

Outer-West Gateshead

The User Voice on GP services in Crawcrook,
Rowland's Gill, Grange Road & Blaydon practices

What is Healthwatch?



- Healthwatch was established by the **Health and Social Care Act 2012** and continues as part of the recent reform of the **Health and Social Care Act 2022**
- Healthwatch has two distinct parts:
 - **Healthwatch England**
 - **Local Healthwatch**
- Healthwatch are **independent organisations with legal powers** and duties
- Each Local Healthwatch **sets its own work programme** to reflect local community concerns



Healthwatch Gateshead



Our vision

- We believe that users' views can improve health and social care services

Our mission

- To demonstrate how user views can improve services in health and social care. And to provide practical services, support, and advice to help that happen well

Our values are:

- Listening to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- Including everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- Analysing different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- Acting on feedback and driving change.
- Partnering with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.



Introduction

Healthwatch Gateshead heard via Councillors, social media and the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB), that some local people were not satisfied with GP services in specific practices.

Healthwatch Gateshead received intelligence from the Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Board that users of these GP services had expressed concern and disappointment with the services they received at these sites, and these comments led Healthwatch Gateshead to focus on three issues in particular:

- Ease of booking appointments
- Waiting times for appointments
- Public perception of the practices



Introduction

Healthwatch Gateshead surveyed the users of the GP services at the following four sites in the Outer-West area of Gateshead:

- Crawcrook Medical Practice
- Grange Road Medical Practice
- Rowland's Gill Medical Practice
- Blaydon GP-led Surgery

These four practices were merged under one contract and have been delivered by Gateshead Healthcare since July 2022.



Gateshead Councillor

'As local ward Councillor for Chopwell and Rowlands Gill (Gateshead Council) and as Chair of Gateshead's Health and Wellbeing Board, I had received a number of concerns from local residents about the services at the outer west GP practices.

Patients had told me that they had experienced difficulties booking appointments and had issues while at appointments. Other people had shared both positive and negative experiences of using their GP practice within the Gateshead Outer West.

I was keen to know more and to look into possible areas for improvement, so working with the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB), we asked Healthwatch Gateshead to act as an independent service to investigate the issues.'

Councillor Lynne Caffrey

*Chair Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Board
Chopwell and Rowlands Gill Ward
Gateshead Council*



Methodology



Healthwatch Gateshead collaborated with the NENC ICB and Gateshead Healthcare on the design of a survey, to be distributed both via paper copies and digital submissions.

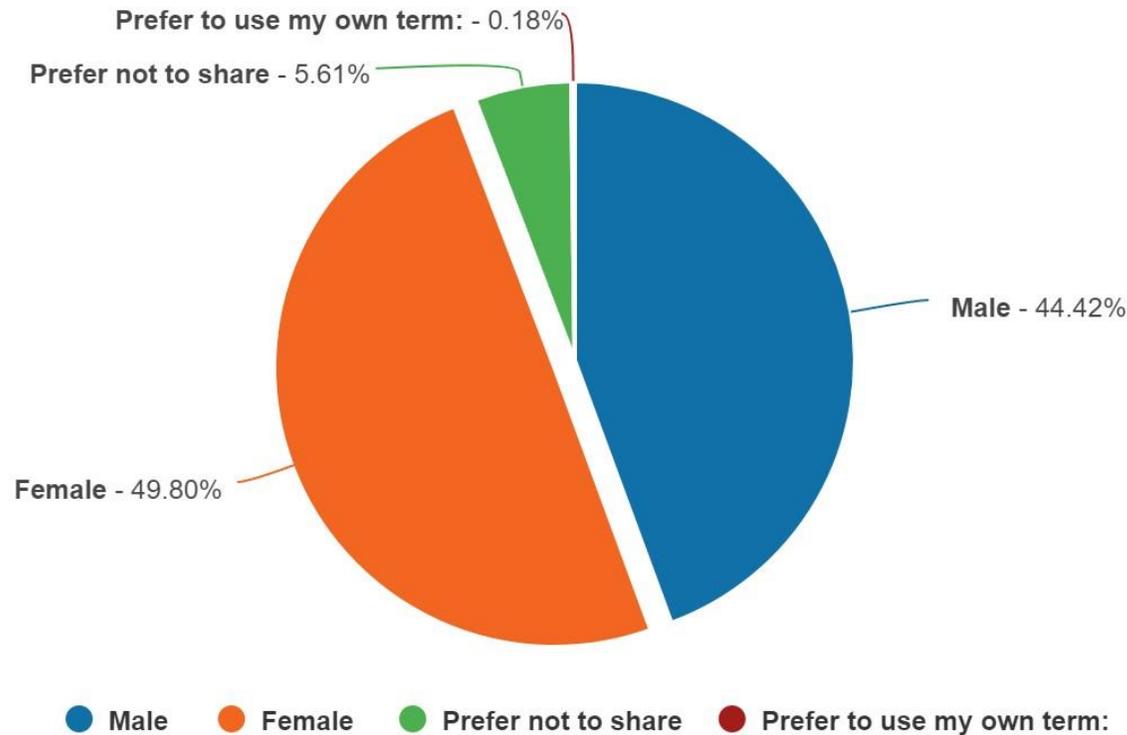
Meetings with the Practice Manager for Crawcrook Medical Centre, Julie Spence, and Gillian Coulson, Deputy Practice Manager, led Healthwatch to distribute paper copies to 6 pharmacies frequented by users of the services, and users were invited to take part in the survey via texts from the surgery and inclusion in newsletters.

Healthwatch received 2,283 total responses, of which 40 were submitted via paper copy. This constitutes 15.7% of the total eligible population (those aged 16+) from the practice. A further 1,414 engaged with the survey but did not complete it, or only partially completed it. With this addition, approximately 25% of the total eligible population of the four GP practices engaged with the survey.



Participant Demographics: Gender

What is your gender?



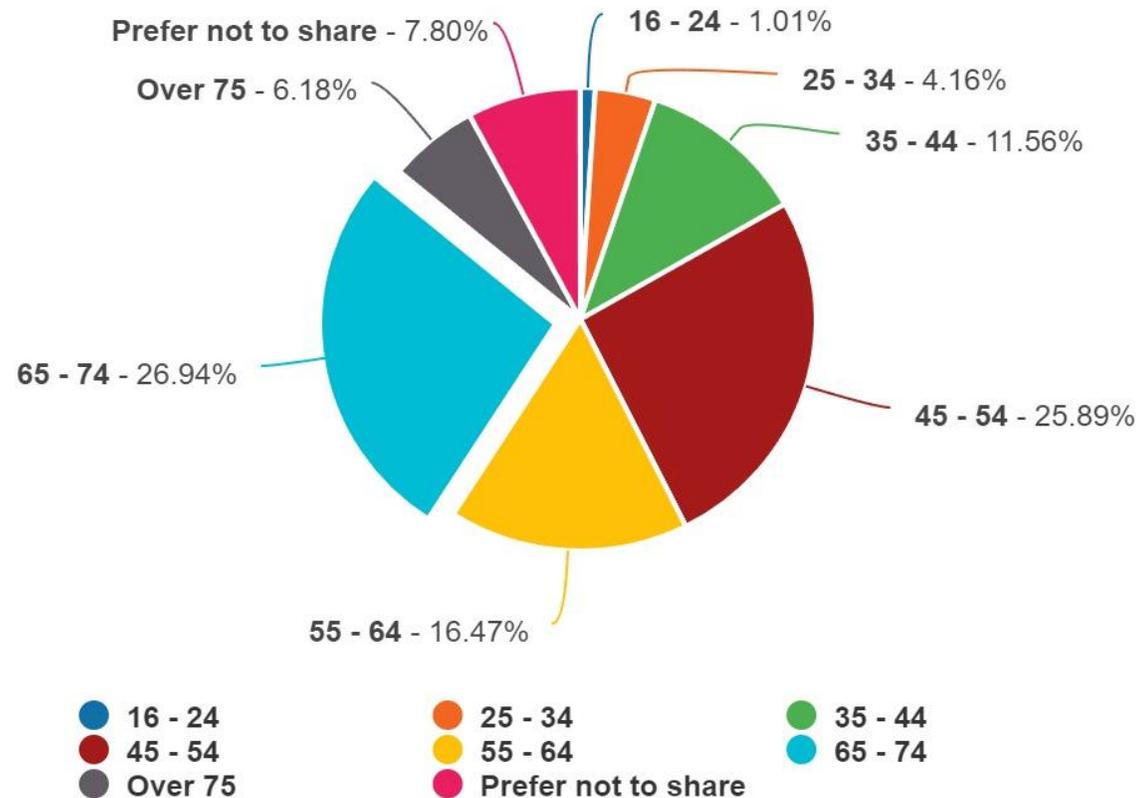
Of all respondents who partook in the survey:

- 49.8% were females
- 44.4% were males
- 5.6% preferred not to share
- 0.18% preferred to use their own term



Participant Demographics: Age

What is your age



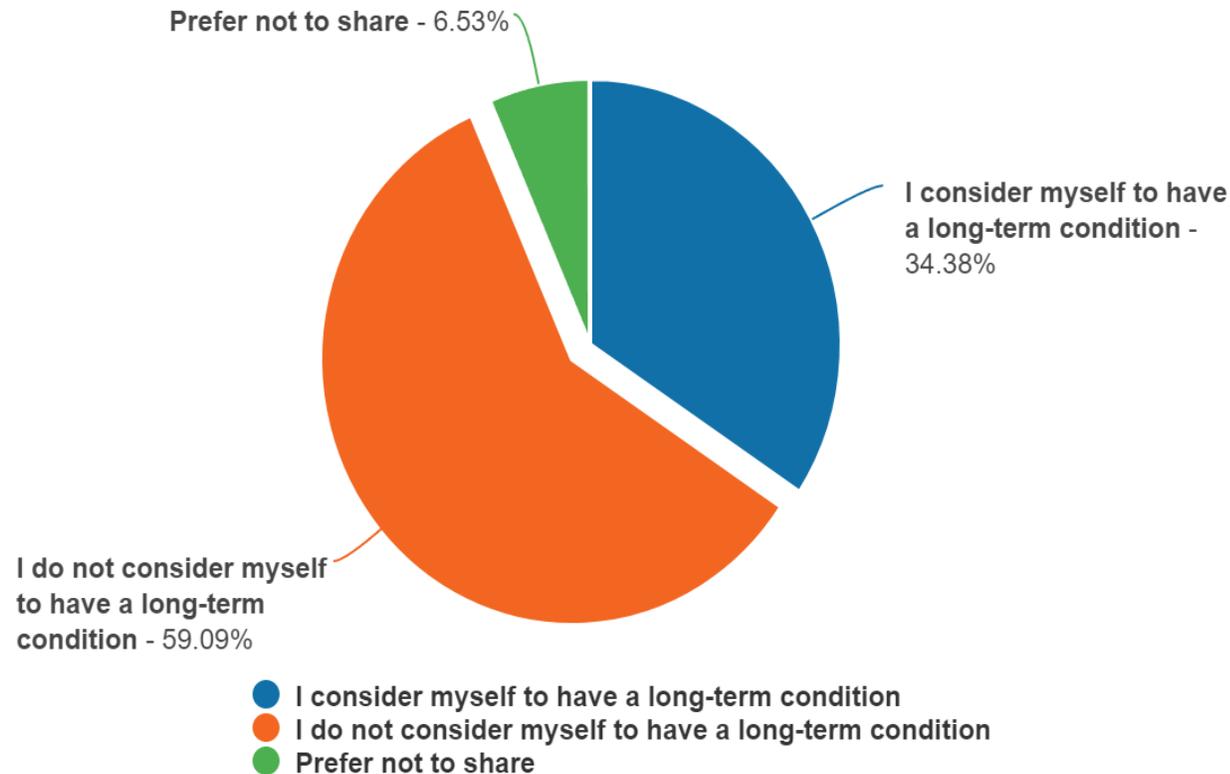
Respondents' ages varied. The survey considered those aged 16-74 years of age. Of those involved:

- 1% were aged 16-24
- 4.1% were aged 25-34
- 11.5% were aged 35-44
- 25.8% were aged 45-54
- 16.4% were aged 55-64
- 26.9% were aged 65-74
- 6.1% were aged over 75
- 7.8% preferred not to share



Participant Demographics: Long-term Condition

Do you have a long-term condition?



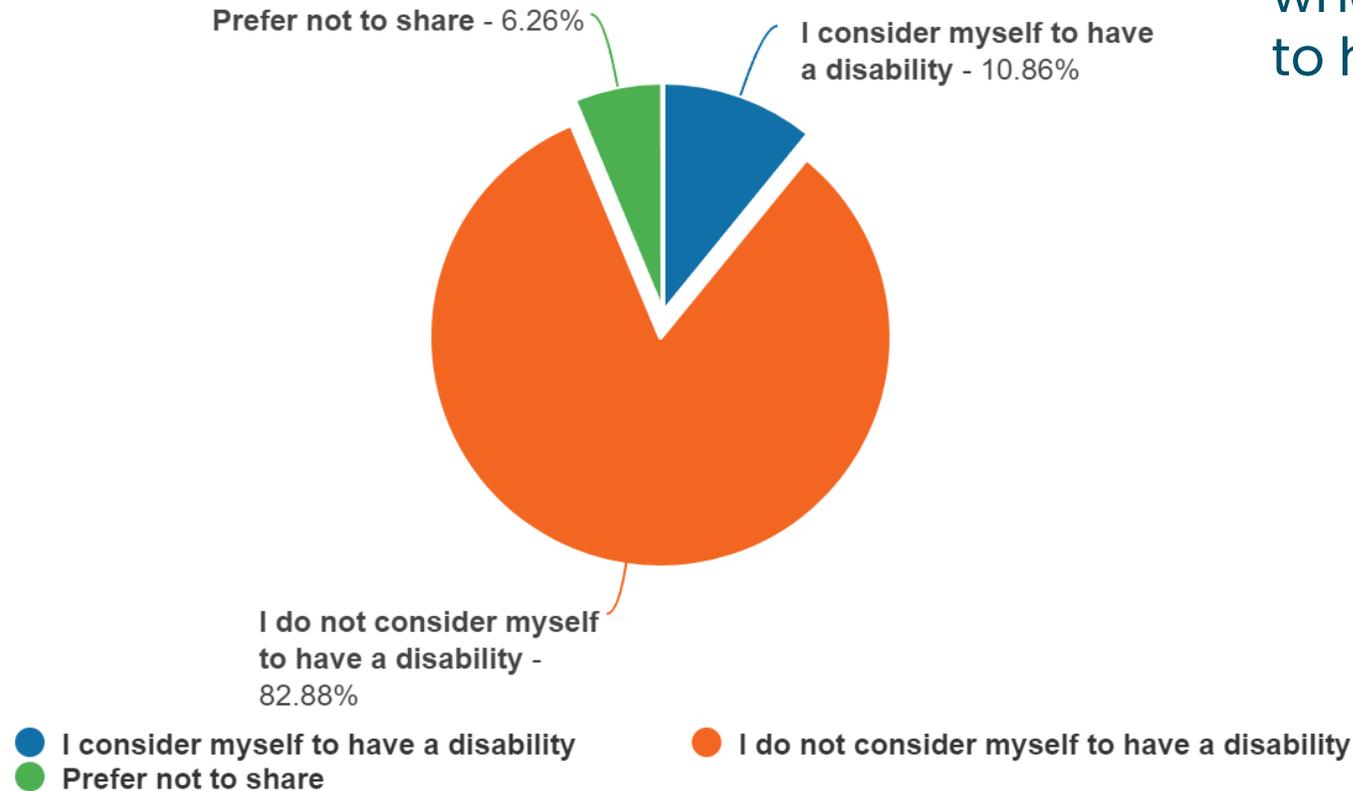
The survey also asked participants whether they considered themselves to have a long-term condition:

- 34.3% considered themselves to have a long-term condition
- 59% did not consider themselves to have a long-term condition
- 6.5% preferred not to share



Participant Demographics: Disability

Do you have a disability?



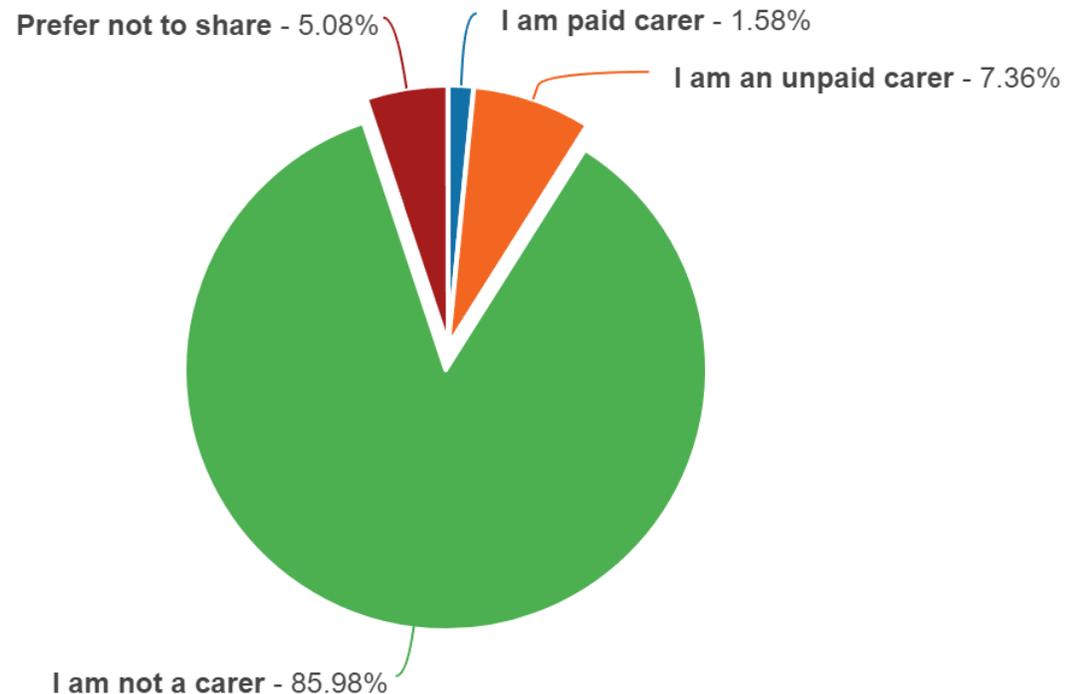
The survey asked participants whether they considered themselves to have a disability:

- 10.8% considered themselves to have a disability
- 82.8% themselves to have a disability
- 6.26% preferred not to share



Participant Demographics: Carer Status

Are you a carer?



● I am paid carer ● I am an unpaid carer ● I am not a carer ● Prefer not to share

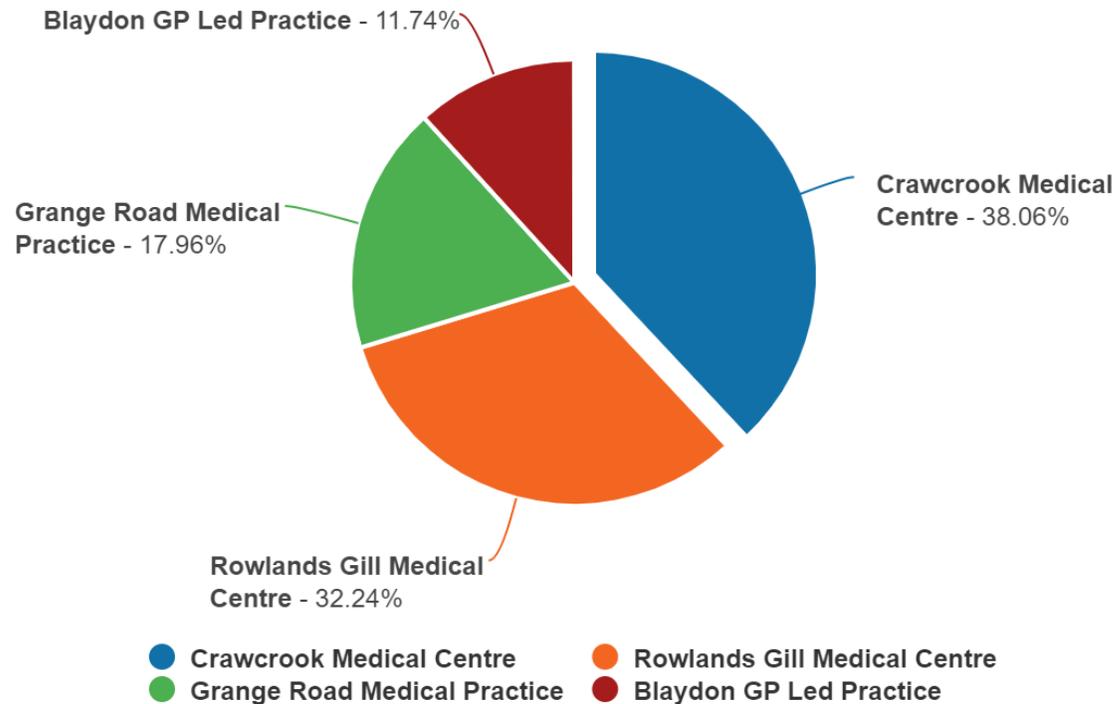
Respondents were also asked to denote their carer status:

- 1.5% indicated they are a paid carer
- 7.3% indicated they are an unpaid carer
- 85.9 indicated that they are not a carer
- 5% preferred not to share



Patient Numbers

Which GP surgery are you registered with?

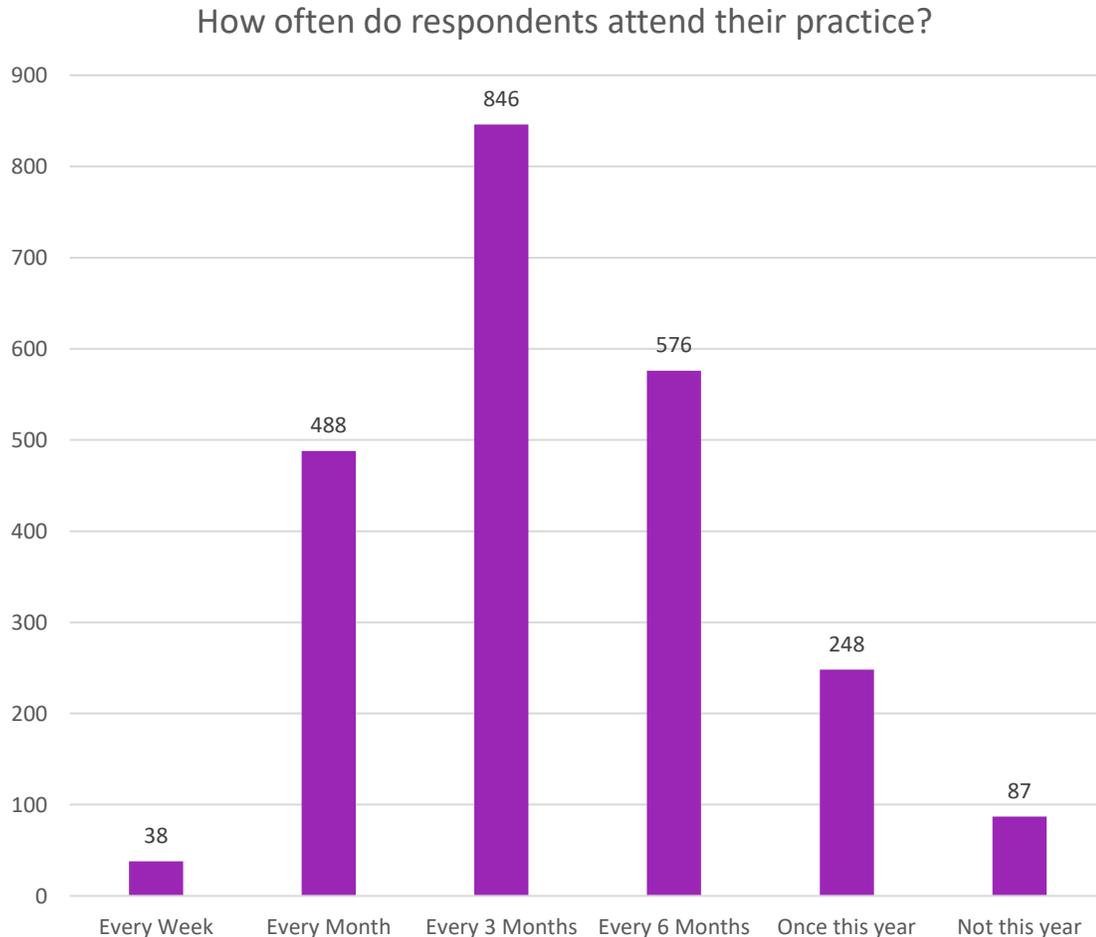


Of the 2,283 responses received:

- 869 were registered with Crawcrook Medical Centre.
- 736 were registered with Rowland's Gill Medical Centre.
- 410 were registered with Grange Road Medical Centre.
- 268 were registered with Blaydon GP-led Practice.



Practice Attendance



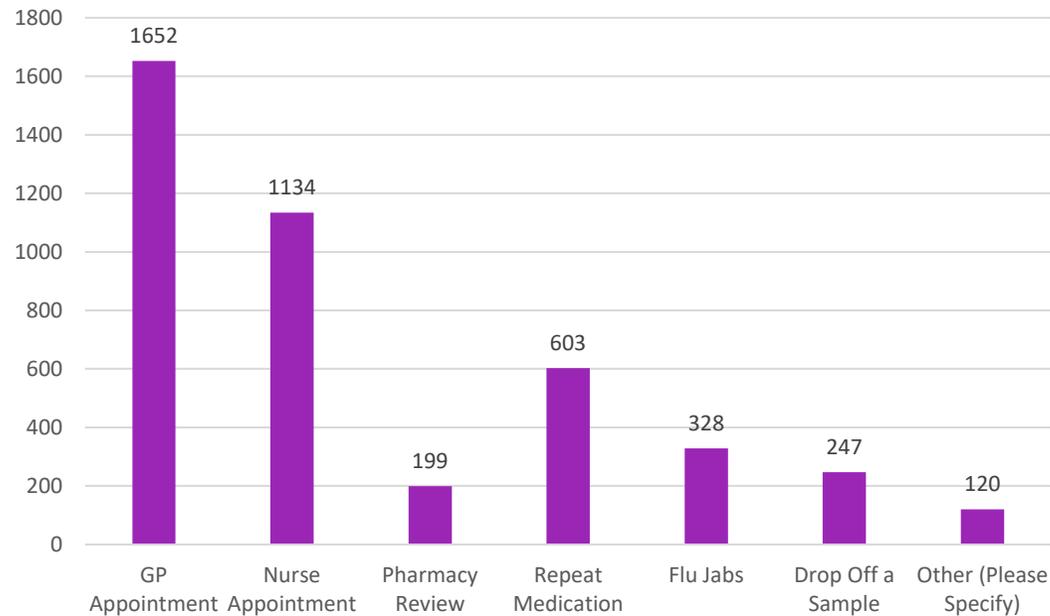
Of the 2283 responses we received:

- 1.7% (38 respondents) used their practice once a week
- 21.4% (488 respondents) used their practice once a month
- 37.1% (846 respondents) used their practice once every three months
- 25.2% (576 respondents) used their practice once every six months
- 10.9% (248 respondents) have used their practice only once every 12 months
- 3.8% (87 respondents) reported not using their practice at all in the last 12 months



Patient Needs

What do respondents use their practice for?



Of the 2283 respondents to this survey:

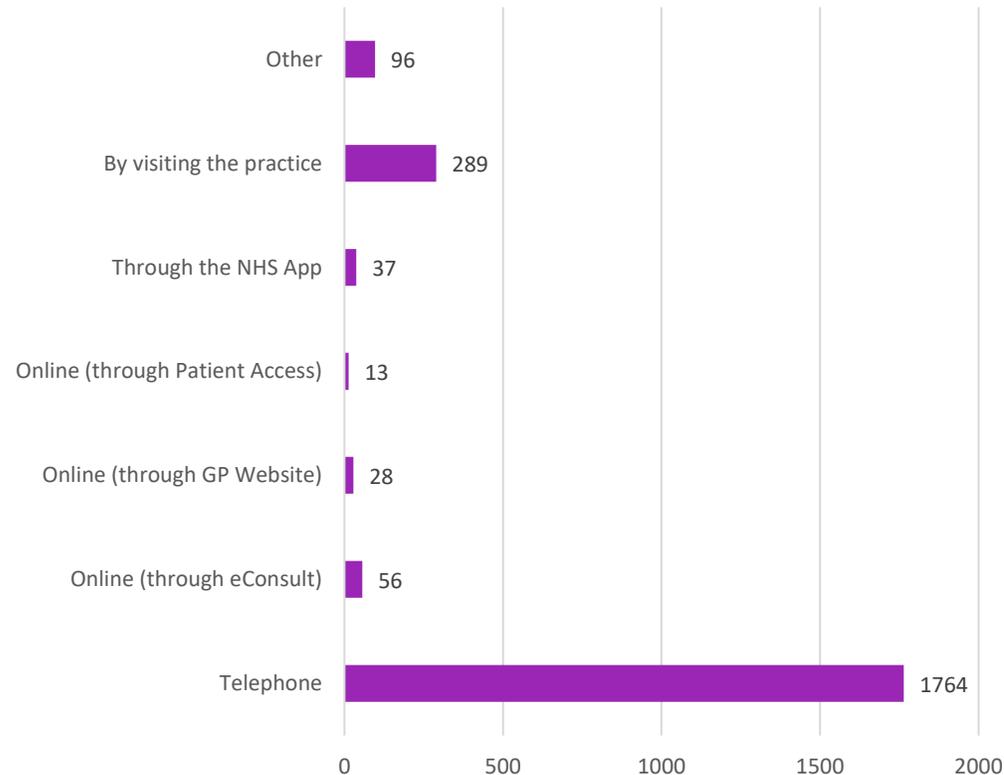
- 72.3% use their practice for GP Appointments
- 49.6% use their practice for Nurse Appointments
- 8.7% use their practice for Pharmacy Review
- 26.4% use their practice for repeat medication
- 14.4% use their practice for flu jabs
- 10.8% use their practice to drop off a sample
- 5.2% use their practice for other purposes, such as:
 - Blood tests
 - Asthma Checkups
 - Covid Vaccinations

Please Note: Respondents could choose more than one option for this question



Key Findings: Appointment Bookings – Method

How did respondents book their last appointment?



Of the 2,283 respondents to our survey, the vast majority (77.3%, 1764 respondents) booked their visit via phone call to the surgery directly.

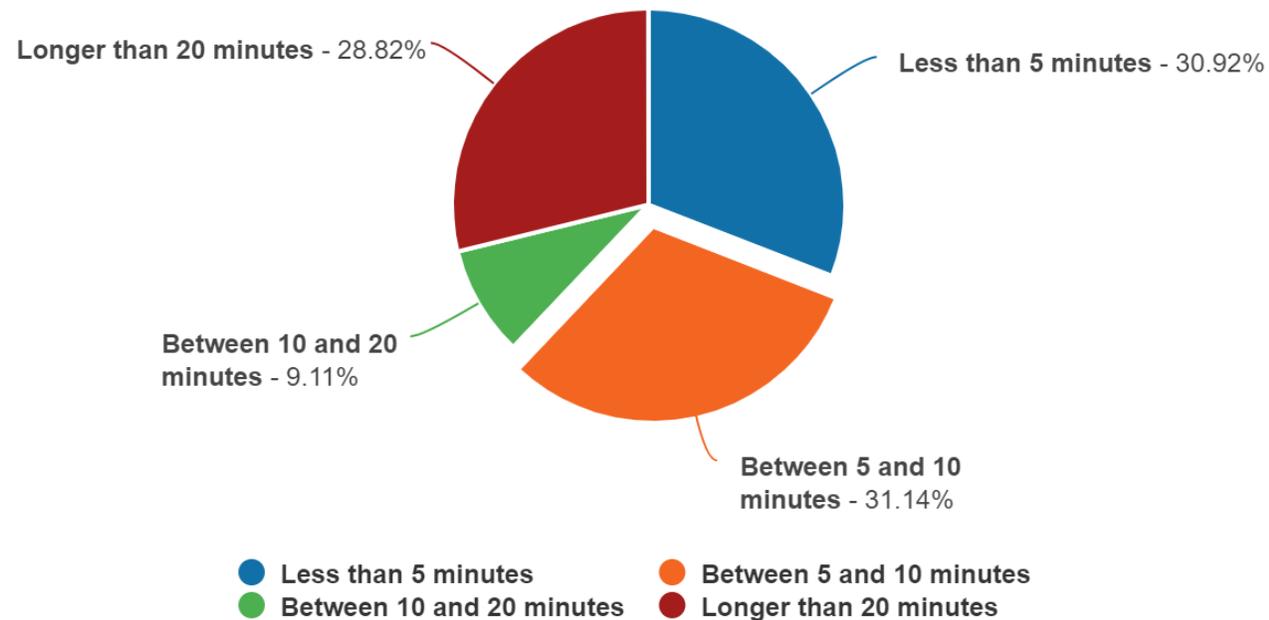
The second-most popular method was booking via visiting the practice directly, with 12.7% respondents (289 respondents) reporting thus.

Online bookings make up only 4.9% of appointments, with only 134 respondents reporting that they booked their last appointment online.



Key Findings: Appointment Bookings – Time Taken

Approximately, how long did it take you to book your appointment? (Include any wait on the phone - for example)

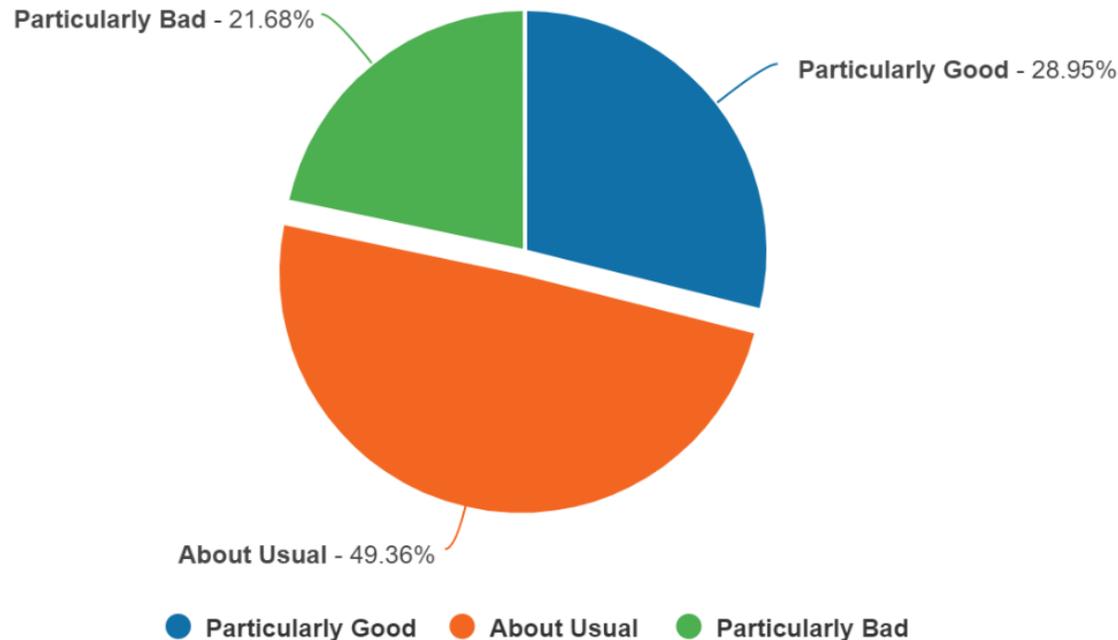


Most respondents (62%, 1417 responses) reported that it took up to 10 minutes to book an appointment, while 28.8% (658 responses) told us it took longer than 20 minutes to book an appointment.



Key Findings: Appointment Bookings – Consistency

Do you feel this waiting time was about usual, or was it particularly good or bad?



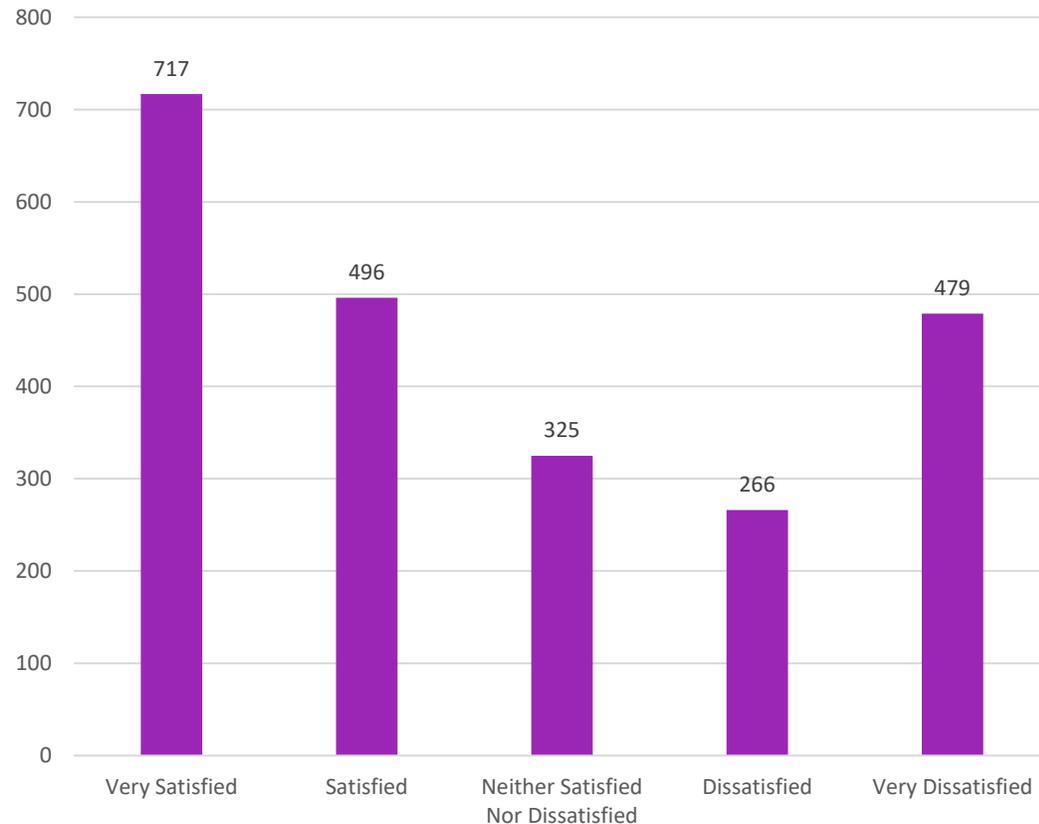
661 respondents (29%) reported they felt the time it took to book their appointment was particularly good, while 1,127 respondents (49.4%) reported this is about usual.

495 respondents (21.7%) said their waiting time was particularly bad.



Key Findings: Waiting Times – User Satisfaction

How satisfied were respondents with their experience of booking an appointment?



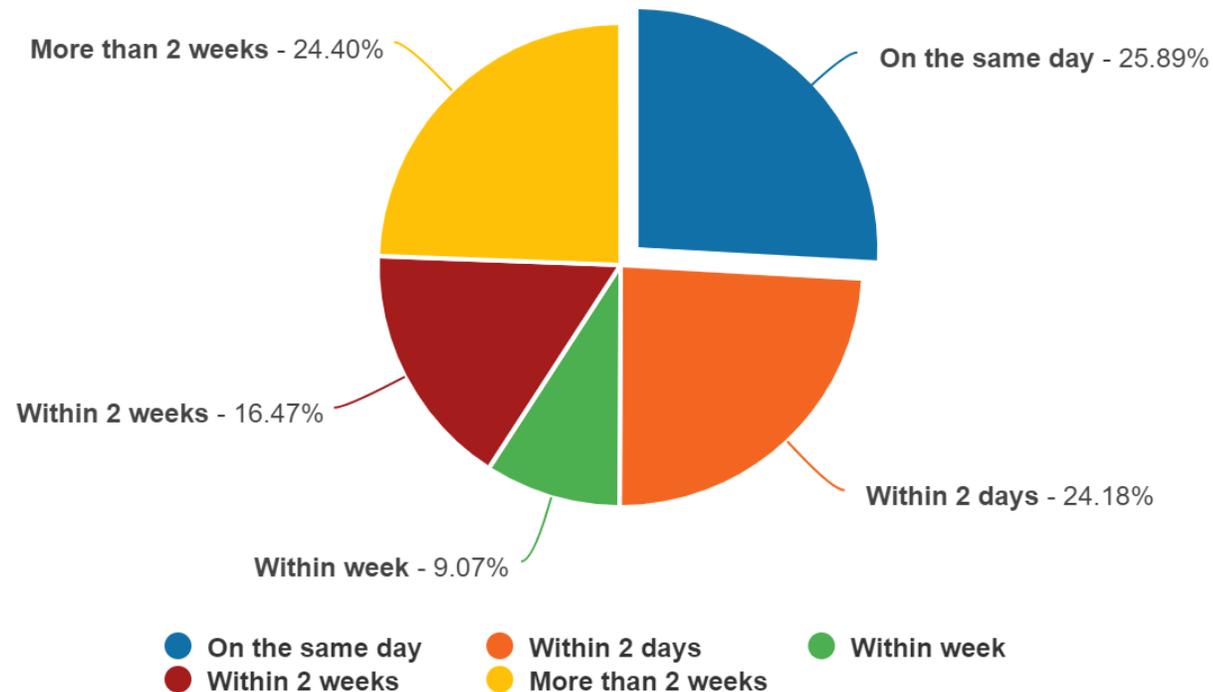
717 respondents (31.4%) reported feeling 'Very Satisfied' with their experience of booking an appointment with their practice. A further 494 respondents (21.7%) reported feeling 'Satisfied', resulting in over half (53.1%) of respondents rating themselves 'Satisfied' or better.

479 respondents (21%) rated themselves 'Very Dissatisfied' with their experience, with a further 266 respondents (11.7%) rating themselves as 'Dissatisfied', resulting in 32.7% of respondents rating themselves 'Dissatisfied' or worse.



Key Findings: Waiting Times

Approximately, how long was the wait between booking and being seen by a doctor / nurse?



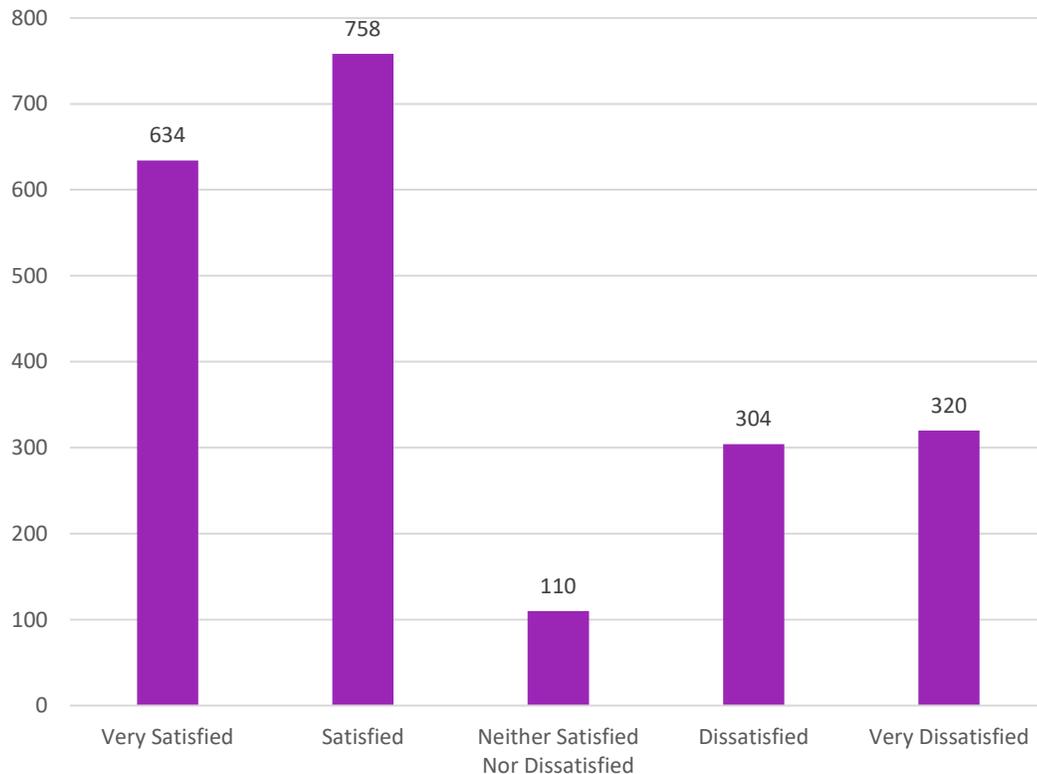
59.2% of respondents (1,350 respondents) reported receiving an appointment within a week at most, with 43.8% of those (25.9% of total, 591 respondents) receiving an appointment on the same day.

40.8% of respondents (933 respondents) reported waiting a week or more for an appointment, with 60% of those (26% of total, 557 respondents) receiving an appointment over two weeks from the date of booking.



Key Findings: Waiting Times – User Satisfaction

How satisfied were respondents with their waiting time?



61.0% (1392 respondents) were 'Satisfied' or better with their waiting time, with 54.4% of these (35.7% of total, 758 responses) rating themselves 'Very Satisfied'.

27.3% (624 respondents) were 'Dissatisfied' or worse with their waiting time, with 51.3% rating themselves 'Very Dissatisfied'.



Key Findings – Appointment Booking

64.7% (1,476 responses) agreed that they were able to book an appointment at a time of day that suited their needs.

65.7% (1,498 responses) agreed they were able to book an appointment using a method that suited their needs.

53.1% (1,210 responses) agreed they can contact their GP practice easily when they need to.

57.0% (1,300 responses) agreed it was, overall, easy for them to book an appointment.



Key Findings – Complaints

7.4% (168 responses) told us they have made a complaint about their GP practice within the last 12 months.

62.6% (1,429 responses) told us they felt no need to complain.

Key Findings – Needs

61.2% (1,395 responses) told us their needs had been fully met.

15.1% (344 responses) told us their needs were mostly met.

16.0% (364 responses) told us their needs were partially met.

7.8% (178 responses) told us that most or all their needs were not met.



Key Findings: Public Perception – Positive

“GP, nurses and reception staff are professional and friendly.”

“Having a range of differently trained staff available to deal with different types of needs.”

“Doctors are kind and patient.”

“Friendly staff are flexible with what you are asking”

Common themes that occurred when respondents were asked to note something that worked well at their surgery was:

- Approachability of reception and practice staff.
- Well-trained staff with robust capabilities.
- Flexibility with booking, frequently able to get same-day bookings.



Key Findings: Public Perception – Negative

“Lack of continuity and no opportunity to discuss outcomes following tests and investigation to interpret findings and implications.”

“Difficulty contacting. It is almost impossible to get through on the phone at any time of day.”

“Being sent reminders for smear but having no available appointments for the last 6 weeks”

“The booking system, my daughter was booked in as a in person appointment but when I arrived was told it was a phone consultation, poor system of booking.”

Common themes that occurred when respondents were asked to note something they have or should have complained about were:

- The booking system feels opaque, and users are sometimes left confused as to how they are attending the appointment.
- Difficulty contacting the practice specifically via phone.
- Lack of available appointments and understaffing.
- Perceived lack of continuing care.



Key Conclusion and Recommendations

Many of the problems that have been reported on in this survey are issues that are prevalent nationwide. Issues such as a lack of available appointments, and therefore the difficulty providing follow-up appointments, as well as difficulty getting through via phone are not isolated to these four sites alone.

However, Healthwatch Gateshead believes that the systems and processes that impact these issues can be improved on a practice-by-practice basis.

We would recommend:

- A review of the appointment booking system, looking particularly at how the specifications of appointments are communicated to the user on who they are seeing (e.g. doctor, nurse).
- Looking at how follow-up care (from tests and procedures) can be administered more effectively. Currently the emphasis is on the patient to check up on results, so there is a perceived lack of continuity of care from the GP service.
- Telephony appointment booking seems to be an issue with several users suggesting that an improvement would be to have an idea of where you were in the call queue.



Thank you:

Healthwatch Gateshead would like to thank all the service users, local pharmacies, the GP practice staff and everyone else who contributed to this survey and our work.

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