”

“Medication reviews – mine are over 3 years overdue. When I have asked the GP themselves about this, I have been told that they are very behind and not to worry. But I could be taking medication for no reason, or it may be doing more harm than good! I believe I am also supposed to have certain things checked on an annual basis and I haven’t had this done.”

“Yes, when dealing with patients with sleep disorders, back spasms and anxiety, they currently don’t do enough to alleviate the symptoms.”

“Take care with autistic patients. Get trained about diversity and disabilities.”

What matters most to patients

When patients were asked what matters most to them when accessing GP services, fifty-five individuals stated that improved access to GP appointments would prove beneficial. Patients voiced the desire to be able to see a doctor within a quick or reasonable time frame when required, rather than waiting several weeks for an appointment. Some individuals expressed the need for a range of appointment availability to be offered, with an additional six patients highlighting a preference for face to face appointments.

“Actually being able to see a doctor face to face and not just being offered an appointment in 3-4 years’ time.”

“Being able to see someone when you need to, not in a few weeks’ time.”

“Availability of appointments.”

“Getting a face to face appointment rather than a phone appointment.”

Fourteen patients expressed a desire to be listened to and feel heard by their GP, having the opportunity to ask questions without feeling dismissed. Similarly, an additional six patients felt that knowledgeable doctors who can be trusted mattered most to them.

“Being listened to and not feeling liked I’m being dismissed.”

“Given time to talk and be listened to.”

“That I can trust what my GP says. This has not been the case. I was fobbed off but actually needed treatment. I gained a second opinion and was sorted relatively easily. My GP had said my bloods were fine, they were not.”

“Getting the right help and a doctor that actually listens to you.”

“Having the appropriate time to talk to the GP and discuss all the options available.”

“Someone who is able to spare me the time to listen, and then advise or reassure me as needed, but only after an open minded fully informed discussion. I’ve asked several times to change my medication dosage in line with what the hospital consultant has told me, but it has never happened and I never get a response.”

“Feeling listened to and valued as a patient, as well as feeling like you are being given good treatment.”

What matters most to patients ctd.

In addition, thirteen patients voiced that caring, polite and empathetic staff mattered most to them.

“Being treated seriously and with empathy.”

“Care and compassion.”

“Caring politeness staff.”

“A friendly, courteous manner always helps when calling with your problem which the reception team always have done with me.”

“Staff being friendly when you are already anxious.”

“Friendly, professional.”

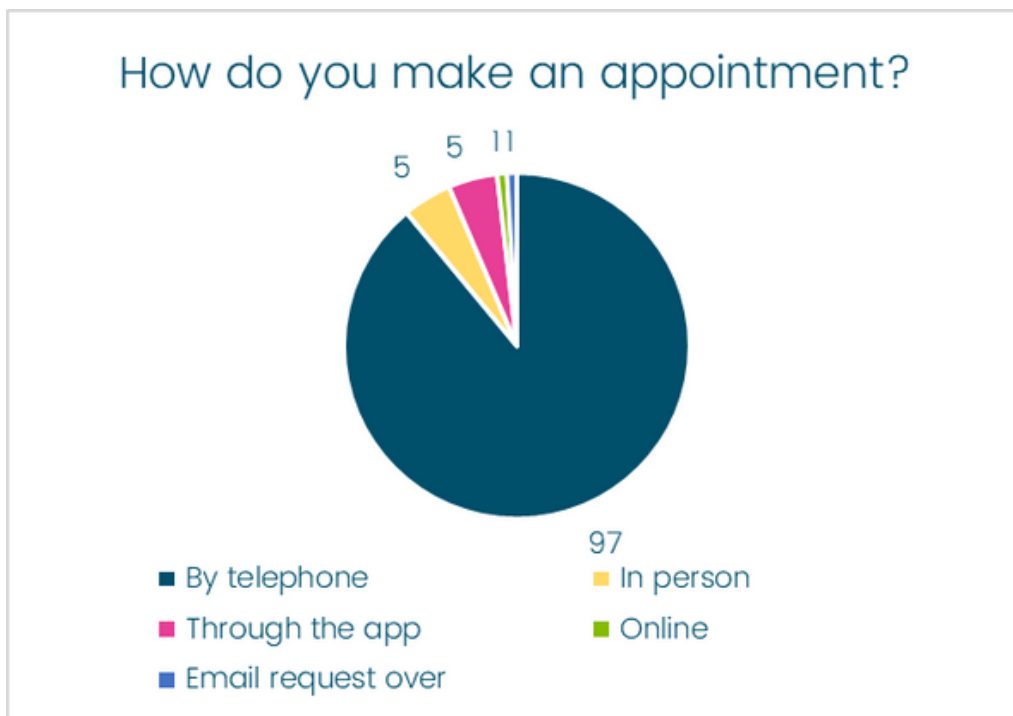
Other patient feedback voiced difficulties with booking methods, alongside receiving specialist support when required.

“You can’t get an appointment on the app.”

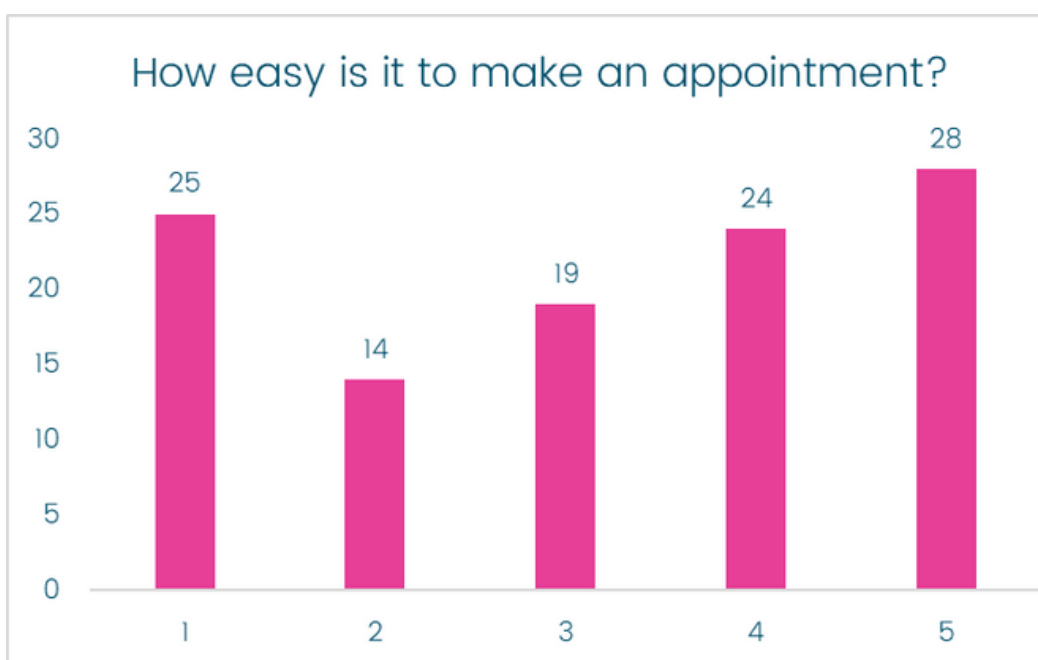
“That you get directed to specialists when needed.”

Appointments

Making appointments

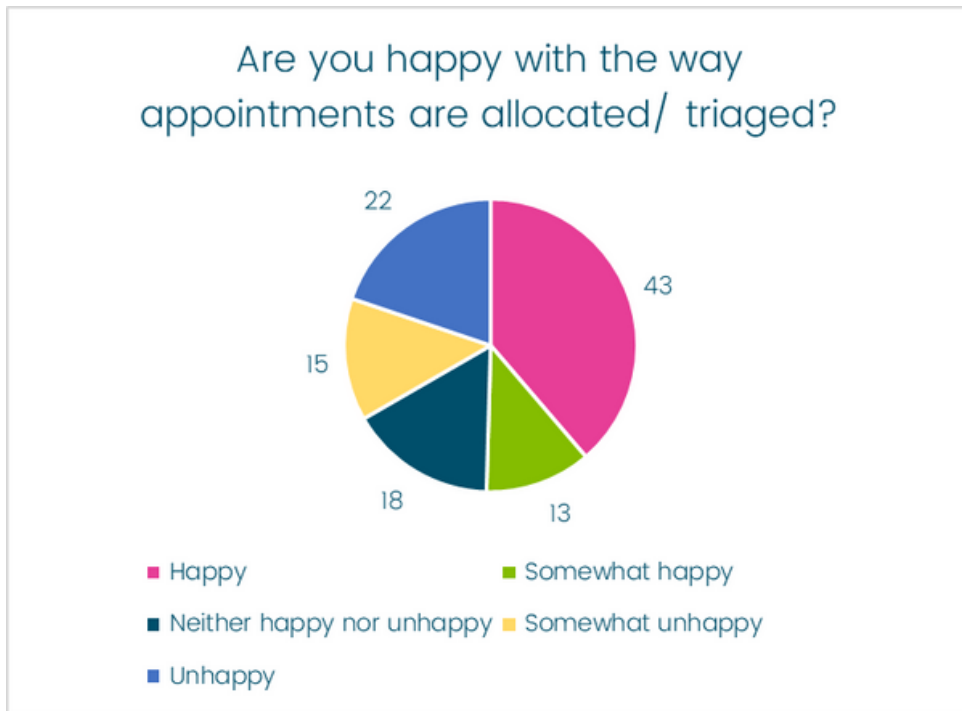


Ease of appointment booking



Appointments

Appointment allocation and triage



Patient feedback

Twenty-five patients felt unhappy with the way in which appointments are allocated and triaged, primarily due to lengthy waiting times. Patients voiced frustrations regarding a lack of available appointments despite calling at 8am, alongside a 3-4 wait to see a doctor.

“Cut waiting time for appointments. When patients are I’ll they need to see a doctor straight away, not in 2 weeks’ time.”

“I have suffered what may be irreparable damage to my hearing because it took over 2 months to be seen by a nurse even I should have seen GP.”

“Most days appointments gone by 8.10.”

“Never appointments available. You get told they have one in 6-8 weeks time, as if you should know in advance that you’re going to get sick.”

“Speaks for itself. Ring at 8am and on the phone ages and often no appointments. Why not make one for next day?”

“Sometimes a review set by the GP is difficult to book. You ask for an appointment because that’s what the GP has told you to do.”

Patient feedback ctd

Additionally, eleven patients experienced difficulties when booking GP appointments. Specific reference was made to the length in which individuals are on hold when booking via the telephone, with appointments being unavailable when answered by reception staff.

“Takes forever to get through as everyone is trying at the same time but all the appointments are gone when you actually do get through.”

“It would be great to be able to request an appointment via an app. Some employers don’t allow staff to be on the phone to the go for an hour – I start work at 8:45 so sometimes can’t wait more than 45 minutes as I need to start work.”

“It’s a lottery. I feel for the older folk. Having to ring at 8 am then being told appointments have already gone for that day because you was in a queue.”

“You cannot ever get through on the phone. If you ring in the morning you will be in a queue and often you get cut off whilst in the queue despite already waiting a protracted length of time, starting the process yet again. Yes if I walk to the practice I can get an appointment straight away within minutes. So ironically it’s quicker to go in person than to phone.”

“If I call it takes far too long to answer the phone.”

Eight patients felt happy with the way in which appointments are allocated and triaged, sharing positive feedback to celebrate.

“Have always been able to book an appt with someone who is able to advise and prescribe appropriately.”

“I sent an email with my symptoms. I got one back promptly saying to make an appointment.”

“I don’t usually have to wait long for an appointment, and I have the option of a phone appt if I just need advice, which is appreciated.”

“I’ve nothing negative to say. My experience has been positive throughout.”

Five patients referenced feeling frustration towards receptionist’s and their role, with some patients feeling they withhold appointments. Additionally, some individuals felt reluctant to discuss their medical conditions with reception staff when booking an appointment.

“Always questioned by the receptionist and sometimes made to feel like your ailments aren’t important or urgent enough.”

“Sometimes you’re expected to explain to the receptionist in front of other people what the issue is.”

Patient feedback ctd

Four patients shared other feedback relating to diagnostics and referrals.

“I was told I had cancer then was told it was a mistake then nobody contacted me for 2 months, despite my desperate calls for clarity.”

“It is often a 'bums on seats' situation and a lottery as to whether you get the right person or another who may not be right for your problem.”

“I’ve had difficulty in getting referred to a dermatologist even having had several confirmed skin cancer removals. GPs initially always disregard my concerns....even though I know my own symptoms. I have to be in some cases rude or extremely firm to get them.”

“I have had good same day experiences and others I have been given a phone appointment 5 days later for things that the clinician on the phone said they had no idea why I was given a phone appointment as I was needed to be seen in person. This has happened multiple times.”

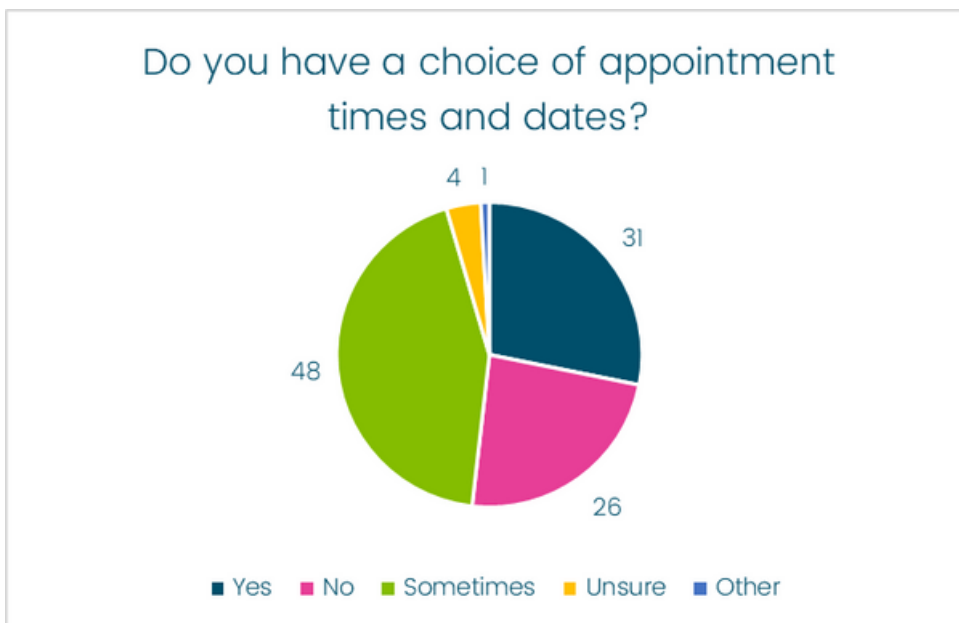
Appointments

Contact via telephone



On average, patients rated ease of contacting their GP by phone as 6.6.

Appointment choice



Appointments

Patient feedback

For those patients who answered no, feedback largely related to difficulties with accessing appointments, with fourteen individuals sharing issues surrounding lengthy waiting times for GP appointments and queues via the telephone.

“Appointments I had were so far in the future you dare not turn it down.”

“I tried to make an appointment for an issue that I felt was quite pressing and was advised by the receptionist it would be at least 2 weeks. I ended up attending a private GP.”

“It seems these days that one has to plan being ill, as like many surgeries, when you to ring for an appointment, it always seems like they need two or three weeks’ notice before they can give you an appointment.”

“Usually appointments aren't available for a couple of weeks or you have to phone in the morning. Difficult when you work 8am – 8pm.”

“When contacting the doctors, there’s often 8/9 people in the queue in front of you on the phone.”

Similarly, eleven patients shared difficulties surrounding the limited flexibility of appointments. Some individuals had issues securing an appointment outside of school and employment hours, and others were not offered a choice of date or time. This highlights a gap in knowledge regarding the allocation of enhanced access appointments.

“No choice, just told when the next one is.”

“You are pretty much told a time.”

“Sometimes it's hard to get appointments outside school hours.”

“You can either accept the one they have available which could be in a months’ time, or if you can’t accept it, you may even have to wait another week or more.”

In contrast, eleven individuals provided positive feedback, centred largely on multiple appointment times being offered and these being easy to rearrange if required.

“Always have choice and times to suit me.”

“Choice available most times.”

“I’m usually good with the first one they offer, but I can change it if I need to.”

“They can always provide the times and or dates that are convenient for me.”

“If they have no appointments, they send me to South Shore which I don't mind.”

Technology

Technology use

When patients were asked about the use of technology in Abbey Dale, nineteen individuals stated that they regularly access and utilise the app. Feedback for improvements centred largely around the inclusion of personal information being incorporated on the app, alongside the majority of patients wanting to use this to book GP appointments.

“I work in IT and a big believer in tech to help surgeries. Having an “all in one” app for surgeries is a big plus.”

“The surgery no longer allows you to book appointments via the my GP app which is insane in this day and age.”

“Be better if my information good be viewed on GP app.”

“Facility to make GP appointments on the app. Currently only non GP services are available.”

“If I could book appointments through app and send and receive replies to a doctor, it would make sense to do so.”

“The ability to book some routine appointments (eg contraceptive injection & blood tests) through the app or online.”

“Would like to see more use of the app(s) for those who want to use them. This would free up phone lines for those who are unable to use the app and hopefully also reduce stress on staff answering the phone – I’m sure it must be unpleasant for staff to speak to a string of people who have been waiting for a long time.”

In addition, twelve patients shared positive feedback in relation to the use of technology in GP services. Individuals shared the ease in which they can use the check-in screen and a willingness to learn.

“I think any technology that assists either the patient or the staff is always worth trying.”

“I thinks it’s fit for purpose to be honest.”

“Nothing as the check in screen is straight forward.”

“The booking-in system is very good.”

“TECHNOLOGY FINE would like to see voice technologies as well as screen.”

“Appointments are always confirmed with reminders given.”

Technology

Technology use

In contrast, seven patients were resistant to the use of digital technology and felt hesitant about its incorporation in GP services.

“It's ok as it is.”

“It's okay with the book in service to let you know that you have arrived. But I'm not sure how I would feel having maybe if I had to use an app. Technology is not my strong point although I always have been willing to learn. Difficult when sent an app to download from the hospital, prefer a letter.”

“I would like a more personal approach without the technology. Reception have to show older folk how to use the tech over and over because they forget. Better service before the tech.”

“Not a fan of technology.”

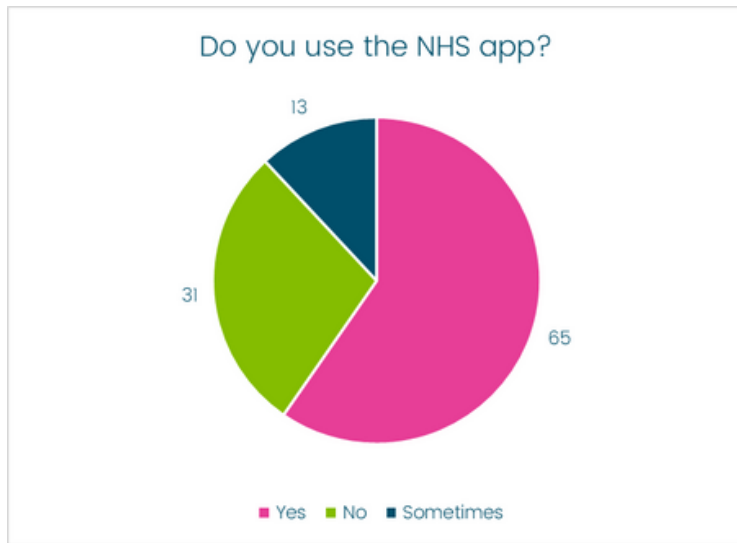
Two individuals shared their experiences of ordering prescriptions online.

“Great, ordering my prescription is super easy. I do that online. I can tick exactly what I need.”

“Sometimes if you leave notes when ordering medication online, they don't see them.”

Technology

NHS App



NHS App- How patients find it

For those patients who use the NHS app, forty-seven patients find it easy to navigate and find this user friendly. More specifically, two of these patients use the NHS app, however they prefer the Patient Access app.

“App very easy to use no problems.”

“Great for what it does.”

In contrast, eight participants provided negative feedback regarding the NHS app, with some patients describing it as “not great”, although further explanation was limited.

“Hard to use.”

“Awkward.”

“I am only in my fifties and not very computer literate so find it easy to go to the surgery.”

Four patients voiced their frustrations regarding being unable to view medical records via the app. Individuals expressed a desire to view these digitally, highlighting scope for development.

“It’s ok I would like access to my medical records though.”

“I can see my list of meds, which is very useful, and can easily get my repeat scripts, but I can’t see any of my medical notes.”

“Useful for some things but doesn’t have all the info on it last time I checked. Blood pressure etc....individuals can’t put that in unless they have access to a calibrated machine.”

Technology

NHS App- How patients find it

In addition, three patients used the NHS app for Covid related bookings and certifications.

“It was only for Covid certifications. It could probably do a lot more?”

“We have only used the NHS app in relation to booking Covid vaccinations, but having done so it was very efficient at picking a date and time.”

Technology

NHS App – What stops patient use

Five patients expressed a preference for verbal or physical contact with a person, rather than using an app.

“Prefer face to face.”

“I prefer humans.”

“Easier to phone through.”

An additional five patients expressed difficulties with accessing the app and finding this difficult to navigate.

“It doesn't work properly and is never up to date.”

“It's difficult, tried it and would not do it even though I read what to do.”

“Too many barriers to access and go staff do not email access codes.”

Three patients voiced difficulties with verifying their account in order to access the NHS app, with requirement for ID proving a barrier.

“I had it during COVID, but deleted it, now you need physical ID to get details from the GP to sign up. Though you self-book in at the GPs and go and speak to the GP without any ID.”

“I need to verify my account even though I have already done that on the GP app.”

“I tried to order my medication via the app but I had to have photographic proof of my identity but unfortunately I only have my works ID and this is unacceptable, so the app is pretty much useless for myself.”

Additionally, three patients experienced issues surrounding accessibility and navigating the app, including digital exclusion.

“I'm dyslexic I get frustrated because I'm not good with apps or technical things.”

“I'm not good with technology.”

“Also we don't have much internet on our phones. No computer neither.”

Two patients felt hesitancy towards downloading an additional app, and one patient did not know the NHS app existed.

“Honestly? I can't be bothered with another app!”

Additional Roles Awareness

	Yes I'm aware of it and use it	Yes I'm aware of it but don't use it	No I am not aware of it
Mental health nurse	11	26	66
First contact podiatrist	3	17	82
First contact physiotherapist	6	16	79
Social prescribing workers	5	15	82
Health and wellbeing coach	1	17	83
Pharmacist	35	21	45
Cancer care coordinator	0	18	82
Paramedic	29	27	46
Dietitian	6	18	76
Trainee associate psychological practitioner	1	15	82
Pharmacy tech	4	18	75

Additional Roles

Use and experience

Eighteen individuals provided feedback on their experience with the paramedic, most of which were positive. This feedback centred largely on the manner in which the paramedic conducted themselves, specifically noting the professionalism shown, alongside their ability to listen, explain and support. In contrast, those who had a negative or mixed experience felt frustration that their issue had not still not been resolved at the end of the appointment.

“I had to see the Paramedic a few months ago and when I explained why I was there he laughed in my face and said, I have no idea what to do, so I ended up having antibiotics which did not help and I’m still having the same problem.”

“One of my first appointments was with the paramedic, what a knowledgeable man he was, he was lovely and so helpful.”

“Paramedic at Abbey Dale is very good. He listens and tries to help, he doesn’t rush you out of your appointment.”

“The paramedic... He is fantastic listens and takes time to explain what could be wrong.”

“Paramedic was very helpful but didn’t sort out my problem.”

“The paramedic very helpful.”

In addition, fifteen patients shared feedback in regards to their experience with the pharmacist. Positive interactions were largely a consequence of patients receiving support and information about medication and staff being approachable. In contrast, two individuals who had a negative or mixed experience felt that medication had been withheld incorrectly, alongside reference being made to patient needs not being met .

“Pharmacist and Paramedic – Both listened to my views when prescribing to ensure I was happy with the designated plan.”

“Pharmacist: Helped with my asthma/hay fever – 10/10.”

“The pharmacist is helpful and friendly and makes sure to get me appointed for my meds reviews once a year, as required.”

“I found the pharmacist very ignorant to my needs.”

“Very good, had chat with pharmacist making sure I was OK with medication.”

“Pharmacist, not positive. Would not let me have something I needed for my condition.”

Additional Roles

Use and experience ctd.

Five patients accessed the mental health nurse, sharing positive feedback. This largely highlighted the manner in which staff conducted themselves, specifically noting the attentiveness shown, alongside their approachable and friendly nature.

“I have been to see the mental health nurse who was extremely lovely and attentive, but I never followed through with my next appointment I have recently booked back in to see her.”

“I went to see the mental health worker. Very friendly and good to talk to.”

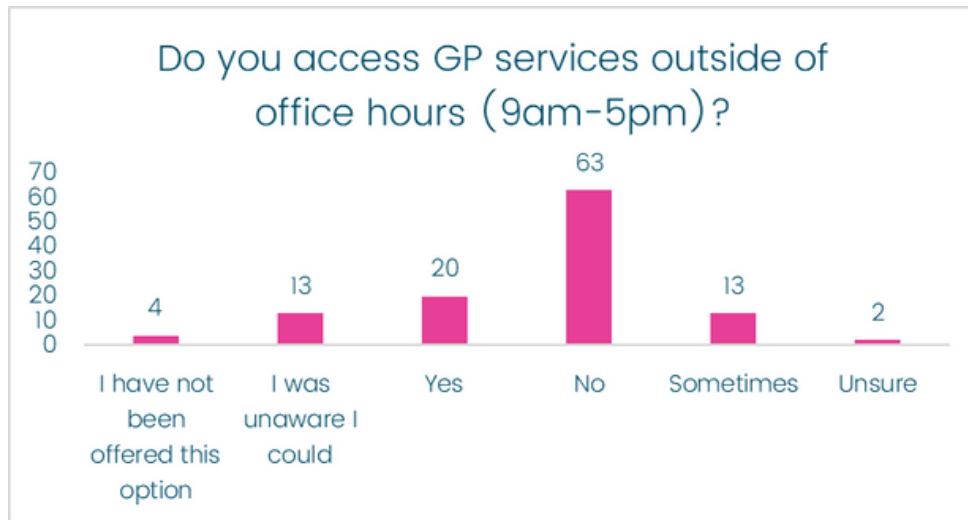
“The mental health nurse practitioner I used to see was excellent, but she’s no longer at the practice. I’m actually not sure who fills that role now, as I haven’t needed to see anyone in that role for a little while.”

One individual shared positive feedback regarding their social prescriber.

“The social prescribers were very helpful when I needed them, mostly during lockdown. I had weekly catch up calls with them during that time, and they got me referred for counselling too, which the primary Mental Health Team hadn’t managed to do.”

Enhanced Access

Feedback from patients



Nineteen patients felt satisfied with enhanced access, two of which preferring this service to the one provided at Abbey Dale.

“Yes, it’s great to be able to get bloods and smears done after work.”

“The service there was preferred to that which is generally received at my surgery.”

“Very good.”

“I have received my Covid and flu vaccination and cortisone treatment at south shore PCC and found this very efficient.”

In contrast, eight participants had never used enhanced access, and a further six individuals were unaware of this being an option or unsure what it meant.

“I don’t know what it is.”

“I have not used the enhanced access, but I’m sure it alleviate some of the problems of getting appointments.”

“I haven’t used it but it is good that it’s another option.”

“I was unaware of this option.”

“Never heard of it.”

One patient had never been offered this alternative.

“I haven’t been offered appointments out of hours, even when booking the appointment in advance for a non-urgent issue.”

Staying Well

Feedback from patients

Fifty-four participants partake in exercise and physical activity in order to keep fit and well, with specific mention being given to accessing the gym.

“Gym regularly.”

“Gym, running and walking.”

“I cycle to work, but other than that I don't exercise.”

Furthermore, twenty-nine individuals emphasised the significance of a healthy diet in upholding a healthy lifestyle. Particular emphasis was given to the consumption of a balanced diet whilst drinking plenty of water. Three patients noted that they do not smoke or drink alcohol.

“Go to the gym and eat nutritious home cooked food.”

“Eat a good balanced diet & walk.”

“Healthy diet, workout 3–4 times a week and drink 3 litres of water based fluids per day.”

“I use my common sense and eat healthy as I possibly can, exercise daily and do not drink or smoke.”

In addition, having active employment responsibilities keep patients fit and well, as highlighted by ten individuals.

“My job keeps me fit and I do lot of walking in spare time.”

“Work 12 hours a day, not a sit down job.”

“Work and more work.”

Five individuals stated that they partake in hobbies and volunteer opportunities in order to stay fit and well.

“Gardening.”

“I'm a people person so I help out with community charity centre and in the community for the council litter picking. It helps to keep my mind active and healthy and Im an active person anyway so I find it helpful.”

“Walk daily, allotment holder, yoga & mindfulness.”

Staying Well

Feedback from patients ctd.

Furthermore, four patients take medication in order to stay well.

“Taking tablets.”

“Take all prescription meds.”

“Medication to help with medical conditions and weight.”

In contrast, five participants noted that they do not actively pursue any measures to keep themselves fit and well. Barriers to doing so included physical and mental factors.

“Due to mental illness I have now lost my job and rarely leave the house.”

“I’m disabled and in pain 24/7 so I do nothing.”

“In short, I don’t. I’m disabled, and have numerous health conditions. I’m never fit and well!”

Giving Feedback

Giving feedback to the practice

Twenty-six participants voiced that they have not previously given feedback with regards to their experience at Abbey Dale Medical Centre, prior to completing this survey. An additional two patients stated that they had never been asked to give feedback.

“Will recommend to friends but no formal feedback given before now.”

“Never.”

“No platform to do so until now.”

“Not been asked.”

For eight patients, feedback was given via a survey sent through text.

“Through surveys sent by the practice via text after an appointment.”

“Yes, via the text message links.”

“By text.”

In addition, five patients have given feedback via online channels such as Google, with an additional three individuals via email.

“I’ve left feedback on Google before.”

“Online, reviews.”

Three participants have given feedback via the feedback form, located within the practice.

“Through feedback forms off, I will let reception know if I have received exceptional or shoddy treatment.”

“Yes form filled in at the practice.”

Furthermore, three patients have given feedback verbally, whether that be in person or via the telephone.

“I have always thanked the staff on the phone or in person.”

“I let people know how I feel – usually a good: Thank you, all great.”

Giving Feedback

Could anything make giving feedback easier for patients

Twenty-nine patients were not sure how it could be made easier to give feedback, or felt that feedback mechanisms are fine as they are.

"I'm sure it's all good."

"No, the current method is fine."

"Nothing. It's easy enough as it is."

Seven patients recommended sending a survey, such as the one facilitated by Healthwatch Blackpool, via text or completed in person. An additional patient suggested friend and family forms.

"A questionnaire like this."

"Survey after each visit."

"Forms such as this being sent automatically when somebody has an appointment."

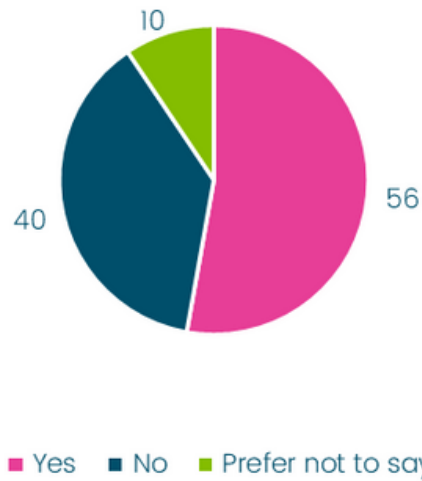
Three patients suggested other methods of engagement, such as giving feedback online, via the telephone or email.

"Make a complaint online."

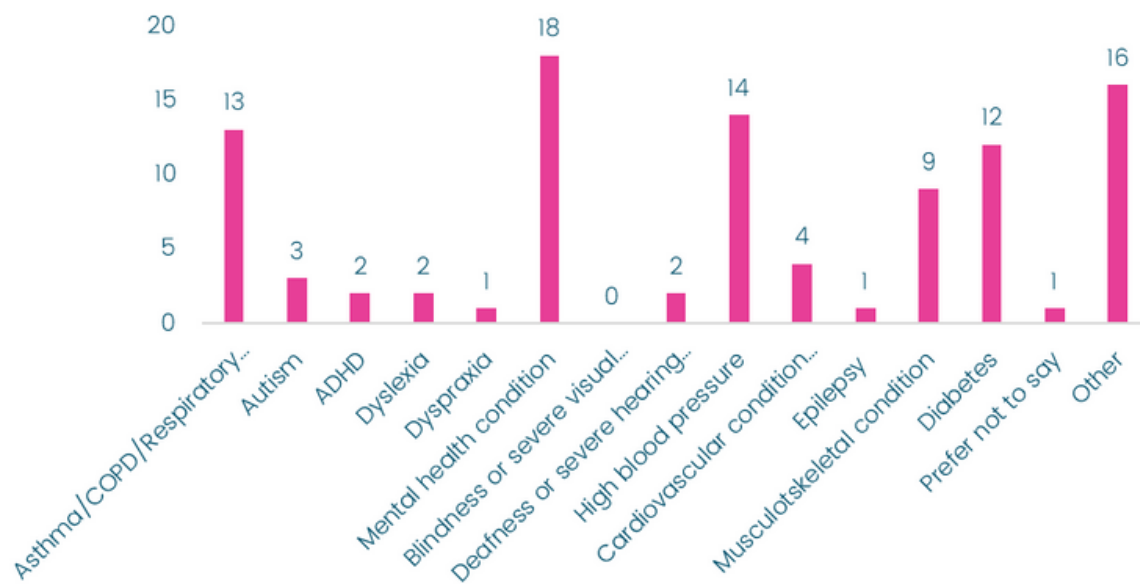
"Phone call."

Long Term Health Conditions

Do you have a long term health condition?



Which of the following long-term conditions or disabilities do you have?



Long Term Health Conditions Management

Thirty-five patients manage their long term conditions through prescribed medication.

“Anti-depressant medication helps I think.”

“Utilise medication.”

“Medication mainly.”

Additionally, twelve individuals manage their conditions through regular support from health and wellbeing services. Interventions such as counselling, consultant clinics, physio sessions and regular reviews, prove beneficial to overall long term health management.

“Lymphedema clinic.”

“Therapy.”

“On LIVA programme for a year.”

“Pain meds and physio.”

“Regular checks with the practice nurse. Diabetes nurse and/or doctors as necessary.”

A further seven patients manage their long term condition through positive lifestyle choices, such as regular physical exercise and consuming a balanced diet.

“Maintain good healthy diet.”

“Medication, diet and exercise.”

“Exercise with minimal exercise.”

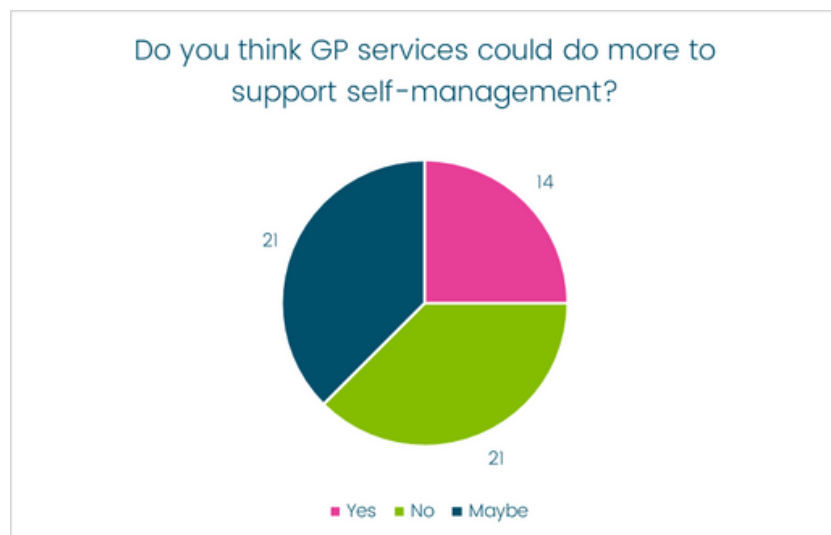
In contrast to this, five patients appear to be struggling with managing their long term condition and would benefit from support from services.

“With great difficulty.”

“I struggle but have to manage but it’s really hard sometimes, can’t cope.”

Long Term Health Conditions

General Practice and self management



When asked what Abbey Dale could do better to support self-management, seven patients suggested additional provision in the form of regular GP appointments, specifically highlighting the need for consistent reviews and follow ups.

“More frequent check-ups.”

“Easier appointment system with longer appointments.”

“Reviews on mental health.”

Five patients believe that improved communication would prove beneficial to supporting self-management, expressing a need to feel listened to, understood and supported by their GP in relation to their condition.

“Be more attentive to patients.”

“My conditions are all dealt with through specialists - most of the time my GP has no idea I have these conditions. So any support would be nice.”

“Better communication on the phone and facts information about the actual person you relate to when talking.”

“Care for the person... Listening also helps... And solid sound advice and understanding.”

Long Term Health Conditions

General Practice and self management

Similarly, three patients felt that they should be given scope to advocate for what works for them in regards to medication and dosage, facilitating patient choice where possible.

“Control over my dosage as intended by consultant and requested by me through GP but so far ignored.”

“I’d like to see other GP partners accepting that patients know own limits and what treatment works, also for other partners to support as much as possible patient choice.”

In addition, two patients focused on the benefits that interventions and support surrounding positive wellbeing could bring.

“Easy access to health and fitness schemes.”

“Mental health and well-being sessions.”

One individual discussed the need for “being able to report electronically on readings specific to the condition, with a follow up email to discuss a change in treatment plan if required.”

Other comments or suggestions

Abbey Dale Medical Centre

Five participants shared positive feedback to acknowledge and celebrate.

“Always good service.”

“I am overall happy with my GP service.”

“I’d like to thank my GP, reception supervisor and reception manager for all the support with arranging repeat prescriptions and making the appropriate referral to tertiary care services.”

“Just hope they keep up the good work they do already.”

“To date, this surgery has been outstanding.”

In contrast, four patients suggested areas for development with regards to staff manner, largely focusing on the approachability and demeanour of doctors.

“I won’t go to the doctor unless I have to as they always seem to be dismissive with me.”

“Not to be told off by the doctor when asking a question.”

“Surgeries are supposed to help people manage their health but they don’t, its reactive not proactive in my view. I only go if I really have to and put up with illnesses & symptoms as I have no faith they would be interested or available.”

Further areas for improvement, put forward by four patients, focused on improved access to GP appointments.

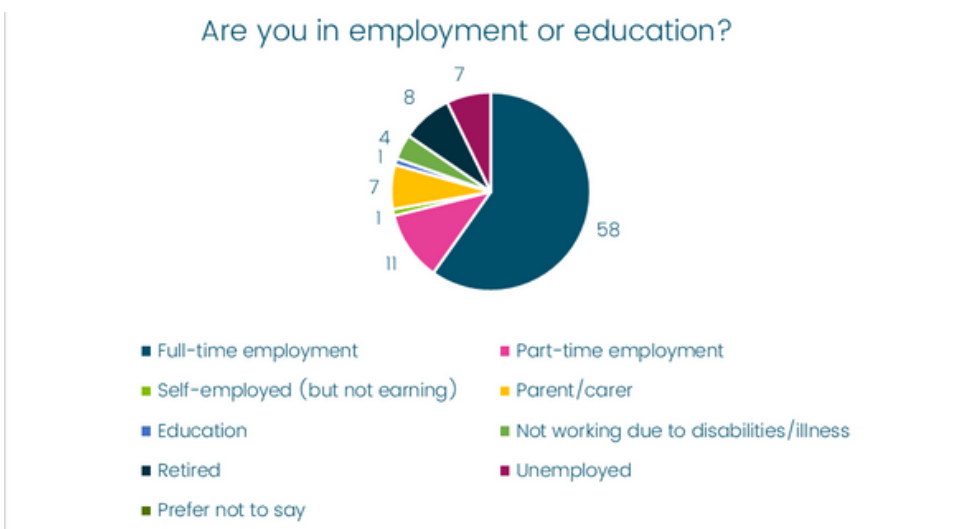
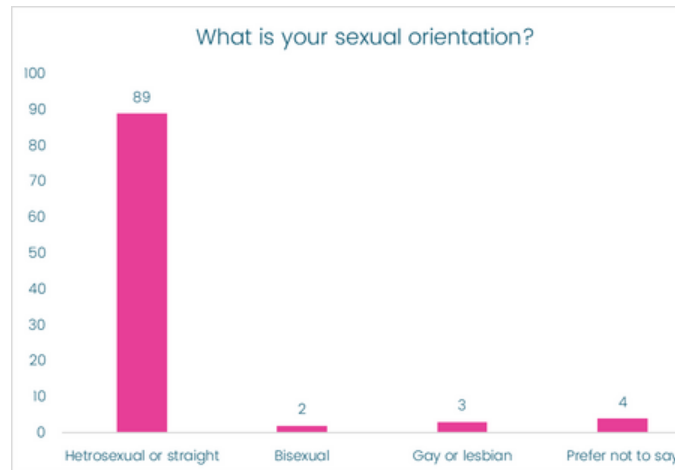
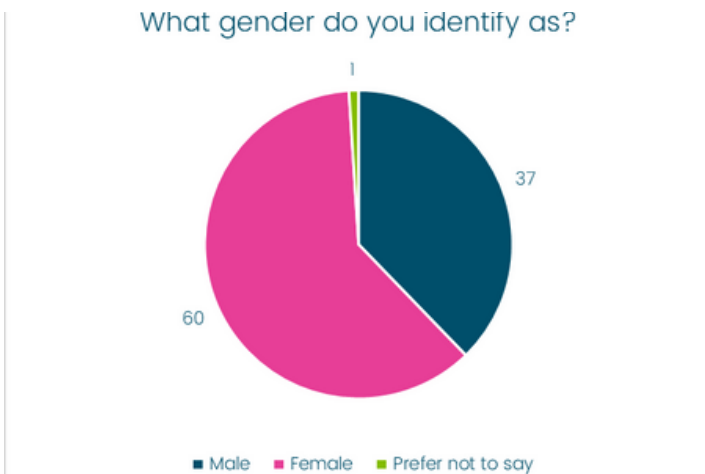
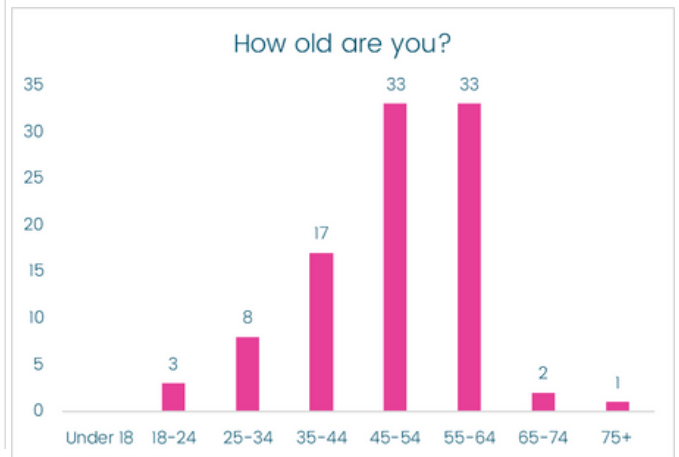
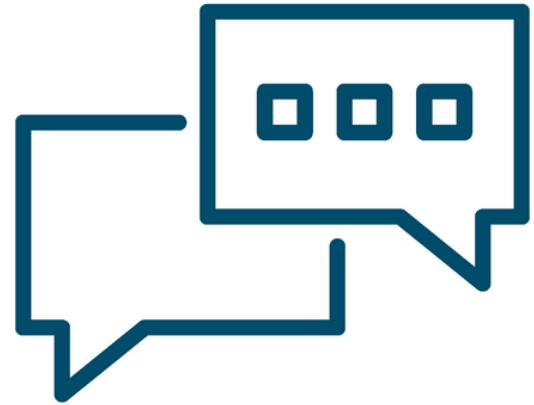
“I avoid trying to ask for a check-up due to the difficulty getting an appointment.”

“I’m so sad what has happened to this practice, when my dad was dying of cancer, the doctor was amazing. Now you can’t get an appointment and they’re trying to do phone consultations, not everything can be done over the phone. I don’t bother with phoning now with things I should prob get checked out. As a tax payer it’s woeful service to be Frank.”

Other feedback focused on improving communication, specifically between primary and secondary care, as well as physical communication barriers as a consequence off PPE.

“More communication between hospital consultants and doctors, one of the doctors at the practice was extremely rude to me when I asked him about my son’s health condition, saying that’s nothing to do with him my son would need to speak to his consultant.”

Demographics



“We enlisted the help of Healthwatch to reach our patients we don’t always get to hear. We focused on 2 / 3 areas and really drilled down to find out what Blackpool South Patients know about the current services we offer. One focus area was improving uptake for our Enhanced Access service. We also wanted to discuss the ARRS staff and gauge how familiar our patients were with these additional roles within practices in Blackpool South. We have found the work carried out by Healthwatch has been invaluable as we work through addressing the common themes that have come off the back of this piece of work. We are already in discussions to invite them back early next year to help us further. ”

Primary Care Network Manager

Healthwatch Blackpool would like to thank all of the patients within South PCN who took the time to share their feedback.

Thank you to the staff within each GP surgery across South PCN for facilitating our engagement.

We hope to continue working with South PCN, in order to celebrate positive feedback and work collaboratively to embed improvements moving forward.