

## Young Healthwatch pilot

Sefton CVS were commissioned to carry out a pilot project to ascertain what children and young people locally thought about the health care services they receive. Between April and September 2015, Caroline Scott and Emma Lambert visited young people in schools, community centres, at public events and promoted an online survey using social media. We also visited parent/carer groups to speak to the families of children and young people with disabilities. This report summarised what young people told us and offers recommendations for engaging young people in the future.

### How were young people involved?

- 125 young people completed the online survey
- 5 young people formed project steering group
- 51 young people took part in chat groups
- 3 young people were interviewed to be a case study



### Methodology

The online survey was designed in collaboration with the young people's steering group. It aims to capture a broad range of baseline data about what services young people use and how they feel about the quality of the care they are given.



## Summary of findings

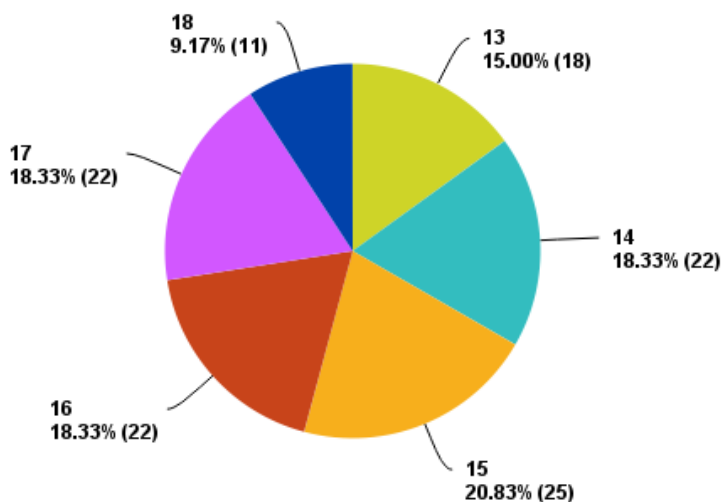
- 21 young people told us they have a disability or a health condition that affects their life
- 95% had accessed some kind of healthcare in the past 12 months
- young people found spoken information from a health professional easier to understand than written information
- More than half of young people surveyed stated that sometimes they did not understand information written or verbal from their appointments
- Chat group feedback told us that young people do not feel engaged by healthcare professionals and leave the communication about appointments and treatment to the adult in their life.
- 65% of young people told us they were made to feel welcome by professionals
- 45 % of young people tell us sometimes the surroundings do not make them feel comfortable. Examples of this are, age appropriate spaces, privacy and quiet, calm waiting spaces for young people who may require it.
- Although 53% of young people told us they would know what do if they were not happy with healthcare, the chat groups informed us that most would go to their parent/carer.
- No young people we met face to face were aware of a formal complaints procedure that they could use.

## What we found out from the survey

We spoke to 125 Young People.

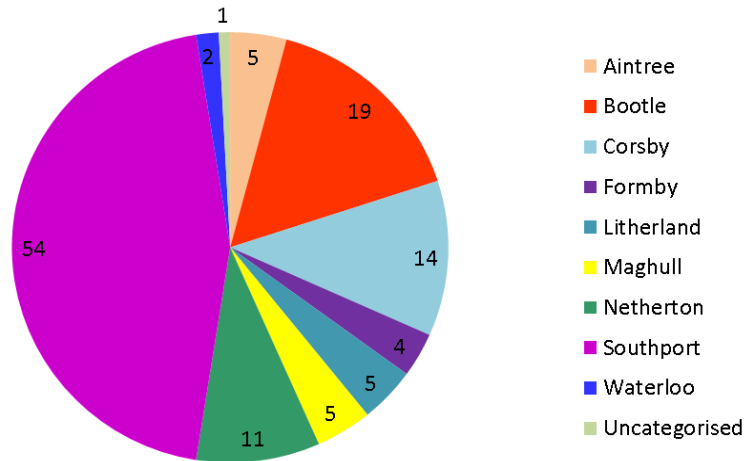
### Q1 How old are you?

Answered: 120 Skipped: 5



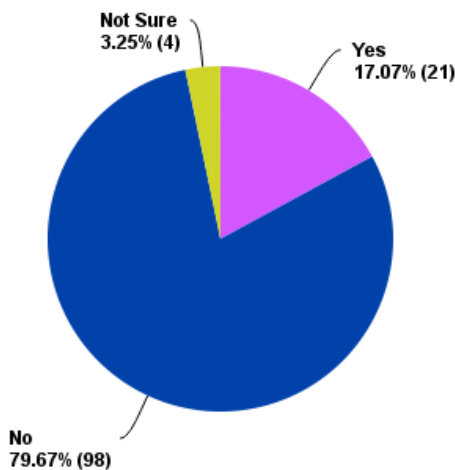
## Q2 What is your postcode?

Answered: 120 Skipped: 5



## Q3 Would you say that you had a disability or condition that affects your life?

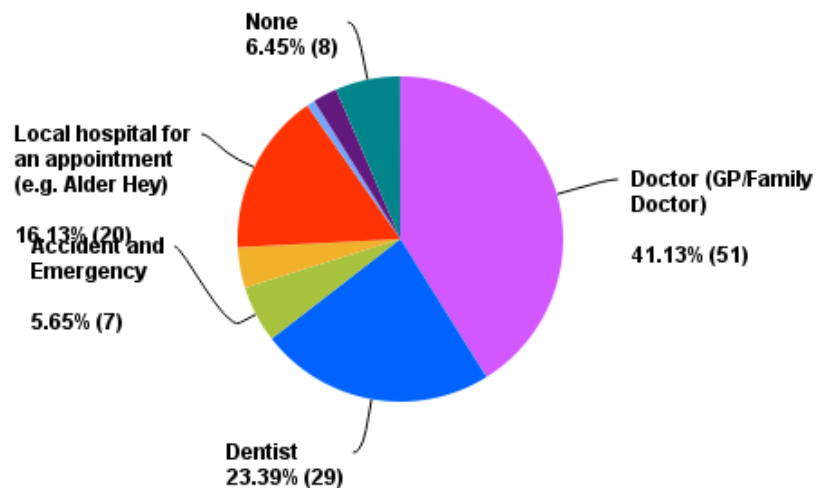
Answered: 123 Skipped: 2



17% of the young people disclosed that they have a disability or a health condition that affects their life, including; Asthma, Autism, Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, ADHD, Subclinical Hypothyroidism, Mental Health Conditions, Epilepsy and Hypermobility.

## Q4 Have you been for a health appointment in the last year? Where did you go?

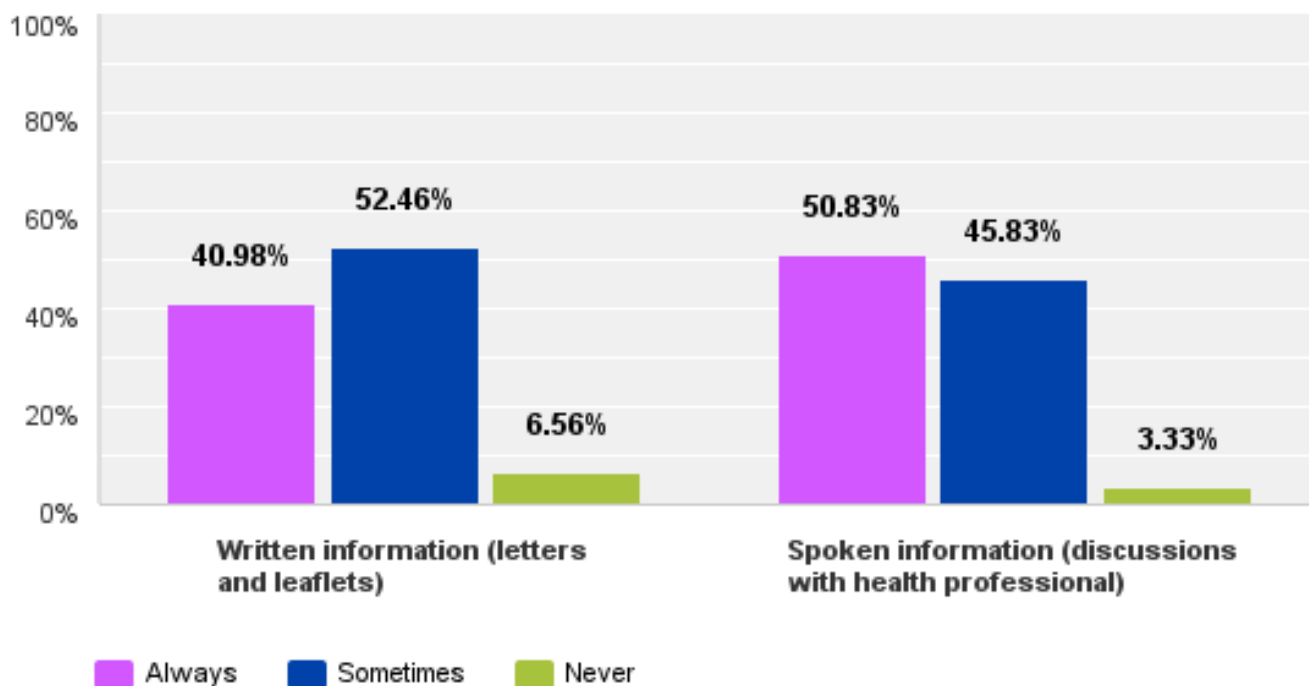
Answered: 124 Skipped: 1



As well as accessing the health appointments at the places indicated in this chart, young people also accessed CAMHs, Orthodontists, Physiotherapists and Walk in Centres.

## Q5 When you get information about your health appointment do you find it easy to understand?

Answered: 124 Skipped: 1



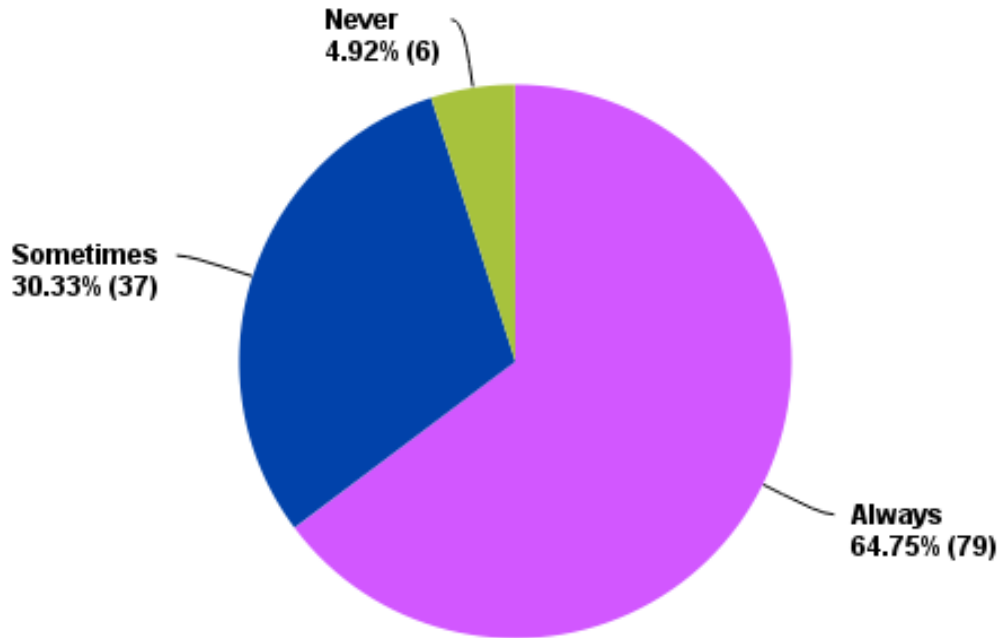
A high proportion of young people surveyed feel they understand the information they receive relating to their health.

Here are some examples of the comments young people made;

- The language used by healthcare professionals being too complicated
- Young people needing help and support from parents and carers to understand the information they are given
- Professionals talk directly to parents and carers rather than to the young person during appointments
- One young person identified that letters often have spelling and grammatical errors

## Q6 Do the staff you meet at your health appointment make you feel welcome?

Answered: 122 Skipped: 3



More than half of young people are happy with the welcome they received at healthcare appointments

Comments included

“They are kind, considerate and thoughtful.”

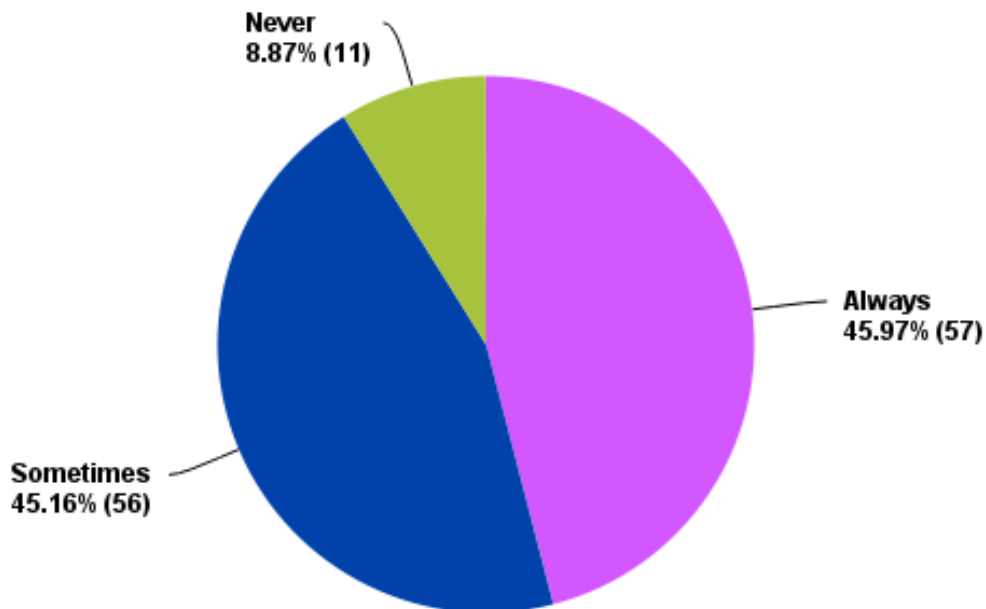
“Always ask how I have been”

“waiting room too big, nothing to do”

“Often rude, look bored, tired and that they don't want to be there (excluding the doctors and so on, they are usually friendly)”

## Q7 Do the surroundings make you feel comfortable? (e.g. The building/ Facilities that you use)

Answered: 124 Skipped: 1



Comments from the participants included

“Nice colours, interesting things to read like books and leaflets”

“It is clean and hygienic”

“It's in a family community in a very relaxed area”

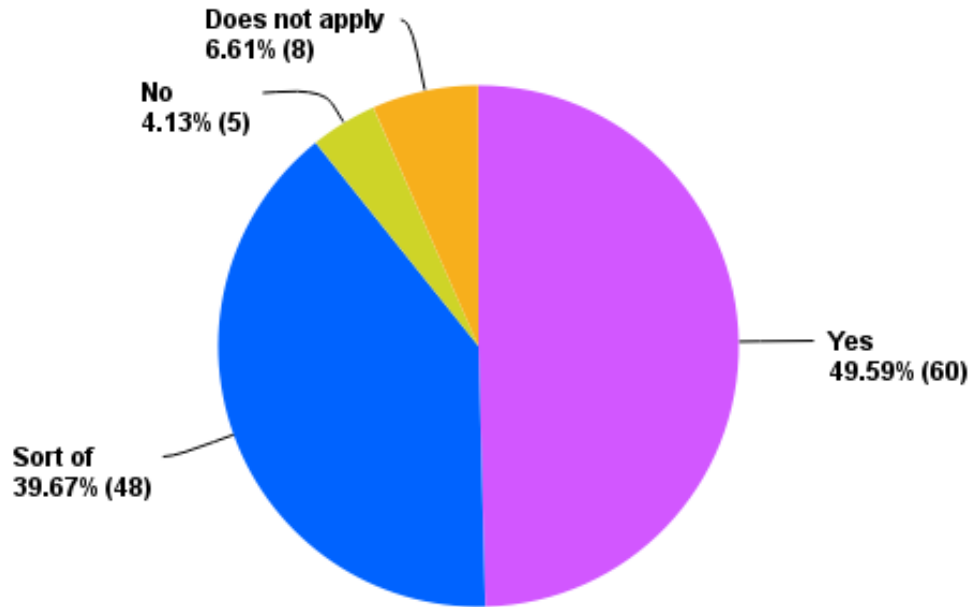
“Don't like talking to people I don't know”

“Local doctors/ dentist is dull, plain and boring”

“I'm not very comfortable in a clinical environment”

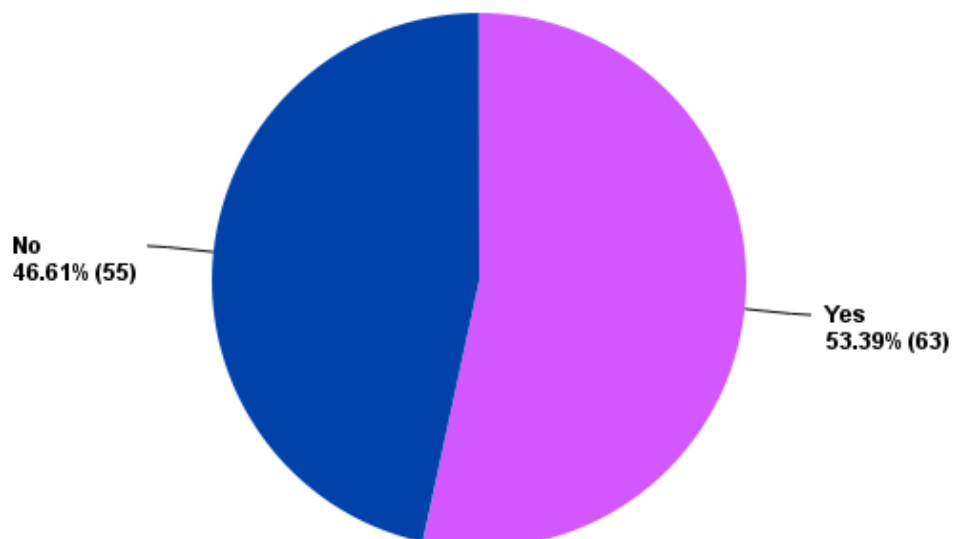
### Q8 After your appointment, did you understand what would happen to you next and why?

Answered: 121 Skipped: 4



### Q9 If at any time you were not happy with health services would you know what to do?

Answered: 118 Skipped: 7



The majority of comments from participants stated that they would tell their parents if they were not happy with the services they received.



## What we found out from the chat groups

When asked if the young people find it easy to understand the information they receive from health care professionals (spoke and written) the common theme was that any written information is given to parents/carers to read and then they inform the young person if they need to attend an appointment and when. Some young people who have developed a relationship with their doctors or dentists over a long period of time feel that their doctors take the time to help them understand the important information.

Some young people prefer it if their doctors/dentists speak to their parents if it is too complicated for them to understand.



The themes in relating to staff making young people feel welcome were;

- If a young person has been visiting the same medical centre for a long time and the staff know them then they can be really friendly.
- Feedback about doctors was positive but comments about nurses being too busy to stop and talk
- Young people felt that dentists not being very nice and shouting at young people for breaking braces or needing fillings.

The majority of young people stated that if they were unhappy with the service they received they would tell a parent or carer.



Some young people were aware that they could speak to a member of staff, fill in a compliments slip or send an email to make a complaint.

Some young people stated they would just complain to themselves rather than tell someone else.



Some young people felt that waiting areas are often too quiet and boring, they do not like to wait there to see their doctor, dentist or nurse.

Some stated that the toilets in their medical centre were not very nice while others thought they were always clean and tidy.

One young person felt that the way a waiting room is set up is very important as in the medical centre they attend the chairs are set up in a circle which makes them feel uncomfortable because everybody has to face each other.

Participants suggested comics, books and magazines in the waiting area would be nice.

### Top Tips from Chat Groups

- Have the latest toys in the waiting area
- Invent a toothpaste filling so you don't have to give us needles and hurt us
- Be nice
- Be happy
- Don't invite us back for dental checks as often
- Be good
- Don't talk down to us

## Case studies

Danny is 17 and a non-binary trans person with a history of mental health service use. This is their story. They had used CAMHS to address their low mood and anxiety starting at age 15 but after having limited success at the age of 16 was discharged by CAMHS by mutual consent. When they went back to their GP after feeling no better, Danny was referred to adult mental health services. On reflecting on the difference on the two services they have the following points to share:

“My notes were not shared between the two services, even though the GP had told Adult MH that I had been a CAMHS service user. This simple thing would have helped me not have to go through my story again, more than once with different practitioners. This can be extremely upsetting at such a difficult time.”

“I was not properly briefed about how different AMHS and CAMHS would be. During a painful point in my life I had to get used to two different practitioners and two different settings- at CAMHS I had everything

Laura is 17 and has Spina Bifida, hydrocephalus and Fragile X Syndrome. She has attended many appointments with doctors from an early age and relies on her parents for support when attending health appointments.

Laura doesn't find it easy to understand the information the doctors give her and so she relies on her family to help keep her healthy but Laura feels that her mum may not always tell her everything to stop her getting upset.

Laura likes one of the doctors who she sees about her 'Shunt' (for her Hydrocephalus) because he is nice to her but she doesn't always get to see him when she has an appointment. She would like to see the same doctor each time she has an appointment.

## Case studies

Hannah is 16 years of age and was born with joint hypermobility syndrome which particularly affects her hips. Hannah is also on the Autism Spectrum and attends special educational school. In general Hannah has a very happy and friendly disposition, rarely complaining about anything and looks for the positive in all situations.

Hannah has attended regular health appointments from an early age to monitor her joint hypermobility condition and in the past 12 months specialists advised the best course of treatment was an operation on her hip. Hannah relies on her parents to help her understand the information that doctors and nurses give her.

During her treatment Hannah felt that the doctors and nurses were very nice to her and always friendly.

She felt that during her stay in hospital the food was not very nice and her family would often bring food for her during visits.

Hannah only felt uncomfortable in hospital when other people came in who were noisy because they were hurt.

## Recommendations

**An effort to publicise complaints/compliments procedures directed to young people.** This could be achieved through a young person led social and traditional media campaign. The aim of this campaign would be to empower other young people to have their say if they wish, and not just leave it to the adult in their life.

**Readable information tailored to young people about their care - one adult and one young person letter for example.** Perhaps young people would feel more involved in their care if they were able to better understand written materials. Parent carers also tell us that sometimes letters can be hard to understand. Young people could lead on standards for improvement in this area.

**The steering group are keen to explore the 'You're Welcome' programme as they like the idea of young people having the opportunity to quality assure services.**

Young people know what works well for young people. If given the opportunity they would be well placed to inspect healthcare services, celebrate those that do well and coach those that need improvement.

This document was created

by

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On behalf of

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In partnership with

Sefton CVS

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**Sefton CVS**  
Supporting Local Communities