

Antenatal Care at Northwick Park Hospital: Patient experience report

Overview

From August – November 2022, we carried out three visits to Northwick Park Hospital's antenatal waiting area to meet with pregnant women and collect feedback about their experiences. The visits were carried out by two members of the Healthwatch Brent team, accompanied by representatives from the Northwick Park Hospital Maternity Voices Partnership.

In total, we met with 37 women and collected their views about access to care, quality of treatment and any other feedback that they wished to share. While this only gives a snapshot of the current performance of the service, several key themes emerged both in terms of where the hospital is offering good care and potential areas for improvement.

Key findings

Overall response from patients

In total, 37 people shared feedback about the service. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with 26 people rating it as 'good' or 'very good', 3 rating it as 'okay' and only one person rating it as 'poor' or 'very poor'. The remaining responses didn't give an overall rating.

In addition, 27 people agreed or strongly agreed that staff were friendly, and 23 people agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy to access the service.

Positive themes

Among those who rated the service as good or very good, there were several key factors that contributed to their positive experience:

- Information and choice

16 people highlighted good communication, stating that they received lots of information about their care and were able to make choices about the care they received:

"They have offered extra support for questions and concerns."

"I'm pretty happy with my treatment. Good information and choices."

"I've been able to make choices about my care."

- Support from staff

15 people said that the quality of care they received from staff was a key reason for their positive experience with the service:

"Staff are lovely and kind, they answer all my questions."

"Staff have been amazing."

"[I] found the staff helpful, informative and friendly."

Areas for improvement

Alongside the positive themes, there were a couple of areas highlighted where patients felt there was room for improvement.

- Long waiting times

Concerns about long waiting times at the start of appointments were raised by a number of patients, including those who were otherwise positive about the service. In total, 11 people highlighted long waiting times or delays as part of their experience.

"The appointment was delayed with no explanation why."

"Waiting times can be quite long at the appointments - always waiting for at least 30 minutes."

"No indication of how long you can wait - can be 75 minutes +."

- Lack of organisation

A small but noteworthy number of respondents spoke about lack of organisation as a negative part of their experience, with issues such as letters not being on the system or appointments being rearranged. In total, this had affected five of the women we spoke to.

"Had two appointments on one day at different times which was not great internal communication."

"Very annoying - letters were not in the system."

"There was one issue when I had high protein levels in my urine and they never called - I had to follow-up after my GP raised it."

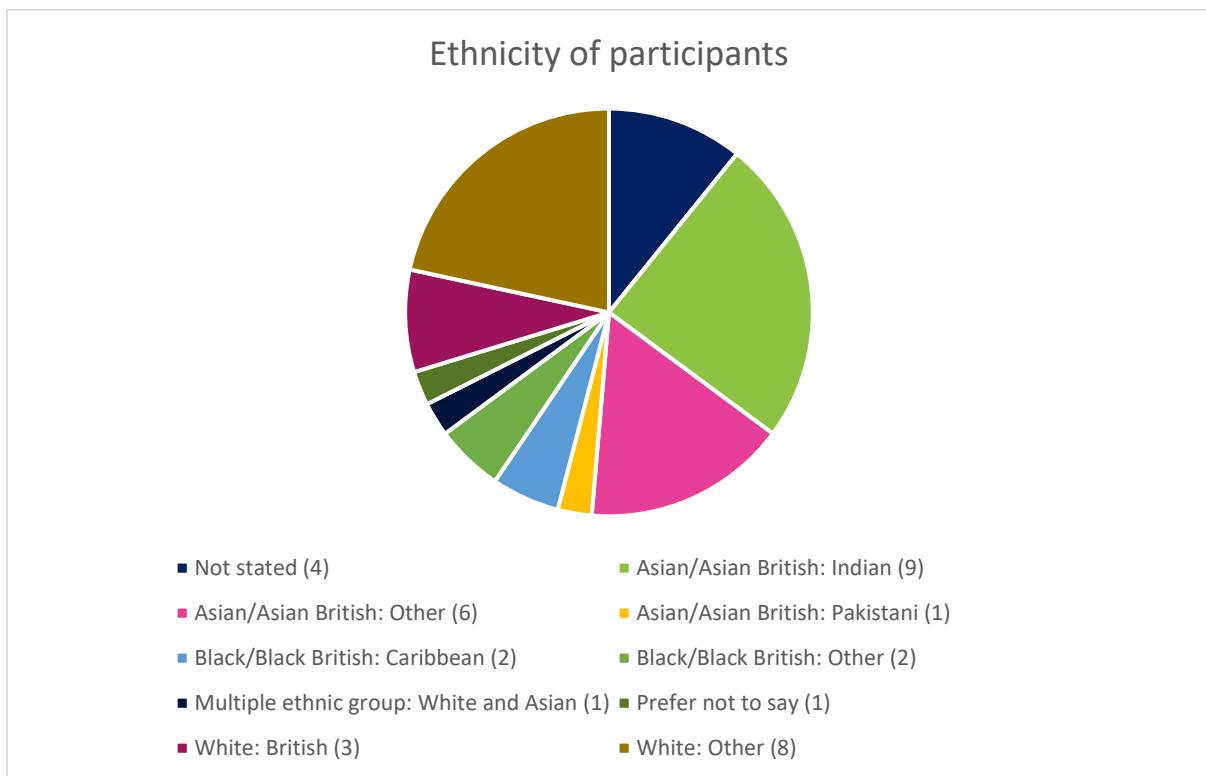
Methodology

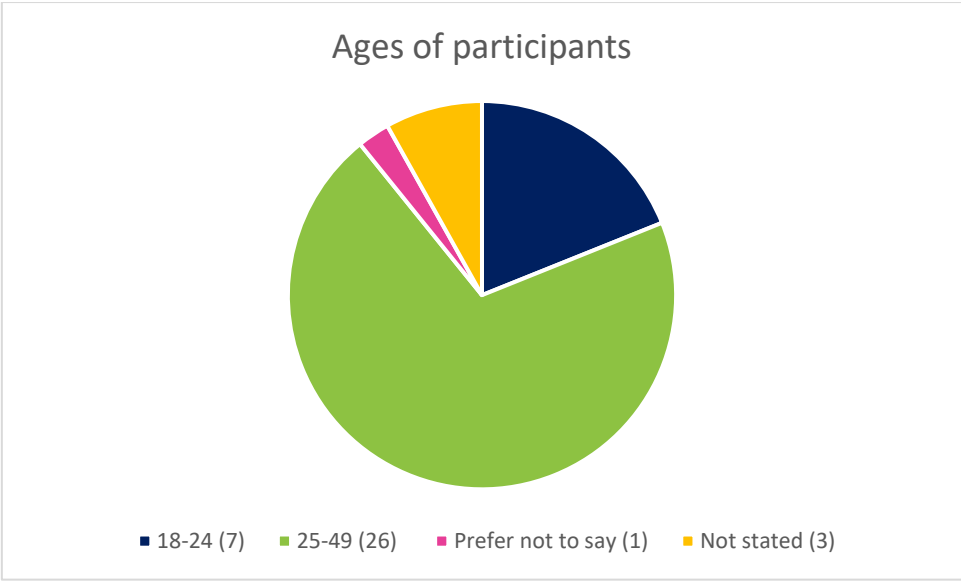
In total we conducted three visits, each lasting for two – four hours. This gave us the opportunity to meet with a range of different patients and collect a diverse mix of experiences. We chose to visit on Tuesdays and Thursdays, when the service is particularly busy.

We collected feedback using a simple survey which all women present were invited to complete. We also offered partners or other family members the option of giving feedback, although none chose to participate.

Demographics

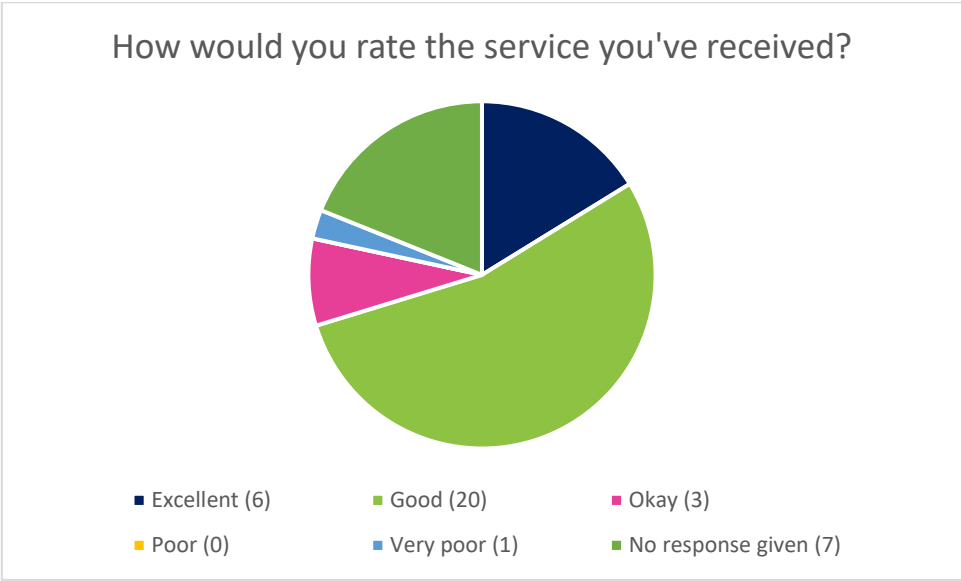
All of the participants were cisgender women, and the majority were in the 25-49 age bracket. Participants came from a wide variety of different ethnic backgrounds. The majority declined to share their religion or sexuality. A breakdown of age groups and ethnicities can be seen below.



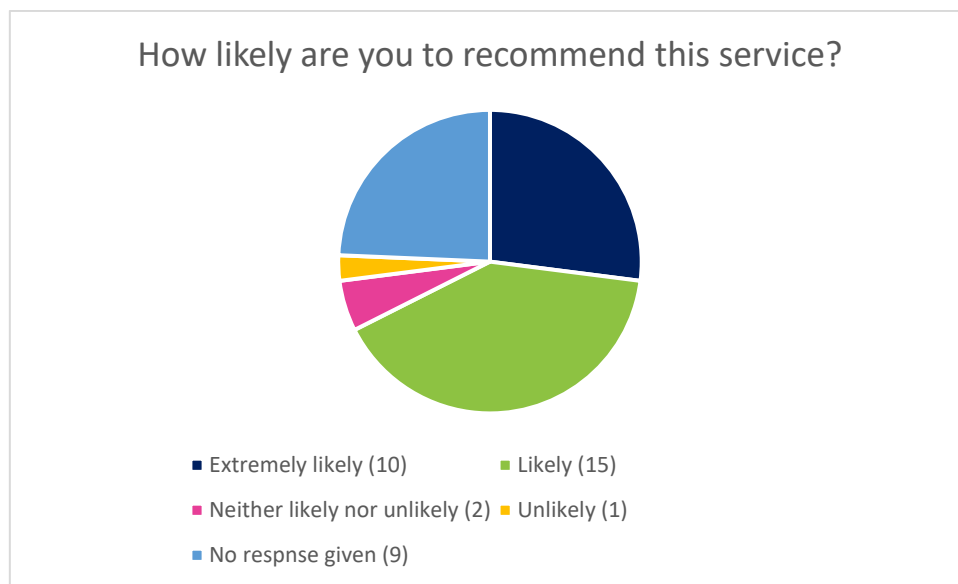


Breakdown of responses

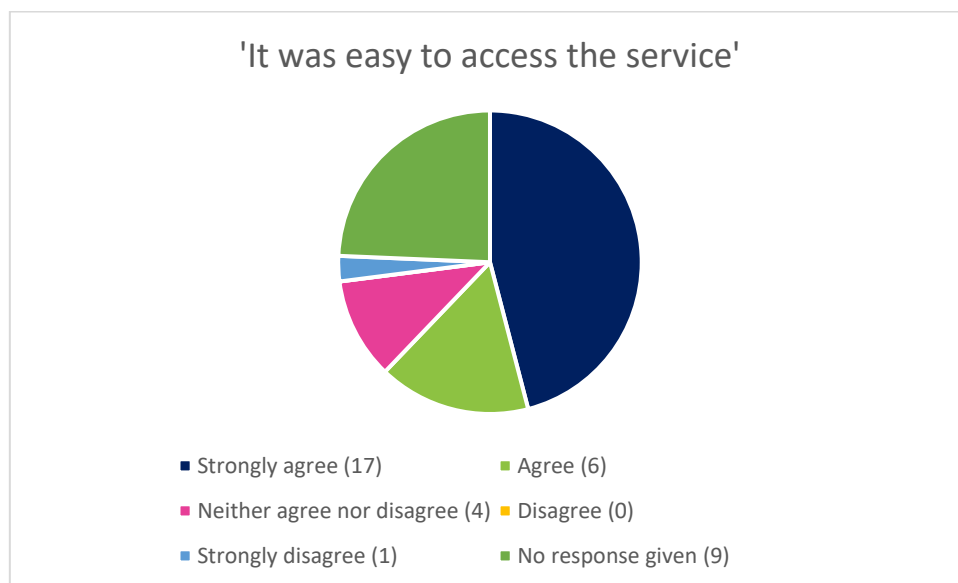
Question one: How would you rate the service you've received?



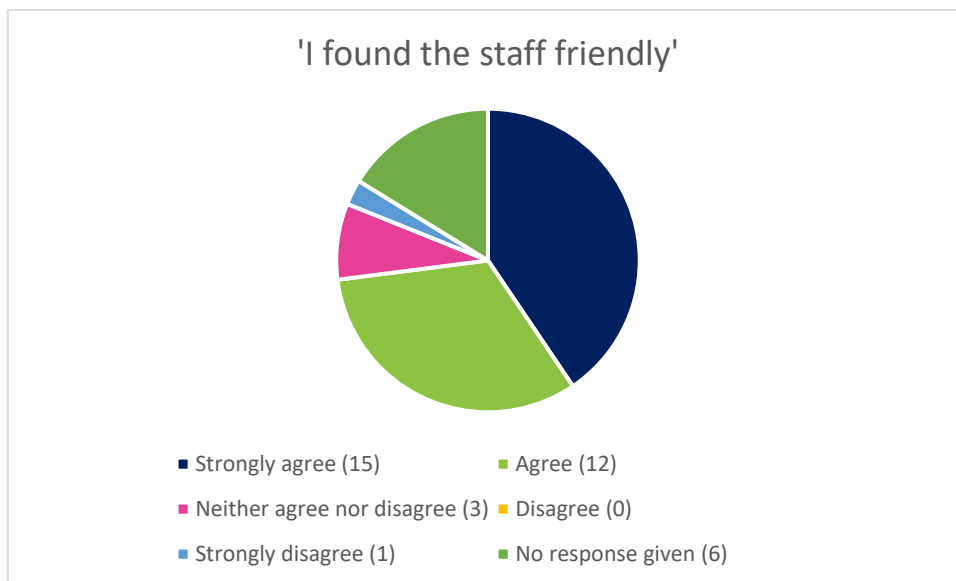
Question two: How likely are you to recommend this service?



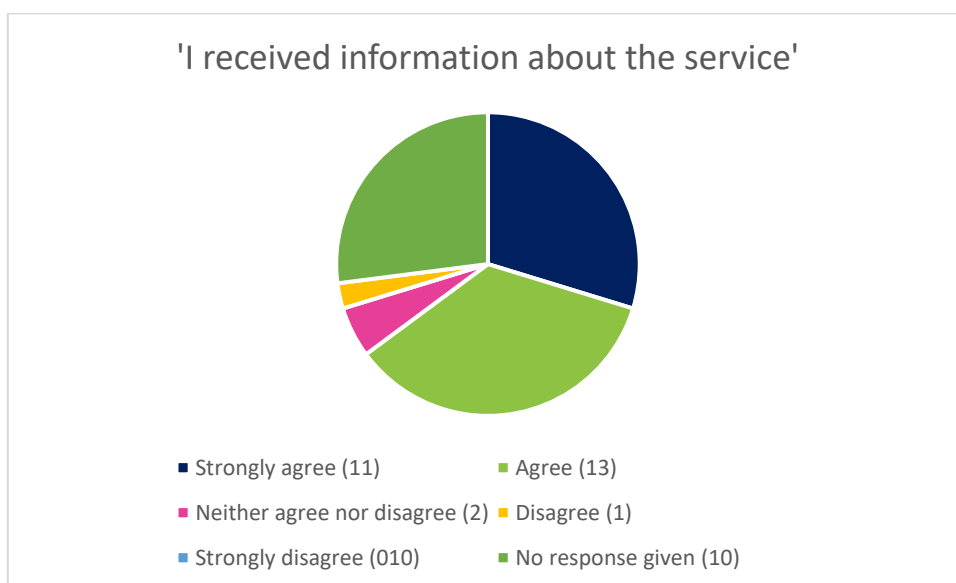
Question three: Do you agree with the statement 'It was easy to access the service'?



Question four: Do you agree with the statement 'I found the staff friendly'?



Question five: Do you agree with the statement 'I received information about the service'?



Conclusion

From the sample we spoke to, patients have a very good overall opinion of antenatal services currently available at Northwick Park Hospital. Although there were some areas where feedback was less positive – most notably, waiting times

– the majority of respondents were pleased with the various aspects of their care including access to services, attitude of staff and information about the service.

Healthwatch Brent is very keen to continue working closely with the Northwick Park Hospital Maternity Voices Partnership to ensure that we can highlight the views of patients accessing these services and ensure that pregnant women have a good experience of care. Our next step will be to collect feedback from women who have recently given birth or are using postnatal services. This will allow us to compare the experiences of those using antenatal and postnatal services.