

Bladder and Bowel Service survey - 2023

Published 2024

Background

- The survey asked people across Suffolk who used the Bladder and Bowel Service what their experience had been in using the service.
- Comments were taken between **July and October 2023**.
- **Twenty-four people**, both individuals and those delivering the service to larger numbers in care homes or as carers responded.
- The response **was rich in qualitative information** about their experience of the diagnosis, delivery and use of the products prescribed.
- All respondents were **over 16 years of age** and, 20 had used the BABS service in the last 12 months.

Locality, gender and ethnicity

- Responses were received from **across Suffolk**. However, four respondents did not state a locality.
- The majority of respondents (67%) were **female**.
- The majority of respondents (83%) were White British.

Gender	Responses
Female	16
Male	4
No answer / prefer not to say	4

Location	Responses
Babergh	5
Ipswich	5
Mid Suffolk	5
St Edmundsbury	3
Suffolk Coastal	1
Waveney	1
No answer/not known	4

Where did they hear about the survey?

- 58% of respondents heard about the survey via the **Healthwatch Suffolk** website, Facebook, or email.
- 21% heard about the survey via **personal contacts**, while 13% gave no answer.
- One respondent spoke of the Stroke Working Age Group Suffolk (SWAGS).

Where did they hear about the survey?	Respondents
HWS website	7
Facebook	4
Email	3
Healthcare professional	3
Work	1
Friend or relative	1
No Answer	3
SWAG	1

Who referred them?

- 42% of respondents were **referred** by a GP or health professional.
- 33% of respondents were **care home staff** or a care **provider**.

Who referred the respondent?	Respondents
Another health professional	6
GP practice	4
Self-referral	2
Care home	2
Professional wellbeing practitioner	1
Care provider	3
Care agency through county council	1
Sister care home	1
No answer	4

How long had they been using the BABS service?

- 45% had used the service **over two years** and 34% under two years.
- 17% did not say who referred them, and 21% did not answer or did not know how long the service had been used.

How long have they been using the service?	Respondents	Percentage
Under 1 year	4	17%
Over 1 year	4	17%
Over 2 years	2	7%
Over 3 years	9	38%
Don't know/no answer	5	21%

How long had they waited to be assessed after initial referral?

- The majority of respondents (70%) **were seen within three months.**
- The other 30% either didn't know, or gave no answer.

Length of wait to be assessed	Respondents	Percentage
Less than a month	9	37%
Two to three months	8	33%
Don't know/can't recall	4	17%
No answer	3	13%

How did they rate the attitudes of BABS staff?

- Over 54% of respondents rated the staff either **very good** or **good**.
- One person (4%) considered staff attitudes '**very poor**'.
- 21% thought staff attitudes were '**okay**'.
- 21% did not answer.

Rating	Respondents	Percentage
Very good	10	42%
Good	3	12%
OK	5	21%
Very poor	1	4%
No answer	5	21%

Levels of satisfaction with the BABS service

Although **over half** the respondents expressed satisfaction in most areas, **42% were unsatisfied** with the quality of the products.

How satisfied were they?	Satisfied		Unsatisfied		Don't know/don't recall		No answer	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
The time it took to be assessed after referral	13	54%	3	13%	3	13%	4	16%
The location of assessment	14	58%	3	13%	3	13%	4	16%
The quality of products supplied	9	38%	10	42%	1	4%	4	16%
The quantity of products supplied	16	67%	3	13%	1	4%	4	16%

Levels of satisfaction with the BABS service

There were some issues recorded about the **support** and **information** provided, **ease of ordering**, and whether the product **met their needs**.

How satisfied were they with...	Satisfied		Unsatisfied		Don't know/don't recall		No answer	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Ease of ordering the product	12	50%	6	26%	2	8%	4	16%
How the product met your needs	12	50%	6	25%	1	4%	5	21%
The support and information provided around incontinence	12	50%	7	29%	1	4%	4	17%



Comments from those who were unsatisfied were made, such as:

"I [work for a] senior independence and wellbeing service, and I meet people every day who are unable to use BABS products due to requiring elasticated pull-up pads [as a result of] numerous health conditions which make coordination challenging, such as amputations, strokes, dementia, Parkinson's.

*"And due to them no longer being supplied, I feel **this isn't a person-centred service**, and is contributing to people no longer being independent - with toileting resulting in carers being required... which increases the risk of carer breakdown."*






Comments from those who were unsatisfied were made, such as:

"We were happy when we had the pull-up padded incontinence pants supplied, but not now we have the pads supplied.

*"My wife has **dementia**, and she finds it very difficult to understand how to put them on and pull up the holding pants. I can help her to use them, but when we are out, **it is very difficult** when using public or restaurant toilets.*

*"It has made life more difficult for us, which you could do without when caring for someone with dementia. I would be very happy if we could return to the pull-up pants - **it would make a difficult job a little easier.**"*



6 Comments from those who were unsatisfied were made, such as:

*“When I complained to the ICS, it turned out they hadn’t done an Equality Impact Assessment on the decision to change the products. They sent the manager of the Bladder and Bowel Service out to re-assess my sister. **My sister cried through the assessment**, telling them she ‘just wanted to be normal’ and she ‘just wanted to be able to go out and not be worried about accidents’.*

*“She told them she had tried the pads and had even tried wearing two or three at the same time, but they didn’t catch her accidents. There was **no apology** from the manager about the way the member of staff had responded, [who] also complained about the ICS decision to us and said her hands were tied. She said the decision about whether my sister could have pull ups would go back to the ICS. That was six months ago, and we have **still heard nothing**.”*



Comments from those who were unsatisfied were made, such as:

*“**Initial contact was quick**, staff **friendly** over the phone. We have never met any of the B & B staff. Products provided to try, then first order came quickly, with instructions on ordering process.*

“Instructions were clear - as were the next set of instructions when the supplier changed. It is difficult to contact the B&B team when there is a question - they do ring back, but the majority of the time the call is missed.

*“**Information feels a bit basic** – ‘try these and come back to us’ - this may be because we’ve never been seen face-to-face.”*





Comments from those who were unsatisfied were made, such as:

*"The system appears to have taken **a bit of a backward step**, and whilst it is appreciated that costs must be considered, the recent change of products (pads) have proven to be **less effective** than the previous type.*

"Also, as part of the assessment process, we now have to make a referral rather than being able to use our own skills and knowledge [as registered nurses] to choose appropriate products for our residents, increasing the time it takes to gain supplies for individuals."






Positive comments included the following:

*"We have dealt with the BABS team for years, they are always willing to give advice, help and always **go the extra mile.**"*

*"We have 70 service users that we provide care for on a daily basis, and a lot of these people deal with (or we deal with on behalf of them). Our overall experience with the BABS service is **very good and helpful** and we have no issues or problems regarding this service."*

*"I've always had **positive interactions with their team** and as always would **prefer the responses to be quicker** and faster but appreciate they assess each query on the priority."*



Conclusions

- The views expressed were **mixed**. The main issue raised by those using the BABS service is the **change from pull-up pad pants to pads**, which sit in the under garment and which respondents state **do not meet their client/relative's needs**.
- None of the respondents commented that there had been any **consultation** about changing from pull-up pad pants to pads, but that they had only been told that the pull-up pad pants were no longer available and the supplier had changed. Users were **not given a choice** of product.
- Response times to queries and to the assessment could sometimes be **slow** and that links between the services could be **unsatisfactory**.
- Some respondents stated they **purchase their own pull-up pant pads**, with one commenting it could cost up to £45.00 per week.
- The results of the survey show that despite **general satisfaction with the BABS service**, the change from the pull-up pad pants to pads has had a **detrimental impact** on some patients' **independence and dignity**.



healthwatch
Suffolk



CAN DO
HEALTH & CARE
Suffolk & North East Essex
Integrated Care System