



Patient Transport Service Patient Experience Report

Patient Transport Service
Bedfordshire & Luton ICB October to December 2023

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Summary

Introduction

The East of England Ambulance Service (EEAST) has a comprehensive annual patient survey programme, which includes the continuous Patient Transport Service (PTS) patient experience survey. This online survey is signposted using a variety of methods and is available for patients to feedback on their experience at any time.

The objective of the PTS survey is to establish patient satisfaction, to involve patients in the healthcare and service received and to monitor the quality of the care and service provided by the Trust. Listening to patient feedback enables the Trust to identify what is working well and to highlight areas for service improvement.

This report summarises the results of the PTS experience survey, for patients who used the service within the Bedfordshire and Luton ICB area during October to December 2023.

Methodology

The PTS online survey is available on the Trust's public website for patients to complete at any time. This survey is promoted using various methods, including the Trust's social media channels and patient information cards (which include the web address and QR code to the survey). The information cards have been distributed across the region and PTS staff have been asked to provide these to patients following their contact with the service.

The Patient Survey Team also post invitation to feedback letters to a random sample of PTS patients each month (obtained through Cleric and provided by the Trust's Information Management Team). The patient samples are traced using the Demographic Batch Trace Service, with any patients who do not trace removed from the sample prior to mail out. The invitation letter provides a unique reference number for the patient to enter upon completion of the survey, enabling the survey results to be separated by contract area. Patients can also provide the first half of their postcode if preferred. The contract area is recorded as unknown if this information is unavailable.

In addition, due to the earlier success of the Pilot PTS SMS text messaging survey running from September 2023, it was decided that this service would also be rolled out to all contractual PTS areas and February 2023 marked the start of the Patient Survey Team implementing the service within the Bedfordshire and Luton area. It was decided that an SMS text message would be sent to a random sample of patients within the Bedfordshire and Luton area who had used the Patient Transport Service during February 2023, however results for prior months between October and December 2023 were also received from patients who had used the service during that time and the results are also included within this report.

Sample

The sample is provided by the Trust's Information Management Team and the SMS text message invites the patient to complete the PTS online survey via a link to the Trust's website where the online PTS survey is accessed, this enables the patient the opportunity to provide their feedback of the service they have recently received.

With the recent success of the introduction of the SMS text messaging service, an SMS text message invitation and link to the online survey (approximately 400 patients each month who have used the transport within the Bedfordshire and Luton area), have been sent out across a period of two batches every fortnight.

The PTS online survey is undertaken by way of a self-selected sample via EEAST's public website and a random sample of PTS patients is also collated each month (approximately 150 patients who have used transport within the Bedfordshire and Luton area), with these patients posted an invitation to feedback letter.

Most patients complete the survey online, although paper versions of the questionnaire are available if preferred. It is not possible to calculate the overall response rate for the online survey, as although the number of invitation letters posted and SMS messages are recorded, it is not clear how many information cards have been provided. Some surveys may also have been completed by patients who found the survey through alternative means.

Conclusion

Overall, **80.0%** of respondents (24) who answered the FFT question and had used the Trust's PTS within the Bedfordshire and Luton area during October to December 2023 rated the service received as either 'good' or 'very good.'

Most respondents (86.2%) were satisfied with the booking system, although four respondents were dissatisfied with the time taken for their call to have been answered.

Respondents were generally satisfied with the length of time their journey took (93.0%), and three quarters of patients arrived on time or early for their medical appointment. Lower satisfaction was seen in relation to the length of time the patient had waited for return transport, with 63.0% of respondents advising that they had waited for over one hour.

Positively, PTS staff were mostly rated as 'good' (32.1%) or 'excellent' (64.3%). All respondents felt they had been treated with dignity and respect.

The majority of the additional comments received were positive, demonstrating the professionalism, kindness and care provided by staff. The main area of dissatisfaction highlighted from the qualitative feedback related to transport delays.

The continuation of collecting and reporting on patient feedback will enable the Trust to ensure that it meets the community it serves and for patients to receive a high standard of service.

Results

Overall, **31** completed survey submissions were received from patients who had used the PTS within the Bedfordshire and Luton ICB area during Quarter 3 2023/24: October (11), November (7) and December (13).

The results to the survey questions can be found below. Please note that the percentages **do not** include the patients who either did not respond to the question or who answered, 'unable to say'/'not applicable.' Some patients may also have provided multiple answers to questions.

Due to the small number of survey submissions received, caution must be taken when interpreting the results which may not be representative.

How did you hear about the survey?

Overall, 17 (54.8%) out of 31 respondents had been signposted to the survey via the invitation to feedback letter.

Other responses included 'text message' (22.6%), 'word of mouth' (16.1%), 'patient information card' (3.2%) and 'ambulance service website' (3.2%).

Overall, how was your experience of our service?



The Friends and Family Test (FFT) score is calculated in line with NHS England guidelines: providing the percentage of patients who responded that their experience of the service was either 'good' or 'very good.'

Overall, 30 respondents who used the Trust's PTS within the Bedfordshire and Luton area answered the FFT question. 24 (80.0%) of these respondents rated the service received as either 'good' (13.3%) or 'very good' (66.7%).

Please can you tell us why you gave this answer?

Patient number	Month	Positive comments received
1	October	I was looked after going and returning home.
4	October	The drivers were so lovely kind and respectful. Had a nice little guided tour round the villages with lots of history made the journey interesting and pleasant.
9	November	The driver was extremely friendly and helpful. Got me to my appointment on time and escorted me to where I needed to go.
10	November	The ambulance arrived early so I was able to get to my appointment in good time. but not too early, as requested in the appointment letter from the hospital.
11	November	Staff were professional at all times. They were friendly, reassuring and patient with my 91 year old mother, and made sure that she was comfortable throughout the journey. I would definitely recommend the service to family and friends.
15	October	Happy with the service.
20	December	The driver was very good and very kind and very talkative and very helpful.
21	December	On time very helpful.
24	December	Turn up promptly most of the time.
26	October	Very good drivers sometimes have to wait a while but that is understandable.
27	December	Can't fault the crew always helpful delivering and getting me home. Praise indeed so well deserved many thanks.

Patient number	Month	Positive comments received
30	December	All of the transport crews are very helpful and always kind and thoughtful.
31	October	Excellent experience.

Patient number	Month	Mixed/neutral comments received
3	October	Because it was convenient as I am currently on crutches and cannot drive and we have no convenient public.
7	October	Overall, I'm very pleased with this service and so appreciative of your kindness. Vehicle is rather noisy and rattles alot, if not feeling well this noise is irritating and tiring.
14	November	All my experiences of your service during the last few years have been very good. Only once (a few years ago,) I arrived at the hospital clinic half an hour late and the receptionist refused to let me in! She told me to telephone when I got home and book another appointment in two months' time! Your drivers took me home immediately!

Patient number	Month	Negative comments received
2	October	The journey to the hospital was no problem. The ambulance turned up on time and the driver made sure that I reached the right clinic. So far so good. The homeward trip was a different story however. After waiting 45 minutes a driver came for me but was told that I was waiting for something from the pharmacy. He said that he had another patient to collect and that he would come back for me afterwards. That was the last I saw of him. After I had waited about three hours I was finally collected and dropped off at home.

Patient number	Month	Negative comments received
8	November	The transport arrived approx 3 hours late and got me to the hospital at least 3 hours after my appointment time (which was for surgery). Someone from East of England Ambulance had phoned me to tell me that it had been agreed that my operation would be postponed but when I spoke to the appropriate people in the hospital they knew nothing of this. The transport was booked by the hospital.
16	December	Transport was arranged for me to attend an important consultation in the cancer clinic at Addenbrookes hospital on 15/12/23. Despite receiving two phone calls to say the transport was on its way it never arrived and I missed the appointment. The appointment was rescheduled for one week later and Addenbrookes arranged transport because it was too important to be missed.
19	December	The waiting times for the return journey are by all accounts abysmal.
25	December	I'm a dialysis patient who's blood pressure gets low and diabetic person who needs oxygen but I have to wait for over an hour and sometimes longer and I'm really not happy.
18	December	Thank you for your letter of 16th January 2024. I have used your service several times and I have written to you previously, with my thoughts on the service that you provide. Firstly, I must say all your staff have been so helpful and kind. They always take me in the wheelchair to the department reception (and also to the loo!!) The only grumble is that on one occasion, my appointment was 11.05am at the diabetic Eye Clinic. But I did not get home until 7.30pm! I think the NHS need more ambulance staff and vehicles. On this occasion as I am diabetic I had to ask the hospital staff for some food. The staff stayed with me until the ambulance arrived. But I was very stressed and tired.

Are you the patient?

26 (86.7%) out of 30 respondents advised that they were the patient. Four respondents (13.3%) completed the survey on behalf of the patient.

Examples of respondents who completed the survey on behalf of the patient included:

- *“Daughter.” (Patient 4, October)*
- *“Son.” (Patient 11, November)*
- *“Wife.” (Patient 21, December)*

How quickly did we answer your call?

22 (84.6%) out of 26 respondents felt their call to the booking line had been answered ‘quickly,’ However, four respondents felt that ‘it took a long time’ (15.4%).

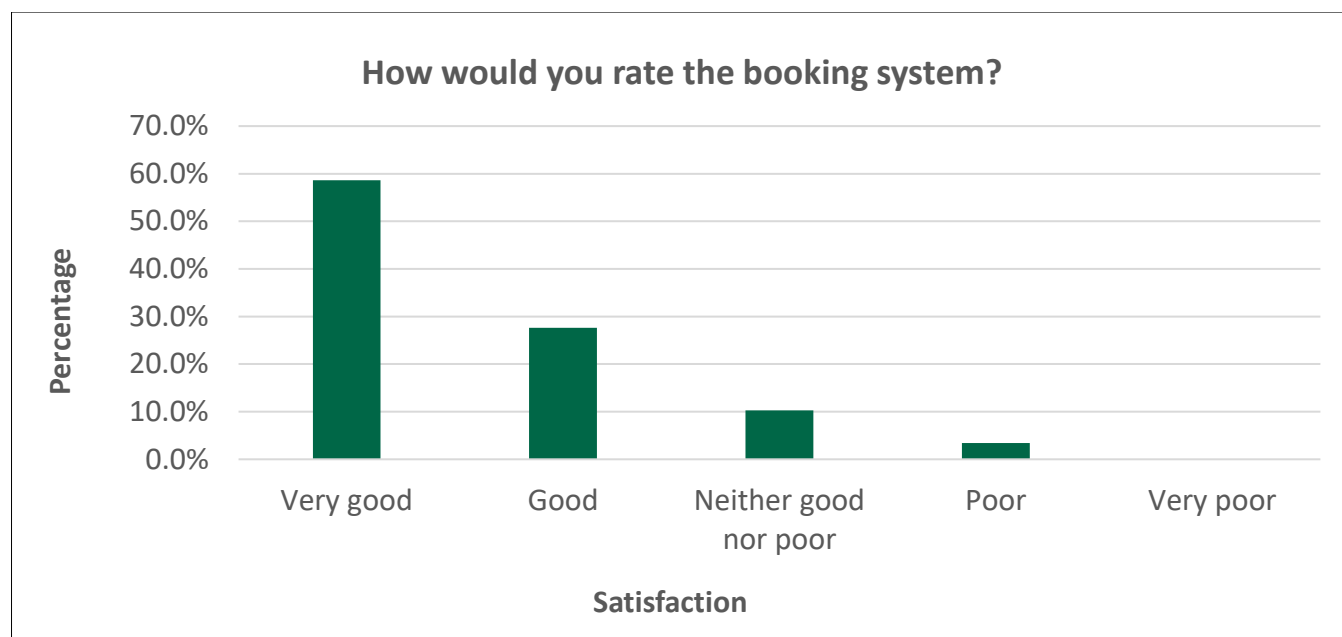
The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or were ‘unable to say.’

Were you clearly informed of the date and time of your transport booking?

27 (96.4%) out of 28 respondents recalled being clearly informed of the date and time of their transport booking. One respondent (3.6%) advised that they had not been informed by PTS staff.

The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or were ‘unable to say.’

How would you rate the booking system?



Of the 29 respondents who were able to answer the above question, 25 (86.2%) rated the booking system as either 'good' (27.6%) or 'very good' (58.6%). Other responses included 'neither good nor poor' (10.3%) and 'poor' (3.4%).

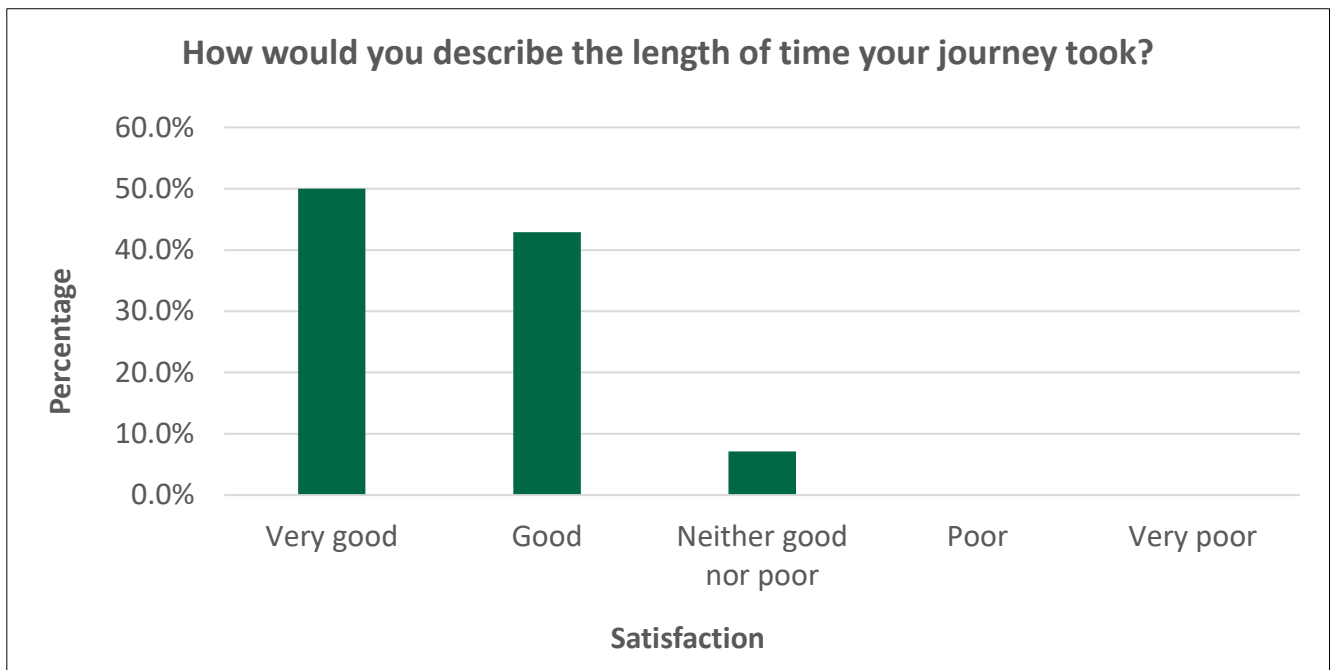
The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or were 'unable to say.'

Did the service staff introduce themselves?

Overall, 23 (88.5%) out of 26 respondents recalled PTS staff as having introduced themselves upon their arrival. Three patients (11.5%) did not recall receiving an introduction.

The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or were 'unable to say.'

How would you describe the length of time your journey took?



Overall, 26 (93.0%) out of 28 respondents were satisfied with the length of time their journey took and provided 'good' (42.9%) or 'very good' (50.0%) responses. Two respondents (7.1%) described the journey length as 'neither good nor poor.'

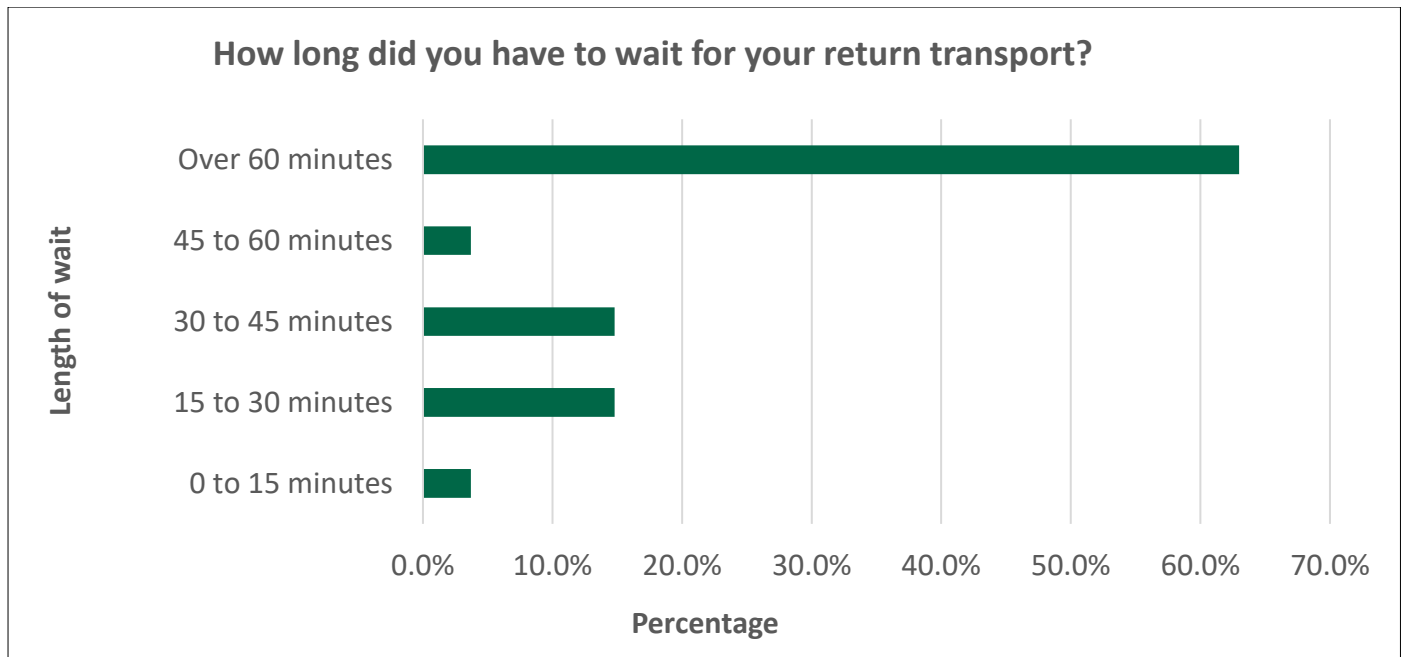
The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or were 'unable to say.'

Did you arrive on time for your appointment?

Of the 27 respondents who answered the above question, 20 (74.1%) had arrived either 'on time' (51.9%) or 'early' (22.2%) at the hospital/clinic. However, five patients (6.7%) had arrived 'late' (11.1%) or 'very late' (7.4%) for their medical appointment.

The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or responded, 'not applicable.'

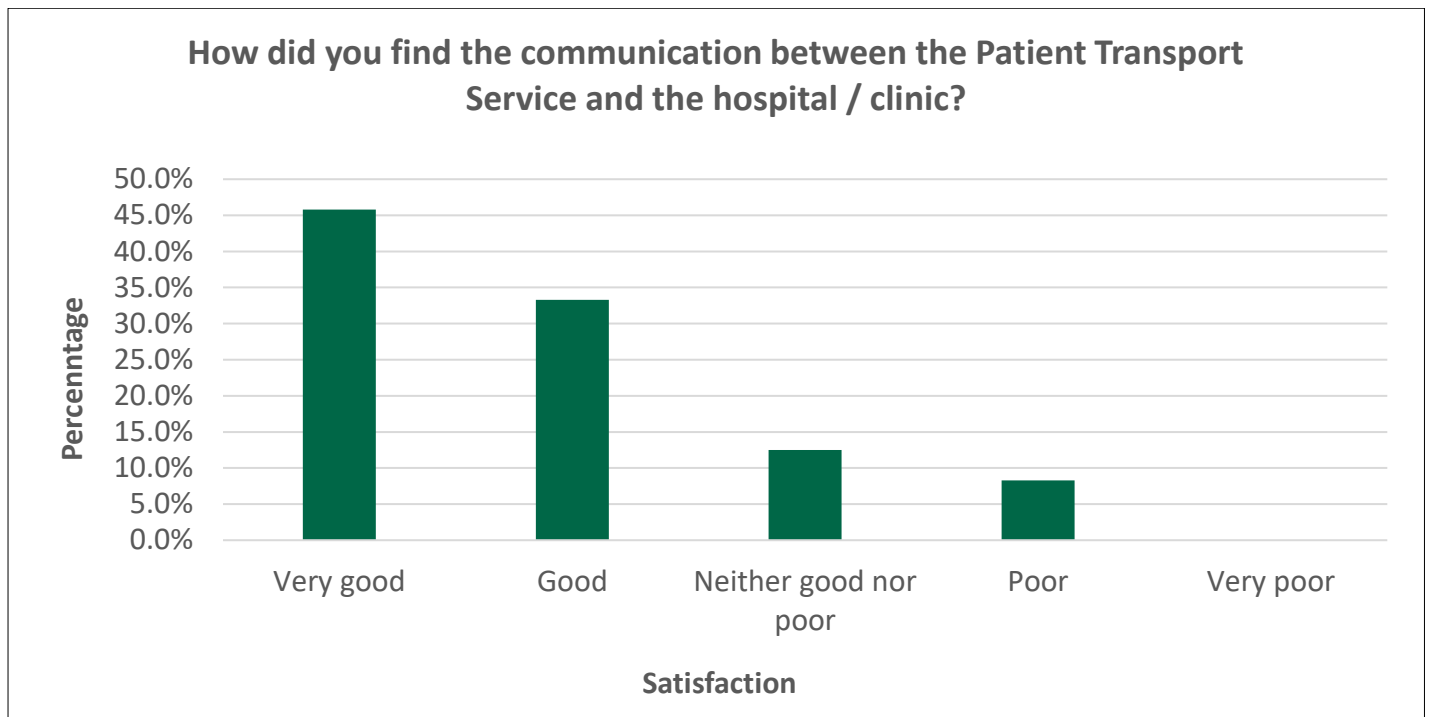
How long did you have to wait for your return transport after your appointment?



Overall, 37.0% of respondents (10) who answered the above question had waited between 0 to 60 minutes for return transport: 0 to 15 minutes (3.7%), 15 to 30 minutes (14.8%), 30 to 45 minutes (14.8%) and 45 to 60 minutes (3.7%). 17 patients (63.0%) had waited over one hour following their medical appointment.

The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or responded, 'not applicable.'

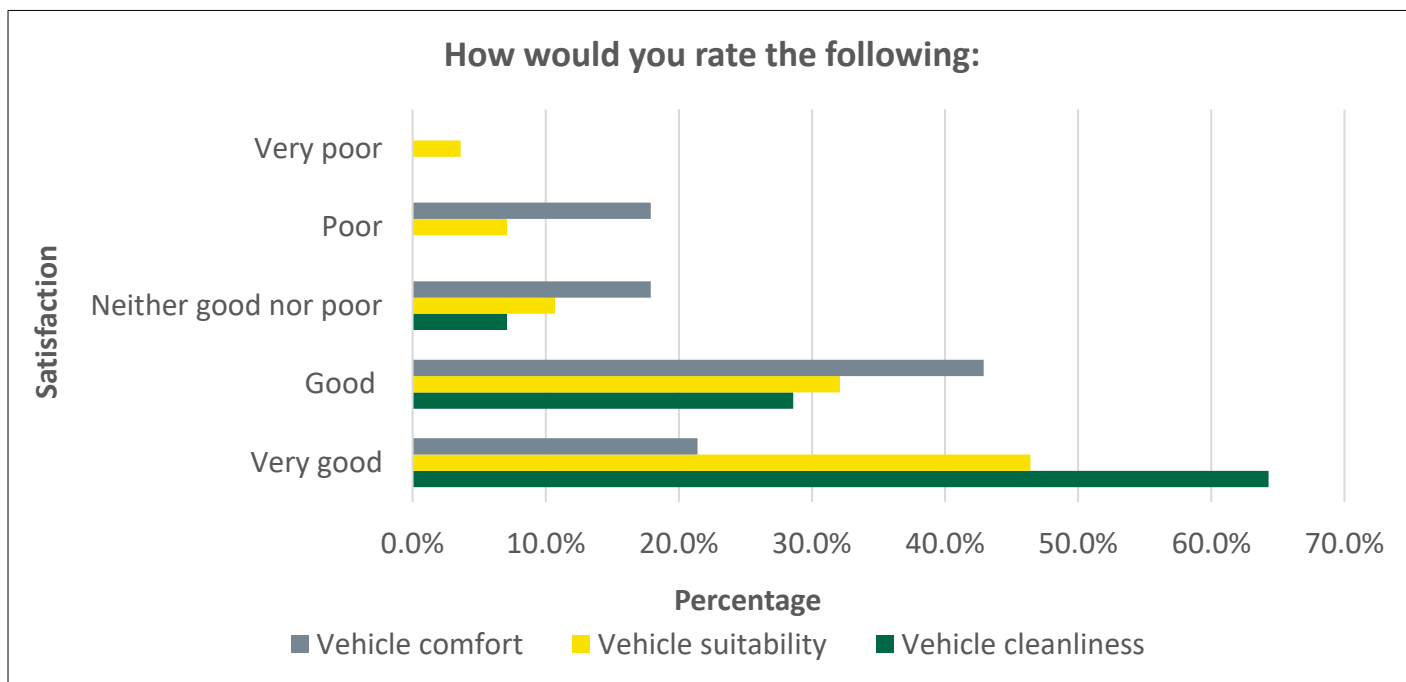
How did you find the communication between the Patient Transport Service and the hospital / clinic?



Of the 24 responses received, 19 (79.2%) respondents rated the communication between the PTS and the hospital/clinic as 'good' (33.3%) or 'very good' (45.8%). Three respondents (12.5%) rated the communication as 'neither good nor poor' and two respondents (8.3%) felt the communication was 'poor.'

The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or were 'unable to say.'

How would you rate the following?



Vehicle cleanliness was rated highly by all respondents as ‘good’ (28.6%) or ‘very good’ (64.3%). However, lower satisfaction levels were seen in relation to vehicle comfort, with 64.3% of respondents providing ‘good’ (42.9%) or ‘very good’ (21.4%) responses.

Over three quarters (78.6%) of respondents rated the vehicle suitability as ‘good’ (32.1%) or ‘very good’ (46.4%). Three respondents (10.7%) rated the vehicle suitability as ‘neither good nor poor,’ and a further three patients described the suitability as ‘poor’ (7.1%) or ‘very poor’ (3.6%).

The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or were ‘unable to say.’

How would you describe the attitude of the staff?

27 (96.4%) out of 28 respondents rated staff attitude as either 'good' (32.1%) or 'excellent' (64.3%). However, one respondent (3.6%) felt that staff attitude had been 'poor.'

The remaining respondents did not complete this question.

Did the staff treat you with dignity and respect?

All 28 respondents who answered the above question advised that they were either 'to some extent' (10.7%) or 'definitely' (89.3%) treated with dignity and respect.

The remaining respondents did not complete this question.

Did the service staff drive safely?

All 28 respondents who answered the above question advised that PTS staff had driven safely.

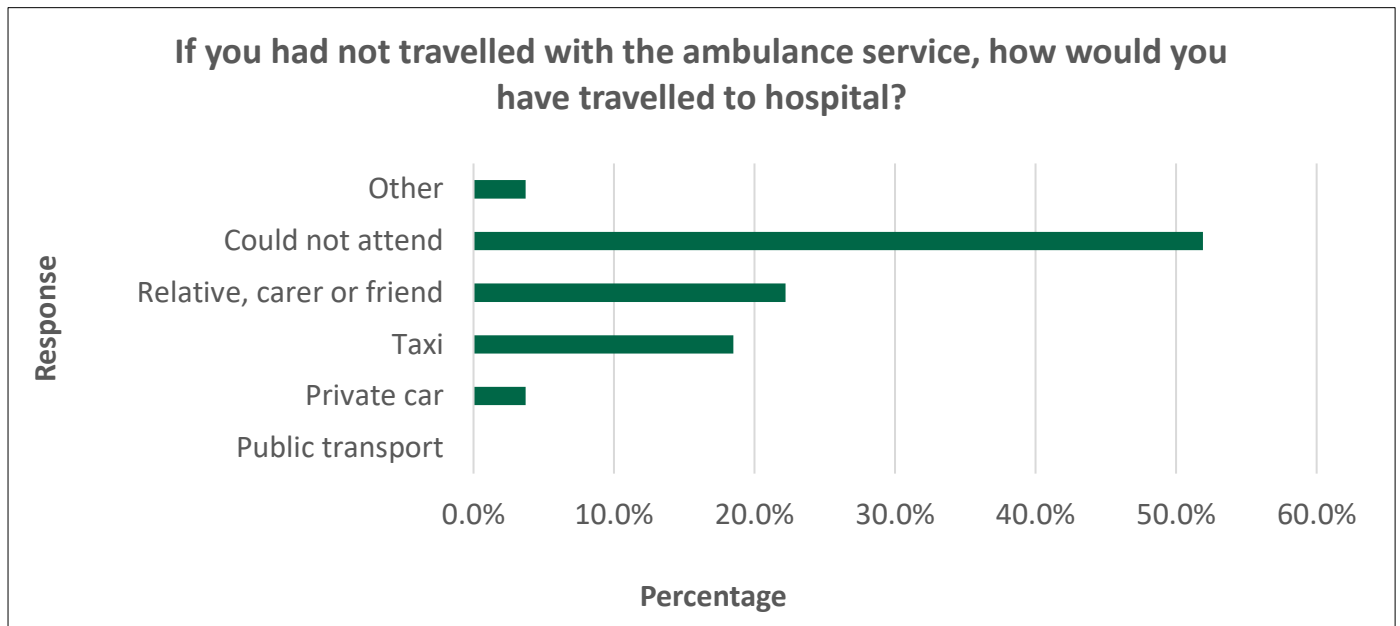
The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or were 'unable to say' how the vehicle had been driven.

Did the staff offer assistance if required?

All 28 respondents who answered the above question advised that assistance had been offered if required.

The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or were 'unable to say' whether assistance had been offered.

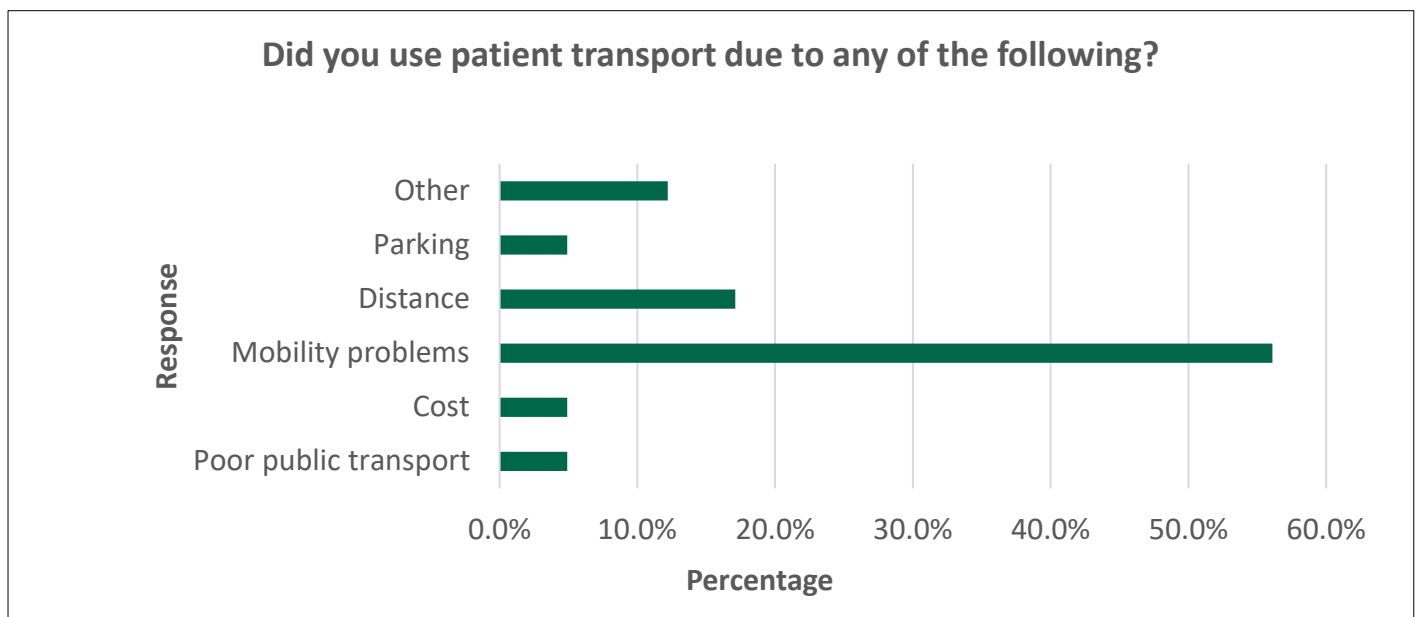
If you had not travelled with the ambulance service, how would you have travelled to hospital?



Various responses were provided in relation to how the patient would have travelled to hospital had transport not been provided. 14 (51.9%) out of 27 respondents advised that they **could not** have attended their appointment. Other responses included: 'taxi' (18.5%), 'relative, carer or friend' (22.2%), 'private car' (3.7%), and 'other' (3.7%).

The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or were 'unable to say.'

Did you use patient transport due to any of the following? (All answer types are listed, some multiple answers)



Of the 41 responses received to this question, over half (56.1%) cited mobility problems as the reason for requiring patient transport. Other responses included: ‘distance’ (17.1%), ‘poor public transport’ (4.9%), ‘cost’ (4.9%), ‘parking’ (4.9%) and ‘other’ (12.2%).

Two respondents did not complete this question.

Please tell us about anything that we could have done better:

Patient number	Month	Positive comments received
4	October	Nothing - absolutely fantastic.
8	November	Got me to the hospital at the correct time for my appointment.
10	November	I cannot imagine how this service could be improved. Everyone concerned did their best to help me when I needed it. As a disabled and elderly (80) person I cannot speak highly enough and I am pleased to provide information on a subject I feel is very important to myself and others in a similar situation. Well done, everyone!

Patient number	Month	Positive comments received
11	November	As far as I am concerned, the service my mother received was excellent. There was nothing of concern, and Mum would use the service again if needed. The only 'issue' was that there was another patient in the ambulance, who was held up and caused a delay on the return leg. Obviously, this is out of the control of the staff and cannot be avoided. Again, the staff were excellent, they explained the reason for the delay and ensured that she was comfortable until ready to depart. First class service.
20	December	You couldn't have done any better, very good company and very nice people.
27	December	You couldn't because it depends on how many need transport that day.

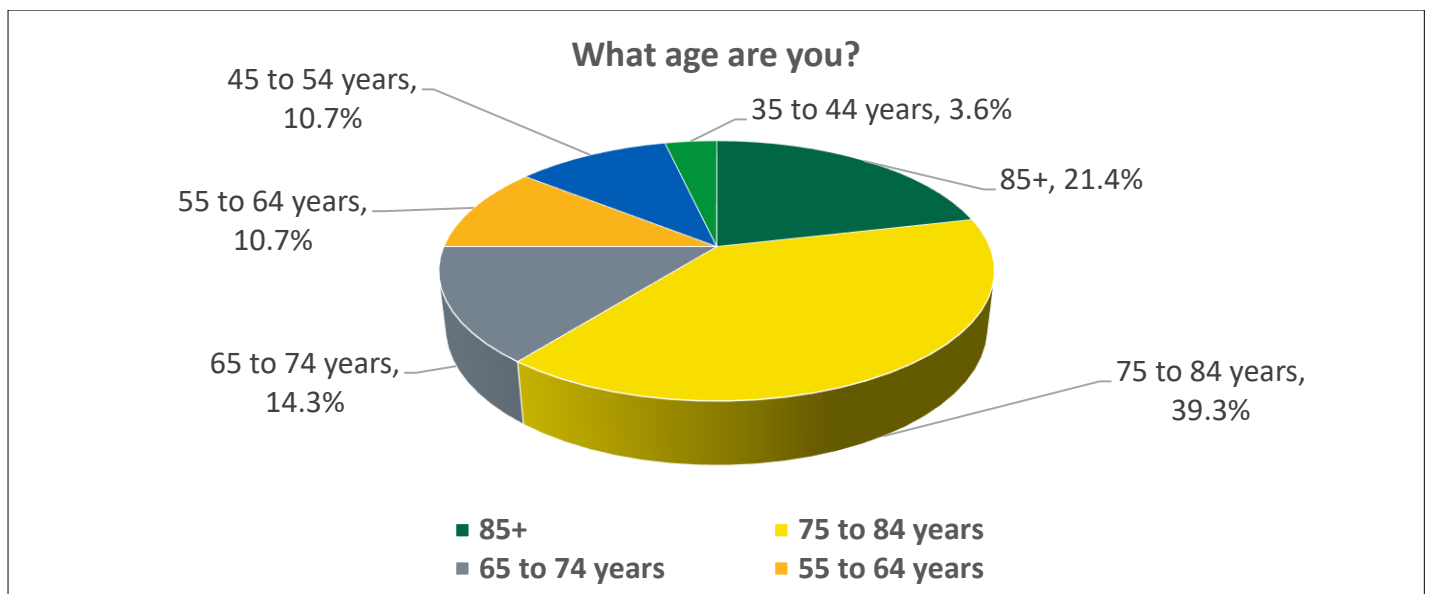
Patient number	Month	Mixed / neutral comments
1	October	None I did not have any problems going or returning home.
3	October	As requested, I was ready to be picked up about two hours early. The problem was that the driver rang the front doorbell and after shouting that I was coming he went around the back door and rang that bell and despite me shouting again he was calling me on the phone in about thirty second's time. It doesn't take me too long to get to the door and when I asked the driver if we were late he said No. I appreciate that the driver must encounter some tardy passengers but I thought that was a bit OTT. Otherwise, it was excellent trip.
13	November	New yellow vehicles - high step and rear ramp, hard seats. White vehicles (superior vehicle) - lower steps, rear lift, better seats.

Patient number	Month	Mixed / neutral comments
7	October	When being picked up from a hospital appointment, drivers have said that they have driven from Oxford, Hemel Hempstead etc to get and pick me up from hospital and on occasions I've waited several hours till being picked up then brought home to Bedfordshire area. Road works, weather, potholes has made it difficult for the driver.
16	December	Provided transport.

Patient number	Month	Areas for improvement
2	October	Improve collection and pick up times for the return journey.
9	November	A quicker return service would have been more helpful. Myself and my carer had to wait longer than two hours.
18	December	You could have come earlier for my appointment and also brought me home a lot earlier.
19	December	Listened!!!
21	December	When appointment finishes not to have to wait so long to be picked up.
25	December	Just waiting times please.

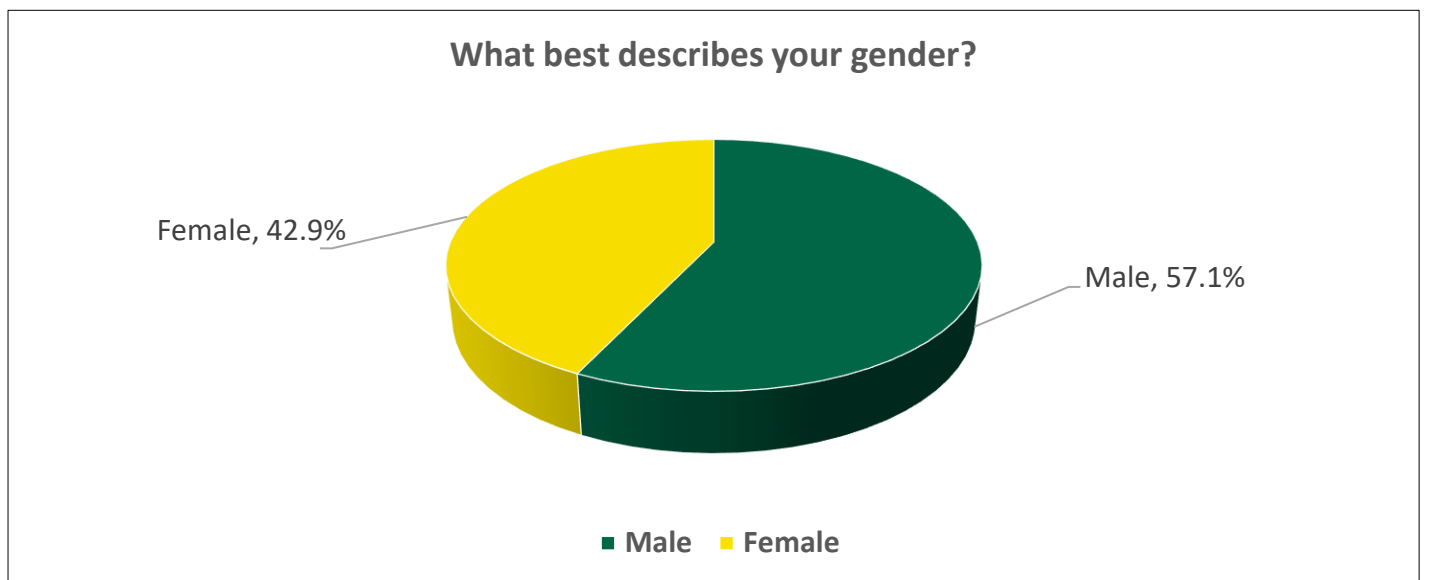
Equality and Diversity Information

What age are you?



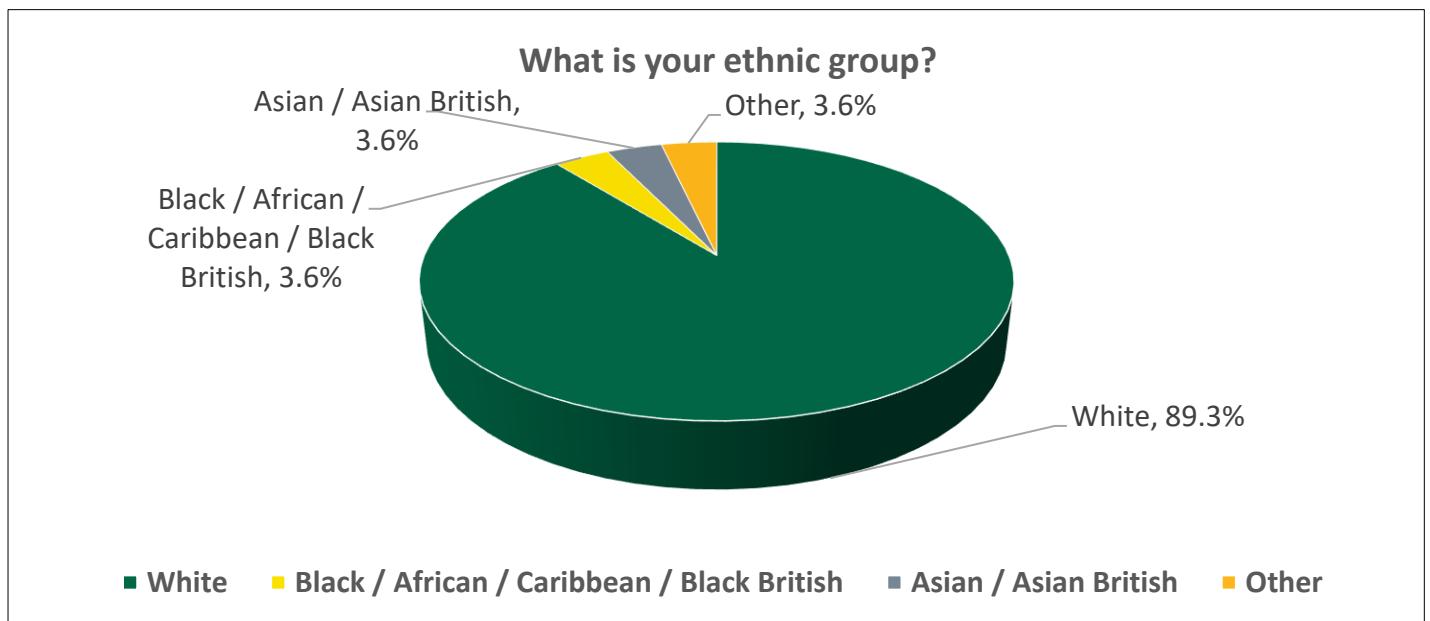
The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or 'preferred not to say.'

What best describes your gender?



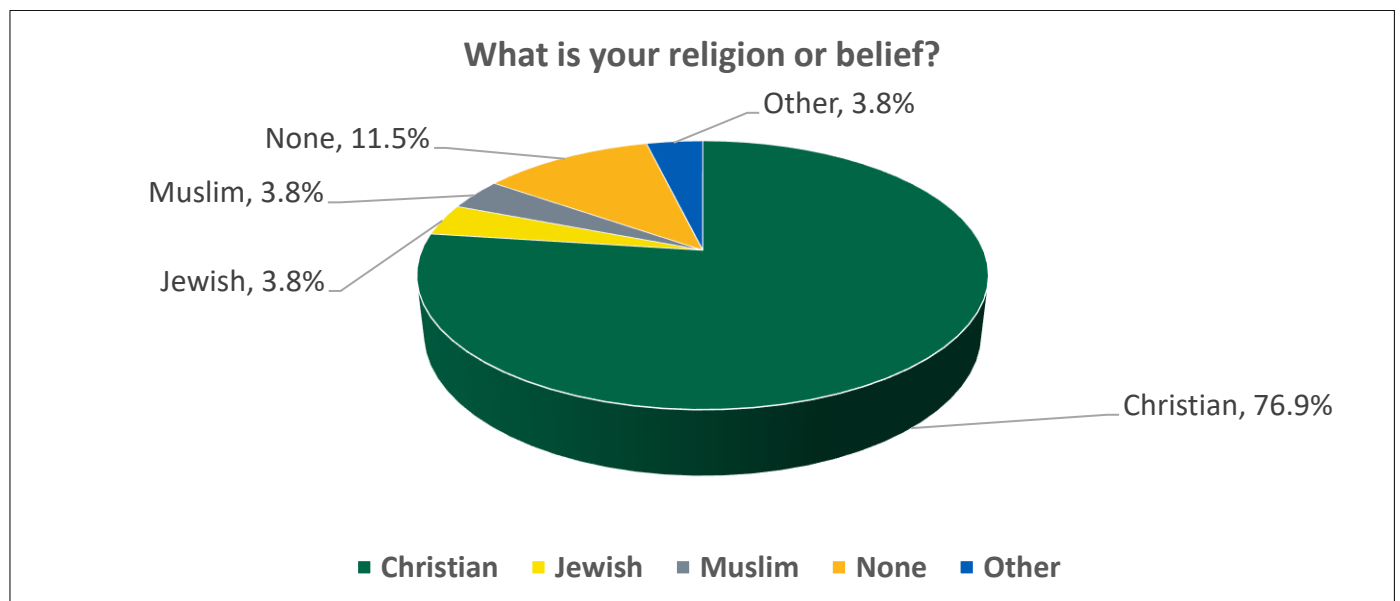
The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or 'preferred not to say.'

What is your ethnic group?



The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or 'preferred not to say.'

What is your religion or belief?



The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or 'preferred not to say.'

Example from the respondent who answered 'other' in response to this question:

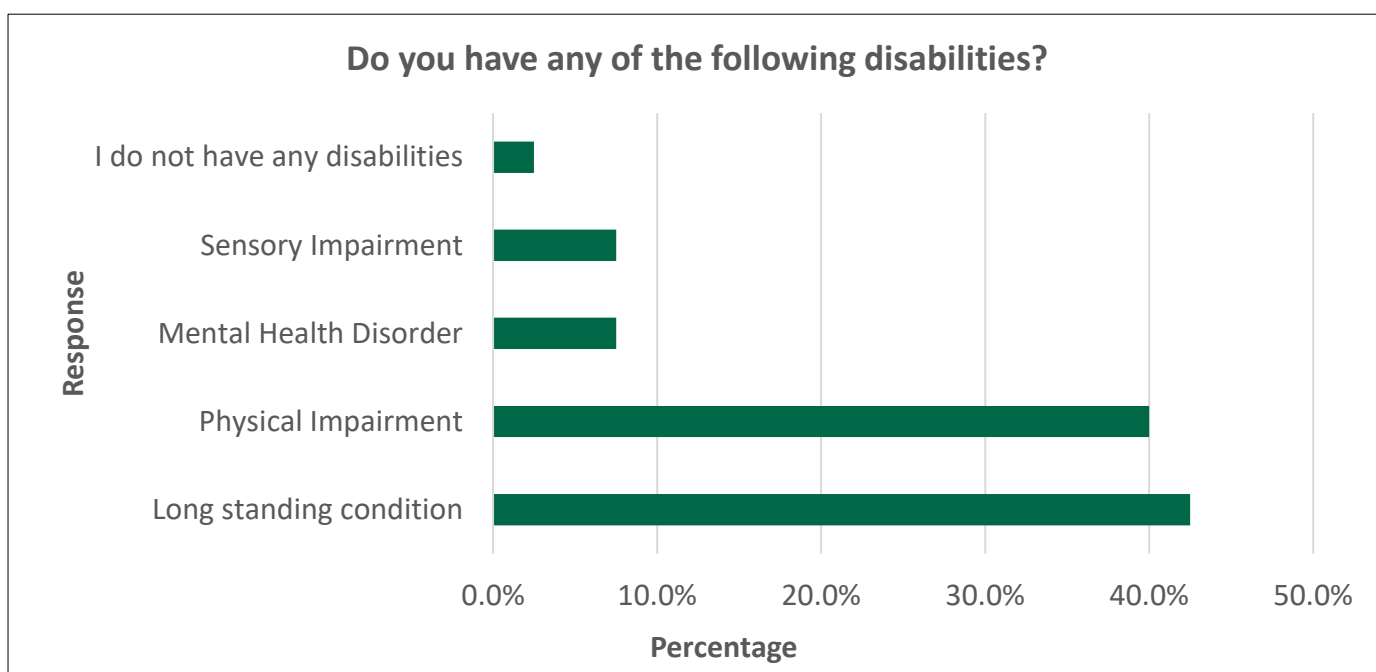
- "Wiccan." (Patient 19, December) 27

What is your sexual orientation?

Of the 26 respondents who answered the above question; 25 (96.2%) advised that they were of a 'heterosexual/straight' sexual orientation and one respondent (3.8%) answered 'other.'

The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or 'preferred not to say.'

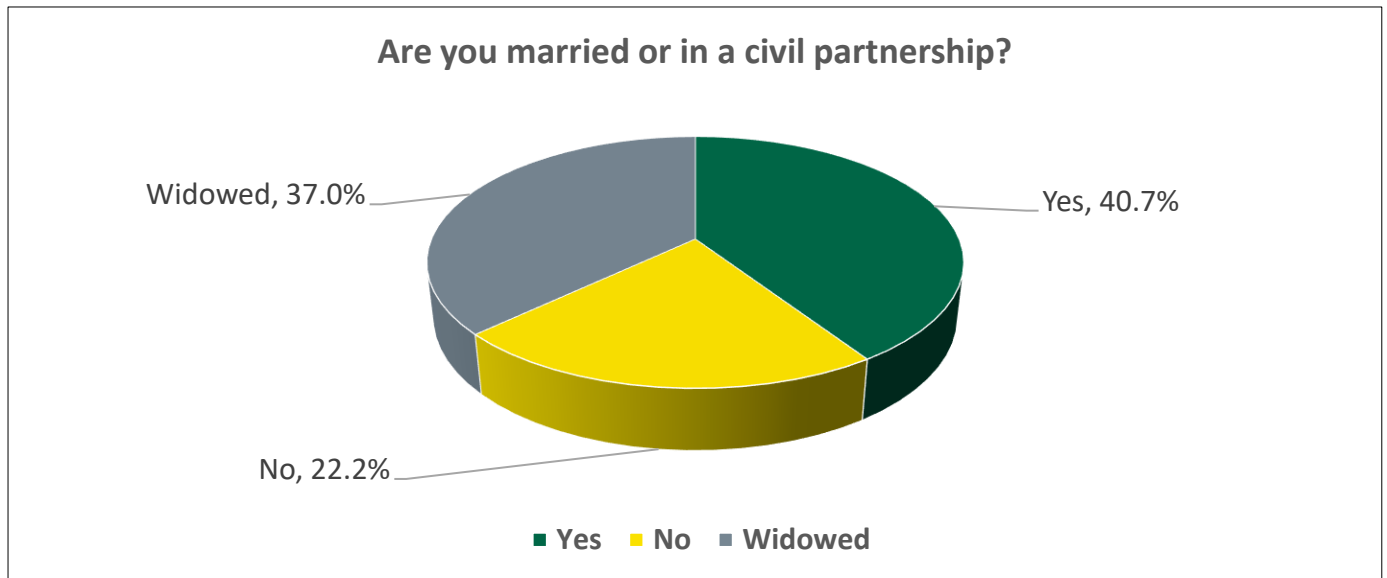
Do you have any of the following disabilities? *(All answer types are listed, some multiple answers)*



Overall, 17 (42.5%) of the responses received related to 'long standing condition.' Other disabilities experienced by the patient included: 'physical impairment' (40.0%), 'mental health disorder' (7.5%) and 'sensory impairment' (7.5%). One patient (2.5%) did not have a disability.

The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or responded that they 'preferred not to say.'

Are you married or in a civil partnership?



The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or 'preferred not to say.'

Are you currently pregnant or have had a child within the last 12 months?

No respondents advised they were pregnant or had a child under 12 months old.

Aftercare

Following this survey, any letters of appreciation or comments of concern were passed to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) for logging and actioning as appropriate.