

healthwatch

Tower Hamlets

Community Insights Report Born Well Growing Well July 2018



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About this report

This report examines important aspects of the services provided in Tower Hamlets to new and expectant parents; children and young people.

The data we have used has been collected between January 2016 and June 2018.

We have spoken to:

- 655 users of *maternity services*, identifying a total of 2321 issues.
- 431 parents and carers who accessed *health and social care services for their children*, identifying a total of 1287 issues.
- 158 *young people* (aged 14-24), identifying a total of 516 issues.



Healthwatch Tower Hamlets is an independent organisation led by local volunteers. It is part of a national network of Healthwatch organisations that involve people of all ages and all sections of the community.

Healthwatch Tower Hamlets gathers local people's views on the health and social care services that they use. We make sure those views are taken into account when decisions are made on how services will be delivered, and how they can be improved.

www.healthwatchtowerhamlets.co.uk

What we have learned

Maternity services

Tower Hamlets is now a better place to give birth than it was in 2016

- ❖ Overall, patient opinion about the provision of maternity services in the borough has improved significantly between 2016 and 2017 and has stayed broadly the same in 2018.
- ❖ Patient opinion of the services provided by the Royal London Hospital maternity has been steadily improving between 2016 and 2018.
- ❖ With the opening of the Lotus Birth Centre and Tower Hamlets Homebirth team, expectant mothers now have more choice regarding where and how to give birth.
- ❖ GPs have a better awareness of antenatal care and are better able to offer information about staying healthy throughout pregnancy.
- ❖ Antenatal classes offered by Barts Health and NCT are a valuable source of information.
- ❖ Midwives at the Royal London are now perceived as having a better, more compassionate attitude than in 2016.
- ❖ Communication within the Royal London Hospital has improved, but there is still scope for improvement. Experience regarding communication around birth plans continues to be mixed.
- ❖ Mothers giving birth in the Maternity ward at the Royal London have a better understanding of how the ward operates, what happens when they give birth and what various medically necessary procedures entail; and they communicate better with midwives and doctors.
- ❖ Patient opinion of postnatal services in the borough has consistently improved; including aftercare and discharge on hospital maternity wards as well as of district nurses and health visitors.

A few aspects are still in need of improvement

- ❖ Antenatal midwives and the Homebirth team at the Royal London are difficult to contact by telephone.
- ❖ Admin issues cause delays in treatment and needless stress for patients.

Children's services

Hospital services for children have somewhat improved, but not sufficiently

- ❖ Overall, patient opinion about the provision of paediatrics services by the Royal London Hospital maternity has improved in 2017, compared with 2016, and stayed broadly the same in 2018. Nonetheless, it remains mixed.
- ❖ Opinion about the attitude of doctors and nurses has improved; parents perceive the care they provide as more compassionate; compared with 2016.
- ❖ Parents have also been happier in 2017 than in 2016 with the quality of the treatment their children receive in the hospital. As doctors build better rapport with children and their parents, they are better trusted to deliver good care.
- ❖ Children wait for a long time for appointments with hospital consultants. While in hospital, they can be faced with long waits before being seen. However, the number of complaints on the topic has decreased relatively.
- ❖ Cancellations, particularly for surgical procedures, cause even longer waiting times which cause young patients and their parents a great deal of concern.
- ❖ Parents don't feel that doctors provide them with a satisfactory level of advice and information about managing their children's health and what to expect from their visit. Opinion of advice and information provided by doctors has improved but remains negative.

Most parents feel that their children's health is reasonably prioritised in their GP surgery

- ❖ Parents have a great deal of trust in their GP's professional competence. Generally, all GP surgery staff are seen as professional, compassionate and kind in relation to their younger patients.
- ❖ While opinion of waiting lists is mixed, a majority of parents find that they can obtain appointments for their children within a reasonable amount of time, and they feel appropriately prioritised. The ability to get same-day emergency appointments is highly valued by parents.
- ❖ The process of booking GP appointments is perceived as difficult and frustrating, particularly if the surgery is difficult to reach by phone.

Young people's services

Young people are mostly happy with their experience with NHS Services.

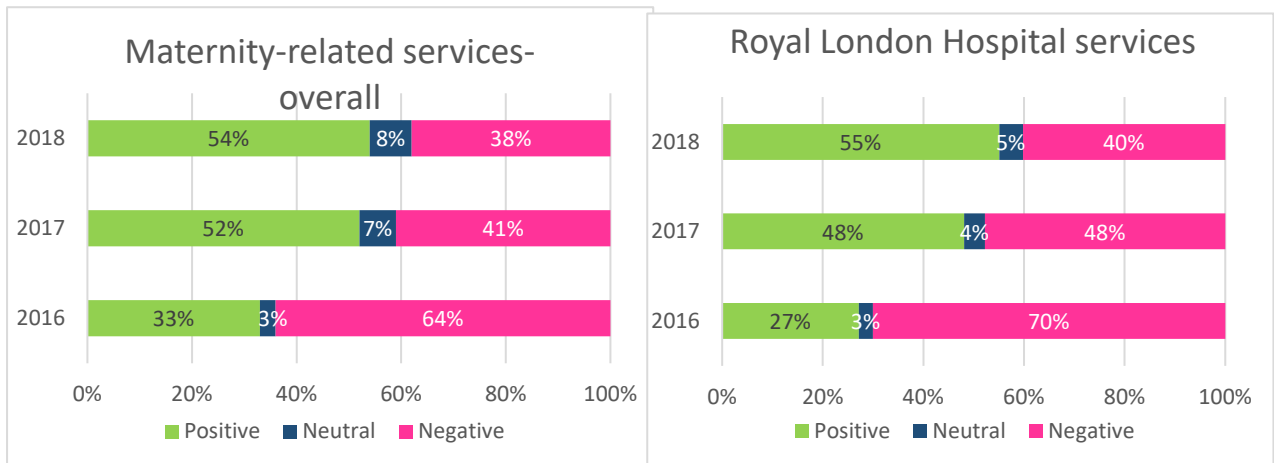
- ❖ Young people who visit the hospital are happy with the process of diagnosis and testing, the treatment and nursing that they receive. They find medical professionals diagnosing them trustworthy and they feel they receive appropriate explanations about their condition. They are generally happy with the attitude of consultant and hospital nurses.
- ❖ Those who have used the services of their GP surgery are also broadly happy with it; they praised the quality of treatment received from doctors and the attitude of all staff members.
- ❖ Those who have used mental health services found them useful and felt supported.
- ❖ Their only complaints about NHS services are around difficulties booking appointments with their GP (particularly over the phone) and long waits when being seen by hospital consultants.

Reccomendations

- ✓ Identify, celebrate and disseminate examples of good practice in maternity, children and young people's services as learning opportunities.
- ✓ Improve communications by telephone in GP surgeries and the Royal London Hospital; consider promoting online/email booking as an alternative to telephone, to ease pressure on phone lines.
- ✓ Promote the newly created Homebirth Team, to ensure all expectant mothers in the borough are aware of its existence and can make informed choices.
- ✓ Work with Maternity Voices to improve cultural understanding of ethnic minority groups among midwives and health visitors.
- ✓ Ensure children are appropriately prioritised with GP and consultant appointments.
- ✓ Ensure vulnerable young people in need of mental health support are seen within a reasonable amount of time. Where long waiting lists are unavoidable, offer detailed explanations, realistic time frames and practical self-help support in the meantime.

Maternity services

Since we began monitoring the experience of expectant and new parents with maternity services in the borough, we have found that patient opinion of them has been steadily improving; in part due to our working closely with the Royal London Hospital Maternity to represent the voice of all women giving birth or accessing antenatal or postnatal services at the hospital and to ensure any changes to service provision are sustainable and reflect the needs of local people.



Based on: 2016: 726 issues, 183 comments

2017: 1216 issues, 368 comments

2018: 379 issues, 104 comments

Based on: 2016: 497 issues, 135 comments

2017: 850 issues, 249 comments

2018: 276 issues, 71 comments

Between 2016 and present, maternity services at the Royal London Hospital have undergone numerous changes. Following an inspection in July 2016, the Hospital's Maternity unit has been rated 'inadequate' by the Care Quality Commission. The report raised issues around the low numbers of midwives on wards, the insufficient level of consultant cover on the delivery suite, the poor level of security, the inconsistency of record-keeping and the attitude of some midwives.

Following the CQC report, the maternity unit has been put in special measures and a series of policies to improve service provision have been adopted. Healthwatch Tower Hamlets have been monitoring patient opinion of maternity services at the hospital and in the borough, in relation to the implementation of these changes.

The Royal London Hospital is also now offering more option for women in terms of where and how to give birth than it gave in 2016.

The Lotus Birth Centre, The Royal London Hospital's first midwife-led maternity centre for women with low risk pregnancies, has opened in the autumn of 2016. The centre contains four birthing rooms, lounge and triage area for antenatal and postnatal care. According to our records, it has received mostly positive feedback from service users.

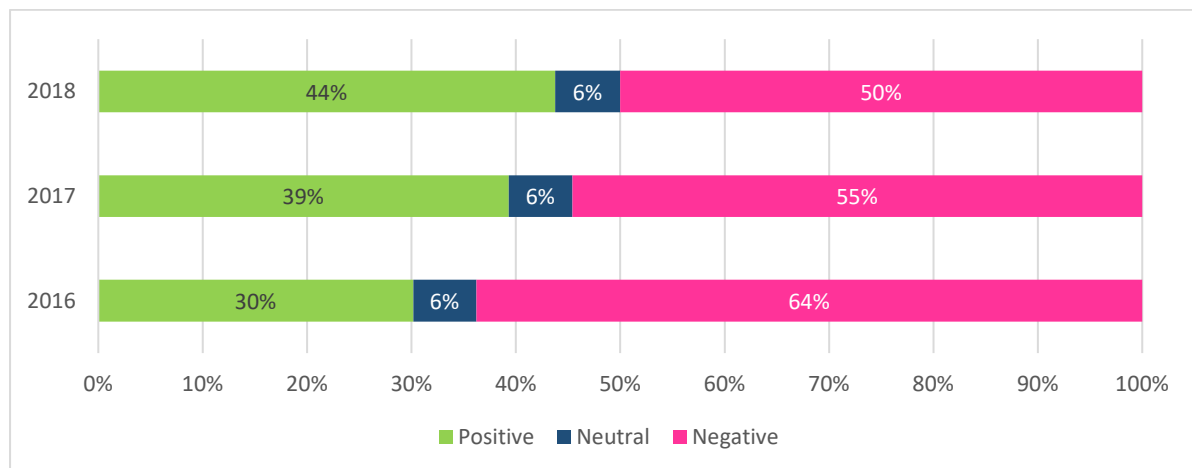
The Barts Health Tower Hamlets home birth team was also launched in January 2018; providing two midwives for each home birth.

Antenatal care

The term *antenatal care* refers to the care received by expectant mothers during the course of their pregnancy. This includes:

- Initial health check, advice and midwife referral typically provided by the service user's GP (although women can also self-refer to midwives through Children's Centres).
- Regular health checks and advice on ensuring a healthy pregnancy (including healthy eating, exercise, smoking cessation etc.), offered by midwives or GPs.
- Two antenatal scans, as well as blood tests and other screening.
- Antenatal classes, including breastfeeding workshops.
- Recommended vaccinations (flu and whooping cough), typically administered by a nurse in the patient's GP surgery.
- Discussion and preparation of a birth plan.
- Appointments with hospital consultants and extra screening/ monitoring if needed.

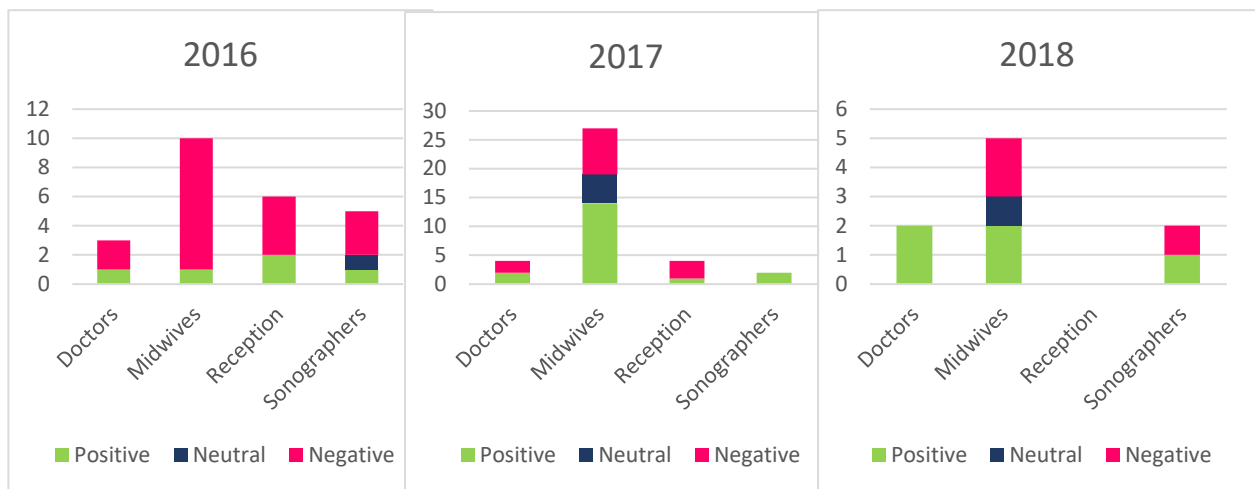
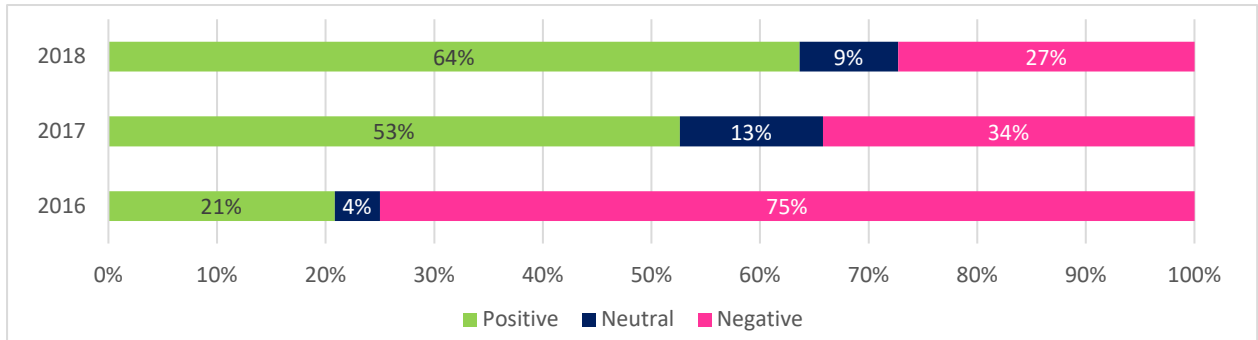
Patient opinion of the antenatal services offered by the Royal London Hospital has improved since 2016 but continues to lean negative.



Based on: 2016: 116 issues; 2017: 262 issues; 2018: 80 issues.

Aspects that have improved

The attitude of staff members has improved, particularly that of midwives:

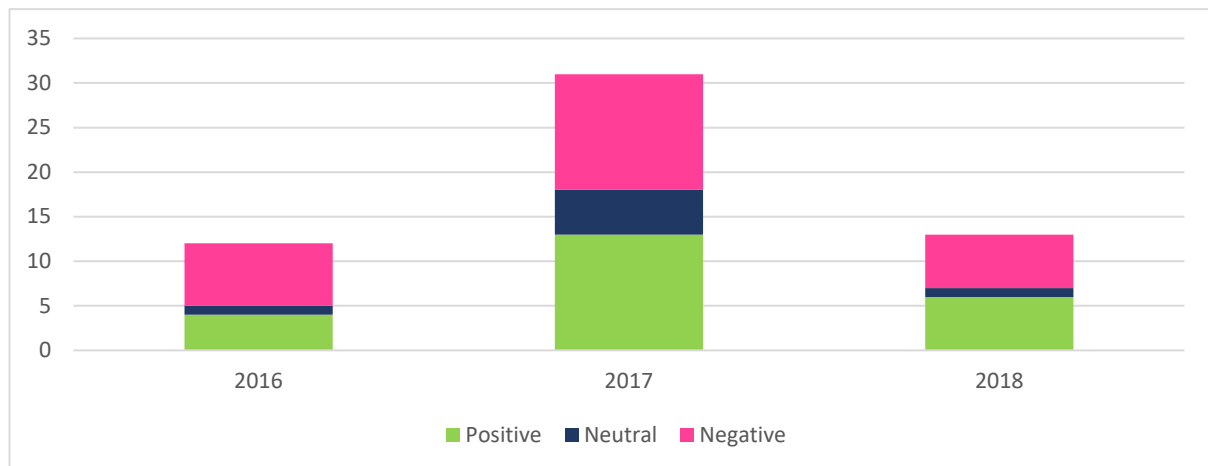


- One of the midwives just hang up the phone on me. When I first answered the phone the midwife immediately accused me of not turning up to my first appointment today. The midwife sounded very rude and whilst I tried to explain to them they were wrong because my appointment was set over the phone with another midwife for June 23rd (2 days' time), they kept treating me as if I was telling lies!! (2016)
- So happy from RLH until now. Smooth appointment system, nice and caring staff, normal waiting times, wonderful midwives. (2017)
- I have a very excellent experience in antenatal 6c or emergency, the consultants and the midwife were there- very different service from my 25th week check, not all staff are same, some midwife are amazing truly! (2017)
- Staff very friendly and answered all our questions, special mention to the Foetal Medicine unit team who were great (2018)
- I believe the antenatal care and midwives at the Royal London Hospital are really failing the patients. The communication & friendless is lacking. Not all midwives fall in this category bit majority sadly do. After getting my care transferred to St Thomas hospital I can see a clear difference in care. (2018)

Antenatal classes offered by the hospital are praised by most service users.

- Such a useful session which I would highly recommend. Even though I'm fasting and I'm shattered. A.'s level of engagement and skill meant I experienced every moment and was engaged throughout. Loved it! (2017)
- Very practical advice from a good communicator. More hands on. (2017)

Patient opinion of *advice and information/communication with antenatal services* has somewhat improved, but remains mixed:



Expectant mothers may now feel better informed about keeping healthy during their pregnancy and about how to care for their baby after birth.

- *Royal London antenatal department are terrible. They failed to tell me I need anti D vaccination, they never told me anything about getting the whooping cough vaccine, they didn't give me the results of my glucose tolerance test (2016)*
- *My midwife told me about recommended vaccinations in pregnancy (ex: for flu, for whooping cough) and the dangers of smoking and alcohol in pregnancy (2017)*
- *Only at my 12 weeks appointment did the midwife mention I should avoid certain things, like coffee, which my GP had never told me about.*
- *I went to an NHS breastfeeding workshop before birth. It was helpful but could be improved by stating more clearly that breastfeeding is natural but often doesn't come naturally to you or your baby but don't worry there is lots of support there on the ward! Also would help for them to explain that babies lose weight in the first few days before your milk comes in and if this is more than 10% of birthweight the hospital will keep you in to help support breastfeeding. It would have been useful to know when packing that we might be in hospital for up to 7 nights (as my baby did lose 9.9% of his birthweight) rather than being given the impression that most people are only in for one night (from the people on the ward with us that was unusual)! (2017)*
- *My midwife from the homebirth team talked to me about my mental health and well-being during pregnancy and after giving birth, as well as recommended vaccinations and vitamin supplements (2018)*

Experience regarding communication around birth plans continues to be mixed:

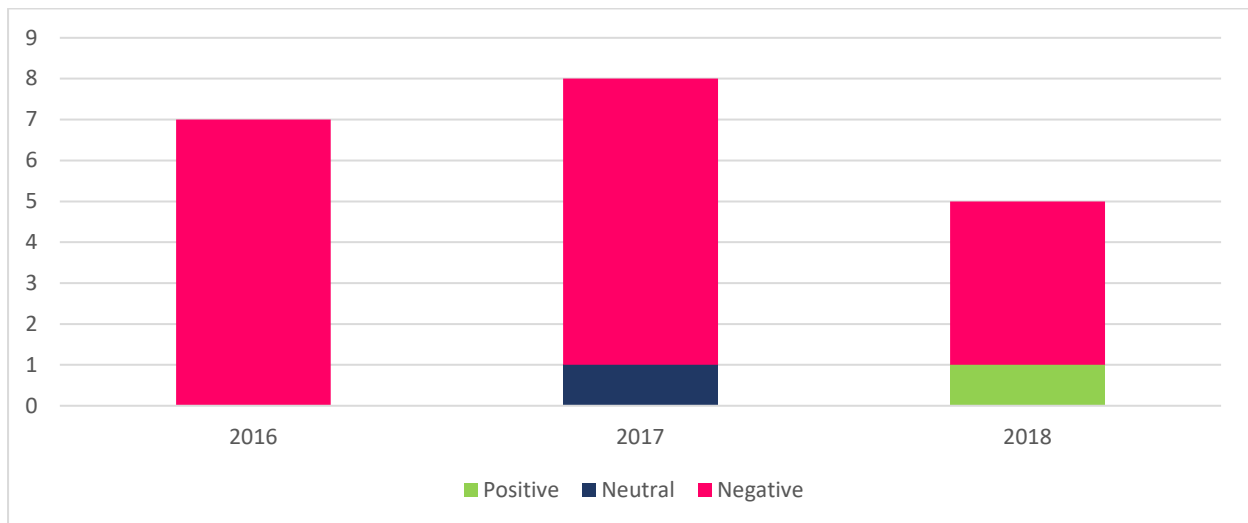
- *[Did you feel well-informed about your options regarding where and under what conditions to give birth?] Yes, definitely; because of NHS ante natal classes and Barkantine midwives' advice. (2017)*
- *I looked into the 4 options [home birth, Barkantine unit, Lotus unit, hospital maternity] and attended the birth option clinic. I also did a lot of research on my own.*
- *I had [my baby] on 19th may in the royal London hospital. In the end I had an induction because my waters broke prematurely. I had had a one day NHS birth preparation class on a Sunday. It was very good but didn't explain what would happen in the event of an induction in the labour ward and I think it would have been helpful to have gone through this as we were perturbed to be moved room 3 times during the process! I was aware that the nursing team's shifts would end so we'd have different staff but not that they'd move us about. This was upsetting because the first midwife had encouraged us to settle into the room, unpack and put up my Buddhist shrine so all that had to be taken down and moved. Patients who feel informed about what to expect from procedures, tests or hospital stays are more satisfied with the service overall than those who feel confused and uninformed (2017)*
- *[Did you feel well-informed about your options regarding where and under what conditions to give birth?] Yes, somewhat. Completely unsure about options until I met a lovely midwife late in my pregnancy. After I started with the homebirth team everything was amazing and care was the best. (2018)*
- *[Discussing the homebirth team, possibility of Barkantine and appointments outside of hospital]. I did not know I could have my appointments outside of the hospital. I have only ever been told to come here. I might try and ask about this when I finally get into my appointment. The idea of having the midwife coming to my house is amazing. (2018)*
- *I am having a planned caesarean because I am having a complicated pregnancy. This is my second pregnancy and I had my first baby here. It was excellent so I am coming back again even though I do not live in the area. My care has been very good. I do not need to see midwives, only the consultant. It is the same consultant each time. (2018)*

Lack of information around what to expect while on the ward, and about managing worrying symptoms contributes to patients feeling unsupported

- *I have raised [the issue of my pelvic girdle pain] at my antenatal appointments at the hospital, and despite posters advertising their PGP physiotherapy sessions, have not been able to get a referral from them. They initially said there wasn't anything I could do, then another midwife gave me the direct number, and I was then told that I needed to get a referral, which I have been unable to get and am being passed around the phone system. (2016)*
- *I have been to EGU a few times in the last couple of weeks due to pain in my early pregnancy, I ended up in A&E this morning with bleeding and they referred me to EGU who refused to scan me again so closely to the previous scan. I don't agree with this but there's nothing I can do. The doctor kept saying to take paracetamol, not helpful at all. (2016)*
- *In due to gastric pain and had to stay to be monitored, overall everyone was nice but when it came to being informed about what was happening nobody had a clue; they left us in the room just waiting around not telling us what was happening or what will happen, I mean when you come into the hospital especially one with midwives you can be understand that it can get busy which is why they don't tend to you straight away, but they should eventually come to you and tell you what is happening instead of my husband going and checking what the deal was (2017)*
- *I went to RLH last week and my experience was very bad. I was 28 weeks pregnant then and was suffering from severe pelvic pain since more than a 2 week, but it was worse past 3 days. I called 111 they advised me to go for maternity triage as it could be Pulmonary Embolism as it was continuous pain. I went there, staff told me to wait and I had to wait for more 1.5 hrs. with that pain. I understand that because it was shift change time as I went around 6 pm but there were midwives who were only sitting and chatting I don't understand why they didn't come to me earlier. They were doing their work very slow although hardly there were only 3 patients, but it took them more than 1.5 hrs. to come to me. (2018)*

Aspects still in need of improvement

Administrative issues are consistently a problem with repercussion on not just patients' experience at the hospital, but their access to care as well.



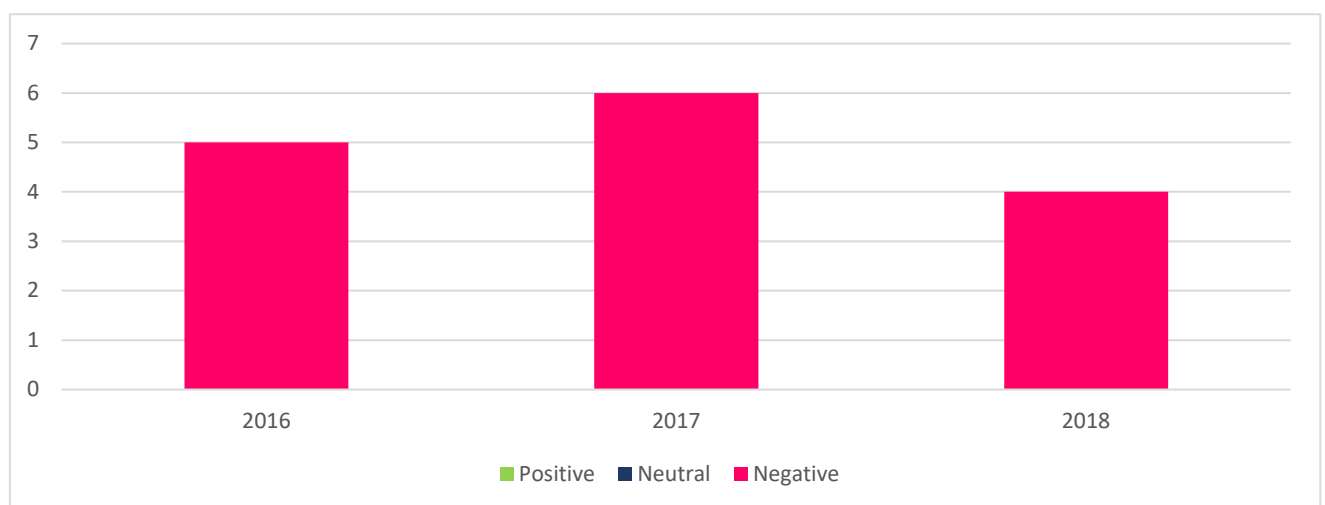
There are reports of inaccurate medical records, referrals not processed, or appointment letters being sent in error. Patients who have experienced admin errors also report poor communication around addressing them.

- *Patient received a letter from the ante-natal department which had wrong information. when she tried to contact the department to find out why, she was pushed from pillar to post. Finally, when she managed to get through to the admin person from ante-natal, she informed that there has been a error and that letters were been sent incorrectly. (2016)*
- *I have been waiting for an appointment for a seven-week scan for over a month now (I am now past seven weeks). My GP has sent three referrals. I spoke to the Royal London this morning and they told me their external email and fax systems have been down for weeks and they have not received my referrals. They refused to book me an appointment over the phone without the referral. (2017)*
- *My midwife referred to see the obstetrician 4 weeks ago to see the obstetrician to discuss having a caesarean section. Since I did not receive an appointment letter, I called the hospital 2 weeks later and was told that they received the referral but were deciding which obstetrician should see me. I waited for another week and called again. This time they told me there was no referral at all. My midwife did the referral again and 1 week later I called the hospital they are still staying there is no referral at all! (2017)*
- *I had an appointment at maternity, then when I came she said it was not in the system and I was really upset because I been wasting my time and it is not fair to wait for another appointment. (2017)*
- *The only issues I have had here have been administrative failures. For example, they cancelled a scan appointment and never told me. I had a wasted journey and then they kind of told me off when I got here and asked about my appointment. It was frustrating but I have had such excellent care that it is only something quite minor. (2018)*

Admin issues also have a negative impact on patients' experience with obtaining the necessary antenatal scans and screenings.

- Complainant very unhappy that she has had several blood samples lost. Patient has a severe phobia of needles, and each time she has been made to attend, has been very traumatic for her (2016).
- Patient's blood test results are not delivered, and she had to be chasing all these which she feels in not acceptable (2016).
- The initial scan and booking took ages to come through. I went to my GP at 6 weeks but by the time I got invited into the scan I was already 16 weeks. This was too late for the Downs Syndrome test. The midwife commented that this keeps on happening. (2018)

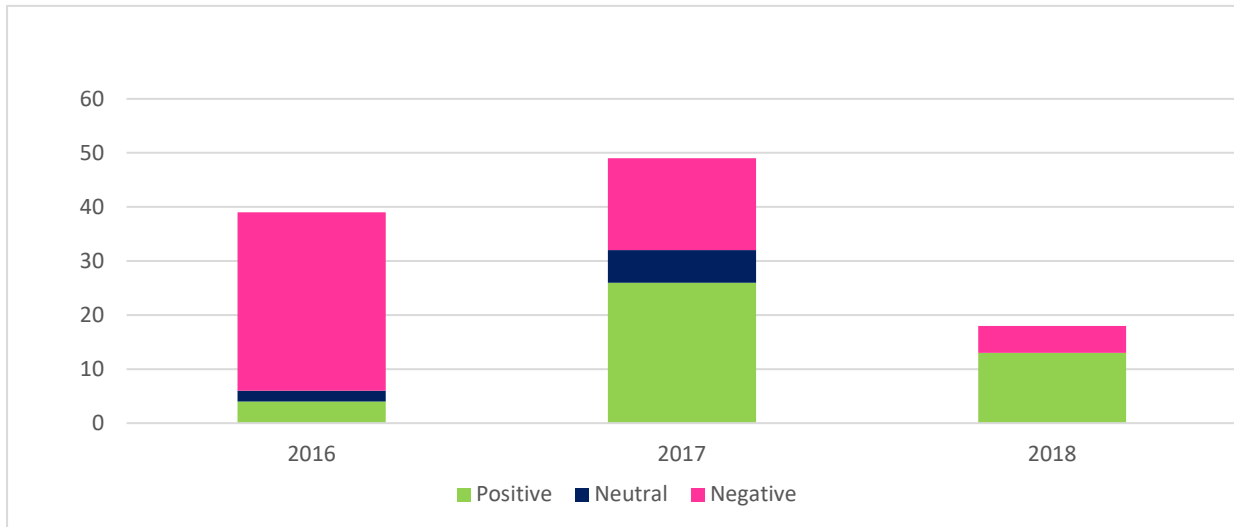
The antenatal department is difficult to contact by telephone.



- Complainant claims to have been trying along with GP, for 5 working days in order to make an ante-natal appointment. The complainant states she has either had no answer, a voice message, but no option to leave a message, of the phone being picked up and immediately 'slammed' down. (2016)
- Once it was discovered that my rhesus is negative I was offered a test to check the baby's blood type. I did that and 4 weeks afterwards I still hadn't been contacted to get the results (either by post or call from a midwife). Having tried several times and spent hours to try to contact the antenatal team to ask about the results I managed to leave a message for a midwife to contact me. The midwife called me to let me know that the baby is positive, and I need to do the Anti-D injection. More than a week later I got the results by post. I asked the midwife if they could book the appointment for the injection and let me know when it would be, but they said I would be contacted by post. Now, one week before week 28 that I need to get the injection I still haven't received a letter with an appointment and again trying to get them on the phone is impossible. (2017)
- I have been trying to get in touch with the Antenatal department for over a week and the numbers I have ending 2573/2572) ring but no one ever ever answers. It is extremely frustrating, no holding message, no call back. (2018)

Antenatal services in GP surgeries

We currently only have limited data about antenatal services in GP surgeries, but (based on a small number of comments) it appears that patient opinion has improved between 2016 and 2017.



Patients who gave feedback in 2016 complained about long waits for appointments, poor admin/communication and rude reception staff

- *I had a Maternity Appointment and nowhere on the website or notices in the surgery does it state that you need to book with Antenatal Clinic to have proper pregnancy checks done at appointment. It should state properly that if you are pregnant please book an Antenatal Clinic appointment. In my Maternity Notes it states see GP at 24 and 38 weeks: What I understand from this is you should see GP not Midwife. As a result of this I did not have the proper checks done that I usually get done in my Antenatal Appointments which I do not blame the Doctor for, I blame your lack of information. (2016)*
- *Being 31 weeks pregnant I needed the whooping cough jab I called in so many times for last 2 weeks and they tell me there is no nurses until next month. So I ask them what I can do as I need to get one and was told they cannot do anything as they have no nurse available. (2016)*
- *Usually I have to wait 20-30 minutes even I have an appointment. I have this problem both with GPs and midwives. I am pregnant and it's really frustrating to wait between ill people even if I arrive promptly to my appointment. (2016)*
- *Rude staff and not professional. I received a letter detailing my missed appointment from GP practice management which seemed quite aggressive and unreasonable, I called direct to speak to the practice management that I was in hospital regarding my baby on one appointment and the other I completely forget. Rudely they answered the phone then continued with the same attitude though out call that I should have called from hospital and if I had a dentist appointment I would have called to cancel.*

On the other hand, service users who gave feedback in 2017 and 2018 mentioned their GP surgeries as an important source of useful information and advice.

- *[I discussed my plans to give birth with my antenatal midwife and my GP] Discussions about what might actually be possible given my age and thyroid condition continued until the end of pregnancy which did increase my anxiety. [Did you feel that medical professionals encouraged and empowered you to make your own informed choices about your birth?] Especially one GP who had recently done an obstetrics placement encouraged me to continue to plan for an active water birth. (2017)*
- *I have had numerous visits to this surgery on and off for various reasons especially during my pregnancy. The doctors went beyond their duty to help me. My husband was also thinking of joking seeing my experience. Can't rate these doctors enough! (2017)*
- *I visited the surgery last week and I had a really positive experience. Staff were very helpful and polite. I went to see the doctor who was extremely knowledgeable and helpful and I was given detailed information about what I needed. They involved me in all the decision making and I am proud to be a part of this surgery. (2018)*

Admin and communication issues persist, on a smaller scale

- *My wife is 28 weeks pregnant and we've been in contact with Gough Walk practice for midwife appointments etc. We have experienced some communication issues: the practice is always asking us to call the midwives at Barkantine to arrange appointments for blood tests, scans etc. Then midwives tell us that no, we need to contact the GP surgery to make these arrangements. Why do we need to be the point of contact? Just now we got a call from the GP reception asking us to call the Barkantine to arrange more blood tests- out of the blue, no idea why. We called the Barkantine and they were not aware of that. The receptionist told us we need to pick up some form- we couldn't understand what kind of form or why. (2017)*
- *Sadly, this practice is very disorganised. I went to the doctor to inform them of my pregnancy and they said they would refer me to the hospital for scans etc. However, I was never offered an appointment. When I phoned the surgery to find out what happened, they said they would look into it and phone the hospital and get back to me, but never did. I then booked a blood test for 26 weeks of pregnancy and when I arrived for the appointment, they had no record of it. It wasn't that I'd got the day wrong as there was no record of any appointments in the future. Then trying to reschedule was extremely difficult with very little availability. (2018).*

Birth

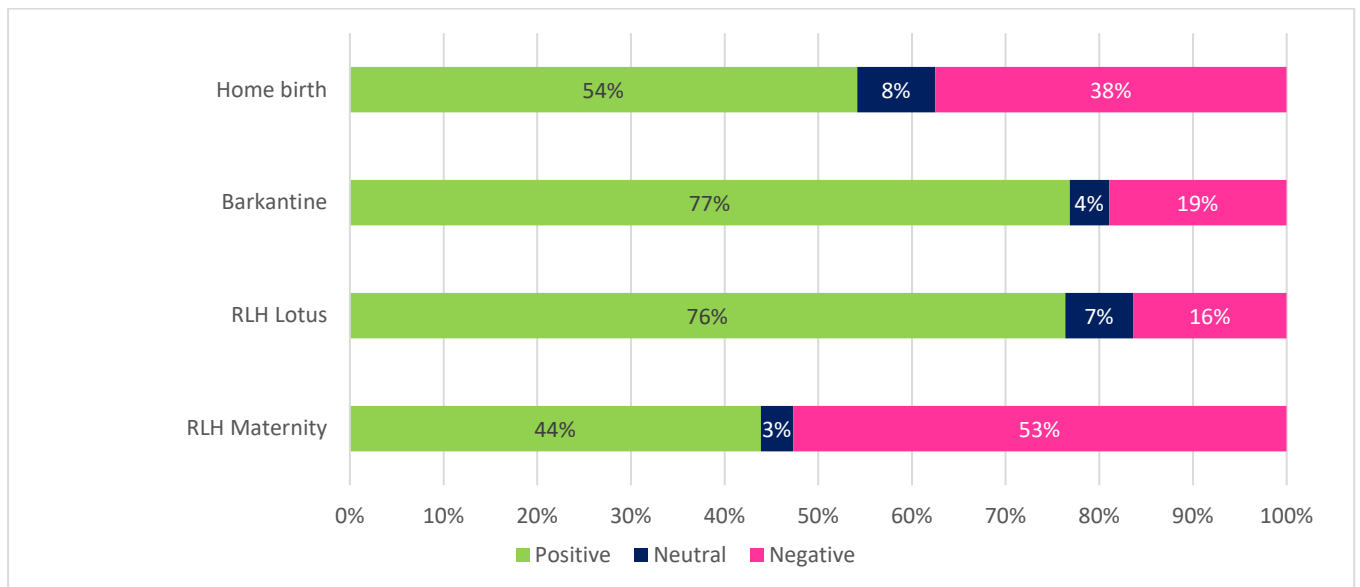
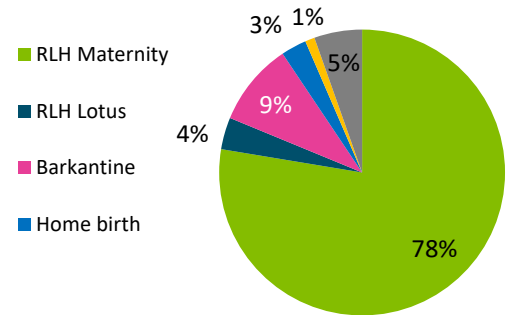
Mothers in Tower Hamlets can give birth:

- At home, supported by midwives from the Barts Health Homebirth Team
- At the independent Barkantine Birth Centre (midwife-led unit)
- At the Lotus Birth Centre based in the Royal London Hospital (midwife-led unit)
- In the Royal London Hospital maternity

We have collected feedback from 277 maternity service users who gave birth in 2016, 2017 and 2018, identifying a total of 1058 issues.

Nearly 80% gave birth in the Royal London Hospital maternity unit.

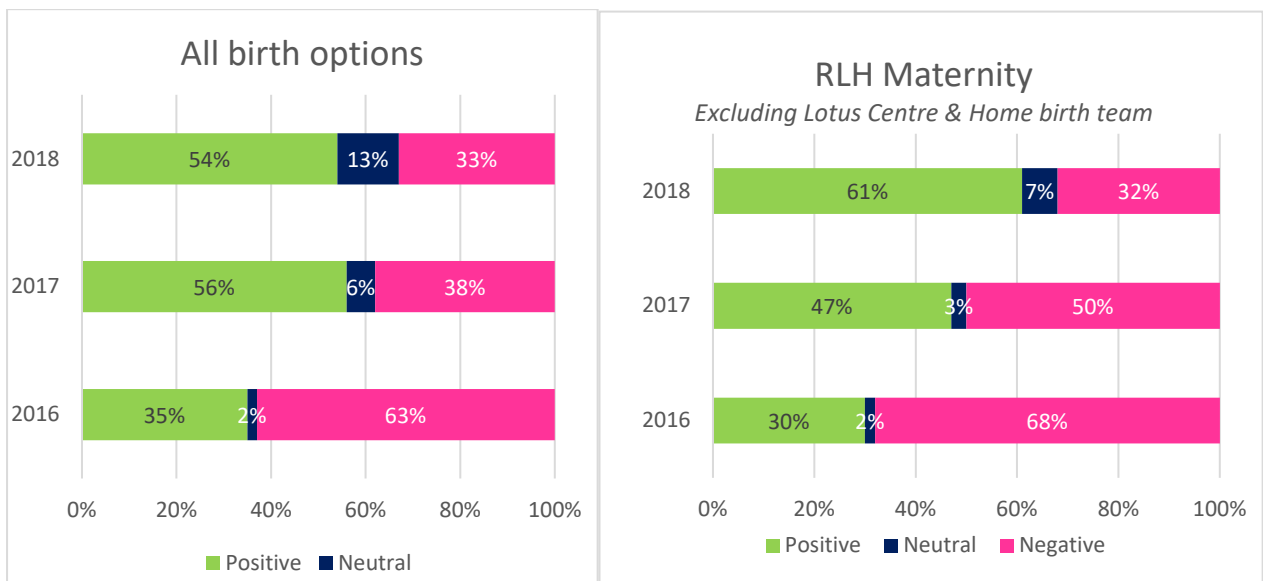
Overall, women who gave birth in midwife-led birth centres gave the most positive feedback.



Patient satisfaction with giving birth in Tower Hamlets has increased between 2016 and 2017, sustaining similar levels to 2017 in 2018.

This is partly accounted for by the opening of the Lotus Birth Centre in 2017, which received very positive reviews upon opening (we have limited data about patient opinion of it in 2018); and partly by improvements in the Royal London Hospital maternity services, which show a positive trend between 2016 and 2018.

The home birth team, launched in 2018, has had mixed reviews from local residents: mothers welcomed having a wider range of options and praised the attitude of home birth midwives, but some pointed out that the homebirth team is difficult to reach by telephone.



Based on: 2016: 368 issues, 87 comments

2017: 586 issues, 142 comments

2018: 190 issues, 50 comments

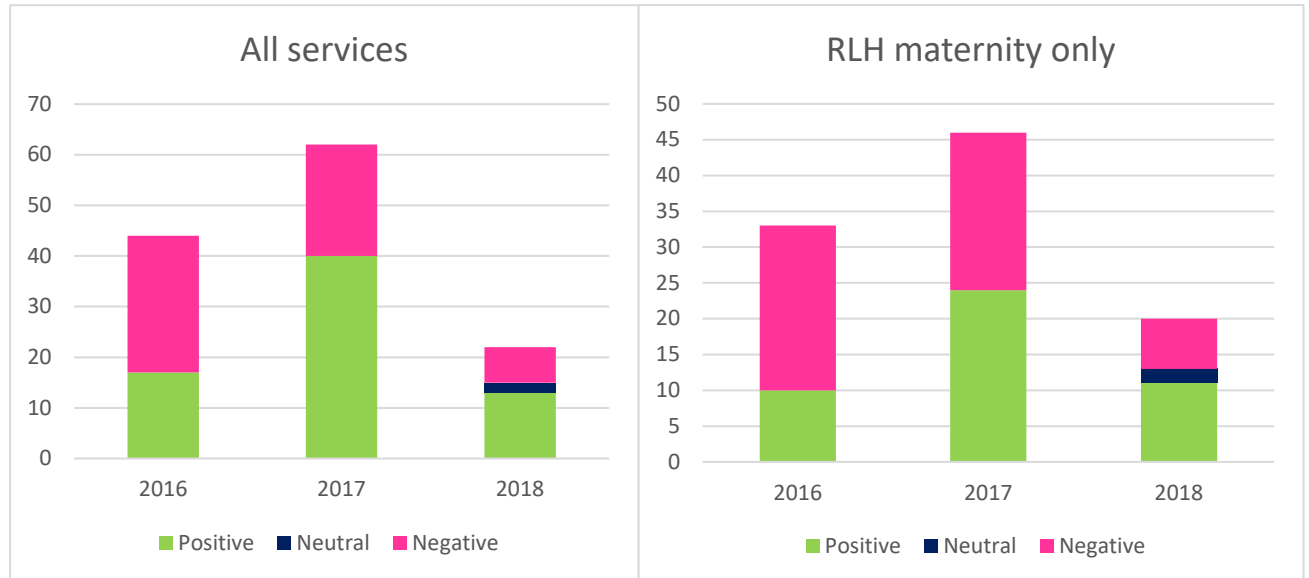
Based on: 2016: 2818 issues, 67 comments

2017: 362 issues, 104 comments

2018: 168 issues, 41 comments

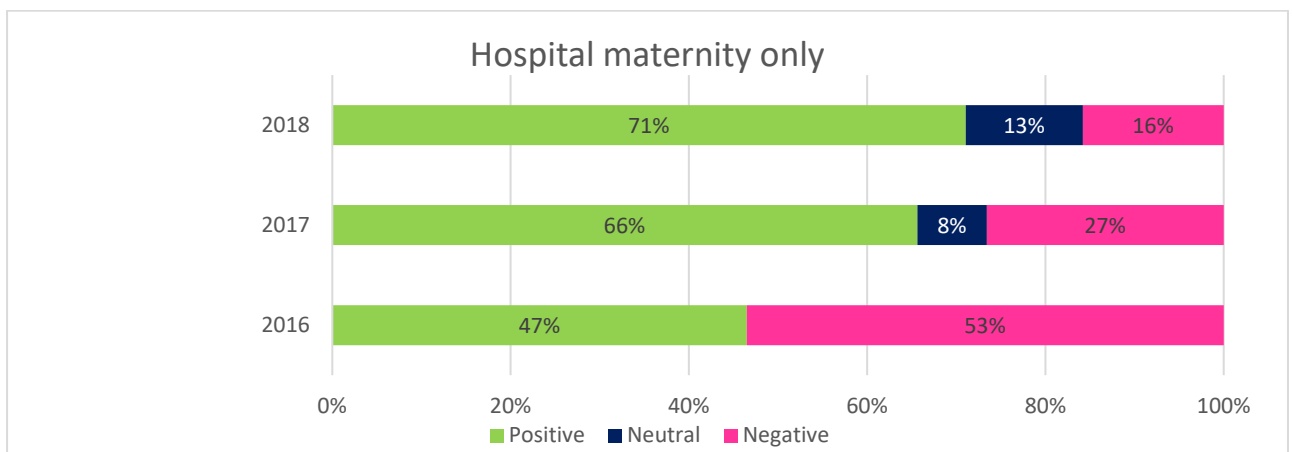
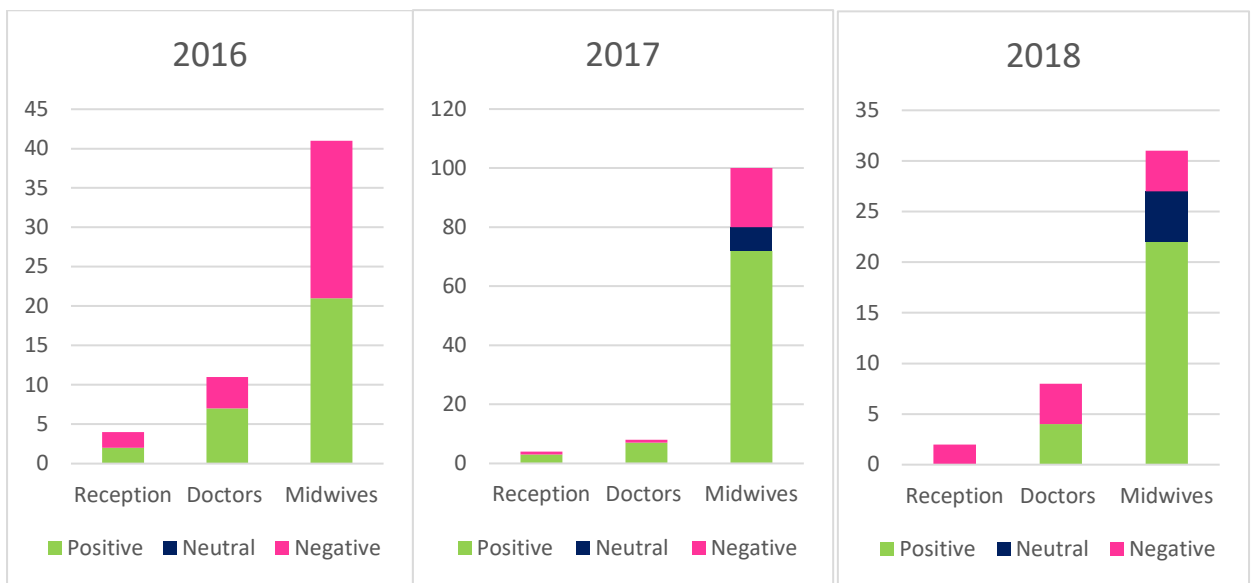
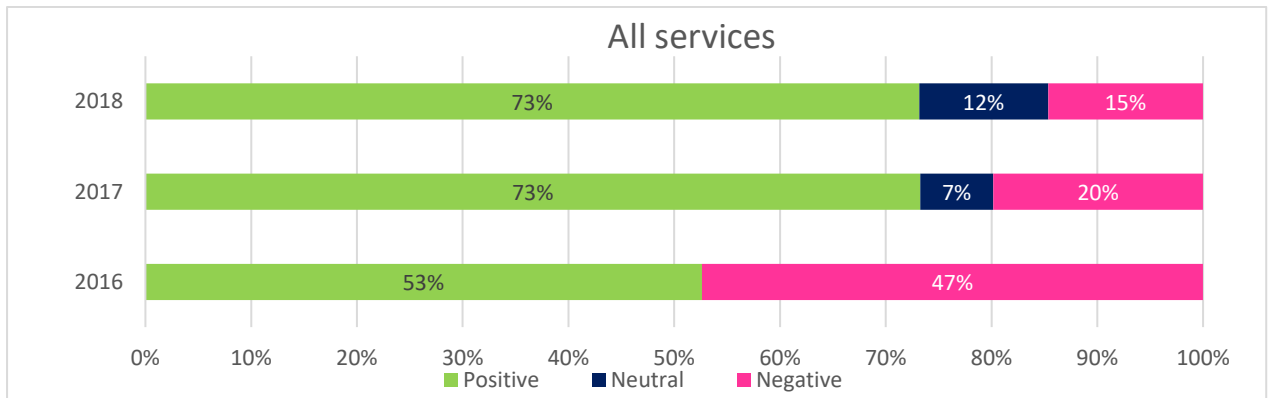
Aspects that have improved

The level of support experienced by mothers giving birth in Tower Hamlets has reportedly increased.



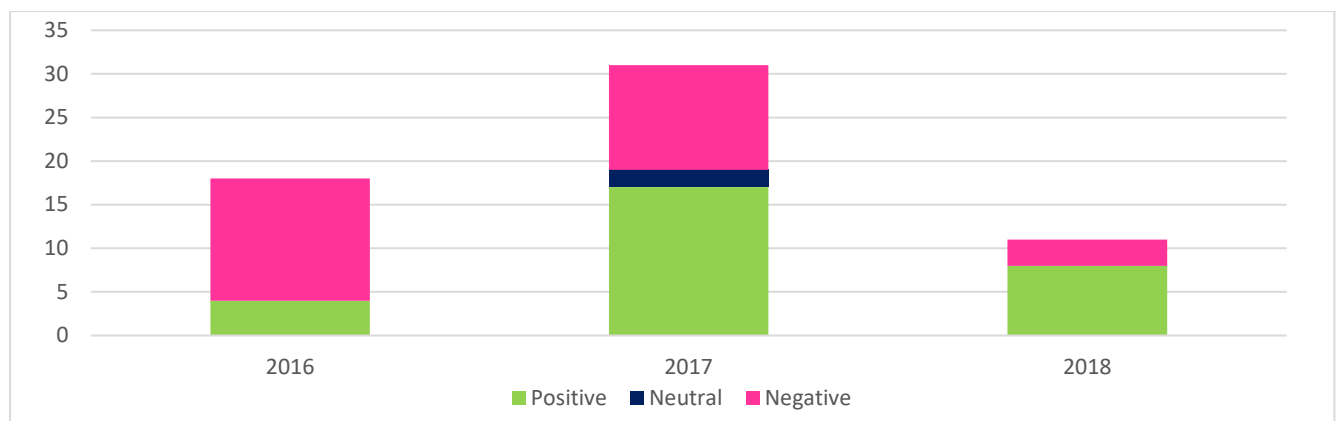
- *My daughter was booked. She went to the ward 10AO, was put in her room 11AM and sat there for 9 hours till they changed shifts and that's when she got seen to. At 9PM. Tuesday she had baby, no baby doctor just the one midwife in the room. Then transfer to HDU for 24hrs nowhere to have a bath. Then got transferred to floor 8e now it's Friday and she is still there. (2016)*
- *Lotus birthing centre. Constant care, reassurance, checking up on me and baby. (2017)*
- *I'm so glad we stuck with the Royal London! After reading some bad reviews we nearly changed hospitals, but decided for continuity not to...I had my baby by emergency c section at the RL after baby's heart rate dropped and I wasn't dilating past 3cm. Throughout, a midwife was with me and I never felt like we had to wait forever for the doctors to come round. When I met the doctors, I could tell they were of the highest quality and I felt safe and confident. There was no messing around about 'should we, shouldn't we do a c section'... we all decided together it would be the best action and then it was happening! (2017)*
- *No hot water! The midwife left me to it while they just stood and did their paperwork, after several hours of me asking whether I can get into the water now, because gas wasn't providing me no relief they realised they have no hot water and an engineer will be out 'shortly' to fix this! Why did nobody check before I came?! (2017)*
- *Your support over 9 days was much appreciated. The hard work you put in every day is phenomenal. I don't know what I would do without you! (2018).*

The attitude of staff members, particularly that of *birth midwives*, has been improving between 2016 and 2017.



- *Rude midwives, rude nurses, rude staff, unhelpful their attitude stinks! (2016)*
- *Very happy with the service, felt that the staff was attentive and very positive (2017).*
- *The midwife at the Royal London was really rude and shouted at my birth partner. Seemed to be a lot of tension between the different professions - anaesthetist, midwife, obstetrician - there were arguments in front of us!! (2017)*
- *#MyNHSHeart belongs to @NHSBartsHealth Royal London. Where I witnessed the births of my favourite niece & nephew. Exceptional midwives. (2018)*
- *I came in on the Monday and gave birth on the Friday. In general, the women [midwives] were amazing. However, there was one who was so horrible. My baby is 6 weeks old and I am still going over and over how horrible she was. (2018)*

Patient opinion on the quality of advice and information received while on the maternity ward improved specifically for people who gave birth in the Royal London Hospital. Mothers have a better understanding of how the ward operates, what happens when they give birth and what various medically necessary procedures entail; and they communicate better with midwives and doctors.



- *I asked to see a doctor as I wanted advice - a midwife at my last visit had told me that the baby was too large for my small frame and a natural birth may be risky. The midwife told me they will go find a doctor - I never saw a doctor until the next day. When I was giving birth (after 12 hours on the bed) and the baby's head was peeking out, a doctor finally came and told me that there were complications as the baby was too large for me. Why did you not come yesterday? The doctor said I had no choice but to put me on stronger epidural drugs and to make me push as hard as possible as may be an emergency C-section was too late. I was horrified. I could lose my baby as a result of the utter shortage of doctors!!! Thank God, my daughter is alive. (2016)*
- *I was lucky enough to have a few different midwives on different shifts during my 24-hour labour and I couldn't have been happier with them all. In particular, one midwife, they were incredible and went far beyond call of duty for my comfort. I'm so impressed by the genuine care this midwife provided and treated me more like a friend than a patient. They made it easier for me at the time of birth by letting me know in detail where and when and I can't thank them enough. (2017)*
- *From going into the hospital from induction, to labour ward to recovery the staff were incredible. Very attentive, caring and explained everything step by step. My wife required a C-section last minute and this was handled with the best care I found. (2018)*

Aspects still in need of improvement

Maternity services are still difficult to reach by telephone; this is a particularly serious issue for the Tower Hamlets Homebirth Team; as women who intend to give birth at home are supposed to notify midwives by telephone when they are in labour.

- *Midwife arrived home when I was about to deliver the baby. Timing can be improved. We struggled to get through to someone (midwife team) on the day of delivery. None was answering the phone (2017)*
- *Who to call for a homebirth when in labour in Tower Hamlets? This was at the back of my maternity notes in April [Shares photo of birth notes with multiple phone numbers from the Royal London written in pen on it]. Midwives gave me extension numbers too. None of those 7 numbers picked up. Luckily I had Barkantine number written too! (2018)*

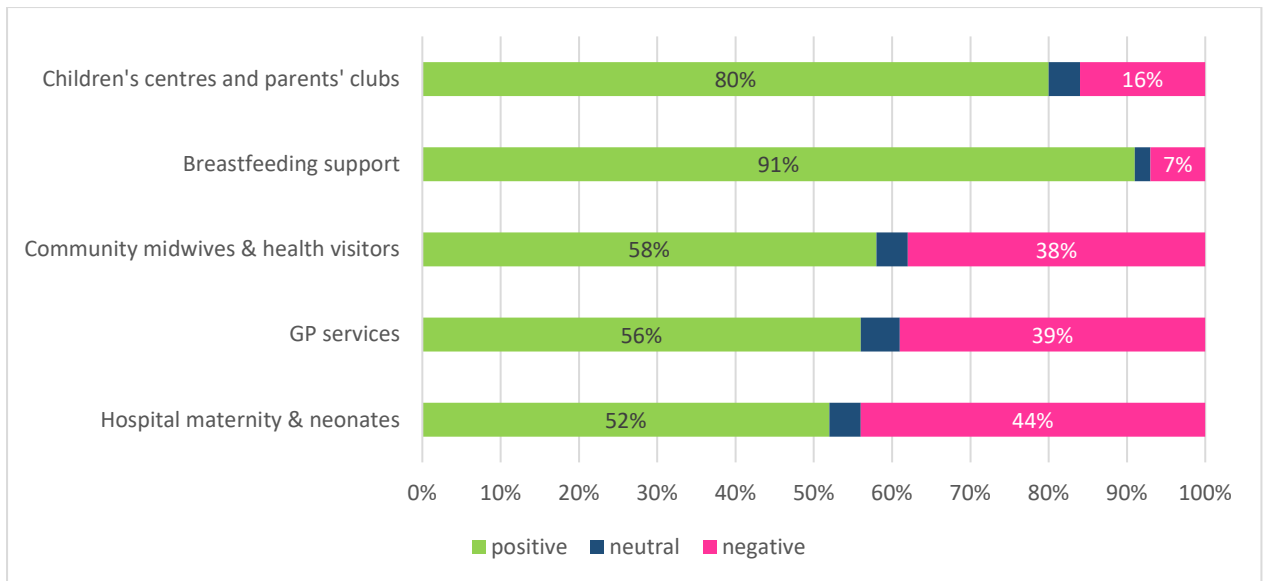
Postnatal services

New parents and their infants also have access to a range of **postnatal services** in the borough.

- Mothers and babies receive visits from *community midwives* and later *health visitors*, usually in their own home.
- Babies are *registered with a GP*.
- Babies received health checks 72 hours after birth (usually before discharge if born in a hospital) and, in some GP surgeries, at six weeks.
- Mothers also receive an examination at six weeks.
- *Breastfeeding support* is available from midwives, health visitors and peer trainers.
- *Children's centres* give help and advice on child and family health, parenting, money, training and employment.

We have received feedback from 209 service users who became parents between 2016 and 2018, identifying a total of 716 issues.

Children's centres and breastfeeding support are seen by most new parents as **valuable community assets**; while patient opinion about hospital, GP and community midwifery services is mixed, but hospital and midwifery services are improving.



Based on: Hospital maternity: 317 issues, 87 comments

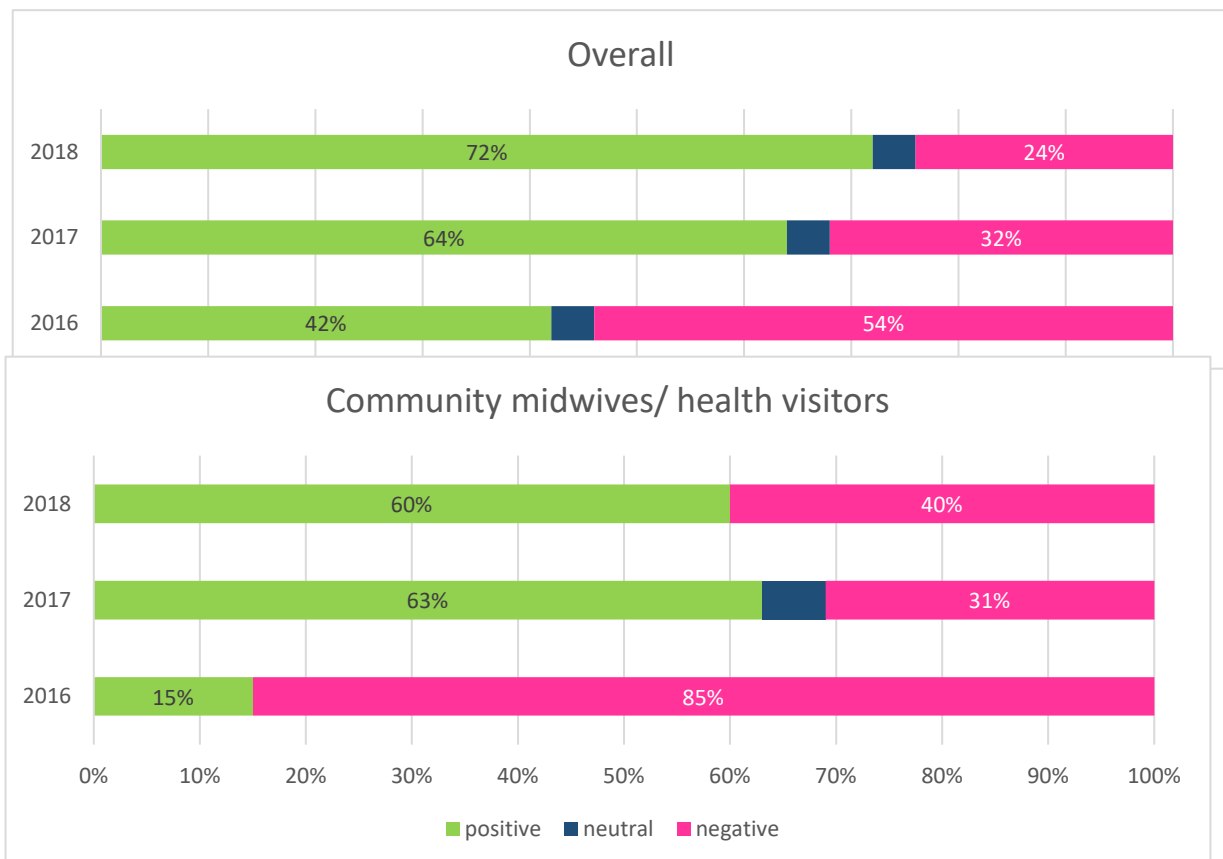
Community midwives/ health visitors: 123 issues, 40 comments

GP services: 148 issues, 30 comments.

Children's centres: 53 issues, 22 comments

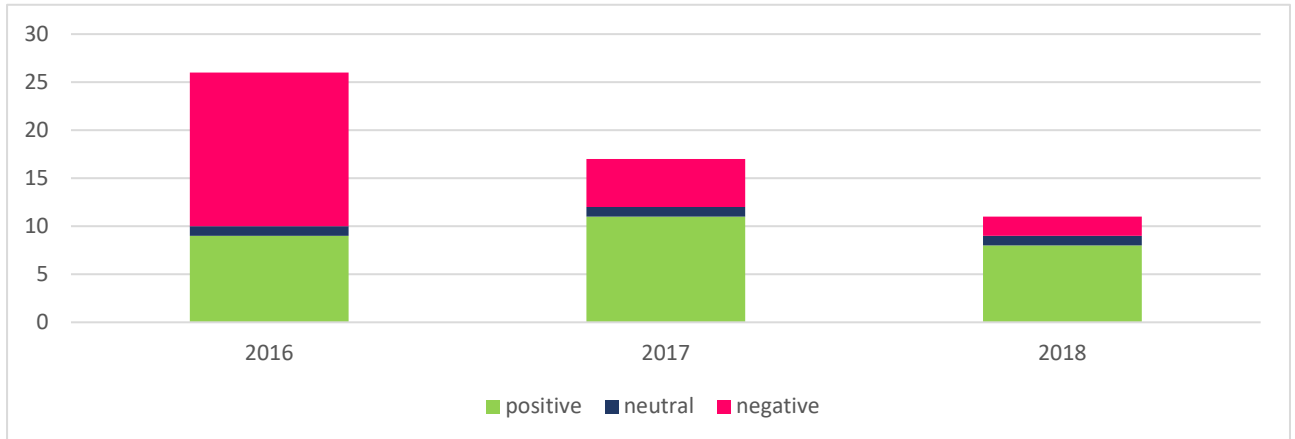
Breastfeeding support: 317 issues, 87 comments

Since 2016, patient opinion of postnatal services in the borough has consistently improved.



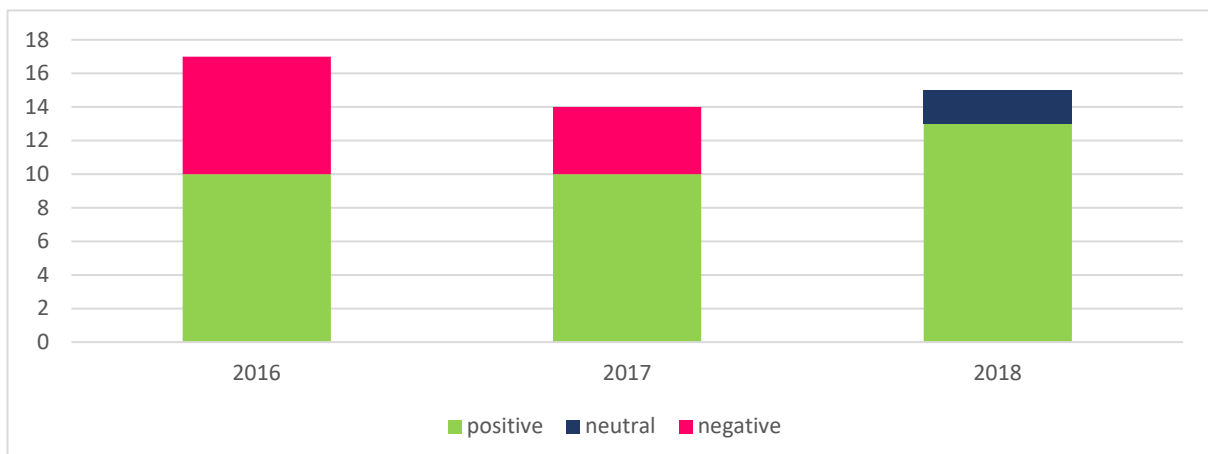
Aspects that have improved

New mothers feel better supported while on the postnatal ward.



- ❶ Patient raises various concerns about her stay in neo-natal unit at RLH. She states that she has requested pillows and was allowed only one as per hospital policy. The temperature in her room was very cold despite her raising concern about this. That she had to walk to the corridor to collect her food knowing that she had a cannula in her arm. (2016)
- ❷ Postnatal ward. My midwife A. was super. She came and saw me straight away and was very kind and approachable. Also, a lady called I. was very friendly too. I have had 4 children in the Royal London and this was my best and most enjoyable experience. (2017)
- ❸ Mum had C-Section at Royal London hospital and had problems with healing afterwards. She was not getting enough help to recover. (2017)
- ❹ Postnatal ward: we paid for an amenity room and spent 2 nights there (baby was born at night and because my wife needed an anti-d injection we spent an extra night there). The room was great and well worth paying for and the midwives (especially a particularly great student midwife) were helpful and friendly. The daily breastfeeding clinic also identified our son had tongue tie which meant it could be dealt with quickly (2018).

Patient opinion of staff attitude on postnatal wards has also improved and is now consistently positive.



- *Emergency C section was good, the aftercare was not good. Short staffed, short tempered and very short with you. (2016)*
- *I was transferred from the Barkantine birth centre to the Royal London just after my baby was born for a post-natal surgery. I was nicely surprised about how the midwives, nurses, surgeons and doctors cared about me. They all clearly explained what will happen to me during and after the surgery. (2016)*
- *8F/ Postnatal ward. The care we received from H. our midwife was outstanding. She was perfect, so friendly and helpful and caring. She was so easy to take to and I had any concerns or worries. She is an absolute credit to the Royal London Hospital and the NHS. (2017)*
- *The only experience I had at Royal London Hospital was postnatal. We had a very good experience using the breastfeeding support team; they were very knowledgeable and gave a diagnosis of Tongue Tie and treatment for it very quickly. (2018)*

Patient opinion of the quality of community midwife/ health visitor services and of their attitude has also improved.

- *We were expecting a visit [from community midwives] the day after being discharged from the hospital (Saturday) but no one turned up. On Sunday I left a voicemail on community midwives office number with our details. Next day midwife came with another student? maternity support worker? Neither of them washed their hands as they came into our house, the blood spot test was performed very badly leaving my baby crying and her blood being all over the card. The midwife didn't check my blood pressure, pulse or even if my uterus was involuting. Just asked me few questions, then arrange next time to be seen in about 10days and they both left after probably 15minutes of mostly scribbling on the paper. (2016)*
- *I saw a community midwife on Thursday. They contacted me straight away through mobile and they told me when they were going to come. I had information about them from a leaflet. were friendly and very helpful and they made me comfortable. They asked me how I was; they asked how I was healing down there, I told them I had natural birth with no tearing or anything. (2017)*
- *Local health visitors (Wapping) have been excellent, friendly and approachable (2017)*
- *They have always been late to get to me (after two weeks with both babies) some are great, others only know what's in the text book and have given me information I know is incorrect hence me not trusting their services (2017)*
- *Postnatal midwives: Amazing, when I was stressed or down my midwife was happy to come visit and chat and I felt comfortable with her. (2018)*

Breastfeeding support services are very useful to new mothers.

- *5 days after leaving hospital, breastfeeding not working out so well I went along to the local breastfeeding group. I would have in all likelihood given up at that point had it not been for their support and advice. (2017)*
- *Excellent! Can't thank them enough especially M. and S. At 13 months old we still pop along to Friday overland sessions for support as needed. I honestly wouldn't have managed it without the breast-feeding team. (2018)*

Aspects still in need of improvement

A minority of service users remains not entirely satisfied with visits from community midwives, health visitors and breastfeeding support. They point out that the quality of advice received could be improved

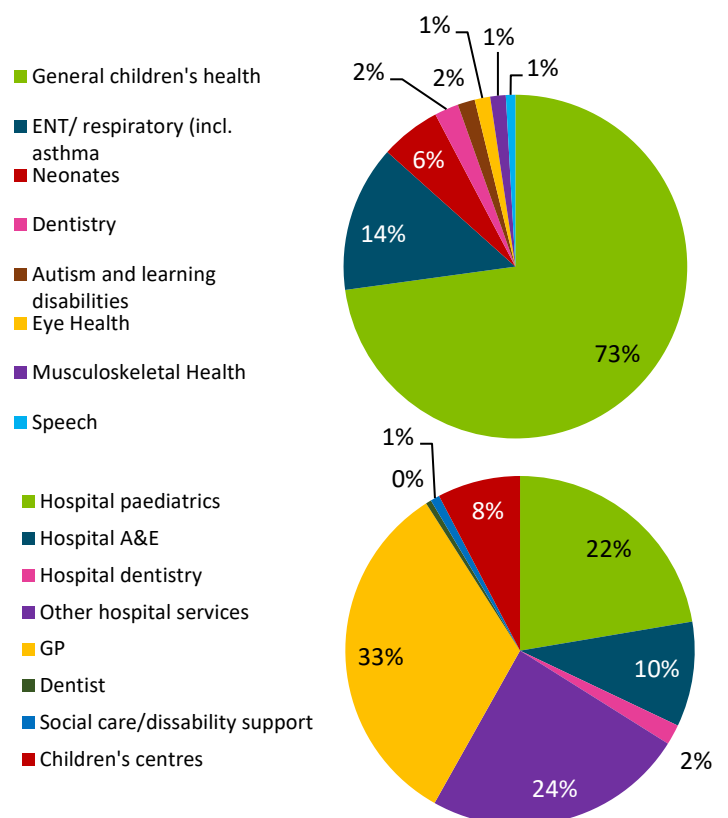
- *Postnatal midwives are okay, but not helpful about breastfeeding. Very confused and incorrect information regarding breastfeeding. Very confused and incorrect information regarding breastfeeding. (2018).*
- *Postnatal midwives/ health visitors Visits should be more spread throughout the first year. It felt there were too many at the beginning and then none after 3 months. More information should be given about introduction to solids (2018).*
- *I really struggled with breast feeding. I went to their drop-in class at the hospital and had several visits, but it was the 3rd person and maybe 7th intervention that someone did something helpful as opposed to show me a bloody crocheted boob! I think all of them should be trained in how to spot tongue tie and how to (with permission) offer some hands-on support. (2018)*

Children's services

Between 2016 and 2018, we have analysed feedback received from 431 parents and carers about accessing various health and social care services for their children, identifying a total of 1287 issues.

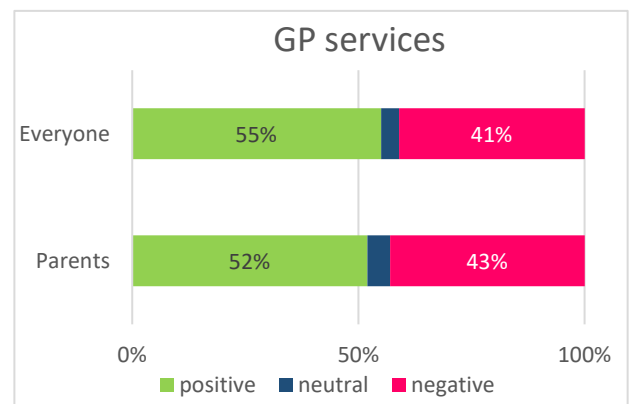
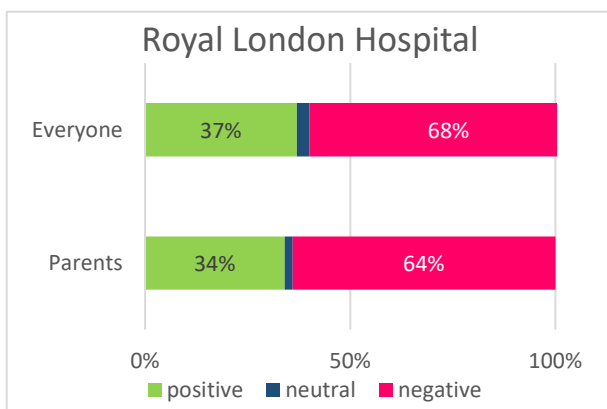
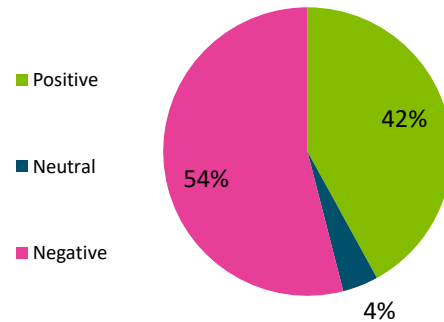
While most comments referred to **children's health in general**, the specific topics most discussed were Ear, nose and throat (particularly asthma), neonatal health& care, dentistry, autism& learning disabilities, eye health, musculoskeletal health and speech.

In terms of **service types**, most comments referred to **GP and hospital services**, particularly paediatrics and A&E.

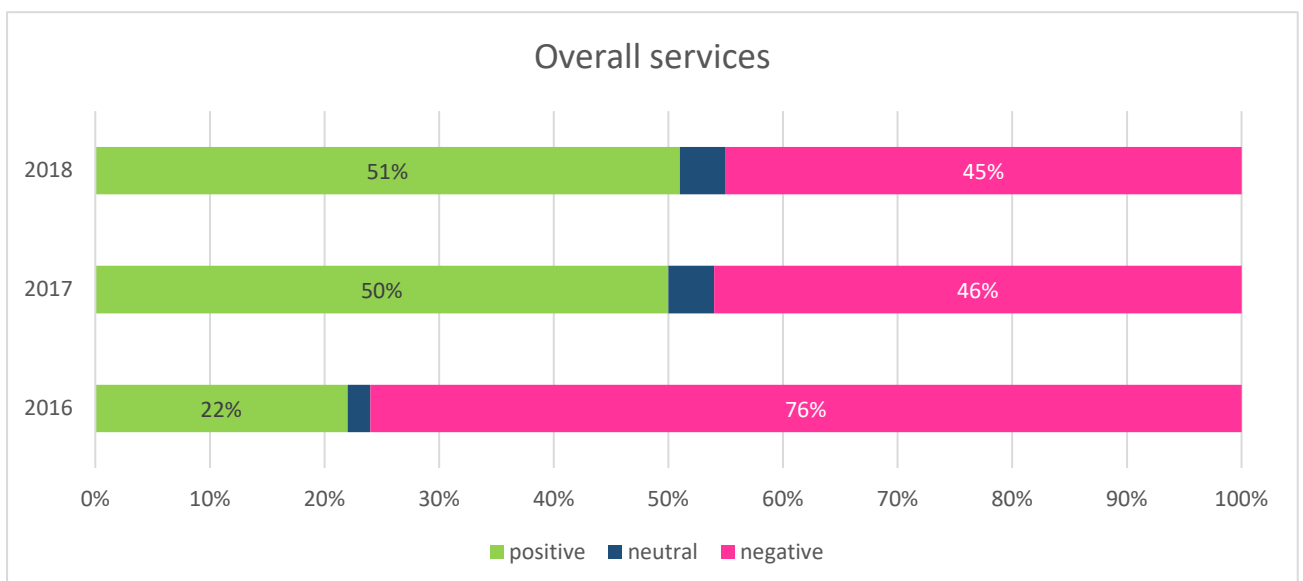


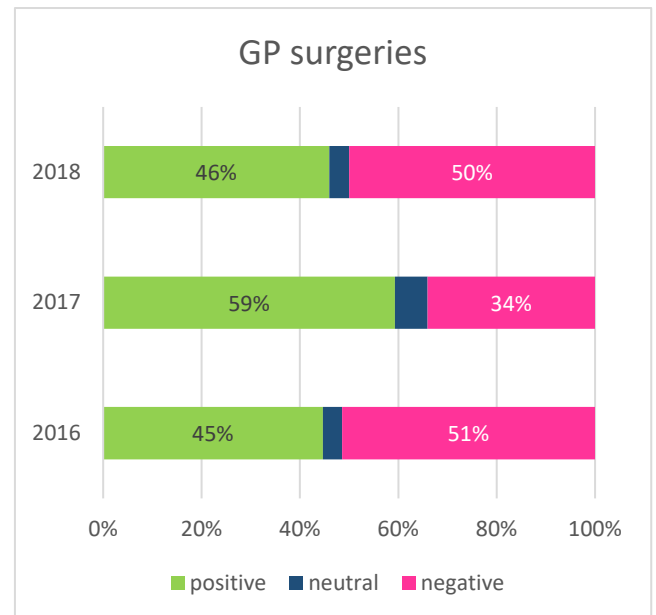
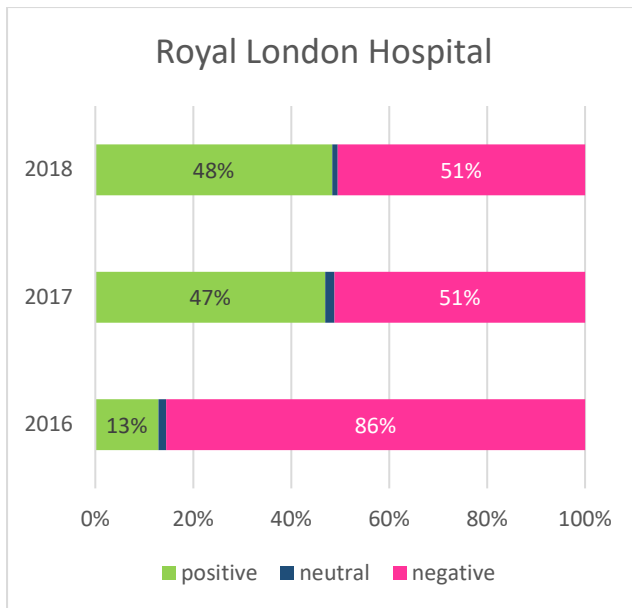
Overall opinion of children’s services in the borough is mixed (54% negative)

Opinion of the Royal London Hospital (which houses the vast majority of services referred to by parents) is 64% negative and opinion of GP surgeries is 52% positive; both are similar to the general opinion of these services over the same period of time.



Between 2016 and 2017, opinion of children’s health services has improved; between 2017 and 2018 it stayed broadly the same. Opinion of hospital services improved significantly between 2016 and 2017, while opinion of GPs stayed broadly the same.



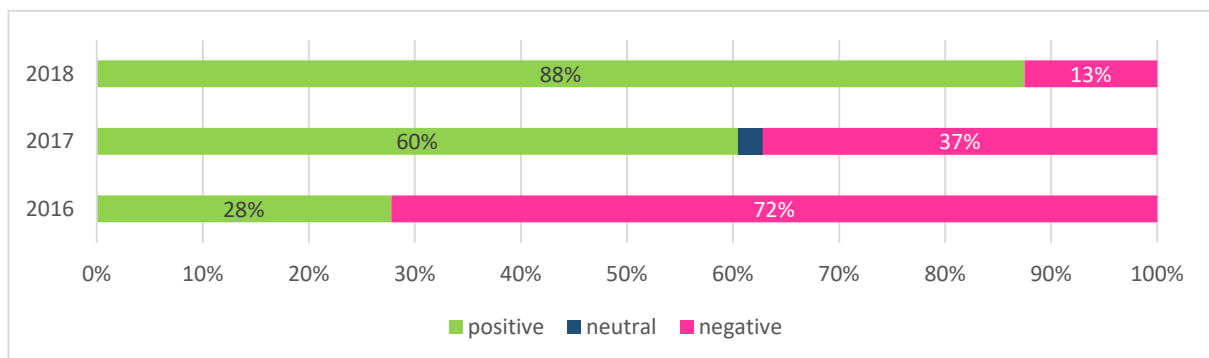


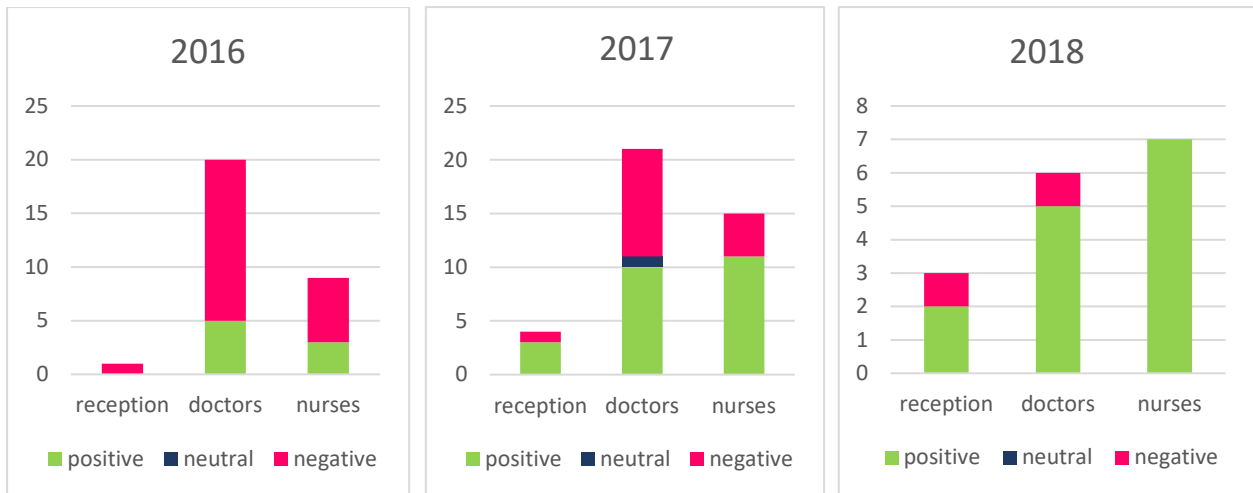
Hospital services - Royal London Hospital

Parents who visited the hospital with their children in 2016 expressed a broadly negative view of it. This has improved the following year, but overall patient opinion of the hospital remains mixed.

Aspects that have improved

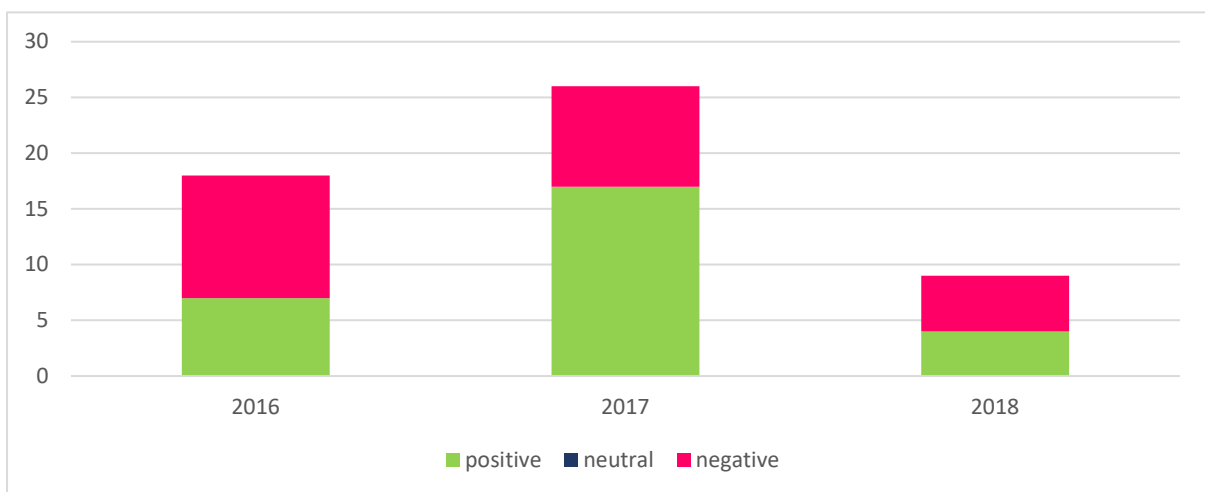
Parents are much happier than they were in 2016 with the attitude of hospital staff, particularly with that of doctors and nurses.





- ☛ Patient's mother not happy with the care and treatment her daughter received in the A&E department at Royal London. Poor staff communication, nurse threatened patient that she was going to get the big security MEN to come and hold her down while they inserted the injections if she didn't cooperate with her. (2016)
- ☛ Mother of a patient e-mail with concerns regarding poor attitude of staff on post-anaesthetic recovery unit (2016)
- ☛ My son fell in the playground and cut his head. I took him to the childrens A&E. we got seen quite quickly because it wasn't busy. We waited for about an hour to see the nurse. They were all very polite. (2017)
- ☛ Complainant not happy with a consultant's attitude and poor communication regarding her daughter's appointment at the Royal London Hospital (2017)
- ☛ I would like to thank all staff at 7D for taking amazing care of my three month old daughter, they were angels who came to my daughter's aid. The paediatrician, nurses, surgical unit and member of staff who received us at night made the whole situation better (2017)
- ☛ Thank you to everyone from the porters, play specialists, docs and nurses for making us feel so cared for. (2018)

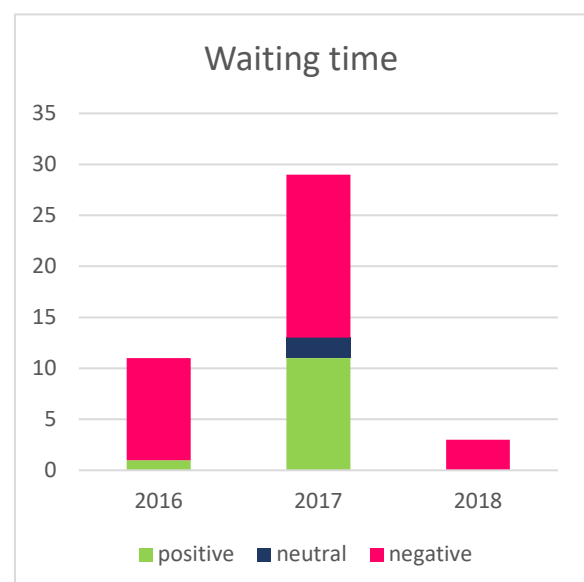
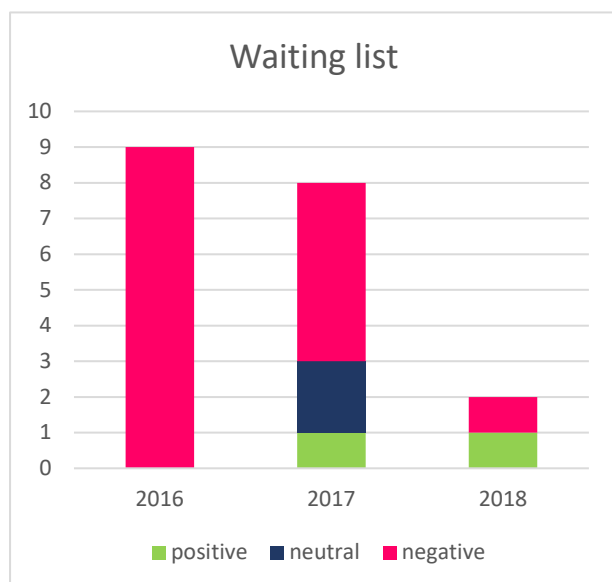
Parents have also been happier in 2017 than in 2016 with the quality of the treatment their children receive in the hospital. As doctors build better rapport with children and their parents, they are better trusted to deliver good care.



- *Father of 14 year old was advised to attend for an urgent plastic surgery appointment, with regards to an injured fingernail. The surgeon requested a Gray which was performed. On review it was discovered that damage had in fact occurred only to the artificial nail. The surgeon proceeded to remove this after administering some anaesthesia. It became apparent that it was not enough, yet the surgeon continued for some time despite the screams from the child, and requests from the parents for more anaesthetic (2016)*
- *Our four-year-old daughter was recently treated as a day case in paediatric ENT. Thank you to the anaesthetist and the surgeon doctor, there were both incredibly caring, kind and patient centred as well as reassuring. Also, not to forget the play specialist, I was never sure about what their role was but actually proved invaluable when practicing 'blowing bubbles' into the breathing mask before surgery. (2017)*
- *Patient father raised concerns regarding poor care received at RLH ED. Father informed that the patient had pain in her throat and presented her at ED. The doctor prescribed Ibuprofen and did not check the patient. Later they presented at Lewisham as the patient was still unwell. There the doctors checked the patient and removed a lot of pus out of her throat. (2018)*
- *His son had surgery on his hips 2 years ago and he came for a check up to see if everything is going well. The father likes how everything is going and would not change a thing. (2018)*

Children wait for a long time for appointments. While in hospital, they can be faced with long waits before being seen. However, the number of complaints on the topic has decreased relatively.

Cancellations, particularly for surgical procedures, cause even longer waiting times which cause young patients and their parents a great deal of concern.



- *Patient had surgery and once they got to Ward 6B on time, she was offered a bed, was asked to change her clothes and be ready for the procedure that day. We were seen by nurses and doctors to explain what was going to take place. However, at around 5pm they were informed by a nurse that her appointment has to be cancelled. They were later informed by the surgeon that because of delays caused by ALL the patients*

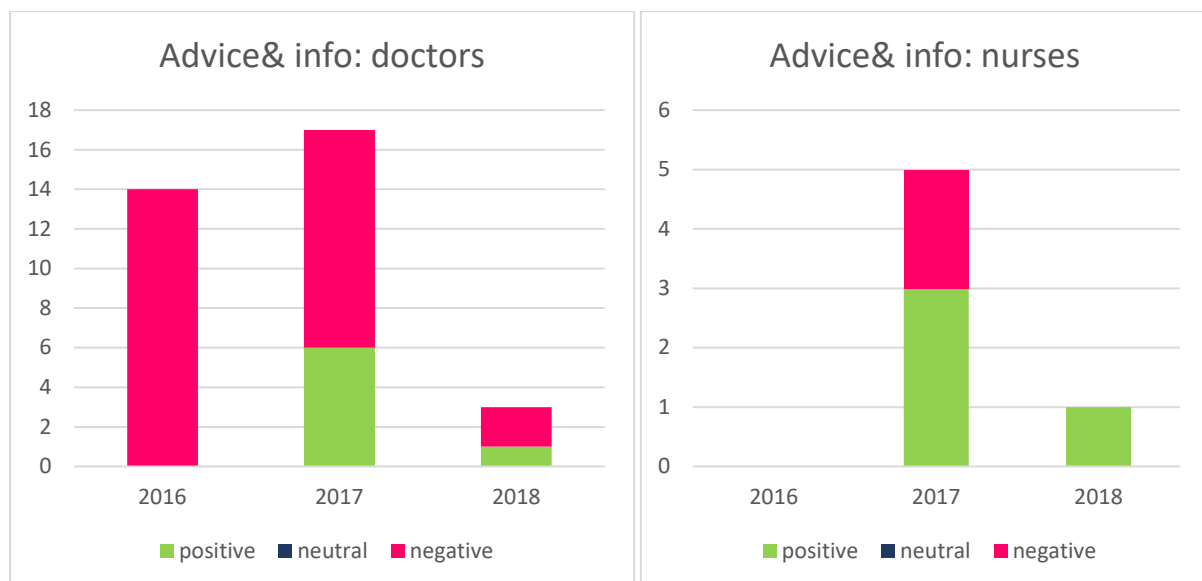
she worked on that day meant that they had to cancel that last person which was the patient. It goes without saying that the father was very frustrated and upset by this. Patient went without any food or water the whole day and father lost a day-off work. Not to mention all the waiting around and uncertainty, missed his Friday congregational prayer, the patient lost her last day of Easter holiday to spend with her family. (2016)

- Year old child was referred to Max fax RLH after a fall. Complainant was told this could not be done that day due to staff and bed shortages. Father received a call the next day and asked to attend max fax, but later called to say this was cancelled, but they would get a call back. Father tried other hospitals but to no avail (2016)
- Mother and son came in today; for the son who had caught his foot in the door. Had to wait a few days for the appointment but expressed that it was not an issue as his injury was not as severe as others. Said that today's visit was quick and easy- no complaints. (2017)
- Patient's mother is concerned that the doctor who saw her 6 month old baby(born with a silent reflux) was not experienced enough to provide information how to give the prescribed strong medication. Her biggest concern that the follow up appointment (some four months later) wasn't based on a clinical decision but when there was a free appointment. She is worried that the follow up appointment is too far ahead, especially since starting the strong medication, the baby is severely constipated to the point of vomiting from the strain. (2017)

Aspects that still need improvement

Doctors do not provide parents with a satisfactory level of advice and information about managing their children's health and what to expect from their visit. Opinion of advice and information provided by doctors has improved but remains negative.

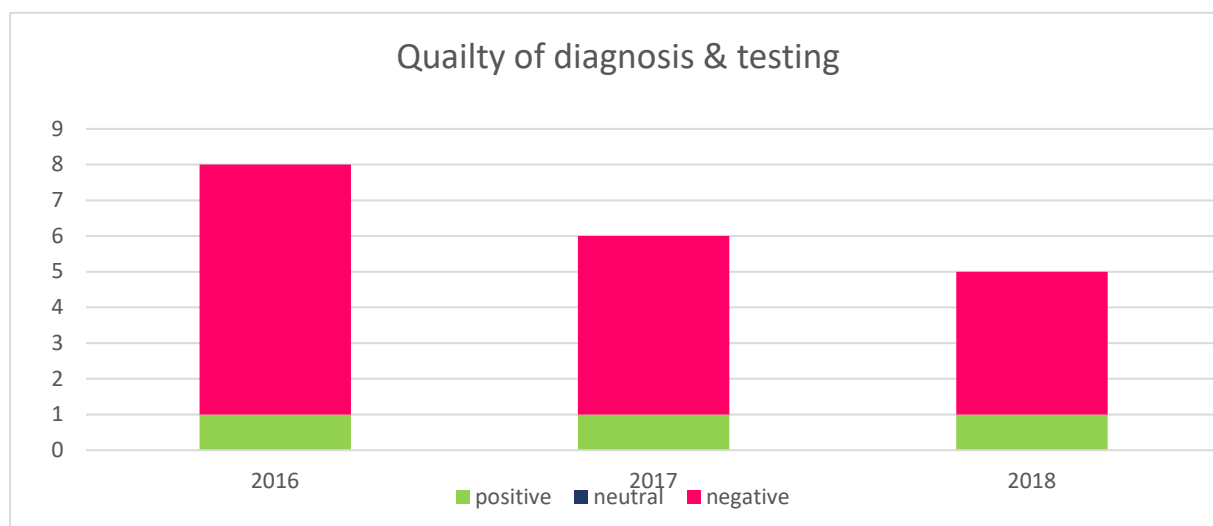
Nurses have started to take on an educational role that doctors insufficiently fulfil, but only to a small extent.



- Received an e-mail from a patient mother has raised concerns regarding the delay in surgery/ lack of communications and accuracies/ poor attitude of staff. (2016)

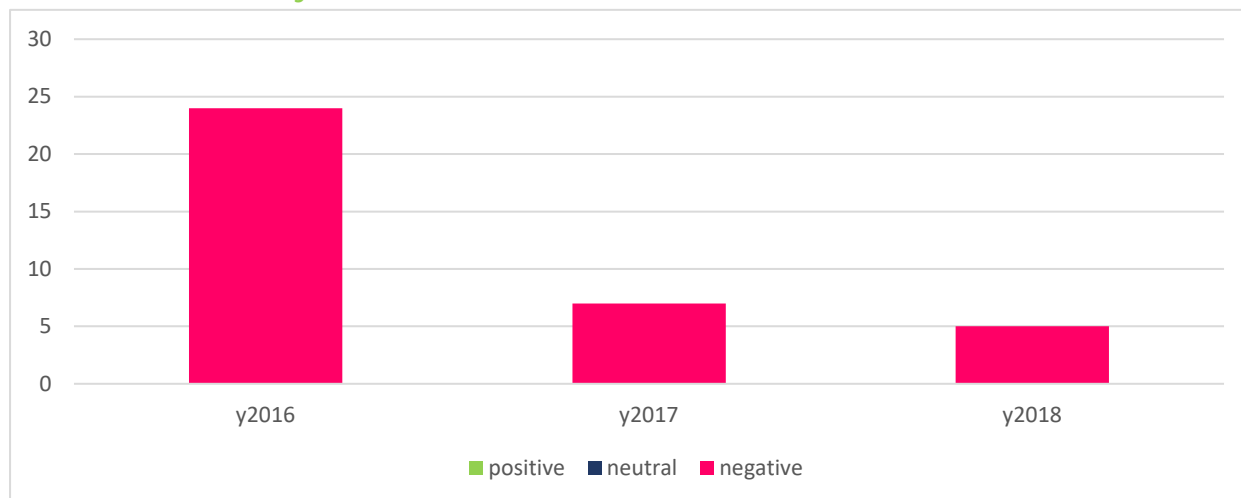
- Spoke to a mother about her daughter: 24th of August was the initial surgery (to decrease growth in one leg so that the other leg may catch up) 3 month follow up appointment was today. results not as anticipated, doctor gave them some disappointing and upsetting news. May need to operate again. Mother was very concerned about her daughter (10y old, seemed to have a developmental condition) she is walking worse than before and not sure why the doctor pushed the procedure. Feels that the risk and the outcome was not properly communicated to her (2017)
- I have been attending the paediatric ophthalmology department at the royal London hospital for a number of years now. I can only applaud the service the doctors at the department provide. Their professionalism is on point, when communicating with me (the parent) they have shown respect even at times when I have been frustrated about my daughter's symptoms they provide assurances and do everything in their power to make sure both parent and child are happy. (2017)
- [Postcard addressed to a nurse] Thank you for all your support and guidance. You have made our stay here with our little one very pleasant. God bless you abundantly! (2018)

Parents are dissatisfied with the quality of the diagnosis proves, and feel distrustful of medical professionals' competence in correctly diagnosing their children.



- Complainant not happy the A&E paed department when the patient attended at the Royal London Hospital and a fracture was missed in the patients leg. (2016)
- Mother is concerned that despite multiple admissions to A&E with gastro related problems, her son has not been deemed serious enough to be admitted and investigations carried out. She is worried about the effects on his schooling as the patient has taken a considerable amount of time out from studies. Challenges the diagnosis of anxiety being the cause. (2017)
- Cold developed, cough, wheezes, taken to both Royal London Hospital and Newham. Dec 16 - RLH didn't diagnose. Feb 17 - Newham confirmed 'cold induced asthma.' (2018)

Admin issues have a negative impact on patient experience and can needlessly add to the already long waits for care; the number of complaints has decreased, but they continue to occur.



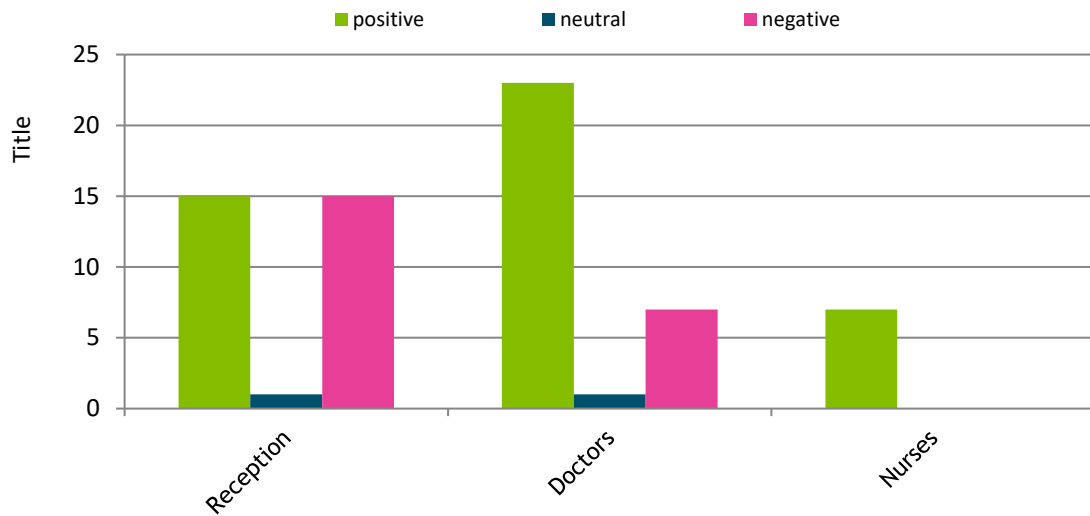
- Paediatric neurologist sent wrote letter of referral typed 02/03/2016, GP received it 24/03/2016. GP is concerned at the length of time a letter, with an action, has taken to reach them. (2016)
- Patient's mother has raised a number of concerns about the her son's treatment, care and general lack of communication from staff about what was happening, what procedures were being carried out and why. In addition to this, they have spelt his first name and surname incorrectly and put the wrong date of birth of the paperwork the mother has. (2017)
- Outrageous lack of care. a failing system that leaves people NEEDING surgery. 2 weeks my son has been waiting for surgery on a fractured elbow, been give 4 dates to be cancelled. we spent 6 hours there today waiting, then turned away. (2018)

GP services

Patient opinion of GP services in the borough is leaning positive and it has stayed broadly constant between 2016 and present. Parents praise the quality of the services provided by local GP surgeries, but find the booking process rather frustrating.

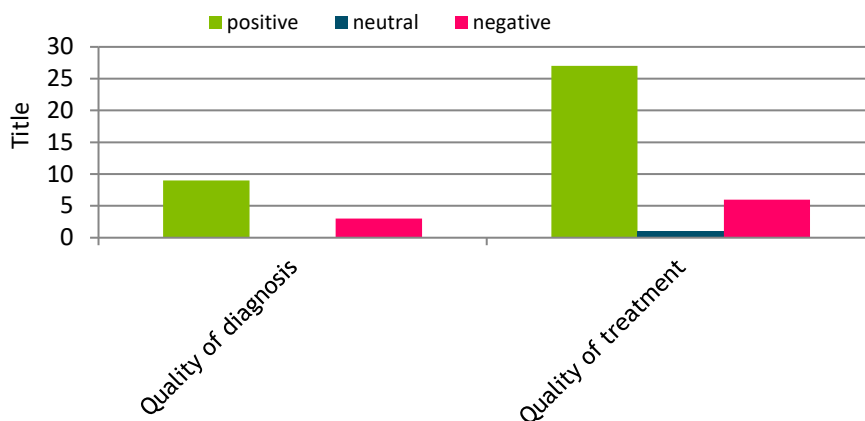
Aspects that receive praise from patients

Generally, GP surgery staff are seen as professional, compassionate and kind in relation to their younger patients. The attitude of GPs is praised by most service users, while the attitude of nurses is universally commended and opinion of the attitude of reception staff is mixed.



- *Since I have been registered here from 2010, I have received such good service, staff are really friendly and helpful.*
- *Receptionists are bored and rude, as if people are a bother.*
- *The doctors always treat their patients with respect and dignity, listen to their patients and refer them to the appropriate specialists when needed. The doctors are also friendly, approachable and very supportive. Furthermore, when it is a case involving a child, they are attentive and empathetic, and investigate thoroughly.*
- *My young daughter came too for a vaccination and they helped calm her down and the nurses were very nice.*

The quality of diagnosis and of medical treatment are praised by parents. Parents have a great deal of trust in their GP's professional competence.



- *I have had two children supported by this surgery and they have offered all the help I have needed along the way. I would say this surgery is the model for all surgeries. I do recommend this surgery all the time.*
- *My young daughter has autism and we visit our GP a bit. Our GP is very good, understanding and helpful.*
- *Diagnosed by GP - after recurring symptoms and needing treatment for 'loud' noises at night. Treatment effective, but symptoms persist. GP not yet referred.*

- Majority of doctors are very good, they take the time to listen, give clear explanations and advice on medicine and course of treatment.

While opinion of waiting lists is mixed, a majority of parents find that they can obtain appointments for their children within a reasonable amount of time, and they feel appropriately prioritised. The ability to get same-day emergency appointments is highly valued by parents.

- I have recently had to take my youngest to see the doctor, no appointment was pre-booked and this was coming up to 6pm. The receptionist arranged for a doctor to call back and the doctor agreed to see us with minutes to spare.
- I've always been able to get an appointment on the day I call, which is my view is essential especially when you have a sick child.
- There is a same day appointment service for which you have to call first thing, or go in person; it can be hard to get through on the phone but the provision is excellent.
- My child was really unwell. There were no appointments available at the time, but the receptionist was so helpful. She took my details and did call me back with an available appointment on the same day.

Aspects that still need improvement

Booking an appointment with a GP can be a frustrating experience for a parent.

- We asked for a prescription for a cream for our child. A response was given in the form of a note which we went to pick up a week later which said that we need to make an appointment with the Doctor. However, when I asked the receptionist for an appointment the first they offered me was 3 working days later and an appointment after 5pm was offered a week later. Clearly the surgery knew that a cream is needed for our child. However rather than communicating by phone or electronically they left a written note for me to go in and collect with a very simple message. What customer facing organisation still operates like this, waiting for customers to make a trip in to get a simple message??
- Was offered appointment for sick toddler in more than a week. Was then told to go somewhere else. Person on the phone wasn't even interested in the symptoms or state of the kid. No other option was offered, e.g. Phone consultation. Very disappointing experience. Not helpful not caring practice.
- Receptionist was nice. I asked if we could have an appointment after school. She looked at the screen and said that there wasn't any. Then looked again that there was. Got one within a week.

Some practices can be difficult to reach by telephone

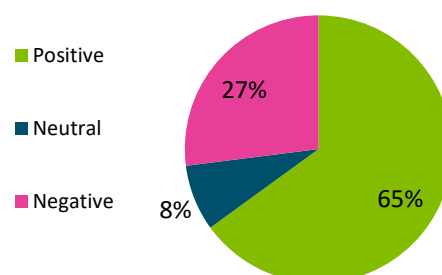
- This is a great surgery and the doctors are brilliant. Once you get an appointment they are great. They really prioritise children and elderly which is good. It can be extremely difficult to get an appointment and even to get through at all on the phone. This is the only negative we have of this practice.
- Been trying to get through on the phone - either no one answers or it's an impatient sounding person.

In some cases, online booking can offer a viable alternative.

Booking same day appointment or 48hrs appointment can be impossible as you have to phone at 8:30 am, and it can be impossible to get thru. But that is common with any surgery and it is beyond their control. However online facility is reliable and secure for booking appointment in advance and requesting prescriptions. And you are sent appointment reminder to your mobile, not a new service, they have been doing it for many years.

Children's centres

Overall opinion of children's centres is broadly positive. They are seen as valuable information hubs, where children can spend time in a nurturing environment while parents find out about other relevant services and socialise with each other.



- *I've used several different children's centres, with classes and sessions for babies, and the idea stores libraries with their storytime sessions. I've found the centres and sessions to be an absolute lifeline, the staff have great advice but more importantly, being able to have places my son can safely play - especially those with outside areas. What's been hard is finding out where and when the sessions actually are, I've searched websites but there is no coherent and up-to-date listing service that includes all the things in my area. Mostly they are discovered by talking to other parents. Just this week I found out there was a play & stay session just minutes from my house that runs weekly, which I would have found useful for the last 8 months!*
- *My baby's experience was very good- there were lots of activities that he interacted with.*
- *Good, we used Olga for baby massage and Overland for breastfeeding support and active babies. My son will continue to use Meath gardens with his child minder.*
- *I visited children centres weekly. They are fantastic and I feel very lucky to have access to them so easily*

Only a minority of parents were dissatisfied with the environment and the attitude of staff members.

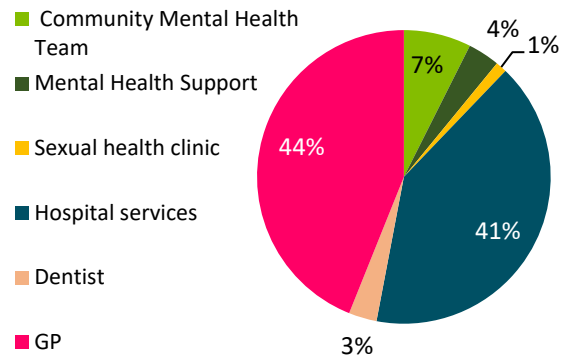
- *I found the staff not helpful, unapproachable and not bothered.*
- *Isle of Dogs really clean good centre, Crisp St a little tired and the coordinators didn't really help facilitate interaction between the mothers so everyone seemed to sit quietly in separate corners with their babies but overall amazing the have these services on offer.*

A small number of parents also report the centres being crowded and under-staffed.

Not enough staff, had to queue to get in and frequently turned away as all spaces filled before the session starting time. When we get in its a great space with lots of fun activities

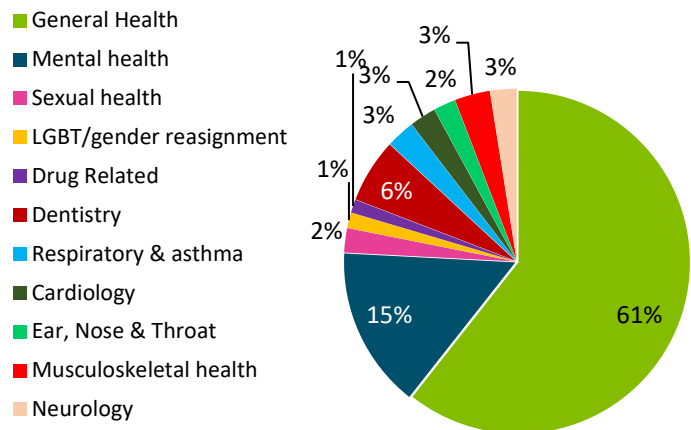
Young people's health services

Between 2016 and 2018, we have analysed feedback received from 158 young people (aged 14-24) about accessing various health and community services, identifying a total of 516 issues.



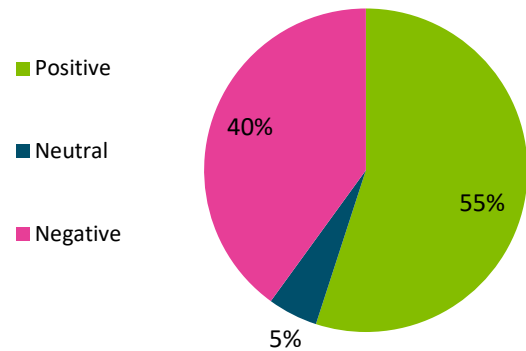
Most comments referred to GP or hospital services, but community mental health services were also represented.

Apart from general health, mental health and dentistry services were the most discussed. Sexual health services were also mentioned.



Young people's opinion of the NHS services they have used is leaning positive.

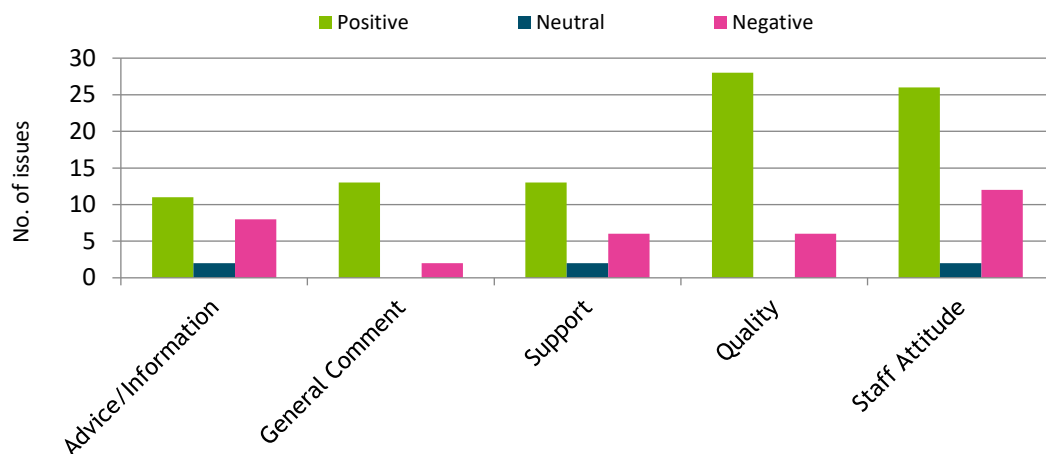
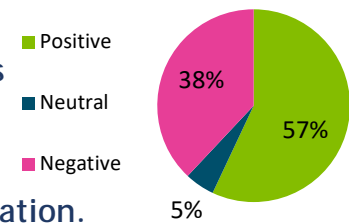
They generally feel well supported by the services they use and well-informed by them. They find the majority of medical staff to be kind, professional and trustworthy.



Hospital services

60 young people gave feedback about hospital services; from which we have identified 205 issues. Most comments were about the Royal London Hospital.

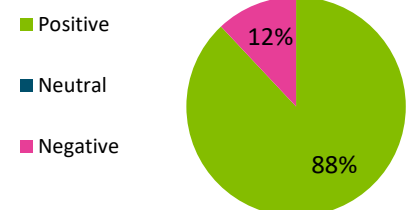
Young people's opinion of hospital services is leaning positive; and more positive than that of the general population.



Aspects that receive praise from patients

Young people who visit the hospital are happy with the process of diagnosis and testing. They find medical professionals diagnosing them trustworthy and they feel they receive appropriate explanations about their condition.

Opinion of diagnosis & testing



- My doctor referred me as I cough with blood and came here for specialist observation. Consultant at RLH communicated well.
- I was at Royal London Hospital last month for a blood test. Everything went well. The staff were caring, polite and professional. Waiting time was about 30 minutes, which was not bad.

Young patients are happy with the quality of treatment they receive and with the attitude of doctors. They feel generally well-informed about their treatment.

- I got oesophageal varices and I was throwing up blood, so I went to A&E, where I was rushed straight in. But then I spent 12 hours in the A&E. I received very good care at the High Dependency Unit for a while- the nurses there are amazing, they very accommodating, and the doctor was great- he was very honest- he explained stuff, he was attentive.
- I went to the doctors because I broke my elbow. The doctors were nice.
- For Hip surgery. It was a good experience. Everyone was lovely. Food was okay. Family was allowed to visit anytime.

Patients are also satisfied with the quality of nursing in the hospital; and opinion of the attitude of nursing staff is leaning positive. (There are issues with contract caterers, but they are mitigated through the efforts of nurses).

- The nurses are really good, they are well-trained, they listen, they're knowledgeable. Healthcare assistants, on the other hand, are not very motivated, and kitchen staff are very snappy.
- Here in 10E, I feel safe and I feel relatively well cared for. I was told I was not allowed to have breakfast; because I had arrived around midnight and at 8 am when they took breakfast orders I was asleep. So, when I woke up and asked about breakfast they said I can't have any because I've missed it. But when I mentioned to another nurse she took care of it and I got it. The staff is polite.

Aspects in need of improvement

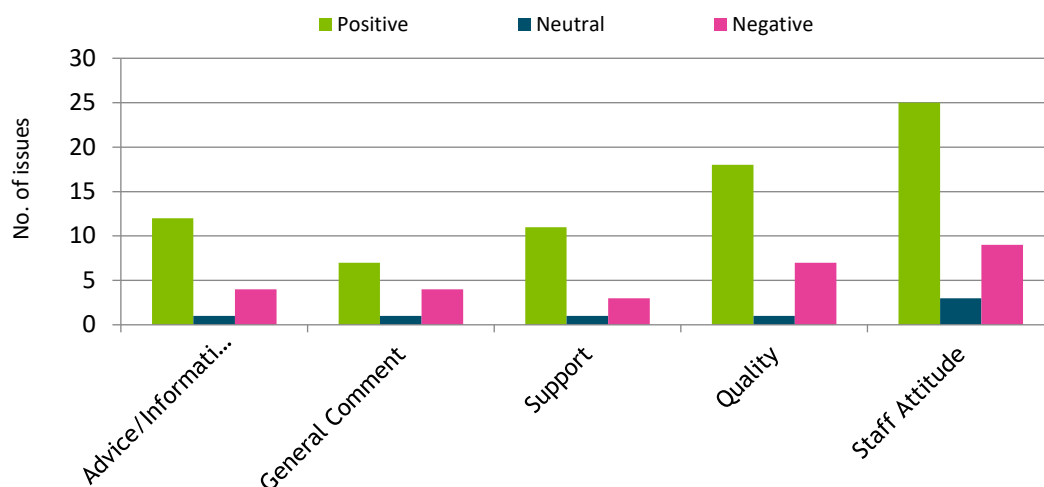
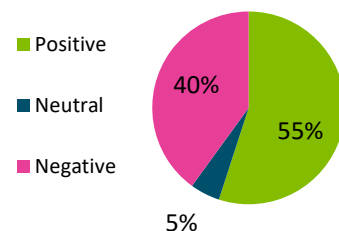
Young people report waiting a long time in the hospital before being seen.

- In the hospital he waited too much time to be seen by the specialist. The ambulance takes too much time to come at the patient.
- Suggested Improvements: A&E should be quick and fast to attend patient within 10/15 minutes of arrival.
- Long wait but only a few people in waiting rooms (maybe just understaffed not overbooked). Waited for 4.5 hours for apt. Sometimes staff can be frustrated easily. Care should be explained a little (more in advance). Only waiting time needs improvement.

GP services

55 young people gave feedback about hospital services; from which we have identified 197 issues.

Young people's opinion of hospital services is leaning positive; and is in line with that of the general population.

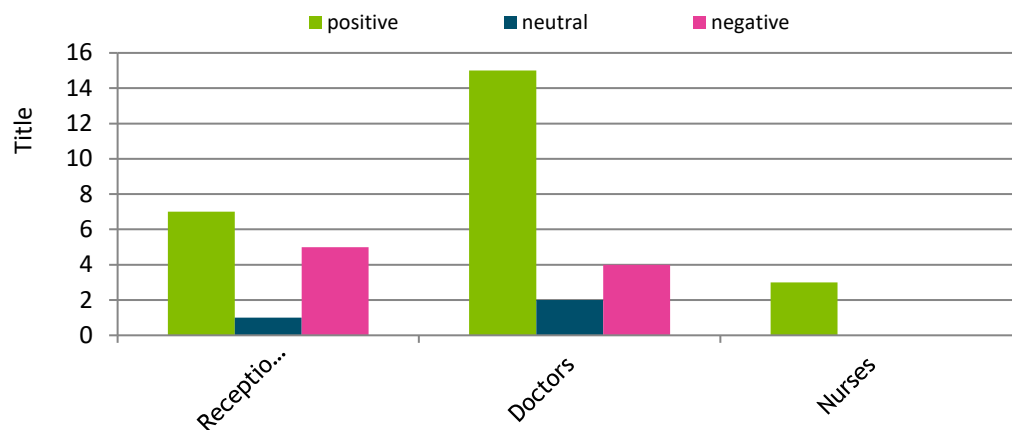


Aspects that receive praise from patients

Young patients are happy with the quality of treatment they receive in GP surgeries. They feel generally well-informed about their treatment.

- *The doctors helped explain the sudden pain I was feeling and gave me a referral appointment to the fracture clinic- which I thought was very helpful.*
- *The doctor and nurses- they have a positive attitude and give clear information about how the patient needs to take the drugs that he received.*
- *Had an immunisation done at Harford Health Centre for a holiday. It was a good experience, doctor was friendly and did a quick and good job.*
- *My family GP is very good. My family has used the same GP for over 25 years, and we have no problems with them.*

They praise the attitude of most staff members, whom they find helpful, professional and compassionate, with a few exceptions.



- *I went into the GP because I was experiencing stomach ache. The doctors were nice and did the tests appropriately. The doctor explained my condition well.*
- *Drug addiction, very helpful, coped with situations very well, made you feel very welcome and comfortable.*
- *Always easy to get appointment, never a long waiting time, reception staff are always friendly and helpful*
- *I am not pleased with my GP at Limehouse Practice. The receptionists are consistently rude on the telephone. I did write a complaint on the website, but I noticed my complaint was partially edited to the practice's favour.*

Aspects that need improving

Some patients have found it difficult to book appointments.

- *Appointments can only be made by turning up at 8:30 am on the day and according to the staff cannot be booked in advance under any circumstances. I have found the best way to progress anything is to write directly to the GP as nothing can be done through the reception (whether by telephone or by visiting in person). The practice is not suitable for anyone working 9-5. If I were unhealthy and not a young man, I would fear being assigned to this practice for risk of ever getting seriously ill.*
- *We don't get the appointment when need- we get it after 3-4 weeks, by then we are either in severe pain or completely fine.*

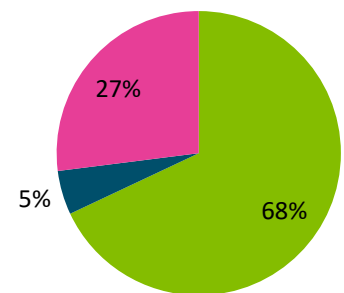
Practices are difficult to contact by telephone; which may make appointment booking even more difficult, as it is usually the primary way in which appointments are being made.

- Called into reception to make appointment, had to wait some time to get through. Not acceptable to wait for this length of time on the phone when you're ill/busy.
- For emergency appointment, have to book at 8am, very difficult to get through by phone to reception. Today had to call practice 20 times as line was always engaged.
- It takes too long for reception to answer the telephone, sometimes 30/40 minutes of calling. It is stressful.
- My GP at XX Health Place at Mile End Hospital are very slow to answer their reception telephone to book for appointments

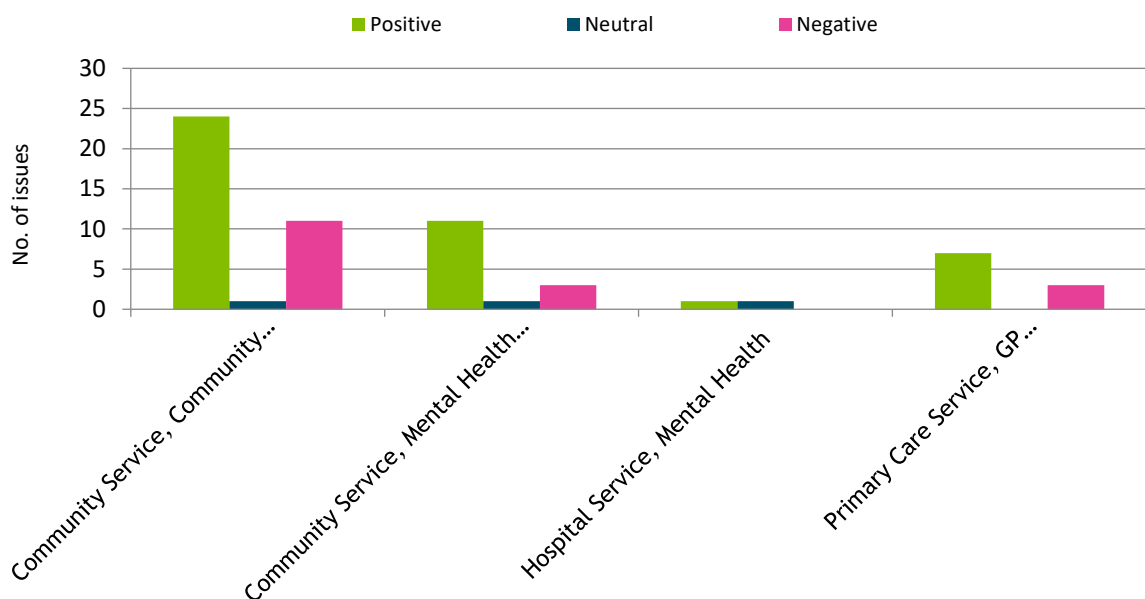
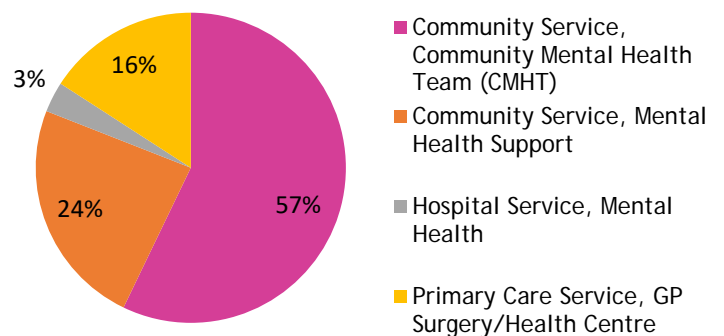
Young people's mental health services

18 young people gave feedback about using services based in the borough for their mental health; we have identified 63 issues. Their experience has been mostly positive.

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative



Young people have accessed mental health services mostly through the Community Mental Health team, as well as through their GP surgery and through dedicated local community organisations, such as Inspire or Beside.



Most young people feel well supported by mental health services in the borough

- *I have a support worker from Look Ahead. Got an appointment in one week after I was referred. I love how they always check up on me, how I'm dealing with money- I used to have drug problems (cocaine) and I was spending quite a lot. They know when I'm about to take drugs and they help me.*
- *Where I live is called Tabbard Court (Poplar). It's known to be good supported accommodation. Beautiful flats, lots of support, no violence.*
- *GPs in my surgery are very knowledgeable of mental health, which is quite rare.*
- *Everything from the front line staff to the practitioners were amazingly helpful and resourceful and really go out of their way to do a fantastic job. Couldn't ask for anything better and they are vital to the local community.*

A few patients report that the services are over-stretched and difficult to access.

- *Doctors don't have enough time for their patients. I have to wait one long year to get into mental health rehab.*
- *I am now 26 weeks pregnant and I asked my doctor for help with anxiety that got worse after pregnancy and he referred me to Compass. I had a telephone consultation with them after one month. A month after that I received a voice message left by the therapist about wanting to book an appointment and she asked me to call her back on her direct number. I have called her and left her a message, but she didn't get back to me. I also called continuously for 2 weeks every day at different times because I know she may be away from her desk but still no answer. One of the days I called her every hour from 9am-5pm but still no answer. I am in need of treatment and running after her in this way has affected me more than my pregnancy. Why are they not available?*