



# Enter and View Report

Oakham Medical Practice

November 2023

**healthwatch**  
Rutland

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## List of Acronyms

A&E	Accident and Emergency Department
E&V	Enter and View
GP	General Practitioner
HWR	Healthwatch Rutland
ICB	Integrated Care Board
LLR	Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland
LPT	Leicestershire Partnership Trust
OMP	Oakham Medical Practice
PPG	Patient Participation Group
RCC	Rutland County Council
RMH	Rutland Memorial Hospital

## Summary

- The majority of patients are satisfied with their medical care but there are reports that they cannot get same-day care for an urgent health issue.
- Patients are more confident and happier to see other appropriate health care professionals than formerly<sup>1</sup> and the practice nurses are valued highly.
- More patients value face-to-face appointments than virtual appointments and some expressed a wish for greater continuity of care with a doctor they know and who knows them.
- The repeat prescription service is rated highly although some patients report difficulties when all their repeat medications cannot be re-prescribed and dispensed at the same time.
- Most people walk or travel by car to the Practice and journey times are most often under 30 minutes. Patients appreciate the convenience of the Practice in Oakham and especially its location next to a pharmacy and adjacent to Rutland Memorial Hospital (RMH). However, some questioned whether the premises are now big enough for the growing population due to large housing developments.
- 54% of the survey respondents make their appointments by telephone and 38% make them online. However, 57% say it is difficult to make online appointments and only 29% say it is easy.
- Patients continue to complain about long waits on the telephone.<sup>2</sup>
- Patients would like more available appointments and sooner. Some reported that they had been told in the Practice to book by phone but were then unable to get through.
- The entrance used by Oakham Medical Practice (OMP) patients to access clinics at RMH is not suitable for wheelchairs and there is no signage to a more suitable access.

There are no signs advising about hearing loops in the practice or RMH and the signage prohibiting the use of 'portable phones' needs removing.

- Reception does not consistently have seats for patients queuing who might feel too poorly to stand. When lengthy patient queues were forming at reception we did not always observe additional staff coming

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<sup>1</sup> See for example <https://www.healthwatchrutland.co.uk/report/2020-08-10/how-people-long-term-or-multiple-conditions-experience-care-rutland-gp-surgeries>

<sup>2</sup> The Practice has installed an automated call back service for patients trying to telephone the surgery since the visits and survey were conducted

to assist. Some reception staff are seen by patients as abrupt or uncaring. Some patients with access to the priority telephone option report being 'told off' for using it.

- Patients attending clinics at RMH do not always know that they need to check in at the main Practice building first.
- Storage of a wheelchair in the main building's disabled toilet takes up manoeuvring space needed by people with disabilities.
- The difficulties of the last few years have undermined trust and created anxiety, but some patients have noticed an improvement over 2023.
- Patients we spoke to in person during visits generally gave higher satisfaction rates than survey respondents.

## Recommendations

1. Improve signage at RMH to provide more appropriate entrance for wheelchairs and use of mobile phones. Add signage at the OMP main building about opening hours and out-of-hours contact details.
2. Improve OMP reception facilities to provide drinking water for patients and better queue management with seating for poorly or disabled patients.
3. Enhance training for Patient Services staff to maintain high standards of customer care in terms of sensitivity to patients' privacy during conversations at reception.
4. Advise patients with appointments for clinics in RMH, at booking time, that they should check in at OMP first (unless they have mobility issues).
5. Make more appointments available for same day urgent health care.
6. Simplify the online appointment booking by providing clarity about appointment codes and make more doctors' appointments available to book online throughout the day.
7. Offer more face-to-face appointments and offer continuity of care.
8. Synchronise prescribing for patients taking multiple medications.
9. Create more space in disabled toilet by storing the wheelchair elsewhere.

10. Continue with making improvements. OMP efforts over 2023 have been recognised and welcomed by patients but some doubts and anxieties remain.

## Response from Oakham Medical Practice

We would like to thank Healthwatch Rutland and OMP PPG for undertaking this Enter and View project. Patient feedback is of great value to us and so we would like to thank every patient for their open and honest feedback.

We are pleased our efforts to improve have been recognised but understand we still have areas requiring improvement. We strive to implement the recommendations as soon as possible and have in fact, since the survey, introduced a call-back feature to our telephones.

For recommendations we cannot implement, we can offer an explanation and moving forward we hope we can work with our PPG to educate patients on what modern general practice looks like for them.

- 1. Improve signage at RMH to provide more appropriate entrance for wheelchairs and use of mobile phones. Add signage at the OMP main building about opening hours and out-of-hours contact details.**

We agree with this recommendation. RMH is owned by LPT. We have approached LPT on many occasions to ask that their signage is updated and improved.

We will add our opening hours and out of hours contact details to our front doors.

- 2. Improve OMP reception facilities to provide drinking water for patients and better queue management with seating for poorly or disabled patients.**

Following an infection control risk assessment, we made the decision to remove the drinking water. This also helps us reduce our plastic use and carbon footprint.

We have ordered more chairs for our waiting room and will provide seating for patients unable to queue.

- 3. Enhance training for Patient Services staff to maintain high standards of customer care in terms of sensitivity to patients' privacy during conversations at reception.**

Our Patient Services Team receive regular training. We have a high turnover of staff due to the difficulty of the role, which means the training is ongoing. We regularly audit the recordings of patient calls and use these to develop and support our team.

We are aware the structure of our reception desk makes privacy difficult. This is why our staff work from the desk furthest from the main waiting room. Should further privacy be needed our staff would endeavour to find a private space.

**4. Advise patients with appointments for clinics in RMH, at booking time, that they should check in at OMP first (unless they have mobility issues).**

We do advise patients to check in at OMP first, however for any patients that have not checked in our staff are aware to check the waiting area.

**5. Make more appointments available for same day urgent health care.**

Primary care is not commissioned to provide urgent same day appointments. However, we do have a same day team - comprising of a GP, Advanced Practitioner, a Minor Illness nurse and a Health Care Assistant. In providing this we have to reduce our planned bookable appointments which leads to a conflict with patients' wishes in other areas of the survey. Oakham endeavours to provide the model recommended for a Modern GP practice within the constraints of the staff, funding and premises that we have in order to provide care for all of our patients' needs.

**6. Simplify ONLINE booking**

The online booking system is owned by our clinical software provider and is restrictive in its labelling and implementation. We have actively started sending links for appointments which patients can book directly into to try and reduce the complexity of online booking.

**7. Offer more face-to-face appointments**

We currently provide more access in total than the target required (in the form of face-to-face, online, telephone and administrative contact) and our face-to-face appointment total per patient are also above the required level. These levels are constantly measured by the ICB and NHS England.

**8. Synchronise prescribing**

This is our aim and actively reviewed when medications are issued but a variety of issues can mean they become out of sync, for example, new medications prescribed by hospitals, changes in dosing, late requests for medication, stockpiling and medication being out of stock. We need patients to work with us and highlight any discrepancies at the time of a repeat request via the online portal and we will endeavour to correct it.

## 9. Create more space in the disabled toilet

We have moved the wheelchair – thank you for highlighting.

## 10. Improvements recognised, doubts remain

We would like to reassure patients and stakeholders that we are continuously looking for ways to improve, enhance and streamline our service provision. We are meeting targets regarding our access but understand there are still frustrations. We have adapted and redirected some care to virtual clinics which frees up face-to-face appointments for those that need one.

We hope our patients understand that we have a duty to provide care for all of our patients however young or old, firm or infirm and have to allocate this within a finite pot of funding and resources. This means that in order to increase same day appointments, we have to reduce routine patient bookable appointments with the clinician of their choice. It is not possible to simply add additional appointments to provide complete patient satisfaction within the current government funding and staffing levels.

We welcome any initiatives that enable us to work with our patients and stakeholders to ensure that we are as efficient as possible in using our current resources to benefit the most patients, while also being aware we need to provide care for all.

We have been working hard with the ICB and RCC for over 2 years to secure funding for space we desperately need to improve care for our patient community. We have become a GP training Practice, and we are upskilling trained Pharmacists to be Advanced Clinical Practitioners to improve access across all clinical areas.

General Practice is incredibly complicated to understand and provide services within, but we will always try to balance our care for the need of our patients.

We continually struggle with a balance of services such as:

- Same day appointments *versus* pre-bookable appointments with GP of choice.
- More people helping the queue at the desk *versus* longer waiting times on the phone.
- Patients' expectations as an individual *versus* the needs of the whole patient population.
- Government messaging regarding seeking help *versus* the structure in place to provide it.



- Patients planning their care where able *versus* demand for instant appointments, prescriptions and care when they haven't or can't.
- Staff to train staff *versus* staff to be available to help patients.
- Senior clinicians being available to oversee multiple strands of patient care to a high-quality, including end of life care, safeguarding, long term conditions, governance and cancer care, versus a senior clinician being available for a prebooked face-to-face appointment for any patient with any problem.
- Historical primary care model (block payment and minimal contracts or other expectations regarding patient care) *versus* modern primary care delivery needs (multiple contracts and funding checklists, constant assessment, benchmarking and governance).
- Rural *versus* city Primary Care. Our total emergency admissions and ED attendances are low. Our total cancer referrals are high which means we are seeing and treating more of our patients than city GP's whose patients attend ED in higher numbers.

We are really pleased that patients are more satisfied and have noticed improvements in the last 12 months which signifies our significant efforts have been well placed.

It is a positive step forward that patients feel more confident to see other valued members of the team.

We have worked hard on our medication management, as per our CQC recommendation and we feel this is reflected in patient comments.

We are grateful for your time in undertaking this survey.

***Ms Sara Kenrick and Dr Lucy Pearson***

***Practice Manager and Partner, Oakham Medical Practice***



## Introduction

Oakham Medical Practice (OMP) is a long-established, General Practice which occupies a purpose-built surgery on Cold Overton Road in Oakham and has 15,000+ patients. The practice also uses a waiting area and consulting rooms at the Rutland Memorial Hospital (RMH) next door. This space is also shared by a Minor Injuries Unit on weekdays.

After inspecting the service in April 2022, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) rated the practice as 'inadequate' overall.

Since then, the practice has worked hard to improve and in November 2022 the CQC revisited and rated the practice as 'good' overall.

Working in collaboration with the Practice Patient Participation Group and with the support of the Practice staff, HWR conducted 'Enter and View' visits in August and September 2023 to understand how patients are now experiencing the services. An online and hardcopy survey was available at the same time to ensure the widest possible reach to patients.

This report is in 3 parts. Section 1 details the findings from visiting the practice and talking to patients about their experiences. Section 2 provides the results of the online survey and Section 3 compares what we heard during visits with the results of the survey.

## What is Enter and View?

Healthwatch Rutland has the statutory right under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to carry out 'Enter and View' visits into NHS health and adult social care services.

Healthwatch staff and volunteers (Authorised Representatives) work together to carry out these visits.

The aim of the visits is to listen to the feedback of service users, their families, carers and staff and observe service delivery and the facilities available for patients. The feedback and observations, along with survey data are collated into a report including any suggested recommendations. The service provider then has the opportunity to comment on the report before it is published.

A service can be visited for a number of reasons such as Healthwatch has received a lot of feedback about a service; it is part of a rolling program of similar service visits; a service is running really well and good practice could be implemented in other places.

## Purpose

### Details of the visits

Healthwatch Authorised Representatives	Janet Underwood Barry Henson Andrew Nebel Tracey Allan-Jones
OMP Patient Participation Group Representatives	Carol Bartlett Susie Sanderson Barbara Crellin Allan Grey Yvonne Rawlings
Dates/times of the visits	Monday 21/8/23 09:00-noon: Long Term Conditions clinic  Tuesday 29/8/23 13:30-16:30: Vaccinations clinic  Weds 30/8/23 09:00-noon: Nursing clinic  Monday 04/09/23 14:00-17:00: Same Day Care clinic (RMH building)  Weds 06/09/23 14:00-17:00 Minor Illness clinic (RMH building)  Tuesday 12/09/23 14:00- 17:00 Same Day Care clinic (RMH building)

### Objectives

- To collect the views and experiences of patients, family members, carers and staff.
- To observe the service and how it runs.
- Identify any best practice or areas of concern.
- To provide a report from the visit, including recommendations that will be made available to the service provider, commissioners and the public.

## Method

- The visits were prearranged with Oakham Medical Practice.
- HWR staff and volunteers and the practice's Patient Participation Group worked in two-person teams to talk to patients about their experiences.
- 82 patients were asked for their feedback through asking structured questions and inviting their additional comments.
- We listened to staff feedback if they wished to offer it.
- During the visits the teams observed the environment and interactions between staff, patients and their families.
- A survey was made available online and in hardcopy, in order to extend the reach to as many patients as possible.

## Section 1: Findings from the visits

### 1.1 Observations by the visit teams

#### 1.1.1 External Signage

There is signage up a narrow drive to the Practice from Cold Overton Road, Oakham. With a small Boots pharmacy immediately next door, it was described by one authorised representative as "a modern and well-presented estate".

#### 1.1.2 Parking

There are 32 spaces in two car parking areas for patients. A pathway between the areas leads directly to the hospital where the practice uses space for patient clinics. There is parking here for another 15 cars – 3 spaces reserved for people with disabilities. Availability of spaces was adequate during our visits.

#### 1.1.3 Main Practice building

There is a post box outside of the building for repeat prescriptions. Two automatic sliding doors open into the lobby which contains:

- Forms for patients to notify changes of name and/or address
- Specimen drop-off point, with spare bottles etc
- Repeat prescription drop off box
- Poster with CQC ratings
- Display of school children's artwork

We saw no signs outside showing opening times or contact details.

At the reception entrance, patients can check in on an electronic screen and are directed to a waiting area. There is also a trolley with hand sanitiser and face masks.

There are 3 reception stations, with one being at a lower height and appropriate for wheelchair users. One, at a higher level, was staffed during our visits. On some occasions we observed additional Patient Services staff coming to help reduce long patient queues. On other occasions a single receptionist was present with no additional help when queues became long. Similarly, during some visits we saw a chair against the wall on which queuing people who were feeling unwell could sit (although they risk losing their place in the queue). At other times there were no chairs close to the reception desk for poorly patients to sit and wait their turn.

*The lady on reception was friendly, helpful and professional and gave patients plenty of time. I think the patients appreciated this time, but this meant the queue was slow moving and this caused some raised eyebrows (authorised representative).*

*The receptionist was very calm, patient and helpful – listening and questioning to understand and doing her best to resolve issues and questions. The fact that I could overhear her was slightly concerning – it was a very open area. There is a sign on the wall to the left of the operational reception desk saying patients can ask for a private conversation and staff will try to find a private space (authorised representative).*

*The check-in screen stopped working during the morning which caused a queue (PPG volunteer).*

There are two waiting areas with laminate flooring and moveable, hard plastic chairs, giving space for wheelchairs. An interactive touchscreen gives access to the practice website and adverts from local health and wellbeing services. A second, wall-mounted screen cycles information about the practice and its staff, and general health and wellbeing support.

The small waiting area has 6 chairs and is adjacent to external doors.

Clinicians come out into the waiting areas to call the next patient in.

The male, female and disabled toilets were clean and modern but we saw no checklists to show that the cleanliness was being monitored regularly.

#### 1.1.4 Additional needs

All public areas are on the same level and very slight differences in floor levels were clearly marked to help avoid tripping.

The disabled toilet, with grab rails, emergency pull cord and appropriate height door handles, is larger than the regular lavatories but some of the extra space was taken up by storage of a wheelchair. There was a child's potty and a baby changing mat in this toilet.

We did not observe any notices about: hearing loop availability; translation facilities; pram parking area; or privacy for breast feeding. The receptionist informed that they try to find an empty treatment room for breast feeding if requested.

#### 1.1.5 Clinic and waiting area space used by OMP at Rutland Memorial Hospital

The entrance is through two sets of manual-opening double doors either side of a very small lobby area. This may be difficult for wheelchair users. There were no obvious directions for an alternative access.

*'This 'same day clinic' is held in RMH. Patients first had to register at OMP and then walk over to the hospital. The entrance to which they were directed was signed as 'Reception & Minor Injuries Unit'. A smaller sign on a side wall, partially concealed by a pillar, was signed "Oakham Medical Practice & Rutland Acute Treatment Centre" (authorised representative).*

*'Outside notices were on one of the doors, but I was unable to read them as the door was propped open against a brick wall' (authorised representative).*

*'There was no receptionist on that day but a lady in uniform, marked 'estates and facilities', was greeting people and directing them to either the surgery to check in [for OMP care] or checking them in and directing them to the waiting area [for Minor Injuries]. She was friendly and seemed competent and professional. (authorised representative).*

*The waiting area was clean and well-lit with sun blinds for bright days. There was a water cooler and waste bin, along with a phone with an 'out of order' sign. There are 15 comfortable, moveable chairs.*

*Although the seats were spaced about a foot apart, there had to be some manoeuvring to fit a patient in a wheelchair into the row of chairs (authorised representative)*

*There were 3 large notice boards with a mix of different posters on display. No music or reading materials and no provision for children. It was a warm day, and the room was a bit stuffy (authorised representative)*

*'The male and female toilets nearest to the waiting room are out of order. There is another toilet at the end of the corridor which has ample room for wheel chairs, assistant etc. It is rather basic and very big. There is a baby changing area with a changing mat and an emergency pull cord. There was a cleaning inspection chart which had not been signed [in the preceding 3 days] since 1/9/2023' (authorised representative 4/9/2023)*

Our teams observed no signs advising about the presence of a hearing loop. When questioned, the member of staff who was greeting patients on arrival (from the hospital Estates team of Leicestershire Partnership Trust), did not know whether there is one. There were wheelchairs available for patient use.

## 1.2 What patients told us

We spoke with 82 patients who were attending the Practice in either the main building or at RMH. We also spoke with 2 members of staff, 2 patients who had come along just to share their experiences and one member of the public who was accompanying a patient.

### 1.2.1 Getting an appointment

The practice offers 3 ways to get an appointment: online; by telephone; and in person.

We asked people how they made their appointments in 2023. The table below shows that the biggest proportion of the patients we spoke to said they book their appointments by telephone.

How do you usually make your appointments?	
Online	15 (26%)
In person	10 (12%)
Telephone	31 (44%)
Combination	10 (17%)

Table 1: How patients make their appointment

Patients are triaged by Patient Services who direct them to an appropriate professional (doctor, nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapist etc). The practice has also installed cloud telephony to improve call handling. We heard differing experiences:



*'I use the telephone if I can get through. My son needed to see a doctor. It was half an hour before I could get through and then I couldn't get an appointment. They told me to phone at 8.30am the next day. And I still couldn't get an appointment. They told me to fill in a form online and I got an appointment for 12 days later. Today*

*was the first time I could get through. I was pleased and relieved. I've been furious about the inability to get an appointment in the past' (patient).*

*'Booking online doesn't work. There are never any appointments when I look' (patient).*

*'I know a lot of people say it's hard, but I've had no problem at all. The first time I rang in the morning and had an appointment in the afternoon. This morning I popped in and got this appointment this afternoon' (patient).*

*'I wanted to make an appointment when I was in the surgery but I was told I would have to go home and make an appointment by phone but I could not get through'*



Almost equal numbers of patients told us they found it **very easy or quite easy** to make an appointment as found it **quite difficult or very difficult**. Some points raised include:

- While some spoke of their frustrations of waiting for a long time to get through on the phone, some said they understood the pressures on the service and others said they were surprised by quick responses to phone or online requests for appointments.
- Some people said they found it easy to book appointments online. Others said they find the process easy, but that there are no available appointments to book online when they try.
- Two people said they are clinically vulnerable and have a priority number to call but are 'told off' when they use it.
- Some people said appointment availability has improved somewhat in 2023.
- Some patients, juggling domestic and work commitments, suggested that it would be helpful if the surgery could give an approximate time for a call back so they could be sure they were in a position to talk privately with the clinician.

### 1.2.2 Virtual consultations


- Just over half of the people we spoke to had received a virtual consultation during 2023.
- 70% of those who had received a virtual consultation said they were very or quite satisfied and 11% said they were quite or very dissatisfied.

*Within the same day I've had a phone call and got an appointment or resolution*



### 1.2.3 Urgent (same day) health care

- 57% said they **always** or **most of the time** receive same day care if they have an urgent health issue
- 16% said they **sometimes** receive same day care if they have an urgent health issue
- 27% said that they **do not usually** or **never** receive same day care if they have an urgent health issue

 *'I had a severe chest pain, went to emergency doctor and was immediately sent to Peterborough. There was a major bowel blockage. I felt it was dealt with promptly'* (patient).

*'My partner couldn't get an appointment and I couldn't leave it. I drove her to Peterborough where she had to have emergency surgery'* (patient).



### 1.2.4 Medical Care

- 82% of patients interviewed rated the medical care they receive as **very** or **quite good**.
- 8% rated it as **quite** or **very poor**

 *Whenever I've needed a referral, I've got one and they have also taken account of my preferred hospital* (patient).

*I have had a number of medical issues which I feel have been treated and my questions answered to my satisfaction* (patient).

*The doctor was asking questions but wasn't giving me the time to answer. It was quite rushed – just 2 minutes* (patient).



Many patients comment that they understand pressures on the service but would still like to see the same doctor, feel listened to and not feel rushed.

### 1.2.5 Prescriptions

91% of people we spoke to who have used the online prescription order service were **very** or **quite satisfied** with the service. Their comments and experiences vary.

Ease of use

*'It's so easy to do online. I don't know why I didn't do it sooner. The practice website is very easy to use.'*

However, some problems were highlighted:

Communication problems

*'We needed a repeat prescription for my son's inhaler – got a message that we couldn't have one and then another message saying we'd got one. The system is confusing, and we were confused because of the mixed messages.'*

Better synchronisation

*'I have a number of prescriptions – if only they could synchronise them.'*

### 1.2.6 Reception Service

We observed reception staff being friendly, caring and professional. The majority of people we spoke to told us how satisfied they are with reception.

- 65% said they were **very satisfied** or **quite satisfied** with reception
- 21% said they were **neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**
- 14% said they were **quite dissatisfied** or **very dissatisfied**



*It depends who you get. You phone up because you need help but sometimes you get someone that doesn't seem bothered and makes you feel like you're wasting their time (patient).*

*I find staff can be very rude (patient)*

*I've been in to speak to them 2 or 3 times this year and they've always been very nice and helpful – e.g., when I was trying to sort out online access. They also helped me get my husband set up with my phone too, as he doesn't use his own (patient).*



### 1.2.7 What patients said they most like about OMP

The people

*'People are all lovely, nice and I can see that they want to help and listen.'*  
*'I'm always made to feel welcome – treated as an individual.'*

The nurses

*'Super, lovely nursing staff'*  
*'The nursing staff are excellent, personable and very helpful'*

Familiar

*'It feels familiar, relaxed and I feel at ease here'*  
*'The reception is a good calm area'*

Convenient

*'It's two minutes in the car for me'  
'It's close to home, I can walk'*

Responsive

*'I like the quick response to an issue or an emergency they detect from test results.'  
'I know I can come in and arrange an appointment and any concerns normally get answered.'*

However, there were negative comments too:

*'I think the communications are terrible with long-winded, repeated messages on the phone. It seems to me that they work to processes with no flexibility' (patient).*

*'The practice has been a different thing post COVID-19. It's all a bit bleak and it's definitely not back to normal. The staff are not visible. The practice hasn't recovered its comfort and familiarity' (patient).*

*'Everything is easy apart from there not being enough doctors – everything is on line and not enough face-to-face' (patient).*

## 1.2.8 What one change patients would like to see

### Telephones answered sooner

*'It's a nightmare waiting for the phone to be answered – can be waiting about 25 minutes' (patient).*

*'More staff to relieve pressures. Maybe a couple more on the phones. A call-back service if patients could leave a message on the phone.' (patient).*

### Appointments

*'I would like more appointments to be available' (patient).*

*'I would like to see a doctor rather than someone else. I do get a good service from the others but I might have an extra question that only a doctor could answer' (patient).*

### Continuity of care

*'I would like to get back to seeing a named GP that I could see' (patient).*

*'To be able to have your own doctor again who knows you' (patient).*

## Access and information

*'Be more accessible and be able to make online appointments. Would like to know about out of hours and weekend services. Like to know more about enhanced access services' (patient).*

## More staff

*'On reception – another person on the desk at least at busy times' (patient).*

*'More staff visibility' (patient).*

## The surgery premises

*'They need a bigger surgery. There are too many patients for the number of doctors (patient).*

## Change nothing!

*'Nothing – very good as it is' (patient).*

*'Nothing, from my experience – been here 5 years and, for the volume of patients, I am satisfied' (patient).*

## 1.3 What staff told us

Hospital staff members talked about confused communications between RMH and OMP.

*'There's been a big inconvenience with the computer system since DHU [Derbyshire Health United] took over the contract [April 2023]. The reception staff here in the hospital can no longer look up on the computer for patients attending OMP clinics. Staff here have to send patients back to OMP to sign in even though the doctors tell people to come to the hospital. Then they have to return to the hospital. This is not good for the elderly and poorly patients. We've had quite a lot of complaints about this. Some patients don't realise that they have to check in and just come in and sit in the waiting room and wait for ages' (staff member).*

Another member of staff told us that some patients think they can access the OMP clinics held at RMH without having an appointment and others attending booked appointments can get quite angry when directed to the surgery to check in.

## Section 2: Survey results

### How we carried out the survey

Between 16 August and 12 September 2023 the survey was widely advertised including on social networks, newsletters, by the Practice on posters and by text message to all its patients registered with a mobile phone number. Hardcopies were available in the Practice and from the Healthwatch Rutland office.

1055 people completed the survey, but not all completed or declared their demographic status or opinion in every question.

How many times have you had an appointment at Oakham Medical Practice during 2023?

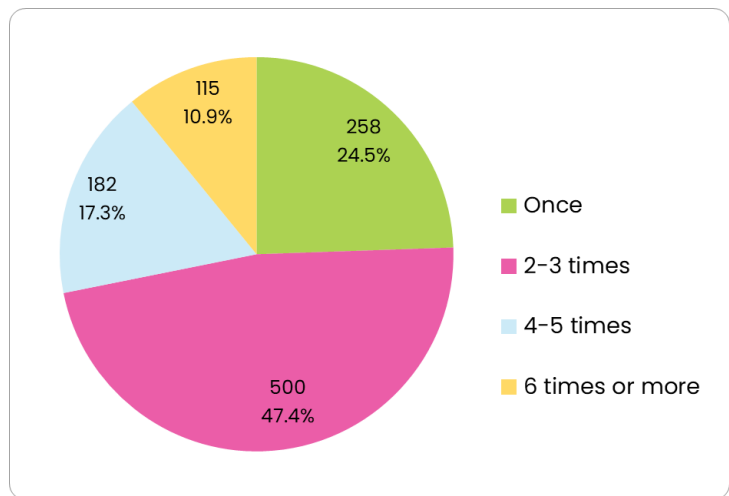


Chart 1: Frequency of appointments

How do you usually travel to the Practice?

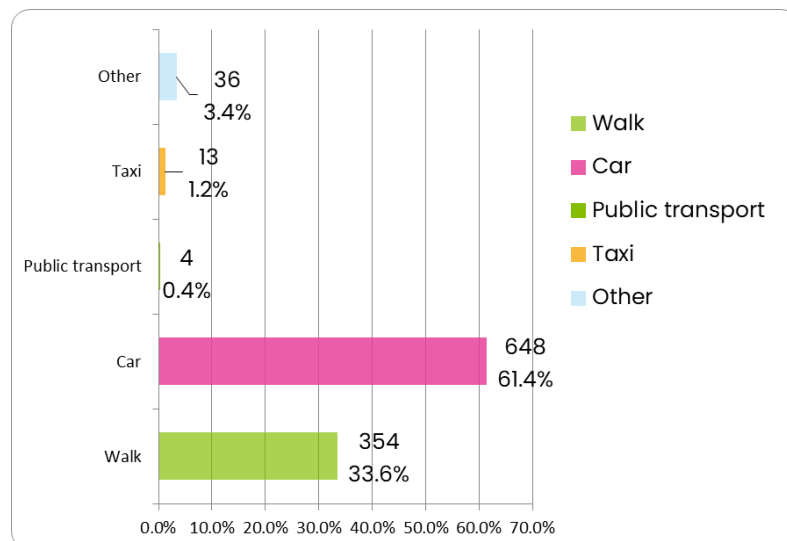


Chart 2: How patients travel to the Practice

How long does it usually take you to travel to the Practice?

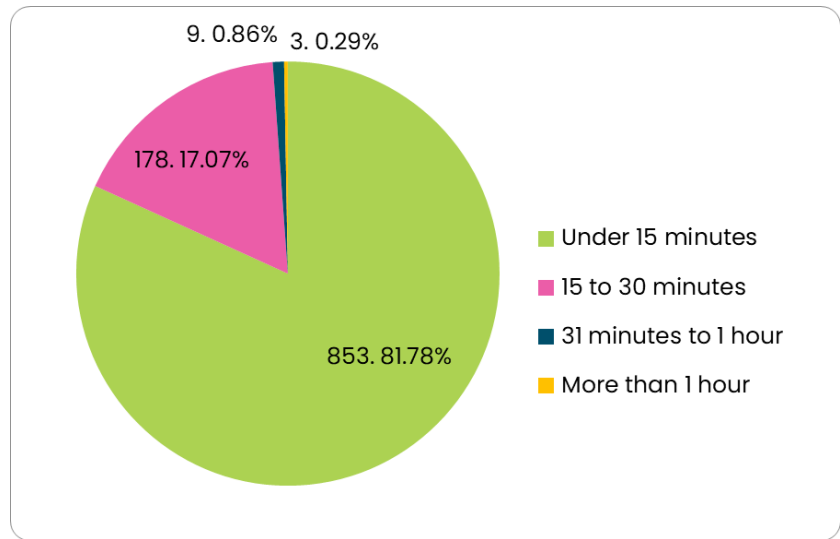
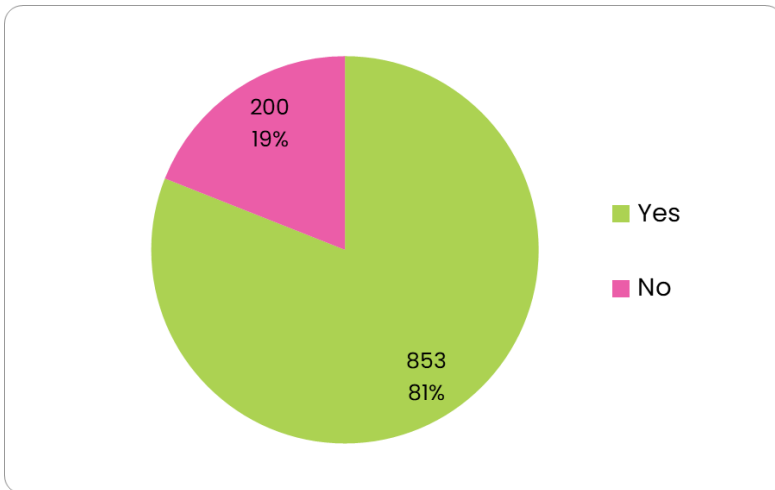


Chart 3: Journey time



Do you use the Practice's online services on your computer, tablet or smart phone?

Chart 4: Usage of online services

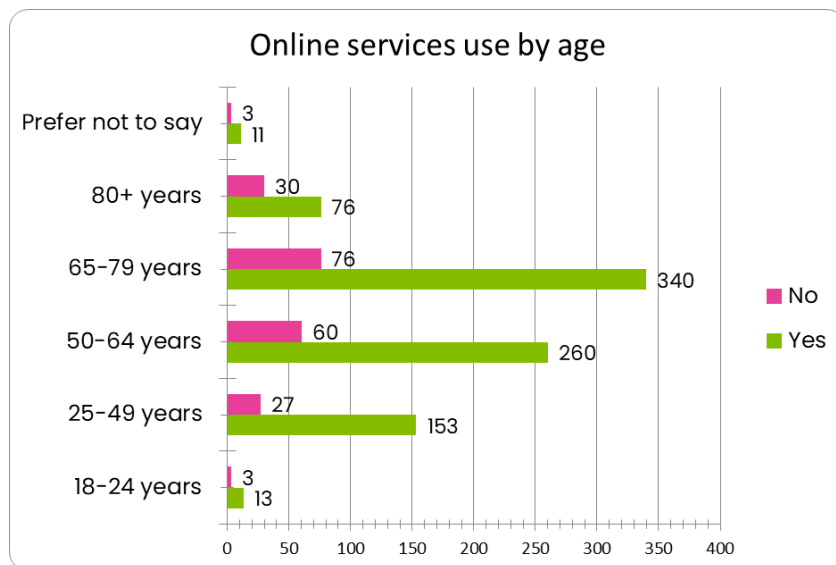


Chart 5: Usage of online services by age range

How do you usually make your appointments?

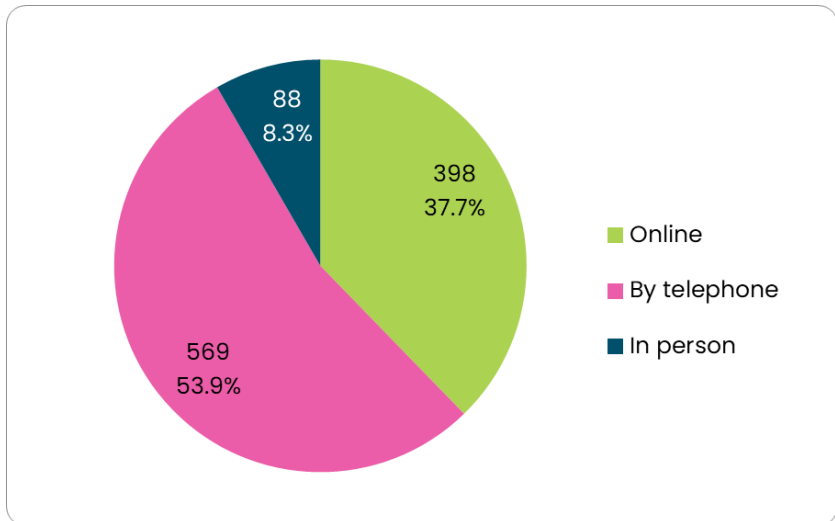


Chart 6: How patients make appointments

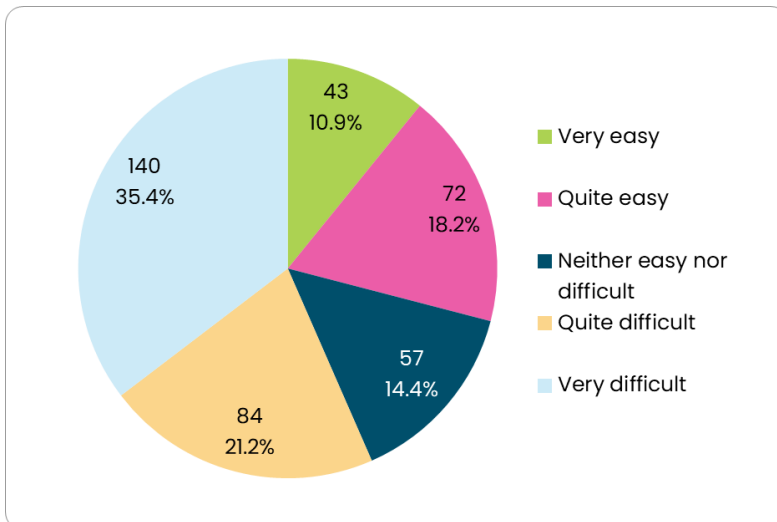


Chart 7: Ease of making appointments online

How easy do you find it to make your appointments online?

**57% of respondents find it difficult to make appointments online:**

*There are hardly ever GP appointments. Never any blood test appointments. Only lots of smear tests and INRs.*

*I do not know all abbreviations or what appointment I need - I just guess sometimes or give up and attend a walk-in centre.*

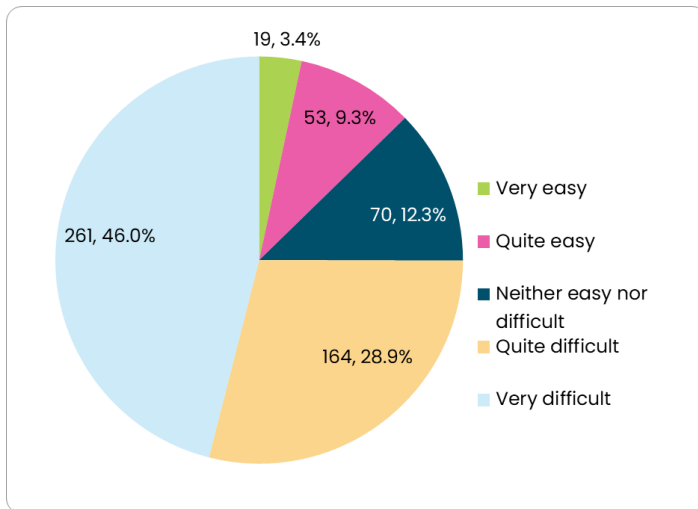
*Never anything available even if the practice has texted me with a link.*

**29% of respondents find it easy to make appointments online:**

*It's very easy to access the website and book the appointment.*

*I find the online platform so easy to use and it allows me to arrange everything I need in one place. The platform is quick and the responses are always rapid.*

*It's easy to use if there are appointments of the type you're looking for.*



**How easy do you find it to make appointments by telephone?**

Chart 8: Ease of making appointments by telephone

**75% of respondents find it difficult to make appointments by telephone:**

*It doesn't matter what time you phone you are always in a queue. Usually 20 - 40 minutes.*

*I have power of attorney for my elderly mother who has memory problems. As I don't live in Oakham, it would be useful to be able to book appointments further in advance as I am limited to school holidays and the surgery isn't open at the weekends.*

*An example: I called at 8.30 on a Monday morning to be told they were at full capacity, as a consequence I had to call 111 to be told I needed to go to A&E.*

*You have to queue for a long time and ring at 9am if you want an appointment anytime remotely soon, which is extremely inconvenient to anyone with a job.*

**13% of respondents find it easy to make appointments by telephone:**

*Once you get through, very helpful staff.*

*Normally get straight through, no problem.*



How easy do you find it to make your appointments in person?

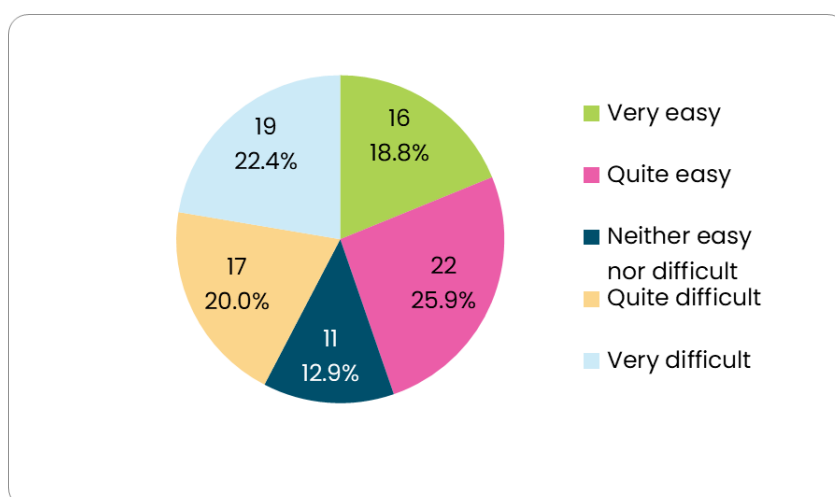


Chart 9: Ease of making appointments in person

**45% of respondents who make appointments in person find it easy:**

*I have no problems at all. Staff have always been polite and considerate and very helpful.*

*[I] find it easier to [go] into the surgery to make an appointment as the phone is very busy.*

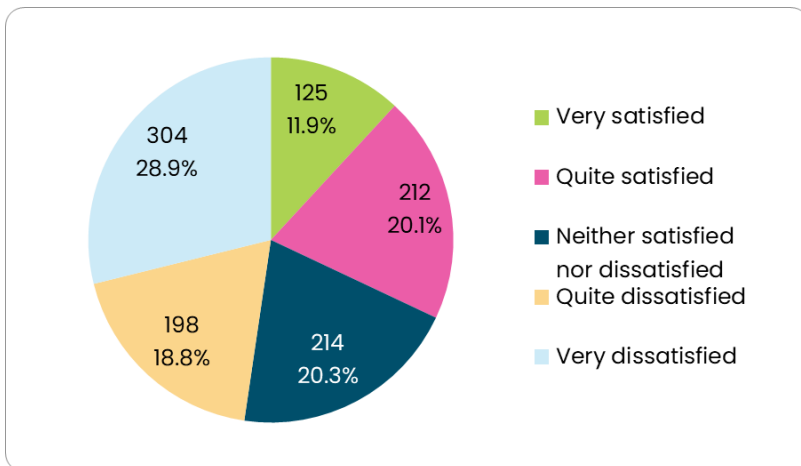
*The receptionist has always been very helpful.*

**42% of respondents who make appointments in person find it difficult:**

*Whenever I have asked for an appointment I am told they have all gone or to phone, which I refuse to do. I am not listening to the doctor repeating over and over all the other phone numbers that may be able to help me, all I want is to see or talk to a doctor or medical professional.*

*On every occasion I've been to the surgery, and may I add in severe pain with osteoarthritis, the receptionist tells me it's not an emergency and more or less to "go away".*

*To make an appointment in person you have to be at the practice for (or before) 8.30am. Earlier this year (2023) I did this and was told by the receptionist that she couldn't book me an appointment, I needed to go home and telephone - by the time I had walked back home, phoned and waited in the queue I would have missed the appointments for that day.*



How satisfied are you with the length of time it took to get your most recent appointment?

Chart 10: Experience of getting most recent appointment

How satisfied are you overall with the length of time to get your appointments throughout 2023?

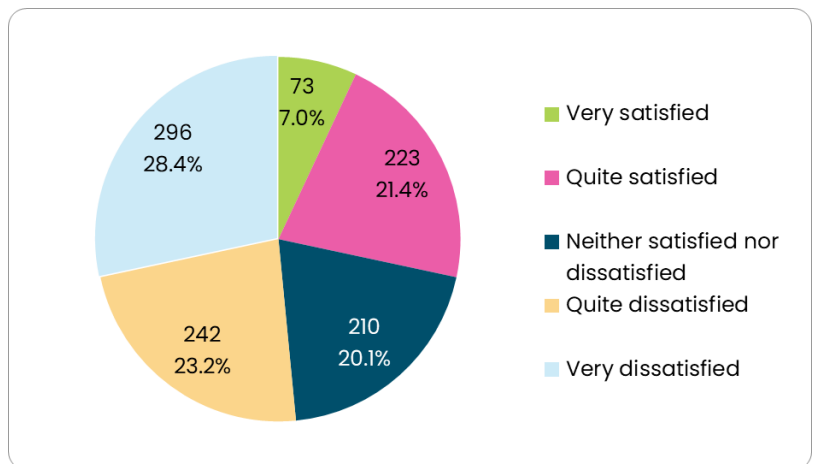
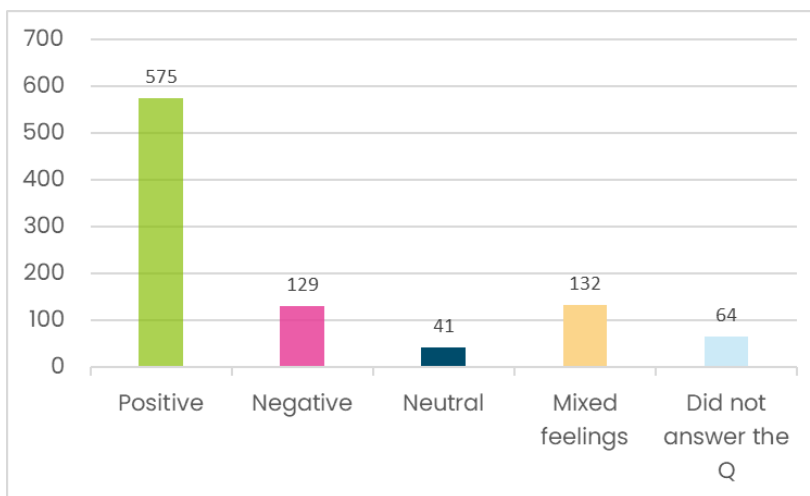


Chart 11: Experience of getting appointments during 2023



How do you feel about being seen by different healthcare professionals for different aspects of healthcare? eg nurse, physio, pharmacist (941 responses)

Chart 12: Receiving care from other professionals than the GP

### Positive comments

*I think it's very sensible and relieves clinicians from undertaking tasks that can be managed by a suitably skilled healthcare professional.*

*If the person is trained on what I need I'm very happy to see them.*

*Happy to see whoever is most appropriate.*

### Negative comments

*I feel there is no continuity of care - always seeing a different person.*

*Not very good. I asked to see a doctor, but my appointment was made with a clinician who told me to take ibuprofen. I came out in massive bruises and got a call from the doctors to tell [me] to stop taking ibuprofen because I'm on blood thinning tablets and should not take it. The clinician should have known this if they had read my notes properly*

*I would like to see a Dr when I request, and several times when a phone appointment has been booked nobody actually rings back! I do not wish to see other health care professionals when I've requested a Dr. It's annoying not being able to see the same GP each time I go. There is no relationship between GP and Patient and each GP has a different point of view on your condition. Having to go through from the beginning each time you see a different GP is draining and as such, progress is slow. You need to make it easier to see the same GP.*

### Neutral

*Doesn't concern me.*

*I would hope that I would be directed to the most suitable person without question.*

### Mixed feelings

*In general, I have no problem with it but my experience with the nurses has been frustrating as different nurses gave very different opinions and treatments. The last one actually said to me "why did she do that?".*

*Fairly OK, feel they should be able to fast track/organise appointments with next level up for you if required rather than leave you to organise yourself from the beginning again.*

*Mixed. It can feel fragmented. Nurses do excellent job etc. However, would prefer Dr. as main ringmaster/organiser. Now it feels, as the patient, you are never sure who is in control. This exacerbates patient stress - before with Dr. [being in] control, it alleviated patient's stress.*

Have you had any virtual (telephone or online) consultations with the doctor or another member of the practice clinical staff during 2023?

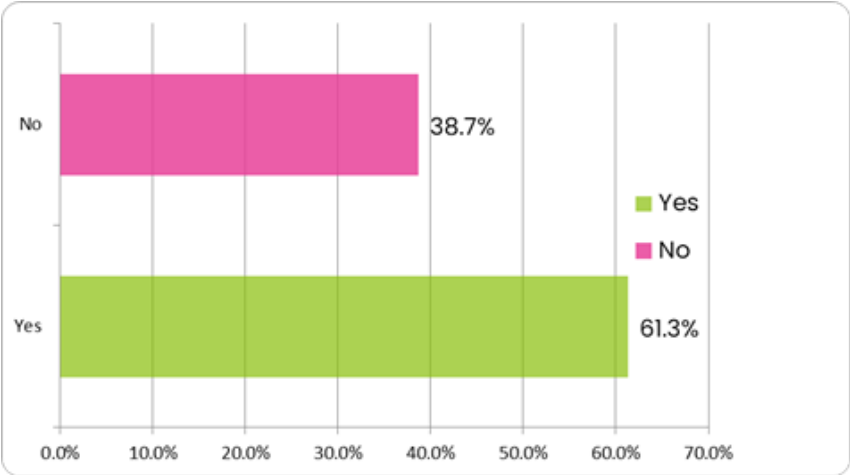


Chart 13: Use of virtual consultations in 2023

How satisfied were you with your most recent virtual appointment?

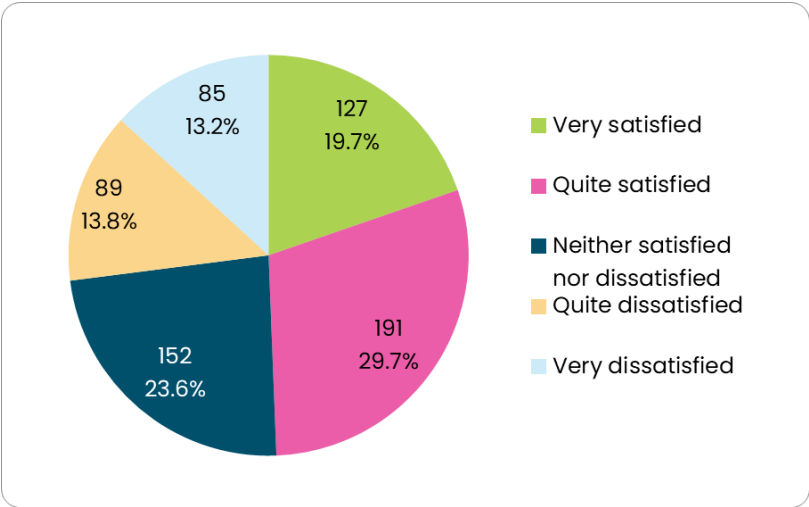


Chart 14: Satisfaction with virtual consultations

**49% of respondents are satisfied with their most recent virtual appointment**

*The doctor called and I didn't feel rushed - was a very detailed appointment and he was polite and friendly.*

*They rang me on time and then got back to check on me within a couple of weeks.*

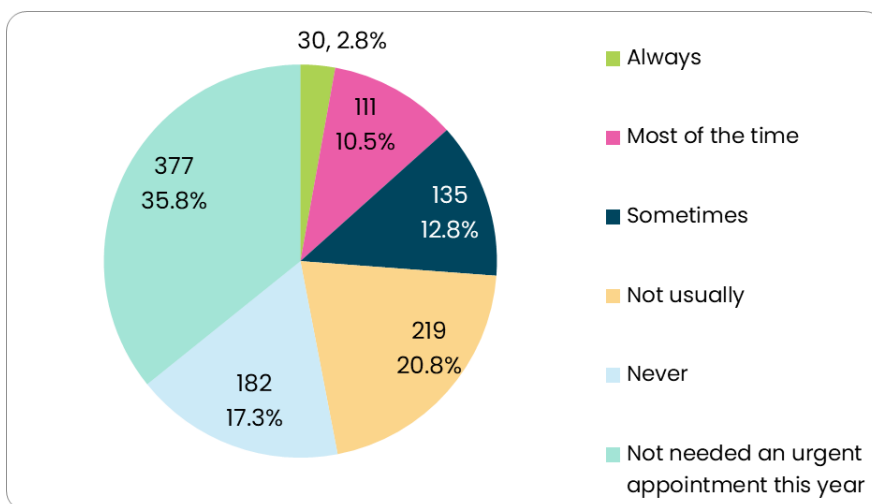
*The lady that phoned me understood my needs and dealt with things efficiently and kindly.*

## 27% are dissatisfied with their most recent virtual appointment

*Being elderly and very hard of hearing despite hearing aids, telephone consultations are not a satisfactory communication for me. I miss bits. When I read my notes online they are not always an accurate record of the call.*

*Time of appointment "any time of day". No other walk of life would appointments be so vague.*

*I got my phone call 3 days after my appointment was booked for and I'd ran out of my controlled drugs that can only be prescribed by a doctor. The doctor knows this and still failed to call me 2 days in a row and eventually had to speak to someone different who was very helpful. My mental health deteriorated drastically due to this missed appointment.*



**If you have an urgent health issue can you usually see the doctor or nurse on the same day?**

Chart 15: Satisfaction with virtual consultations in 2023

**How satisfied are you with the reception service?**

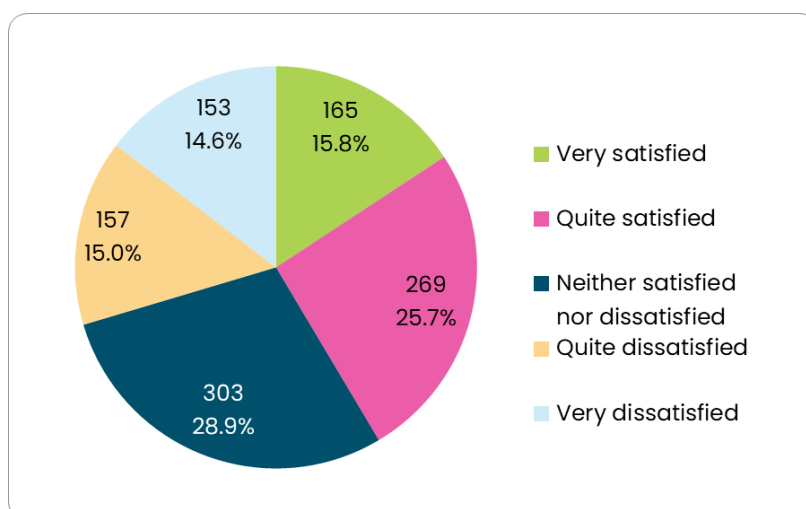


Chart 16: Satisfaction with reception service

### 42% of respondents are satisfied with the service from Reception

Very pleasant and helpful receptionists. At busy times it would be better if there's a second or third receptionist to ease the queue and assist those patients who find standing for some time difficult.

More recently reception by reception team has improved. No longer made to feel to be an inconvenience.

Really friendly and helpful both on phone and in person.

### 30% of respondents are dissatisfied with the service from Reception

I went in the other day to try to get the contraceptive pill. The receptionist- shouted so loud that I needed to go to 'the sexual health clinic in Leicester.' I was mortified. It was not busy, but other people in there heard. In actual fact someone I know heard and could not believe how loud and how many times the receptionist said this. I find them not discrete nor helpful.

Feel very patronised, like being spoken to like a child. I know how to use the internet but not do not have internet access.

Abrupt and no empathy at all (not all obviously, some lovely). I do think training in dealing with anxious, poorly people [is] needed.

### Have you used the repeat prescription service?

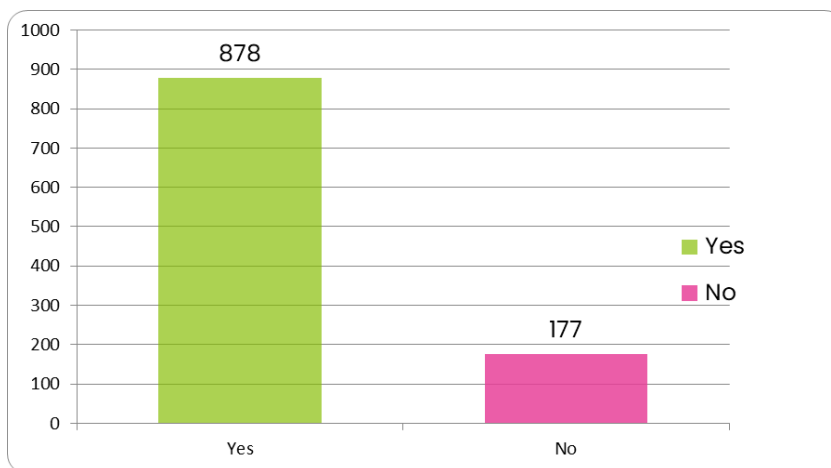


Chart 17: Use of repeat prescription service

## How satisfied are you with the repeat prescription service?

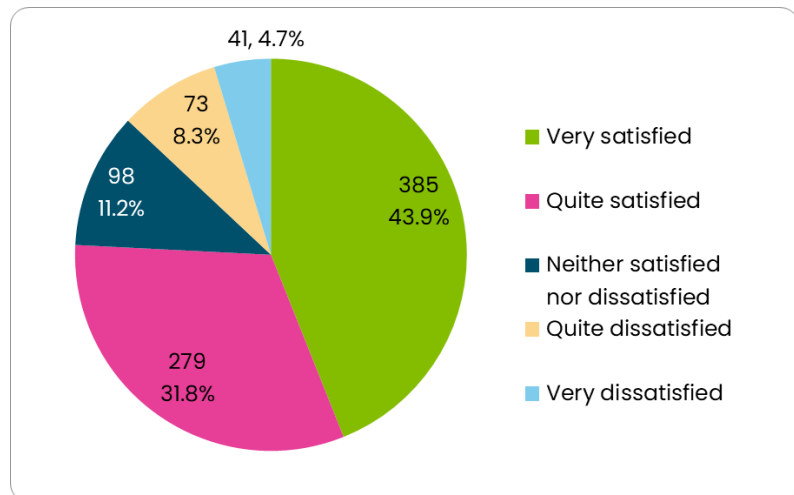


Chart 18: Satisfaction with repeat prescription service

### 76% of respondents who have used the repeat prescription service are satisfied

*Quick and easy. I've had reviews by phone.*

*Very easy to use & prescription items are usually dispensed promptly.*

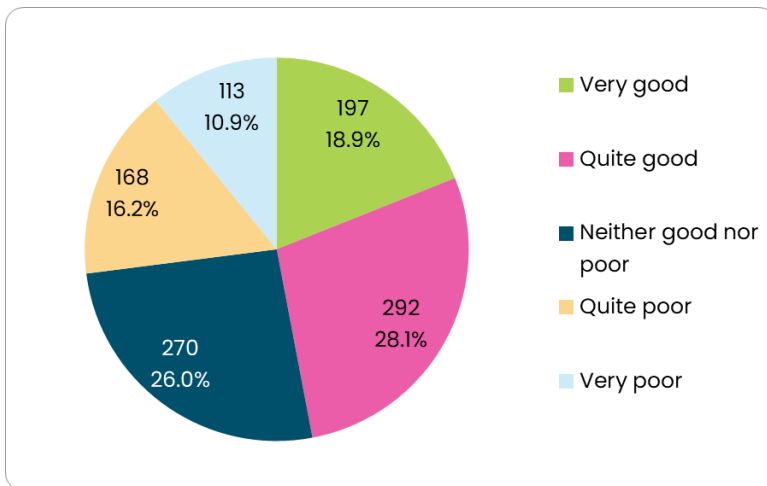
*Easy to order with the NHS app.*

### 13% of people who have used the repeat prescription service are dissatisfied

*They changed the way they issue the repeat prescriptions, but forgot to tell us, the patients, [that] they had done so. The result was a lost morning trying to chase explanations.....the past 2 lots seem to have gone well. We'll see what happens at the end of August.*

*Needed extra medication for holiday. Wasn't allowed.*

*Was frustrated when on two consecutive occasions my request was under review by the in-house pharmacist. This caused a delay which meant that I almost ran out. There was no explanation as to why and I didn't seem to benefit at all from this i.e., no-one asked if my situation had changed or if I had any concerns with my condition.*



How do you rate the quality of medical care at the practice in general?

Chart 19: General quality of care

**47% respondents rate the quality of medical care as good**

*The nurses I see there are excellent and provide a very good service.*

*I have had very good online appointments with Dr.[X].*

*I have had very positive experiences this year at the doctor's and always felt well taken care of.*

**27% respondents rate the quality of medical care as poor**

*My husband elected to die at home and, to my mind, was very much neglected.*

*Lack of continuity in treatment. Health issues missed due to non-joined-up care.*

*I would have liked to be told that I had leukaemia CLL face- to-face, not over the phone.*

How do you rate the overall service from the practice based on your experiences this year during 2023?

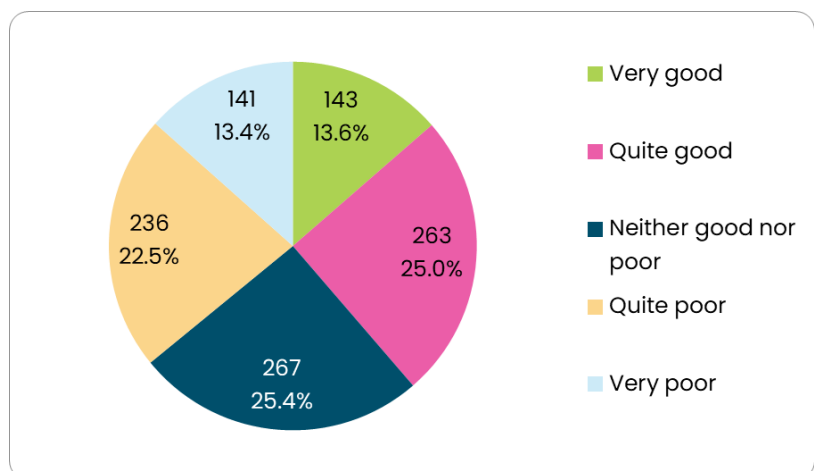


Chart 20: General quality of care



## What do you like the most about the practice? 701 responses

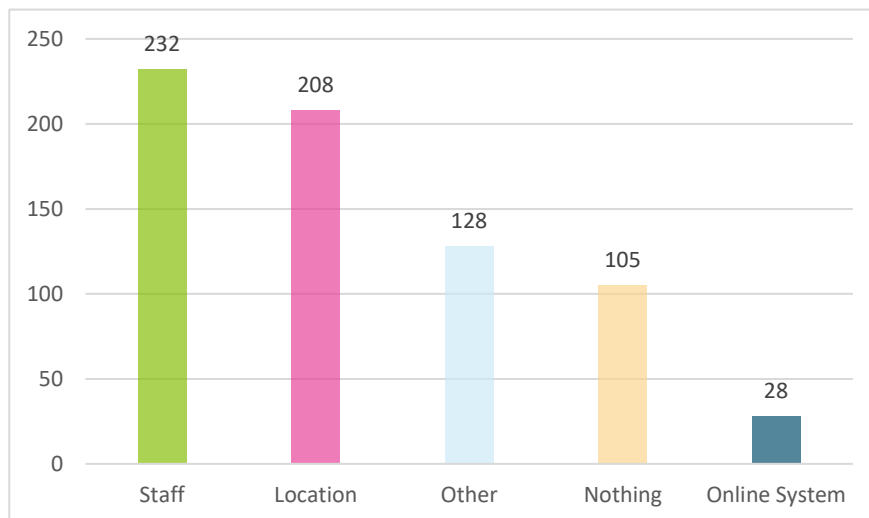


Chart 21: Best thing about the Practice

### 33% of respondents identify the staff as the thing they most like about the practice

*They were very helpful and friendly when I was feeling quite poorly.*

*All the doctors I have seen this year have been brilliant. They have listened to what I have had to say and then discussed a way forward.*

*The politeness in the face of all the difficulties that they face. I stood in the queue waiting to see the receptionist and sometimes what they have to put up with is totally out of order.*

### 30% said the thing they most like is the location

*GP, pharmacy and minor injuries on the same site.*

*It exists and is nearby – i.e. I don't have to travel out of county.*

*It's local and it's been hard for GP staff. But they're still doing their best.*

### 15% liked differing features

*Self-check-in, especially when there's a queue for reception.*

*Prescription requests are dealt with in a timely manner. Online enquiries usually dealt with well and signposted efficiently.*

*I have lost a lot of confidence in the practice over the last few years. The bad CQC [rating] seems to have been the jolt that was needed. There seems to have been more effort to actually offer a better service this year, but I feel there is still a lot more to do.*

## What change would you most like to see happen?

1006 responses

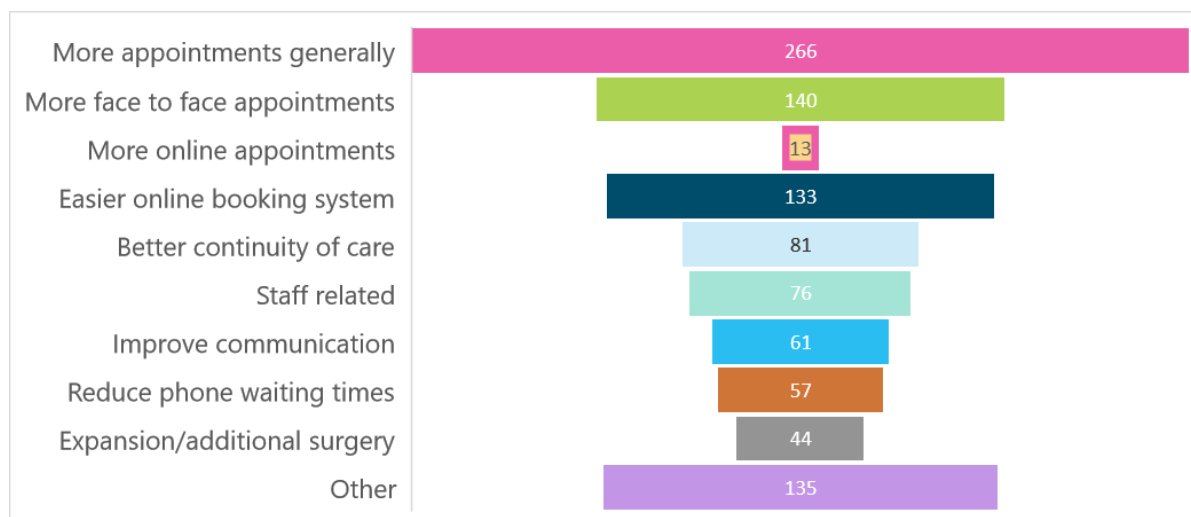


Chart 22: If I could change one thing...

**26% said the one thing they wanted to improve is availability of more appointments in general:**

*More appointment availability and early and late surgery times.*

**14% said more face-to-face appointments:**

*For me more face-to-face availability. More Doctors so you can see same one each time and less dependence on 111 who do often send me to A&E, and I sit in there for 24hr.*

**13% said an easier online booking system:**

*More online slots for GP and the addition of blood test appointments online*

*Easier online system. You should be able to make appointments at any time of day*

*Less complaining from patients on social media. The surgery provides a good service*

**8% said better continuity of care**

*I am a suicide survivor and continuity is important.*

**13% mentioned wanting disparate changes**

*Instructions need to be more basic for people not using apps (like me!).*

Improve the phone system, by reducing the repetitive general information loop and answer it quicker.

Oakham clearly needs another surgery to cope with the growing population or this one needs more staff, both in Doctors and in Admin.

Better and easier to understand booking on the app (codes are not useful unless you work in the healthcare sector) – [an] explanation of what each booking means.

## Demographics

What is your age range?

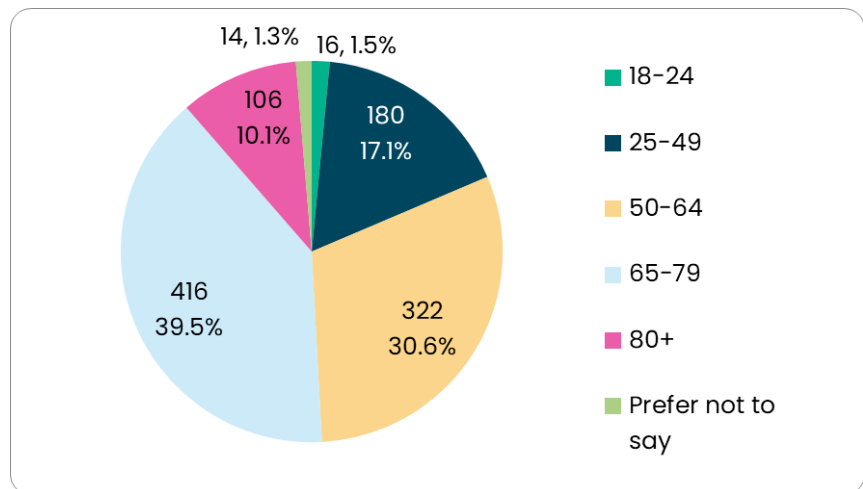


Chart 23: Age range of respondents

What is your ethnicity?

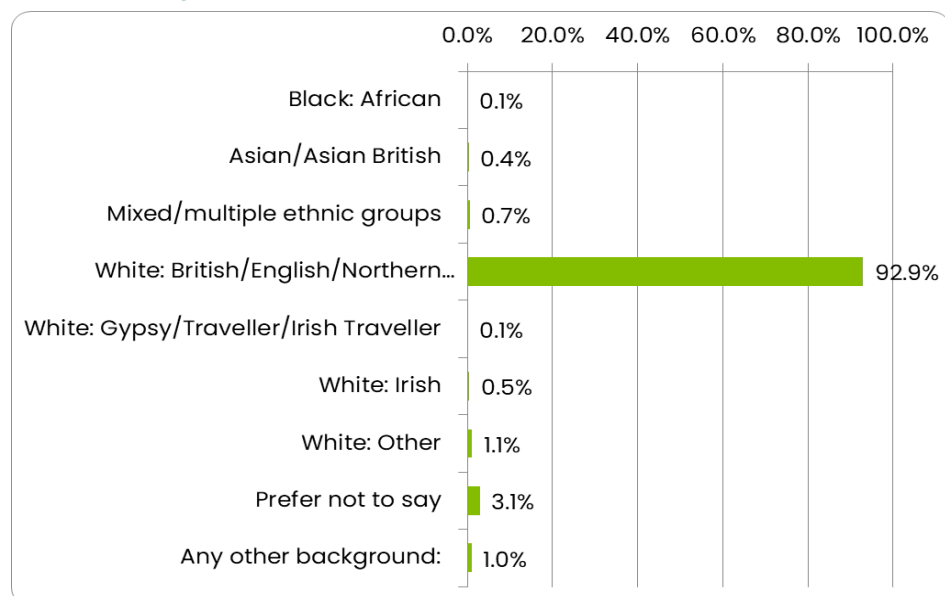


Chart 24: Ethnicity of respondents

What is your gender?

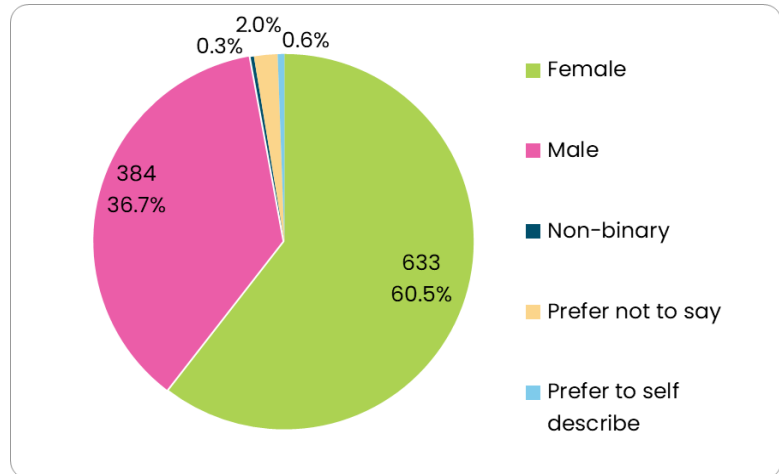


Chart 25: Gender of respondents

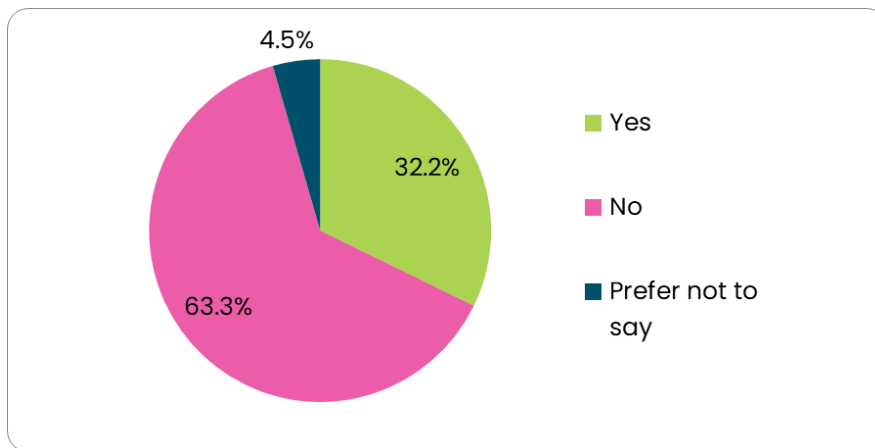


Chart 26: Carer status

Do you consider yourself to be an unpaid carer?

Do you have a disability? (e.g., physical/mobility impairment, sensory impairment, learning disability, mental health condition, long-term condition.)

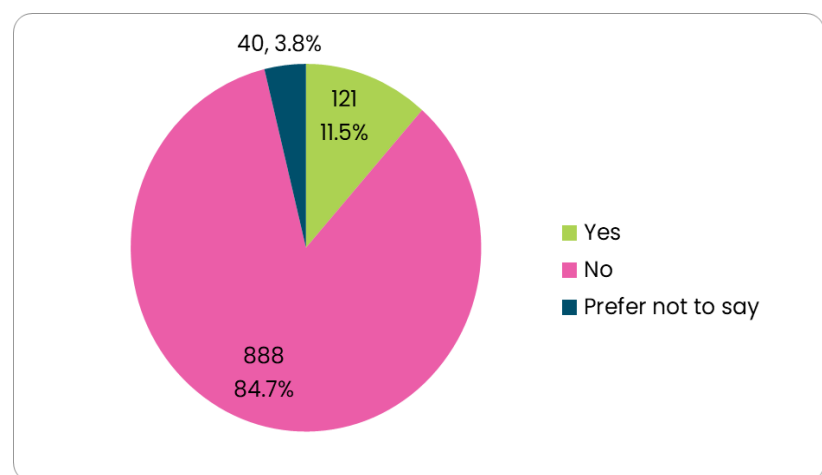


Chart 27: Respondents with disability

## Section 3: Comparing feedback from the visits and survey

### 3.1 Responses from patients interviewed during visits compared to survey responses

Patients we spoke with during the visits had already secured a face-to-face appointment whereas those filling in the survey might have had different experiences. Although not statistically significant with 82 participants, we have compared their responses with percentages in the survey results to look for differences of 10% or more. Only variables showing differences of 10% or more are shown below.

Three people identified themselves non-binary. Their responses have been recorded as numbers rather than percentages. Respondents who did not declare their gender or answer a specific question have not been included in percentage calculations.

Question	Variables	Visits	Survey
What is your age range?	65-79	30%	40%
	80+	30%	10%

#### 3.1.2 Accessing appointments

Question	Variables	Visits	Survey
How many times have you had an appointment in 2023?	2-3 times	34%	47%
	6+ times	24%	11%
Do you use the practice on-line services?	Yes	65%	81%
	No	35%	19%
How do you usually make your appointments?	Online	26%	38%
	Telephone	44%	54%

How satisfied were you with the time to get your most recent appointment?	Very or quite satisfied	59%	32%
	Quite or very dissatisfied	26%	48%
How satisfied were you with your most recent virtual appointment?	Very or quite satisfied	70%	50%

Of patients interviewed in the Practice there is a higher percentage who have had 6+ appointments in 2023 than the survey respondents. A higher percentage of survey respondents had attended 2-3 times more.

Patients we spoke to were more satisfied with the time to get their most recent appointment than patients who completed the survey.

There was a higher satisfaction rate with virtual consultations among patients we spoke to during the visits.

A higher percentage of patients we spoke to during visits rated the overall quality of medical care as good in comparison to patients who completed the survey.

### 3.1.3 Prescriptions

Question	Variables	Visits	Survey
How satisfied are you with the repeat prescription service?	Very or quite satisfied	91%	76%
	Quite or very dissatisfied	4%	13%

There is a high satisfaction rate in both groups, but survey respondents showed higher levels of dissatisfaction with the prescription service than patients we interviewed during visits.

### 3.1.4 Reception

Question	Variables	Visits	Survey
How satisfied are you with the reception service?	Very or quite satisfied	65%	42%
	Quite or very dissatisfied	14%	30%

Patients interviewed in the Practice were more satisfied with the reception service than the survey respondents.

### 3.1.5 Rating of overall service

Question	Variables	Visits	Survey
How do you rate overall service based on experiences in 2023	Very or quite good	70%	39%
	Quite or very poor	15%	36%

The patients we spoke to rated the overall service much higher than the survey respondents. There was a higher percentage among survey respondents who rated the overall quality of medical care as poor.

These comparisons of differences greater than 10% between people we spoke to and survey respondents, suggest that patients with whom we interacted on a face-to-face basis trended towards rating services more highly than survey respondents.

## 3.2. Differences between genders

To determine whether there is a gender influence on patients' experiences, we have pulled out the responses where percentage differences between people we spoke to and people who completed the survey, are higher than 10%. The results should be treated as indications only, and not statistically significant.

### 3.2.1 Accessing appointments

Question	Variables	Visits: Females	Visits: Males	Survey: Females	Survey: Males	Non- binary
Do you use the Practice on-line services?	No	32%	38%	19%	20%	
How do you usually make your appointments?	Telephone	49%	36%	56%	51%	
	On-line	24%	32%	37%	39%	
How satisfied are you with the time to get your most recent appointment?	Very or quite satisfied	66%	47%	31%	35%	
	Quite or very dissatisfied	21%	34%	48%	47%	

More females than males make appointments by telephone.

More Males than females book their appointments online.

Females interviewed during visits were the most satisfied with the time to get their recent appointments.



### 3.2.2 Treatment and Care

Question	Variables	Visits: Females	Visits: Males	Survey: Females	Survey: Males	Non- binary
Have you had any virtual consultations with the doctor or another member of the clinical staff during 2023?	Yes	54%	95%	64%	56%	2
	No	46%	5%	36%	44%	1
How satisfied were you with your most recent virtual (telephone or online) appointment?	Quite or very dissatisfied	16%	5%	26%	29%	2
How do you rate the quality of medical care at the practice in general	Quite or very poor	13%	0	25%	30%	1

Most males we spoke to (95%) said they had had virtual consultations compared with 54% of females.

Males we interviewed during visits were the least dissatisfied with their virtual consultations.

There was a higher rating for 'quality of medical care' among patients we spoke to than among survey respondents; no males we interviewed rated the 'quality of medical care' as 'poor or very poor'.

### 3.2.3 Reception service

Males interviewed during visits were the most satisfied with the reception service

Question	Variables	Visits: Females	Visits: Males	Survey Females	Survey Males	Non-binary
How satisfied are you with the reception service?	Very or quite satisfied	67%	82%	43%	40%	
	Quite or very dissatisfied	14%	5%	28%	31%	2

### 3.2.4 Rating of the overall service

Question	Variables	Visits: Females	Visits: Males	Survey Females	Survey Males	Non-Binary
How do you rate overall service based on experiences during 2023?	Very or quite good	67%	76%	40%	38%	2
	Neither good nor poor	13%	21%	25%	25%	
	Quite or very poor	19%	4%	35%	36%	1

4% males interviewed during visits rated the overall service as poor compared with 19% females.

Although showing a less than 10% variance, the percentages for 'neither good nor poor' have been included for completeness.

## Conclusion

This was a project involving 1139 patients registered with Oakham Medical Practice. Although the results suggest an improving situation, there remain lingering memories and anxieties for some patients of the earlier

difficulties they have experienced in their access to services at the Practice. Some of these difficulties remain.

We hope that this report is useful in demonstrating that, after some difficult years, there are many patients who understand the problems the Practice has had and are appreciative of the care they receive. However, we also hope the Practice recognises the problems patients continue to report and use these as a challenge to continue making improvements in their service offer.

## **Acknowledgements**

We thank the staff at Oakham Medical Practice for accommodating the visits and the public for providing their feedback.

We also thank members of the Patient Participation Group for their active involvement and collaboration in this joint project.

## **Disclaimer**

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific dates indicated and from people that responded to the survey who had used the Practice services during 2023. It is not representative of all service users.

## **About Healthwatch Rutland**

Healthwatch Rutland is your health and social care champion. We make sure NHS leaders and other decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We are part of a national network of 152 local Healthwatch in England. We have three main areas of work:

- Listening to people's experiences and seeking out feedback on health and social care services. Healthwatch has legal powers to undertake Enter and View visits to NHS and social care settings to observe and hear how users are experiencing the services.
- We also spend time building relationships and attending meetings within the local health and care system so that the patient's voice can be heard in the right places, at the right time.
- We provide information, advice and guidance to help people to navigate health and care services.

Your experiences matter, we strive to be a strong voice for local people to help shape how services are planned, organised and delivered.

## About Connected Together CIC

Connected Together Community Interest Company (CT CIC) is the legal and governing body of Healthwatch Rutland. The remit of CT CIC includes:

- Contract compliance
- Legal requirements
- Financial and risk management
- Sustainability and growth
- Policies and procedures

## About Oakham Medical Practice Patient Participation Group (OMP PPG)

The OMP PPG is here as a critical friend of the Practice, to listen, to improve communication and to work together to improve the health and wellbeing of all patients of the practice.

To find out more about the PPG, visit the [Oakham Medical Practice website](#).



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