

**NHS app awareness and experiences
report 2024**

Index

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Background | 2 |
| What is the NHS app? | 2 |
| Methodology | 4 |
| Summary | 4 |
| Recommendations | 5 |
| The findings | 6 |
| Who we spoke to | 9 |
| Response | 13 |

Introduction

This report is a snapshot of people's experiences and awareness of the NHS app in Derby City. The report will be shared with Joined Up Care Derbyshire Integrated Care System, which is the NHS organisation responsible for developing a plan for meeting the health needs of the population, to help them plan improvements to provision in the City. The report will also be shared with the Derby City Health and Wellbeing Board for awareness. The report will then be published with Healthwatch England and on our website for public perusal.

Background

The NHS published a primary care recovery plan setting out how the NHS aims to address some of the pressures facing GPs and other services.

The main pressure the plan aims to tackle is the issue of access, which has been a growing concern since the pandemic. Healthwatch Derby published a recent report on GP access (Healthwatch Derby GP Survey Report 2024).

Joined Up Care Derbyshire in their response to that document highlighted the NHS app as one of the ways patients can be empowered and supported to manage their own health, along with self-referral pathways and through the use of more services offered from community pharmacy.

Healthwatch Derby staff in their outreach work across the city noted they did not recall anyone spoken to mentioning the NHS app.

The purpose of this report was to gauge people's awareness and experiences of the NHS app and to see whether any actions for improvement were identified.

What is the NHS app?

The NHS app can be accessed through a smart phone or PC and gives you a simple and secure way to access a range of NHS services. You must be aged 13 or over to use the NHS app and also need to be registered with a GP surgery in England or the Isle of Man. With full access you can: order repeat prescriptions and nominate a pharmacy where you would like to collect them, book and manage appointments, view your GP health record to see information like your allergies and medicines, if your GP has given you access to your detailed medical record, you can also see information like test results, book and manage COVID-19 vaccinations, register your organ donation decision, choose how the NHS uses your data, find out your NHS

number and use NHS 111 online to answer questions and get instant advice or medical help near you.

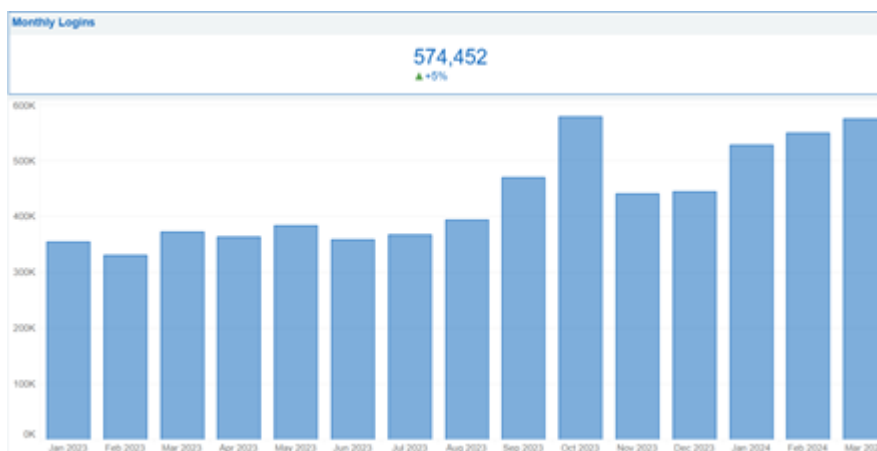
Before proving who you are, you may use the NHS app to search trusted NHS information and advice on hundreds of conditions and treatments and find NHS services near you.

Other services are dependent on your GP surgery or hospital, for example, you may be able to use the NHS App to, message your GP surgery or a health professional online, contact your GP surgery using an online form and get a reply, access health services on behalf of someone you care for, view and manage your hospital and other healthcare appointments, view useful links your doctor or health professional has shared with you and view and manage care plans.

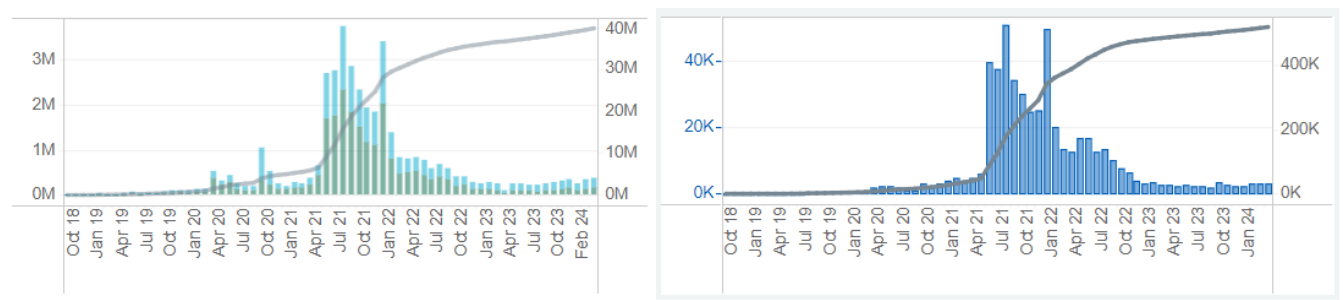
More information can be provided at <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/about-the-nhs-app/>

The following provided by Digital Transformation Derby and Derbyshire ICS shows that through Covid there was a steep rise in people downloading and using the app but there has been a big drop off since 2022.

This first graph is for Derby and Derbyshire and shows usage (how many people logged in to the app).



These graphs show how many people downloaded the app (left side) and how many people followed through with registration (right side).



Methodology

A simple survey consisting of just 3 questions was produced and made available through social media platforms, both our own and those of other local partners across the city. The engagement team also had copies which they used on a face-to-face basis whilst visiting GP services and at other various outreach locations.

The survey was open throughout April 2024.

103 people completed the survey.

Summary

103 people answered the survey, of those 48% were aware of the NHS app.

However, there was a big divide between those who said they were White British/English/Northern Irish/Scottish/Welsh (73% aware) and those who said they were Asian/Asian British, Pakistani, Indian or Black/Black British, Caribbean (14% aware).

28% of the 103 had downloaded the app.

Of those who said they were aware of the app, 59% went on to download it.

Some of the issues that stopped people from downloading the app were:

- language barriers
- IT literacy issues
- difficulties in downloading
- length of time to download
- face recognition issues
- could not see the use of it
- no smartphone or PC

Of those who used it, 41% said their experience was mixed, 35% said it was good and 24% said they had bad experiences.

The main reasons given for the bad experiences were:

- app not always up to date
- navigation difficulties
- app not working

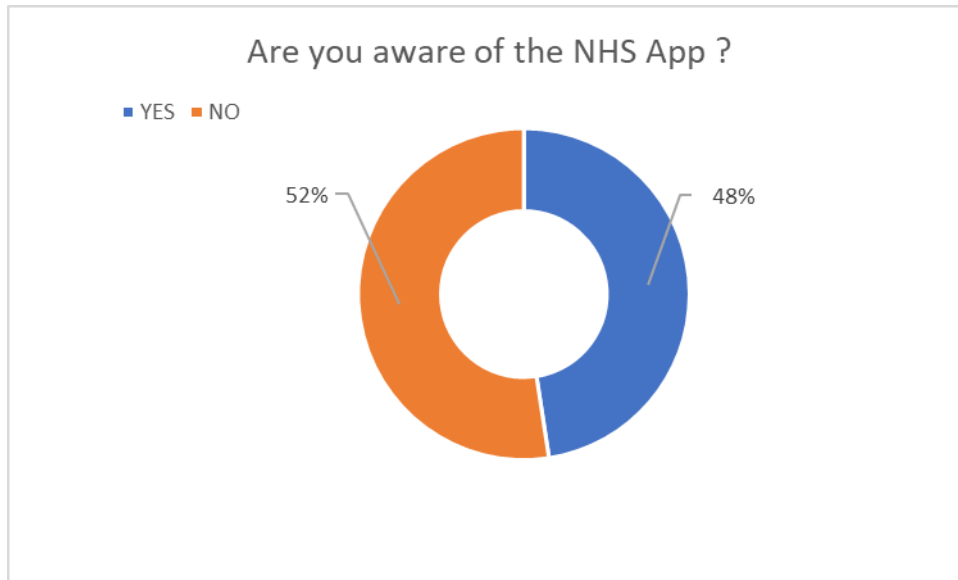
Recommendations

The survey is only a small sample, but if the NHS sees the app as a useful tool to help improve access for patients and to help alleviate some pressures on the system by helping empowering patients to self-manage their health, then Healthwatch Derby recommends:

- An inclusive awareness campaign, both locally and nationally, which includes a better understanding of the benefits of using the App for the individual.
- Improvements to make the app easier to use.
- Ensure there is a set standard for updating the app by NHS professionals.

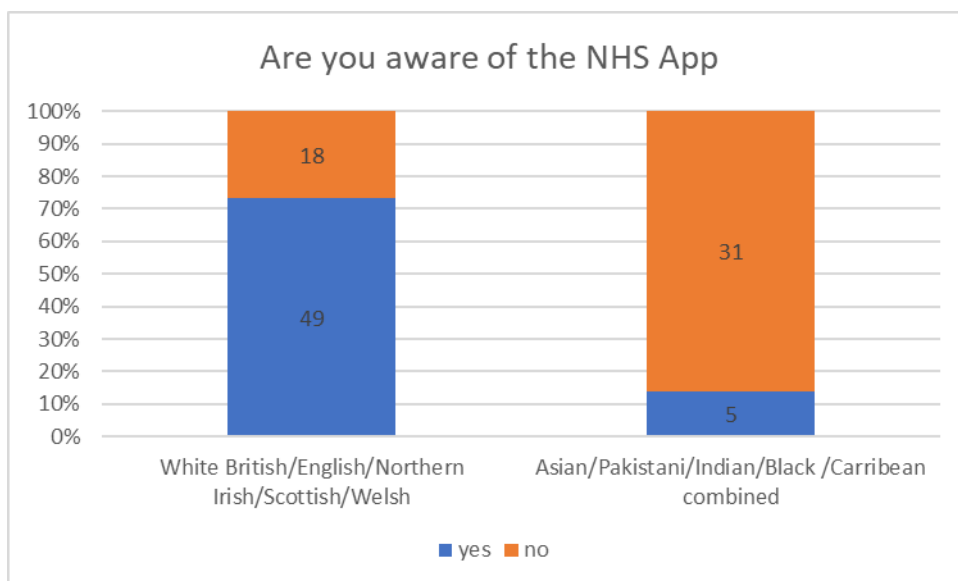
The findings

Q1. Are you aware of the NHS app?



Of the 103 people who answered the question, 52% said they were not aware of the app and 48% said they were.

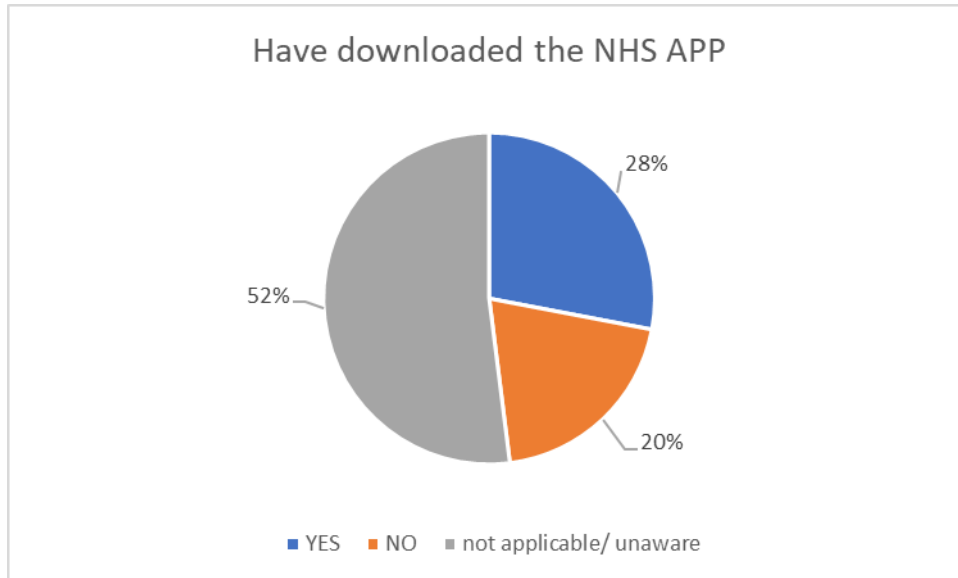
However, on further analysis using the ethnic background of those who answered the question, there was a notable divide.



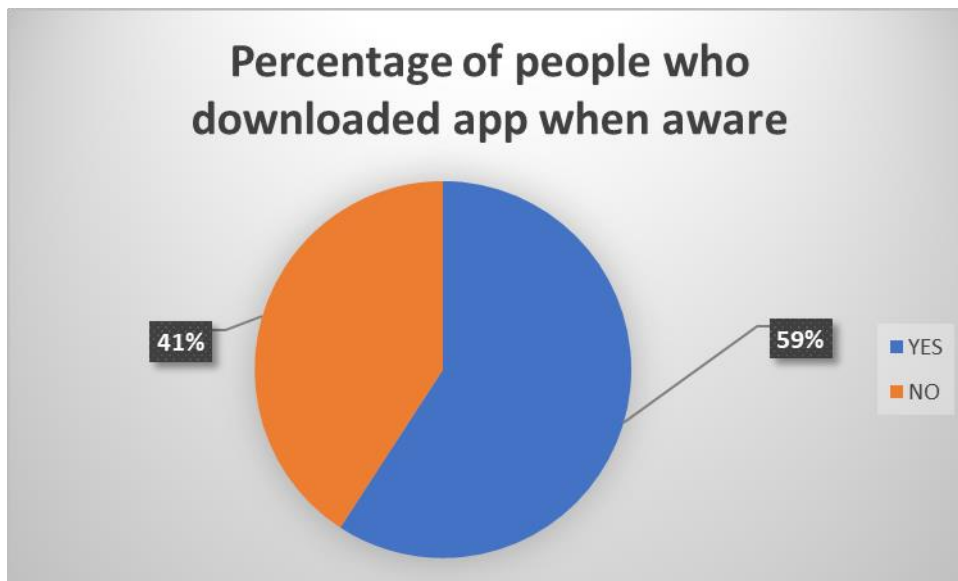
73% of those who said they were White British/English/Northern Irish/Scottish/Welsh said they were aware of the app. But only 14% of those who said they were

Asian/Asian British, Pakistani, Indian or Black/Black British, Caribbean said they were aware of it.

Q2. Have you downloaded the NHS app?



28% of all those asked had downloaded the NHS app.



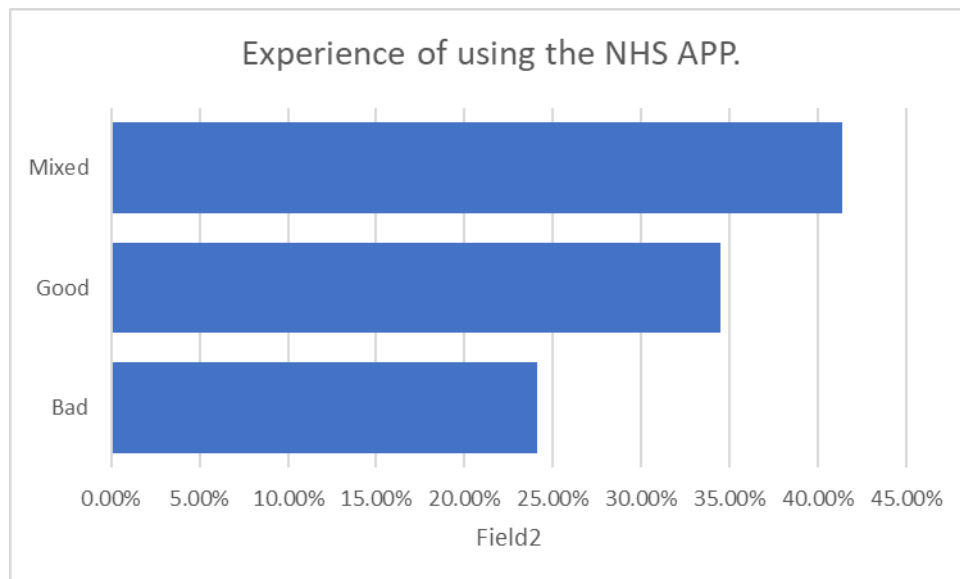
59% of those who said they were aware of the NHS App had downloaded it.

Reasons for not downloading included:

- I know about it and my daughter tried to put it on for me, but she couldn't do it at the time, and I've forgot to ask her again.
- I know about it but not needed.

- Rely on family members to ensure and arrange access to NHS health appointments.
- Language barriers.
- IT literacy issues.
- Took to long so gave up.
- Couldn't do the face recognition bit so stopped trying.
- I had it through Covid but could not see any reason to keep it so uninstalled it.
- You still have to contact your GP anyway, so no point.
- Is that not the same as the NHS Covid 19 App?
- I do not have a smartphone.
- I use Patients Know Best app.

Question 3 What is your experience of using the NHS app?



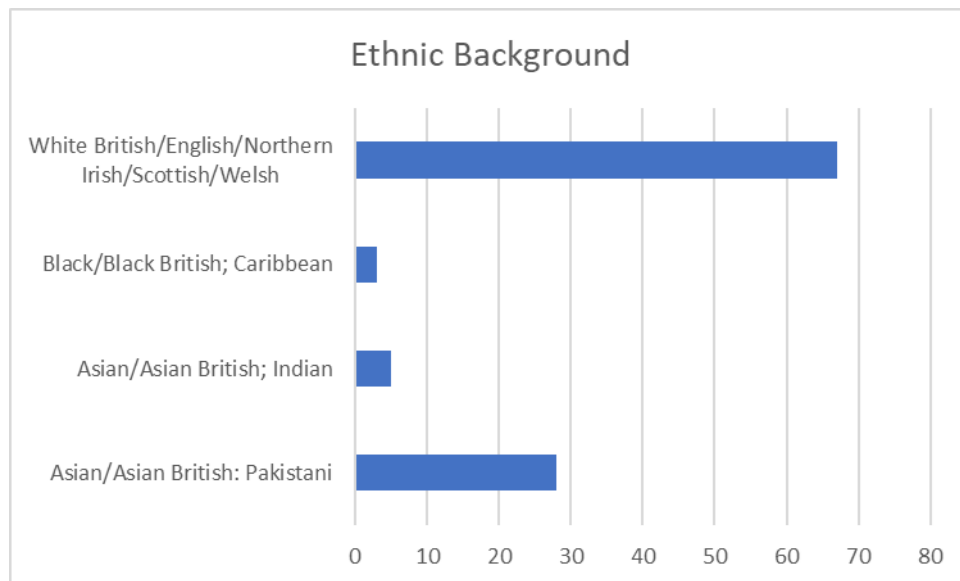
Of those who have downloaded and used the app, 41% said they had mixed experiences of using it – sometimes good, sometimes bad. 35% said they had good experiences and found it useful. 24% said they had found it difficult to navigate, could not find what they were looking for, app stopped working or waste of time and had to call 111 or GP anyway.

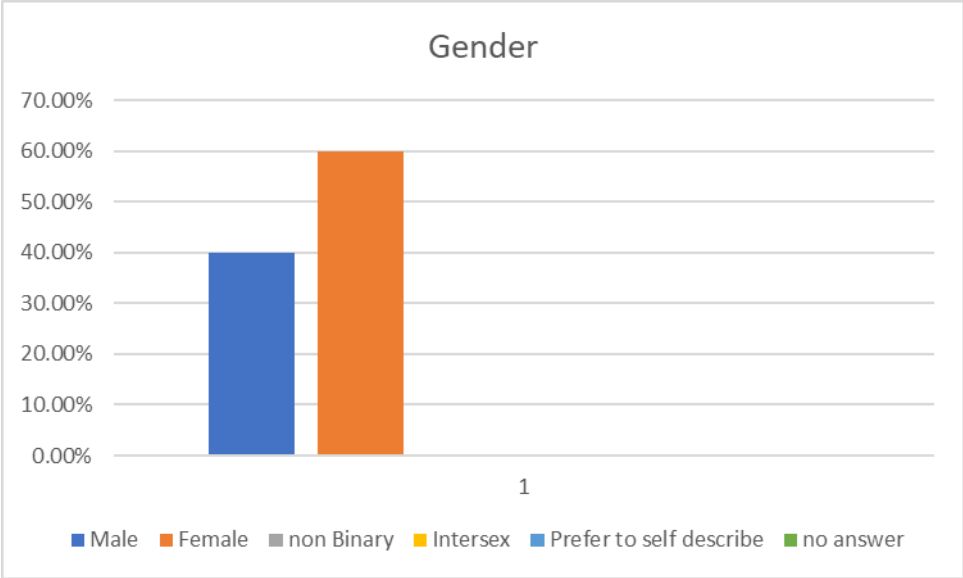
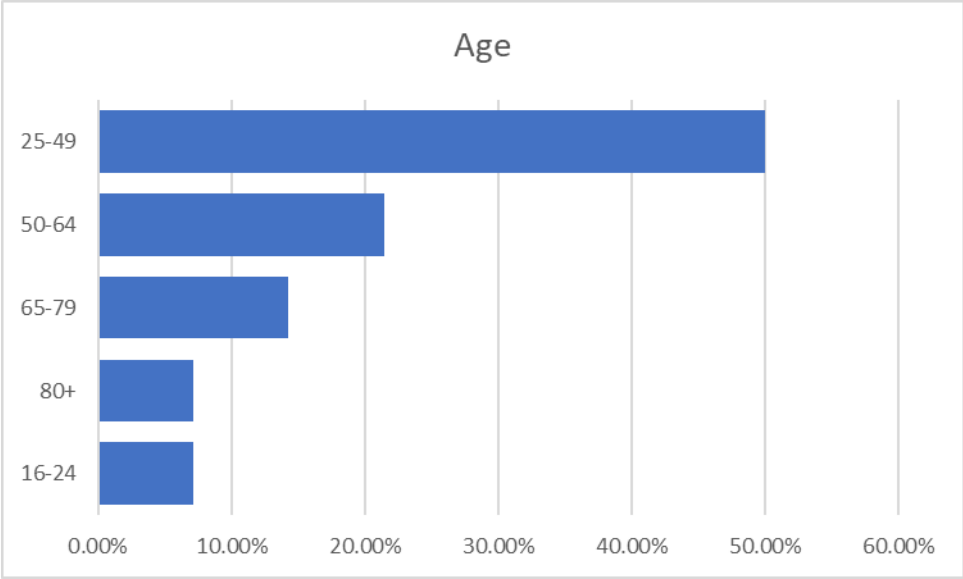
Some of the comments provided:

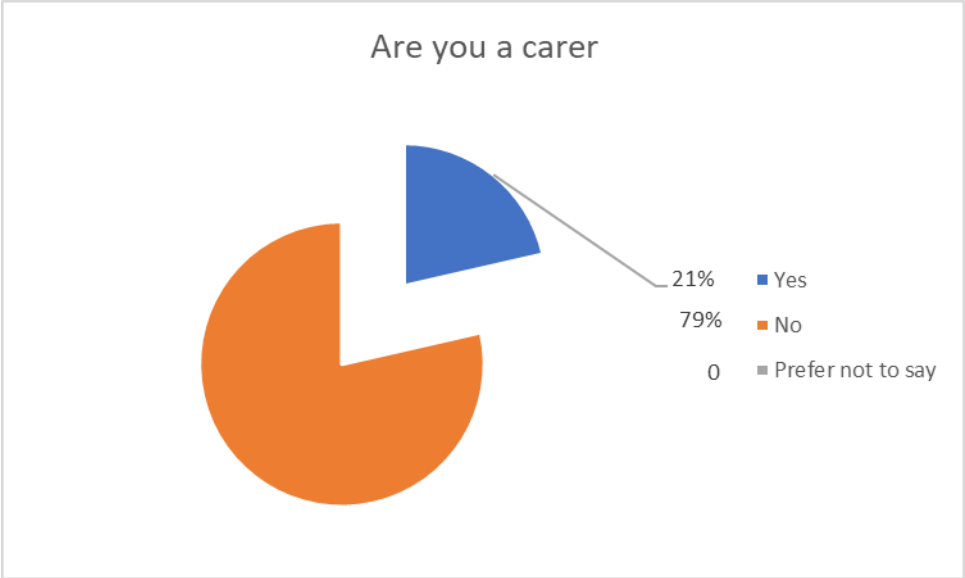
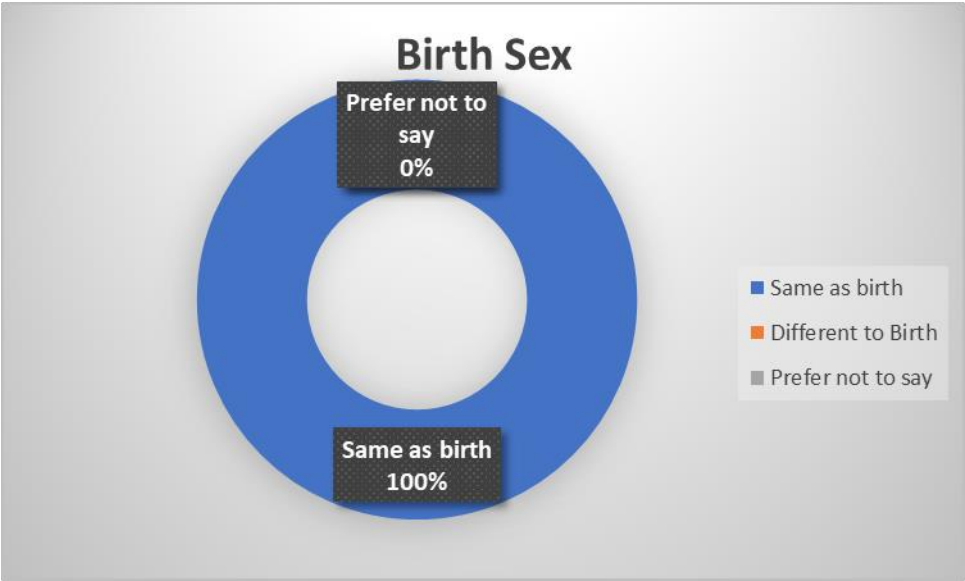
- Alright, simple to use.
- My husband uses it, I just call.
- Seems alright, I do my medication online.

- I used to have it but not downloaded it on my new phone. It did what I wanted it to, and you can link it to the kids, good but I don't know the full benefit of it.
- Fine, no issues happy to make use of it.
- I've got it but don't really use it.
- Quite knowledgeable.
- Gave me access to a referral response that the team had forgotten to post/update me about.
- Often get emails when nothing seems to have been updated.
- Not enough professionals use it to make it useful.
- Only real function seems to be booking appointments online, which can be done through GP website anyway.
- Would like to see it consistently and routinely updated and used by NHS teams so that it provides a comprehensive record and resource for patients.
- It was helpful.

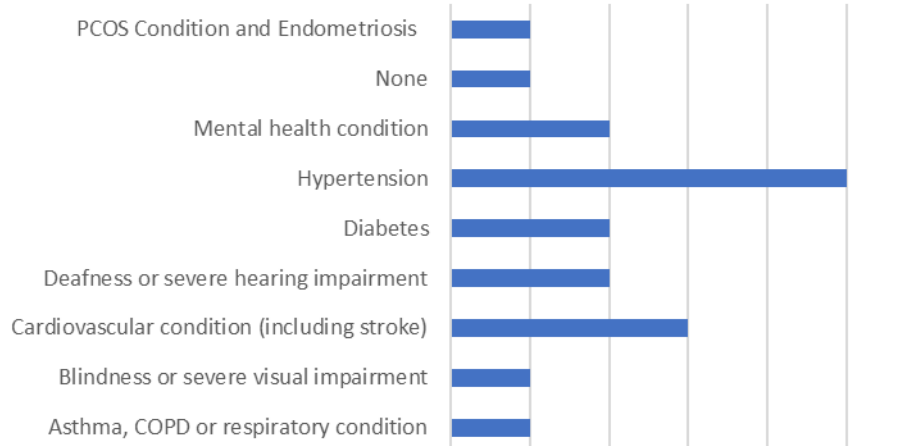
Who we spoke to



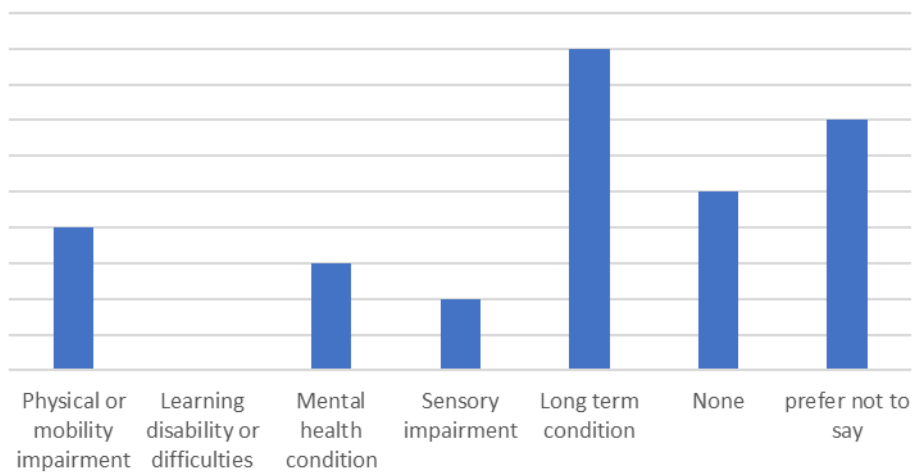




Long term conditions mentioned



Do you consider you have an impairment



Response from Joined Up Care Derby (ICS).

Thank you for the opportunity to see and comment on the work you have completed around the NHS App. It's a very comprehensive read with some quite surprising findings. As a Patient Experience Team, we reviewed the report in the last team meeting and were surprised at how few people are using the App compared to our expectations of usage.

There is an interesting, but maybe not surprising finding around usage in diverse communities and amongst those who have less access to advanced technology. For example, we talked at the team meeting about our own elderly relatives experiences and the fact that we often purchase a very simple telephone for them to ease their use, but have realised that also reduces functionality for Apps such as this.

I expect that, despite being very functional with technology, many young people do not have enough encounters with their GP to prompt them to download and use the App, but that's just an assumption.

Although the sample size was quite small, we did note that it did cover age ranges and diversity proportionally.

We fully support your recommendations especially feeding into the National Systems and, as an ICB will too will promote the use of the App through our social media pages and usual engagement opportunities using an inclusive awareness approach.

We are currently undertaking a piece of work around people's experiences and expectations of virtual wards. Those on a virtual ward often find themselves using technology to support their health and well being and to report on their daily readings and it therefore seems logical that we promote the use of the NHS App to the patients and carers, if they don't already have it.

Once again thank you for the report and please contact me if you want any further information or comment

Patient Experience Manager

NHS Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board / Joined Up Care Derbyshire