



healthwatch

Healthwatch Bracknell Forest
Survey report on Access to GP
Practices conducted in October 2017

Background Information

GP Services, particularly access to and ability to make an appointment at a convenient time and in a timely manner, remains the topic Healthwatch Bracknell Forest receives the most feedback on from patients and members of the local community.

After a particular conversation thread on a local social media group which appeared to highlight some concerning issues particularly about contacting some practices by telephone, Healthwatch Bracknell Forest decided to conduct a short online survey to establish if the reported issue was having an impact on more than a couple of individuals who had originally started the discussion.

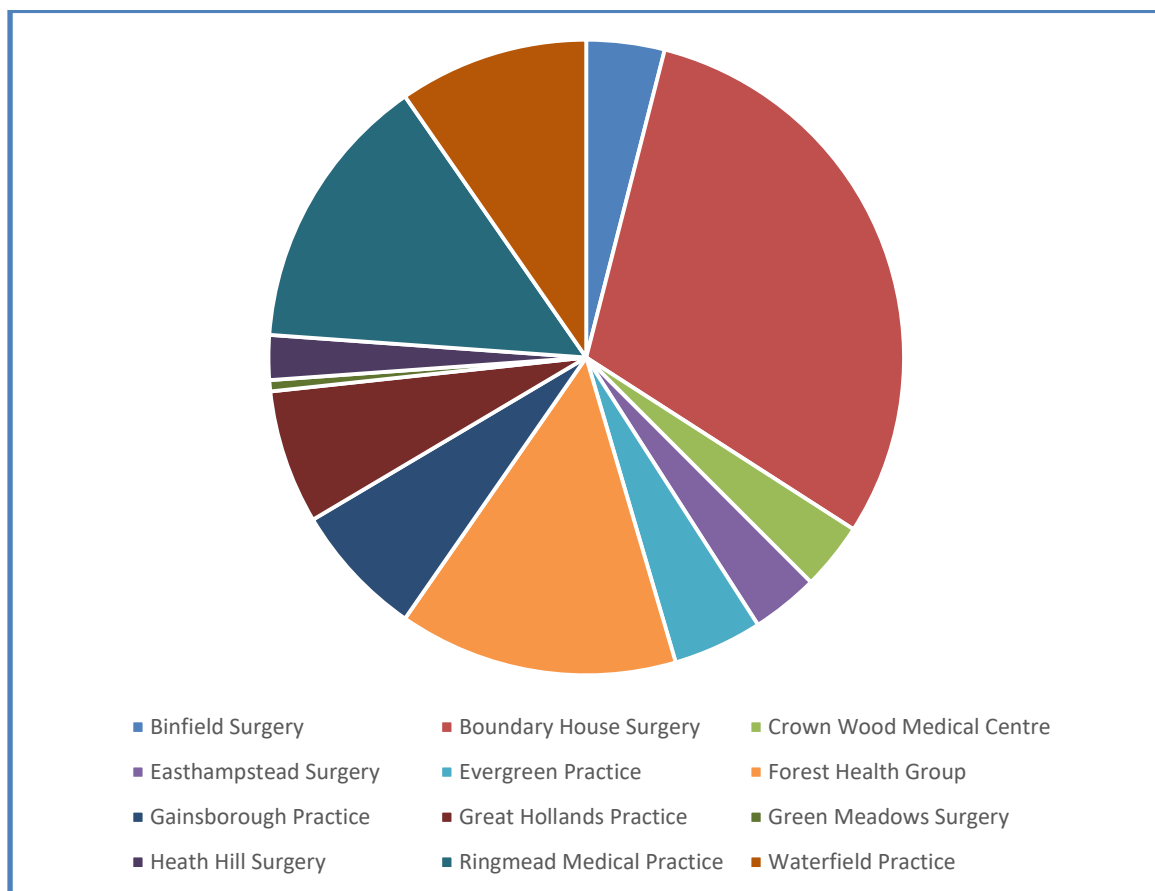
The survey was open for 10 days from the 17th October. All responses were received in the first week. Feedback was mainly received about practices in Binfield, Bracknell and Crowthorne; the survey was mainly promoted within the Bracknell focused social media groups that initiated the survey, so this was not a surprising result.

Some practices have more than one site: Forest Health Group, Ringmead Medical Practice, Sandhurst Group Practice (no responses in survey) and Waterfield Practice. This survey gave respondents the option to identify their Practice, not the site.

Results

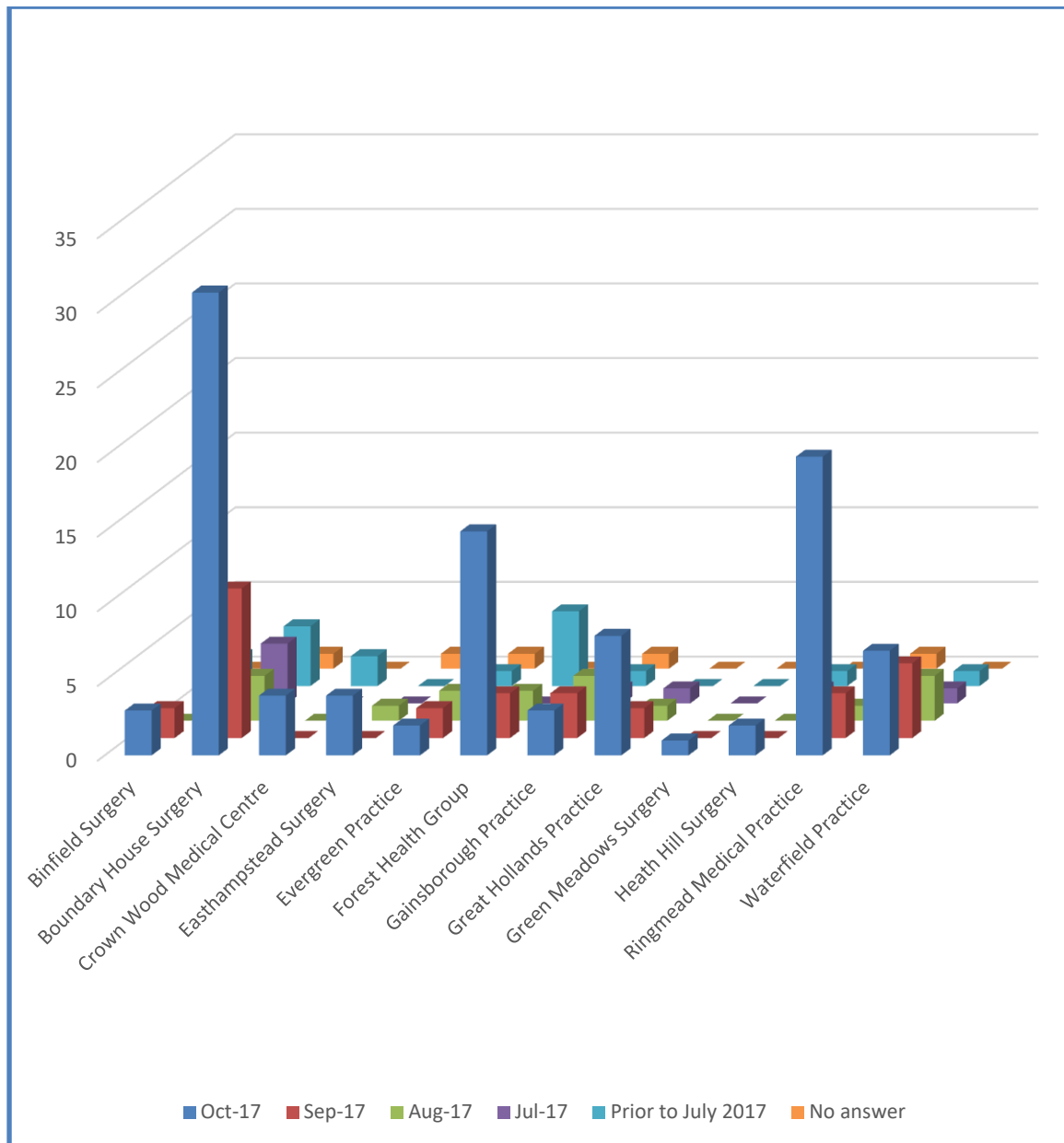
The survey had 176 responses.

What GP Practice are you a patient at?



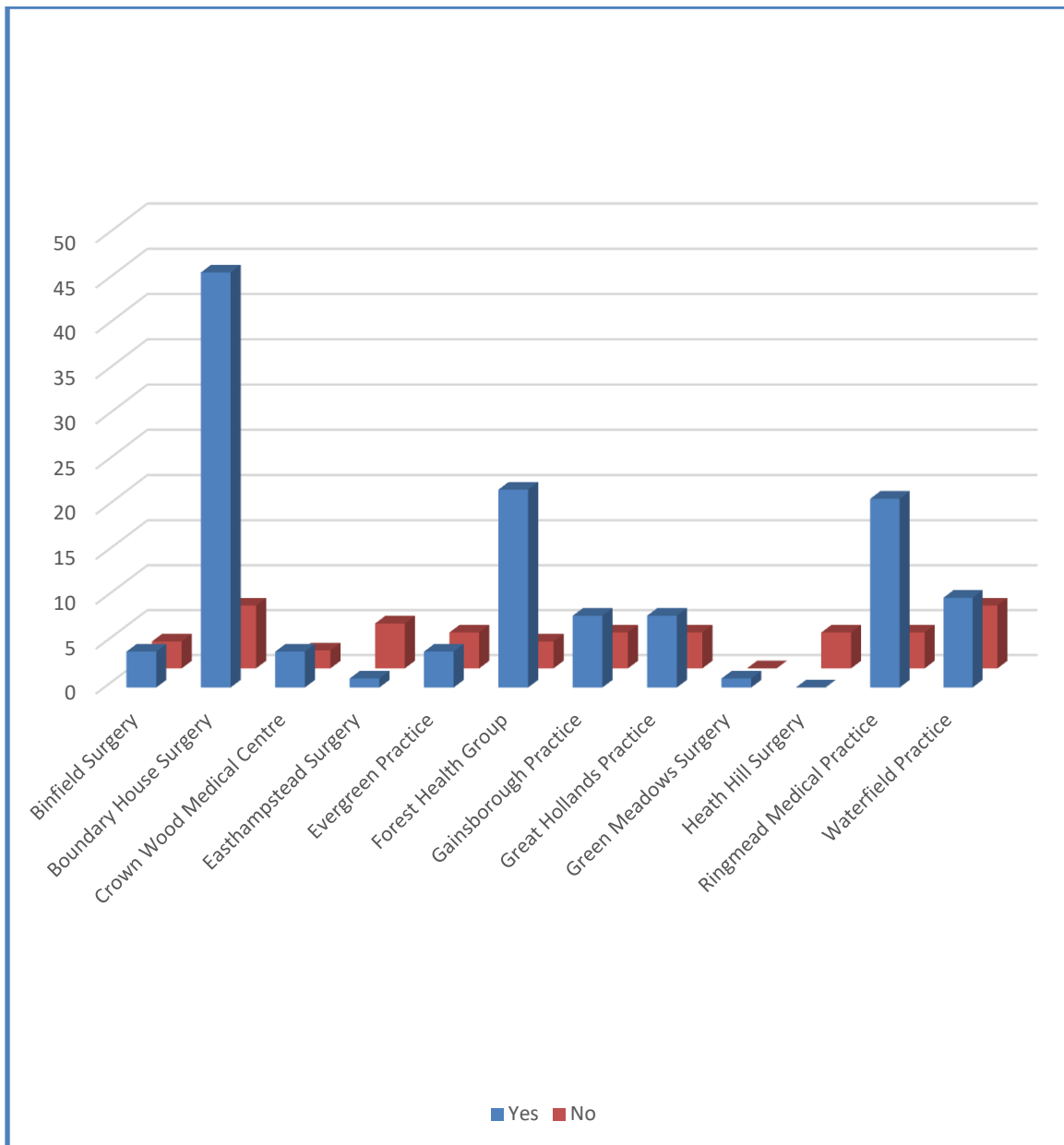
We received no responses from patients of Kings Corner Surgery, Magnolia House and Sandhurst Group Practice.

When did you call?

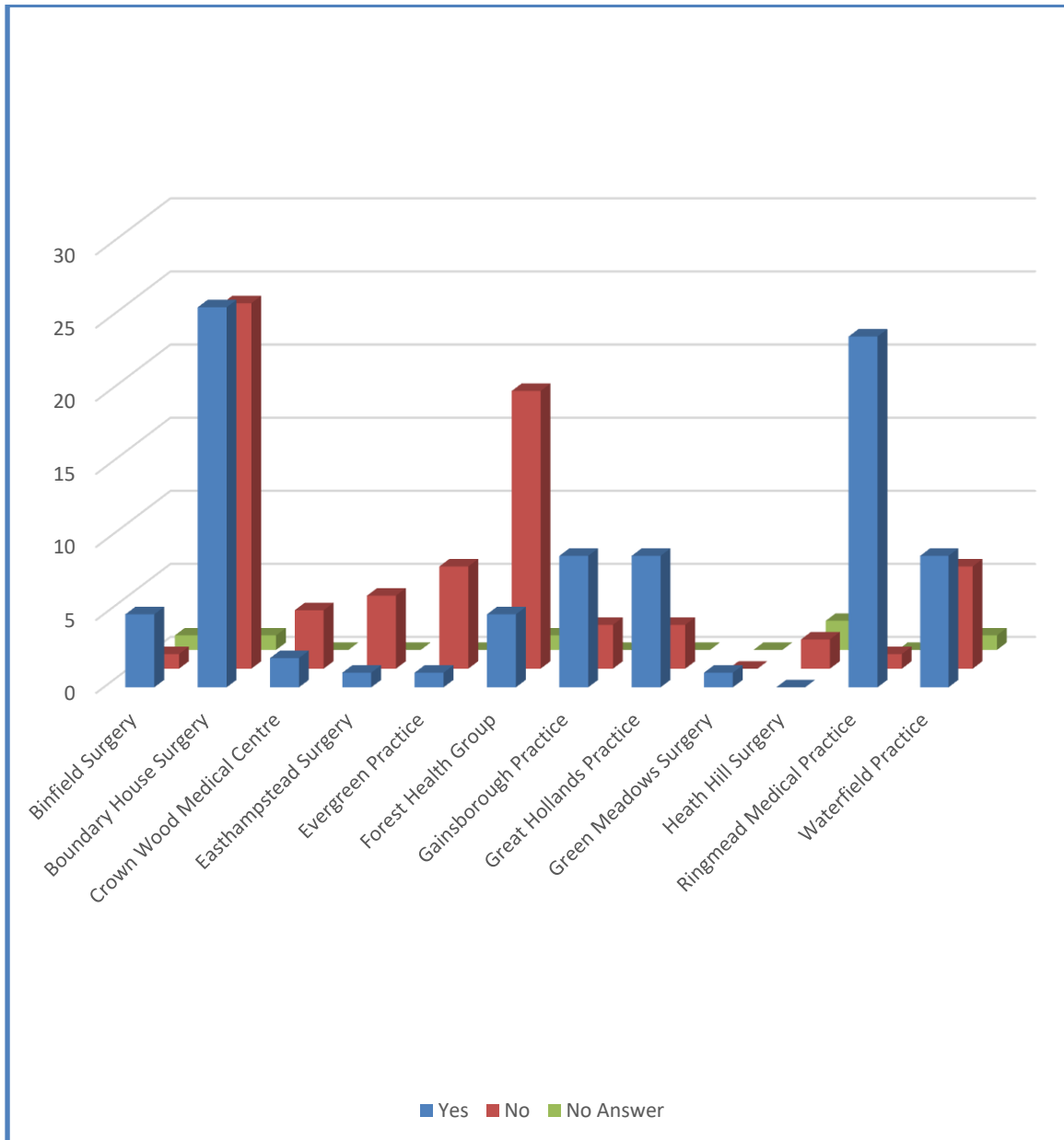


From these results we can see that most patients were reporting on recent interactions.

When you called, was the line busy?

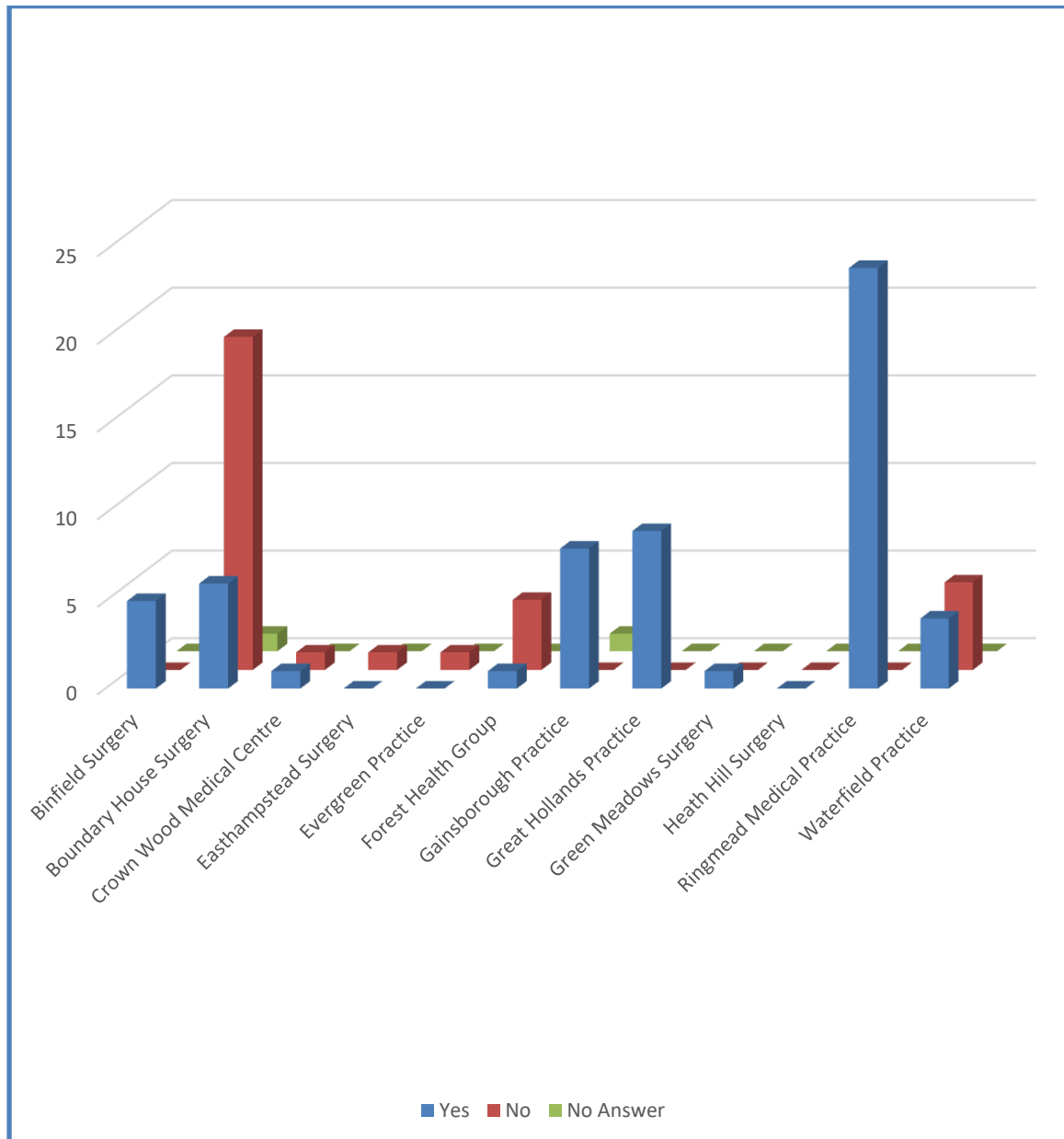


When you called, were you put on hold?

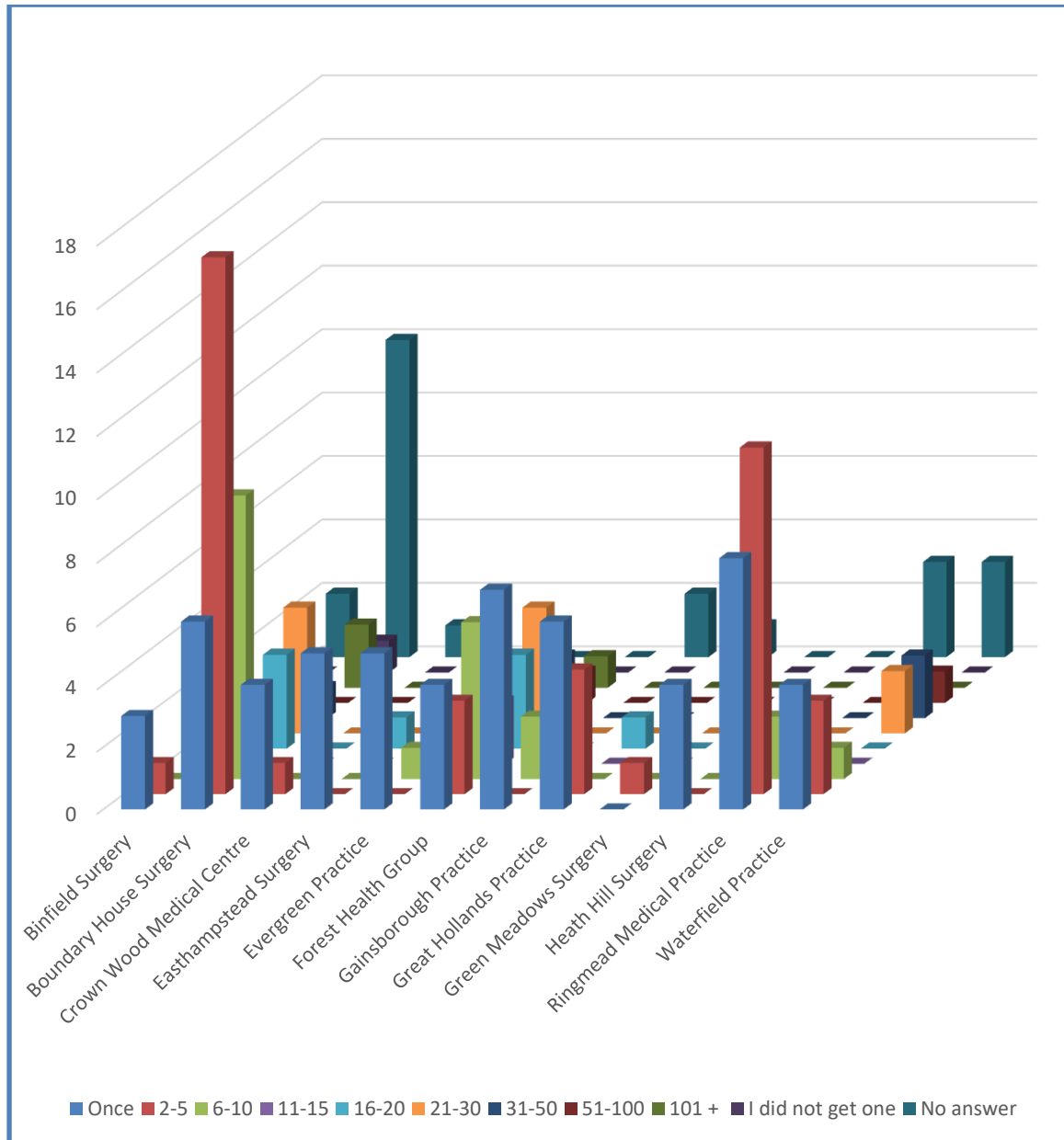


If you were on hold, did the system tell you where you were in the queue?

* Only counted the responses of those who answered yes to the previous question “When you called, were you put on hold?”

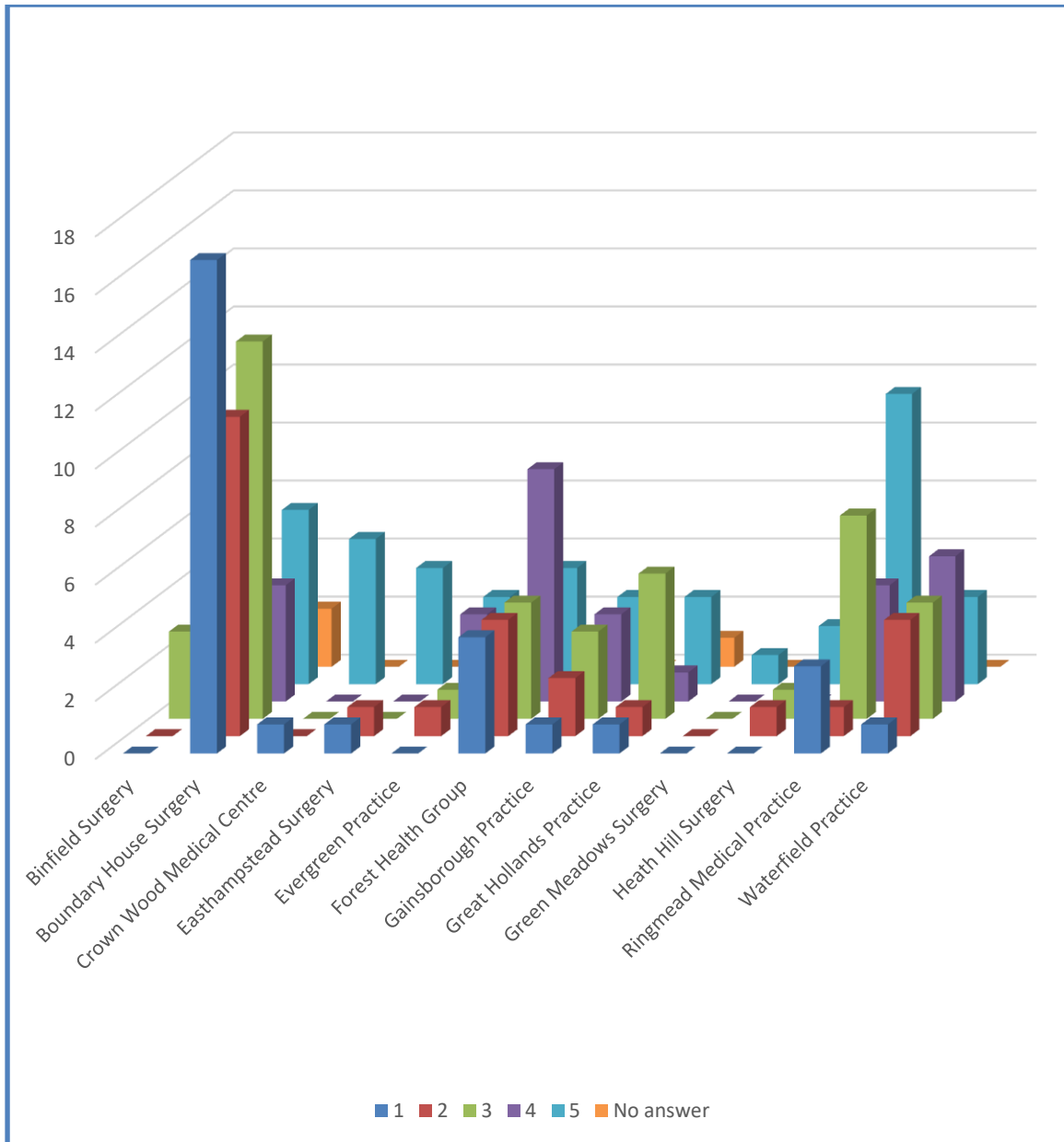


How many times did you have to ring before getting an appointment?

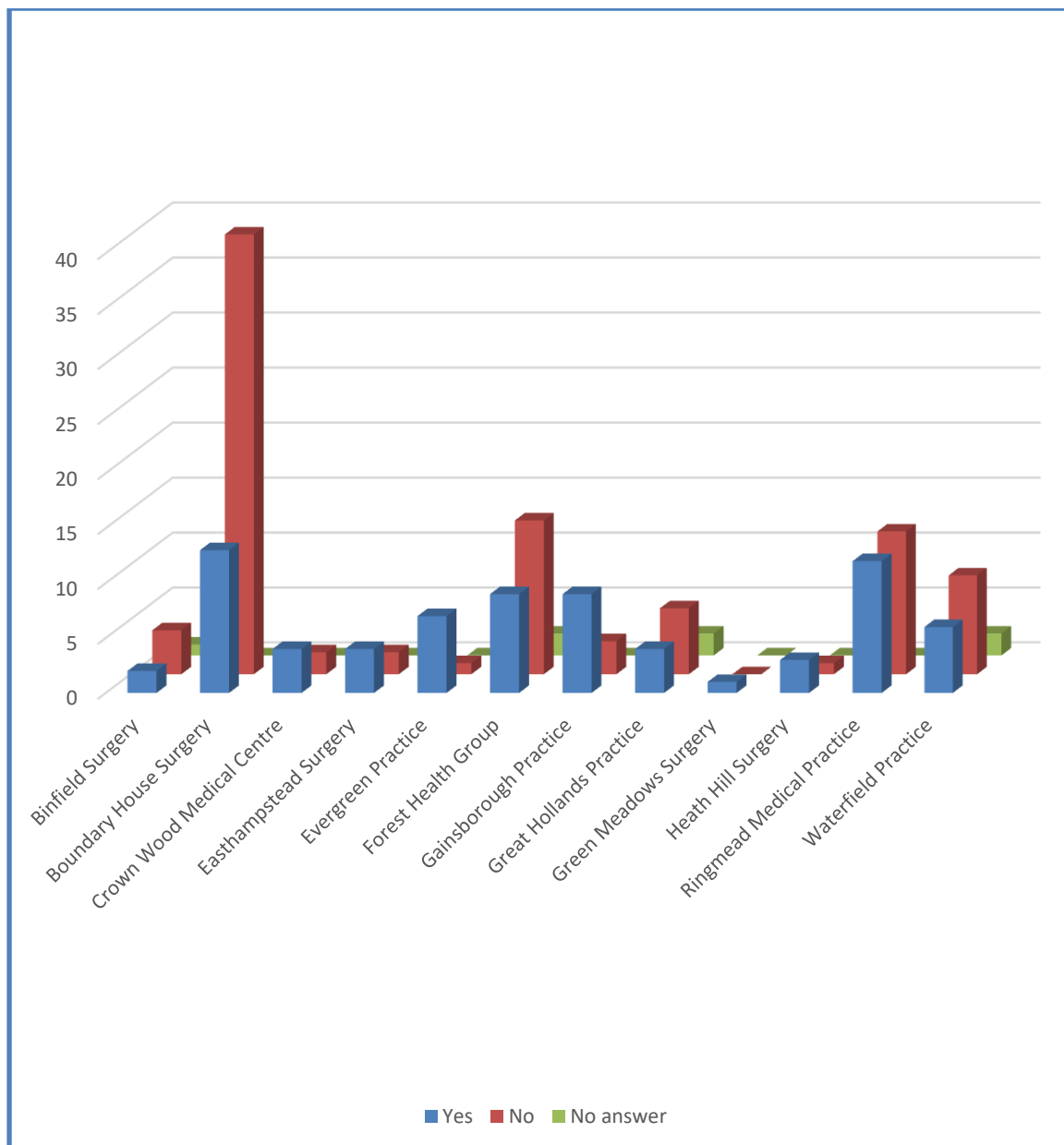


Once you spoke to someone, how would you rate the initial interaction?

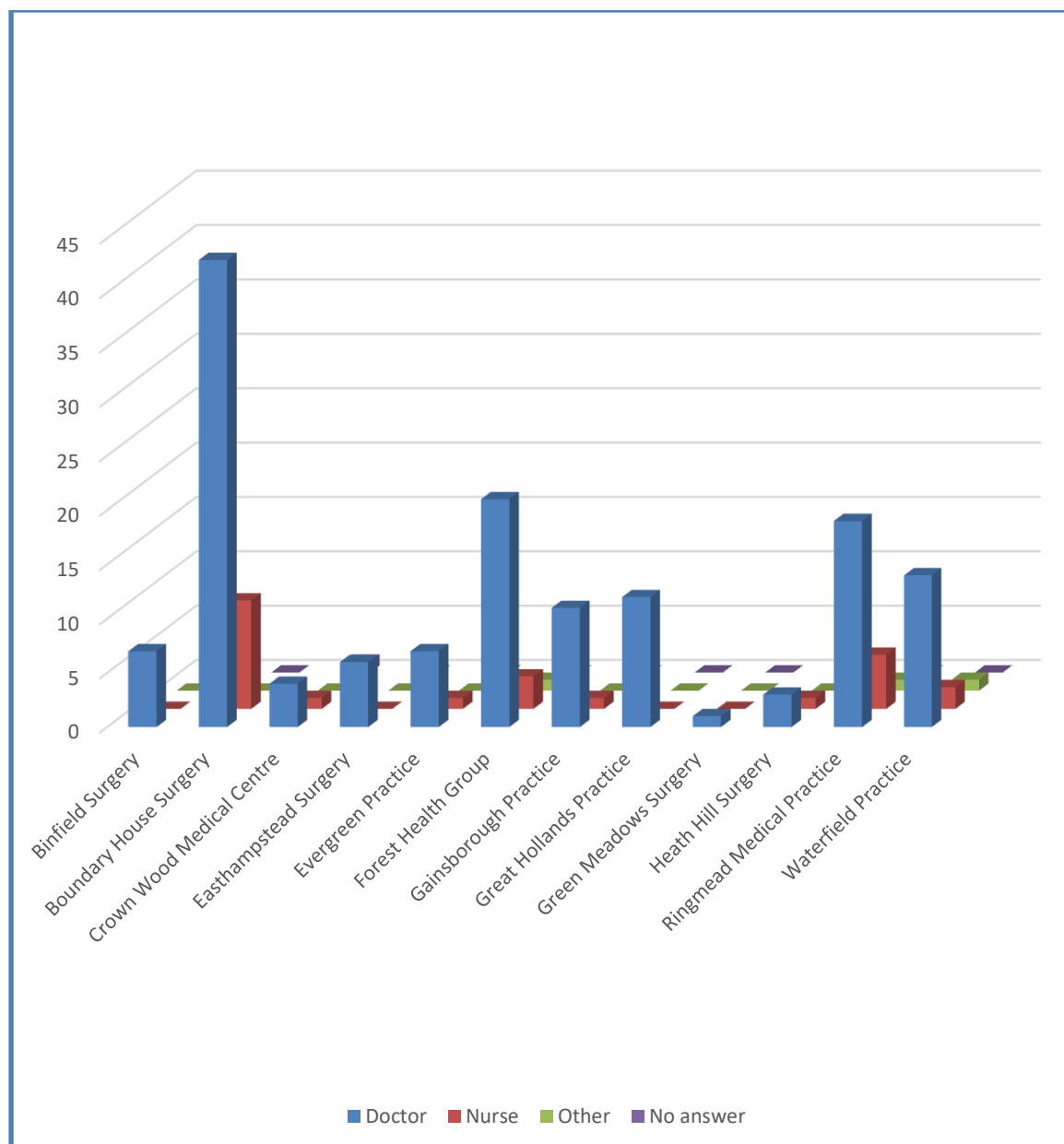
Scale of 1-5 with 1 being the lowest mark and 5 the highest.



Could you get an appointment when you think you needed one?



Who did you want to see?



Is there anything you would like to add?

Binfield Surgery

It would be nice to be able to make an appointment for the future, not always ring on the day as then if you do not manage to get early enough to get a selection of times available you are stuck with what's left and if you have to work, this can be frustrating.

Cannot book appointments for same day without talking to doctor first. Have to wait hours for a call back. Disaster if you have a sick child. Also keep being fobbed off with a nurse practitioner who needs lessons in how not to be rude!

If you are over 70 and ring between 8.30 and 9.30 you are guaranteed an appointment that day. Have never not been given an appointment.

Binfield Surgery is excellent for on the day appointments but sometimes harder to book follow up or plan in advance.

Boundary House Surgery

I called 18 times. They didn't answer the phone so I had to walk in to speak to the receptionist. They can't ignore you face to face!

Last 3 times I've called I haven't been able to get an appointment. I had call backs every time and one of those times actually managed to get an appointment. All 3 of these times were for my son who was between the ages of 11 months and 18 months. For myself I have also had to wait 2 weeks for an appointment which led to my ear going septic and I was asked why I waited so long to come in!

Very rude reception staff bar 1 member who is nice. Always fully booked to get appointment but when you turn up the place is empty. The phone just rings and rings. Have to call multiple times to get through.

They were very good, seen straight away, and almost (sic) see the same doctor.

Called 103 times between 8 and 8.24. Got through on call 103. Put on hold. Spoke to receptionist. No appointments left. Begged to speak to a doctor. She asked me if it was life or death. I said no but I've been ill for 3 weeks. She said it wasn't urgent enough. I said ok it is life or death. She said she would ask a doctor to call. He called two hours later luckily I am self-employed so this was fine. He listened and gave me an appointment at 2pm. Ridiculous process if you were a teacher and couldn't take ad hoc calls when appointments are free. Also asked for swab results for my son. 13th September taken. Told to chase it up myself. Given a number. Rang it and they loaded (sic) results. Then had to call back to get results. They should have chased it up themselves.

Got through on phone at 8.10am and told there was no appointments for the whole day. GP phoned back within 30 mins.

I also called to get a number for counselling. I was told the Dr would need to call back, which would have been a week later. Sorry but for an anxiety sufferer that would have been too late. I then looked around online and did a self-referral for my partner. This is a potentially serious call and could not get a resolution. So ended up going online without any qualified help or advice. They can clearly see by his medical notes that he struggles, yet this was the outcome. Extremely poor.

I needed a cortisone injection and only 1 Dr is qualified to do them... she also appears to be the most popular Dr.

I didn't get offered an appointment as gave up. Went to Brants Bridge instead.

There were no appointments available so duty doctor phoned within ten minutes and I went down straight away to see him.

Receptionists digging into what the issue is thinking they know who is qualified to treat you, kind of feel I do not want to be disclosing my issue over the phone, would much prefer to see a professional.

The doctor called me back and was seen within 10 mins.

Reception staff polite and efficient and helpful. Doctor polite and professional, did not feel rushed at all. No complaints te (sic) any staff.

When waiting for my nurse appointments which was late the phone continuously rang in reception with 2 receptionists but the receptionists left the phones to continue to ring while they typed. More staff required so they can answer emergencies and type up.

Never had a major problem. Been a patient since 2016.

Had to wait over a week for an appointment and having to see a different doctor from my regular doctor as there was only 1 appointment available to book.

Have been unable to pre-book an appointment. Need to phone on the day but working odd hours, so currently putting up with my condition. Even when I phone on the day and say I'm free at certain times I'm met with rudeness.

I object to receptionist asking reason for appointment.

Rang previously after having an asthma attack and wanted to go in for someone to check my breathing, something that could have been done by a nurse. Was given a telephone appointment with the Doctor and he told me to ring an ambulance because they had all the equipment needed. Had to ring 999 while at work to get a paramedic out to check my breathing. Complete waste of time for the ambulance service!!! My breathing was fine and it could have easily been checked by a nurse. Doctor (removed) at Boundary House is very rude and abrupt.

Had to explain to receptionist why I needed an appointment in front of a packed waiting room before appointment given. Receptionists are rude.

Phone answers automatically and then you're on hold until someone answers. I waited about 14 minutes.

Always get appointments and never have had a problem.

I never actually got through to the practice - in the end I drove down there - requested telephone call as all they could offer. The doctor

who called me back said it was a two week wait before I could be seen.

I've never really had an issue with any staff at boundary house.

I had to arrange call back with the doc. I advised I work in a call centre so need a call back after 5pm. Adv not possible. When doc did call I missed it and was advised sorry call back tomorrow. I called next after cannotger (sic) 8 attempts that doc is not doing any more calls call back the next day.

Advised I needed to get a scan referral after visiting urgent care was told no appointments this week and they said they could book one for 24th Oct - when I said I had possible gallstones they said the duty doctor would call me and he did about an hour later. No need to see anyone said he would request scan.

Receptionists are rude. Make you feel guilty about needing to see a doc/nurse. They ask to many questions outside of what they are qualified to answer for.

Receptionist need to go onto a customer service course. The rudeness was unacceptable.

Telephone appointment does not let a real doctor diagnose patients. You can't observe symptoms of health issues over the phone. A waste of everyone's time as usually you are asked to come in anyway.

Doctors are great at this surgery when you eventually get past one particularly awful rude receptionist.

They just have too many people registered! I'm looking at circa 2 weeks plus to see a doctor and a week to see the nurse!

It usually takes 4-7 days to have an appointment. There is often a delay once you have an appointment, last time I had to wait 45 minutes. There is no say in a choice of a doctor who is allocated to each patient without a patient's consent. The nurses are rather unskilled - every time I had my blood test taken, my vein was damaged and severe bruising lasted for several days. When I have my blood test taken elsewhere, for example Heatherwood hospital, this never happens.

I was told to call back in the afternoon when more appointments would be released. I called back and again struggled to get through. Then told no appointments and to try again the next day. This has been happening for days!

I spoke to the duty doctor who called me back and said I had arthritis without seeing me. Luckily I have private health and I do not have arthritis but a ripped cartilage!!!!

On this occasion I needed to speak to the doctor about some blood tests results for my father. I was put on hold for 6 mins, without answer, this is normal for this surgery, the only reliable way to get results or an appointment is to call at the surgery, or book appointments online. Of course if you book appointments online you can rarely get an appointment with the Dr you are registered with. I still don't have the results of my father's blood test, I will need to go to the surgery to get them!

Crown Wood Medical Centre

Service is always great.

I wasn't able to see my own GP, although I did get 2 back-to-back appointments as requested, 1 for me and 1 for my son. I was a little disappointed with the advice given during appointments as it contradicted that given by my own GP, so continuity of care was not as I would have hoped.

Never had an issue at Crown Wood. Excellent small practice.

Such poor service quite often as if the receptionists don't want to work there.

A brilliant doctors, I have children and they always get them in on day I ring.

Easthampstead Surgery

Easthampstead have a sensible system where you call an answer machine in the morning, the calls are then triaged and the doc calls back with advice or the reception call and offer you an appt in the order of urgency.

The triage system is brilliant. Receptionists polite and helpful.

This is really appalling booking system. Thankfully I live and work locally and am able to get to an appointment if I am lucky enough to warrant one. Sadly, I work in an open office so when the GP phones me back 27 people know I believe I have a (list of medical conditions), not very confidential at all!! My daughter is now of an age when she has to do this all for herself and she is in sixth form college currently has a problem but can't take a phone call at school or get a pass out to get an appointment.

Amazing service as always from Easthampstead surgery. Can always get appointments to see a GP (admittedly not always my normal GP) and the nurses as required. All of the staff are extremely helpful and will go out of their way to help you if you are polite and have a genuine need.

I find the triage system efficient.

Can never get an app with my doctor even if I do triage in the morning, always get passed off to another doctor who knows nothing about my condition so clearly doesn't read my notes or anything.

Evergreen Practice

Needed to see our Asthma / Diabetic nurse and ask advise on both subjects. She was excellent.

Told by hospital to make appointment but told to call back to check if results were back, then had to wait 3 weeks for appointment

I never have a problem getting an appointment. I moved to the surgery about 18 months ago from Binfield surgery as my experience with Binfield was utterly unacceptable.

Dr Nelli and his team (including the receptionists) are fantastic. A proper family surgery where the doctor doesn't need to read notes to know his patients. He's kind, helpful, professional and most importantly knowledgeable. Wouldn't ever go anywhere else. Thank you Evergreen Practice x

Depends what receptionist you get but most of them help & are pleasant.

Reception staff are always very friendly and helpful on the phone.

Forest Health Group

Phoned 20 times either line busy or rang out. Never actually got through. Eventually gave up.

I called as my son had been poorly for 5 days and wanted him checked over. I didn't specify a doctor, however I kind of assumed that is who our appt was with until we got there and it was actually a fantastic nurse who was reassuring and very thorough.

Always the same appalling service and atrocious experiences with the receptionists.

Very good system, happy that I always get an appt.

I tried calling 20 times before I got through and then was told there were no appointments and to call back at the end of the week. I've never had an appointment since that call.

They have a new sit and wait system which seems a little better than the old system although you never know how long you could be waiting. I waited 30 mins with my 4 month old for him to be seen.

The system is ridiculous for emergency appointments. On this occasion I rang at 8am and got a recorded message. I put the phone down and rang again immediately and got engaged tone. There is no queueing system so I continued to put the phone down and immediately re-phone for 20 minutes (42 times). When I got through I was told I was too late for a same day emergency appointment as I should have phoned at 8am!

Never seem to be able to book an appointment to see a doctor, considering changing practices.

Forest End are horrendous... I get spoken to terribly every time I call they refuse appointments until you tell them what's wrong even if you

feel uncomfortable telling them I've been hung up on laughed at its an absolutely disgraceful surgery.

When I finally got seen after 3 weeks doctor (removed) was really, really rude, their whole attitude is appalling.

My son had a head injury at school he needed to be checked. We were told to come straight in and we could sit and wait to be seen by GP in their emergency sit and wait clinic.

Drs don't read their notes, so are very underprepared for appointments.

Follow up appointment requested by the doctor.

I was told that extending my sick note isn't an emergency so I'd have to wait for an appointment on the 19th.

To get through I start ringing at 8 o'clock on the dot and it's always engaged. I keep re-dialling straight away and very rarely I get through before ringing more than 20-30 times. Once I had to ring near 100 times (and I'm not exaggerating). The receptionists always ask what the nature of the problem is and more often than not they try to book you with a nurse instead of a doctor (many times they do so without telling you they have). Also they're generally not very pleasant in the interaction.

Took an entire day from calling at 9am to get a prescription for my son's inhaler which we got at 5.25pm at a local chemist... absolutely disgusting it took that long and several phone calls. Also it was the day we had all the dust from storm Ophelia making it difficult for my son to breathe (was at in-laws with no car so couldn't get back to Bracknell).

Receptionists are friendly and very helpful.

Impossible, ring at 8, can't get thru. Constant redial for 20 mins, all appts gone. Ask for routine appointment, told there isn't any and to call later in week. Go through exact same process. Been trying to get one for 3 weeks and still don't have appt.

It's a minimum of a 2 week wait for an appointment with ANY GP at the surgery.

I was asked to go to the practice and wait to be seen.

Gainsborough Practice

One receptionist has been very rude to me a number of times and have sat in waiting room listening to her conversation to another person about another patient. So breaching confidentiality.

Reception staff are rude and unhelpful.

You have to really push to see a doctor.

Don't think the receptionists have enough medical knowledge to make the decision who I (the patient) should see or not see. Think telephone consultations are not good practice. Things get missed. Know doctors are busy but when I ask to see a doctor would like to see a doctor not have a conversation with the nurse.

When phoned at 8am I was eighth in the queue, very surprised to get an appt. for that morning, I think due to a new doctor being available...not normally like that! Usually have to have a call back from triage nurse ...the receptionist seemed calm and positive as well ...most unusual ...usually very abrupt and unhelpful. So hope this attitude continues but probably won't know as do not see the doctor very often.

Receptionists at Gainsborough are always kind and helpful, as are the doctors and nurses. Fantastic care and much appreciated.

Great Hollands Practice

People just need to stop being so impatient and understand that they will have to wait if they want to see a doctor.

You should be able to book an appointment at any time its just 8am n 2pm and I'm on a 7/4pm shift. Haven't got a chance on hell of getting an appointment at all. I don't go very often but when I do need an

appointment I can't get one straight away like I should be able to, it's so frustrating.

I was 17 in the queue first call. 30 minutes later 11 in the queue.

I phoned 16 times from 8-8:15 before even being put on hold as I kept getting an engaged tone then I was 2nd in the queue.

Can always get an appointment.

Receptionist was extremely helpful as the appointment was for my daughter that suffers with social anxiety and wanted a lady on this occasion.

The earliest appointment I could get was 18/10 - more than two weeks from date of booking. It's only a review so that's ok, but surely a phone appointment could be offered instead.

I was told to go to Brants Bridge as no appts at the surgery, then was asked why I came to Brants Bridge.

Green Meadows Surgery

Exceptional service both by receptionist and GP's! There is not one GP I wouldn't want to see!

Heath Hill Surgery

I was seen quickly and on a subsequent phone call Nurse Practitioner put my mind at rest over the telephone. She offered a second appointment but after her chat I didn't feel I needed it.

Got a call back for a gp. Without been seen by a gp was prescribed lots of meds which did not even touch the pain. Really don't like the new call system they have in place.

Cannot book nurse appointments online.

Ringmead Medical Practice

8th in queue but a 37 minute wait to get through. Not acceptable.

Online system is useless. Offered one appointment in 2 weeks with a doctor I don't want to see. Also I have always thought you need a separate set of people in a private room booking appointments and not on reception where they are tied up and the world can hear what's being said.

When I wanted to pre-book female doctor was told that her pre-books were fully booked and to try again in a week. This system just isn't working you are no longer a patient you feel like a number. Always feel rushed when being triaged on phone. There is no continuity either as you never see same doctor. Whole system gone to pot.

You are always in a queue, regardless of which option you select, and some are worse than others. To ring for test results you can only ring after 1330 hrs, and every time I've had to do this I have been on hold for over 30 minutes waiting to get to number 1 in the queue. They clearly need more people answering these calls. I am not always able to spend that amount of time waiting to be answered, when I am ringing from work - I don't believe I am alone in that situation either - and so I often have to give up. This is not a good situation to be in, when you are wanting to know your test results and getting stressed about it.

Dr (removed) is extremely rude and should be sent on a course in bedside manners. I understand they are busy but he is just rude. This has been reported to the surgery as well.

The receptionist was helpful I had just been advised by the hearing specialist I needed to have my ears syringed I went to Dr straight away explained and I was advised which ear drops to use pre appt and an appt was booked for 48hrs later.

I have two small children and gone through pregnancy at this surgery and therefore had a higher need than normal. I find Ringmead exceptionally good. I love that the Dr rings back within a few hours and then makes an appointment/gives prescription/gives advice quickly. I have always got an appointment quickly when needed.

Had to phone as Dr had not put prescription through to chemist as stated during telephone call previous evening. Then had to wait until following morning to collect.

I have had complex medical problems this year, and saw many different GPs. Without exception they were supportive and respectful, twice arranging for inpatient admission at Frimley Park Hospital. Dr Holmes & Dr Sachdev help me manage my diabetes & Dr Holmes has been very supportive following my cancer diagnosis.

We need more surgeries and more GPs! Too many housing estates are being built without any amenities.

Getting an appointment at this surgery is becoming more and more difficult. On the last occasion I tried calling 5 times across 24hours, holding on for more than 40 minutes at the longest point. This is not acceptable. However, once you do get an appointment the care is very good.

It took 23 minutes to answer and I was only number 3 in the call queue.

Excellent practice, very good appointment procedure, doctor calls back to see if it warrants a face to face consultation leaving appointments opens for more serious problems.

No apology for 50 minute wait to get through the queue and refused an appointment unless the Dr triaged me first so waited in until the Dr phoned 4 hours later - then given an emergency appointment. So frustrating.

Being 14th in the queue tells me that you need more people answering the phone!

Awful trying to book an appointment. Always the same. Have now decided to move surgeries.

Staff are friendly and try help where they can.

Waterfield Practice

The scramble to get appointments at 8am is ridiculous. The surgery needs to get a decent phone system that can queue more calls rather than having to sit redialling repeatedly and listening to engaged tones.

Only got an appointment as they had just got a cancellation.

They want u to phone at 8 which is when I'm on the way to work. It is constantly engaged then when u get through appt all gone.

I usually book my appointments online if not an emergency, but when it is I am usually given an appointment once I get a call back from the doctor.

I can get same day appt. I never have a problem.

There is a really lovely receptionist but should you get through to the (removed) .. at best patronising at worst downright rude also I was waiting for my appointment literally cringing at the way she spoke to patients on the phone and having to hear their names and " symptoms " and I very rarely use the doctors.

Have to wait too long for an appointment.

Usually can't get an appointment if you ring late morning or afternoon and get told to call the next day at 8am. When you call at 8am you can't get through as the line is busy until around 8:15am. Then you get through and the receptionist is always miserable and seems like you're being a pain in asking for an appointment!

| Did you know you can book appointments on line? | Is there anything stopping you booking appointments online? |
|---|---|
| <i>Binfield Surgery</i> | |
| YES: 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appointments too far in future - at least 2 weeks away and my own doctor not bookable!• No• System changed and everyone needed to register again• Very few available |
| NO: 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• My surgery doesn't advertise this so wasn't aware• No |

| Did you know you can book appointments on line? (cont.) | Is there anything stopping you booking appointments online? |
|---|---|
| <i>Boundary House Surgery</i> | |
| YES: 35 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having to go to surgery to get the code when you work full time • Nothing for non-urgent matters • Can't get on to appointments with the mygp app for surgery tried it • No. After I spoke to GP I booked appointment for next week online. However for the whole week there was only 4 appointments available and no choice of doctor • Yes because you can never get one online either • I use them if I need to, but called as I need a 10min appointment • It doesn't work • My surgery have failed to issue me with a login • Getting my number to be able to register myself • Tried using app but said no appointments available (X4) • I always use the online booking appointment system when I do not need a same day appointment • Keep forgetting to get a code as very rarely need to go to surgery • I didn't have a patient code at the time of booking • Currently can't sign in for some reason • There wasn't an appointment available for almost 2 weeks online • Appointments online tend to be further away than if you try to call up and book • Never enough appointments and always at inconvenient times |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can't get one quickly |
| Did you know you can book appointments on line? (cont.) | Is there anything stopping you booking appointments online? |
| <i>Boundary House Surgery (cont.)</i> | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Log in problems It doesn't always work. No one responds or it says sorry we are unable to assist please call the surgery Yes, being able to get through to receptionist to get a code The dates available are so far ahead makes you wonder if you'll survive till then Booking an appointment online does not make much difference as appointments are as scarce and you need to wait for a couple of days No guidance no advice I can (?) No, except getting an appointment with my own GP, that can rarely be achieved |
| NO: 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No (X7) I don't like it I did get the app but it wouldn't let me add my 13 and 14 year old, it said they had to get it and control their appointments themselves! As minors this is ridiculous If I was told I would book online I would but would like to have the opportunity to call someone Didn't know I could/ will look into it (X2) I had the app but was told after making a complaint to the surgery that they had stopped using it Don't have a computer No. However I will have to go into the surgery to get a code to do it. The surgery should be able to send this out to their patients rather than making it an inconvenience as they are only open during |

| | |
|--|--|
| | working hours |
| Did you know you can book appointments on line? (cont.) | Is there anything stopping you booking appointments online? |
| <i>Boundary House Surgery (cont.)</i> | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I didn't know the facility was available so lack of knowledge. No adverts or letters ever released about it • Like to speak to human! |
| NO ANSWER: 1 | |
| <i>Crown Wood Medical Centre</i> | |
| YES: 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer to talk to some one & also wanted to speak to Doctor • Time |
| NO: 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No • Didn't think it was possible • No - apart from never being told I could! |
| <i>Easthampstead Surgery</i> | |
| YES: 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No idea how to • No • I prefer speaking to another person rather than just booking an appointment online. A bit of interaction goes a long way |
| NO: 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never ever been advertised |
| <i>Evergreen Practice</i> | |
| YES: 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can only book the GP on line one cannot book to see the Diabetic/ Asthma Nurse on Line :-) • Need to find the time to go into practice to complete registration |
| NO: 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didn't know I could. • No information that this could be done. maybe they need to let patients know that this is available and how to access this from home • No |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Did you know you can book appointments on line? (cont.)</p> | <p>Is there anything stopping you booking appointments online?</p> |
| <p><i>Forest Health Group</i></p> | |
| <p>YES: 20</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not set up to book online appointments • Never any available when I look • On line booking has always seemed very little choice and long time in advance ok for a non-urgent appt but not suitable when I need a more urgent appointment • Find it too complicated • The appointments online are too far in advance for most illnesses, ok for routine things but I don't know I am going to be ill 2 weeks before the event • They have about three available in 2weeks time that's all - every flipping time! • I've tried a few times and cannot get into the system. It does not recognise my password • The fact that you have to plan to be sick as the online appts are always 2+ weeks away • Complicated to register • No • Registration is not straight forward/easy (X2) • That the system for setting it up is too convoluted • There are never spaces available to book online • Can't book nurse on line only doctor • No suitable appointments and needed to ask about medication that is not shown on repeat also • They were only available for 3 weeks away! • Appointments are too far in advance |

| Did you know you can book appointments on line? (cont.) | Is there anything stopping you booking appointments online? |
|---|--|
| <i>Forest Health Group (cont.)</i> | |
| NO: 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No (X2) • Yes, it doesn't work • Unreliable systems |
| <i>Gainsborough Practice</i> | |
| YES: 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only very limited number and always weeks in advance - 2-3 easily • Don't think I can book same day online, although never tried • Haven't requested a log in code yet |
| NO: 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didn't know I could • Do not want too • If it meant I could get to see who I wanted I would do it • Sheer stupidity on my part! Never even thought of it but then again I've never had a problem getting through |
| NO ANSWER: 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nope would like more info on it though |
| <i>Great Hollands Practice</i> | |
| YES: 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No • No. Fine if you want to wait 3 weeks for an appointment • Don't get on too well with internet booking have tried and gave up and rang surgery • I can't always get an appointment online as it sometimes says no available appointment I always try online first before calling • Haven't got the password (X2) • It always says nothing available • Online is not very useful if you need something same day/week. Only slots available tend to be weeks ahead |
| NO: 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This facility is not available at Gt Hollands • Not now I didn't know our surgery did online appointments • No |

| Did you know you can book appointments on line? (cont.) | Is there anything stopping you booking appointments online? |
|---|---|
| <i>Green Meadows Surgery</i> | |
| YES: 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No and I have booked in advance on line but needed a same day appt which can't be done online!! |
| <i>Heath Hill Surgery</i> | |
| YES: 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am not sure you can at Heath Hill surgery |
| NO: 1 | |
| <i>Ringmead Medical Practice</i> | |
| YES: 19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I last looked into this it seemed quite a complex procedure, but should maybe be further pushed/explained by the surgery. Always find staff at desk very helpful though • Not enough variety of appointments or doctors available • Never felt the need to book this way • They are normally emergency ones so I need to talk to Dr first. I did need one routine one and I couldn't remember my login • Normally need to see Dr sooner than appointments available online • No, but sometimes I just need to speak to a GP on the phone to get advice about adjusting my medication & don't require an appointment. I'm a type 1 diabetic. The triage system suits me well • Never any available to book (X6) • You can't book an appointment for the day so unless you know you will be ill online booking is not useful • No but nice to talk to a friendly receptionist • My surgery does not show available appointments • Just like to speak to a person to ensure that I'm booking in with the correct person • Too far in advance |

| | |
|---|---|
| Did you know you can book appointments on line? (cont.) | Is there anything stopping you booking appointments online? |
| <i>Ringmead Medical Practice (cont.)</i> | |
| NO: 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not now I know! • I didn't know about it. Nor do I know how this is set up |
| NO ANSWER: 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm not good with technology very basic knowledge. Plus you ring and they say 14 days at least you can put a case across to see a Dr. Can't do that on line. I'm a retail employee don't always have a Rota that far ahead |
| <i>Waterfield Practice</i> | |
| YES: 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only limited appointments available online - usually none same-day • My log in won't work and asks for my email address then tells me it's wrong • None released • They are only about 6 appointments and they are for many weeks' time • Online booking is for future appointments • Always book appointments online. Only use telephone if need appointment on the day • No, do if not an emergency • No, haven't yet registered to do so • Not usually same day appt. but have booked online when I can wait a week or so appt • Do this all the time. Appointment has been cancelled 3 times. And I've had to make another appointment and wait longer. • The log in details are far too complicated and hard to remember. It should be easier to do and easier to log in e.g. User name, nhs no. And password. I would use it then. • Appointments online are for booking weeks in advance and there are very few appointments available. You can only book for yourself and not for children |
| NO: 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't know how to set up |

Main Findings

The three practices with the most responses were

1. Boundary House Surgery (53)
2. Forest Health Group (25)
3. Ringmead Medical Practice (25)

As Forest Health Group and Ringmead Medical Practice are the largest practices in the Bracknell and Ascot Clinical Commissioning Group, in terms of number of patients registered, and also have 2 sites it is therefore logical to assume that this is a main factor in the number of the responses.

However Boundary House Surgery is not a particularly large surgery; it has just over half the number of patients registered compared to Ringmead Medical Practice and only has one site. Although the Extended Hours service is based at Boundary House Surgery for the area, these appointments are made direct by other practices online or an alternative number. When looking at the rest of the answers of the respondents for Boundary House Surgery, one explanation for the reason for the high number of responses is due to the issues it appears to have in answering and managing calls from patients; it was one of the practices discussed on social media which triggered this survey.

As previously mentioned, this survey was mainly promoted on Bracknell centred social media groups which explains the low number of responses for practices based in villages/areas outside of Bracknell town (Green Meadows, Heath Hill etc.) and no responses for Kings Corner Surgery, Magnolia House and Sandhurst Group Practice.

Of the 176 responses, 130 (almost 74%) were about interactions in October and September - the 6/7 week period before the survey. This is important as historically some surgeries had significant problems with telephone access from patients and some have changed the way that this is managed and, in the case of Boundary House Surgery, have invested in specialist telephone systems. These survey was conducted a significant period of time after these changes.

With the exception of Easthampstead Surgery, Evergreen Practice and Heath Hill Surgery, more patients than not reported that the line was busy when they tried to contact their practice. This was particularly a problem for patients of Boundary House Surgery, Forest Health Group and Ringmead Medical Practice. Over 86% of patients from these practices reported that the line was busy.

When asking patients if they were placed on hold when they called, there were no significant indications of this as a standard practice (or not) due to the split between responses or the small number of respondents - with the exception of Forest Health Group, where 76% of patients who reported they were not placed on hold, and Ringmead Medical Practice where 96% of patients reported they were placed on hold.

Of those patients (from all practices) that reported they were placed on hold only patients from Binfield Surgery, Great Hollands Practice, Green Meadows Surgery and Ringmead Medical Practice had a 100% 'yes' response when asked if the system told them where they were in the queue.

With the exception of Heath Hill Surgery not all patients were able to get through straight away to their practice to make an appointment. Worryingly patients from 3 practices reported that they had to call in excess of 30 times; Boundary House Surgery, Forest Health Group and Waterfield Practice. The first 2 of these practices also had patients reporting it took over 100 attempts.

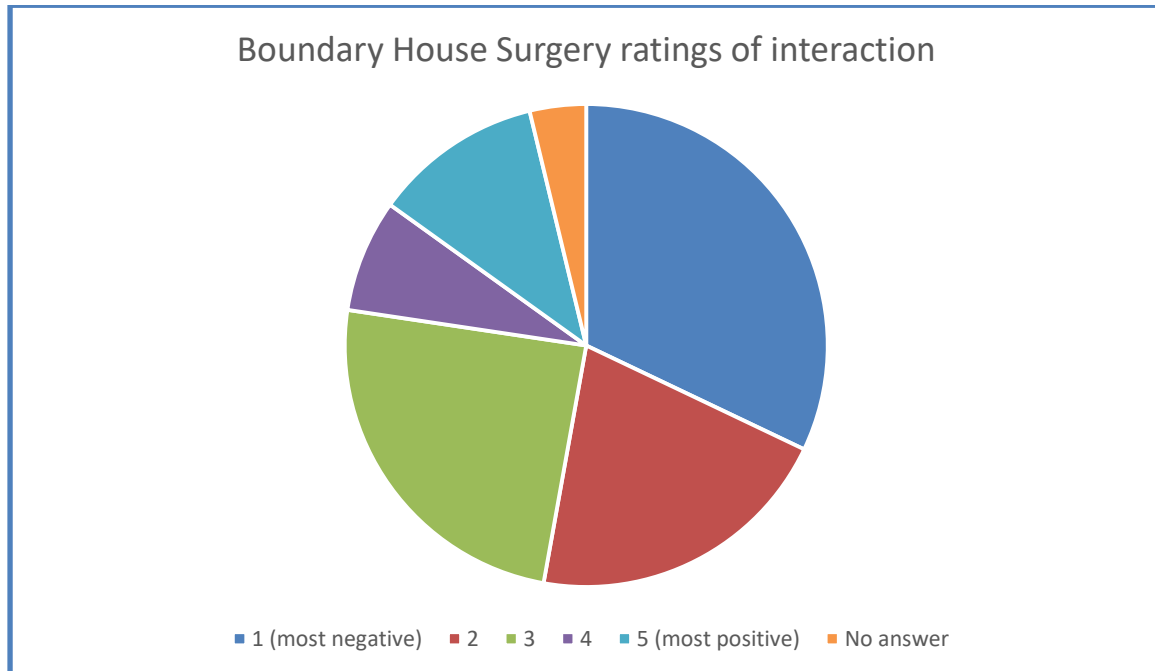
After these results were received, Healthwatch Bracknell Forest tried to contact these 3 practices between 8am-8.49am:

Boundary House - 71 attempts to get through and then 19 minutes on hold. (before speaking to anyone, no indication where you are in the queue).

Forest Health Group - 39 attempts to get through and then 2 minutes to answer.

Waterfield Practice - 8 attempts to get through and then 2 minutes to answer.

The survey also asked patients to rate the initial interaction when they got through to the practice: 1 being the lowest mark and 5 the highest. Boundary House Surgery was the only practice where the number of interactions rated 1 or 2 was higher than interactions rated 4 or 5.



Patients were asked if they could get an appointment when they thought they needed one; this is based on the patient's own subjective view rather than a clinical judgement.

In 6 practices the number of patients who answered 'no' was greater than those who answered 'yes'; Binfield Surgery, Boundary House Surgery, Forest Health Group, Great Hollands Practice, Ringmead Medical Practice and Waterfield Practice. In only one practice did patients who answered 'no' equate to more than 50% - Boundary House Surgery where 75.5% of respondents said 'no'.

We asked patients who they wanted to see when they were trying to make the appointment they were telling us about. Different types of practitioners operate in GP practices and there have been many campaigns, both locally and nationally, to inform the public that not all primary care needs to be delivered by a GP.

The patients of 4 practices reported that they were trying to make an appointment with a GP only; Binfield Surgery, Easthampstead Surgery, Great Hollands Practice and Green Meadows Surgery. This is in contrast with Ringmead Medical Practice where 24% of the patients were trying to make an appointment with a nurse or other practitioner.

Patients were then asked if they had anything to add. The full list of comments has been provided in the results question and add further evidence to the other results of the survey.

Patients were asked if they knew that appointments could be booked online and also if there was anything stopping them from booking online.

Binfield Surgery

The majority of respondents from the small cohort did know they could book appointments online and the main barriers identified that prevent patients from using this facility was the lack of appointments, not able to book with your own doctor and no availability in time (none for 2 weeks).

Boundary House Surgery

Almost two-thirds of respondents were aware they could book an appointment online. The main barriers identified that prevent patients from doing so included: not available for children, preferring to speak to someone, problems registering for the system, not being aware of the system, no urgent/emergency appointments available to book online and lack of appointments available.

Crown Wood Medical Centre

The majority of respondents from the small cohort did not know they could book appointments online and the main barriers identified that prevent patients from using this facility was this lack of awareness of the system, time and preferring to speak to someone.

Easthampstead Surgery

The majority of respondents from the small cohort did know they could book appointments online however the main barriers identified that

prevent patients from using this facility was this lack of awareness of the system and preferring to speak/interact with someone.

Evergreen Practice

The majority of respondents from the small cohort did not know they could book appointments online and the main barriers identified that prevent patients from using this facility was this lack of awareness of the system, time needed to complete the registration process and the inability to book with other practitioners online.

Forest Health Group

80% of respondents were aware they could book appointments online but lack of timely appointments available, how complicated the system to register and book is and that nurses' appointments are not available online were the main barriers preventing patients from using this facility.

Gainsborough Practice

Knowledge of the online system was known by about half of the respondents. Lack of timely, available appointments was again cited as a reason the system was not utilised by patients.

Great Hollands

The majority of respondents from the small cohort did know they could book appointments online however the main barriers identified that prevent patients from using this facility was this lack of awareness of the system, not completing the registration process and lack of timely, available appointments; not good for same day/week.

Green Meadows

The one respondent was aware of the online system but did not use it as they needed a same day appointment which cannot be booked online.

Heath Hill Surgery

The majority of the small number of respondents were aware of this system but, apart from uncertainty if it was available, no other barriers to using the system were identified.

Ringmead Medical Practice

Just over three-quarters of the respondents from this practice were aware they could book appointments online. Lack of available appointments, especially urgent same-day ones, the need to speak to a doctor or other member of staff first (triage) and the complexities of the system were given as the main reasons people did not use the system.

Waterfield Practice

88% of respondents from this practice were aware they could book appointments online but lack of timely appointments available and how complicated the system to register and book were the main barriers preventing patients from using this facility. One patient did state they do use the system when booking routine appointments, but not for emergency appointments.

Next Steps

Healthwatch Bracknell Forest will continue to offer support, with communication and/or potential solutions, to those practices who, from these results and other patient feedback collected, appear to have issues with patients accessing surgeries for appointments - particularly urgent/same day appointments.

The anonymised data from this report, along with other patient feedback about primary care, has been shared with Bracknell and Ascot Clinical Commissioning Group (BACCG) Quality Team and with the Care Quality Commission.

Healthwatch Bracknell Forest delivered a brief update on the results of the survey at GP council. Following this 5 practices (Boundary House Surgery, Great Hollands Surgery, Kings Corner Surgery, Ringmead Medical Practice and Waterfield Practice) have asked us for any comments and patient feedback data (anonymised) from the past 12 months, including the results of this survey.

We will talk to the BACCG Primary Care Team to discuss online booking of appointments as this has recently been heavily promoted but patients are telling us this service is not working in all areas due to the limited number of appointments being released by some practices for booking this way. This therefore seems to be a conflict of purpose between BACCG and some practices.

Healthwatch Bracknell Forest will also be formally asking Boundary House Surgery about the performance of their new telephone system as the results from this survey do not show that the previous issues for patients in contacting the surgery have been resolved.

BACCG, along with the other Clinical Commissioning Groups in East Berkshire, are reviewing how patients contact primary care providers (GP practices) and Healthwatch Bracknell Forest will ensure the patient voice is heard within this process.

In June 2017, Healthwatch Bracknell Forest took part, over 2 days, in the development of a training course for BACCG for reception and administration staff in customer service - providing the patient's perspective. Due to some of the results from this survey and other feedback recently received we will follow up with BACCG about when this training has/will be delivered.

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