



Call Before Convey Service Pilot Report

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INTRODUCTION

In December 2024, the **Northwest Ambulance Service (NWAS)** launched a pilot initiative called '**Call Before Convey**'. This innovative approach focuses on patients aged 65 and over who call 999 but are not assessed as having a life-threatening illness or mental health concern, instead of being automatically brought to A&E (as per the leaflet for 'Call before convey').

This initiative aimed to triage patients, who met the criteria and who had contacted NWAS, and redirect them to the right care pathway, with the overarching goals of reducing pressure on A&E services, minimising patient waiting times and improving overall patient care, experience and satisfaction.

During the pilot, which ran for two weeks from **mid December 2024**, patients contacting NWAS were assessed and triaged into the following care pathways, depending on their needs:

- Treat them at the scene.
- Treat them in the ambulance and return them to their place of residence.
- Convey them to the Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) at Arrowe Park Hospital (APH).
- Convey them to the Acute Medicine Unit (AMU) at APH, or other appropriate departments.
- Call Urgent Community Response (UCR) to attend at their place of residence.
- Refer them to the Community Intermediate Care Centre (CICC).
- Convey them to A&E at APH.
- Other (as deemed appropriate by NWAS).

From the above pathways, NWAS identified a maximum of **25 people** daily who were not conveyed to A&E. These patients were selected based on the following criteria:

- Over the age of 65.
- No identified mental health issues.
- Identified as being at risk of falling.
- Informed during the triage process that they would receive a follow-up call from Healthwatch Wirral (HWW).

Healthwatch Wirral's role in the Call Before Convey pilot was to collect feedback from these patients about their experiences with the alternative pathways. WCHC provided HWW with the contact details of the patients who met the criteria and were redirected

to other services. HWW staff conducted follow-up phone calls with these patients, making multiple attempts where necessary to maximise participation. The information gathered during these calls was recorded in Excel spreadsheets and later transferred into SurveyMonkey for analysis.

WCHC sent data from 25 patients for HWW to contact. HWW successfully obtained good quality feedback from **14 patients**, which provided valuable insights into their experiences with the Call Before Convey initiative and their perceptions of the care pathways they were directed to.

HWW's involvement was to design the data collection process, conduct the follow-up interviews and documenting the findings, while the Call Before Convey multi agency team retained responsibility for the triage decisions and patient pathways.

The collected data was analysed to identify key themes and trends in patient experiences with the chosen pathways. Quantitative and qualitative insights were documented to provide a comprehensive understanding of the patients' perspectives.

This report outlines Healthwatch Wirral's contribution to the pilot, focusing on the methods used to collect patient feedback and the insights gained from the participants. These findings aim to ensure patient experience and satisfaction is valued in evaluating the pilot's success and exploring its potential for broader implementation.

Disclaimer

This report represents patient feedback and provides an unbiased account of engagement with patients, with minor edits only for the purposes of anonymity.

FINDINGS

This section presents the findings from a small survey conducted as part of the Call Before Convey pilot. Feedback was collected from 14 participants, but it is important to note that some service users did not respond to all the questions during follow-up phone calls.

Breakdown of non-responses

Of the 10 patients who did not respond or complete the survey:

- **4 patients** were identified as potential recontacts but as agreed, were not followed up:
 - 2 patients who were 'no reply' before Christmas.
 - 1 patient who was still in hospital before Christmas.

- 1 patient who was 'no reply' as of yesterday (13th Jan).
- **6 patients** were deemed unsuitable to complete the survey due to the following reasons:
 - 1 patient refused, stating they had already completed the survey on 12 December (HWW began calls on 13 December).
 - 1 patient was unable to complete the call as they had no memory of the ambulance visit and felt too unwell to answer.
 - 1 patient's contact number was linked to a family member or friend who felt unable to answer the survey.
 - 2 patients were care home residents and staff reported that they lacked the capacity to respond.
 - 1 patient was still in hospital when contacted.

The findings presented in this report are based on the 14 completed responses and any gaps or limitations due to non-responses should be considered when interpreting the results.

The findings from the Call Before Convey pilot survey provide insights into patient experiences with NWAS and their perceptions of the alternative care pathways introduced during the pilot. The following summarises the key results based on survey responses (for detailed information please see the Appendix):

Communication and Information Provision

Effective communication was a significant factor in shaping patient experiences:

81.82% of respondents reported being told where they would be treated.

However, 18.18% stated they were not informed (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Graph of Distribution of patients that were informed place treatment was taking place

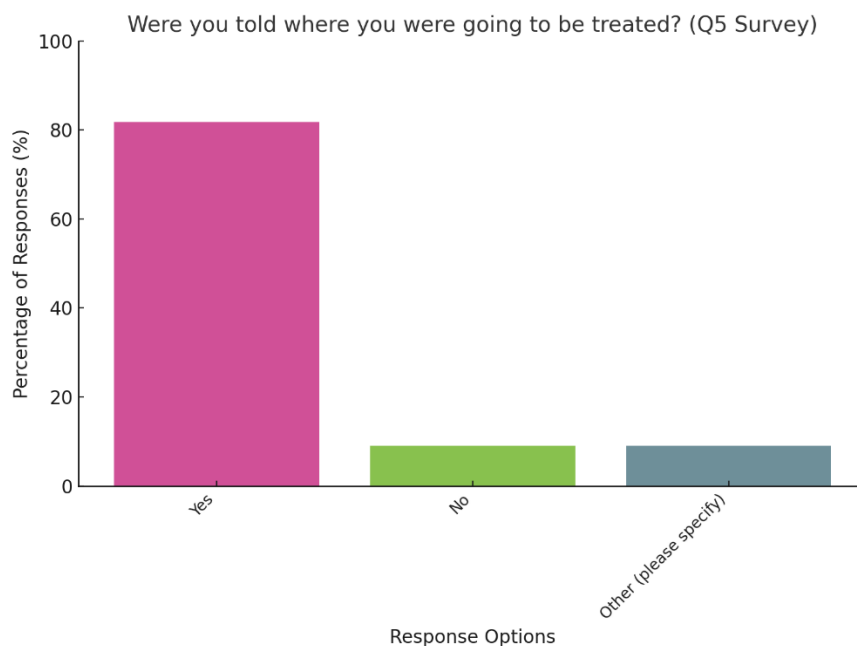


Figure 2: Distribution of participants responses regarding whether were they advised about what was happening next.

63.64% of participants were informed about what would happen next in their treatment. And 18.18% mentioned not being told (see Figure 2).

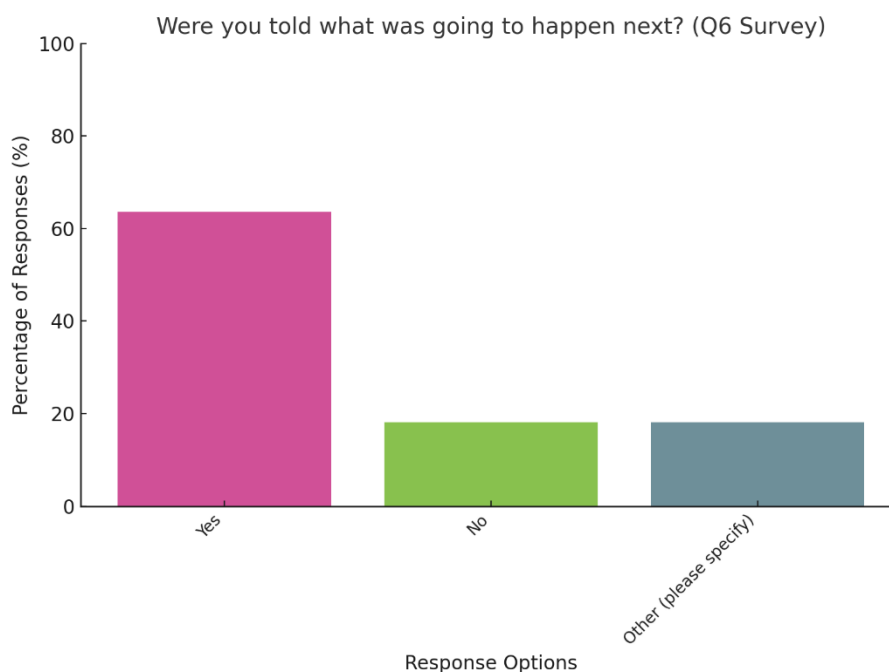
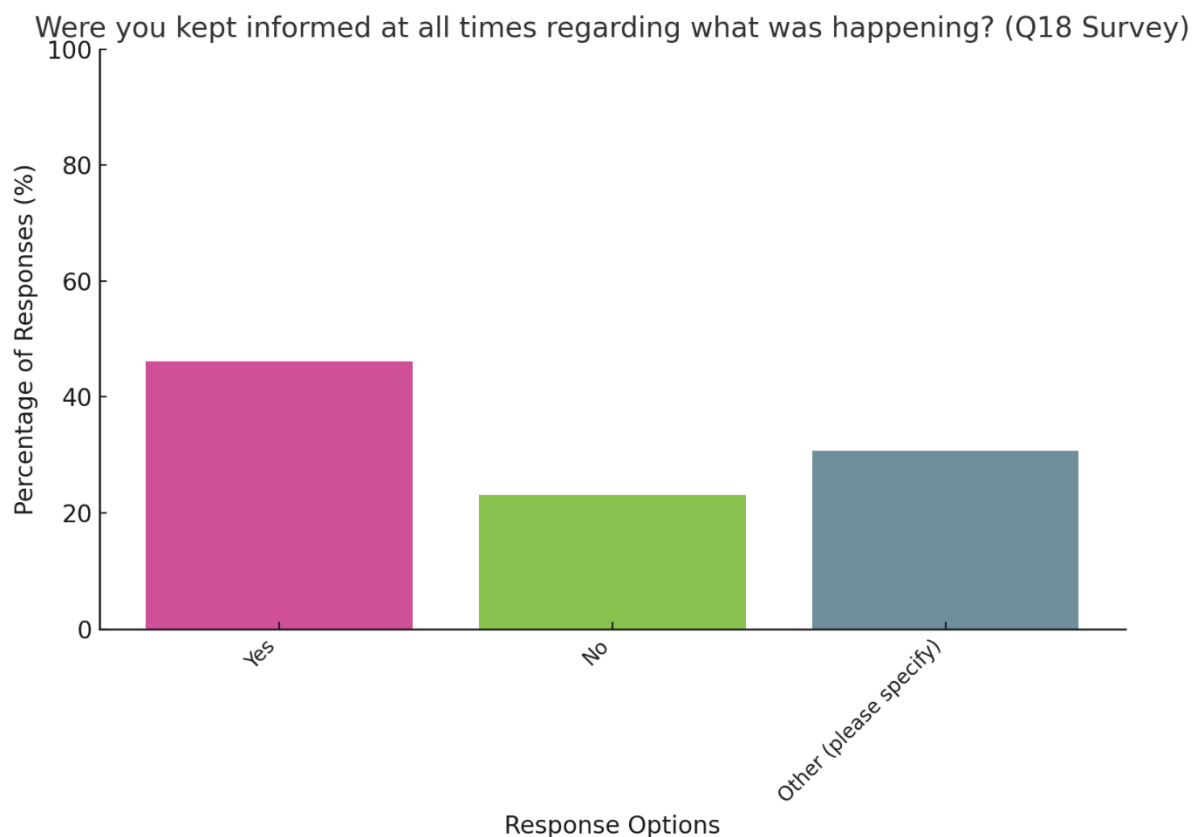


Figure 3: Distribution of participant responses on whether they were kept informed during the process



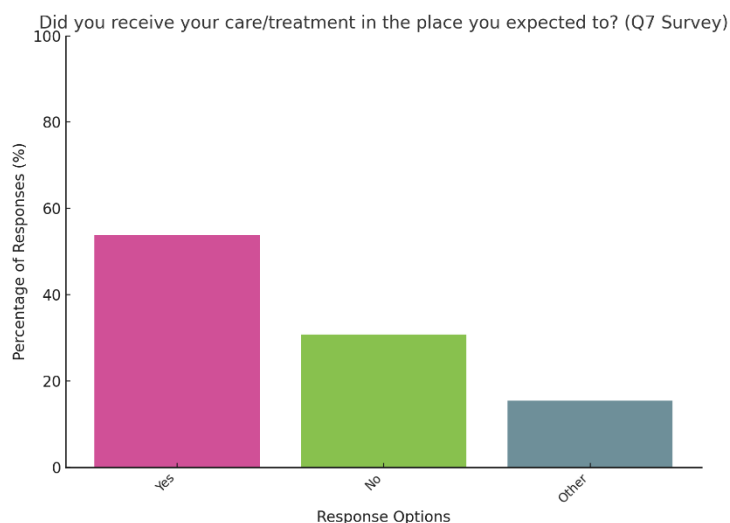
46% of the service users mentioned they were kept informed at all times regarding what was happening (see Figure 3).

Treatment Location and Expectations

The relationship between patient expectations and their treatment experience varied:

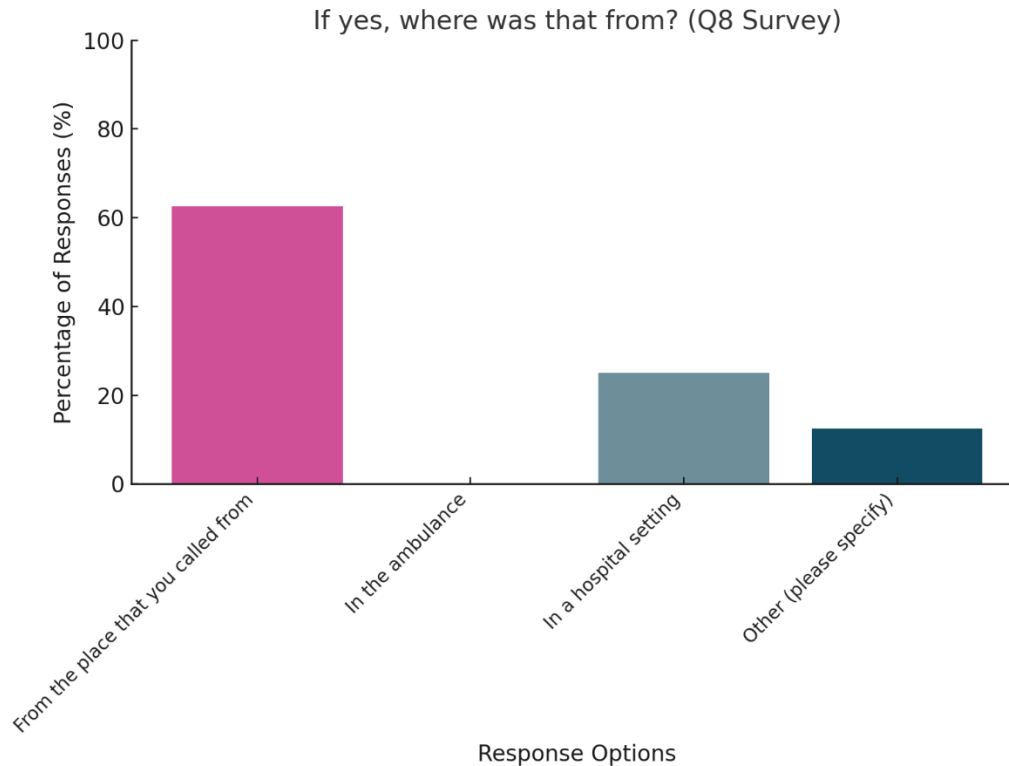
53.85% of respondents received treatment in the location they expected (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Distribution of patient responses on whether patient expected to receive treatment at that location



Among those treated, 62.5% were managed in the place they called from, while the remainder were treated in hospital settings. All hospital care was provided at Arrowe Park Hospital (APH) (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Distribution where the patients were treated

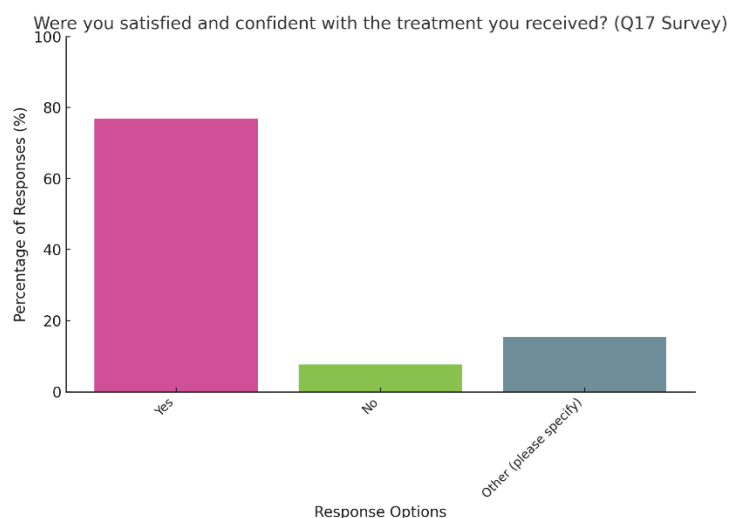


Satisfaction with Care and Confidence in Treatment

Most patients had positive perceptions of the care provided:

76.92% of respondents felt satisfied and confident with the treatment they received (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Distribution of patient satisfaction with the treatment received



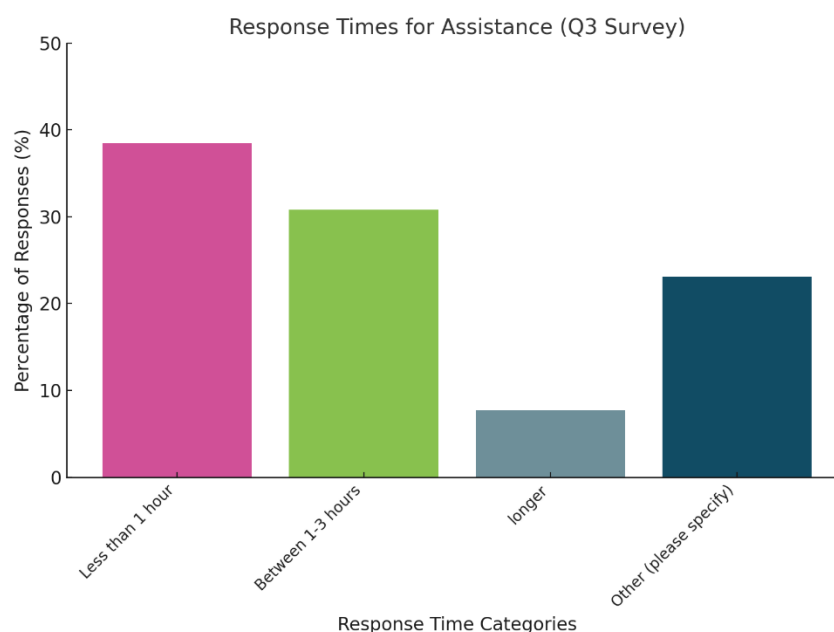
Ambulance Response Times

Response times played a crucial role in patient experiences:

38.46% of participants received assistance within one hour, which was generally well-received.

30.77% experienced waiting times of 1–3 hours, and 7.69% reported even longer delays (see Figure 7 below).

Figure 7: Distribution of responses times of the NWAS



QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

This section presents insights from qualitative responses provided by patients and their families HWW staff during follow-up calls.

Positive Experiences with Care

Many patients expressed satisfaction with the care provided by the ambulance crews and healthcare staff. Their professionalism, empathy, and attention to patient comfort were praised:

“Patient was very happy with the wonderful service from paramedics and was very happy that they did not have to be taken to hospital.”

“All treatment has been fantastic – has been seen by nurses and other healthcare professionals, all at home and all brilliant – much better than waiting in a busy A&E.”

“Person said they couldn’t fault the way they’ve been treated, stated ambulance staff were very considerate, caring, and thoughtful.”

Challenges with Communication

A significant theme in the feedback was the lack of clarity around the care process, follow-up, and triage decisions:

“Patient remains concerned about their mobility as currently not walking. Patient thinks the Falls Service was mentioned but is not sure and wants clarification on what to expect next.”

“Family is unhappy that this person was not conveyed to A&E. They said they were told conveyance was refused ‘because of the over 65 policy.’”

Emotional and Physical Impacts

Patients and families described how the pilot impacted their emotional and physical well-being:

“Patient said they had hoped not to be treated in hospital as they had recently left there. Patient repeatedly stated they still felt unwell and were concerned what was causing this.”

“Person stated they are fearful of falls whilst outside in dark conditions and current carers do not undertake walking.”

Follow-Up

Concerns about follow-up care and access to essential resources were stated:

“Patient said that paramedics prescribed Paracetamol, but they had none to dispense at the time. It was difficult for the patient’s family to locate a pharmacy open on a Sunday to get the prescription filled.”

CONCLUSION

The findings from the Call Before Convey pilot provides valuable insights into the experiences of patients redirected to alternative care pathways by the NWAS. The project demonstrated the potential to reduce unnecessary attendances at A&E while providing care tailored to patients' needs in alternative settings.

Most patients expressed satisfaction with the care they received, highlighting the professionalism and empathy of ambulance staff and healthcare staff. The ability to receive treatment at home or in a non-hospital setting was particularly appreciated, as it avoided the stress and long waiting times associated with A&E visits.

However, several challenges were identified. Communication emerged as a key area requiring improvement, with some patients and families reporting not enough clarity about their care pathway and next steps. Extended response times and resource availability (e.g., medication or equipment) were sources of concern. Furthermore, some patients voiced discontent with decisions not to transport them to A&E.

The pilot highlighted the critical role of effective communication, adequate follow-up processes and resource provision in ensuring patient satisfaction and confidence in the care pathways. This will support and encourage the behaviour change needed by patients, families and professionals which is necessary for relieving the strain from our health and care systems by providing and receiving the right care, at the right time, and in the right place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Ensure patients and families receive clear and consistent explanations about triage decisions, care pathways and next steps during the process.
2. Explore ways to reduce delays and provide regular updates during waiting periods to improve patient confidence.
3. Co-ordinate follow-up care effectively and ensure patients understand the services available to them.
4. Tailor feedback collection processes for patients unable to participate, for example by involving carers.
5. Collect patient feedback and conduct regular evaluations to refine the initiative and address any issues.

6. Listen and learn from patients and front-line professionals and be open to flexing.
7. Adopt and create credible and consistent communication strategies and training initiatives for all those involved in initiative to ensure the winning of hearts and minds and 'buy-in'.
8. Encourage professionals and key stakeholders to consider gaps in service provision
9. Consider what could be added to the patient's care to prevent and manage future issues e.g. do the family need support? Could the patient be referred/signposted to non-clinical support?
10. Consistently gather the views of professionals and patients for service confidence and improvement.
11. All patients to receive call back to ascertain wellbeing and experience of service. Data to be collated and reported upon.
12. HWW to support colleagues in communication, training, research and evaluation. E.g. Facilitate independent Paramedic feedback sessions – report back to stakeholders.
13. HWW to develop strategies for continuing to gather and report upon patient feedback.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

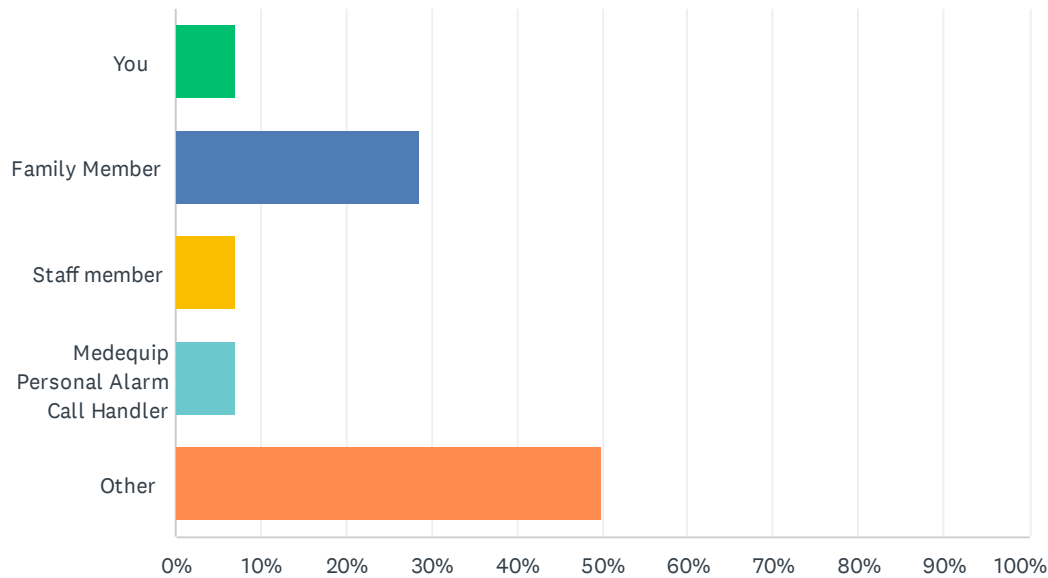
We would like to extend our gratitude to the following partners involved in this joint initiative:

- NWAS – North West Ambulance Service
- WCHT – Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Wirral Social Services
- WUTH – Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- ECIST – Emergency Care Improvement Support Team
- ICB – Integrated Care Board
- NHS Wirral

APPENDIX

Q1 Who called the ambulance?

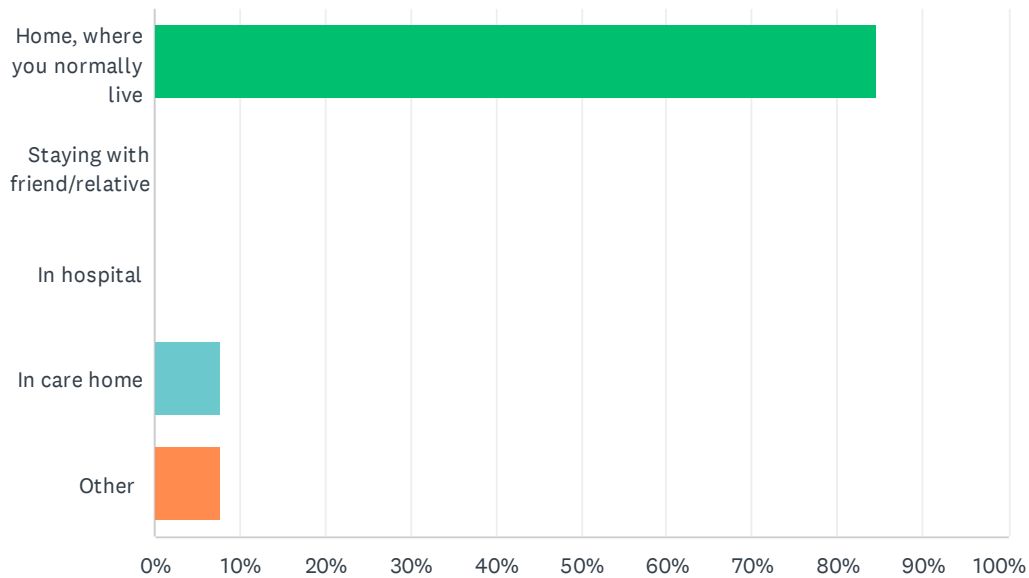
Answered: 14 Skipped: 11



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
You	7.14%	1
Family Member	28.57%	4
Staff member	7.14%	1
Medequip Personal Alarm Call Handler	7.14%	1
Other	50.00%	7
TOTAL		14

Q2 Where were you when the ambulance was called?

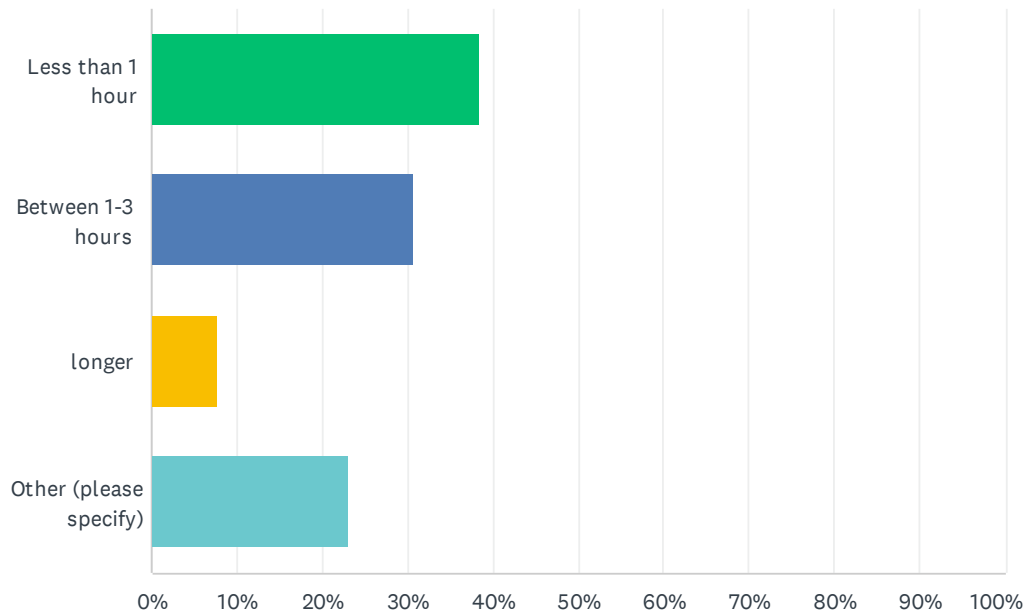
Answered: 13 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Home, where you normally live	84.62%	11
Staying with friend/relative	0.00%	0
In hospital	0.00%	0
In care home	7.69%	1
Other	7.69%	1
TOTAL		13

Q3 How long did you wait before you received helped?

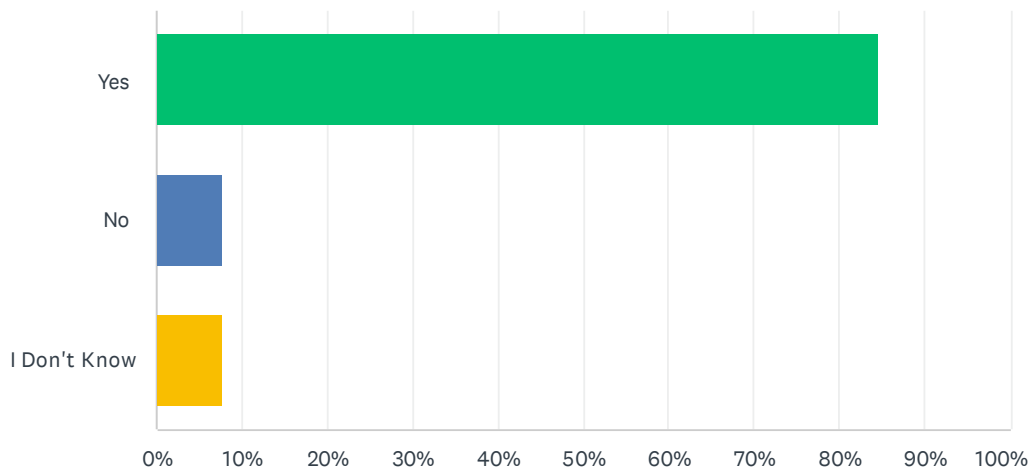
Answered: 13 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 1 hour	38.46%	5
Between 1-3 hours	30.77%	4
longer	7.69%	1
Other (please specify)	23.08%	3
TOTAL		13

Q4 Did you receive treatment from ambulance crew/ paramedics when the ambulance arrived?

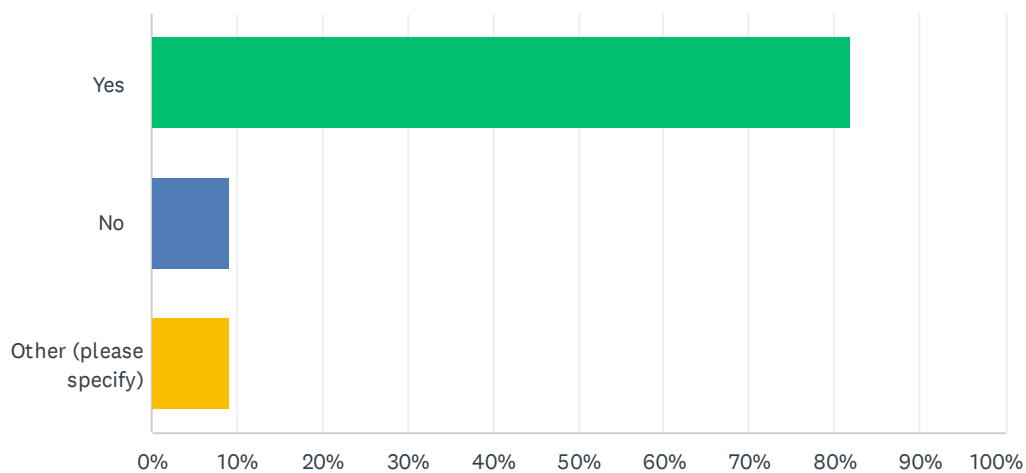
Answered: 13 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	84.62%	11
No	7.69%	1
I Don't Know	7.69%	1
TOTAL		13

Q5 Were you told where you were going to be treated?

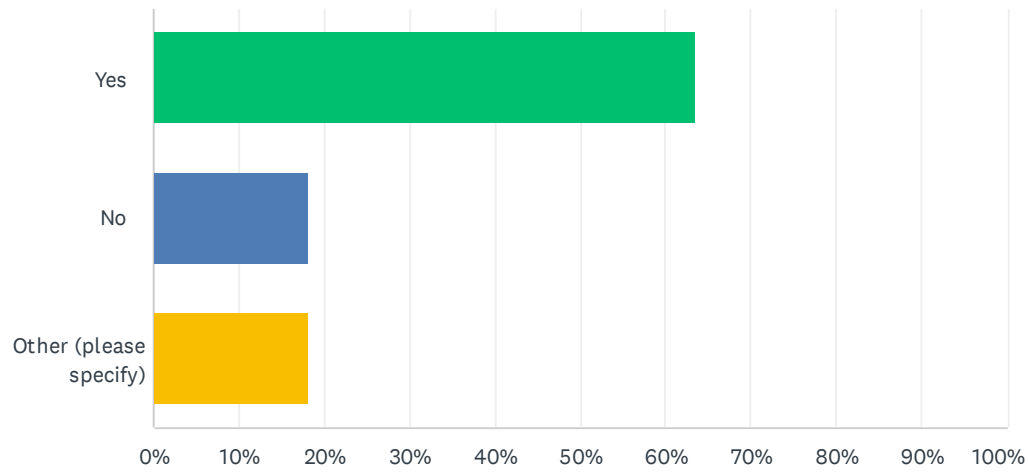
Answered: 11 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	81.82%	9
No	9.09%	1
Other (please specify)	9.09%	1
TOTAL		11

Q6 Were you told what was going to happened next?

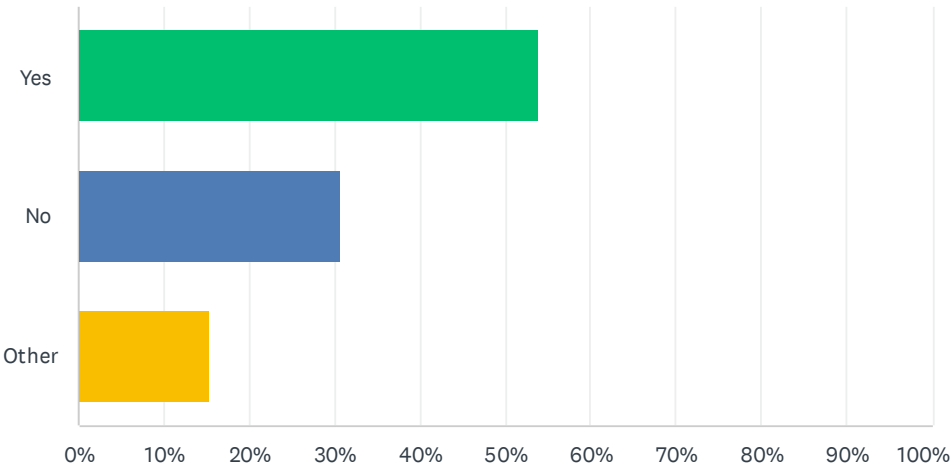
Answered: 11 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	63.64%	7
No	18.18%	2
Other (please specify)	18.18%	2
TOTAL		11

Q7 Did you receive your care/treatment in the place you expected to?

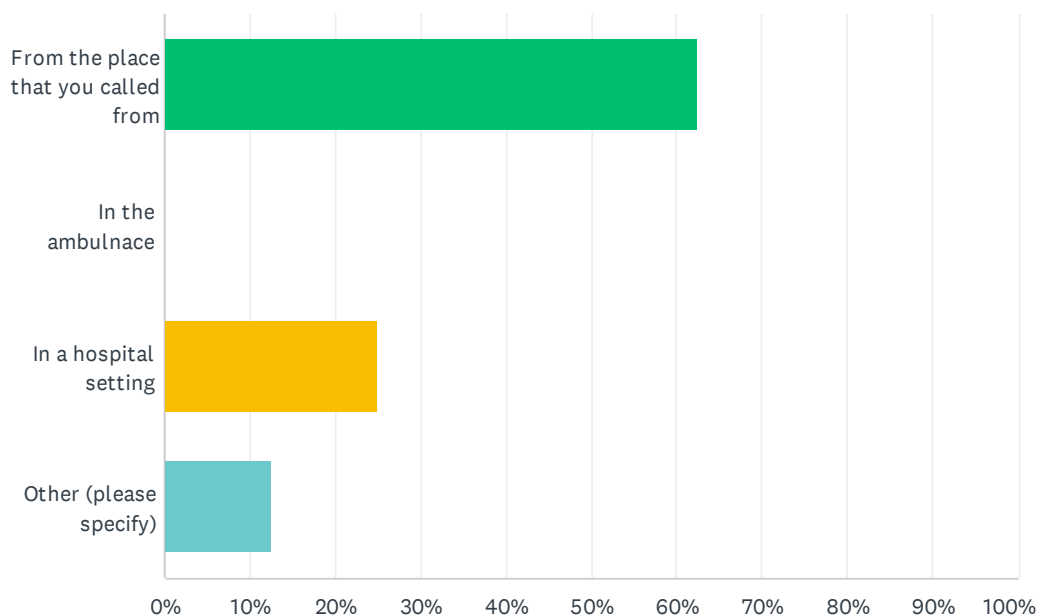
Answered: 13 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		53.85%	7
No		30.77%	4
Other		15.38%	2
TOTAL			13

Q8 If yes, where was that from? (Tick all that apply)

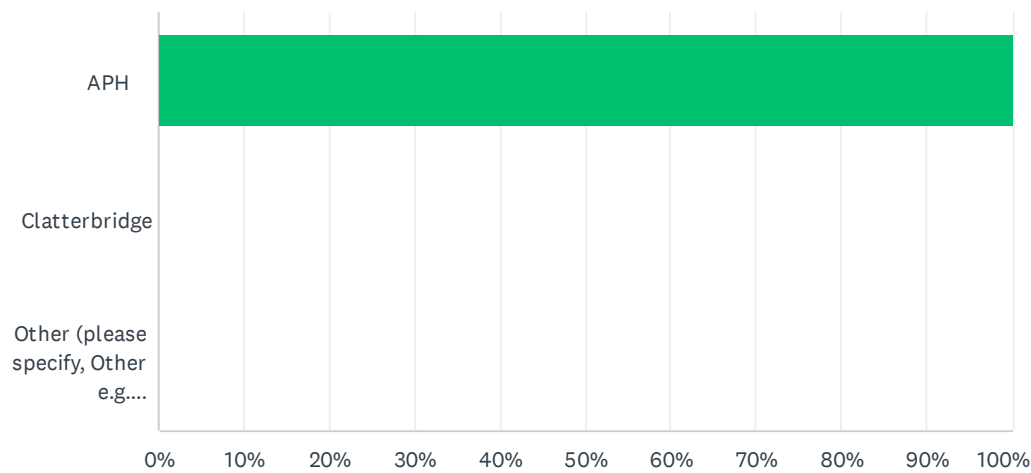
Answered: 8 Skipped: 17



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
From the place that you called from	62.50%	5
In the ambulnace	0.00%	0
In a hospital setting	25.00%	2
Other (please specify)	12.50%	1
Total Respondents: 8		

Q9 If you were treated in a hospital setting, was it at?

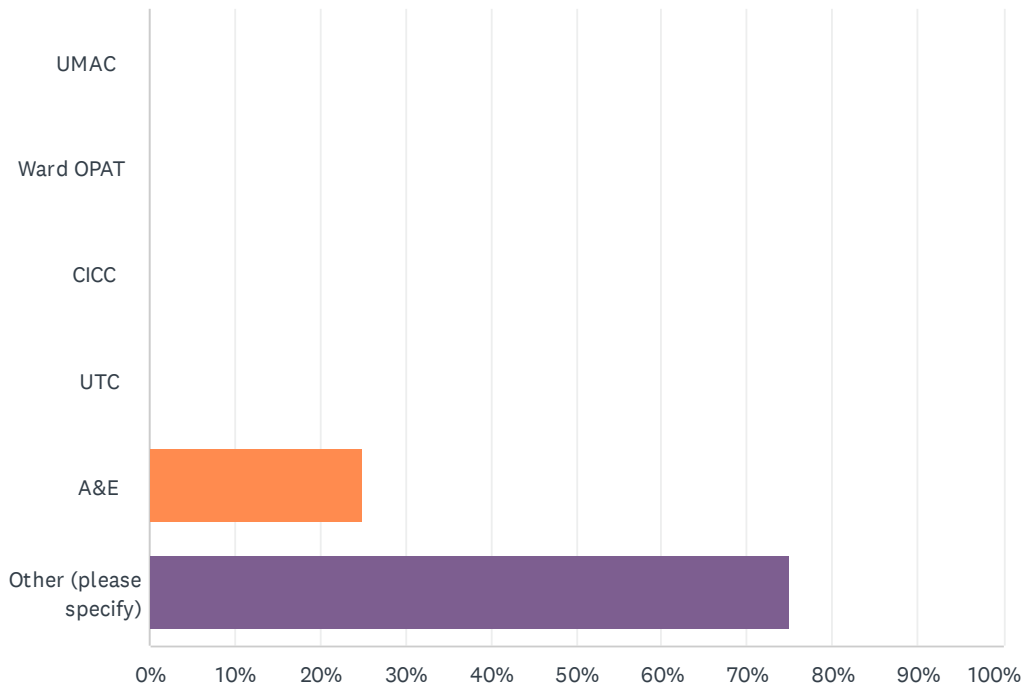
Answered: 4 Skipped: 21



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
APH	100.00%	4
Clatterbridge	0.00%	0
Other (please specify, Other e.g. Broadgreen, Walton, Liverpool Heart & Chest, Aintree, The Royal.)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		4

Q10 If yes, do you know which department was?

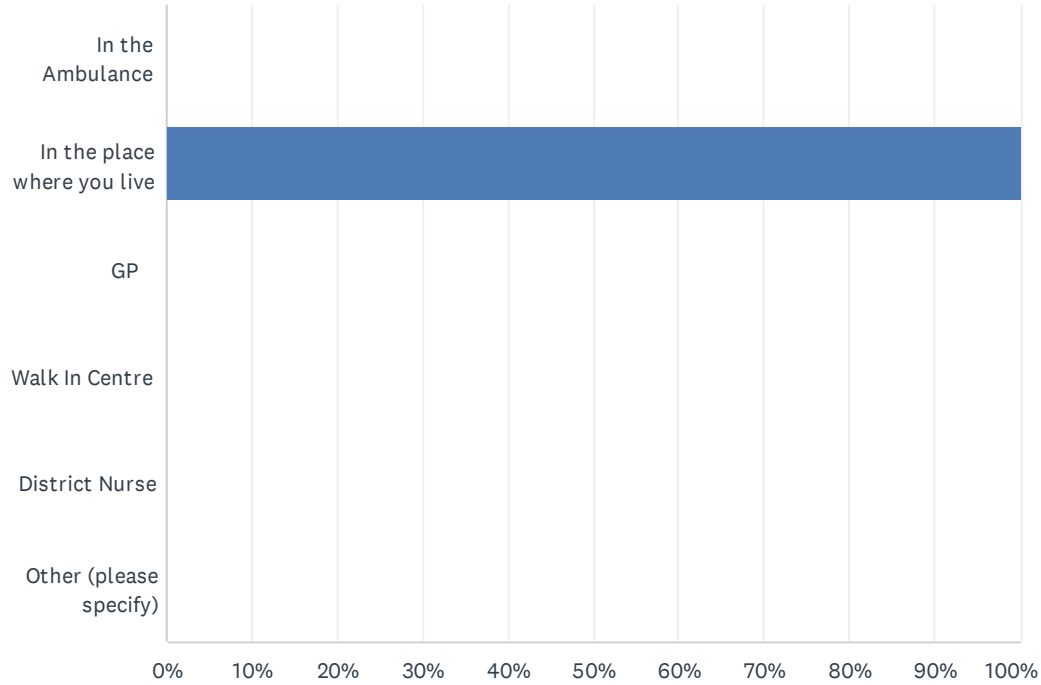
Answered: 4 Skipped: 21



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
UMAC	0.00%	0
Ward OPAT	0.00%	0
CICC	0.00%	0
UTC	0.00%	0
A&E	25.00%	1
Other (please specify)	75.00%	3
TOTAL		4

Q11 If you were not taken to a hospital, where did you receive the treatment?

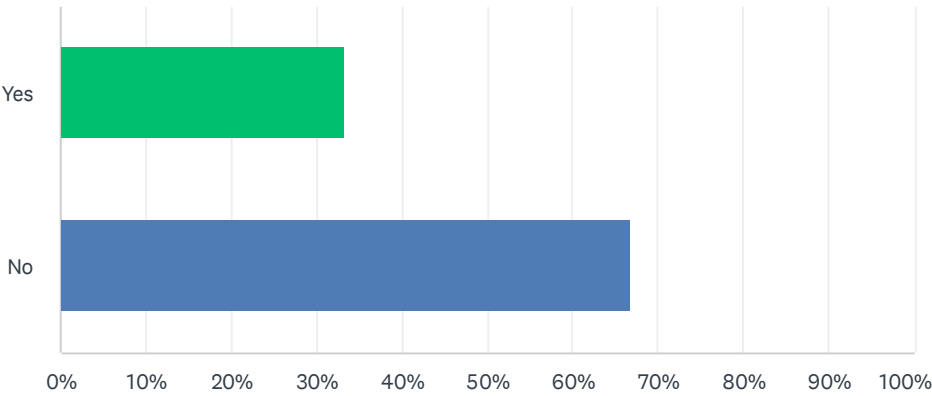
Answered: 9 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
In the Ambulance	0.00%	0
In the place where you live	100.00%	9
GP	0.00%	0
Walk In Centre	0.00%	0
District Nurse	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		9

Q12 Did your treatment take place in more than one service/setting?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	33.33%	3
No	66.67%	6
TOTAL		9

Q13 If yes, how many times did you move to another place/setting service?

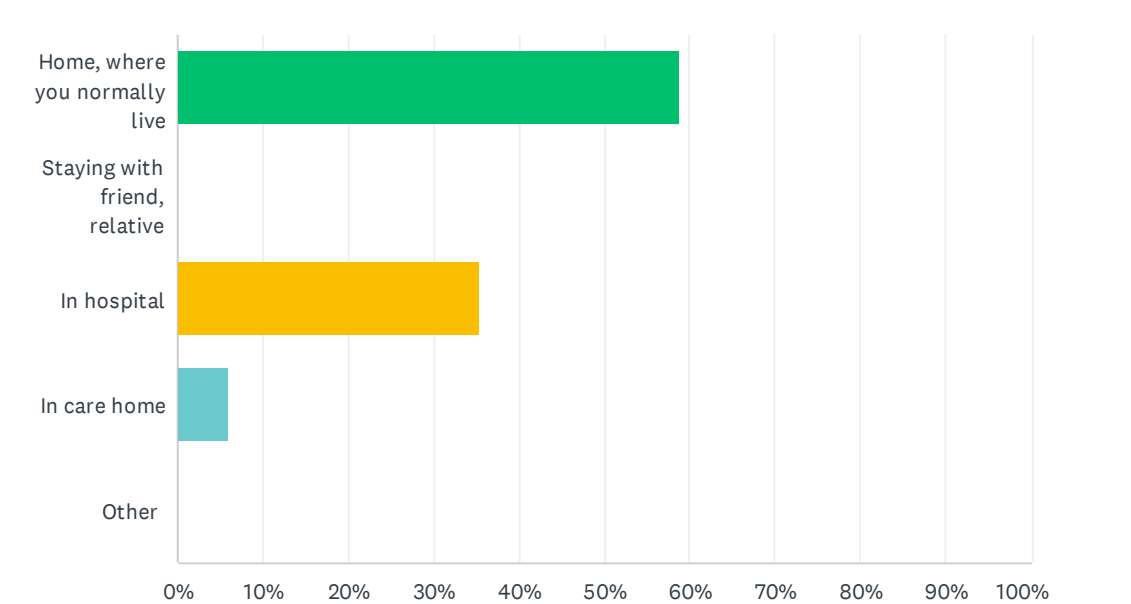
Answered: 3 Skipped: 22

Q14 If yes where were you moved to?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 22

Q15 Where are you now?

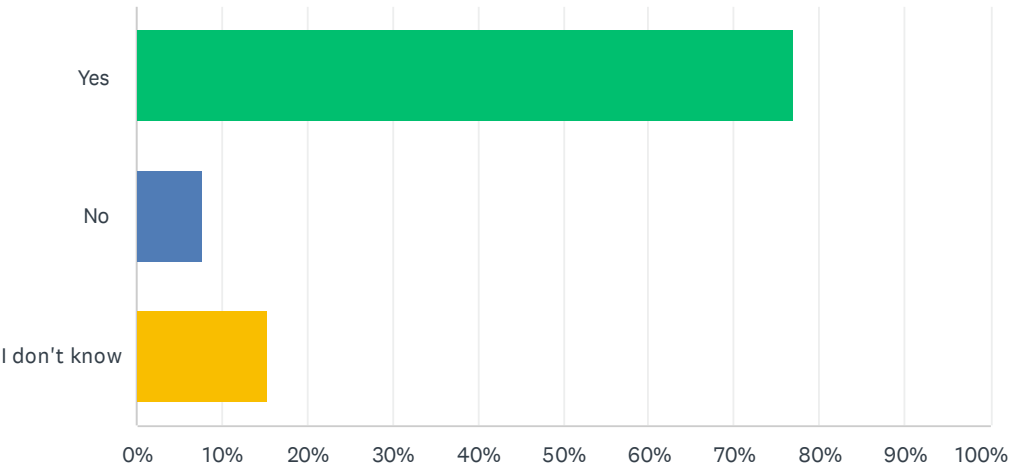
Answered: 17 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Home, where you normally live		58.82%	10
Staying with friend, relative		0.00%	0
In hospital		35.29%	6
In care home		5.88%	1
Other		0.00%	0
TOTAL			17

Q16 Do you feel that where you are now, is the right place for you to be?

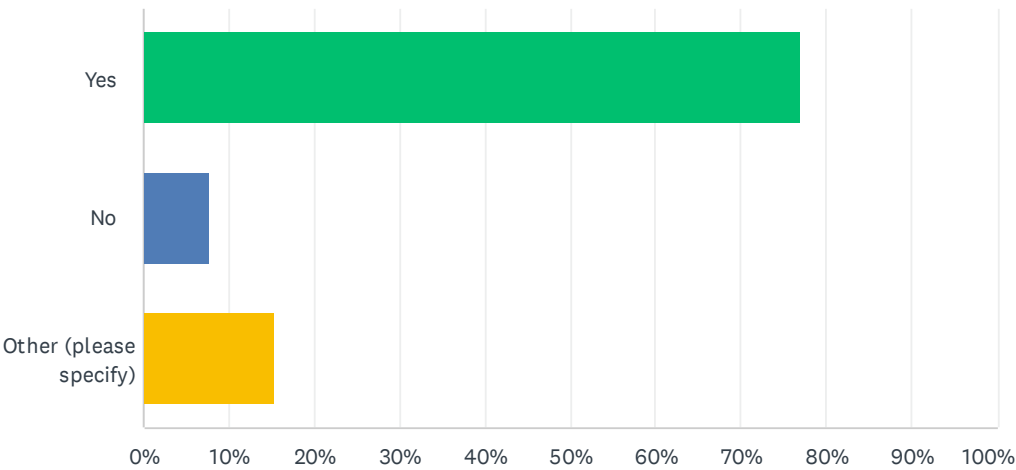
Answered: 13 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		76.92%	10
No		7.69%	1
I don't know		15.38%	2
TOTAL			13

Q17 Were you satisfied and confident with the treatment you received?

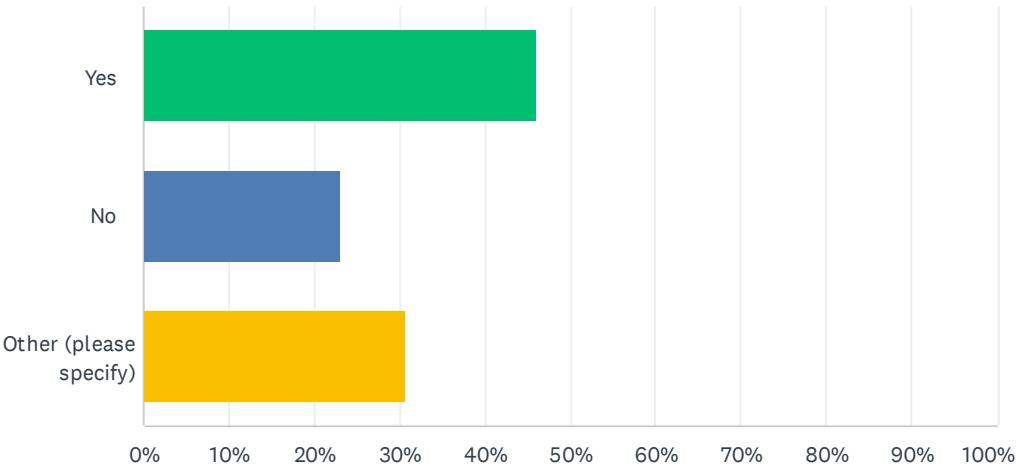
Answered: 13 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	76.92%	10
No	7.69%	1
Other (please specify)	15.38%	2
TOTAL		13

Q18 Were you kept informed at all times regarding what was happening?

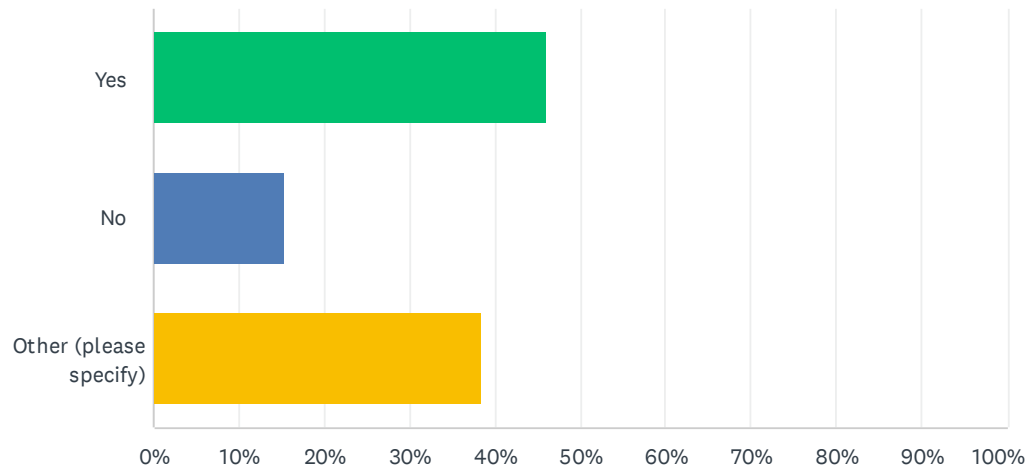
Answered: 13 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		46.15%	6
No		23.08%	3
Other (please specify)		30.77%	4
TOTAL			13

Q19 Were you happy with the outcome?

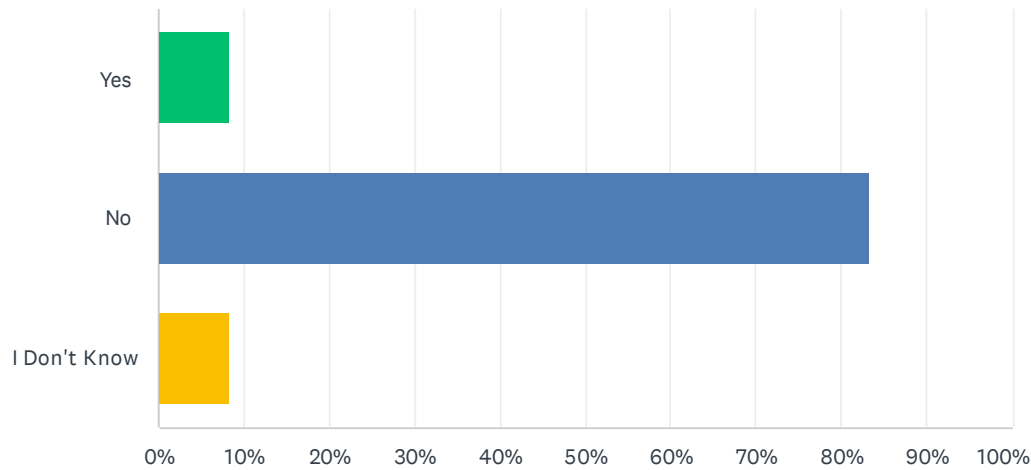
Answered: 13 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	46.15%	6
No	15.38%	2
Other (please specify)	38.46%	5
TOTAL		13

Q20 Are you a carer?

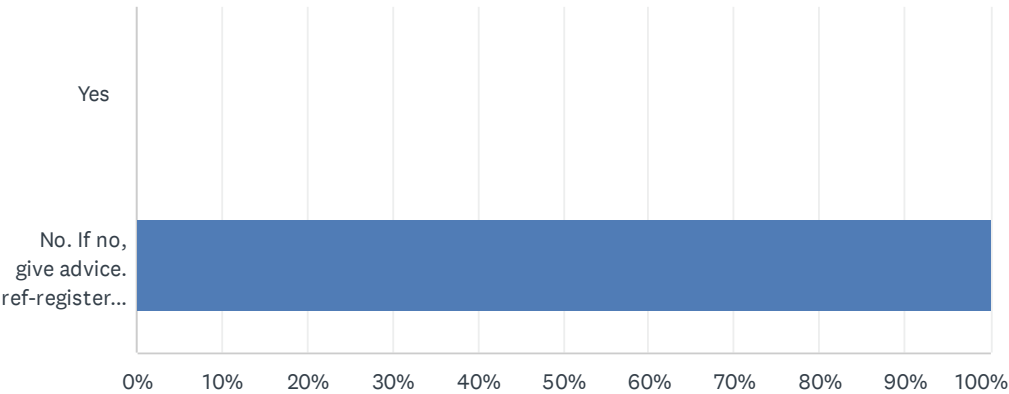
Answered: 12 Skipped: 13



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	8.33%	1
No	83.33%	10
I Don't Know	8.33%	1
TOTAL		12

Q21 If Yes, are you a registered as a carer with your GP practice?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 24



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	0.00%	0
No. If no, give advice. ref-registering as a Carer with GP Practice	100.00%	1
TOTAL		1

Q22 Would you like to add anything?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 0

Q22 Would you like to add anything?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Patient said that paramedics prescribed Paracetamol, they had none to dispense at time, it was difficult for patient's family to locate a pharmacy open on a Sunday to get prescription filled, a "lady from the emergency service" came 2 days later and took notes but gave no treatment. Patient remains concerned about their mobility as currently not walking. Patient things the Falls Service was mentioned but is not sure & wants clarification on what to expect next.	1/8/2025 10:31 AM
2	Daughter answered survey to best of knowledge as was not present at the time ambulance was called and both parents have dementia. Ambulance was called twice. Family is unhappy that this person was not conveyed to A&E. They said were told conveyance was refused 'because of the over 65 policy'.	1/8/2025 10:23 AM
3	No phone number provided	1/7/2025 3:10 PM
4	Person said they couldn't fault the way they've been treated, stated ambulance staff were very considerate, caring and thoughtful. Said they've been made to feel very comfortable in hospital and despite being there still feel like its Christmas due to efforts to make the hospital welcoming.	1/7/2025 3:03 PM
5	Patient said they had hoped not to be treated in hospital as they had recently left there. Patient repeatedly stated they still felt unwell and were concerned what was causing this.	1/7/2025 2:58 PM
6	Patient unable to complete call. Family member advised person had no memory of the ambulance visit and were too unwell to answer questions.	1/7/2025 2:53 PM
7	Person's daughter answered questions as was with patient at the time. Person is still in hospital.	1/7/2025 2:30 PM
8	Patient said the staff were great although it was very clear the whole system is overwhelmed. Patient said they insisted on coming home as had been there all night stuck in A&E in nightdress, very cold and uncomfortable.	1/7/2025 2:25 PM
9	Called x 2 19/12. Called again 20/12. Person who answered said patient is in hospital at present.	1/7/2025 2:20 PM
10	Patient was very happy with the wonderful service from paramedics and was very happy that they did not have to be taken to hospital.	1/7/2025 2:13 PM
11	Number given is not patient's but someone known to him. Patient is currently in hospital.	1/7/2025 2:10 PM
12	No reply x 2 06/01/2025	1/7/2025 2:09 PM
13	Patient's daughter answered call. Patient gave permission for daughter to relay responses as patient speech is currently not very clear.	1/7/2025 2:06 PM
14	Patient in care home as temporary respite resident. Staff said would not be appropriate to answer questions or ask resident to answer.	1/7/2025 2:01 PM
15	Care home staff said person felt unwell whilst attending a day centre, with no taxi available to bring back to care home, someone called ambulance which was stood down when alternative transport found from another service.	1/7/2025 1:47 PM
16	Number given was incorrect. After clarifying number, x2 attempts to speak to patient, on second attempt staff advised patient becomes confused so not suitable for answering survey.	1/7/2025 1:44 PM
17	Number given is son-in-law's number; unable to discuss details	1/7/2025 1:41 PM
18	Person who answered call said patient is in hospital	1/7/2025 1:41 PM
19	Called 19/12/24 x 2 no reply, 20/12/24 x 2 no reply.	1/7/2025 1:39 PM

SPA NWAS Call data - Pilot December 2024

20	Patient was previously and remains on end-of-life care. Wants to know how soon their mobility scooter/ wheelchair will arrive from Medequip.	1/7/2025 1:39 PM
21	All treatment has been fantastic - has been seen by nurses and other healthcare professionals, all at home and all brilliant - much better than waiting in a busy A&E.	1/7/2025 1:39 PM
22	Number given is daughter's number, felt inappropriate to discuss details.	1/7/2025 1:38 PM
23	HWW were told that person has already been called 12/12/24 and asked about survey; they feel they answered the survey then.	1/7/2025 1:36 PM
24	Had fall and Medequip alarm was triggered, Medequip called ambulance. Very happy with treatment from paramedics and "nurses from the hospital."	1/7/2025 12:01 PM
25	Had fall and Medequip personal alarm was triggered, Medequip called ambulance. Person stated they are fearful of falls whilst outside in dark conditions and current carers do not undertake dog-walking.	1/7/2025 11:34 AM