

Health and Wellbeing Board

4 January 2018

Healthwatch Walsall - Access to Primary Care Services

1. Purpose

Each year Healthwatch Walsall asks the public what their concerns are around health and social care services. The public told us that they were concerned about access to GPs in both normal surgery hours and for access outside hours following bad experiences of accessing GP appointments. We merged the two issues to look at access to GP services generally as our second priority area of research and engagement.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Board notes this report
- 2.2. That the Health and Wellbeing Board request Walsall CCG to provide a baseline of GP appointment availability across the Borough that can be routinely reviewed.

3. Report detail

- A total of 839 surveys were carried out across Walsall.
- The data suggests that younger people are more likely to use Urgent Care Centres and A&E when GP appointments are not available and that confidence in getting through to the surgery and being able to access appointments affected the level at which respondent's accessed Urgent Care Centres and A&E.
- In our last report regarding GPs services in Walsall people told us (64% of respondents) *'that they were able to get an appointment when they felt that they needed one and there was better availability of appointments for nurses than doctors. On the day appointment availability could be problematic but so could the availability for routine appointments within the next few days with long waiting times meaning that some patients were taking emergency appointments when it was not really necessary just to secure an appointment.'*
- It is most concerning that this research had found this figure dropping markedly with only 43% of people stating they could get an appointment when they need it but with 49% saying they could not. This is a fall of 21%.
- This also corresponds in an increase of people accessing A&E when they can't get an appointment from 22% previously to 25% in this piece of research.
- The satisfaction with surgery opening times has also fallen from 86% to 75%, a drop of 11%.

- It is clear that people are generally having more difficulty seeing their GP when they feel they need to and factors affecting this could be lack of awareness of online booking and then a lack of online appointments coupled with poor conceptions of opening times and those that contact the surgery directly equally finding it hard to get appointments is putting greater pressure on A&E and Urgent Care Centres.
- Action must be taken by the GP practices and Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group to address the opening hours and availability of appointments both physical and virtual. This needs to be coupled with a plan to raise awareness of the places people can seek help other than their GPs, Urgent Care or A&E for minor health issues but safeguarding that the awareness raising also covers the subjects that people do need to go to their GPs for as well the life threatening issues that require an immediate response to.

4. Implications for Joint Working arrangements:

There is a resource implication for Walsall CCG if they agree to prepare a baseline report on appointment availability that can be reported on regularly to monitor ongoing appointment availability.

4. Health and Wellbeing Priorities:

- This report supports meeting three of the current Health and Wellbeing Board priorities:
 - Priority 3: Enable and empower individuals to improve their physical and mental health
 - Priority 7: Remove unwarranted variation in healthcare and ensure access to services with consistent quality
 - Priority 8: Enable those at risk of poor health to access appropriate health and care, with informed choice
- The report also supports a number of Marmot objectives namely:
 1. giving every child the best start in life
 2. enabling all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives
 6. strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention.

Background papers

Healthwatch Walsall - Access to Primary Care Services November 2017

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Healthwatch Walsall - Access to Primary Care Services

November 2017

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Executive Summary

Each year Healthwatch Walsall asks the public what their concerns are around health and social care services. The public told us that they were concerned about access to GPs in both normal surgery hours and for access outside hours following bad experiences of accessing GP appointments. We merged the two issues to look at access to GP services generally as our second priority area of research and engagement.

There are 59 General Practitioner surgeries across Walsall. The objective of the report was to establish how the public booked appointments, whether they found their GP service accessible in terms of getting an appointment when needed, if they would prefer extended surgery opening times, if the lack of appointments at GP surgeries impacted on use of A&E and Urgent Care Centres in the area. It also looked at whether there were any influence by demographics on the use of A&E or Urgent Care Centres, the demographic information used was gender, location, ethnicity and disability.

The key findings were:

Online Appointments

(N=818) 48% could access online appointments but 56% of them didn't use the service however of the 21% that said that they couldn't access online appointments 66% stated that they would use it if it was available.

Accessing appointments

(N=819) 49% said that they could not access an appointment when they needed it and 43% stated that they could access an appointment when they needed.

(N=783) Cross tabulation between online appointment availability and ability to access appointments when it was needed did not show any significant relationship. There was no real difference between those who used online services to those who booked in other ways, for those that were not able to book online more reported being unable to get an appointment when they needed it but it was not at a level to indicate a significant relationship.

(N=780) 38% agreed that they would be happy to have a skype or telephone appointment, 42% disagreed.

Availability of appointments

(N=836) 14% rated the appointment with doctors availability as excellent, 30% Good and 31% fair with 25% as poor.

(N=828) 17% rated availability of appointments with nurses as Excellent, 40% Good and 27% fair with only 9% as poor.

(N=812) 11% rated appointments with other medical professionals as Excellent, 28% Good and 24% fair with 9% as poor, the remainder didn't know.

Calling the surgery

(N=813) 44% agreed that they could speak to reception within 5 minutes of trying whilst 39% disagreed.

(N=803) 45% agreed that they could get an appointment when they called their practice whilst 35% disagreed.

Continuity of care

(N=655) 61% agreed that as an older person with complex needs they would like to see the same doctor when they visit the surgery, only 6% disagreed.

(N=509) 55% agreed that as a younger person with health issues they would like to see the same doctor when visiting the surgery, 9% disagreed.

(N=660) 68% agreed that as an adult with complex needs they preferred to see the same doctor each time they visited, 7% disagreed.

(N=752) 53% agreed that they didn't mind who they see as long as they got the treatment they needed.

(N=790) 73% agreed that they would be happy to see a medical professional other than a doctor if they had the right skills to treat their condition.

Despite a trend to being willing to be treated by anyone who was qualified most respondents still preferred to see a named doctor when they had complex health needs.

Surgery opening times

(N=839) 75% were happy with the opening times of their surgery. 20% were unhappy and 5% were unsure.

(N=810) 46% stated their surgery closed during the week. However, when a cross tabulation was run there was no significant correlation between the surgery opening times and the satisfaction with opening times. The closing of surgeries during the week is not an issue for most of the respondents.

(N=812) 48% of respondents did want to extend opening times at their surgery to have earlier appointments,

(N=802) whilst 63% wanted to extend opening times to being open later and

(N=813) 74% answered yes to extending opening times to weekend opening.

(N=792) 41% were aware that some surgeries offered Saturday morning appointments, 50% said no and 9% were unsure.

Accessing alternative or secondary healthcare services

(N=795) 54% said yes they had accessed Urgent care and walk in centres in Walsall when they were unable to access appointments with their GP. 41% said no they hadn't.

(N=791) 25% agreed they had accessed A&E when they were unable to get a doctor's appointment and 71% said no they hadn't.

Accessing secondary services and influencing factors

A series of cross tabulations were run to see if availability of appointments influenced accessing alternative or secondary healthcare services.

Due to the limited amount of people who stated that they used A&E when their practice wasn't available led to the cross tabulations being inconclusive in terms of statistical significance to the wider population, however some interesting results showed that of the 25% of people that had accessed A&E due to a lack of access to their GP, 66% said that they could not get an appointment with their GP when they needed one.

For the use of urgent care services, the results were still inconclusive but almost 50% of respondents who had used Urgent Care Centres found their access to GP services to be either fair or poor.

What was revealed was that age appeared to be an indicator of A&E use when unable to access a GP in addition to confidence around being able to contact the surgery and get an appointment.

Respondents to the survey

Far more women responded to the survey than men. Also we had more people from diverse communities respond to this survey than previous surveys. Whilst this doesn't reflect an accurate cross section as per the 2011 census it is positive that diverse communities and women have expressed their views on this important subject. The largest age group for both women and men to respond was 40 – 64. 65+ was the second largest group with 26-39 range being well represented by women but considerably less men as was the same for the 16 – 25 range.

Conclusions

A total of 839 surveys were carried out across Walsall which, which was slightly over representative of the diversity of the town and over representative of the female demographic population also. It has however provided some good insight into the use of GP services and how the public feel about their access to their GP's.

The specific responses by Health Centre and GP practice are to follow.

The data suggests that younger people are more likely to use Urgent Care Centres and A&E when the GP appointment wasn't available and that confidence in getting through to the surgery and being able to access appointments affected the level at which respondent's accessed Urgent Care Centres and A&E.

In our last report regarding GPs services in Walsall people told us (64% of respondents) ‘that they were able to get an appointment when they felt that they needed one and there was better availability of appointments for nurses than doctors. On the day appointment availability could be problematic but so could the availability for routine appointments within the next few days with long waiting times meaning that some patients were taking emergency appointments when it was not really necessary just to secure an appointment.’

It is most concerning that this research had found this figure dropping markedly with only 43% of people stating they could get an appointment when they need it but with 49% saying they could not. This is a fall of 21%.

This also corresponds in an increase of people accessing A&E when they can’t get an appointment from 22% previously to 25% in this piece of research.

The satisfaction with surgery opening times has also fallen from 86% to 75% a drop of 11%.

It is clear that people are generally having more difficulty seeing their GP when they feel they need to and factors affecting this could be lack of awareness of online booking and then a lack of online appointments coupled with poor conceptions of opening times and those that contact the surgery directly equally finding it hard to get appointments is putting greater pressure on A&E and Urgent Care Centres.

Action must be taken by the GP practices and Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group to address the opening hours and availability of appointments both physical and virtual. This needs to be coupled with a plan to raise awareness of the places people can seek help other than their GPs, Urgent Care or A&E for minor health issues but safeguarding that the awareness raising also covers the subjects that people do need to go to their GPs for as well the life threatening issues that require an immediate response to.

Key recommendations

1. Extending surgery opening times to open earlier, later and at weekends to support access for those individuals who work daytime shift patterns whether they need appointments for themselves or to bring children or those they care for such as parents or other relatives. The same is true for those that depend on people bringing them that may work or have other caring responsibilities.
2. Improving the availability and number of appointments people can book at short notice.
3. Online appointment booking should be made more available and promoted extensively within the practices to encourage more people to utilise the service. However, there would need to be more appointments made available so as to encourage people to use the service.
4. Due to the acknowledgment that most respondents would be happy to see a medical professional that wasn’t a doctor to receive treatment it would be wise to educate patients around what medical professionals they can see for which conditions and what treatments they can provide including a list of where these services can be accessed.
5. Promotion of the use of Urgent Care Centres as opposed to A&E if the matter is urgent but the GP is unavailable. Whilst most responses indicated people were more likely to use

Urgent Care Centres rather than A& E services when their GP appointments were not available, there was evidence to suggesting that more people especially younger are accessing A&E services when they can't get GP appointments.

6. Regular monitoring and reporting of the availability of GP appointments and opening hours to ensure a constant overview can be kept and actions taken when levels fall. This to be reported regularly to the Health and Wellbeing Board

Introduction

Healthwatch Walsall is the independent consumer champion for health and social care services in your local area, delivered by Engaging Communities (ECS) an independent, community interest company. Our job is to Champion for the consumer interests of those using health and social care services across the Borough, and give local people an opportunity to speak out about their concerns about health care and social care services.

Our reports are designed to be transparent, clear, and easily accessible that create sustainable improvements in the delivery of services.



Plan & Methodology

Methodology

This research took the form of a survey that was disseminated to the public through engagement within GP surgeries and public events that Healthwatch Walsall attended. A total of 839 responses were gathered from individuals who accessed GP practices within Walsall. However not every question was answered by every respondent. The number of respondents is designated by (N=number). Analysis of the data has been through a series of cross tabulations and charts to denote the number of response choices for each question.

Limitations to the methodology is that the name of the surgery was provided as a free text option, this led to the respondents in some instances recording the name of the health centre their practice was in rather than the specific practice they attended. This has impacted on our ability to focus in on specific practices that are located within a larger health centres setting where there may be more than 1 GP practice located.

Quality plan

ECS has a responsibility to ensure that the research it undertakes and creates is of high quality and aligned to best practice across the industry. Research ultimately provides the evidence on which sound decisions should be made, which is why it is important to state up front how quality was ensured during this project. The Research team underpins its research activities by applying the Market Research Society Codes of Conduct (MRS, 2014). ECS are a company partner of the Market Research Society.

During this project ECS adhered to a strict data protection policy that ensured that:

- Everyone handling and managing personal information internally understood they were responsible for good data protection practices;
- There was someone with specific responsibility for data protection in the organisation;
- Staff who handled personal information were appropriately supervised and trained;
- Queries about handling of personal information would have been promptly and courteously dealt with had they been received;
- The methods of handling personal information are regularly assessed and evaluated;
- Necessary steps were taken to ensure that personal data was kept secure at all times against unlawful loss or disclosure.

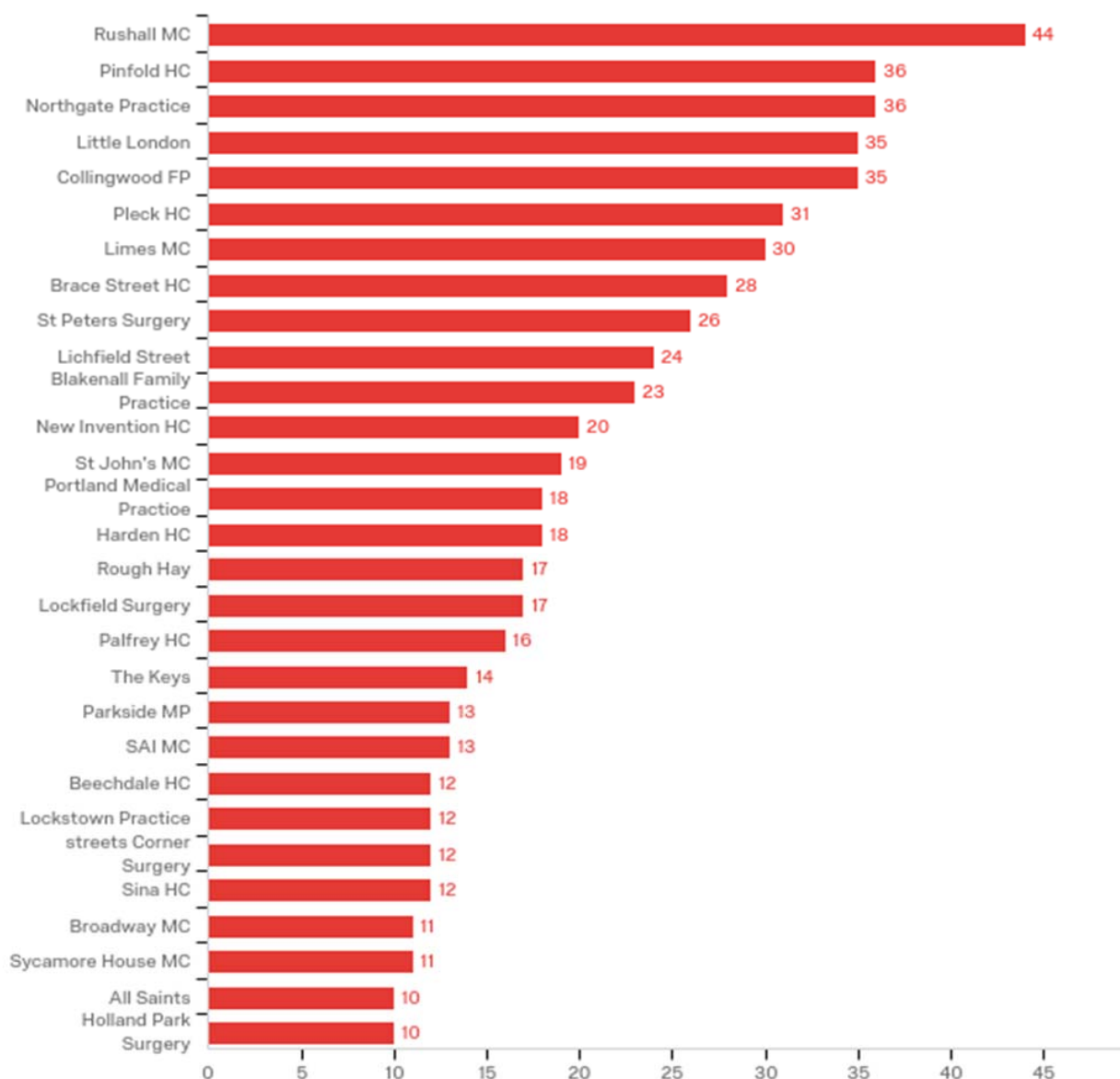
ECS have firm guidelines for data storage, data retrieval, data security and data destruction. There is also a strict process in place should a data breach occur (which includes containment and recovery, assessment of ongoing risk, notification of breach, evaluation and response). To further ensure the quality of the final report, an internal peer review process was initiated to ensure that the report is fit for purpose before submission. Where data is not robust it was statistically suppressed to prevent disclosure.

Findings

839 responses were collected from patients of GP Surgery's across Walsall. Findings will be presented across the whole cohort followed by a mini report for those surgeries with 10 or more responses.

Some participants gave the name of the health centre rather than their specific GP Practice so figures are presented for either individual surgeries where possible and Health Centre Locations where this was not possible. Not included in the tables are answers from those respondents who did not specify a surgery or health centre location.

Below is a chart showing the number of responses for all locations with 10 or more responses.



The following locations received less than 10 responses:

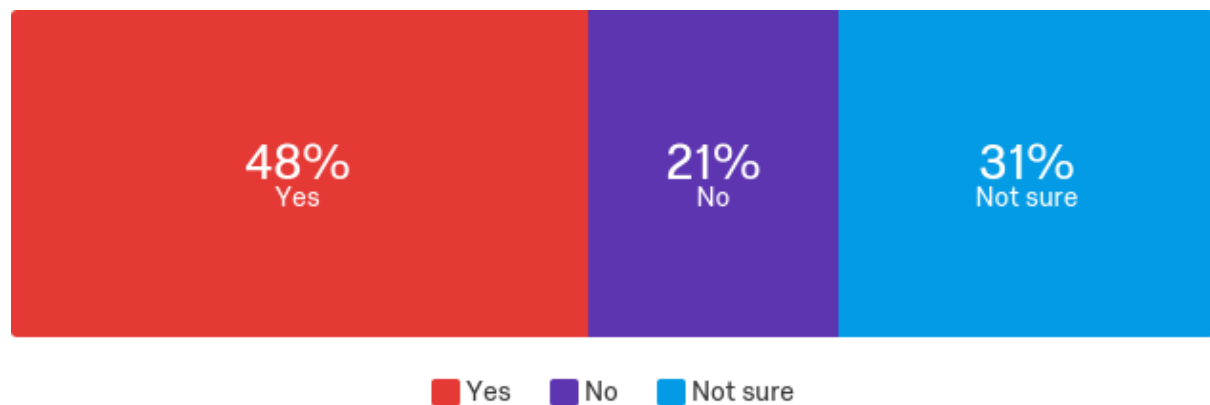
Location	Count	Location	Count
Ambar MC	6	Lower Farm HC	9
Bentley MC	1	Manor Medical Practice	7
Berkley Practice	7	Mossley Field Surgery	6
Bilston HC	1	Moxley MC	8
Bilston urban village MC	1	New Road Surgery	1
Birchills HC	8	Park View Centre	6
Blackwood HC	1	Pelsall Village Centre	7
Bloxwich Medical Practice	9	Quinton Practice	5
Chapel Street Surgery	5	Saddlers HC	5
Colliers Surgery	1	Spines HC	1

croft surgery	5	St Luke's Surgery	3
Darlaston Family Practice	4	St Mary's	7
Darlaston MC	4	Stroud Practice	7
Dr Sameja's surgery	2	Sutton park surgery	2
Field Rd Surgery	2	The Surgery, Queslett	7
Lockstone Surgery	1	Walsall Wood	1
High Street Surgery	1	Wharf Family Practice	8
Kingfisher Practice	9	Wilenhall MC	2
Lichfield Road	4	Yew Tree Surgery	3

Appointments

Respondents were asked the following questions around the appointment systems at their surgery:

Can you book your appointment online?

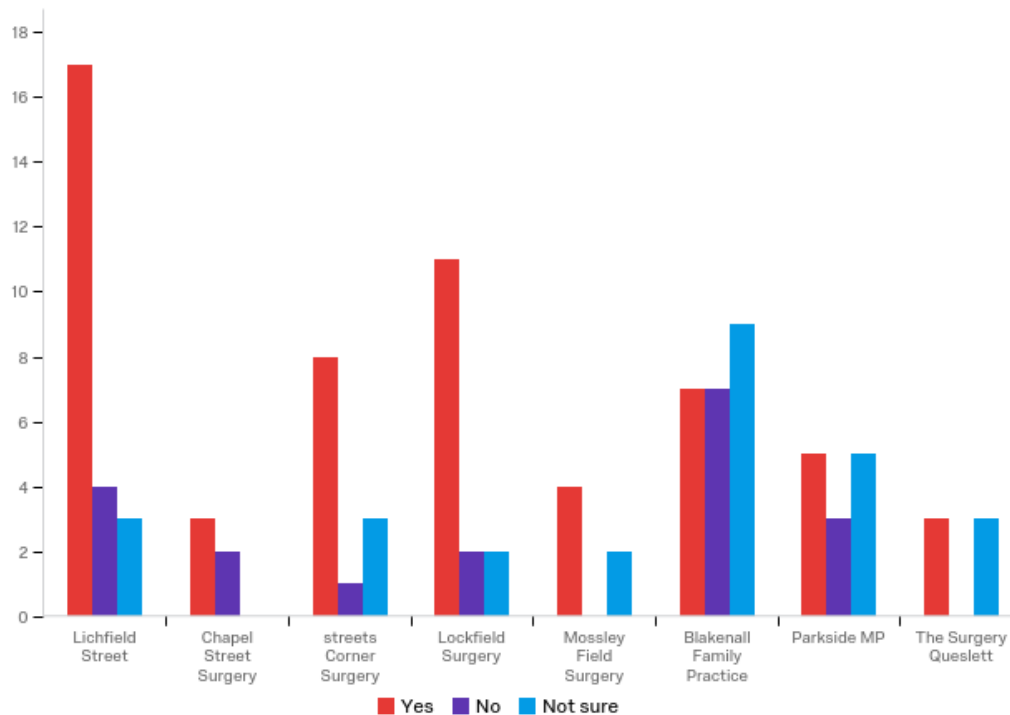


391 (48%) respondents stated yes they could book appointments online, 257 (31%) were not sure and 170 (21%) stated no they could not book appointments online. (N=818)

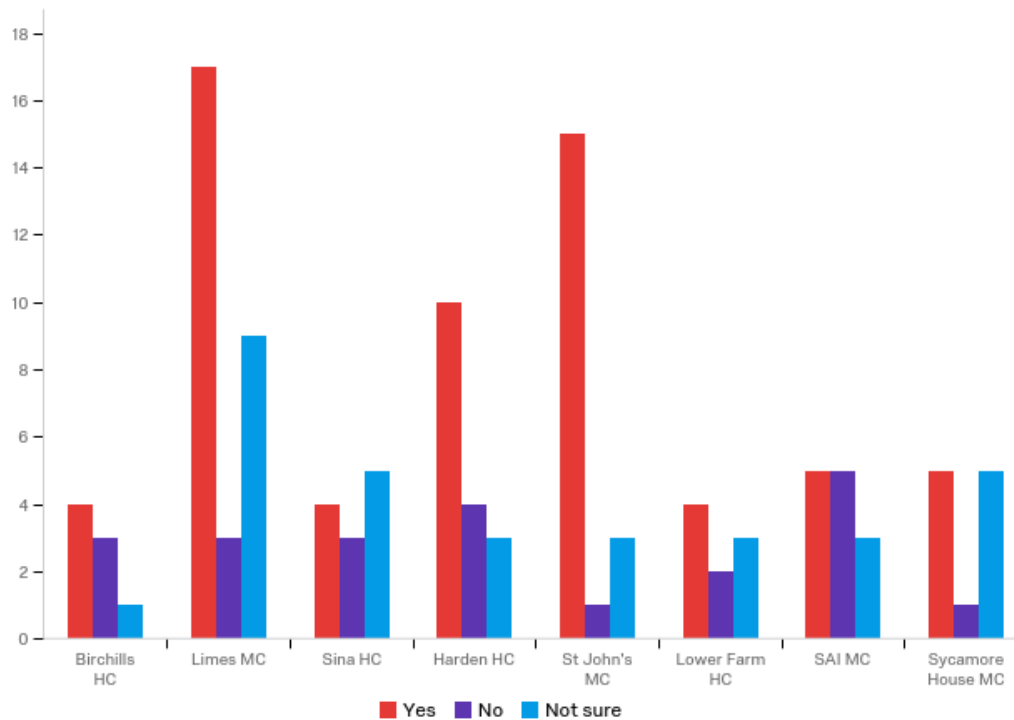
	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	47.80%	391
2	No	20.78%	170
3	Not sure	31.42%	257
	Total	100%	818

The following charts show the responses for each location. Red signifies that they can book appointments online, purple indicates respondents didn't think it was possible to book appointments online and blue signifies the respondent was not sure if it was possible to book online appointments.

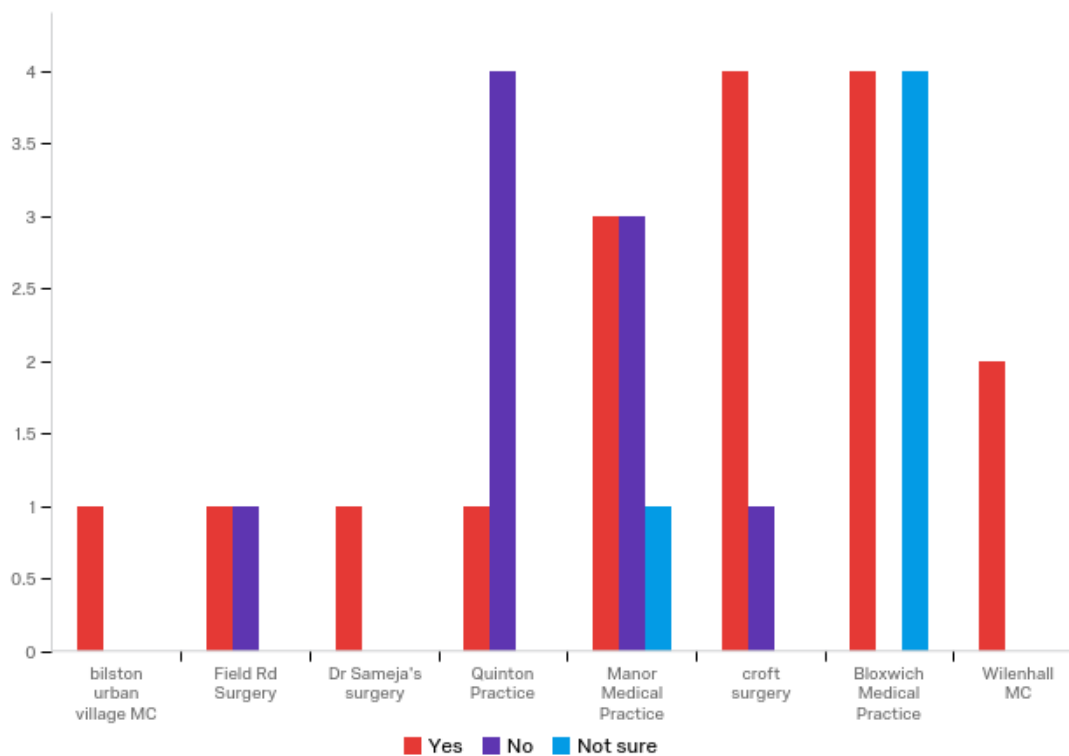
Group 1 (Lichfield Street Surgery, Chapel Street Surgery, Streets Corner Surgery, Lockfield Surgery, Mossley Field Surgery, Blakenall Family Practice, Parkside Medical Practice and The Surgery Queslett)



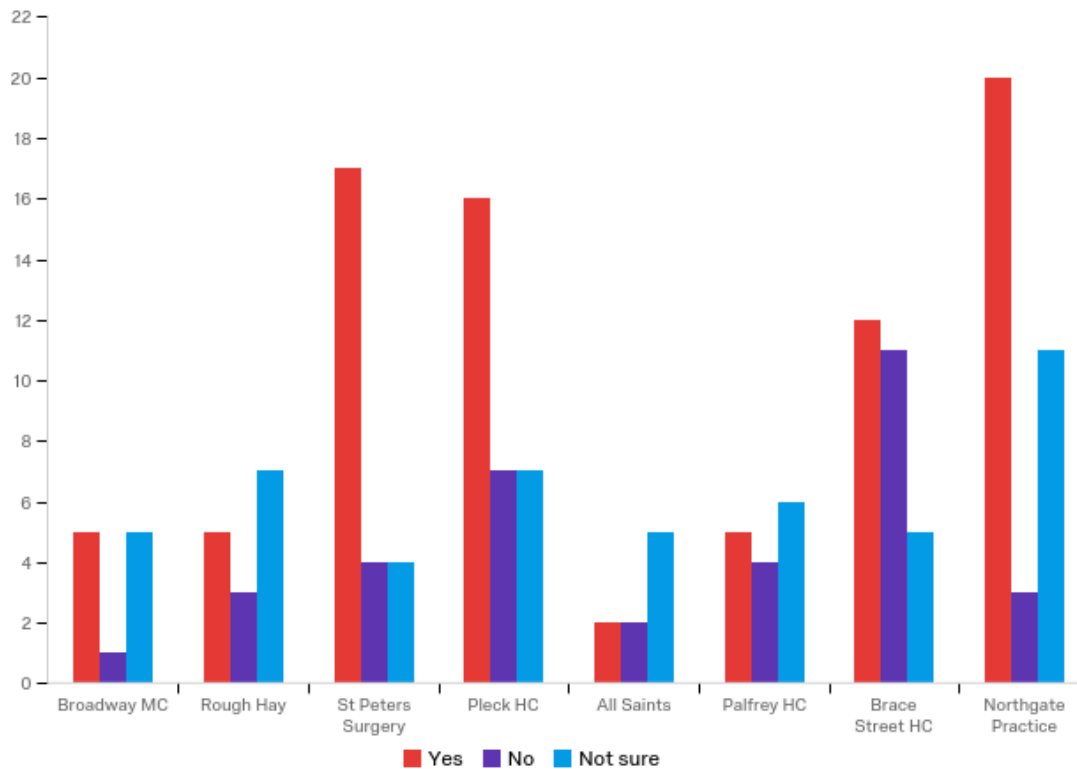
Group 2 (Birchills Health centre, The Limes Medical Centre, Sina Health Centre, Harden Health Centre, St John's Medical Centre, Lower Farm Health Centre, Sai Medical Centre and Sycamore House Medical Centre)



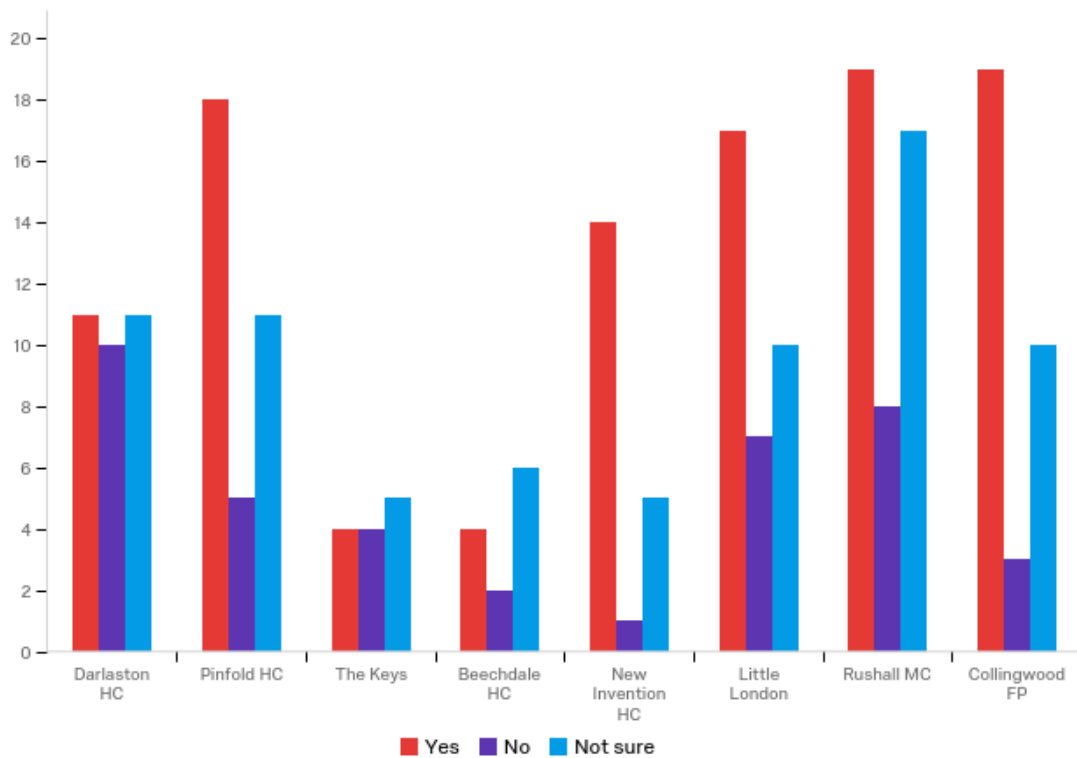
Group 3 (Bilston Urban Village Medical Centre, Field Road Surgery, Dr Sameja's surgery, Quinton Practice, Manor Medical Practice, Croft Surgery, Bloxwich Medical Practice and Willenhall Medical Centre)



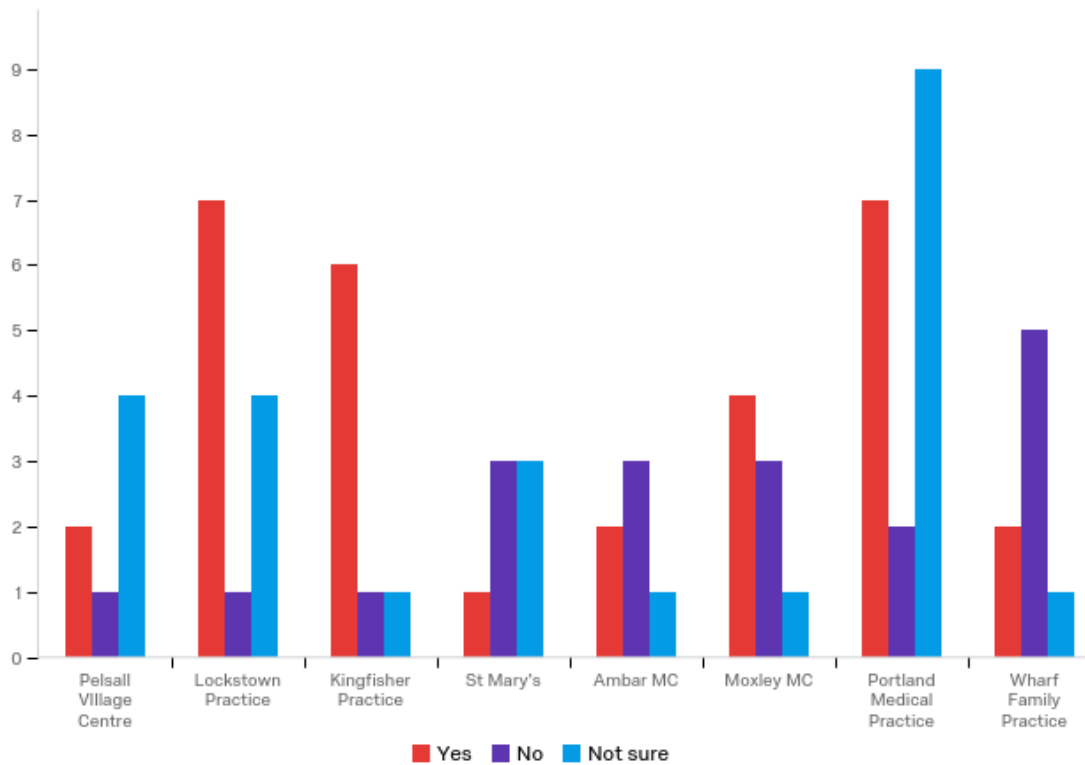
Group 4 (Broadway Medical Centre, Rough Hay Surgery, St Peter's surgery, Pleck Health Centre, All Saints Surgery, Palfrey Health Centre, Brace Street Health Centre, Northgate Practice)



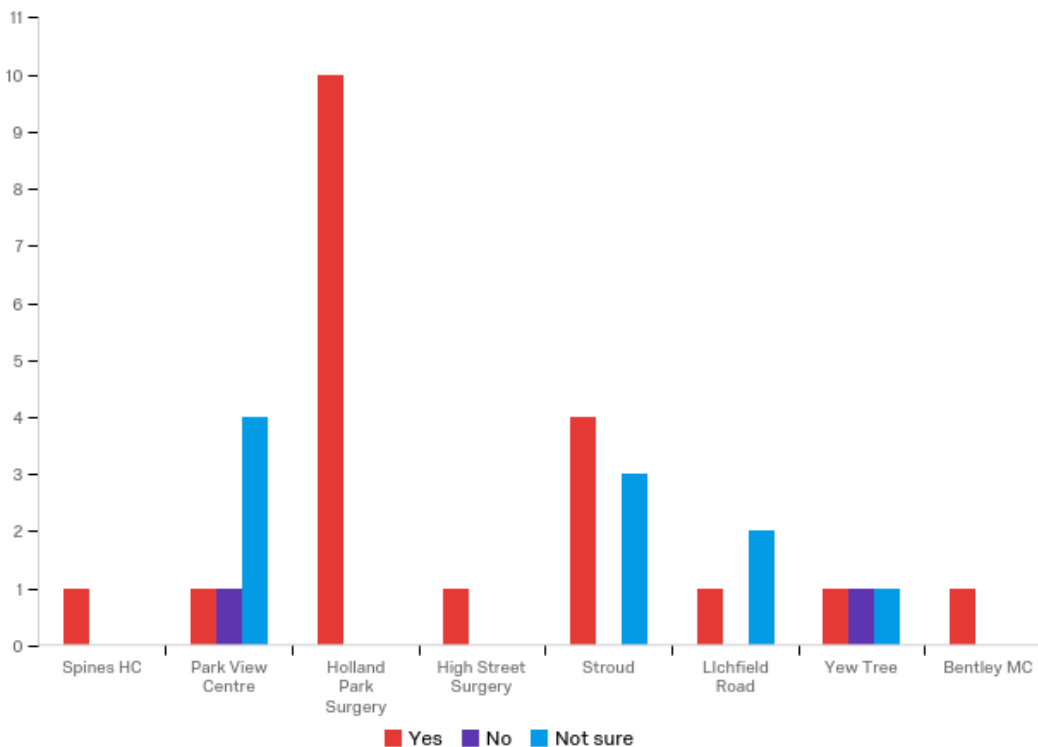
Group 5 (Darlaston Health Centre, Pinfold Health Centre, The Keys Family Practice, Beechdale Health Centre, New Invention Health Centre, Little London Surgery, Rushall Medical Centre and Collingwood Family Practice.)



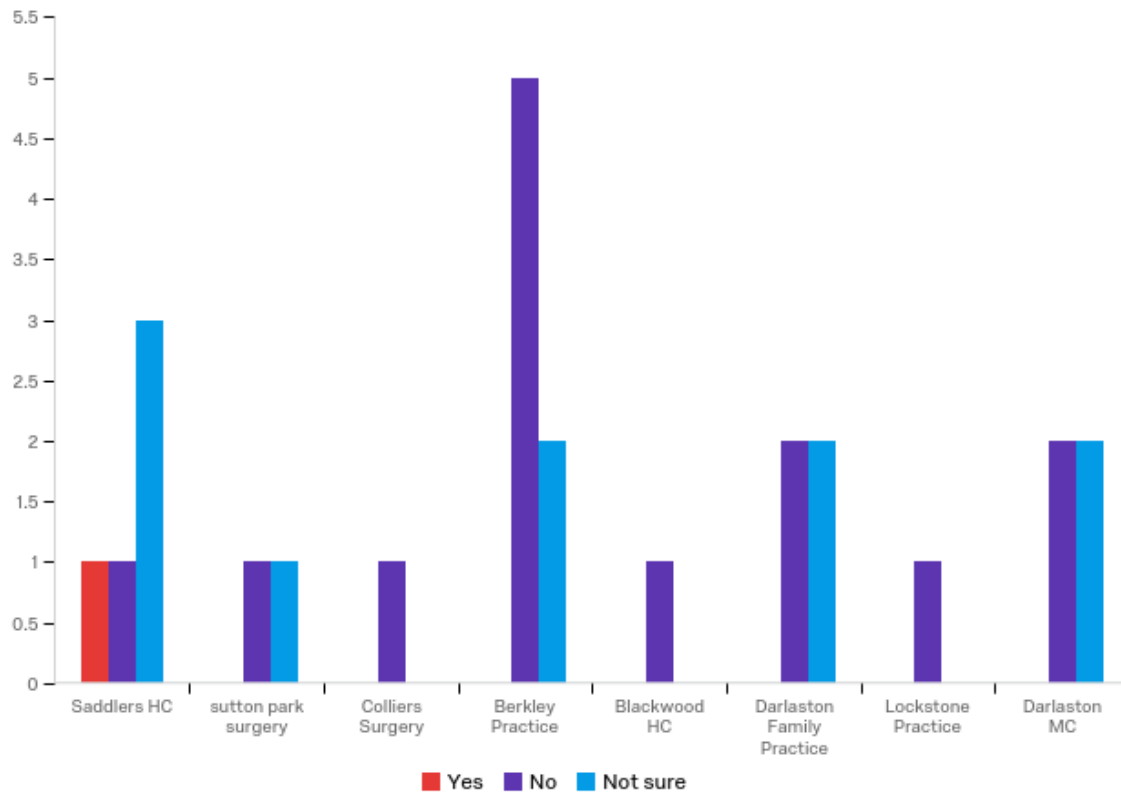
Group 6 (Pelsall Village Centre, Lockstown Practice, Kingfisher Practice, St Mary's surgery, Ambar Medical Centre, Moxley Medical Centre, Portland Medical Centre and Wharf Family Practice.)



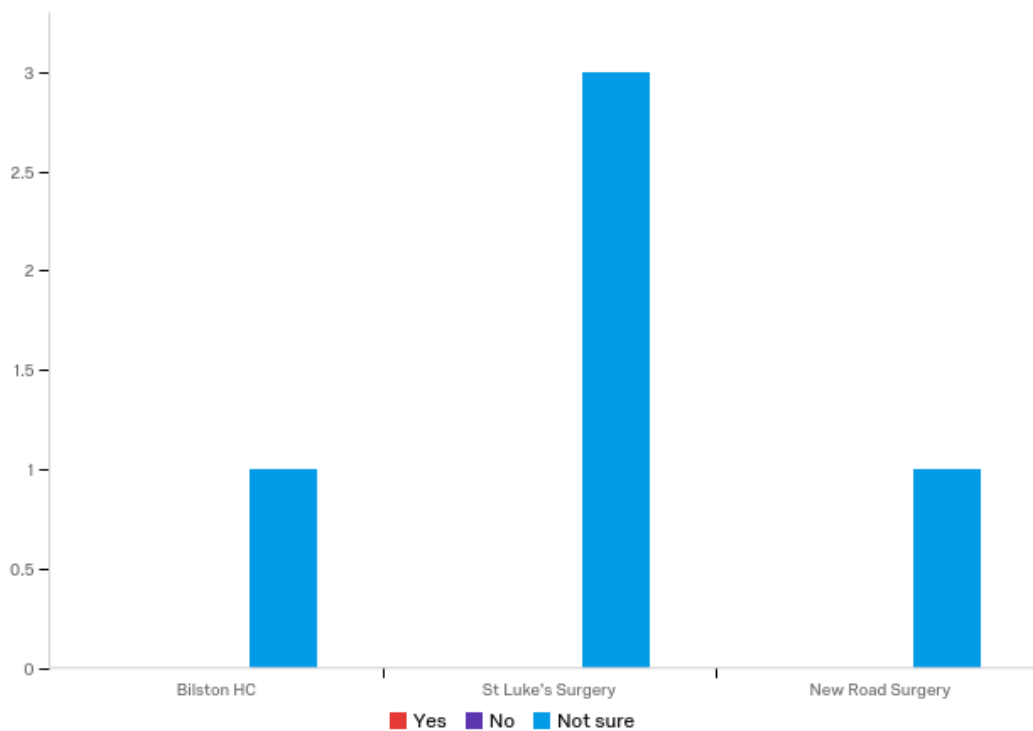
Group 7 (Spines Health Centre, Park View centre, Holland Park Surgery, High Street Surgery, Stroud Practice, Lichfield Road – Dr Latthe, Yew Tree Surgery, Bentley Medical Centre)



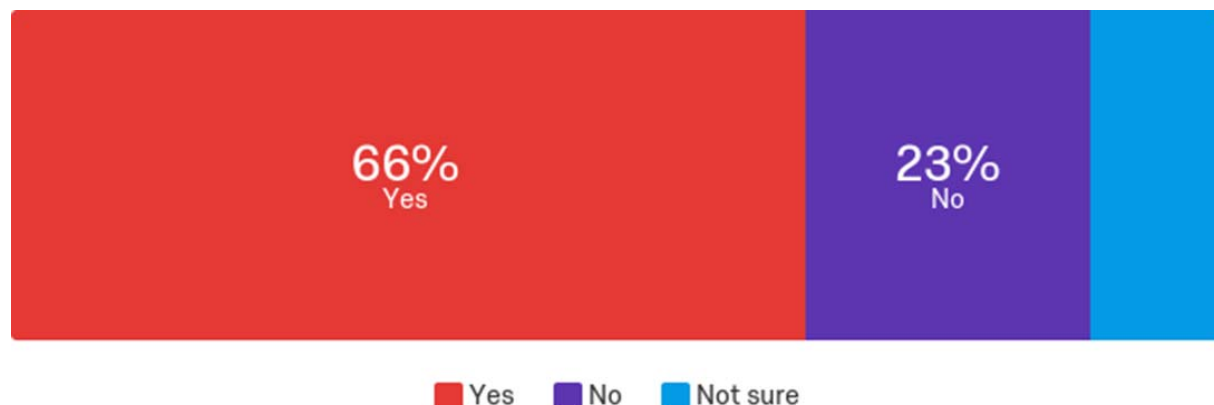
Group 8 (Saddlers Health Centre, Sutton Park Surgery, Colliers Surgery, Berkley Practice, Blackwood Health Centre, Darlaston Family Practice, Lockstone Practice, Darlaston Medical Centre)



Group 9 (Bilston Health Centre, St Luke's Surgery, New Road Surgery)



If no, would you use this service if it was available? (booking online appointments)



	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	65.52%	95
2	No	23.45%	34
3	Not sure	11.03%	16
	Total	100%	145

Of the 145 respondents that answered no to having access to online appointments 66% (95) stated that they would use an online booking appointment if it was available. 23% (34) respondents answered that they would not book online and 11% (16) were unsure whether they would use the service. (N=145)

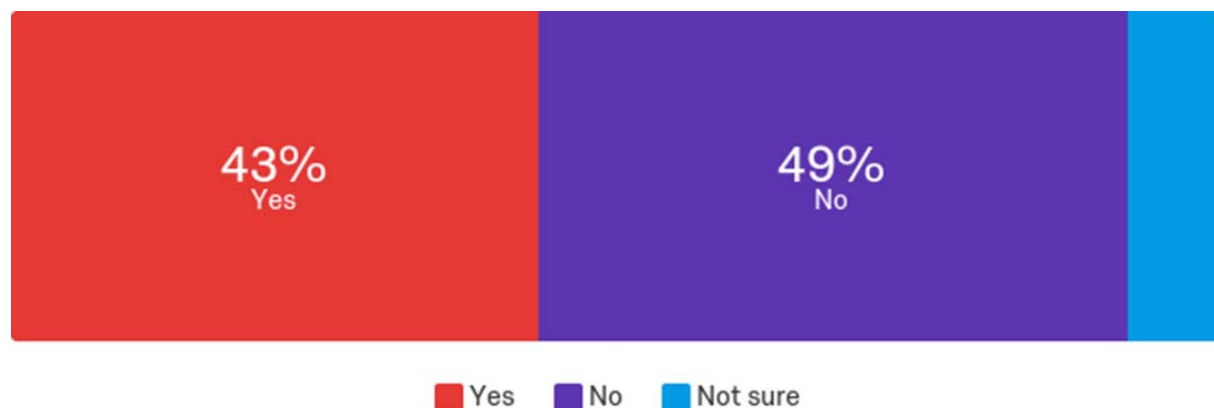
If yes, how regularly do you book an appointment on-line?



	Answer	%	Count
1	Every time	13.65%	49
2	Occasionally	30.36%	109
3	Never	55.99%	201
	Total	100%	359

Of the 359 respondents that answered yes, their practice did have an online booking system only 14% (49) used it every time they booked an appointment. 30% (109) used it occasionally and 56% (201) never used the online booking service despite knowing it existed. (N=359)

Can you get an appointment for when you need it?



	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	43.47%	356
2	No	48.60%	398
3	Not sure	7.94%	65
	Total	100%	819

Of the 819 respondents that answered this question 43% (356) stated that they could get an appointment when they needed it, whilst 49% (398) stated that they couldn't get an appointment when they needed it. Whilst only 8% (65) were not sure. A cross tabulation was run between can you access appointments online and do you receive an appointment when you need it.

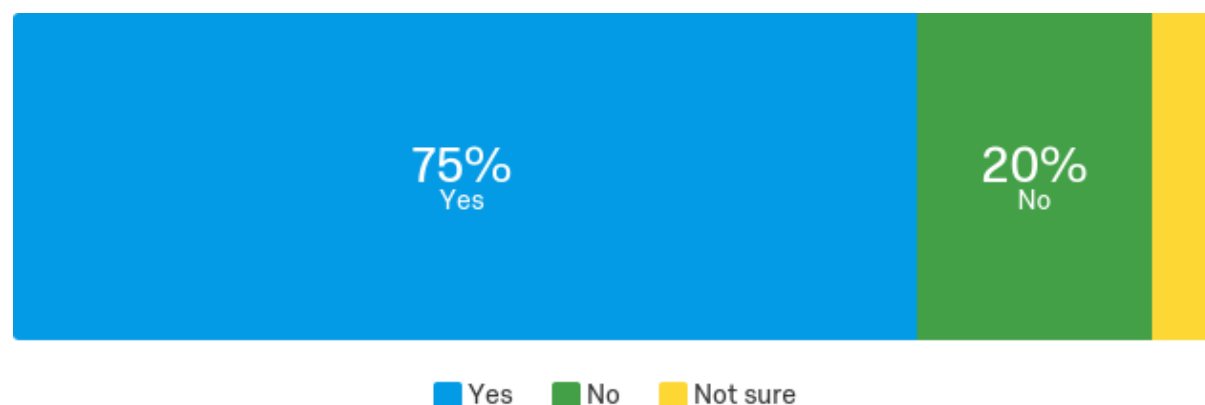
		Can you get an appointment for when you need it?			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
Can you book your appointment online?	Yes	168 45.04% 49.12%	167 44.77% 44.18%	38 10.19% 60.32%	373 100.00% 47.64%
	No	54 33.13% 15.79%	99 60.74% 26.19%	10 6.13% 15.87%	163 100.00% 20.82%
	Not sure	120 48.58% 35.09%	112 45.34% 29.63%	15 6.07% 23.81%	247 100.00% 31.55%
	Total	342 43.68% 100.00%	378 48.28% 100.00%	63 8.05% 100.00%	783 100.00% 100.00%

The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column percentages. Of those respondents that can book an appointment online 45% can get an appointment when they need it, 45% cannot get an appointment when they need it and 10% are unsure whether they can get an appointment or not when they need it. Of those respondents that cannot book an appointment online 33% can get appointments when they need them. 61% cannot get appointments when they need them and 6% are unsure if they get appointments when they need them. Of those who didn't know about whether there was an online appointment system 49% said that they could get an appointment when they needed it. 45% couldn't get an appointment when they wanted one and 6% were unsure. Of those that could get appointments when they needed it 49% were able to use an online system if they wished to do so.

Opening times

Respondents were then asked a series of questions around the surgery opening times and possible changes that might improve access to see what they thought would make access easier for them.

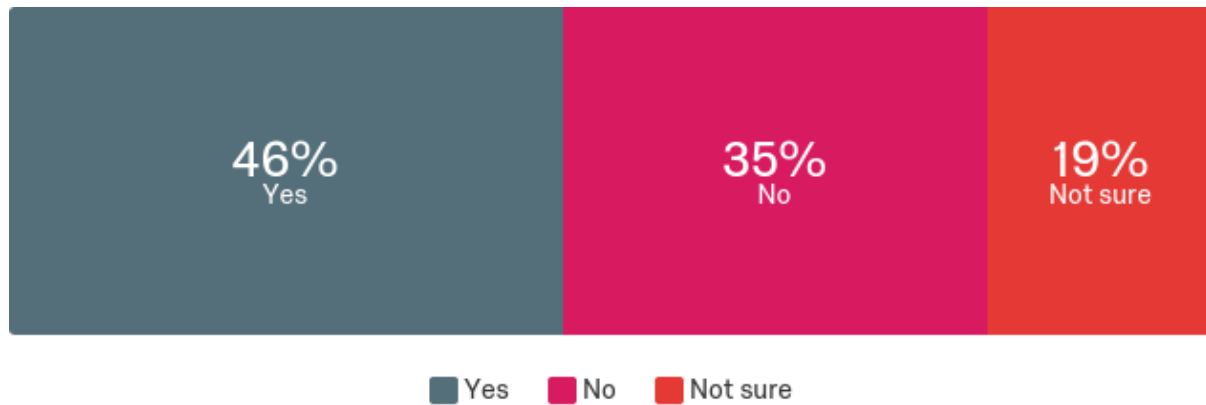
Are you satisfied with your surgery opening times?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	74.97%	629
2	No	19.55%	164
3	Not sure	5.48%	46
	Total	100%	839

Of the 839 respondents that answered this question 75% were happy with their surgery opening times. 20% were not and 5% were unsure.

Does your surgery close during the week?



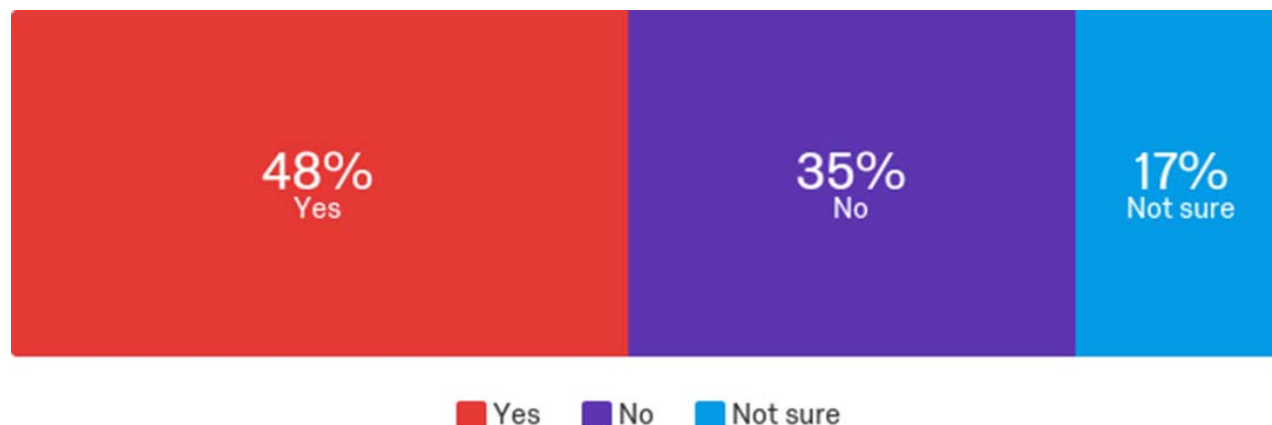
	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	45.93%	372
2	No	35.31%	286
3	Not sure	18.77%	152
	Total	100%	810

Of the 810 respondents that answered this question 46% (372) said yes their surgery closed during week. 35% (286) said No their surgery did not close during the week and 19% (152) said that they were unsure. A cross tabulation was run between are you satisfied with your surgery opening times and does your surgery close during the week. Red figures are row percentages and blue figures are column percentages.

		Does your surgery close during the week?			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
Are you satisfied with your surgery opening times?	Yes	255 41.94% 68.55%	237 38.98% 83.45%	116 19.08% 76.32%	608 100.00% 75.25%
	No	95 60.13% 25.54%	38 24.05% 13.38%	25 15.82% 16.45%	158 100.00% 19.55%
	Not sure	22 52.38% 5.91%	9 21.43% 3.17%	11 26.19% 7.24%	42 100.00% 5.20%
	Total	372 46.04% 100.00%	284 35.15% 100.00%	152 18.81% 100.00%	808 100.00% 100.00%

This shows that of the 372 respondents that answered yes to surgeries closing during the week 69% of respondents are still satisfied with the surgery opening times. 26% were unsatisfied with opening times and 6% were not sure.

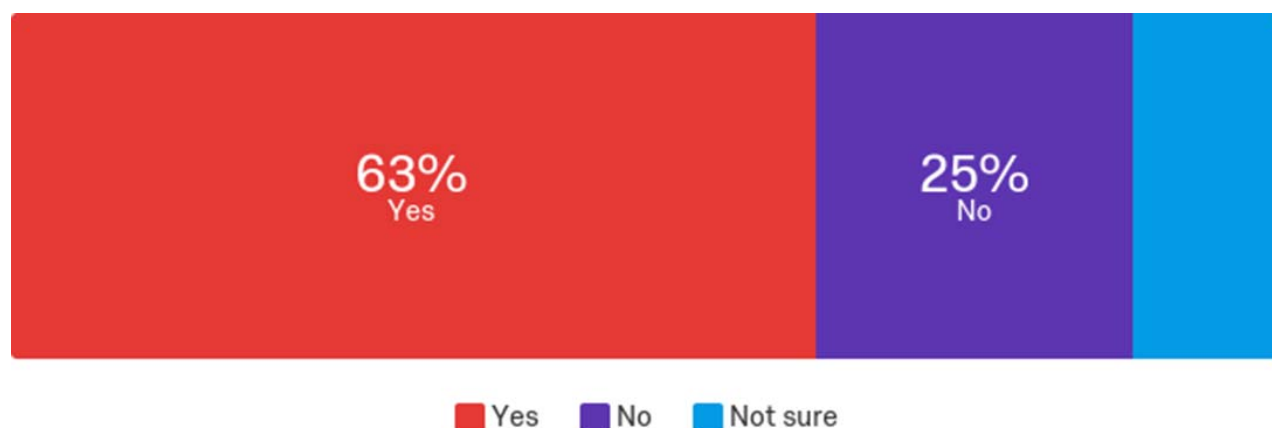
Would you like extended opening times at your surgery to have earlier opening times?



	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	48.28%	392
2	No	35.10%	285
3	Not sure	16.63%	135
	Total	100%	812

Of the 812 respondents that answered the question would you like opening times extended to have earlier opening times 48% (392) said yes, 35% (285) said no and 17% (135) said they were not sure.

Would you like extended opening times at your surgery to have later opening times?



	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	63.22%	507
2	No	24.94%	200
3	Not sure	11.85%	95
	Total	100%	802

Of the 802 respondents that answered this question 63% (507) stated that they would like later opening times, 25% (200) said no they wouldn't and 12% (95) stated that they were not sure about later opening times.

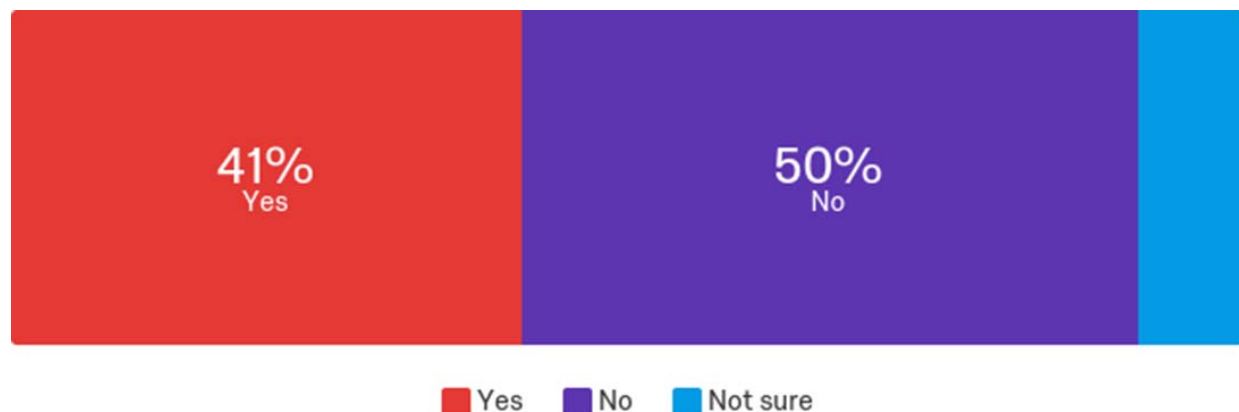
Would you like extended opening times as your surgery to have weekend opening times?



	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	74.17%	603
2	No	13.65%	111
3	Not sure	12.18%	99
	Total	100%	813

Of the 813 respondents that answered this question 74% (603) stated that they would like their surgery to have weekend opening times. 14% (111) stated that they No to weekend opening times and 12% (99) stated that they were not sure about extending opening times to include weekend opening.

Are you aware that some surgeries are providing Saturday morning appointments?

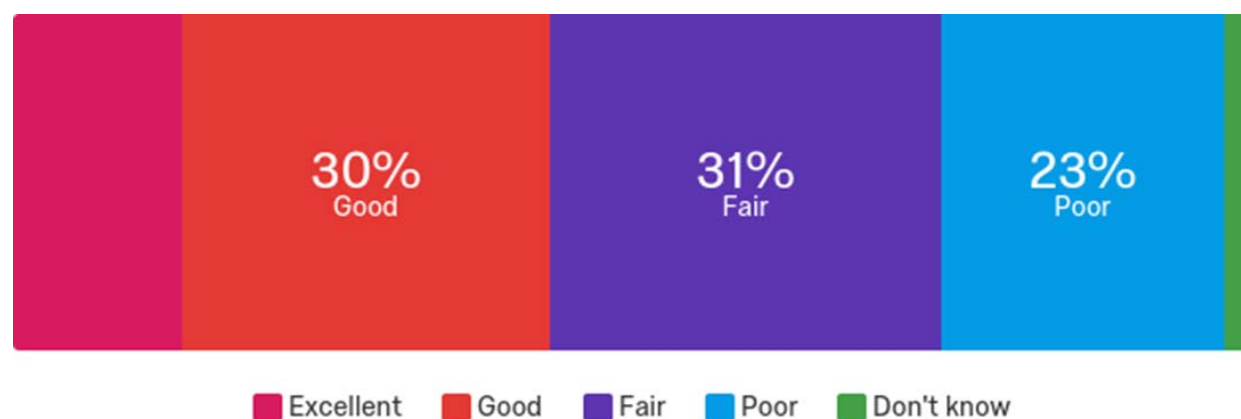


	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	41.29%	327
2	No	50.00%	396
3	Not sure	8.71%	69
	Total	100%	792

Of the 792 respondents who answered this question 41% stated yes they were aware that some practices were providing Saturday morning appointments. 50% said no they were not aware and 9% were not sure.

Availability of appointments

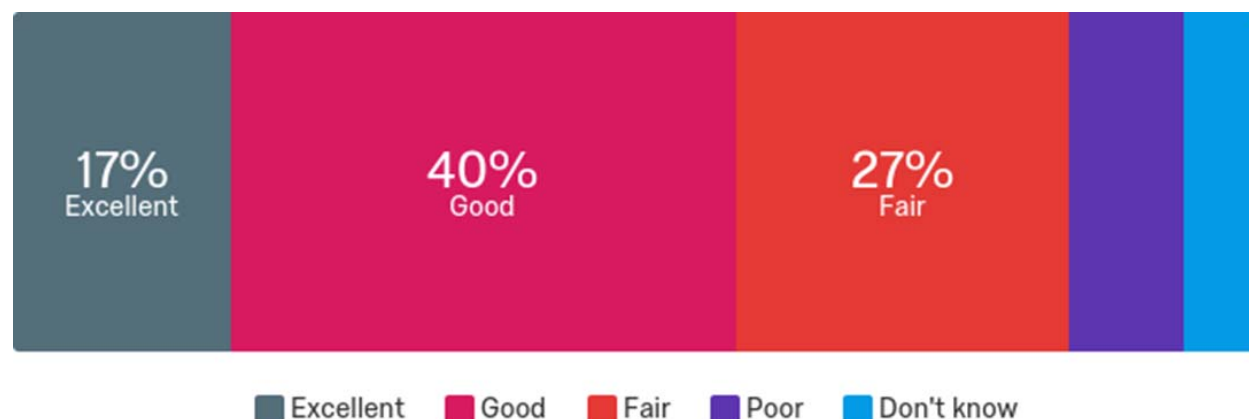
How would you rate the availability of appointments with doctors at your surgery?



	Answer	%	Count
1	Excellent	13.64%	114
2	Good	29.67%	248
3	Fair	31.46%	263
4	Poor	22.97%	192
5	Don't know	2.27%	19
	Total	100%	836

When asked how respondents would rate the availability of appointments with doctors at the surgery of the 836 that answered the question 14% (114) said Excellent, 30% (248) said Good, 31% (263) said Fair, 23% (192) said Poor and 2% (19) said Don't Know.

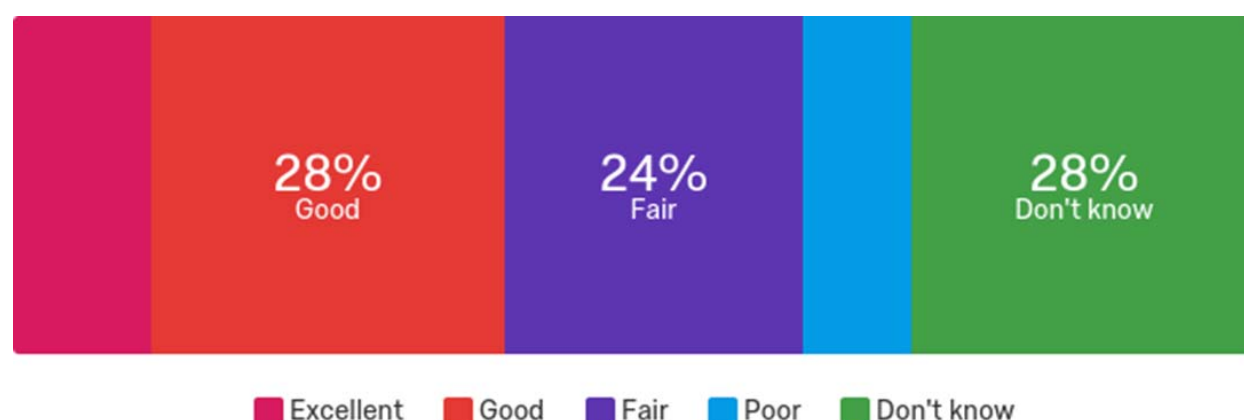
How would you rate the availability of appointments with nurses at your surgery?



	Answer	%	Count
1	Excellent	17.39%	144
2	Good	40.46%	335
3	Fair	26.57%	220
4	Poor	9.30%	77
5	Don't know	6.28%	52
	Total	100%	828

Of the 828 respondents that answered this question 17% (144) stated that availability of appointments with nurses at their surgery was excellent, 40% (335) stated that it was good, 27% (220) stated that it was fair with 9% (77) stating it was poor 7% (52) stating they didn't know.

How would you rate the availability of appointments with other medical staff at your surgery?

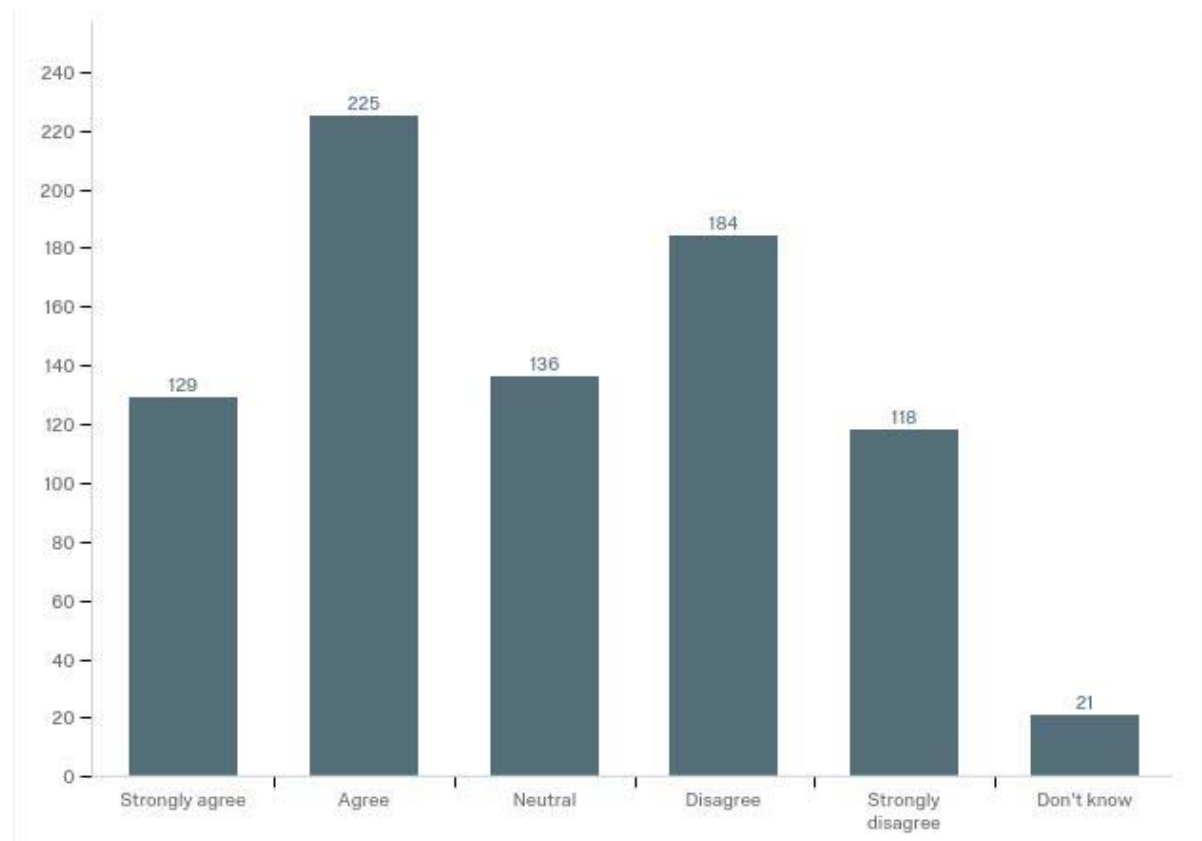


	Answer	%	Count
1	Excellent	11.08%	90
2	Good	28.33%	230
3	Fair	24.01%	195
4	Poor	8.74%	71
5	Don't know	27.83%	226
	Total	100%	812

Of the 812 respondents that answered the question 11% (90) regarded availability of appointments with other medical staff at the surgery as Excellent, 28% (230) regarded availability of appointments as Good, 24% (195) as Fair 9% (71) as Poor and 28% (226) as didn't know about the availability of appointments with other medical staff at their surgeries.

Confidence about access and appointments

I feel confident I'll get through to reception within 5 minutes when I call my GP practice

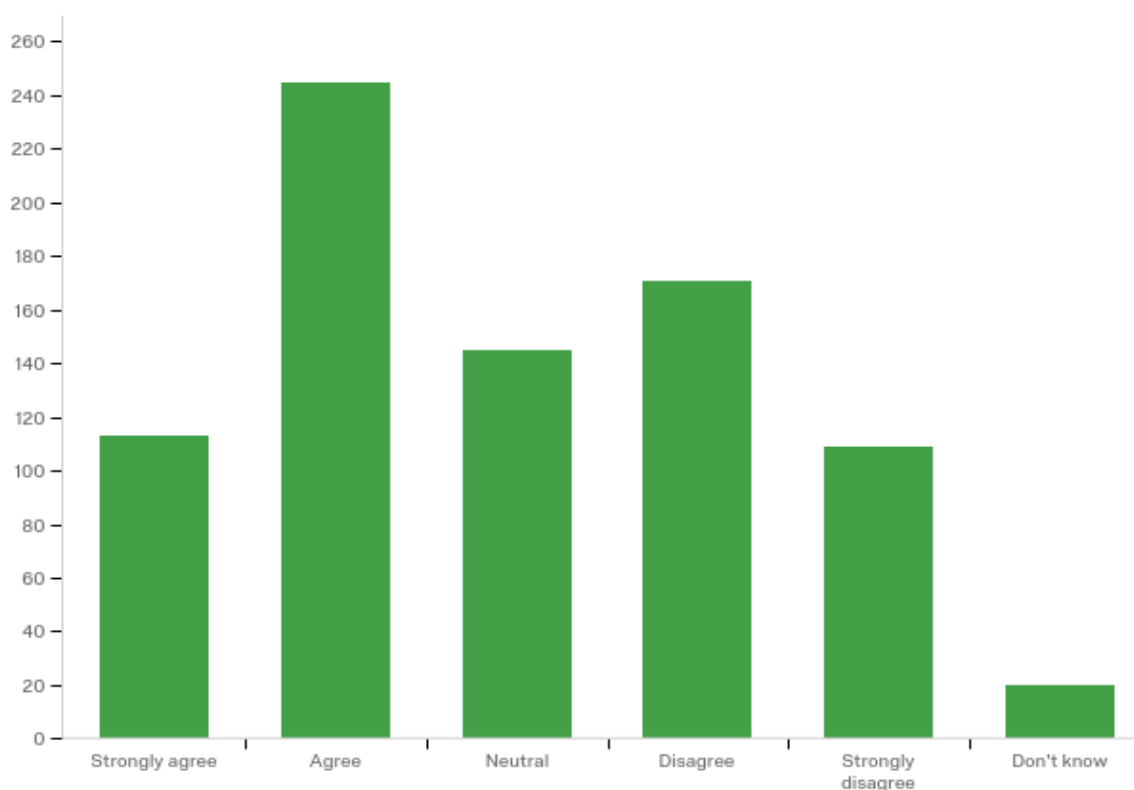


	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly agree	15.87%	129
2	Agree	27.68%	225
3	Neutral	16.73%	136
4	Disagree	22.63%	184

5	Strongly disagree	14.51%	118
6	Don't know	2.58%	21
	Total	100%	813

Of the 813 respondents that answered this question 16% (129) strongly agreed that they were confident that they would get through to reception within 5 minutes, 28% (225) agreed with the statement, 17% (136) expressed a neutral sentiment that they neither agreed or disagreed, 23% (184) disagreed with the statement, 15% (118) strongly disagreed and 3%(21) stated that they didn't know.

I feel confident I'll be able to get an appointment when I call my practice

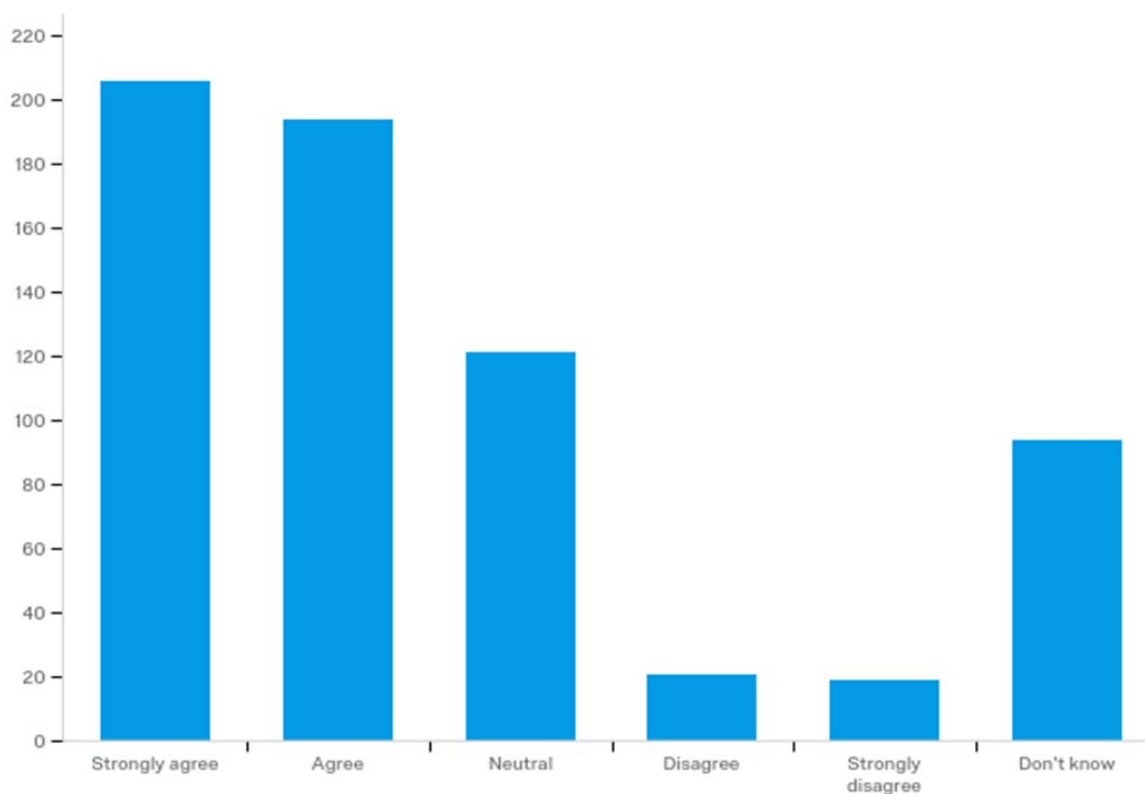


	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly agree	14.07%	113
2	Agree	30.51%	245
3	Neutral	18.06%	145
4	Disagree	21.30%	171
5	Strongly disagree	13.57%	109
6	Don't know	2.49%	20
	Total	100%	803

Of the 803 respondents 14% (113) strongly agreed that they were confident they were able to get an appointment when they called the practice. 31% (245) agreed with the statement. 18% neither agreed nor disagreed whilst 21% (171) disagreed and 14% strongly disagreed and 2% didn't know.

Continuity of care

As an older person with complex needs I prefer to see the same doctor when I visit the surgery.

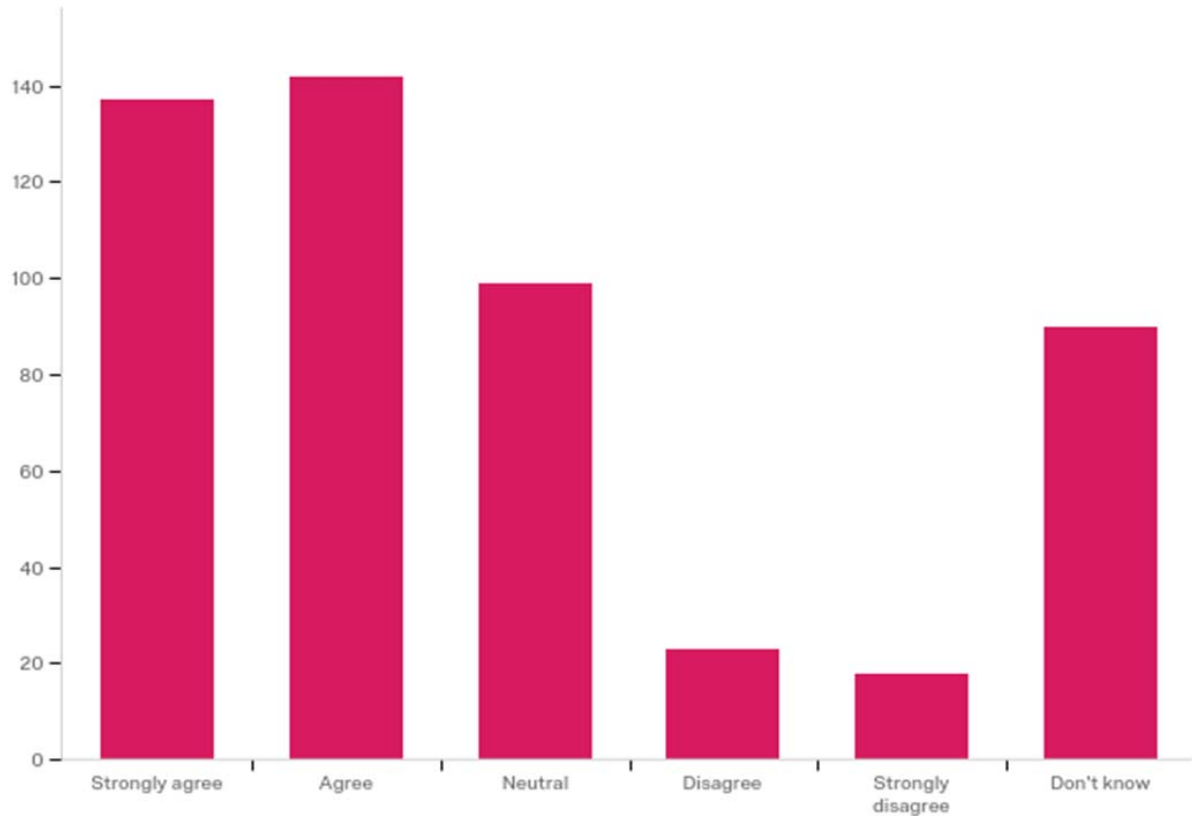


	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly agree	31.45%	206
2	Agree	29.62%	194
3	Neutral	18.47%	121
4	Disagree	3.21%	21
5	Strongly disagree	2.90%	19
6	Don't know	14.35%	94
	Total	100%	655

Of the 655 respondents that answered this question, 31% (206) strongly agreed that as an older person with complex health needs they preferred to see the same doctor. 30% (194) agreed, 18%

neither agreed nor disagreed whilst 3% (21) Disagreed and 3% (19) strongly disagreed and 14% (94) didn't know.

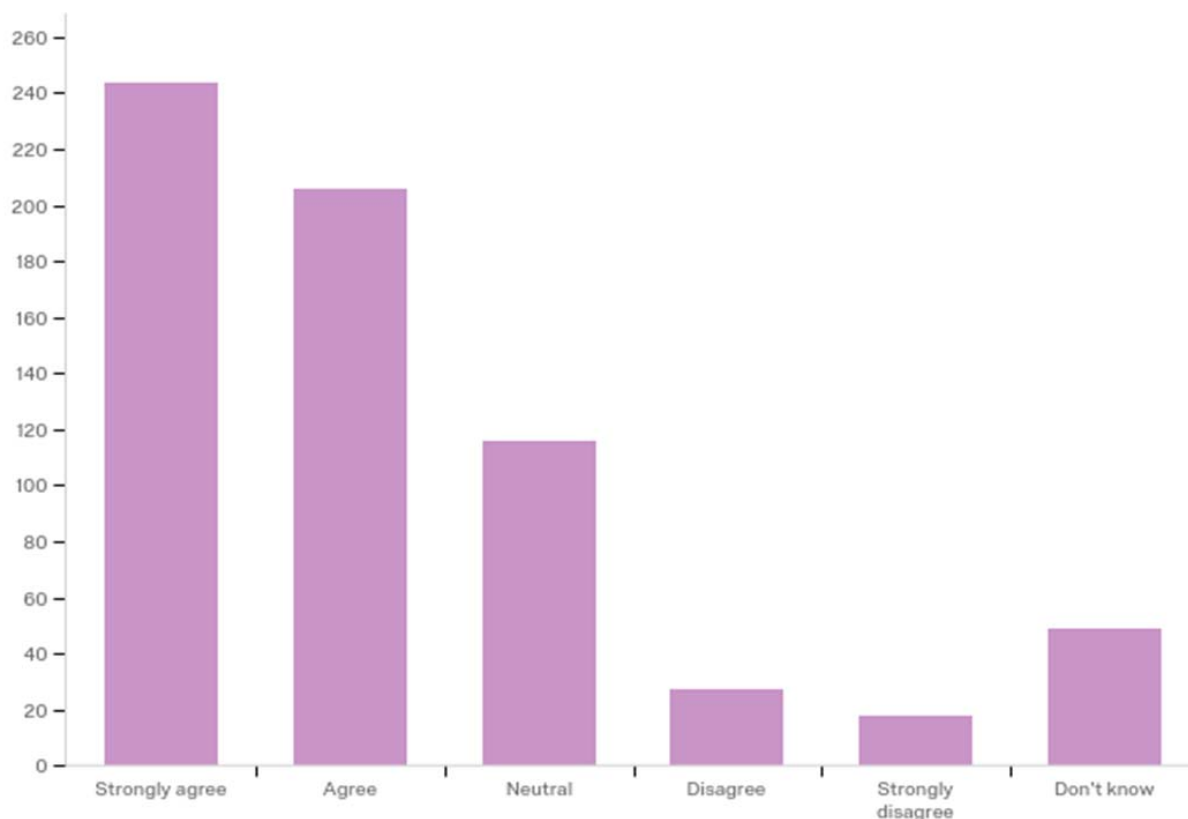
As a young person with health issues I feel more confident seeing the same doctor when I visit the surgery.



	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly agree	26.92%	137
2	Agree	27.90%	142
3	Neutral	19.45%	99
4	Disagree	4.52%	23
5	Strongly disagree	3.54%	18
6	Don't know	17.68%	90
	Total	100%	509

Of the 509 respondents that answered this question 27% (137) strongly agreed, 28% (142) Agreed and 19% (99) neither agreed nor disagreed, 5% (23) Disagreed and 4% (18) strongly disagreed and 18% (90) didn't know.

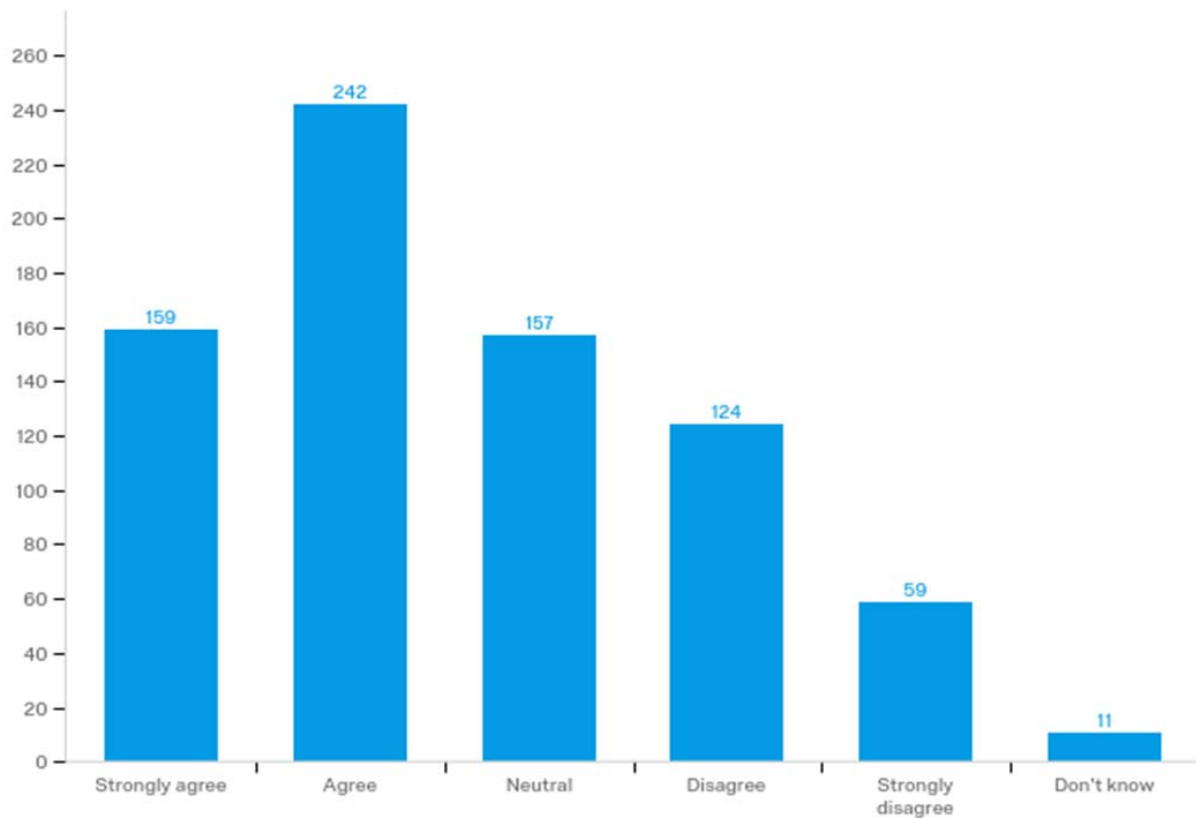
As an adult with complex needs I prefer to see the same doctor when I visit the surgery.



	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly agree	36.97%	244
2	Agree	31.21%	206
3	Neutral	17.58%	116
4	Disagree	4.09%	27
5	Strongly disagree	2.73%	18
6	Don't know	7.42%	49
	Total	100%	660

Of the 660 individuals that answered this question 37% (244) Strongly agreed, 31% (206) agreed, 18% (116) neither agreed nor disagreed, 4% (27) disagreed and 3% (18) strongly disagreed and 7% (49) didn't know.

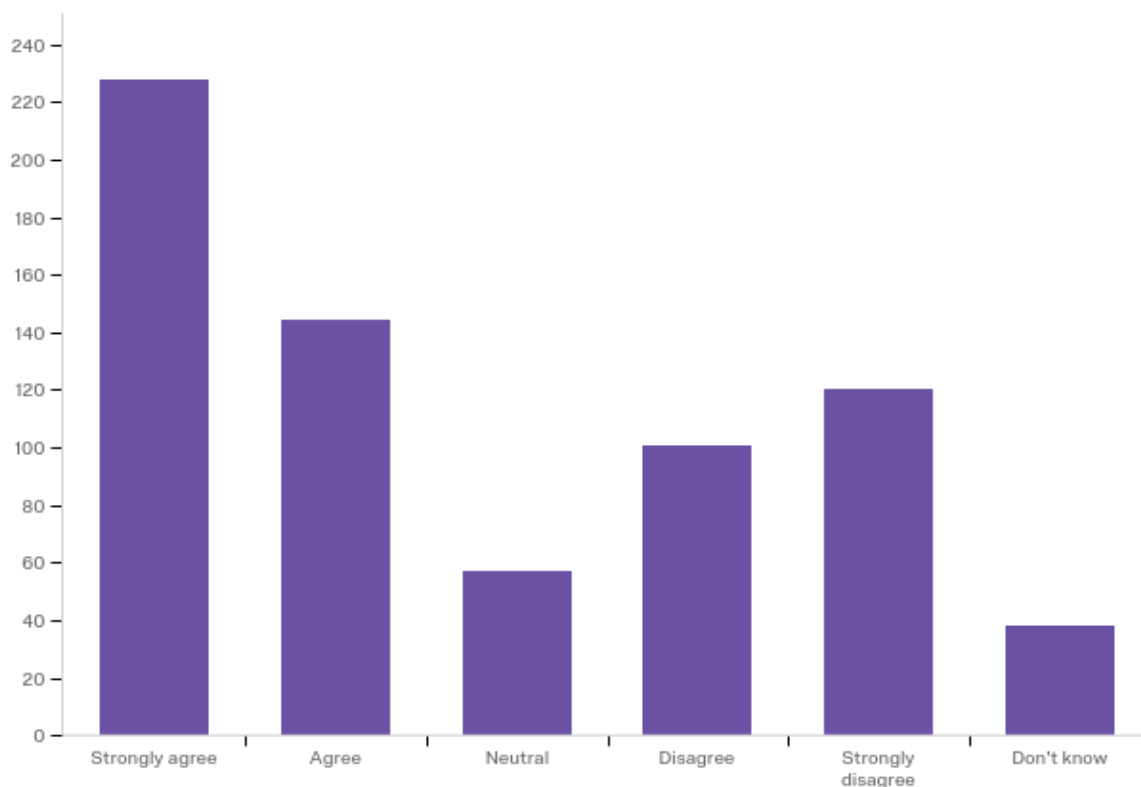
I do not mind who I see as long as I receive the treatment that I need.



	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly agree	21.14%	159
2	Agree	32.18%	242
3	Neutral	20.88%	157
4	Disagree	16.49%	124
5	Strongly disagree	7.85%	59
6	Don't know	1.46%	11
	Total	100%	752

Of the 752 respondents 21% (159) strongly agreed with the statement I do not mind who I see as long as I receive the treatment I need. 32% (242) agreed with the statement, 21% (157) recorded a neutral sentiment toward the statement whilst 16% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed and 1% didn't know.

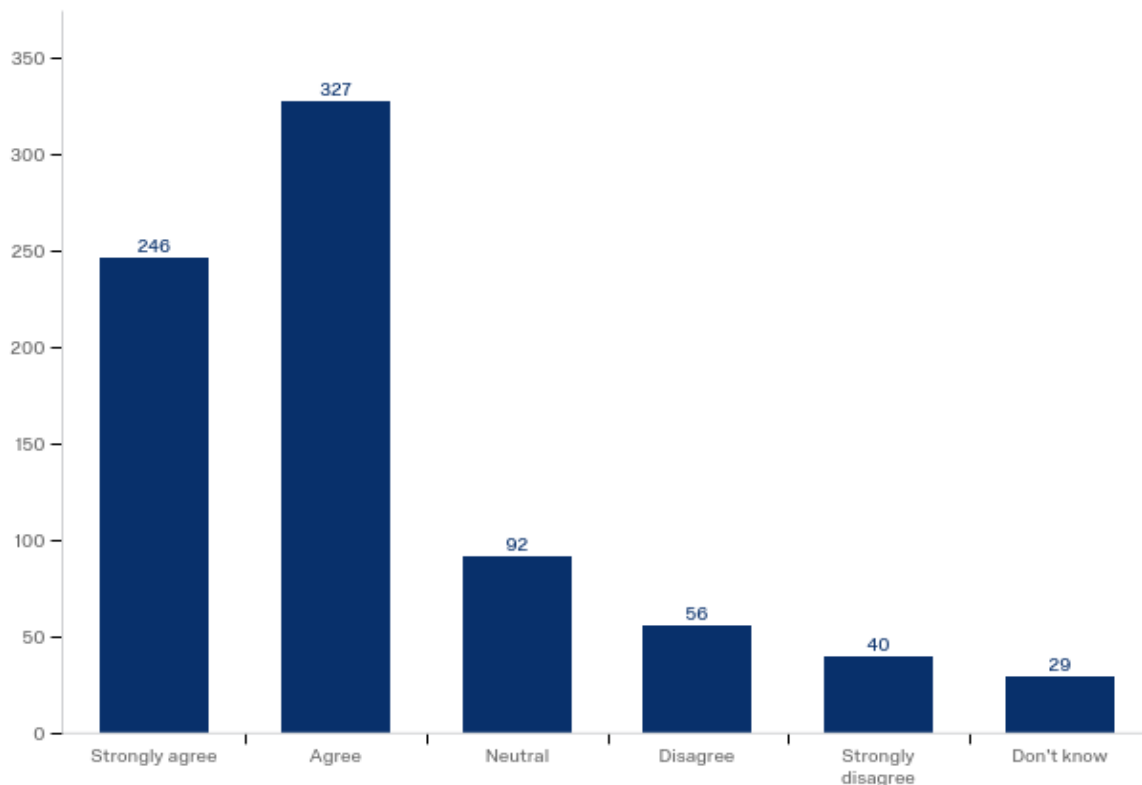
Do you have a long term health condition such as diabetes, heart condition, depression?



	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly agree	33.14%	228
2	Agree	20.93%	144
3	Neutral	8.28%	57
4	Disagree	14.68%	101
5	Strongly disagree	17.44%	120
6	Don't know	5.52%	38
	Total	100%	688

Of the 688 respondents that answered this question approximately 54% strongly agreed/agreed that they had a long term health condition. Approximately 32% strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement that they had a long term health condition and 14% either didn't know or described a neutral position.

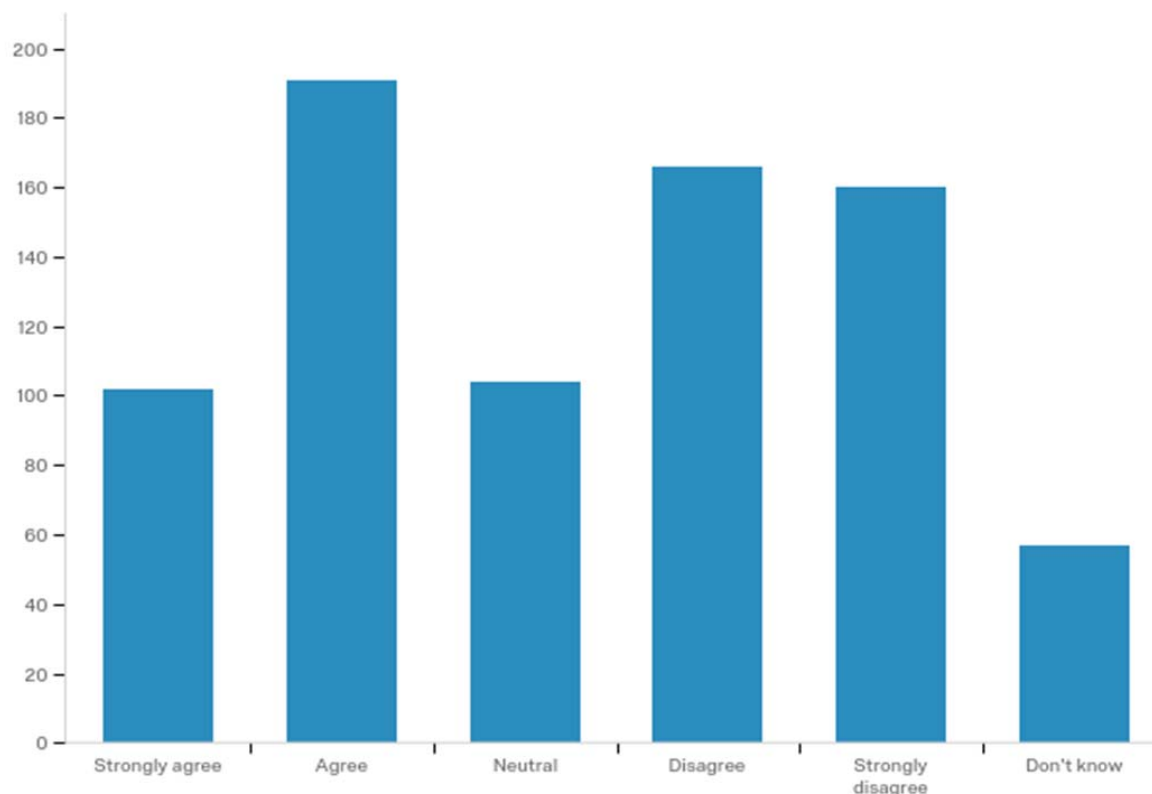
Would you be happy to see a medical professional other than a doctor if they had the right skills to treat your condition?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly agree	31.14%	246
2	Agree	41.39%	327
3	Neutral	11.65%	92
4	Disagree	7.09%	56
5	Strongly disagree	5.06%	40
6	Don't know	3.67%	29
	Total	100%	790

Of the 790 respondents 31% (246) strongly agree, that they would be happy to see a medical professional other than a doctor if they had the right skills to treat their condition, 41% (327) agree, 5% strongly disagree, 7% Disagree, 12% (92) reported a neutral sentiment and 4% didn't know.

Would you be happy to have a telephone or Skype appointment?

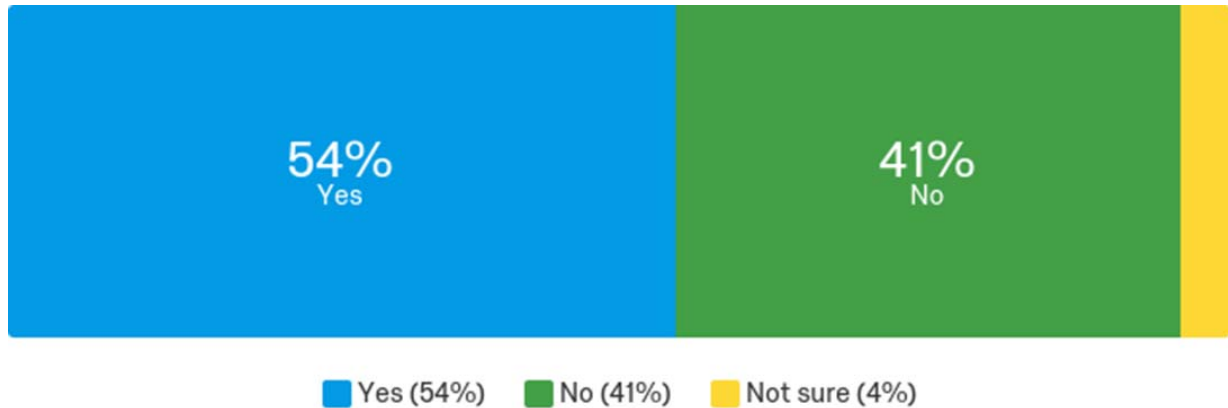


	Answer	%	Count
1	Strongly agree	13.08%	102
2	Agree	24.49%	191
3	Neutral	13.33%	104
4	Disagree	21.28%	166
5	Strongly disagree	20.51%	160
6	Don't know	7.31%	57
	Total	100%	780

Of the 780 respondents that answered this question 38% either strongly agreed or agreed that they would be happy to have a telephone or skype appointment. 42% either strongly disagreed or disagreed, 13% did not express a sentiment and 7% didn't know.

Accessing secondary services

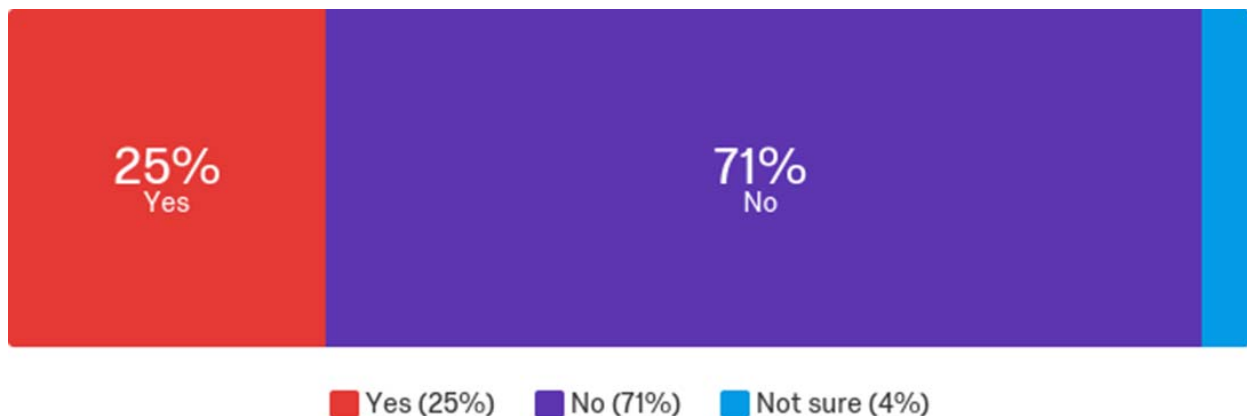
If you have been unable to get an appointment at your surgery have you used the Urgent Care Centres (Walk in centre/Badger) in the town centre or at the Manor Hospital?



	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	54.47%	433
2	No	41.26%	328
3	Not sure	4.28%	34
	Total	100%	795

When asked if they had accessed the walk in centre at times they were unable to get an appointment at their surgery, 54% of the 795 respondents said yes. 41% said no and 4% said they were unsure.

Have you ever gone to A&E because you couldn't get a GP appointment?

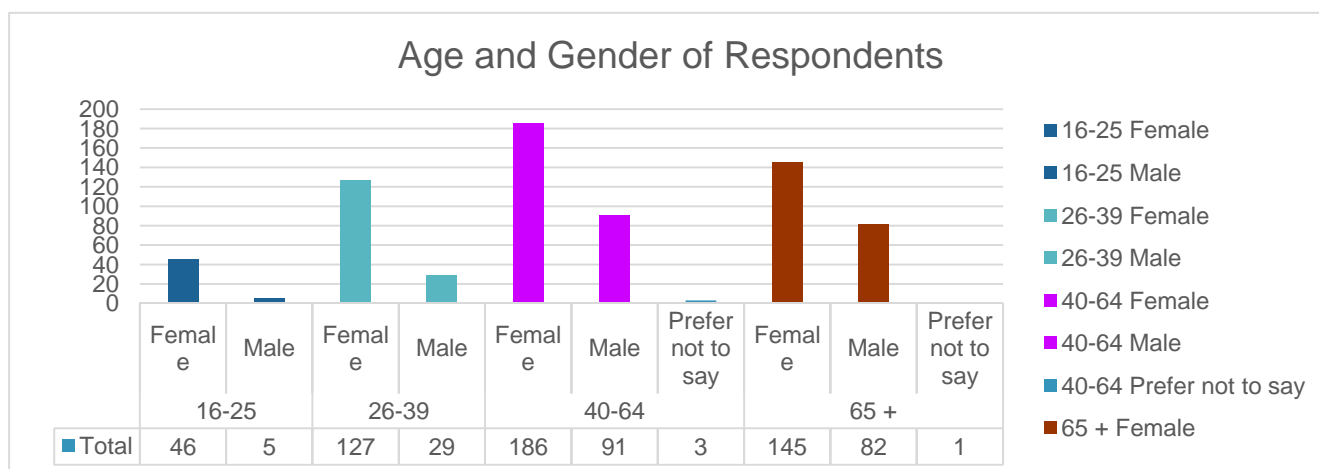


	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	25.41%	201
2	No	70.54%	558
3	Not sure	4.05%	32
	Total	100%	791

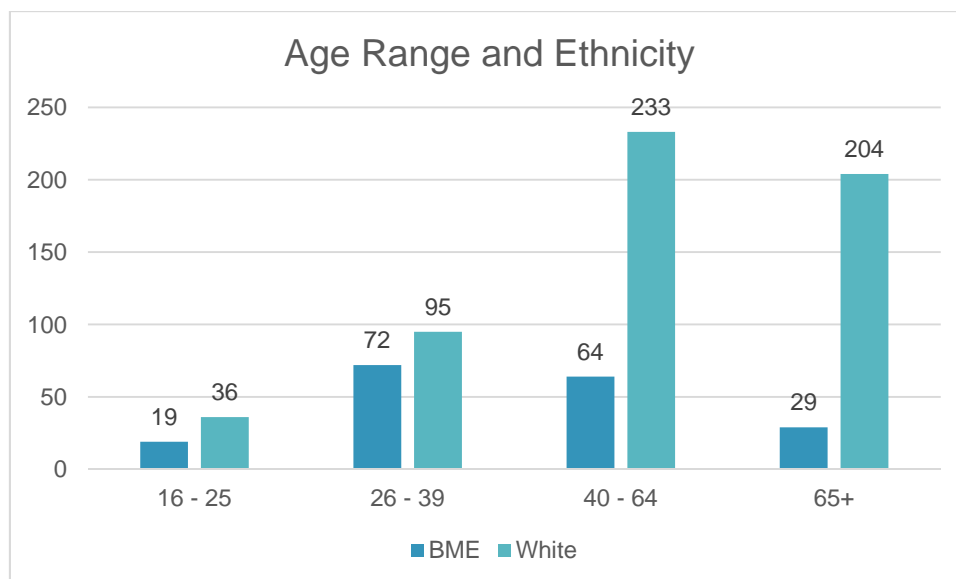
Of the 791 respondents that answered the question if they had ever visited A&E because they couldn't get a GP appointment 71% said No, 25% said yes and 4% said they were unsure.

Respondents to the survey

Far more women responded to the survey than men. Also we had more people from diverse communities respond to this survey than previous surveys. Whilst this doesn't reflect an accurate cross section as per the 2011 census it is positive that diverse communities and women have expressed their views on this important subject. The largest age group for both women and men to respond was 40 – 64. 65+ was the second largest group with 26-39 range being well represented by women but considerably less men as was the same for the 16 – 25 range.



There was a strong response from the Black and Minority Ethnic communities in the first three age ranges with the highest being in the 26 – 39 ages. The lowest response rate was in the 65+ range that saw a far lower response rate.



The following questions were put forward for the basis of further analysis:

1. Did the availability of appointments with GP's at the surgeries affect the use by patients of A&E and Urgent Care Centres?
2. Did the surgery closing during the week affect the use of A&E and Urgent Care Centres?
3. Did the confidence in getting through to reception affect the use of A&E or Urgent Care Centres?
4. Did the confidence in getting an appointment when calling a practice affect the use of A&E or Urgent Care Centres?
5. Does any of the demographic information such as age, gender, postcode or disability affect the use of A&E or Urgent Care Centres?

In order to examine the potential relationships between these factors cross tabulations were carried out for the following:

A&E visit by availability of GP appointment.

A cross tabulation was run on whether respondents had visited A & E due to not getting an appointment by how respondents rated availability of appointments with doctors at their doctors

		Have you ever gone to A&E because you couldn't get a GP appointment?			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
How would you rate the availability of appointments with doctors at your surgery	Excellent	19 17.76% 9.50%	86 80.37% 15.44%	2 1.87% 6.25%	107 100.00% 13.56%
	Good	35 15.02% 17.50%	192 82.40% 34.47%	6 2.58% 18.75%	233 100.00% 29.53%
	Fair	58 23.77% 29.00%	172 70.49% 30.88%	14 5.74% 43.75%	244 100.00% 30.93%
	Poor	84 44.92% 42.00%	95 50.80% 17.06%	8 4.28% 25.00%	187 100.00% 23.70%
	Don't know	4 22.22% 2.00%	12 66.67% 2.15%	2 11.11% 6.25%	18 100.00% 2.28%
	Total	200 25.35% 100.00%	557 70.60% 100.00%	32 4.06% 100.00%	789 100.00% 100.00%

surgery.

The results show that whilst most respondents hadn't accessed A&E if they were unable to access a GP appointment, 18% of those that thought that the availability of GP appointments were excellent had still accessed A&E when they were unable to access their GP.

This figure dropped to 15% for those who felt that they had Good availability of GP appointments but rose to 24% for those who thought they had fair availability of GP appointments and up to 45% for those who rated the availability of GP appointments as Poor.

However, those that had accessed A & E still only accounted for 25% of the total respondents. Whilst this suggests that those who consider access to their GP as poor are more likely to attend A&E this is not a statistically significant result. The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column percentages.

A&E visit by satisfaction with opening times

A cross tabulation was run on whether people had gone to A&E because they couldn't access a GP appointment with whether they were satisfied with their surgery opening times.

		Have you ever gone to A&E because you couldn't get a GP appointment?			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
Are you satisfied with your surgery opening times?	Yes	129 21.72% 64.50%	445 74.92% 79.89%	20 3.37% 62.50%	594 100.00% 75.29%
	No	58 37.91% 29.00%	90 58.82% 16.16%	5 3.27% 15.63%	153 100.00% 19.39%
	Not sure	13 30.95% 6.50%	22 52.38% 3.95%	7 16.67% 21.88%	42 100.00% 5.32%
	Total	200 25.35% 100.00%	557 70.60% 100.00%	32 4.06% 100.00%	789 100.00% 100.00%

Whilst only 25% of respondents accessed A&E when they could not get a GP appointment the data shows that only 29% of those respondents were actually unhappy with their surgery opening times. This would suggest that there is no correlation between dissatisfaction with surgery opening times and accessing A&E due to a lack of access to GP appointments. The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column percentages.

A&E visit by appointments when needed

A cross tabulation was run on whether respondents had ever gone to A&E because they couldn't

		Have you ever gone to A&E because you couldn't get a GP appointment?			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
Can you get an appointment for when you need it?	Yes	60 17.75% 30.61%	269 79.59% 49.36%	9 2.66% 30.00%	338 100.00% 43.84%
	No	129 34.49% 65.82%	229 61.23% 42.02%	16 4.28% 53.33%	374 100.00% 48.51%
	Not sure	7 11.86% 3.57%	47 79.66% 8.62%	5 8.47% 16.67%	59 100.00% 7.65%
	Total	196 25.42% 100.00%	545 70.69% 100.00%	30 3.89% 100.00%	771 100.00% 100.00%

access a GP appointment by whether they could access an appointment when they needed it.

Whilst only 25% of the respondents have accessed A&E when they were unable to get a GP appointment, of those who had accessed A&E for that reason, 66% said that they could not get an appointment when they needed it, this figure is more than double that of respondents who said that they could get an appointment when they needed it. The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column percentages.

Urgent care visit by availability of GP appointments

A cross tabulation was run on whether respondents had used an Urgent Care Centres when unable to get an appointment at the GP's by how would they rate availability of appointments with doctors at your surgery?

		If you have been unable to get an appointment at your surgery have you used the Urgent Care Centr...			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
How would you rate the availability of appointments with doctors at your surgery	Excellent	50 47.17% 11.60%	53 50.00% 16.16%	3 2.83% 8.82%	106 100.00% 13.37%
	Good	117 49.79% 27.15%	106 45.11% 32.32%	12 5.11% 35.29%	235 100.00% 29.63%
	Fair	141 57.09% 32.71%	98 39.68% 29.88%	8 3.24% 23.53%	247 100.00% 31.15%
	Poor	118 63.44% 27.38%	61 32.80% 18.60%	7 3.76% 20.59%	186 100.00% 23.46%
	Don't know	5 26.32% 1.16%	10 52.63% 3.05%	4 21.05% 11.76%	19 100.00% 2.40%
	Total	431 54.35% 100.00%	328 41.36% 100.00%	34 4.29% 100.00%	793 100.00% 100.00%

(N=793) 54% of respondents have accessed Urgent Care Centres when they were unable to access a GP appointment, of those 33% rated the availability of appointments with doctors at their surgeries as fair and 27% rated the availability as poor. 13% more respondents used Urgent Care Centres when they couldn't get an appointment with their GP than didn't. The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column percentages.

Urgent Care visit by satisfaction with Surgery opening times

A cross tabulation was run on whether respondents had used an Urgent Care Centres when unable to access a GP appointment by whether they were satisfied with GP opening times.

		If you have been unable to get an appointment at your surgery have you used the Urgent Care Centr...			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
Are you satisfied with your surgery opening times?	Yes	317 53.37% 73.38%	258 43.43% 78.90%	19 3.20% 55.88%	594 100.00% 74.91%
	No	92 58.97% 21.30%	55 35.26% 16.82%	9 5.77% 26.47%	156 100.00% 19.67%
	Not sure	23 53.49% 5.32%	14 32.56% 4.28%	6 13.95% 17.65%	43 100.00% 5.42%
	Total	432 54.48% 100.00%	327 41.24% 100.00%	34 4.29% 100.00%	793 100.00% 100.00%

Again more of the respondents that accessed Urgent Care Centres were happy with the opening times of their GP Surgery than were unhappy by 52%. This suggests that dissatisfaction doesn't influence decisions to use urgent care services. The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column percentages.

Urgent care visits by appointment when needed

A cross tabulation was run on whether respondents had used an Urgent Care Centres when unable

		If you have been unable to get an appointment at your surgery have you used the Urgent Care Centr...			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
Can you get an appointment for when you need it?	Yes	172 51.04% 40.86%	153 45.40% 47.96%	12 3.56% 35.29%	337 100.00% 43.54%
	No	222 58.73% 52.73%	140 37.04% 43.89%	16 4.23% 47.06%	378 100.00% 48.84%
	Not sure	27 45.76% 6.41%	26 44.07% 8.15%	6 10.17% 17.65%	59 100.00% 7.62%
	Total	421 54.39% 100.00%	319 41.21% 100.00%	34 4.39% 100.00%	774 100.00% 100.00%

to access a GP appointment by whether they could access an appointment when needed.

This cross tabulation reveals that 12% more of those respondents that have used Urgent Care Centres when they could not access their GP cannot get an appointment with a GP when it was needed. In addition of those who can't get an appointment with their GP 22% more chose to use Urgent Care Centres than don't. The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column percentages.

A&E visit by closure of surgery during the week

A cross tabulation was run on whether respondents had accessed A&E when unable to access a GP

		Have you ever gone to A&E because you couldn't get a GP appointment?			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
Does your surgery close during the week?	Yes	93 26.42% 47.69%	246 69.89% 45.30%	13 3.69% 41.94%	352 100.00% 45.77%
	No	64 23.36% 32.82%	197 71.90% 36.28%	13 4.74% 41.94%	274 100.00% 35.63%
	Not sure	38 26.57% 19.49%	100 69.93% 18.42%	5 3.50% 16.13%	143 100.00% 18.60%
	Total	195 25.36% 100.00%	543 70.61% 100.00%	31 4.03% 100.00%	769 100.00% 100.00%

appointment by does the surgery close during the week.

		Have you ever gone to A&E because you couldn't get a GP appointment?
Does your surgery close during the week?	Chi Square	1.32
	Degrees of Freedom	4
	p-value	0.86

Of those respondents that use A&E when they cannot get an appointment with their GP 15% more have surgeries that close during the week. The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column percentages.

Urgent care visits by closure of surgery during week

A cross tabulation was run on whether respondents had accessed an Urgent Care Centres when they could not access a GP appointment and whether their surgery closed during the week. The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column percentages.

		Have you ever gone to A&E because you couldn't get a GP appointment?				
		Yes	No	Not sure	Total	
Does your surgery close during the week?	I feel confident I'll get through to reception within 5 minutes when I call my GP practice	Strongly agree	14 11.38% 7.00%	108 87.80% 19.42%	1 0.81% 3.13%	123 100.00% 15.61%
	Agree	49 22.37% 24.50%	158 72.15% 28.42%	12 5.48% 37.50%	219 100.00% 27.79%	
	Neutral	33 25.00% 16.50%	96 72.73% 17.27%	3 2.27% 9.38%	132 100.00% 16.75%	
	Disagree	52 28.89% 26.00%	117 65.00% 21.04%	11 6.11% 34.38%	180 100.00% 22.84%	
	Strongly disagree	49 42.98% 24.50%	62 54.39% 11.15%	3 2.63% 9.38%	114 100.00% 14.47%	
	Don't know	3 15.00% 1.50%	15 75.00% 2.70%	2 10.00% 6.25%	20 100.00% 2.54%	
	Total	200 25.38% 100.00%	556 70.56% 100.00%	32 4.06% 100.00%	788 100.00% 100.00%	

If you have been unable to get an appointment at your surgery have you used the Urgent Care Centr...		
Does your surgery close during the week?	Chi Square	12.81
	Degrees of Freedom	4
	p-value	0.01

Of those respondents that have accessed Urgent care services 14% more have surgeries that close during the week.

22% more of the respondents whose

surgeries were closed during the week accessed urgent care services due to not being able to access a GP appointment. This was a statistically significant result.

A&E visit by confidence of response within 5 minutes of calling GP

A cross tabulation was carried on whether respondents used A&E when they didn't have access to a GP appointment by whether they were confident that they would get through to the reception at the surgery within 5 minutes of trying. The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column percentages.

(N=788) Of those respondents that who strongly agree that they will get through to reception within 5 minutes of calling their GP 76% more haven't accessed A&E than have, when they haven't been able to access their GP. In addition of those that agree they are confident to get through within 5 minutes of calling their GP 50% more respondents haven't accessed A&E than have. Whilst the trend is not to access A&E, when respondents are less confident that they will get through to reception within 5 minutes of calling the difference between those who access A&E and those who don't is markedly decreased. (11% more for strongly disagree and 36% more for disagree). This

suggests that the lack of confidence in getting through to speak to someone at the surgery may influence a decision to access A&E, this is not statistically significant result so is not conclusive.

Urgent care visit by confidence of response within 5 minutes of calling GP

A cross tabulation was carried out on whether respondents used an Urgent Care Centres when they could not access a GP appointment by whether they were confident that they would get through to reception within 5 minutes of trying. The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column percentages.

		If you have been unable to get an appointment at your surgery have you used the Urgent Care Centr...			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
I feel confident I'll get through to reception within 5 minutes when I call my GP practice	Strongly agree	63 51.22% 14.62%	58 47.15% 17.79%	2 1.63% 5.88%	123 100.00% 15.55%
	Agree	111 50.45% 25.75%	99 45.00% 30.37%	10 4.55% 29.41%	220 100.00% 27.81%
	Neutral	75 56.82% 17.40%	49 37.12% 15.03%	8 6.06% 23.53%	132 100.00% 16.69%
	Disagree	103 57.54% 23.90%	69 38.55% 21.17%	7 3.91% 20.59%	179 100.00% 22.63%
	Strongly disagree	74 63.79% 17.17%	37 31.90% 11.35%	5 4.31% 14.71%	116 100.00% 14.66%
	Don't know	5 23.81% 1.16%	14 66.67% 4.29%	2 9.52% 5.88%	21 100.00% 2.65%
Total		431 54.49% 100.00%	326 41.21% 100.00%	34 4.30% 100.00%	791 100.00% 100.00%

(N=791) The distribution of responses shows that of those that strongly agree that they are confident that they can get through to reception within 5 minutes only 4% more respondents were likely to go to Urgent Care Centres, and 5% more for those that agree.

For those that disagree 19% more respondents accessed Urgent Care Centres but of those that strongly disagree it rose to 32% more were likely to attend Urgent Care Centres. This suggests that those respondents who had confidence in their GP practice were less likely to access secondary healthcare or alternative services.

A&E visit by confidence in getting an appointment

A cross tabulation was carried out on whether respondents had accessed A&E when they were unable to access a GP appointment by whether they were confident of getting an appointment when calling their practice. The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column

		Have you ever gone to A&E because you couldn't get a GP appointment?			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
I feel confident I'll be able to get an appointment when I call my practice	Strongly agree	13 12.15% 6.63%	91 85.05% 16.49%	3 2.80% 9.38%	107 100.00% 13.72%
	Agree	43 18.07% 21.94%	186 78.15% 33.70%	9 3.78% 26.13%	238 100.00% 30.51%
	Neutral	33 23.24% 16.84%	98 69.01% 17.75%	11 7.75% 34.38%	142 100.00% 18.21%
	Disagree	58 34.52% 29.59%	108 64.29% 19.57%	2 1.19% 6.25%	168 100.00% 21.54%
	Strongly disagree	47 43.52% 23.98%	55 50.93% 9.96%	6 5.56% 18.75%	108 100.00% 13.85%
	Don't know	2 11.76% 1.02%	14 82.35% 2.54%	1 5.88% 3.13%	17 100.00% 2.18%
	Total	196 25.13% 100.00%	552 70.77% 100.00%	32 4.10% 100.00%	780 100.00% 100.00%

percentages.

(N=780) Of those respondents who strongly agreed that they would be able to get an appointment when they called the practice, 73% more respondents did not access A&E when they couldn't get a GP appointment.

Similarly, of those that agreed that they could access an appointment when they called the practice 60% more respondents hadn't accessed A&E because they couldn't get a GP appointment. For those that disagreed this dropped to 30% whilst those that strongly disagreed dropped to 7% more who didn't access A&E.

This suggests that confidence in being able to access the appointment at the surgery decreases the likelihood of accessing A&E when you can't access a GP appointment.

Urgent care visit by confidence in getting an appointment

A cross tabulation was carried out on whether respondents had accessed an Urgent Care Centres when they were unable to access a GP appointment by whether they were confident that they would get a GP appointment when calling their practice. The red figures are row percentages and

		Have you ever gone to A&E because you couldn't get a GP appointment?				Total
		Yes	No	Not sure		
I feel confident that I will get a GP appointment when calling my practice	What age band are you in?					
	65 +	34 14.53% 18.58%	192 82.05% 36.78%	8 3.42% 28.57%	234 100.00% 31.92%	107 100.00% 13.68%
	40-64	64 22.54% 34.97%	210 73.94% 40.23%	10 3.52% 35.71%	284 100.00% 38.74%	238 100.00% 30.43%
	26-39	66 40.99% 36.07%	90 55.90% 17.24%	5 3.11% 17.86%	161 100.00% 21.96%	142 100.00% 18.16%
	16-25	19 35.19% 10.38%	30 55.56% 5.75%	5 9.26% 17.86%	54 100.00% 7.37%	168 100.00% 21.48%
Total		183 24.97% 100.00%	522 71.21% 100.00%	28 3.82% 100.00%	733 100.00% 100.00%	107 100.00% 13.68%
Total		426 54.48% 100.00%	323 41.30% 100.00%	33 4.22% 100.00%	782 100.00% 100.00%	20 100.00% 2.56%

the blue figures are column percentages.

(N=782) For those respondents who were confident that they would get an appointment when they called their practice there was a 12% difference between those respondents who had visited Urgent Care Centres when they hadn't got an appointment with the surgery and those that didn't visit urgent care, for those that agreed it dropped to 1% more respondents didn't use Urgent care services.

Of those respondents that disagreed that they were confident in getting an appointment 26% more respondents used urgent care services, for those that strongly disagreed 31% more respondents used urgent care services.

A&E visits by age of respondent

A cross tabulation was carried out to see if age affected the use of A&E if a GP appointment was not available. The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column percentages.

(N=733) Of those respondents that have used A&E when they have not been able to access a GP appointment the majority are aged between 26 and 64 years of age. 68% more elderly respondents

haven't accessed A&E when they couldn't get an appointment with their GP. The highest users of A&E when GP appointments are not available are the 26-39 year old age group.

A&E visit by gender

A cross tabulation was carried out to see if Gender affected the use of A&E if a GP appointment was not available. The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column percentages.

		Have you ever gone to A&E because you couldn't get a GP appointment?			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
What is your gender?	Male	53 25.73% 29.61%	145 70.39% 28.38%	8 3.88% 27.59%	206 100.00% 28.65%
	Female	125 24.56% 69.83%	363 71.32% 71.04%	21 4.13% 72.41%	509 100.00% 70.79%
	Prefer not to say	1 25.00% 0.56%	3 75.00% 0.59%	0 0.00% 0.00%	4 100.00% 0.56%
	Total	179 24.90% 100.00%	511 71.07% 100.00%	29 4.03% 100.00%	719 100.00% 100.00%

Due to the disparity of responses between men and women being unrepresentative of the population of Walsall the fact that women are more likely to attend A&E could be attributed to the number of female respondents. There is very similar differences between those who have accessed A&E to those who haven't for each gender identity.

A&E visit by ethnicity

A cross tabulation was carried out to see if ethnicity affected the use of A&E when GP appointments were not available.

		Have you ever gone to A&E because you couldn't get a GP appointment?			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
What is your ethnicity?	White British	118	434	17	569
	White Irish	0	0	1	1
	White Eastern European	2	3	0	5
	White other	2	4	0	6
	Asian or British Asian- Indian	17	45	6	68
	Asian or British Asian- Pakistani	25	17	4	46
	Asian or British Asian- Bangladeshi	2	4	0	6
	Asian or British Asian- Chinese	0	0	0	0
	Other Asian background	5	2	1	8
	Black or Black British- Caribbean	9	6	0	15
	Black or Black British- African	4	7	0	11
	Other Black background	0	2	0	2
	Dual heritage	5	3	0	8
	Traveller/Romany	0	0	0	0
	Total	189	527	29	745

(N=745) The demographic representation is slightly higher than the 2011 census data figures however with such small numbers it cannot be assumed to be statistically significant. However, the data indicates that Asian or British Asian Pakistani, Other Asian backgrounds, Black or Black British - Caribbean and those with dual heritage had more respondents use A&E when they didn't receive an appointment with the GP.

A&E visit by disability

A cross tabulation was carried out to see if disability affected the use of A&E when GP appointments were not available. The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column

		Have you ever gone to A&E because you couldn't get a GP appointment?			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	Yes	53 26.77% 28.80%	138 69.70% 26.69%	7 3.54% 23.33%	198 100.00% 27.09%
	No	131 24.58% 71.20%	379 71.11% 73.31%	23 4.32% 76.67%	533 100.00% 72.91%
	Total	184 25.17% 100.00%	517 70.73% 100.00%	30 4.10% 100.00%	731 100.00% 100.00%

percentages.

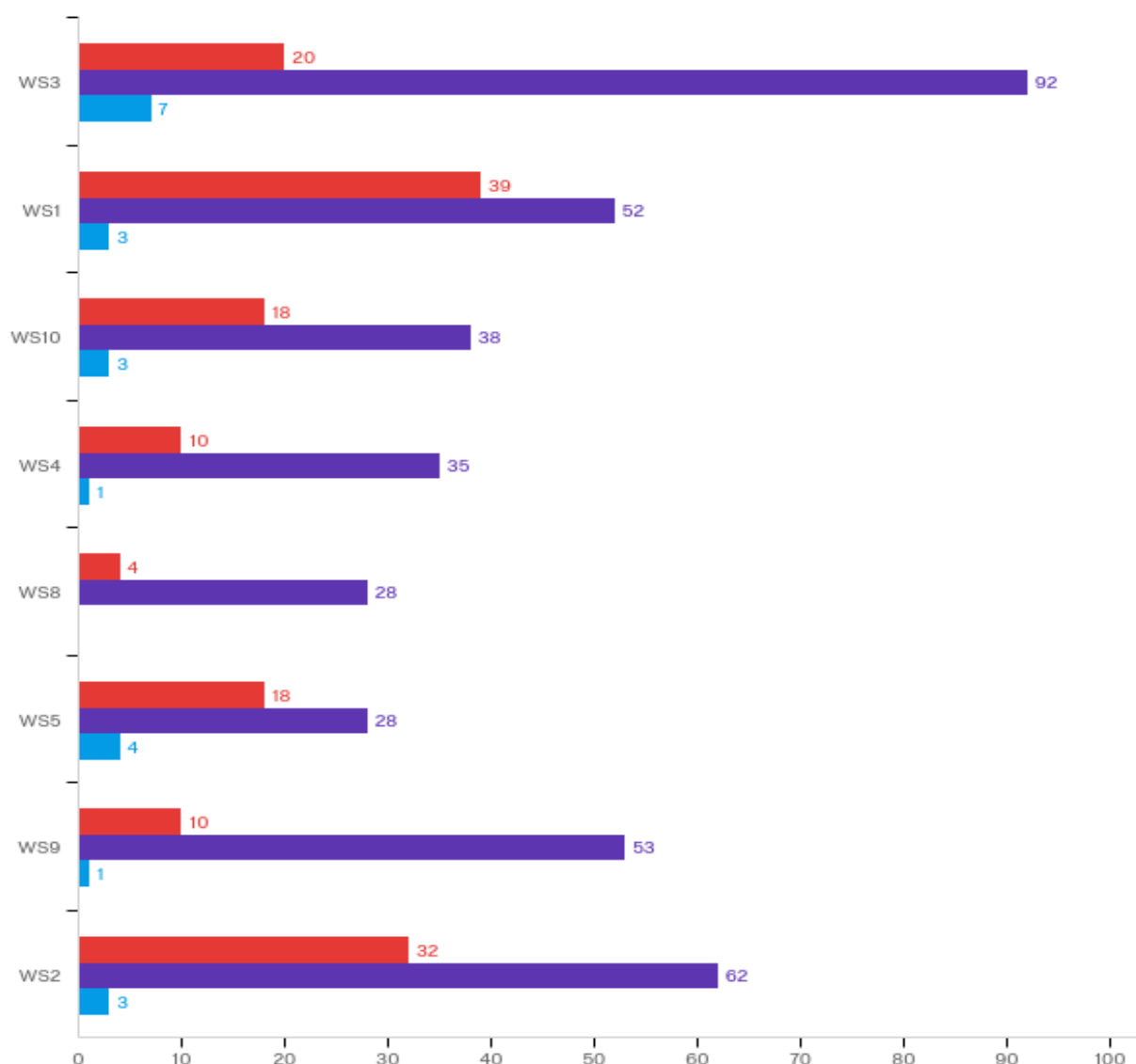
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?		Have you ever gone to A&E because you couldn't get a GP appointment?
	Chi Square	0.53
	Degrees of Freedom	2
	p-value	0.77

The data does not show any significant difference between those respondents that consider themselves disabled to those that don't each proportional difference between

those that have used A&E and those that haven't are very similar.

A&E visit filtered by postcode area.

The question results for have you ever gone to A&E because you couldn't get a GP appointment was filtered by Postcode area. The table below shows the most frequent response areas.



Red signifies those that have visited A&E, purple is those that haven't and blue denotes those that are not sure. Those that have are more prevalent in WS1, WS2, WS3, WS5 and WS10.

Urgent care visit by gender identity

A cross tab was carried out to see if Gender influenced the number of respondents that used Urgent Care Centres when GP appointments were not available. The red figures are row percentages and the blue figures are column percentages. Whilst more women were respondents there was an 8% difference between women who use Urgent Care Centres when the GP is not available and those

		If you have been unable to get an appointment at your surgery have you used the Urgent Care Centr...			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
What is your gender?	Male	96 46.15% 24.62%	95 45.67% 31.67%	17 8.17% 54.84%	208 100.00% 28.85%
	Female	292 57.37% 74.87%	203 39.88% 67.67%	14 2.75% 45.16%	509 100.00% 70.60%
	Prefer not to say	2 50.00% 0.51%	2 50.00% 0.67%	0 0.00% 0.00%	4 100.00% 0.55%
	Total	390 54.09% 100.00%	300 41.61% 100.00%	31 4.30% 100.00%	721 100.00% 100.00%

that don't whilst for men the difference was only 1%. This may suggest that women are more likely to use Urgent Care Services when the GP is not available but it is not at a level high enough to be statistically significant.

Urgent Care Centres visits by ethnicity

A cross tabulation was carried out to see if Ethnicity influenced the number of respondents that used Urgent Care Centres when GP appointments were not available. (N=746) The most prevalent difference is amongst Asian or British Asian – Pakistani, Black or Black British – African, Black or Black British – Caribbean and Dual heritage populations.

		If you have been unable to get an appointment at your surgery have you used the Urgent Care Centr...			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
What is your ethnicity?	White British	292	255	21	568
	White Irish	0	1	0	1
	White Eastern European	2	2	1	5
	White other	4	3	0	7
	Asian or British Asian- Indian	41	22	5	68
	Asian or British Asian- Pakistani	35	10	1	46
	Asian or British Asian- Bangladeshi	3	3	0	6
	Asian or British Asian- Chinese	0	0	0	0
	Other Asian background	5	2	1	8
	Black or Black British- Caribbean	12	4	0	16
	Black or Black British- African	8	1	2	11
	Other Black background	1	1	0	2
	Dual heritage	7	1	0	8
	Traveller/Romany	0	0	0	0
	Total	410	305	31	746

Urgent Care Centres visit by age

A cross tabulation was carried out to see if there were any correlation between age and the use of Urgent Care Centres when unable to access GP appointments. The red figures are row percentages

		If you have been unable to get an appointment at your surgery have you used the Urgent Care Centr...			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
What age band are you in?	65 +	89 38.20% 21.98%	134 57.51% 44.52%	10 4.29% 31.25%	233 100.00% 31.57%
	40-64	157 54.51% 38.77%	116 40.28% 38.54%	15 5.21% 46.88%	288 100.00% 39.02%
	26-39	128 79.01% 31.60%	30 18.52% 9.97%	4 2.47% 12.50%	162 100.00% 21.95%
	16-25	31 56.36% 7.65%	21 38.18% 6.98%	3 5.45% 9.38%	55 100.00% 7.45%
	Total	405 54.88% 100.00%	301 40.79% 100.00%	32 4.34% 100.00%	738 100.00% 100.00%

and the blue figures are column percentages.

(N=738) The data shows that the use of Urgent Care Centres when a GP appointment is not available is more likely amongst 26-39 year olds and 40-64 year olds. However, it is the 26-39 year olds that have a higher number of respondents having used Urgent Care Centres at 60% more users than not, whilst amongst the 65+ more are likely not to use urgent care by around 19% and within the 40-46 year olds they have 14% more Urgent care users than not. Whilst the 16-25 year olds have 18% more that have used Urgent Care Centres than haven't.

Urgent care visits by disability

A cross tabulation was carried out to see if there were any correlation between disability and the use of Urgent Care Centres when unable to access GP appointments. The red figures are row

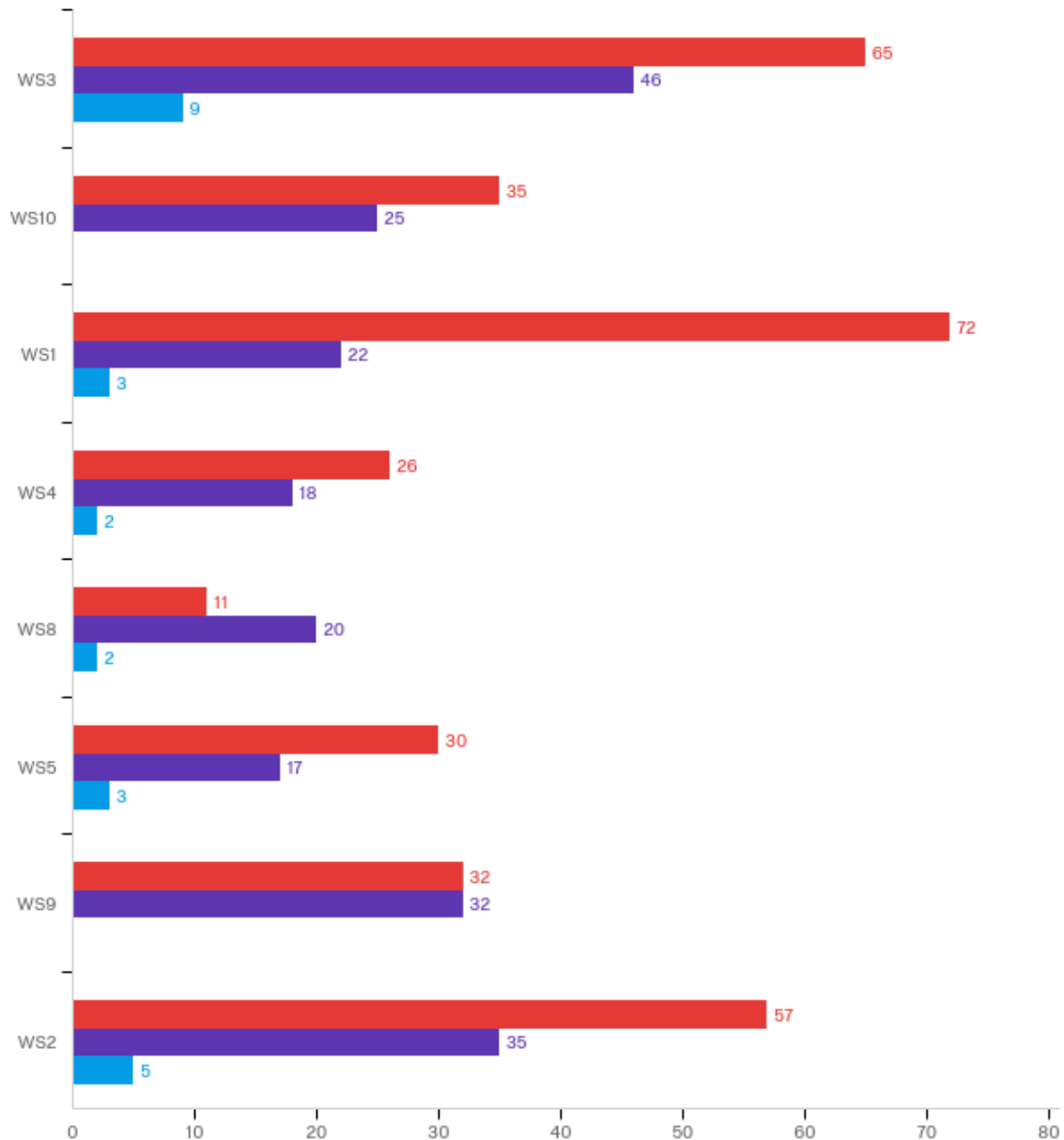
		If you have been unable to get an appointment at your surgery have you used the Urgent Care Centr...			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	Yes	93 46.97% 23.13%	94 47.47% 30.82%	11 5.56% 36.67%	198 100.00% 26.87%
	No	309 57.33% 76.87%	211 39.15% 69.18%	19 3.53% 63.33%	539 100.00% 73.13%
	Total	402 54.55% 100.00%	305 41.38% 100.00%	30 4.07% 100.00%	737 100.00% 100.00%

percentages and the blue figures are column percentages.

(N=737) The data shows that those respondents that consider themselves to have a disability are as likely to visit Urgent Care Centres when they cannot access an appointment at their surgery as not but are less likely to visit Urgent Care Centres than those that don't consider themselves to have a disability.

Urgent Care Centres visits filtered by postcode.

The question results for the question have you ever used an Urgent Care Centres if a GP appointment wasn't available was filtered by postcode area. The table below shows the most frequent response areas.



Those respondents that used Urgent Care Centres when they couldn't get a GP appointment were primarily in the WS1, WS2 and WS3 areas.

Conclusions

A total of 839 surveys were carried out across Walsall which, which was slightly over representative of the diversity of the town and over representative of the female demographic population also. It

has however provided some good insight into the use of GP services and how the public feel about their access to their GP's.

The specific responses by Health Centre and GP practice are to follow.

The data suggests that younger people are more likely to use Urgent Care Centres and A&E when the GP appointment wasn't available and that confidence in getting through to the surgery and being able to access appointments affected the level at which respondent's accessed Urgent Care Centres and A&E.

In our last report regarding GPs services in Walsall people told us (64% of respondents) 'that they were able to get an appointment when they felt that they needed one and there was better availability of appointments for nurses than doctors. On the day appointment availability could be problematic but so could the availability for routine appointments within the next few days with long waiting times meaning that some patients were taking emergency appointments when it was not really necessary just to secure an appointment.'

It is most concerning that this research had found this figure dropping markedly with only 43% of people stating they could get an appointment when they need it but with 49% saying they could not. This is a fall of 21%.

This also corresponds in an increase of people accessing A&E when they can't get an appointment from 22% previously to 25% in this piece of research.

The satisfaction with surgery opening times has also fallen from 86% to 75% a drop of 11%.

It is clear that people are generally having more difficulty seeing their GP when they feel they need to and factors affecting this could be lack of awareness of online booking and then a lack of online appointments coupled with poor conceptions of opening times and those that contact the surgery directly equally finding it hard to get appointments is putting greater pressure on A&E and Urgent Care Centres.

Action must be taken by the GP practices and Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group to address the opening hours and availability of appointments both physical and virtual. This needs to be coupled with a plan to raise awareness of the places people can seek help other than their GPs, Urgent Care or A&E for minor health issues but safeguarding that the awareness raising also covers the subjects that people do need to go to their GPs for as well the life threatening issues that require an immediate response to.

Recommendations

1. Extending surgery opening times to open earlier, later and at weekends to support access for those individuals who work daytime shift patterns whether they need appointments for themselves or to bring children or those they care for such as parents or other relatives. The same is true for those that depend on people bringing them that may work or have other caring responsibilities.
2. Improving the availability and number of appointments people can book at short notice.
3. Online appointment booking should be made more available and promoted extensively within the practices to encourage more people to utilise the service. However, there would need to be more appointments made available so as to encourage people to use the service.
4. Due to the acknowledgment that most respondents would be happy to see a medical professional that wasn't a doctor to receive treatment it would be wise to educate patients around what medical professionals they can see for which conditions and what treatments they can provide including a list of where these services can be accessed.
5. Promotion of the use of Urgent Care Centres as opposed to A&E if the matter is urgent but the GP is unavailable. Whilst most responses indicated people were more likely to use Urgent Care Centres rather than A& E services when their GP appointments were not available, there was still some evidence to suggest that it has also led to accessing secondary healthcare services such as A&E.
6. Regular monitoring and reporting of the availability of GP appointments and opening hours to ensure a constant overview can be kept and actions taken when levels fall.

These actions may help alter people's perceptions of poor appointment availability as the research suggested those who consider access to their GP as poor are more likely to attend A&E than Urgent Care Centres. It will also address the 25% of respondents who accessed A&E when they could not get a GP appointment and the 13% who access Urgent Care Centres alternatively.

References

Walsall Council; Key Statistics for Walsall: Borough Summary; 2011 Census Reports

Healthwatch Walsall. 'GP Report'. 2017