

Where people take their children when they are unwell

July 2022

healthwatch
Nottingham & Nottinghamshire

Made with VISME

Between March and April 2022 Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire conducted a survey across Bassetlaw with parents and guardians who have or who look after children under the age of 16.

The survey was commissioned by Bassetlaw Place who have identified an absence of rich insights into local behaviour and awareness of certain cohorts, which includes parents of pre-school and school aged children who are frequent attendees of A&E.

Bassetlaw Place have recognised that GP practices are receiving high demand from parents seeking support and/or attending A&E when the nature of the child's illness is something that could be managed at home or by seeking support from alternative services, such as a pharmacist or the Bassetlaw Place recommended website 'Healthier Together'.

The aim of the survey was therefore to find out where people take their children when they are unwell, where they seek advice when they are worried about their child's health and how confident they are dealing with common illnesses.

The target was to reach at least 40 responses to this survey and we received a total of 126 responses and of those, 47 from people who had taken their child to A&E.

Demographics

We targeted the most deprived areas of Bassetlaw and the proportion of respondents from the areas identified as more deprived were as follows:

- Worksop South East - 46.0%
- Worksop North West - 7.1%
- Harworth - 6.3%
- Langold - 2.4%

We also reached the following groups:

- 46.8% were pregnant or had children under five.
- 31.0% of people had one or more long-term health condition or disability.
- 13.5% of people were unemployed and 8.7% were unable to work.
- 8.7% of respondents described their nationality as Polish.

Part 1

Accident & Emergency services

According to the NHS website¹, parents are advised to take their children to A&E if they:

- have a fever and are still sluggish, despite having taken paracetamol or ibuprofen
- have severe tummy (abdominal) pain
- have a leg or arm injury and cannot use the limb
- have swallowed a poison or tablets

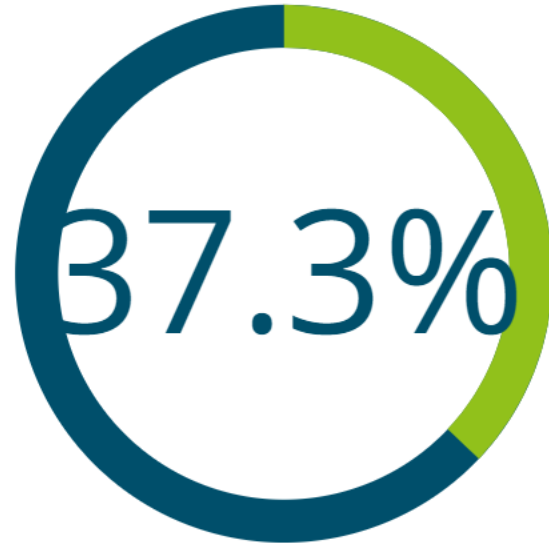
Parents are also advised to take their children to the nearest A&E department or minor injuries unit in the following cases:

- If a child has an object lodged firmly in their nose or ear
- If a child has a cut that keeps bleeding or there's a gap between the edges of the wound.

If a parent is worried about their child and are not sure if they need medical help, the website advises to call NHS 111.

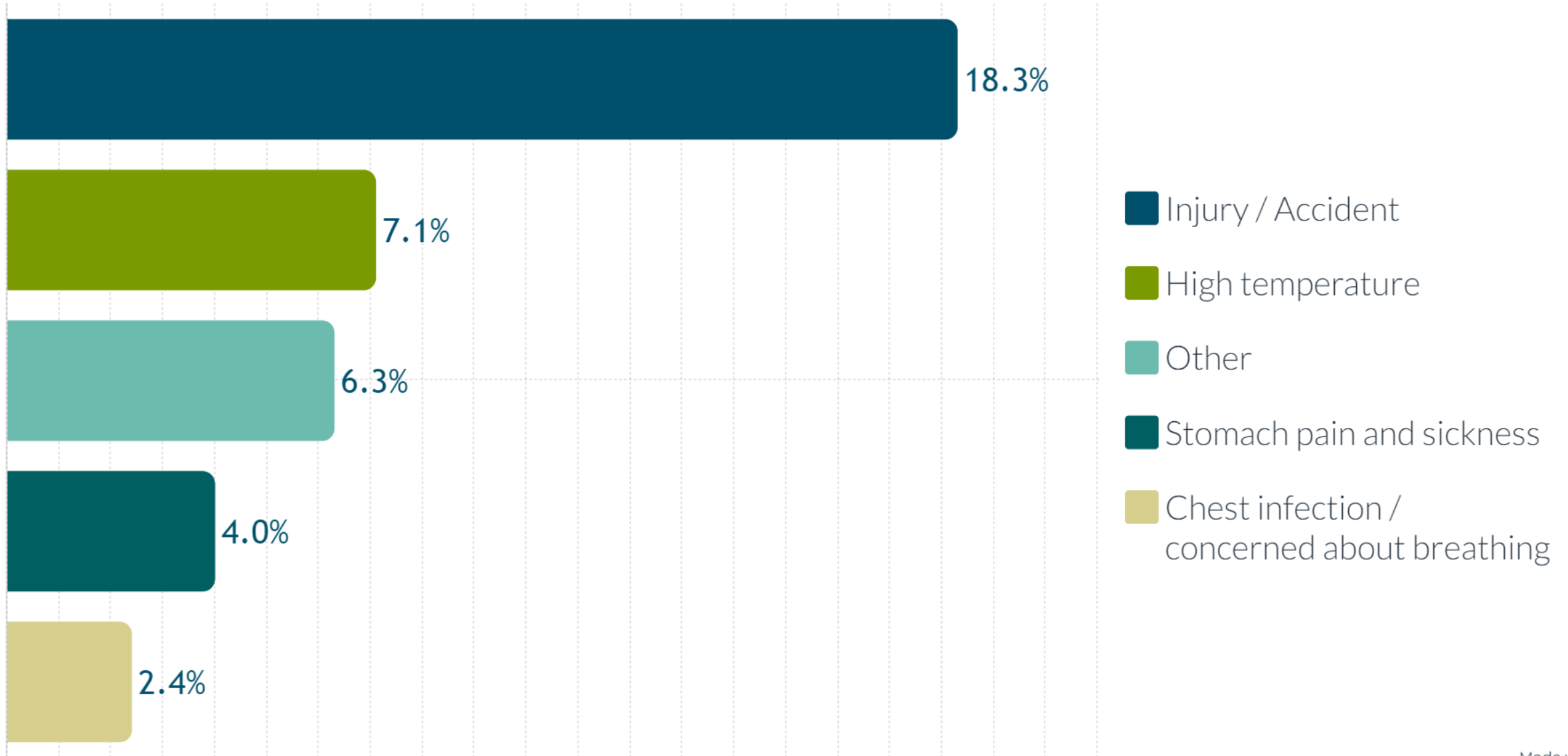
1. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/what-to-do-if-your-child-has-an-accident/>

Out of 126 people who responded to our survey



47 people (37.3%) said they took their child to A&E in the last 12 months

The main reasons for taking their child to A&E were :



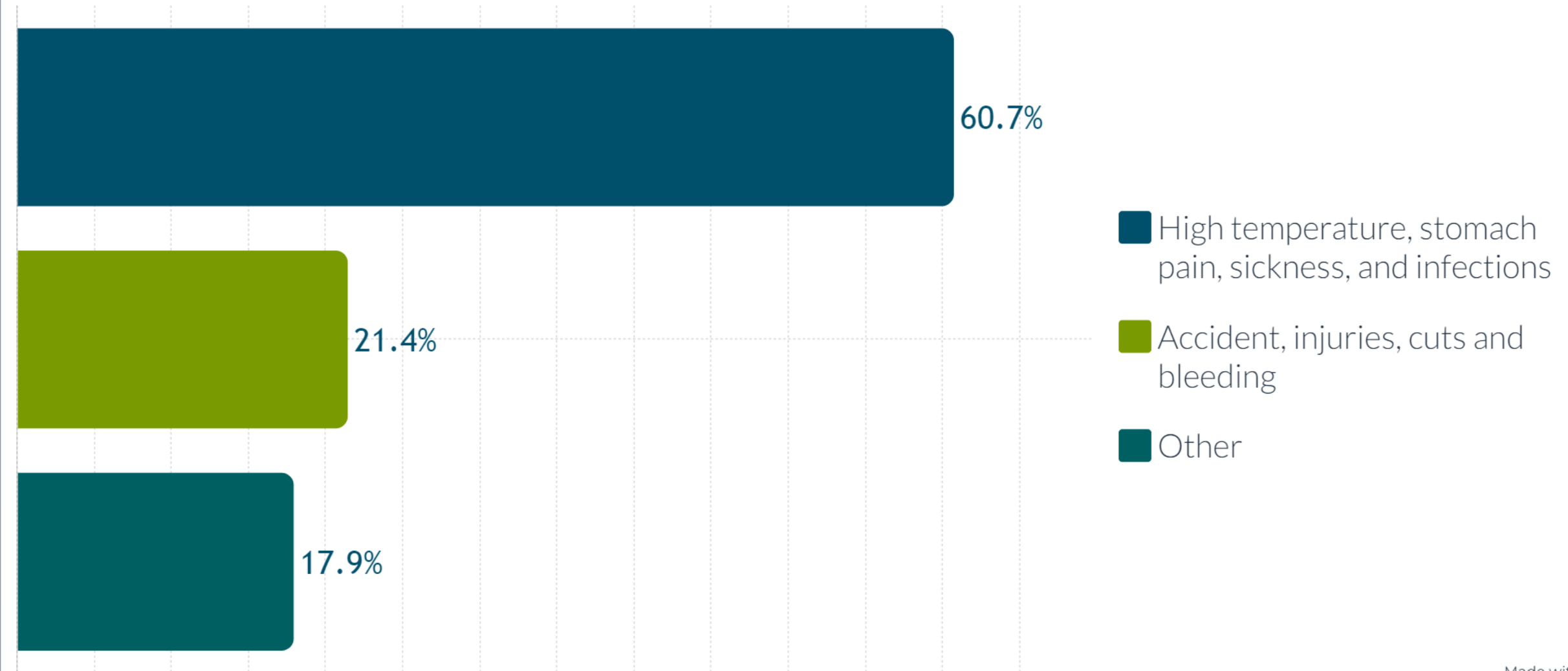


Before going to A&E,
61.7% contacted
either their GP, NHS
111 or other medical
professionals.



Of the people who
contacted somebody,
96.6% were advised
to go to A&E.

Of the 61.7% of people who were advised to go to A&E, the main reasons for taking their child to A&E were related to the following:



**This is what people said about why
they took their child to A&E...**

High temperature, stomach pain and sickness, and infections:

"Child being sick (vomiting) 6x within 1 hour. Told someone would ring me within 4 hours. It was too long for me to wait as was worried about little one getting dehydrated"

"High temp, wouldn't go down, wasn't eating or drinking, being sick, very sleepy"

"Concerned about breathing, possible chest infection"

"High temp of 31 due to ear infection"

"Baby - high temperature"

"1 year old refusing food & drink-poorly"

Accidents and injuries:

"Accidents
falling"

"Lip injury"

"Trapped toe
in a door"

"Accident at school, knocked her knee.
I knew she was fine, but as school said I
should take her, I felt I had to, in order to
prove I had taken due precaution"

(was advised to go to A&E by the surgery)

Other reasons:

"Swollen tonsils"

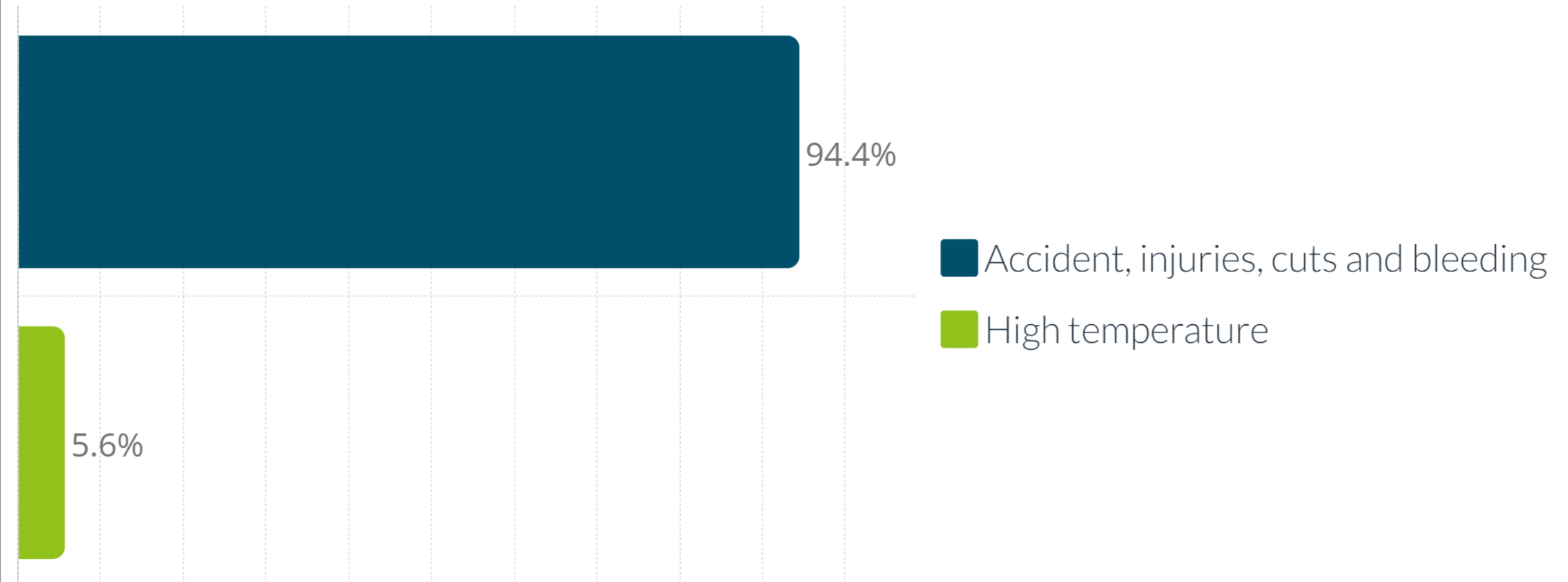
"Acute
migraine"

"Severe eczema
flare-up"

"Chronic
Stomach cramps"

38.3% did not contact anybody before going to A&E

The main reasons for taking their child to A&E were related to the following:



What people said about why they took their child to A&E...

"He got a staple stuck in his thumb"

"Wart on hand wouldn't stop bleeding"

"Lego up nose"

"My child put a small object into her ear which we could not get out without medical help"

"Head injury"

"Little one cut his eye lid open"

"Dog bite"

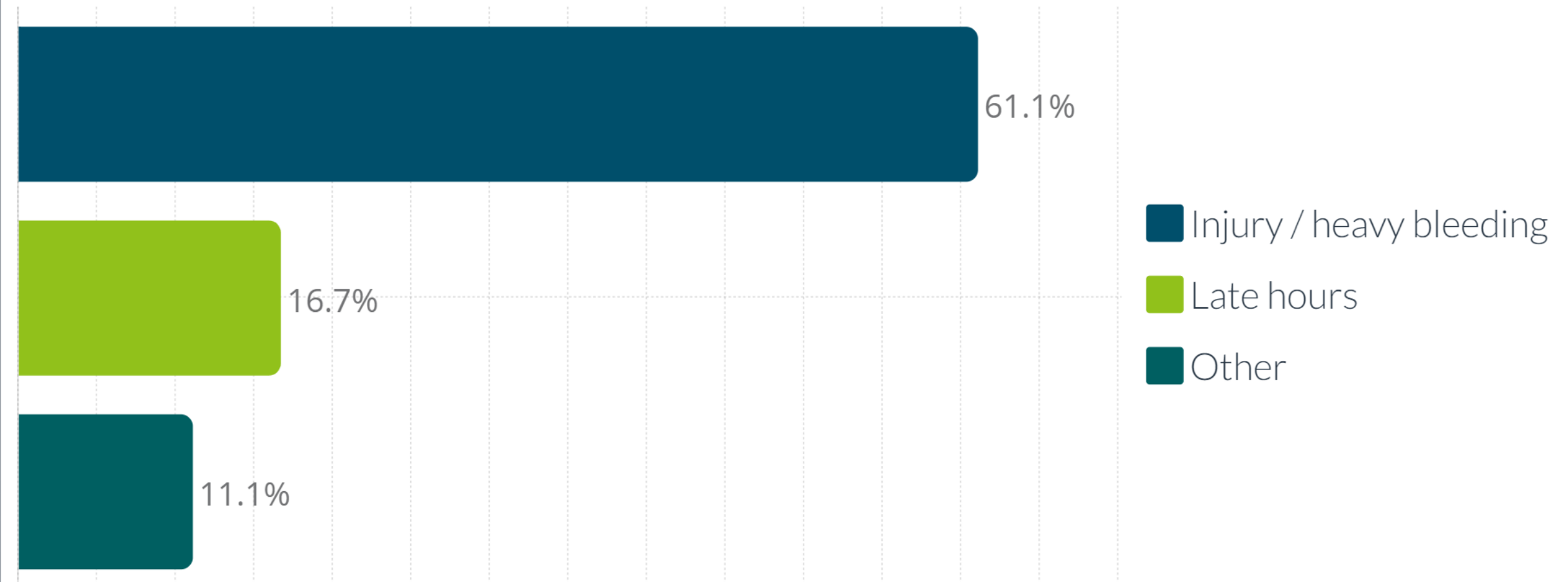
"Hurt knee"

"Sprained knee and also sprained ankle"

"Broken wrist"

"Cut at side of eye"

People stated the following reasons for going straight to A&E:



**What people said about why they
went straight to A&E...**

"Thought about trying 111 but assumed they would just tell me to go to A&E to have it removed so cut out the middleman" (reason for going - staple stuck in the thumb)

"As it was late, and doctors were closed"

"Lego was stuck up his nose and needed to come out"

"Late hours. No out of hours doctor available in town"

"Deep cut"

Part 1 - Conclusions

It is a significant finding that over a third of survey respondents have taken their child to A&E. However, most of them (61.7%) contacted a medical professional before going to A&E, which means that they were directed by the current systems and processes in place. This shows that whilst many people did attend A&E, in most cases, it was because they were advised to do so.

Part 1 - Conclusions

Of the respondents who did not contact anybody before going to A&E (38.3%), many mentioned reasons, such as injury or bleeding, or being unable to contact anybody out of hours. This shows that people did not always know that they could contact NHS111 service which is available 24 hours, or they did not always know whether the situation was serious enough to go to A&E.

Due to the small sample size and limitations of the research design, we cannot generalise the findings and which conditions were serious enough to go to A&E. The examples of some of these responses include "hurt knee", "dog bite", "trapped toe in a door". This limits the conclusions we can draw from this survey.

Part 1 - Recommendations

HWNN recommends that Bassetlaw Place work with organisations on supporting them to:

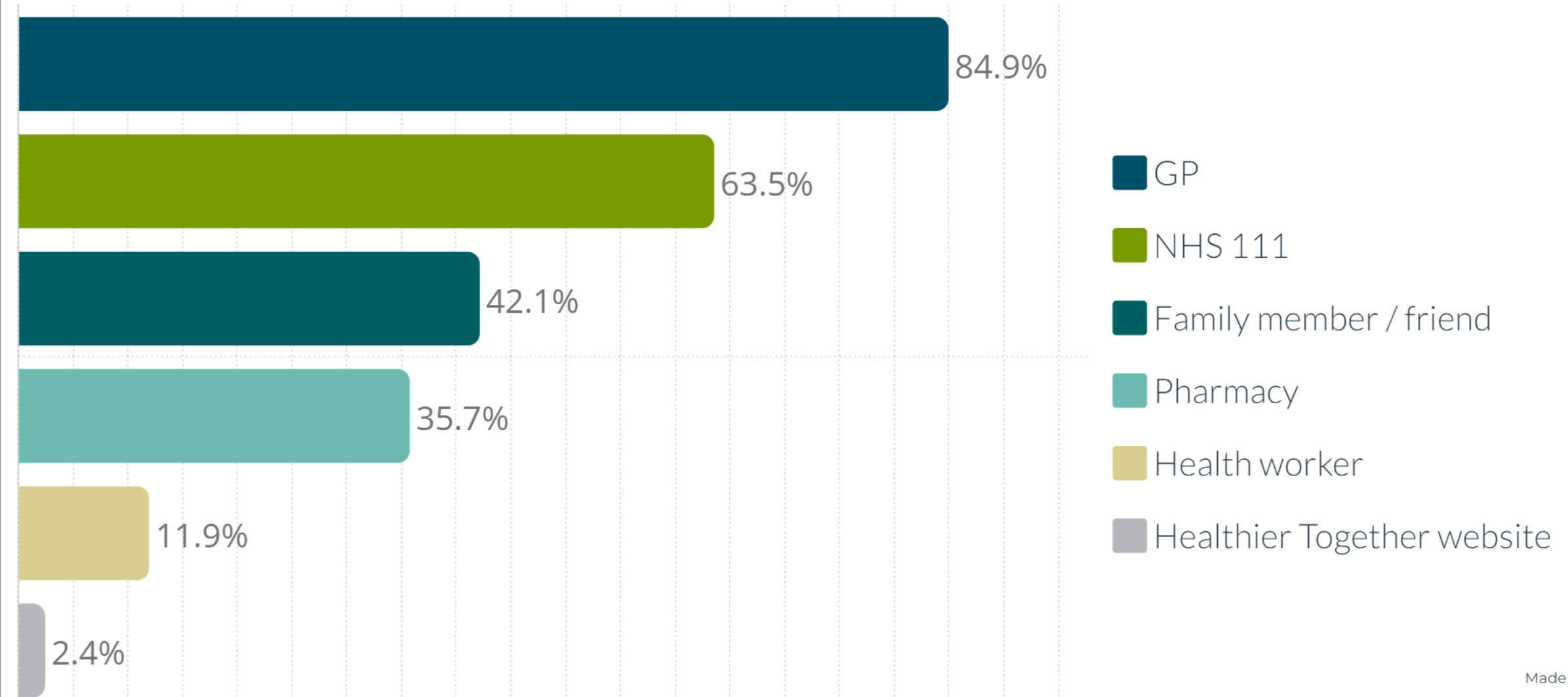
- Develop public awareness on where people can seek help if their child has had an injury or a concern, and what they can do when they need to ask for help out of hours. This includes developing awareness on urgent treatment centres and NHS 111 services.
- Review the recommendations and compare to current messaging and adapt the messaging, if needed.

Recommendations for further research

Further research is needed to gain a more in-depth understanding about why people take their children to A&E, using interviews or focus groups with parents.

Part 2

Where most people seek advice when they are concerned about their child's health:



Other places where people seek advice:

- Health worker / other health professionals (13.5%)
- Healthier Together website or NHS website (3.2%)
- Children's / community-based services / other parents (3.2%)
- Internet (2.4%)

Part 2

Conclusions

Whilst 84.5% of people seek advice with their GP when they are concerned about their child's health, less than two thirds of people seek advice with NHS 111 and just above one third of people seek advice with a pharmacist. It is therefore important to ensure that people are aware of where they can seek help when they need it, particularly when they are unable to contact their GP.

Part 2

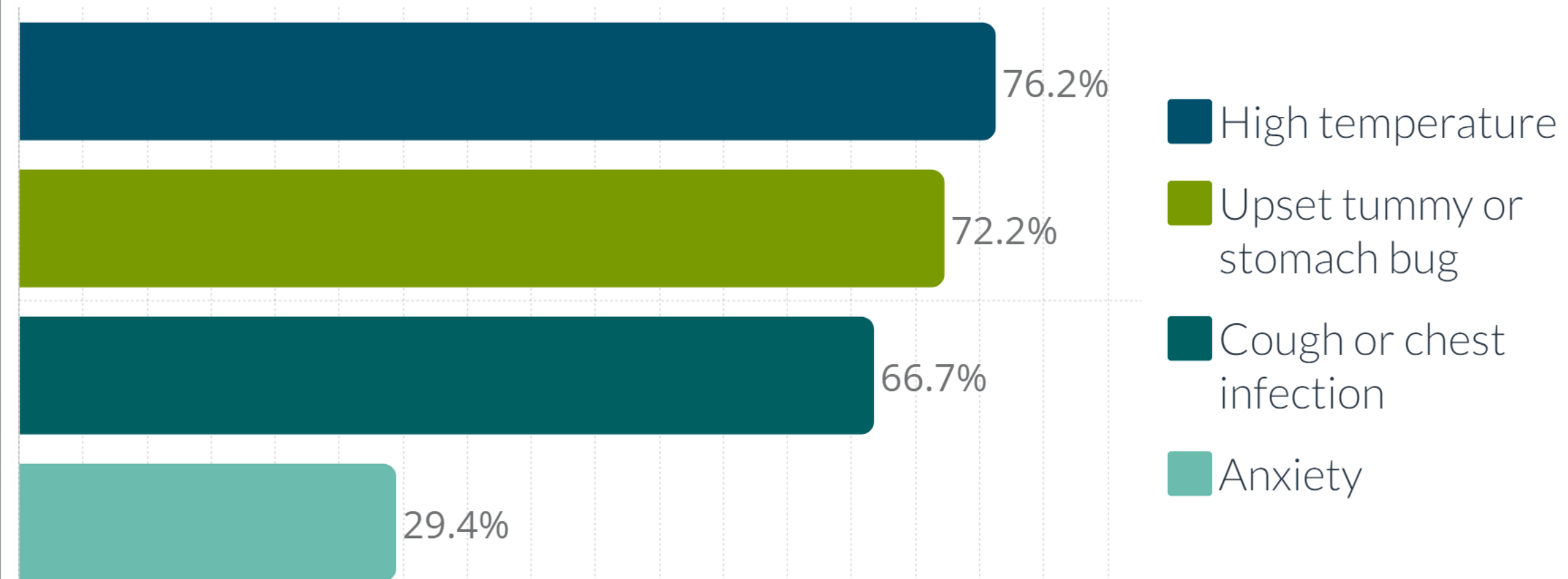
Recommendations

HWNN recommends that Bassetlaw Place work with organisations on supporting them to develop public awareness about where people can seek help for different types of concerns or issues, and the information sources available to them, particularly when it is not possible to contact a GP.

Part 3

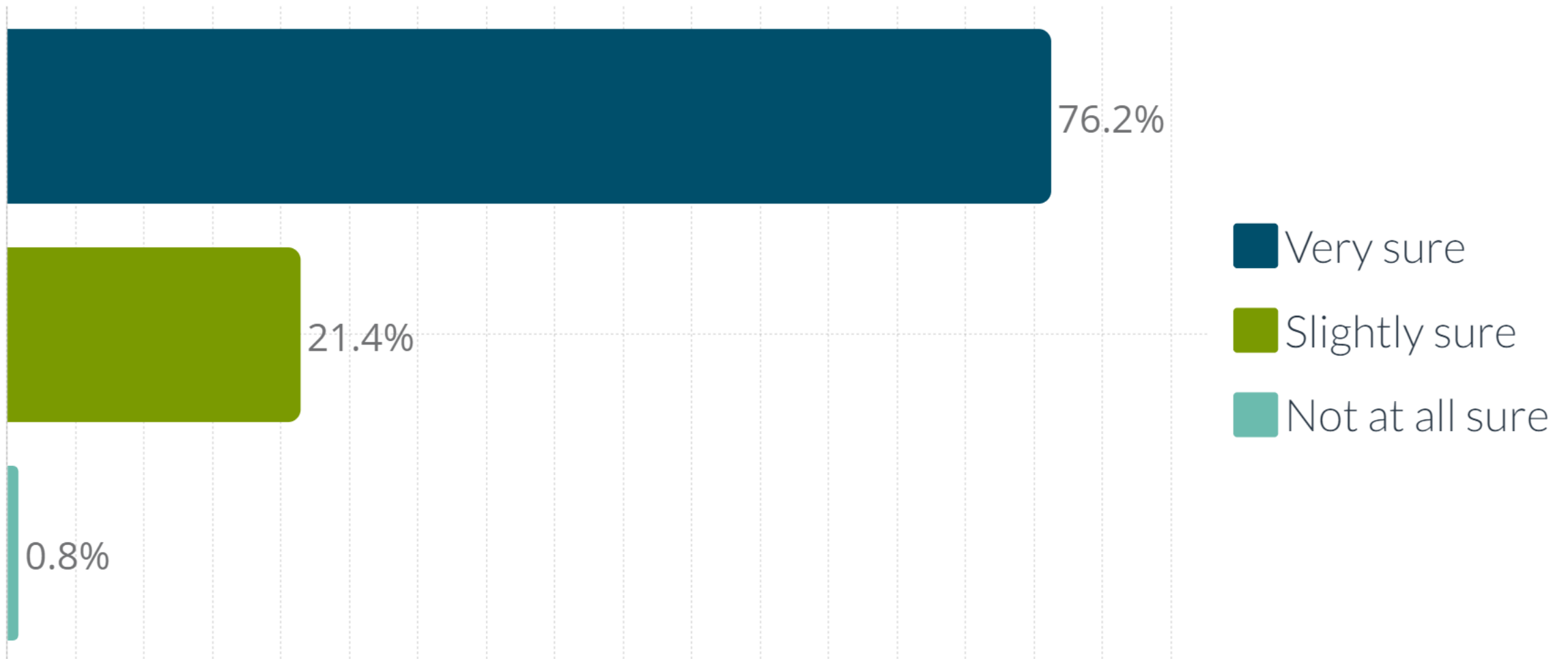
Dealing with common illnesses

The percentage of people who felt very sure about dealing with the following illnesses:

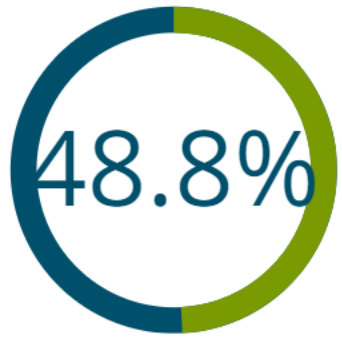


High temperature

How people felt about dealing with high temperature:



We asked people to provide reasons why they felt slightly sure or very sure about dealing with high temperature and this is what they said:



Would try to bring down the temperature with medications or by cooling the body, allowing to rest, giving liquids / monitor the temperature / follow NHS guidance



Would be confident depending on how high the temperature is /
Would seek medical advice if the temperature does not go down or there are other symptoms



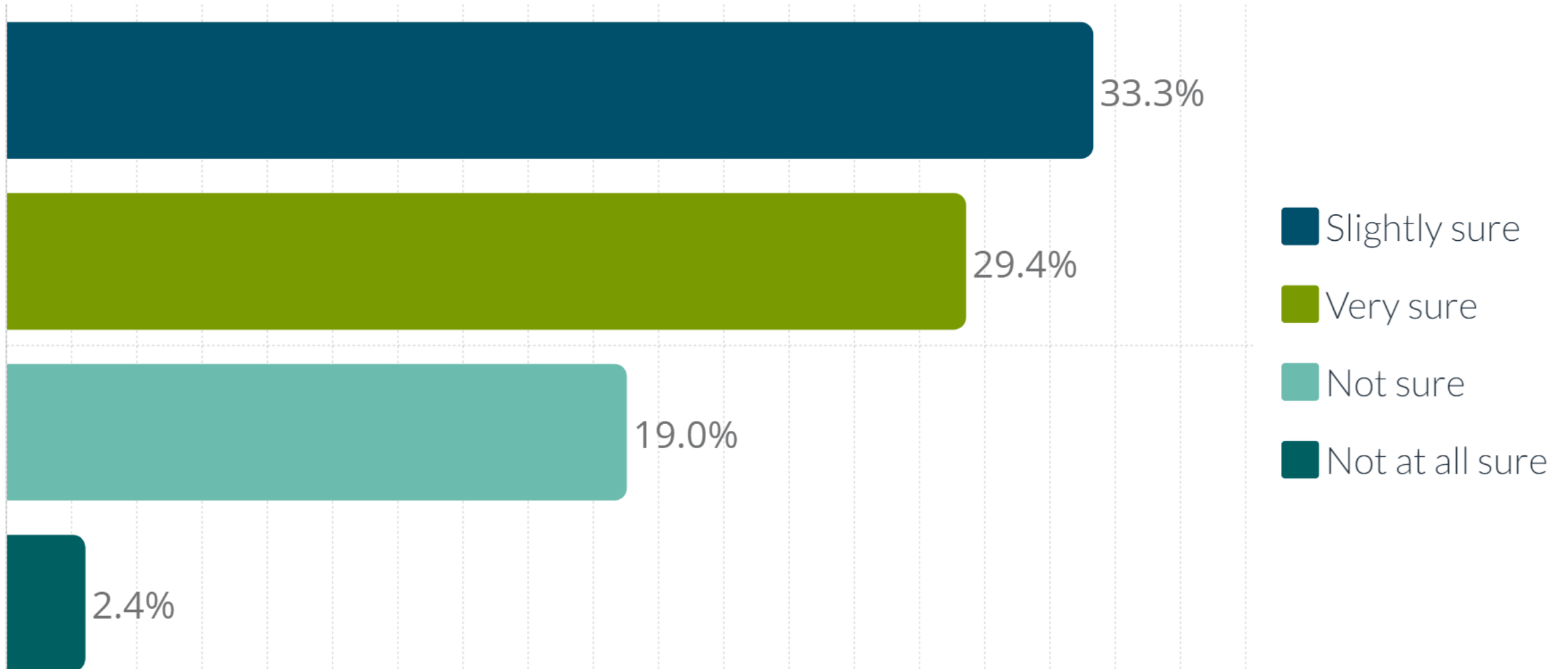
Dealt with it before or know how to deal with it



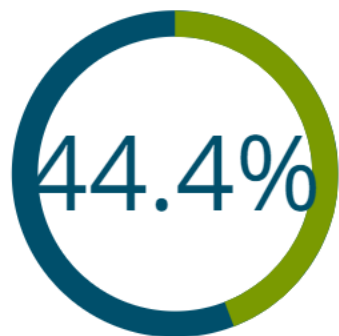
Would contact GP / would seek advice / look online

Anxiety

How people felt about dealing with anxiety in school aged children:



We asked people to provide reasons why they felt not at all or not sure about dealing with anxiety and this is what they said:

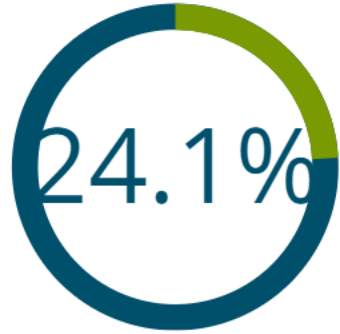


Have not been in this situation before / were not sure about the signs of anxiety / do not have enough information about dealing with it



Would try to help by talking, but would need to seek further help / Said it would depend on severity of anxiety

We asked people to provide reasons why they slightly or very sure about dealing with anxiety and this is what they said:



Would speak to the child and/or try to calm them down



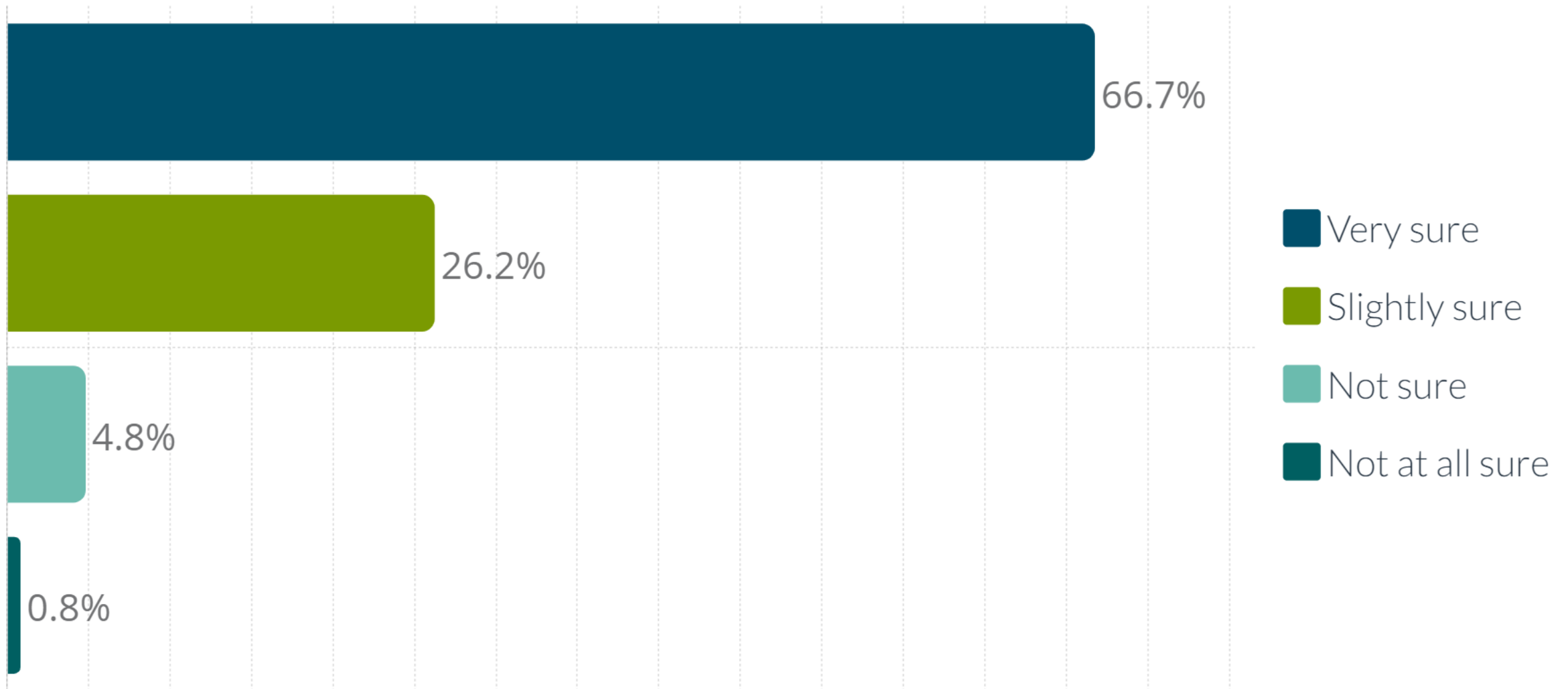
Would look for support or advice, or they would speak to school
Would contact support if they were not able to deal with it themselves



Have an understanding about how to deal with it or they have dealt with before

Cough or chest infection

How people felt about dealing with cough or chest infection:



We asked people to provide reasons why they felt not at all or not sure about dealing with cough or chest infection and this is what they said:



Were confident dealing with cough, but not chest infection



Would give medication or other interventions



Would contact GP

We asked people to provide reasons why they felt slightly or very sure about dealing with cough or chest infection and this is what they said:



Have dealt with it before or would know how to deal with it / would treat it at home with medications and/or monitor it



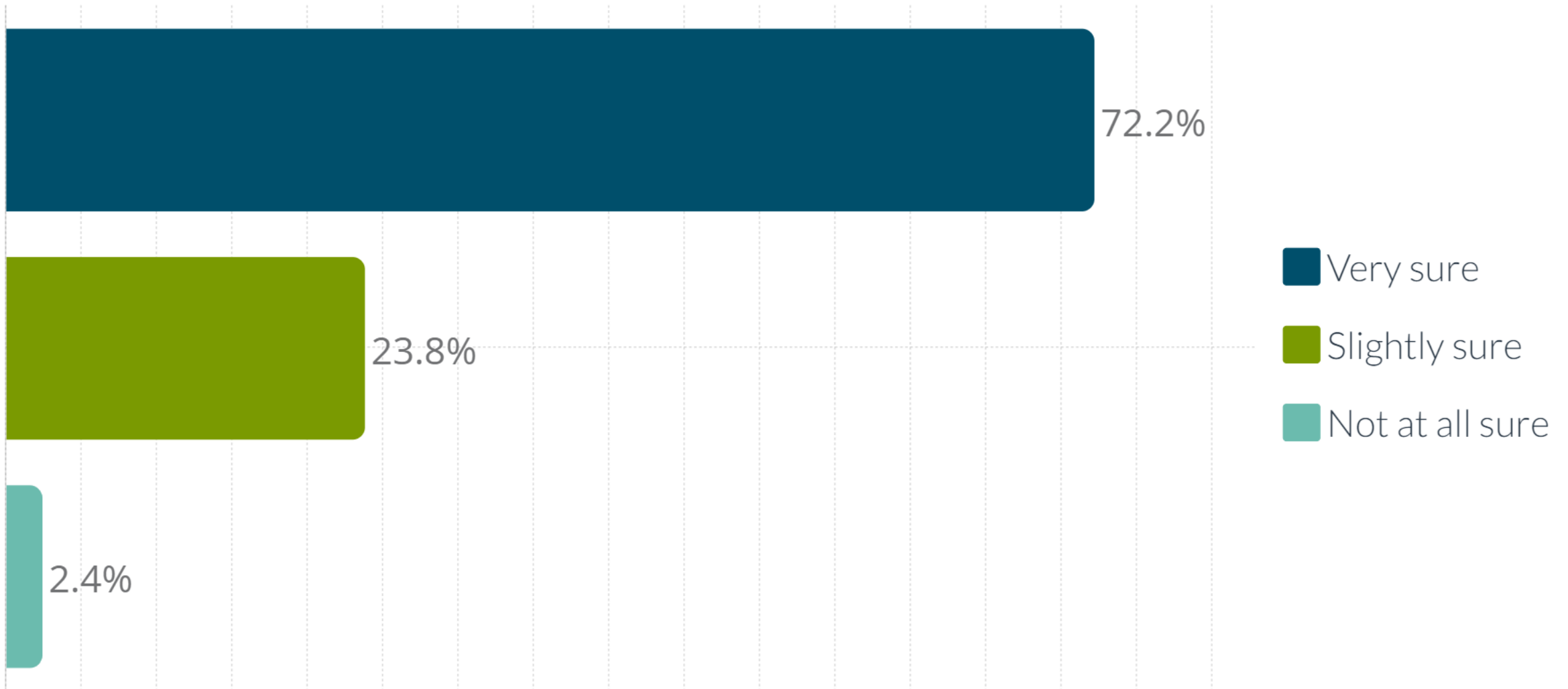
Would contact GP or seek medical advice



Would contact GP or seek medical advice if it did not get better / said it would depend on how serious it is

Upset tummy or stomach bug

How people felt about dealing with upset tummy or stomach bug:



We asked people to provide reasons why they felt slightly sure or very sure about dealing with upset tummy or stomach bug and this is what they said:



Have dealt with it before or would know how to deal with it / Would treat it at home with medications and/or fluids / would follow NHS guidance



Would seek medical help or advice if it did not get better / Said it would depend on how serious it is



Would contact GP or seek medical advice

Part 3

Conclusions

The most frequently cited reason why people felt slightly sure or very sure about dealing with the common illnesses were that they would treat it at home, or that they would monitor child's condition. However, some people said that they would contact their GP or seek medical help. This shows that even though some people said they were slightly sure or very sure about dealing with common illnesses, this may only be the case if they are able to get medical advice.

Whilst most people felt very sure about dealing with high temperature, upset tummy or stomach bug, and cough or chest infection, less than one third felt very sure about dealing with anxiety in school aged children. This shows a lack of awareness and/or confidence among parents and guardians about how to deal with anxiety if their child is experiencing it.

Part 3

Recommendations

HWNN recommends that Bassetlaw Place work with organisations on supporting them to develop public awareness campaign to share with schools, partners, online and via social media around:

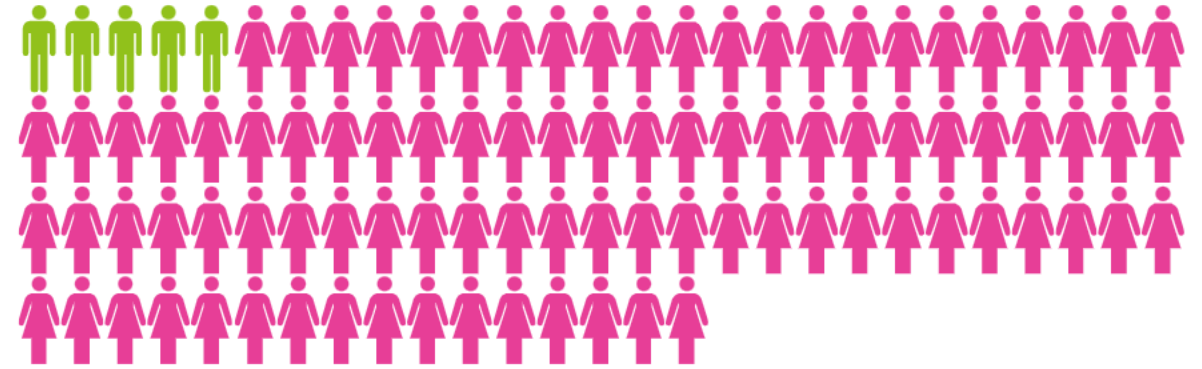
- signposting people to information on how to deal with anxiety.
- how to deal with common illnesses and guidance on when to seek medical help.

Appendix

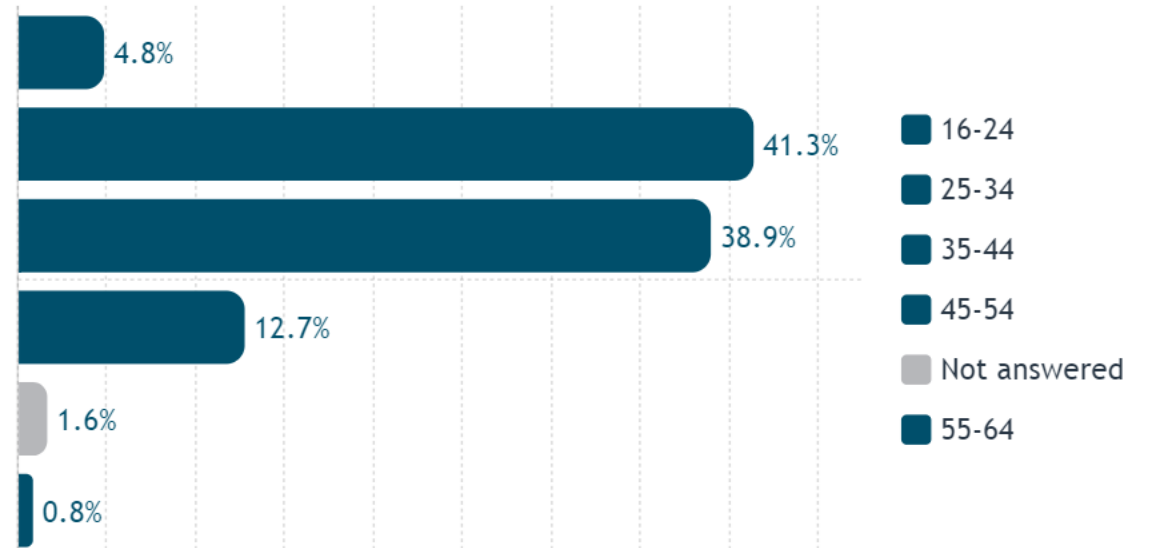
Who answered the survey?

In which ward do you live?	Number	%
Worksop South East	58	46.0%
Worksop South	22	17.5%
Worksop North	10	7.9%
Worksop North West	9	7.1%
Harworth	8	6.3%
Worksop East	7	5.6%
Langold	3	2.4%
Blyth	2	1.6%
East Retford South	2	1.6%
Ranskill	2	1.6%
Worksop North East	1	0.8%
Sturton	1	0.8%
Beckingham	1	0.8%
Total	126	100%

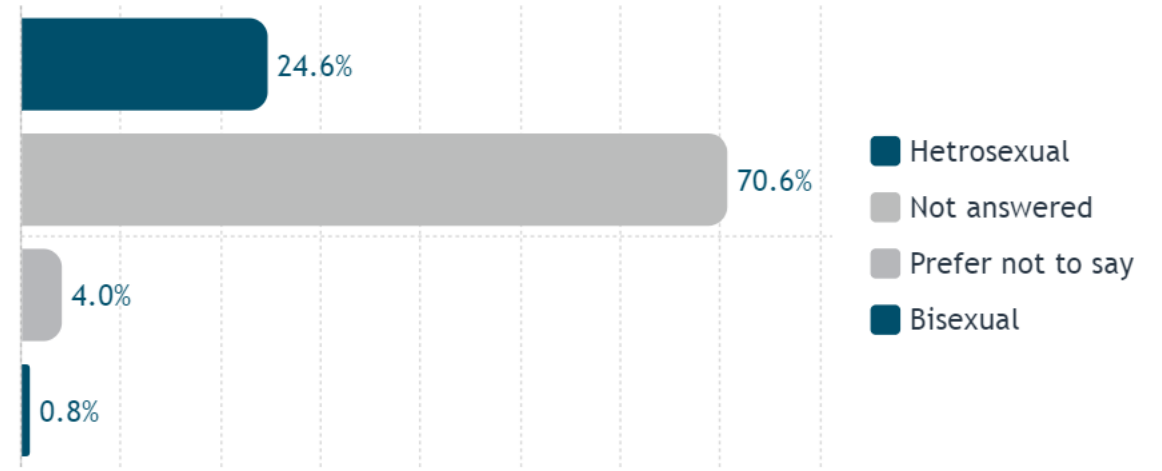
Sex	Number	%	Census 2011*
Female	116	92.1%	50.4%
Male	6	4.8%	49.6%
Not answered	3	2.4%	-
Non-binary	1	0.8%	-
Total	126	100%	



Age Group	Number	%	Census 2011*
16-24	6	4.8%	10.3%
25-34	52	41.3%	24.4%
35-44	49	38.9%	
45-54	16	12.7%	28.8%
55-64	1	0.8%	
Not answered	2	1.6%	
Total	126	100%	



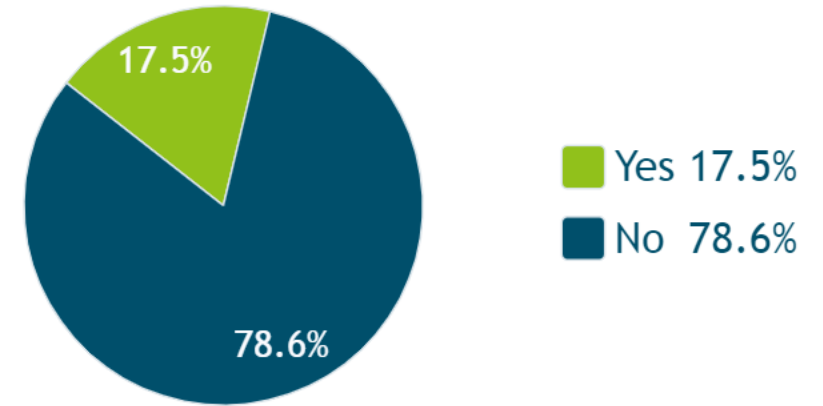
Sexual orientation	Number	%
Hetrosexual	31	24.6%
Not answered	89	70.6%
Prefer not to say	5	4.0%
Bisexual	1	0.8%
Total	126	100.0%



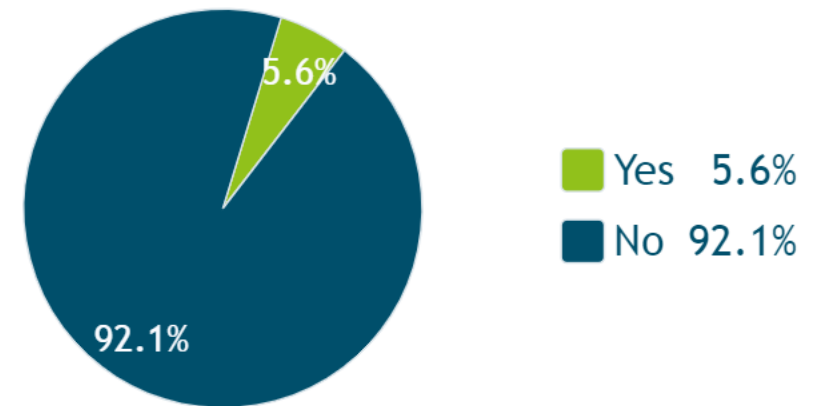
Is your gender identity the same as you were assigned at birth?	Number	%
Yes	125	99.2%
Not answered	1	0.8%
Total	126	100%



Are you a carer?	Number	%
No	99	78.6%
Yes	22	17.5%
Not answered	5	4.0%
Total	126	100%



Are you cared for by anyone?	Number	%
No	116	92.1%
Yes	7	5.6%
Not answered	3	2.4%
Total	126	100%



Religion	Number	%	Census 2011*
Christian (all denominations)	63	50.0%	70.8%
No religion	37	29.4%	20.9%
Atheist	9	7.1%	-
Prefer not to say	9	7.1%	-
Other	6	4.8%	0.3%
Not answered	2	1.6%	-
Total	126	100%	

How would you describe your nationality	Number	%	Census 2011*
British	87	69.0%	73.9%
Not answered	26	20.6%	-
Polish	11	8.7%	1.9% (EU countries)
Indian	2	1.6%	0.4% (Middle East and Asia)
Total	126	100%	

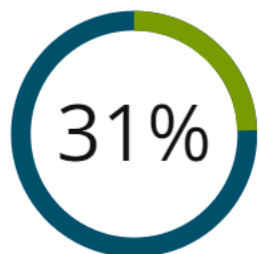
Ethnic group	Number	%	Census 2011*
White	117	92.9%	97.2%
Asian	2	1.6%	1.1%
Mixed / multiple ethnic	2	1.6%	0.9%
Not answered	2	1.6%	-
Black	1	0.8%	0.5%
Other	1	0.8%	0.2%
Prefer not to say	1	0.8%	-
Total	126	100%	

What is your main language	Number	%	Census 2011*
English	114	90.5%	97.4%
Polish	10	7.9%	1.5%
Not answered	2	1.6%	-
Total	126	100%	

Employment status	Number	%	Census 2011*
Part time	49	38.9%	15.3%
Full time	39	31.0%	38.1%
Not employed	17	13.5%	3.9%
Unable to work	11	8.7%	7.8%
Prefer not to say	6	4.8%	-
Not answered	4	3.2%	-
Total	126	100%	

Are you pregnant or have child under 5	Number	%
No	62	49.2%
Yes	59	46.8%
Not answered	4	3.2%
Prefer not to say	1	0.8%
Total	126	100%

Do you live with any of the following impairments	Number	%
A long-term health condition	24	19.0%
Mental health illness	20	15.9%
Prefer not to say	17	13.5%
Hearing impairment	7	5.6%
Physical impairment	5	4.0%
Social / behavioural problems	5	4.0%
Learning disability	3	2.4%
Visual impairment	2	1.6%



39 respondents (31%) have got one or more of the above impairments