healthwatch Oldham

MEDICAL

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Health Care
Doctor
Hospital
Pharmacist
Nurse
Dentist
First Aid
Surgeon
Emergency

A review on how people use Digital Health to manage their health and wellbeing

October 2020

Contents

Background

Healthwatch Oldham completes a bi-monthly survey called the Healthwatch Oldham 100. This survey is designed to obtain the views from local people on a range of subjects. The findings from these surveys can help us to identify trends within service delivery and provide information to guide us on areas to look into further.

In July 2020, we released our Digital Health survey to better understand the way people use technology to support their health and wellbeing. 76 people took the time to complete this survey and we would like to thank everyone for their contributions to this review.

Disclaimer: about our research

Please note that the statements within the report are subjective accounts by individuals given on the day they submitted the survey and do not represent the views of Healthwatch Oldham. Healthwatch Oldham researches line with accredited guidelines set out in Healthwatch England's Research Framework. We aim to identify what matters most to people and use our findings to ensure that people's voices influence and improve the quality of local services.

If anyone has any queries relating to the content of this report, please contact a member of the Healthwatch Oldham team via info@healthwatcholdham.co.uk.

What we did

We created a survey which was released for July 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this survey was completed online but people were invited to complete paper versions of the survey as well as staff offering to complete the survey online over the telephone.

We asked people to tell us about the following areas:

- ➢ Any devices and equipment they use to manage their health and wellbeing
- ➢ Experiences of any online consultations they may have had
- ➢ Find out what worked well in these instances
- ➢ Understand more the usage of apps to support their health and wellbeing
- ➢ Identify and understand people's possible concerns over technology becoming more standard across health and wellbeing practices

Key Findings

People highlighted many positives to using technology to manage their health and wellbeing as well as some concerns with access, data protection and education on the technology moving forward. The following are some of the key themes identified in the feedback:

Access	People within this survey highlighted their lack of access to some technology. Whilst this cannot always be helped, service provisions must be equally in place for those who feel confident in using technology and those who do not have access. There is also the consideration to make sure that technology and services are easily accessible for those with learning difficulties and other barriers to using technology.
Data Protection	People in the main throughout this report welcomed the use of technology in managing their health and wellbeing. However, the main concern raised was understanding what security measures are put in place regarding their sensitive data. People have commented that they do not want their information to be stored by others unless necessary.
Education	People stated that they would welcome technology to support their health and wellbeing if they fully understood how to use the technology. Supporting and training people to make the best use of technology should be a priority moving forward to allow those who are willing to learn to easily do so.

Main Recommendations

The Healthwatch Oldham recommendations are based on the experiences and feedback of people who completed this survey. We are committed to ensuring that the voices of all Oldham residents can reach those who commission, design and deliver local services. The findings from this report will be shared with Oldham Cares Commissioners, Northern Care Alliance NHS Group and Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust to help shape health and social care services to welcome people to make the best use of technology when managing their health and wellbeing.

1. Flexibility and Accessibility

Providers should ensure that all services are tailored to suit those who can use technology and for those who do not feel they can. When services are created (such as a phone app), as part of the planning process, it should be reviewed whether someone can still get the same benefits from this service if they cannot access the app. If not possible, then clear, simple, and user-friendly instructions should be in place to welcome someone to try and use the app where possible. People who have learning difficulties should also be considered to ensure digital inclusion along with anyone who has a disability which could be affected by the introduction of new technology. Support should also be provided to staff who might not feel confident with the technology but are expected to assist people in using it as part of their role.

2. Data Protection

People raised concerns about data protection. With so many items in the news about data breaches, it is understandable that people shared concerns on how their data is used. Simple and clear messages should be provided to ensure that people understand what information will be held and reassure them on how it will be stored and potentially be used.

3. Clear Communication

Clear communication is key to bridging the gap between someone refusing to embrace technology and someone who might be willing to try it if they understand what they need to do. This could be having some form of helpline to support someone through the process of better-using technology that is available or holding demonstration sessions where appropriate and possible.

4. Accessible Training and Support

For those who are willing to try the technology, they need to feel supported and have access to an environment where they can learn. Local libraries could play a vital part in providing such an environment as well as the local authority which might be able to provide some IT learning provisions in the area. The learning could be delivered through demonstration sessions, clear tutorials, clear messages, and bespoke training on certain elements of services. People with learning difficulties will also need to be considered to ensure that they can access and use the service as they could before any potential changes come into effect.

5. Post COVID-19 pandemic

It is clear that in recent months, providers have had to change their way of delivering their services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has meant that digital resources have been more vital than ever. As a result of these changes, providers will likely want to continue some of the changes they have made as they have been particularly successful in saving costs, time and providing an easier way to access some of their services. These successful changes must be celebrated, but it is also important that they do not exclude those who cannot take advantage of technological advances.

6. Effective Planning

Moving forward, we would recommend that people are consulted to ensure that any potential changes to services are clear and easy for people to understand and have their say on whether it will work for them as patients. Consultations will allow providers to raise awareness of the different ways they can deliver their services moving forward and understand if people in the main are agreeable with these changes. Also, it will ensure that people that are unable to use technology, will be considered as things progress.
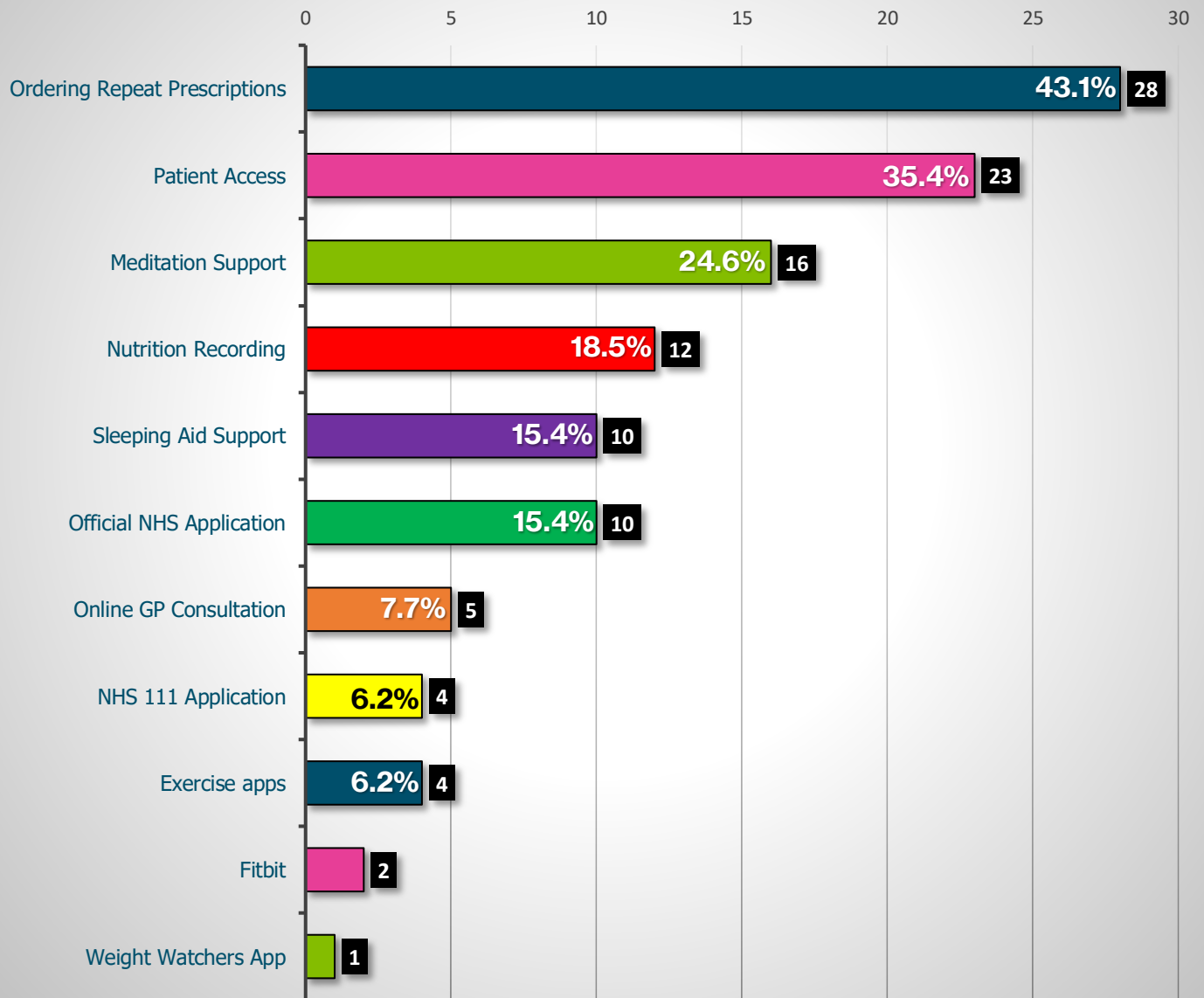
Detailed Findings

Below are the detailed findings of the 76 people who completed this survey.
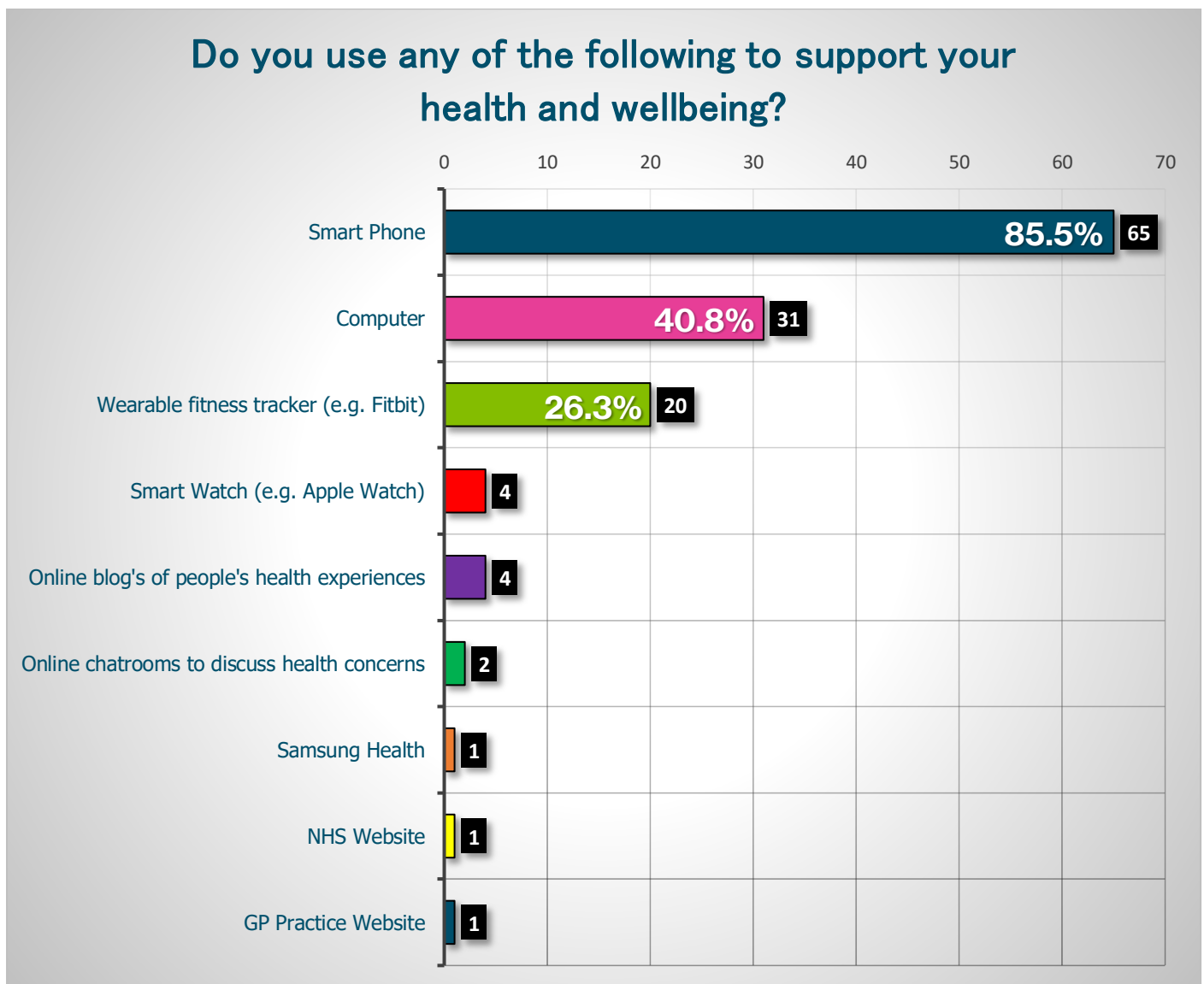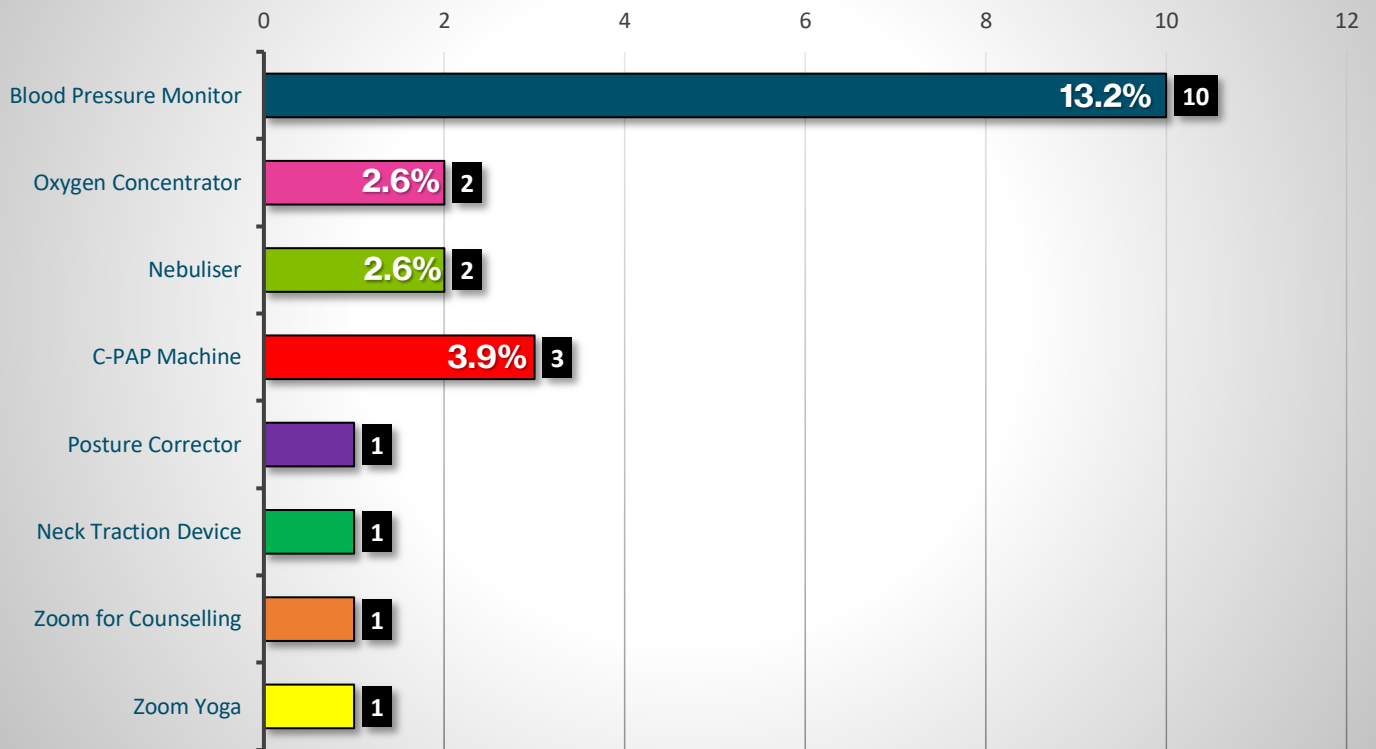

When people were asked what they used to support their health and wellbeing, 85.5% (65 people) stated that they used a smartphone. The next highest answers were 40.8% (31 people) who use a computer and 26.3% (20 people) who use a wearable fitness tracker such as a FitBit.

What are the main health and wellbeing functions you use your smartphone for?

| Function	Value
Ordering Repeat Prescriptions	43.1% — 28
Patient Access	35.4% — 23
Meditation Support	24.6% — 16
Nutrition Recording	18.5% — 12
Sleeping Aid Support	15.4% — 10
Official NHS Application	15.4% — 10
Online GP Consultation	7.7% — 5
NHS 111 Application	6.2% — 4
Exercise apps	6.2% — 4
Fitbit	2
Weight Watchers App	1

For those that stated they used a smartphone, we asked what health and wellbeing functions they used on their phone. 43.1% (28 people) stated that they use their phone to order their repeat prescriptions and an additional 35.4% (23 people) stated they used Patient Access which also includes a service to order your repeat prescriptions. There was a wide range of additional functions such as meditation support, nutrition recording, sleeping aid support and the official NHS app which was all represented in this question.

Please list any other technology you use to manage your health and wellbeing

| Technology	Value	%
Blood Pressure Monitor	10	13.2%
Oxygen Concentrator	2	2.6%
Nebuliser	2	2.6%
C-PAP Machine	3	3.9%
Posture Corrector	1	
Neck Traction Device	1	
Zoom for Counselling	1	
Zoom Yoga	1	

We asked the 76 people who completed this survey whether they used additional technology to help maintain their health and wellbeing. 13.2% (10 people) stated that they used a blood pressure monitor and 3.9% (3 people) stated they used a C-PAP Machine.

List any other technology you would like to see available that you would find beneficial in managing your own health and wellbeing

| Technology	Value
Wheelchair	1
Asthma Support App	1
ECG App	1
Blood Pressure Monitor	1
Access to the internet	1
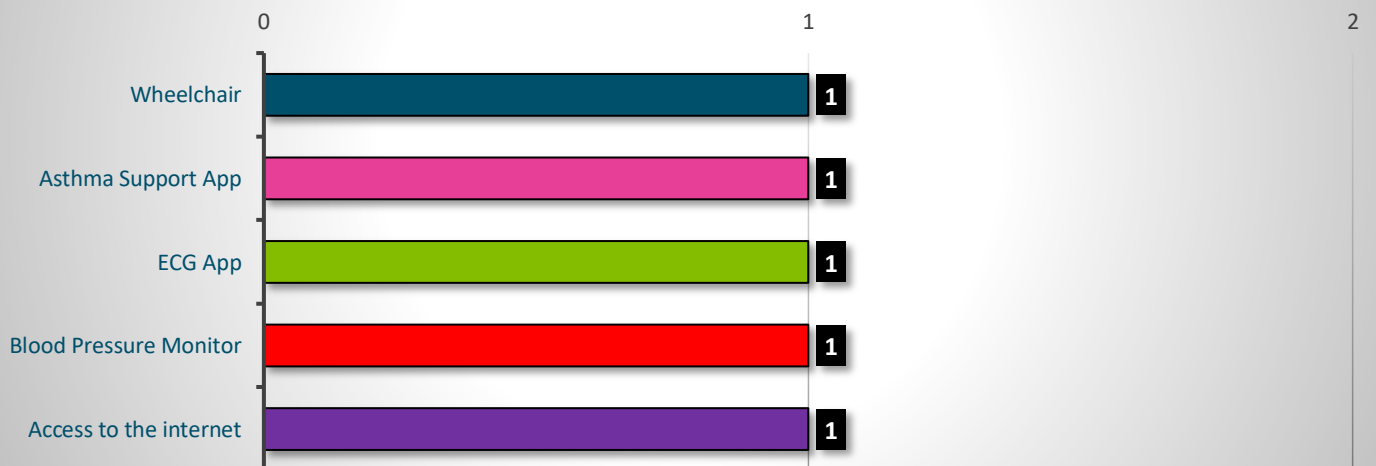
We asked the 76 people who completed this survey whether there was any additional technology that they would find beneficial in managing their health and wellbeing. There were 5 answers given in total, all for different options.

Have you ever had an online consultation with a GP or consultant?

Yes: 10 — 13.2%
No: 64 — 84.2%
Didn't answer: 2
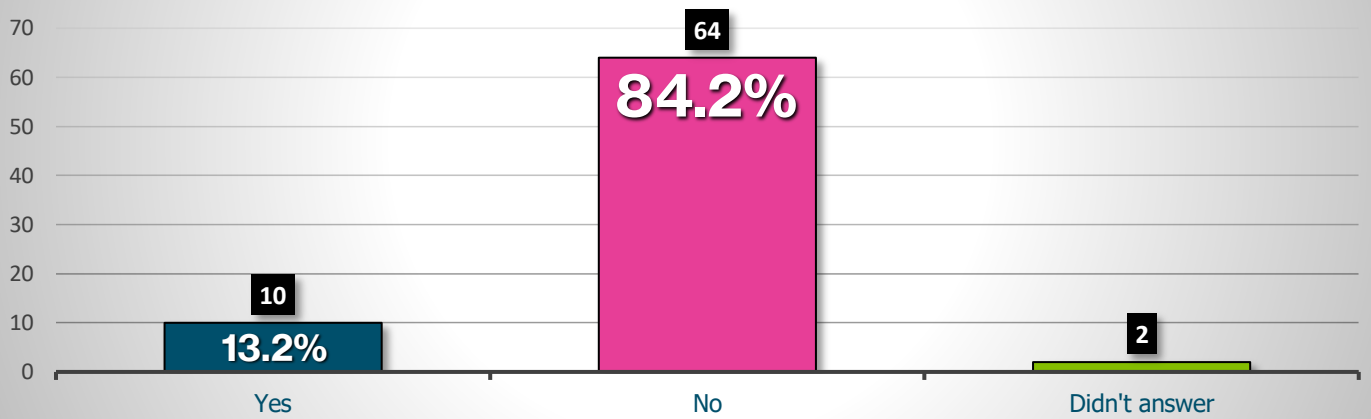
84.2% (64 people) had never had an online consultation with either a GP or a consultant compared to 13.2% (10 people) who did have one.

How would you rate this means of consultation?

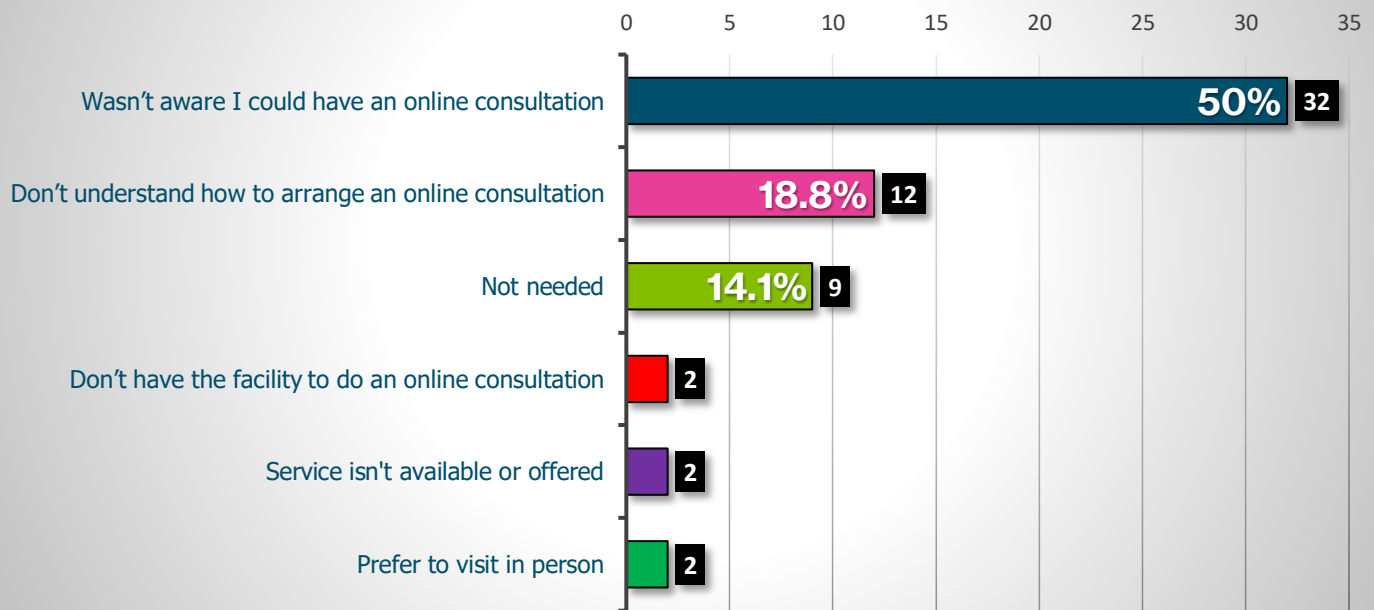**Very Good:** 4 — 40%
Good: 6 — 60%
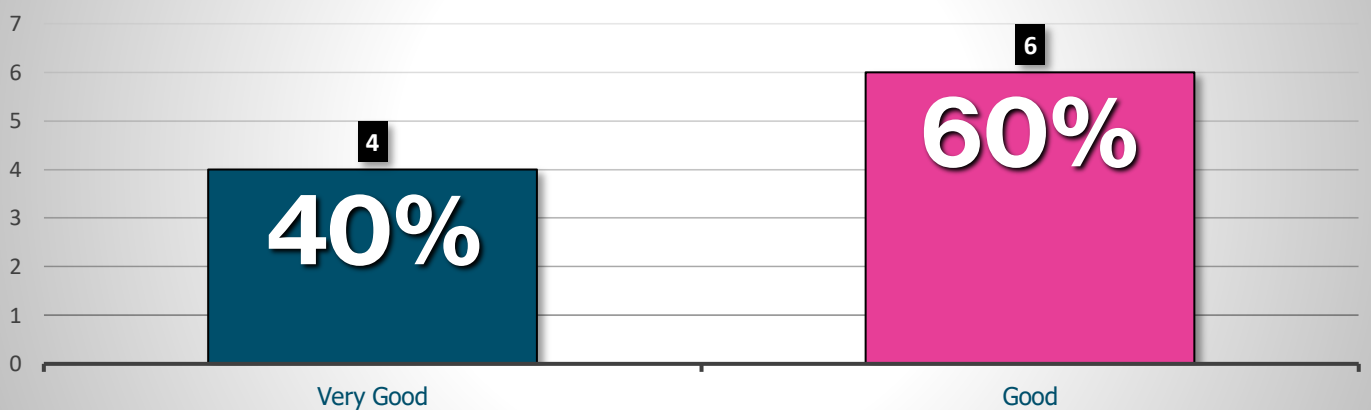
Of the 13% (10 people) who stated that have had an online consultation, we asked them to rate this service. 60% (6 people) stated that the service was good and 40% (4 people) stated that the service was very good. None of the 10 people stated any concerns with their online consultation.

"I think technology can be very useful to support professionals and patients. During the COVID-19 pandemic, my friend had a FaceTime consultation with a doctor.

This could be useful in the future too as long as it is alongside face to face support that is fine but to rely only on online support could create poor outcomes for patients as does not allow for other discussions or observations by medical staff.

This could be especially difficult for elderly, people that do not speak English well or have low confidence to explain their issues."

Please could you explain why you have never had an online consultation?

| Reason	Percentage	Count
Wasn't aware I could have an online consultation	50%	32
Don't understand how to arrange an online consultation	18.8%	12
Not needed	14.1%	9
Don't have the facility to do an online consultation		2
Service isn't available or offered		2
Prefer to visit in person		2

84% (64 people) stated that they had not ever had an online consultation. Therefore, we asked the reasons why. 50% (32 people) stated that they weren't aware that they could potentially have an online consultation whilst 18.8% (12 people) stated that they do not understand how to arrange an online consultation.

"When Doctors have spent many years training to be in their profession, why on earth would they want to talk to me via a computer!? How will they check my blood pressure or pulse? How will they be able to spot if I am off colour and notice there may be something underlying?

I would prefer the powers that be put the money into Doctors and more of them to shorten waiting times and deal with people that use them, not management that only know how to save money, NOT lives."

Have you ever ordered your repeat prescriptions online using Patient Access?

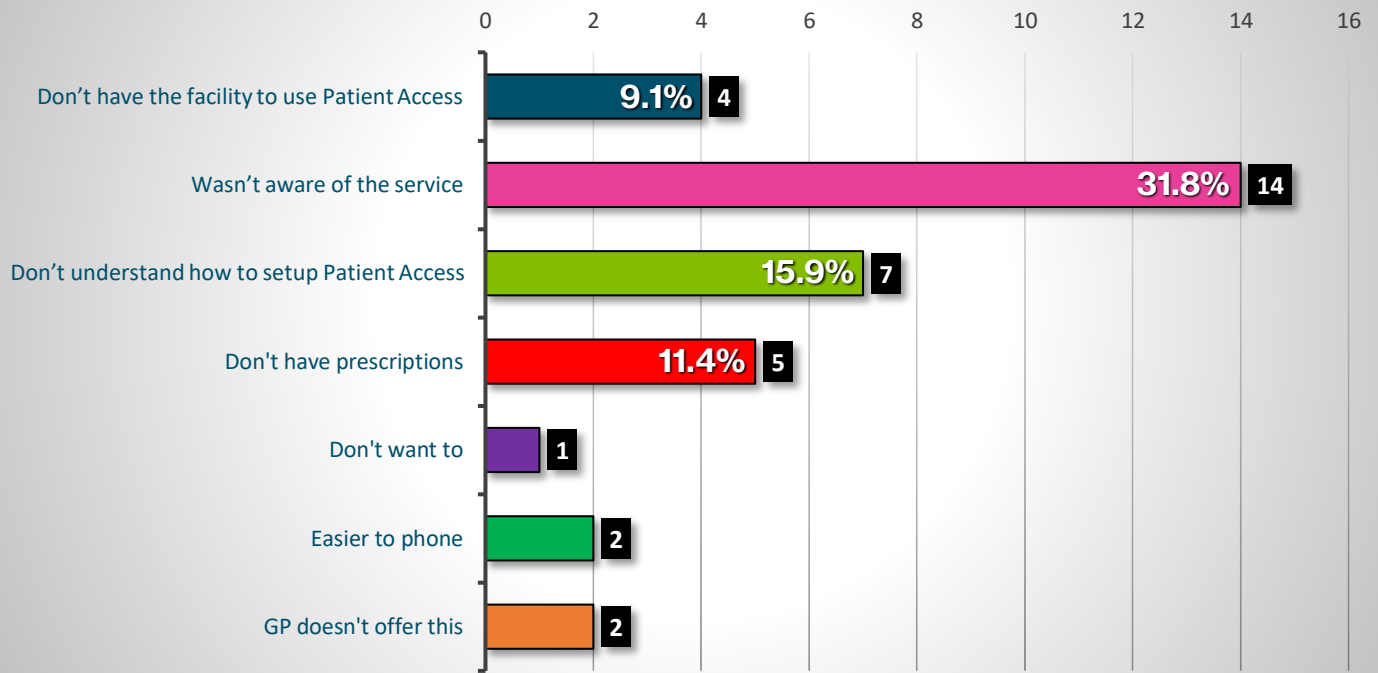**Yes:** 32 — 42.1%
No: 44 — 57.9%
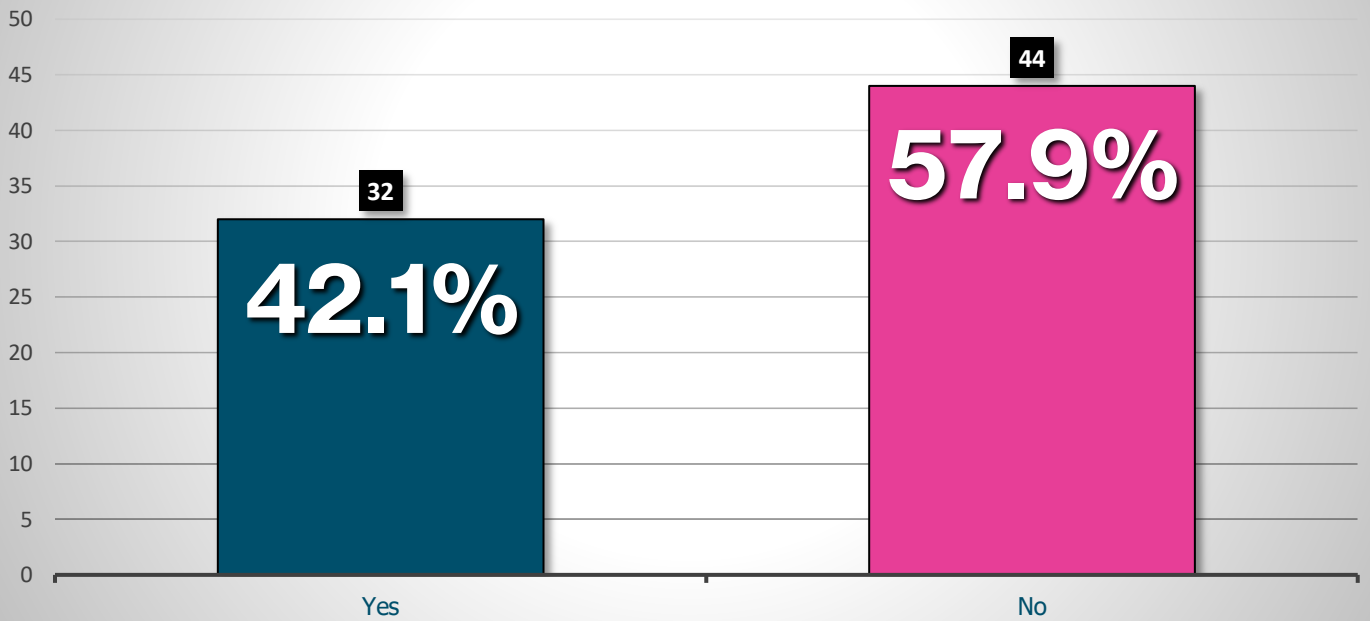
We asked whether people had ever ordered their repeat prescriptions via Patient Access. 57.9% (44 people) stated that they hadn't compared to 42.1% (32 people) who stated that they had.

If yes, how would you rate the Patient Access service?

**Very Good:** 17 — 53.1%
Good: 11 — 34.4%
Poor: 4 — 12.5%
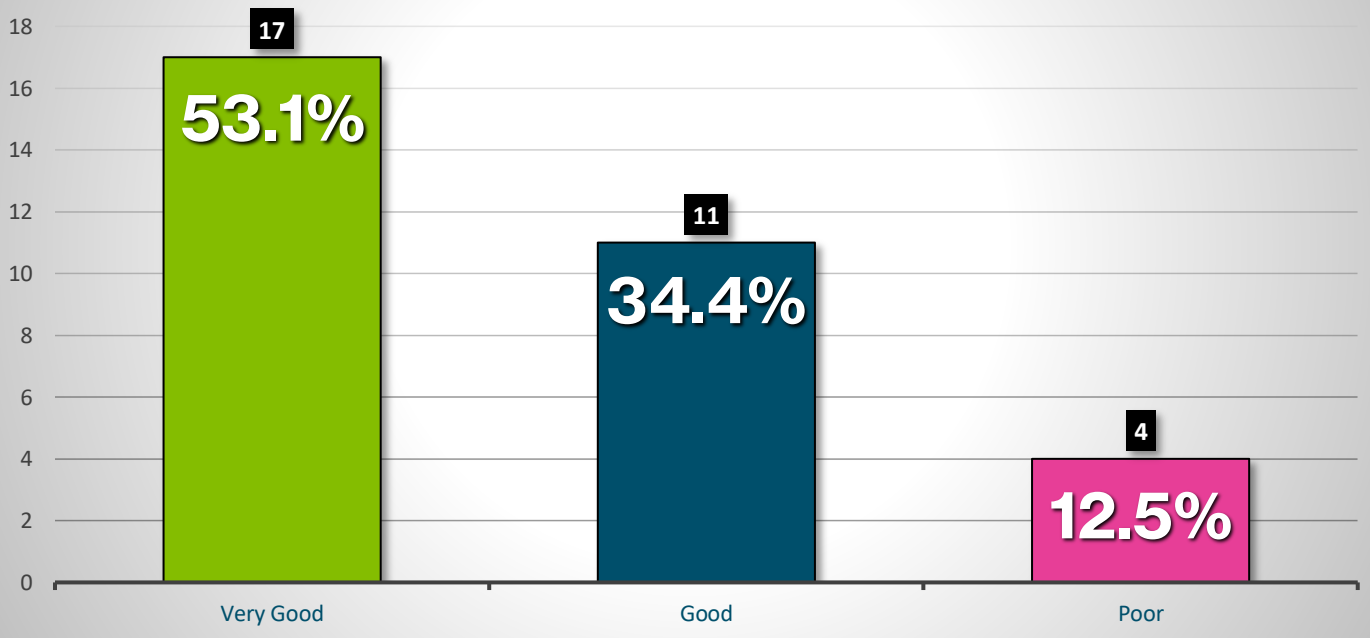
For the 42.1% (32 people) who stated that they had used the Patient Access Service, we asked how they would rate it. 53.1% (17 people) rated it as a very good service and 34.4% (11 people) rated it as good. 12.5% (4 people) rated the service as poor.

If no, please could you explain why?

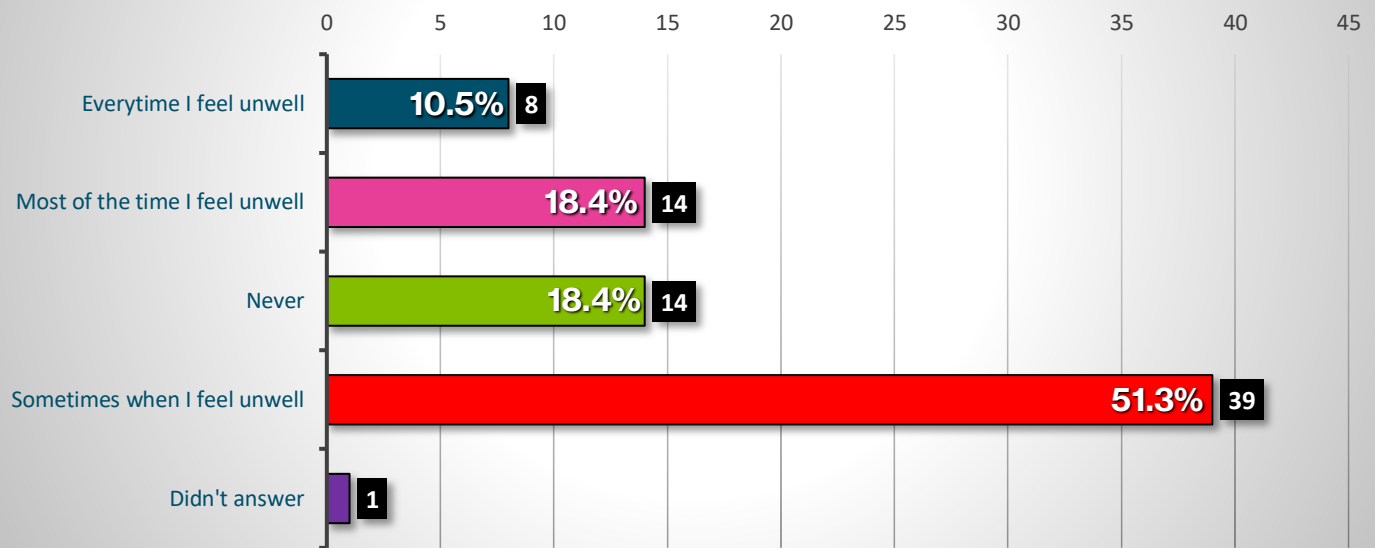| Category	Value
Don't have the facility to use Patient Access	9.1% — 4
Wasn't aware of the service	31.8% — 14
Don't understand how to setup Patient Access	15.9% — 7
Don't have prescriptions	11.4% — 5
Don't want to	1
Easier to phone	2
GP doesn't offer this	2

57.9% (44 people) stated that they hadn't used the Patient Access Service, we asked why. 31.8% (14 people) stated that they weren't aware of the service and 15.9% (7 people) stated that they didn't understand how to set up Patient Access.

If you are not registered with Patient Access would you be interested in finding out more about it from your GP?

|	Value
Yes	68.4% — 26
No	31.6% — 12
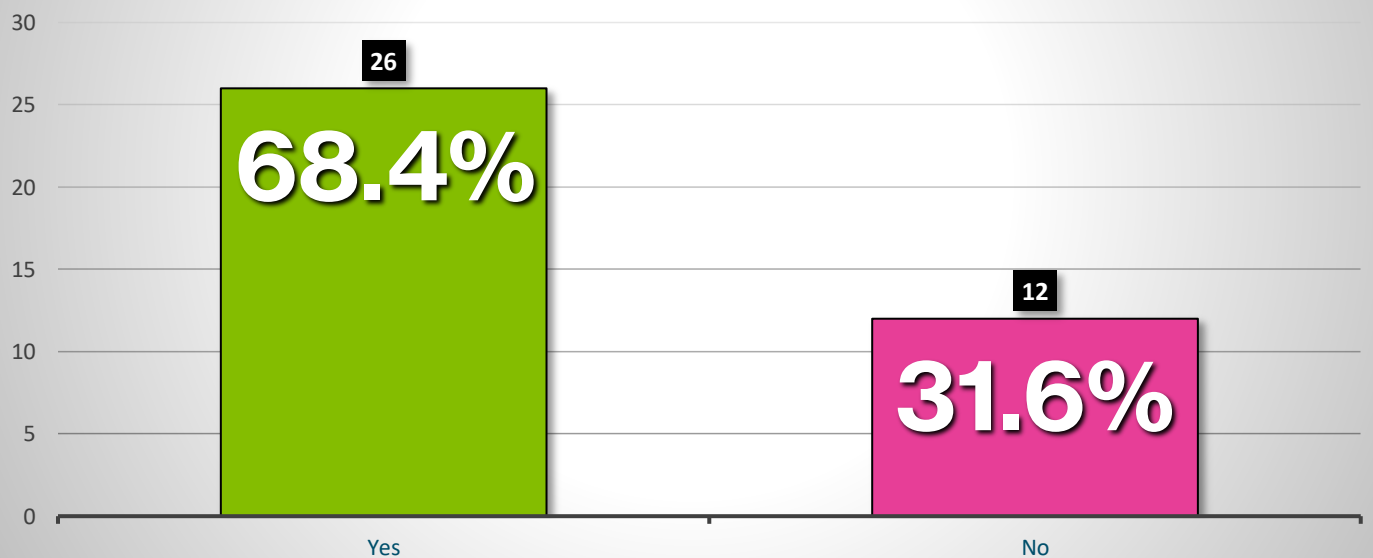
We asked those who had registered with Patient Access, would they be interested in finding out more about it from their GP. 38 people responded with 68.4% (26 people) stating that they would be interested compared to 31.6% (12 people) who stated that they wouldn't.

How often have you used an online search tool (such as Google or Bing) to check your symptoms when you are feeling unwell?

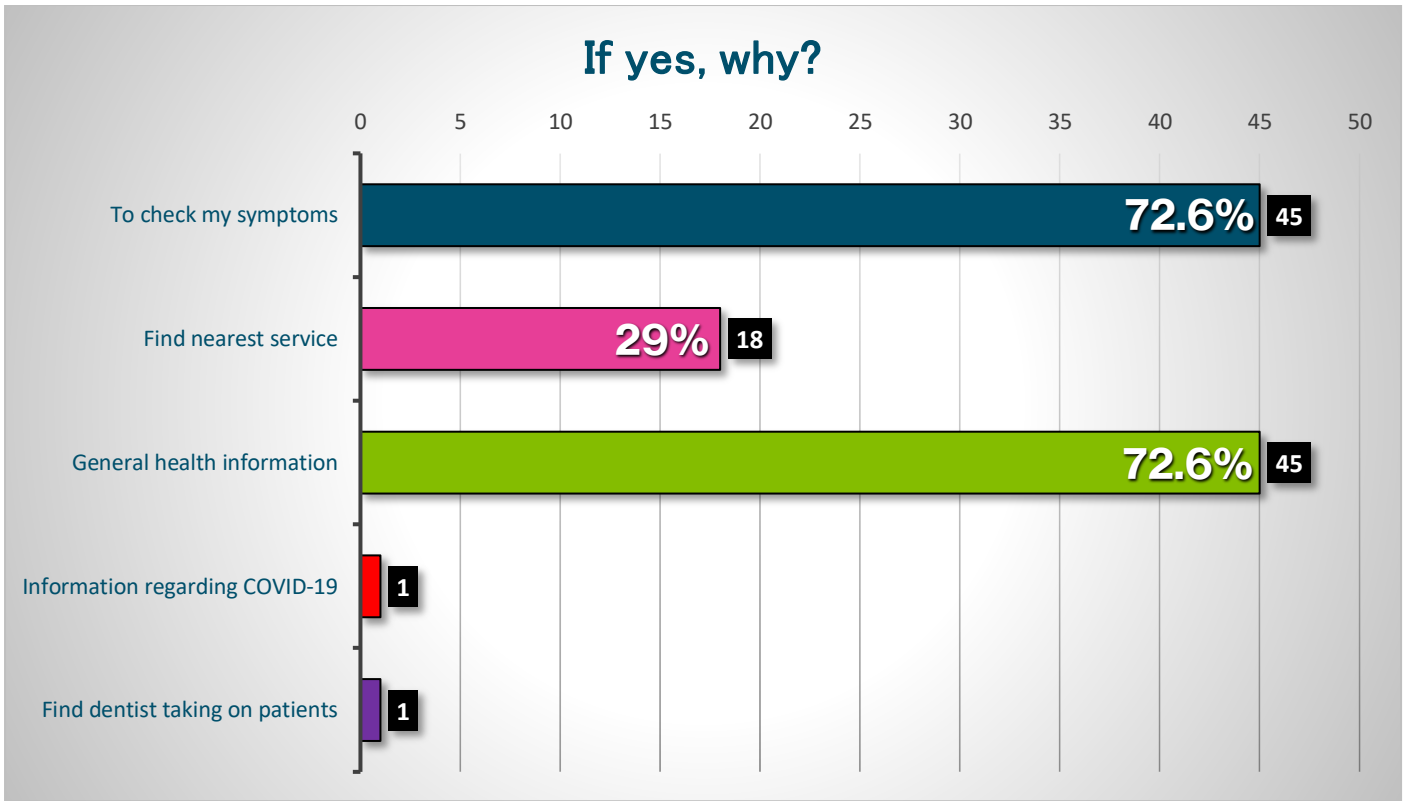| Response	Percentage	Count
Everytime I feel unwell	10.5%	8
Most of the time I feel unwell	18.4%	14
Never	18.4%	14
Sometimes when I feel unwell	51.3%	39
Didn't answer		1

51.3% (39 people) who completed this survey, stated that they sometimes use an online search tool to check their symptoms when they have felt unwell. 18.4% (14 people) stated that they use this tool most of the time when they feel unwell and equally, 18.4% (14 people) stated that they never check their symptoms online using an online search tool.
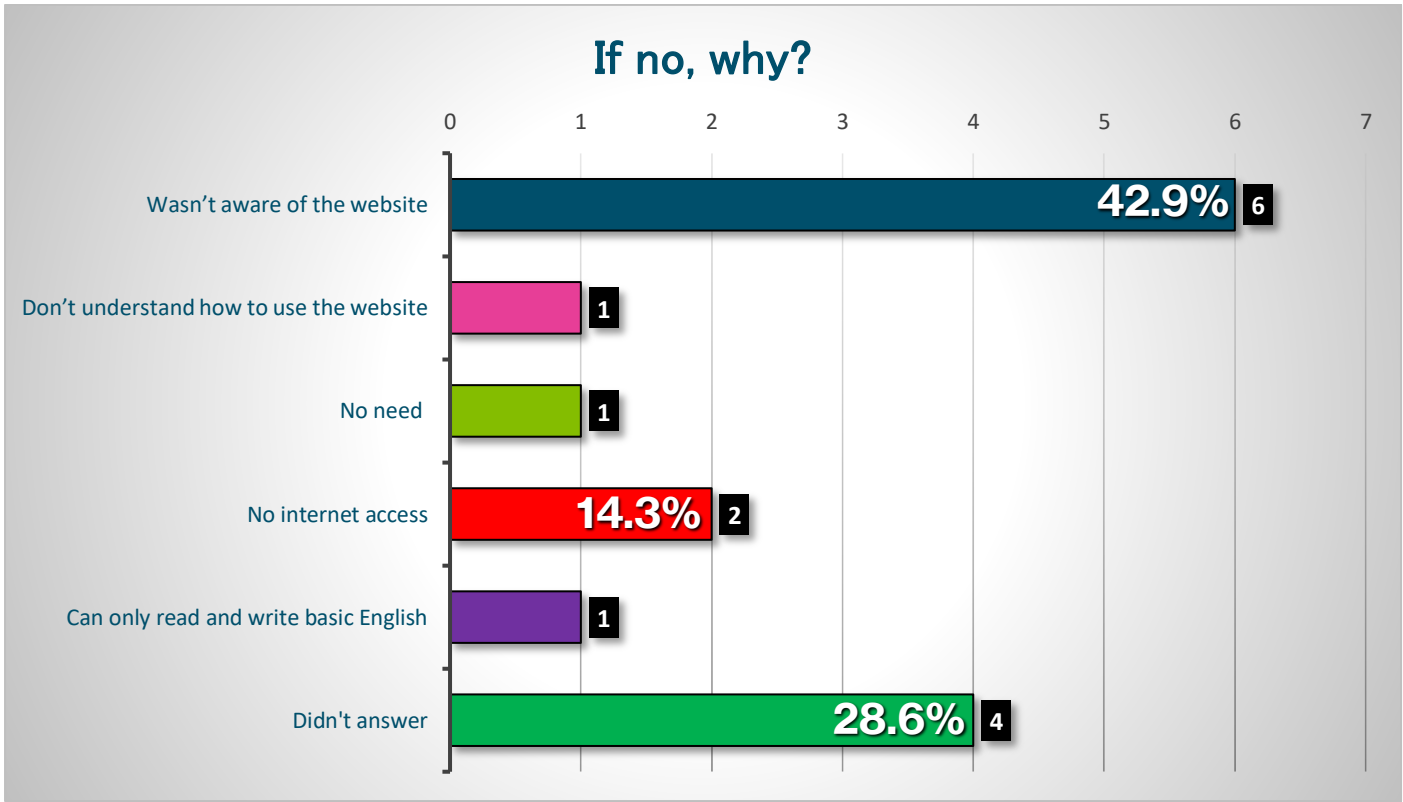
Have you ever used www.nhs.uk?

Yes	No
81.6% (62)	18.4% (14)
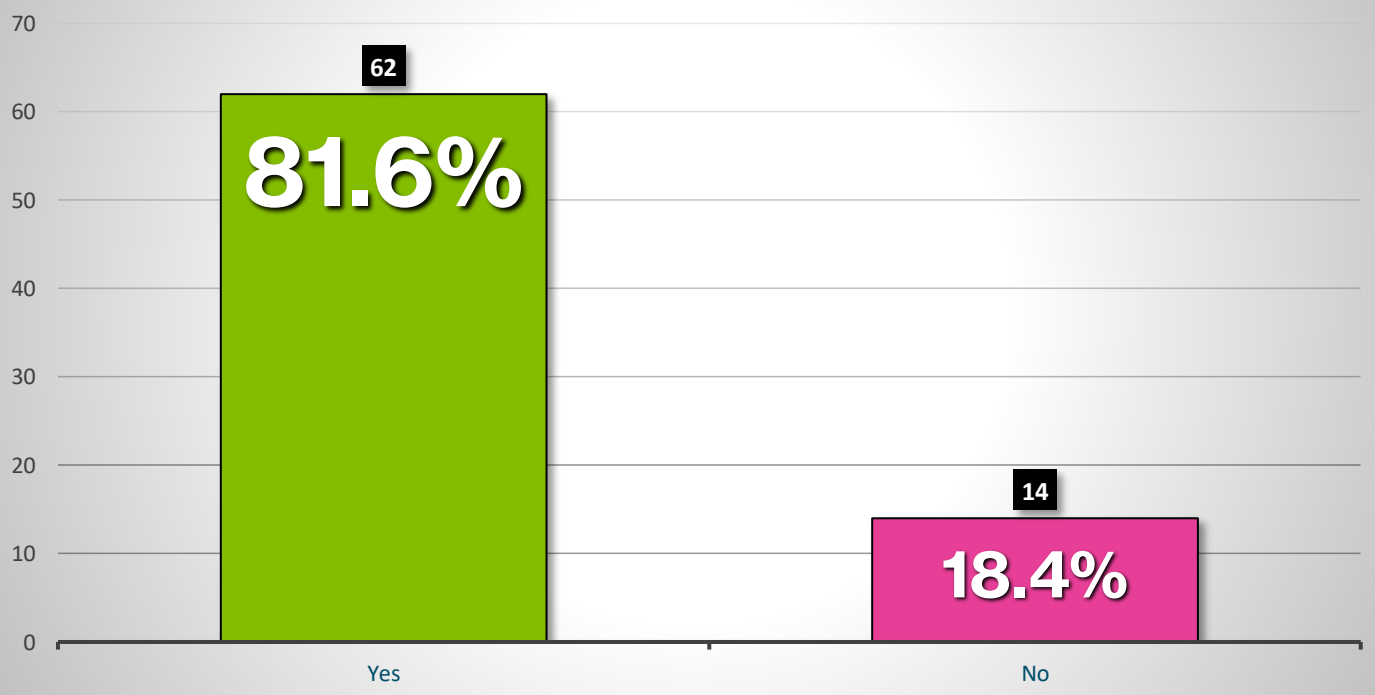
81.6% (62 people) stated that they had used www.nhs.uk previously compared to 18.4% (14 people) who stated that they had not.

If yes, why?

| Reason	Percentage	Count
To check my symptoms	72.6%	45
Find nearest service	29%	18
General health information	72.6%	45
Information regarding COVID-19		1
Find dentist taking on patients		1

We asked the 62 people who stated that they had used www.nhs.uk, why they had done so. This question was multiple choice and people selected more than one answer. The most common responses were to check their symptoms and to find general health information with 45 answers each.

If no, why?

Reason	Percentage	Count
Wasn't aware of the website	42.9%	6
Don't understand how to use the website		1
No need		1
No internet access	14.3%	2
Can only read and write basic English		1
Didn't answer	28.6%	4

Of the 14 people who stated that they hadn't used www.nhs.uk, we asked why. 42.9% (6 people) stated that they weren't aware of the website with 28.6% (4 people) choosing not to answer this question and 14.3% (2 people) stating that they do not have internet access.
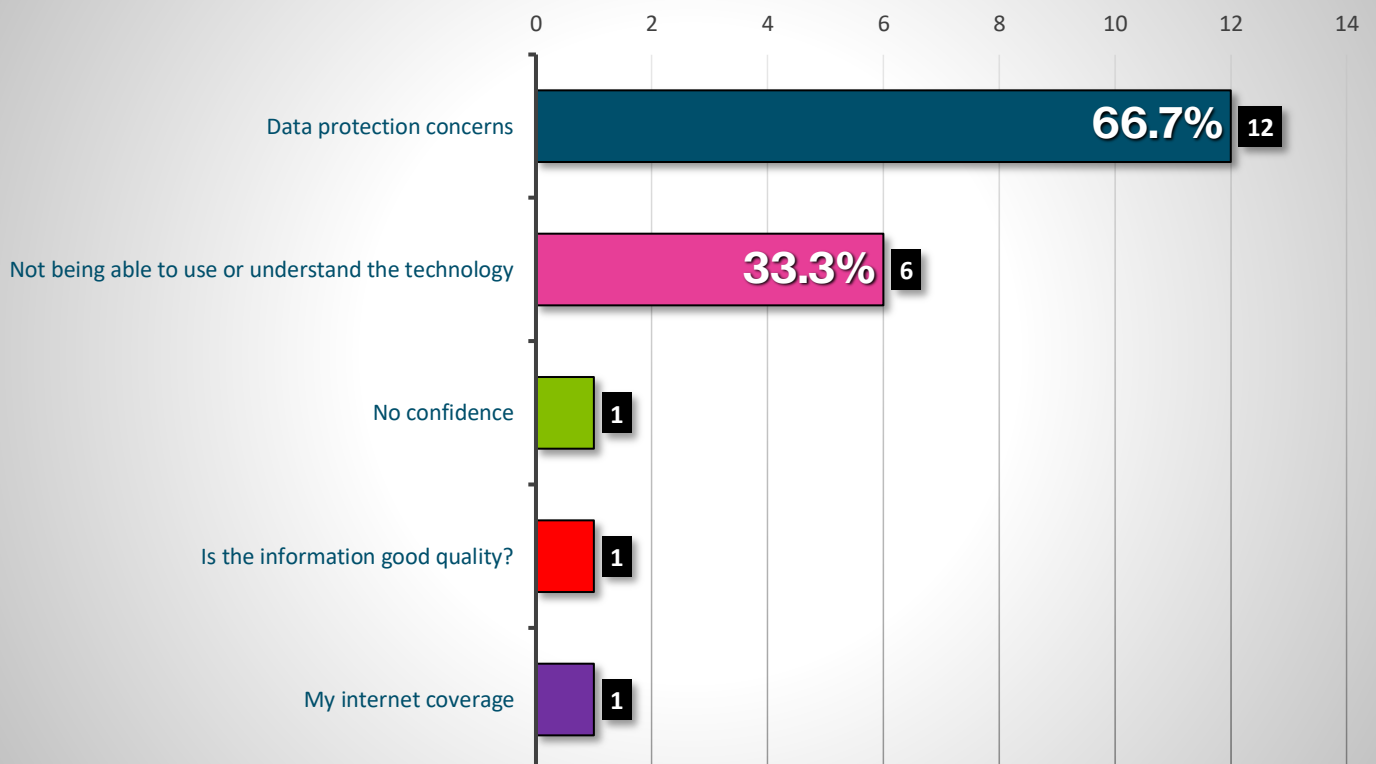
Do you have any concerns about the use of technology in supporting your continued healthcare?
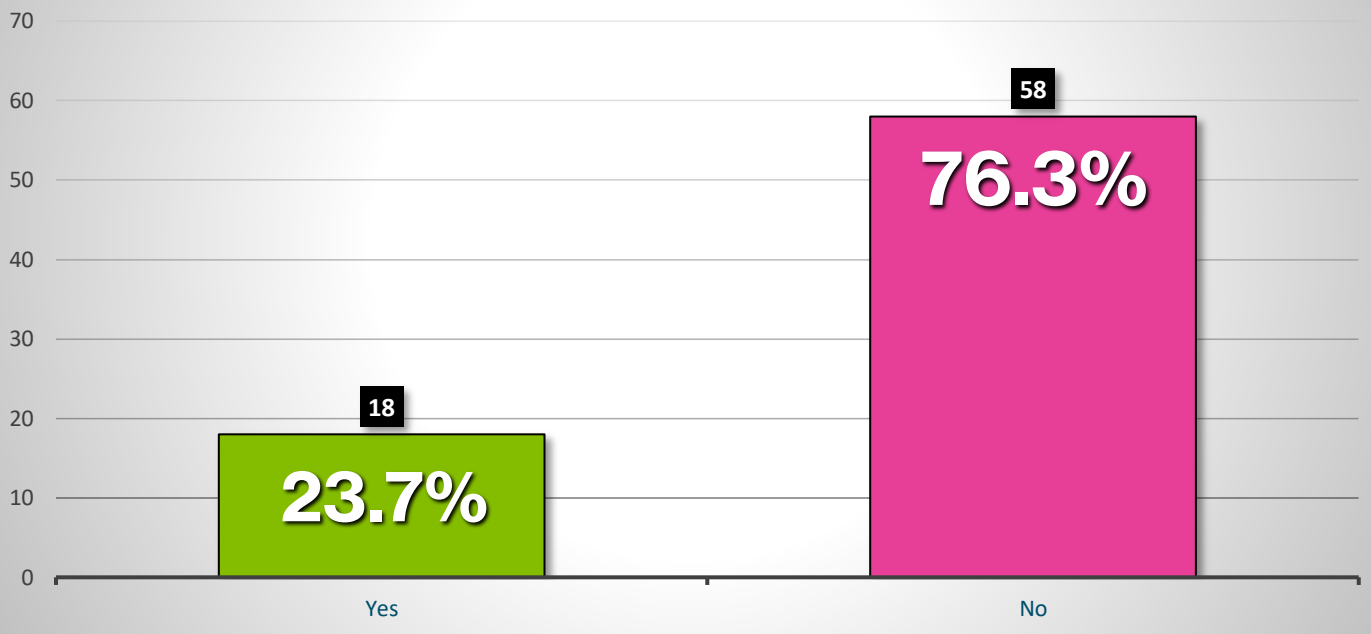
We asked whether people had any concerns about technology supporting their continued healthcare. 76.3% (58 people) stated that they did not have concerns compared to 23.7% (18 people) who did.

> "If I had access to online or email I would use it."

If yes, are any of these your concerns?

Concern	Value
Data protection concerns	66.7% (12)
Not being able to use or understand the technology	33.3% (6)
No confidence	1
Is the information good quality?	1
My internet coverage	1

Of the 18 people who stated that they had concerns, we asked whether it was any of the above statements. 66.7% (12 people) stated their concern was with data protection issues. The next highest statement was 33.3% (6 people) who stated that their concern was not being able to use or understand the technology.

"I would like to see more support available but also more support in helping people to understand the technology they have access too. Make sure what is available at the moment is properly utilised."

"As I am in my 60's and not very technically minded I am not always sure how to use some of the apps that may be available. I would welcome the opportunity to learn and not just be expected to download an app and expect to be able to use it. I am also concerned about protecting my personal data."

"It concerns me that there is information overload, too much to read on-line and his can lead to missing important key messages.

People are flooded with e-mails, text, WhatsApp, Twitter, on-line training, on-line support etc. Sometimes this is useful, other times when people are sick, depressed, struggling, they want to speak to someone instead of exploring many IT sites that do not always help."
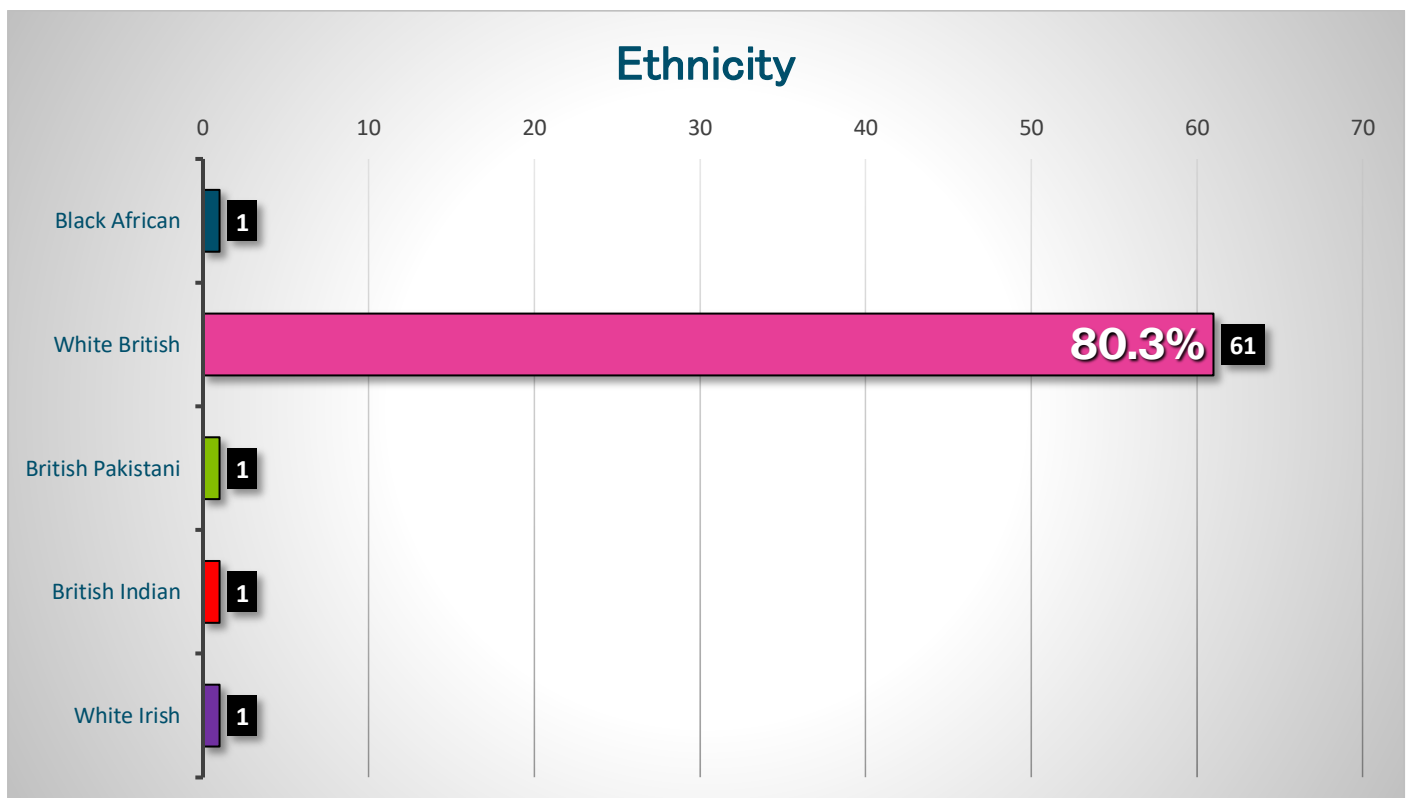
"I think each GP surgery should have a 'TV' screen in the waiting room to announce appointments when the GP is ready to see them for people who have hearing problems.

The current system of verbally announcing it is dependent on people being able to hear. A TV screen allows people to see as well as hear."
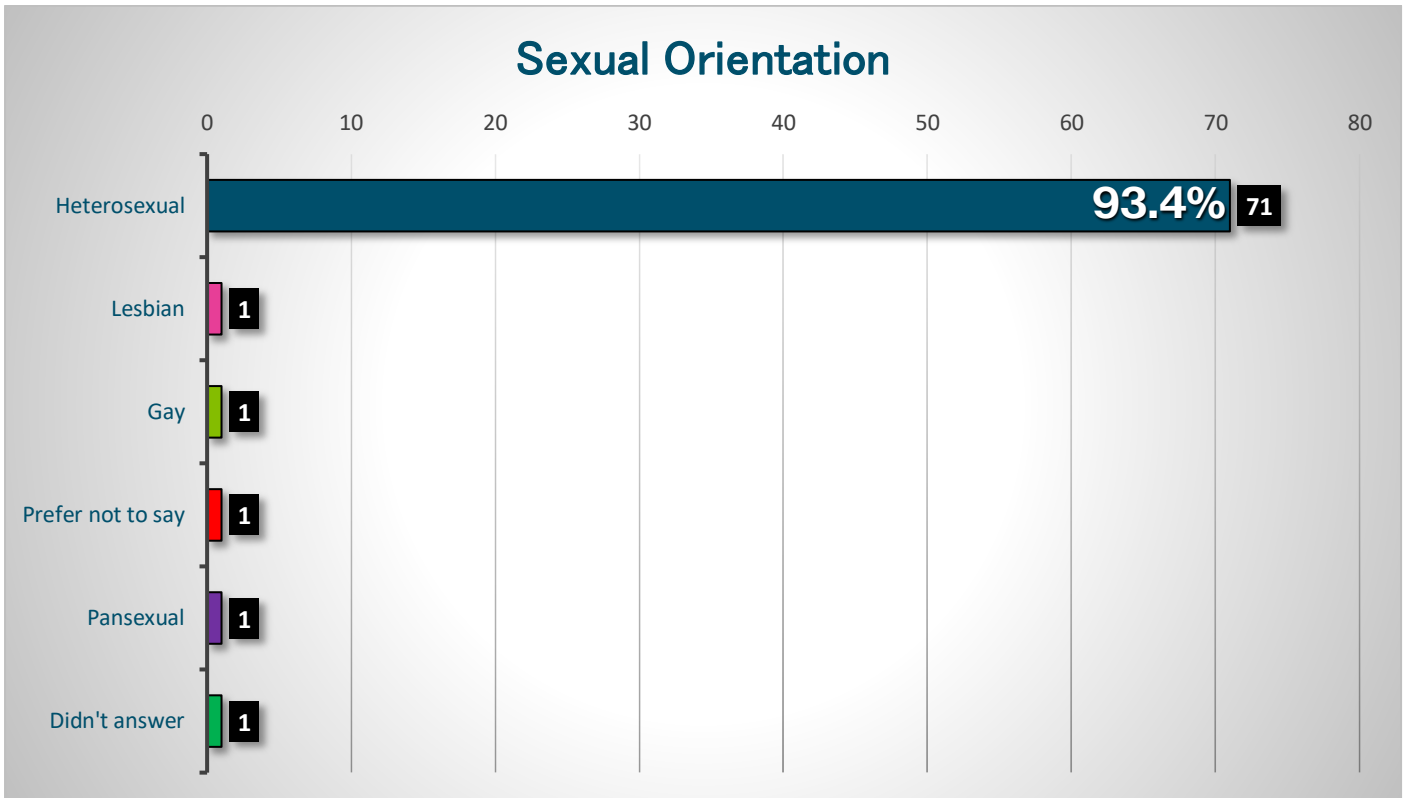
Demographics

Gender

| Gender	Count	Percentage
Male	11	14.5%
Female	64	84.2%
Prefer not to say	1	
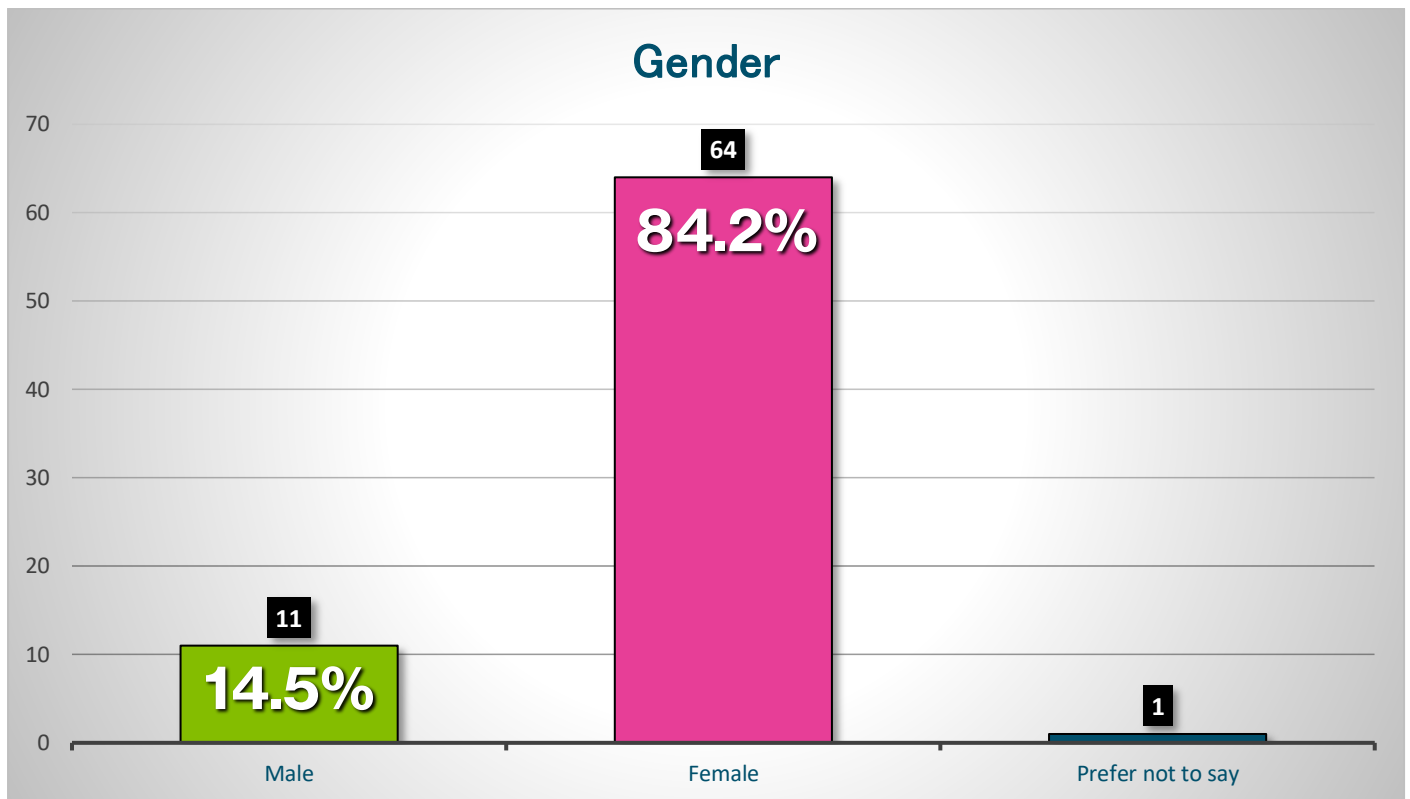
Of the 76 people who completed the survey, 84.2% (64 people) were female compared to 14.5% (11 people) who were male. One person declined to answer this question.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Count
Black African	1
White British	61 (80.3%)
British Pakistani	1
British Indian	1
White Irish	1

80.3% (61 people) who completed this survey identified as White British. Other ethnicities were represented in lower numbers. 9 people chose not to answer this question.
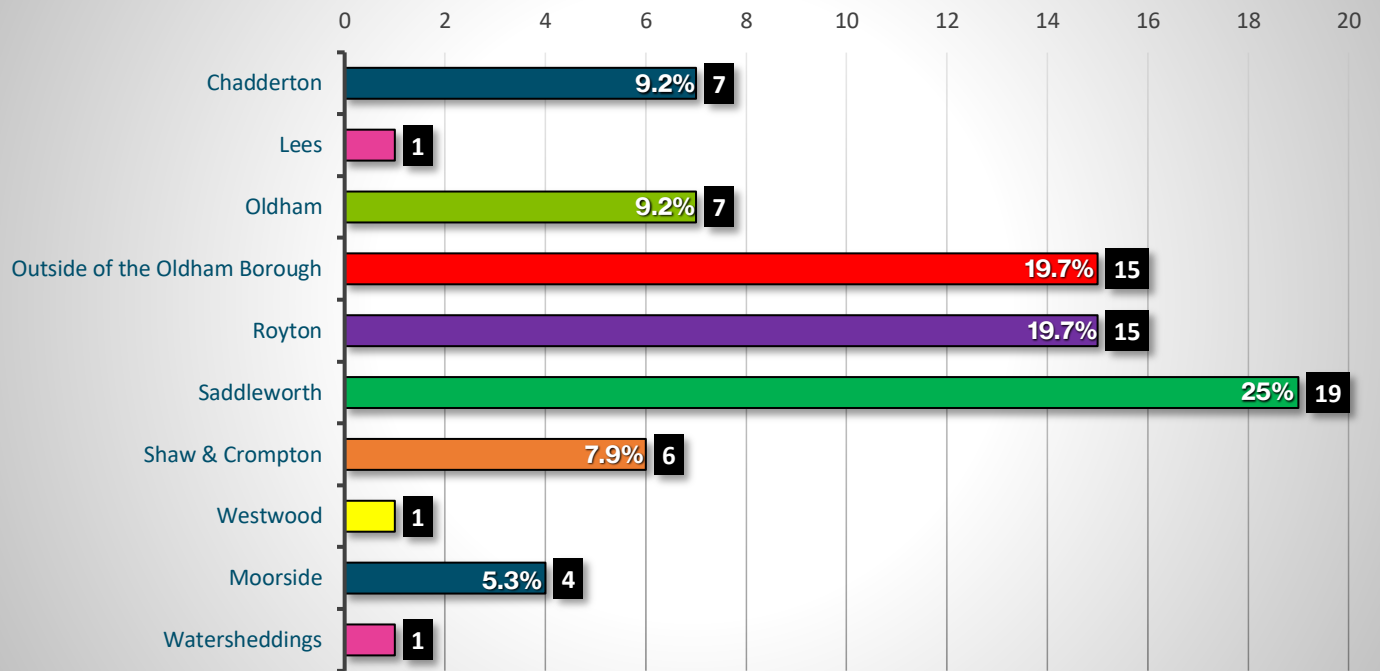
Sexual Orientation

Orientation	Value
Heterosexual	93.4% — 71
Lesbian	1
Gay	1
Prefer not to say	1
Pansexual	1
Didn't answer	1

93.4% (71 people) identified their sexual orientation as heterosexual. Other orientations were represented in lower numbers.

Do you see yourself as a disabled person?

Answer	Value
Yes	17.1% — 13
No	82.9% — 63
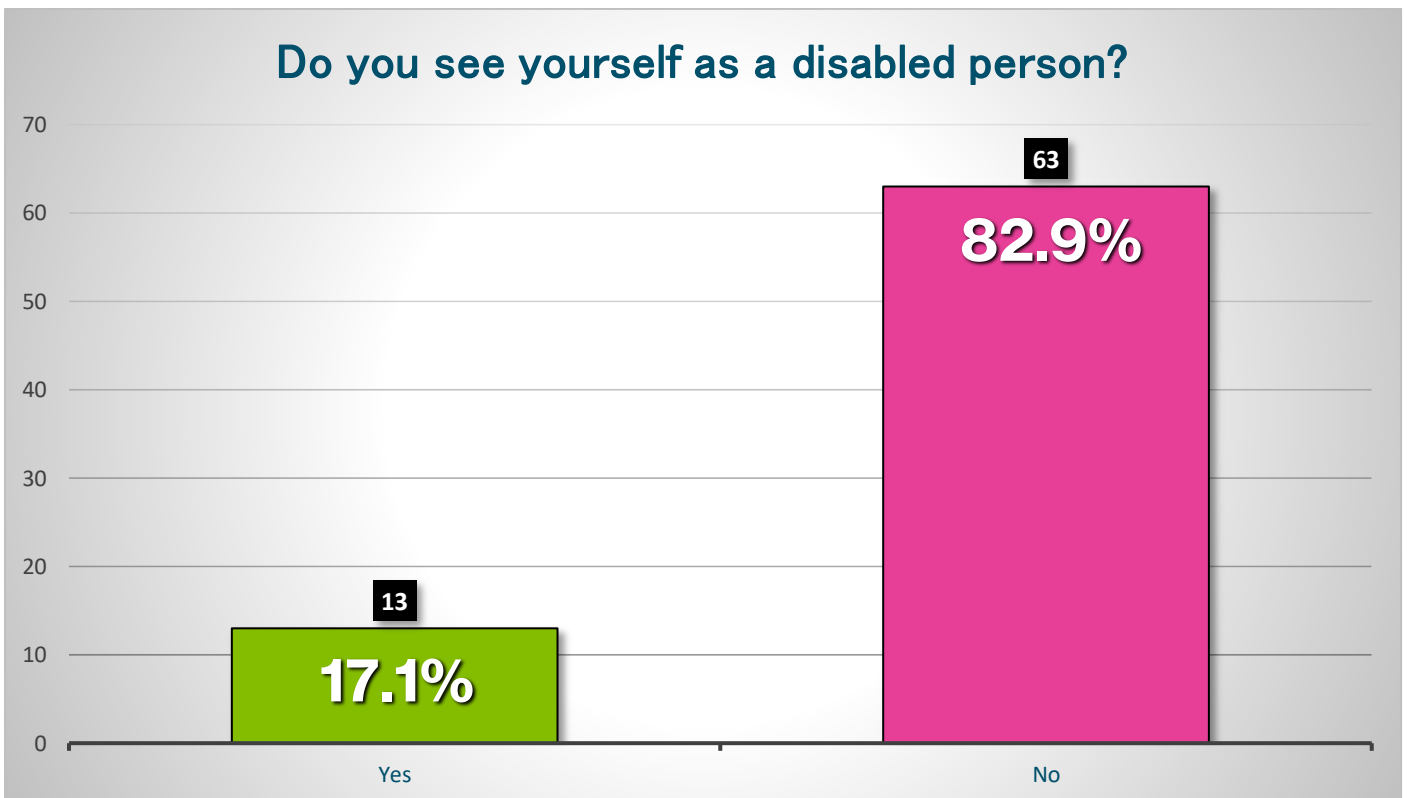
82.9% (63 people) do not see themselves as a disabled person compared to 17.1% (13 people) who stated that they feel they are a disabled person.

Town or area you live in

Area	Value	Count
Chadderton	9.2%	7
Lees		1
Oldham	9.2%	7
Outside of the Oldham Borough	19.7%	15
Royton	19.7%	15
Saddleworth	25%	19
Shaw & Crompton	7.9%	6
Westwood		1
Moorside	5.3%	4
Watersheddings		1

Most areas throughout the Oldham borough were represented within this survey. 25% (19 people) were from Saddleworth and 19.7% (15 people) were from Royton. There was also 19.7% (15 people) who completed this survey from outside of the Oldham borough.