



# Patient Transport Service Patient Experience Report

Patient Transport Service  
Hertfordshire: Q3 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 experience survey for the Patient Transport Service (PTS). 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 in the Hertfordshire area during October to December 2023.

## Methodology

The online survey is available on the Trust's public website for patients to complete at any time. The survey has been 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, which enables 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 2024 marked the start of the Patient Survey Team implementing the service within the Hertfordshire area. It was decided that an SMS text message would be sent to a random sample of patients within the Hertfordshire area who had used the Patient Transport Service during February 2024, 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 PTS online survey is undertaken by way of a self-selected sample via EEAST's public website. However, a random sample of PTS patients is also collated each month (approximately 150 patients who have used transport within the Hertfordshire area), with these patients posted an invitation to feedback letter.

In addition around 500 SMS text messages are also sent each month to a sample of patients who have used the transport service within the Hertfordshire area and sent to patients up to two weeks after their use of the service.

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 is 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, **91.1%** of respondents (41) who answered the FFT question and had used the Trust's PTS within the Hertfordshire area during October to December 2023, rated the service received as either 'good' or 'very good.'

82.1% of respondents (23) felt their transport booking call had been answered 'quickly,' although 17.9% of respondents (5) felt their call had taken a long time to be answered (14.3%) or their call was not answered (3.6%). Respondents were generally satisfied (87.8%) with the

length of time their journey took, with 82.8% of patients (24) arriving in good time for their medical appointment. 72.4% of respondents (21) had waited between 0 to 60 minutes for their return transport. However, eight respondents (27.6%) had waited over one hour.

PTS staff were rated highly as 'good' (11.9%) or 'excellent' (83.3%), with respondents also advising that they had been treated with dignity and respect.

The majority of additional comments received were positive and highlighted the professionalism, kindness and care provided by staff. Areas of dissatisfaction related to **delays, communication and comfort**.

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, **48** completed survey submissions were received from patients who had used the PTS within the Hertfordshire area during Quarter 3 of 2023/24: October (15), November (10) and December (23).

Please note that the percentages in the below tables/charts do not include the patients who either did not respond to the question or who were 'unable to say.' 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, 33 respondents (68.8%) had heard about the survey through the invitation to feedback letter. Other responses included 'ambulance service website' (6.3%), 'word of mouth' (14.6%), 'Text message' (8.3%) and 'Patient information card' (2.1%)

## 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, 45 respondents who used the Trust's PTS within the Hertfordshire area answered the FFT question. 41 (91.1%) of these respondents rated the service received as either 'good' (11.1%) or 'very good' (80.0%). Other responses included: 'neither good nor poor' (4.4%), 'poor' (2.2%) or 'very poor' (2.2%).

The remaining respondents did not complete this question.

## Please can you tell us why you gave this answer?

Patient	Month	Positive comments received
1	October	Was very well looked after.
2	November	The lady driver was very helpful.
4	October	You all do an amazing job I wouldn't be able to get to hospital without this service.
5	October	It was absolutely brilliant, I couldn't praise them enough.
6	October	Picked up within time specified. Day surgery done and brought home safely. Always smiling and helpful staff.
8	October	Staff are very helpful and do a brilliant job.
9	October	The paramedics were kind and patient.
11	October	Both ACA's were professional and polite. They carried out their work in a very caring manner.
15	November	Very prompt, courteous and friendly.
17	November	Ambulance crew are always attentive and helpful.
18	November	I had it my head and it was bleeding really badly. When the ambulance crew arrived, they were sympathetic, very thorough and soooo very kind and gentle.
19	October	Realistic response times.
21	November	Transport arrived in reasonable time for appointment and home after short wait.
24	November	The paramedics were considerate and put me at my ease.
26	December	Service could not be faulted.
27	December	Very helpful and polite. Brought some aids.

Patient	Month	Positive comments received
29	December	Every section of it was brilliant no faults.
31	December	My brother was picked up within the time frame from Watford General Hospital and transported to his home in St. Albans. The two crew members were calm, friendly and efficient, helped my brother into my property where my sister and I were waiting. We will be eternally grateful to all the staff and the ambulance crews at the hospital who helped our brother during his time in their care.
32	December	Always a friendly, polite and helpful service. I feel that I am in safe hands.
37	December	They turned up a bit late than I wanted, but we got to my appt on time and the driver was helpful.
38	December	Excellent staff, very careful, caring and attentive. I had several 'emergency' calls and the staff definitely reassured me.
39	December	Your staff were utterly amazing!!! The hospital were trying to do an unsafe discharge on my mother by discharging her without care or equipment in place. Your staff helped me get the equipment needed and even waited till this was arranged. I honestly cannot thank them enough as they 100% prevented a future admission to hospital.
40	December	Very professional. Very helpful when needed.
41	December	The driver was good at his job.
42	December	On time, very polite and helpful driver.
43	December	Arrived on time. Easy access to ambulance. Good driver.
44	December	Very friendly & reliable.
45	December	The service was prompt and reliable.
46	December	It is obvious that you are all working under a lot of pressure and are very busy. Yet despite this the way you look after the patients is a credit you should be proud of.

Patient	Month	Positive comments received
48	December	Because it was good.

Patient	Month	Mixed/Neutral comments received
14	October	I have put good because the drivers were helpful but although I think the rules of travel is ridiculous, I can understand the pressure the service is under I object strongly to the fact that I am 92 and requested my sister should be able to come with me. I was told she would have to make her own way there (Lister). Which meant I could go free & she would have to pay for a taxi - she is 86.
23	November	Very good, usually, but I have been left until 7.00 a couple of times.

Patient	Month	Negative comments received
3	November	I was left waiting at St Albans Hospital for 3 hours trying to find out when a driver would pick me up for a return trip to Watford. I became ill and needed to get home so I tried to call several times to cancel the booking. I contacted my local cab company and was home within the hour. Since then I've tried to call many times to cancel the booking and have been left holding on each time. This final call I made about 20 minutes ago I was left holding and finally the phone went dead. This is in addition to another unsuccessful experience on Friday 10 November 2023 which resulted in my missing the time for my appointment as nobody came for me. I had to cancel my appointment and then cancelled my transport booking. Only to be telephoned that afternoon to find out where I was as the driver was at the hospital waiting for me! Absolutely appalling!
13	October	The ambulance technicians had little or no empathy and were abrupt. They made us feel like we were an inconvenience to their life.



Patient	Month	Negative comments received
28	December	While I was waiting in transport dept it was freezing cold I had a sleeveless top on and no one gave me a blanket, I was shaking like a leaf, I had not eaten either, my daughter rang and said to transport I had not eaten nothing they told her they had given me food when they didn't, why lie?

### Are you the patient?

Overall, 30 (73.2%) of the 41 respondents who answered the above question advised that they were the patient. 11 respondents (26.8%) advised that they were answering on behalf of the patient. The remaining respondents did not complete this question.

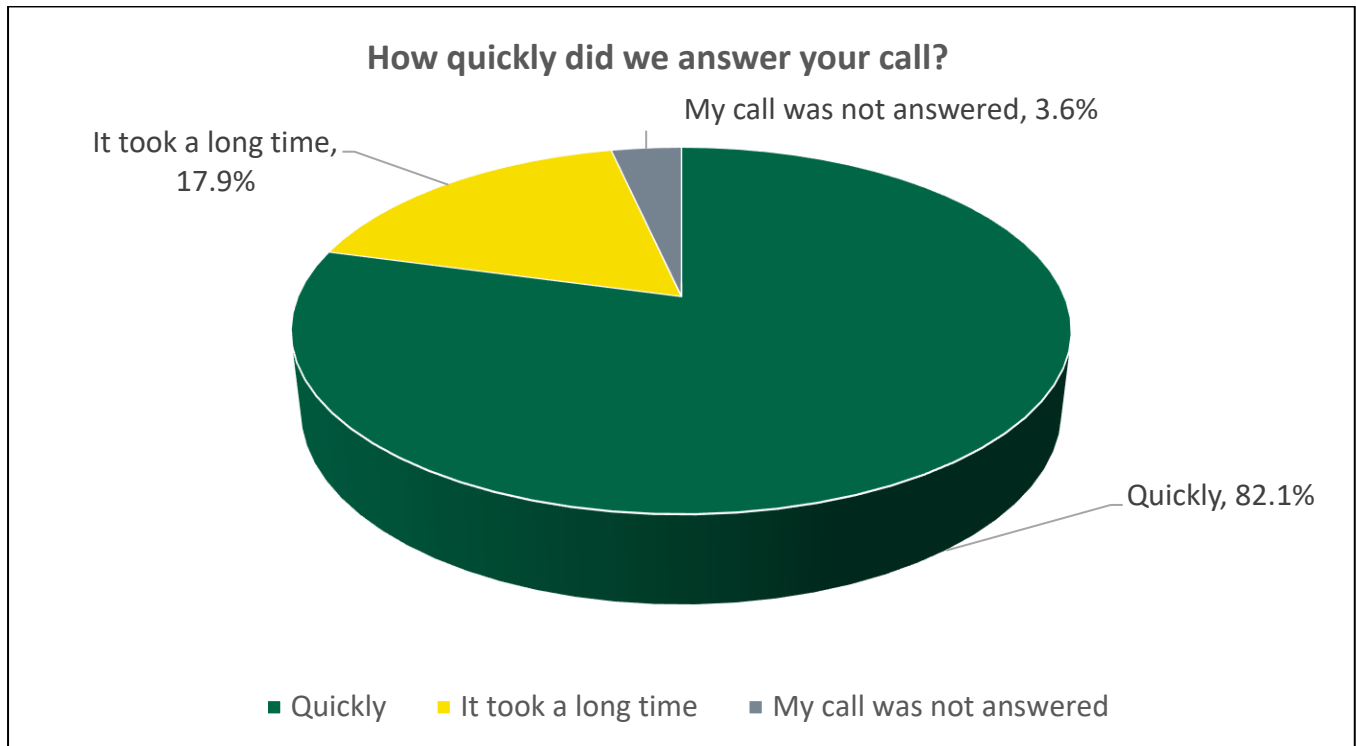
Example of responses from the respondents who answered on behalf of the patient:

“Wife.” (Patient 6 and 48, October)

“Carer.” (Patient 43 and 45, December)

“Son.” (Patient 16, November and Patient 34, December)

## How quickly did we answer your call?



Of the 28 respondents who answered the above question, 23 (82.1%) recalled their call to the PTS as being answered 'quickly.' However, five respondents (17.9%) felt that it took either 'a long time' (14.3%) or their 'call was not answered' (3.6%).

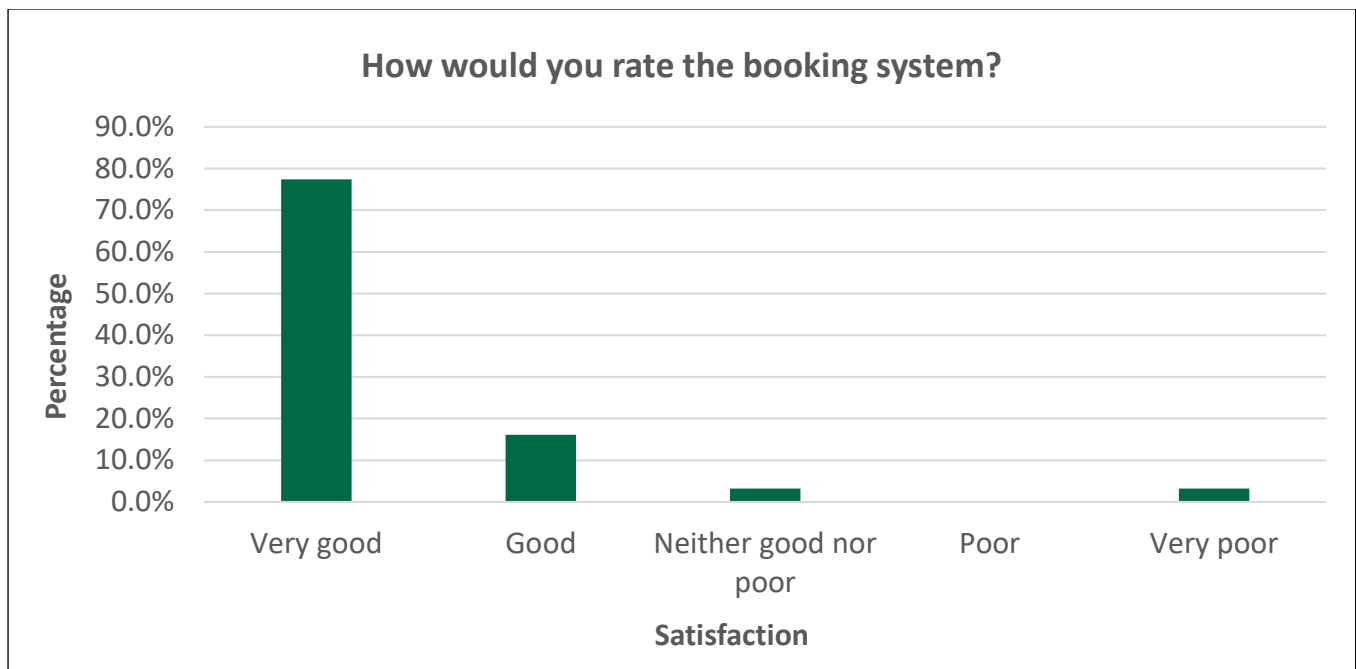
The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or were 'unable to say.'

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

Of the 33 respondents who answered the above question, 32 advised that they had been clearly informed, however, one respondent advised that they had not been clearly informed of the date and time of their transport booking.

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

## How would you rate the booking system?



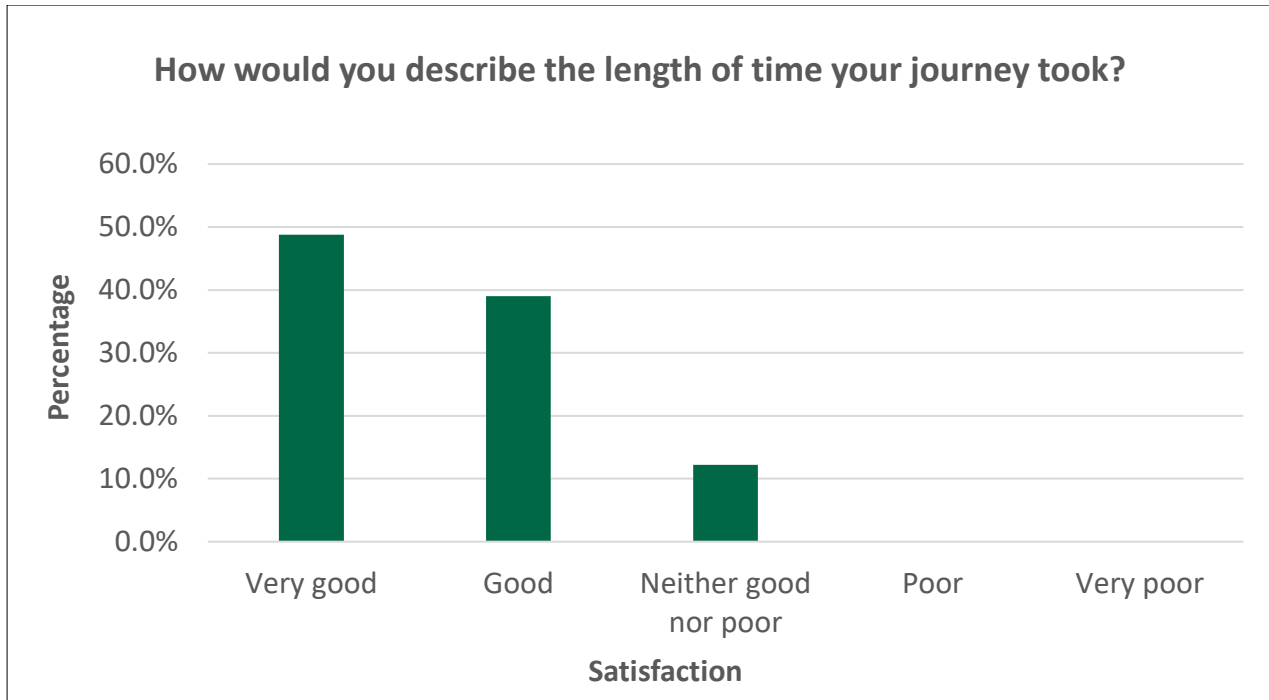
Of the 31 respondents who answered the above question, 29 (93.5%) rated the booking system as either 'good' (16.1%) or 'very good' (77.4%). One respondent (3.2%) rated the booking system as 'neither good nor poor' and one respondent (3.2%) rated the booking system as 'very poor.'

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

## Did the service staff introduce themselves?

32 (88.9%) out of 36 respondents recalled the PTS staff as having introduced themselves upon their arrival. Four respondents (11.1%) did not remember receiving an introduction. The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or were 'unable to say.'

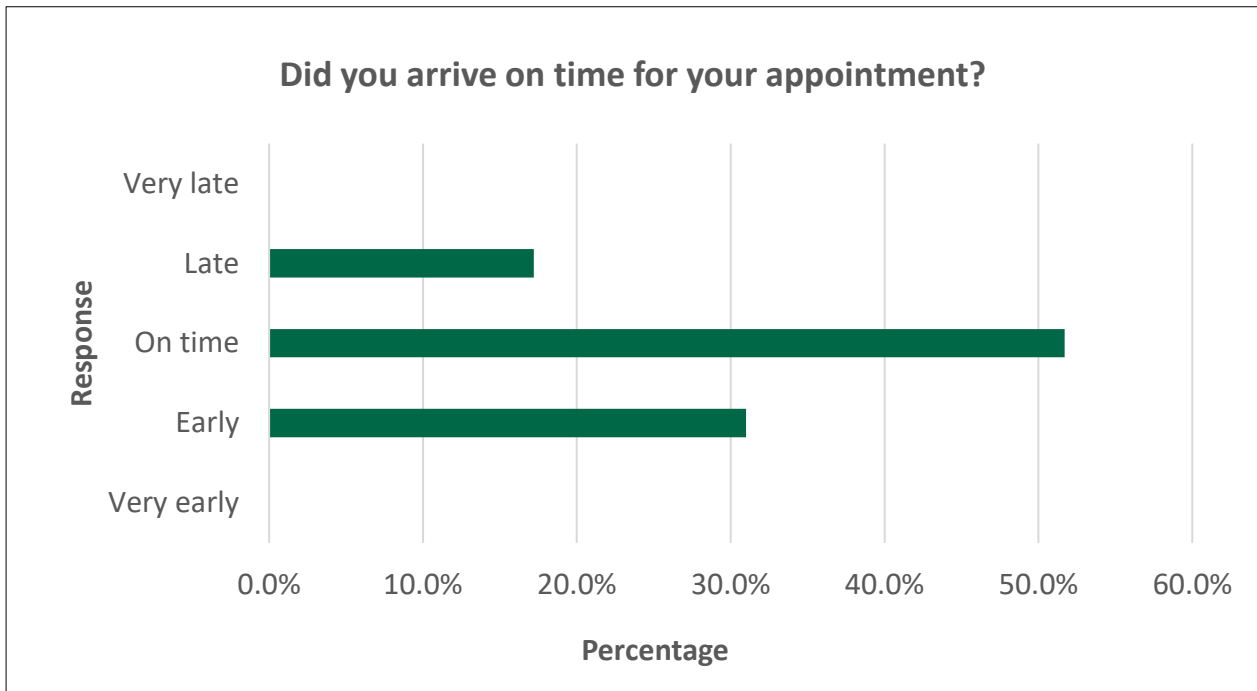
## How would you describe the length of time your journey took?



Overall, 36 (87.8%) out of 41 respondents who answered the above question were satisfied with the length of time their journey took and provided 'good' (39.0%) or 'very good' (48.8%) responses. Five respondents (12.2%) 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?



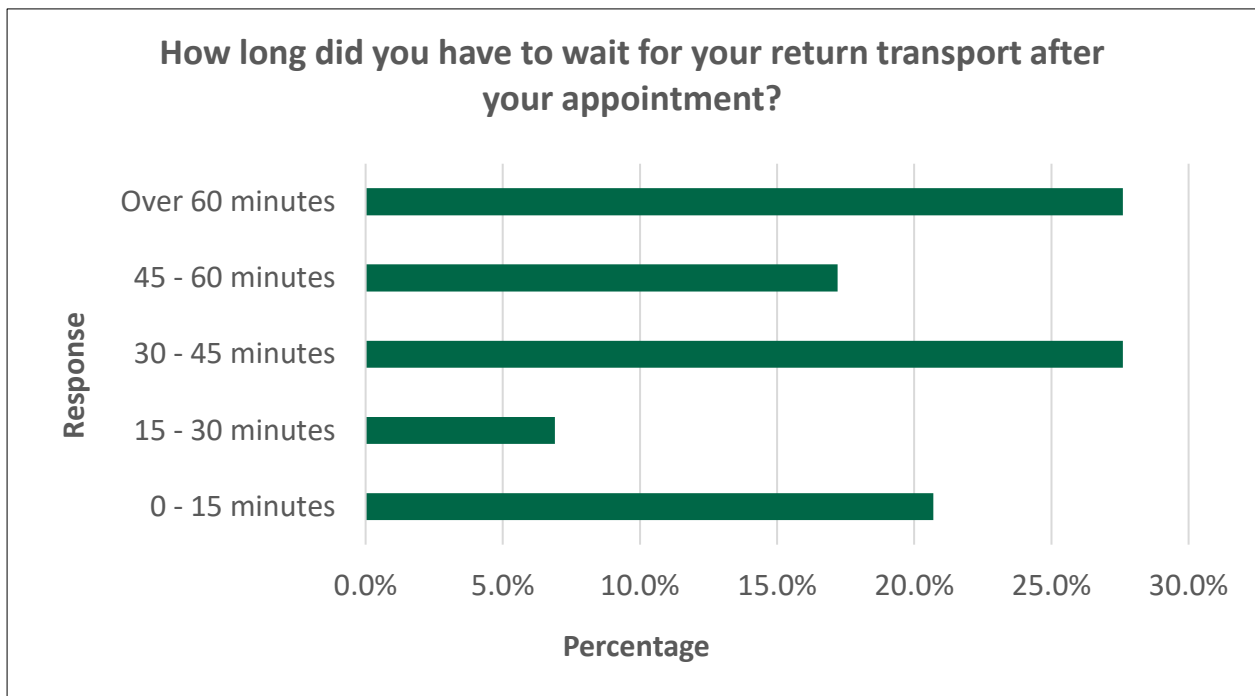
Of the 29 respondents who answered the above question, 24 (82.8%) had arrived either 'on time' (51.7%) or 'early' (31.0%) for their medical appointment. Five patients had arrived 'late' (17.2%).

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

## If we were late, did we contact you?

Two respondents advised that they had not been informed and two respondents advised that they had been informed of any transport delay. The remaining respondents did not complete this question.

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



Overall, 72.4% of respondents (21) who answered the above question had waited between 0 to 60 minutes for return transport: 0 to 15 minutes (20.7%), 15 to 30 minutes (6.9%) 30 to 45 minutes (27.6%) and 45 to 60 minutes (17.2%). Eight patients (27.6%) had waited over 60 minutes following their medical appointment.

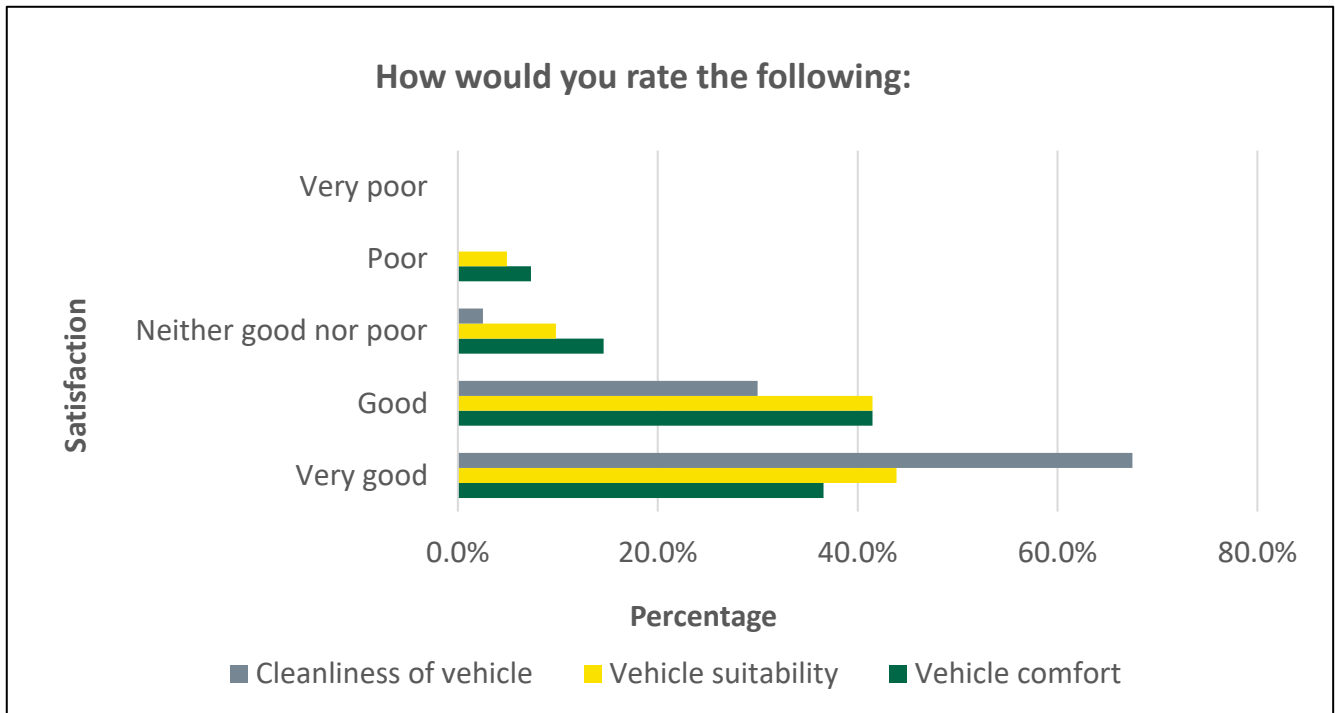
The remaining respondents either did not complete this question or answered, 'not applicable.'

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

Overall, 30 (85.7%) out of 35 respondents rated the communication between the PTS and the hospital/clinic as either 'good' (28.6%) or 'very good' (57.1%). Three respondents (8.6%) felt the communication had been 'very poor' and two respondents (5.7%) responded 'neither good nor poor.'

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

## How would you rate the following?



Some variance was seen in relation to satisfaction with the PTS vehicle. Vehicle cleanliness was rated most highly, with 97.5% of patients providing 'good' (30.0%) and 'very good' (67.5%) responses.

Vehicle suitability and vehicle comfort were rated less favourably, with overall satisfaction scores of 85.4% and 78.0% respectively.

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

## How would you describe the attitude of the staff?

Overall, 40 respondents who answered the above question rated staff as 'good' (11.9%) or 'excellent' (83.3%) and two respondents (4.8%) described the attitude of the staff as 'poor.'

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

## **Did the staff treat you with dignity and respect?**

Of the 42 respondents who answered the above question, 40 recalled being treated with dignity and respect. Two respondents felt that they were not treated with dignity and respect.

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

## **Did the service staff drive safely?**

All 40 respondents who answered the above question felt that the PTS staff had driven safely.

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

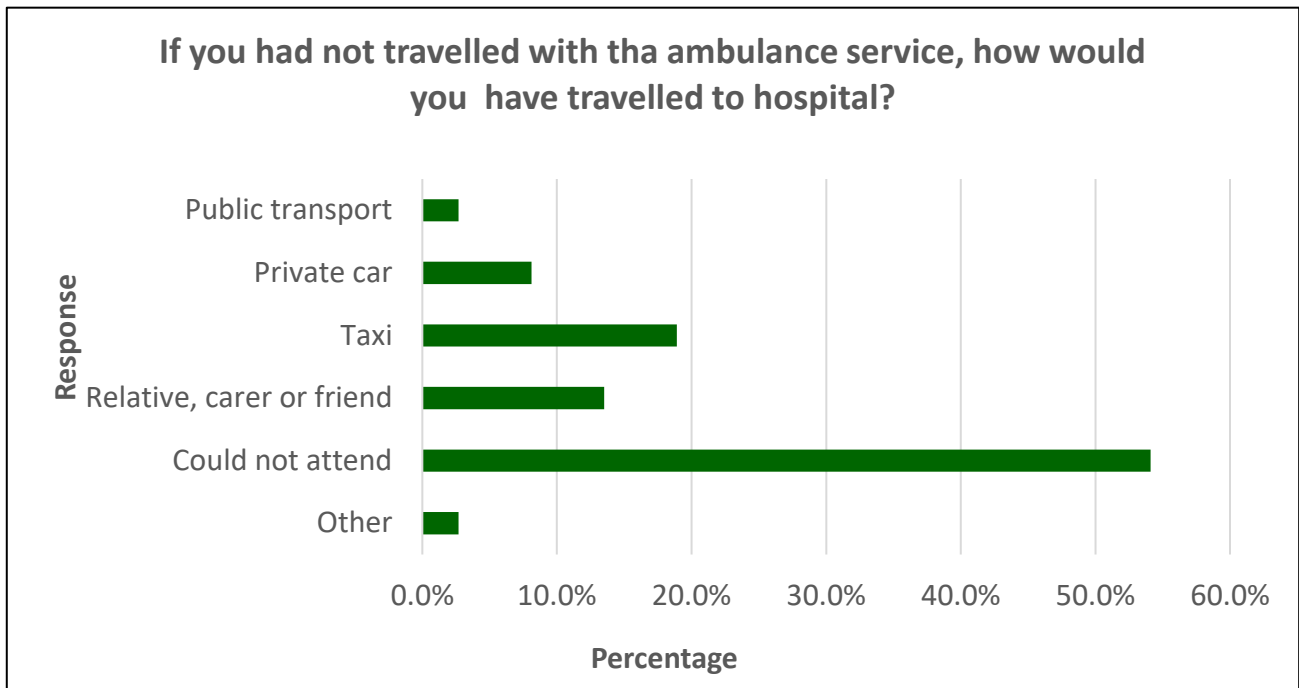
## **Did the staff offer assistance if required?**

Overall, 40 respondents (97.6%) who answered the above question advised that assistance had been offered, one respondent advised that they had not received assistance (2.4%).

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



**If you had not travelled with the ambulance service, how would you have travelled to hospital?** (All answer types are listed, some multiple answers)

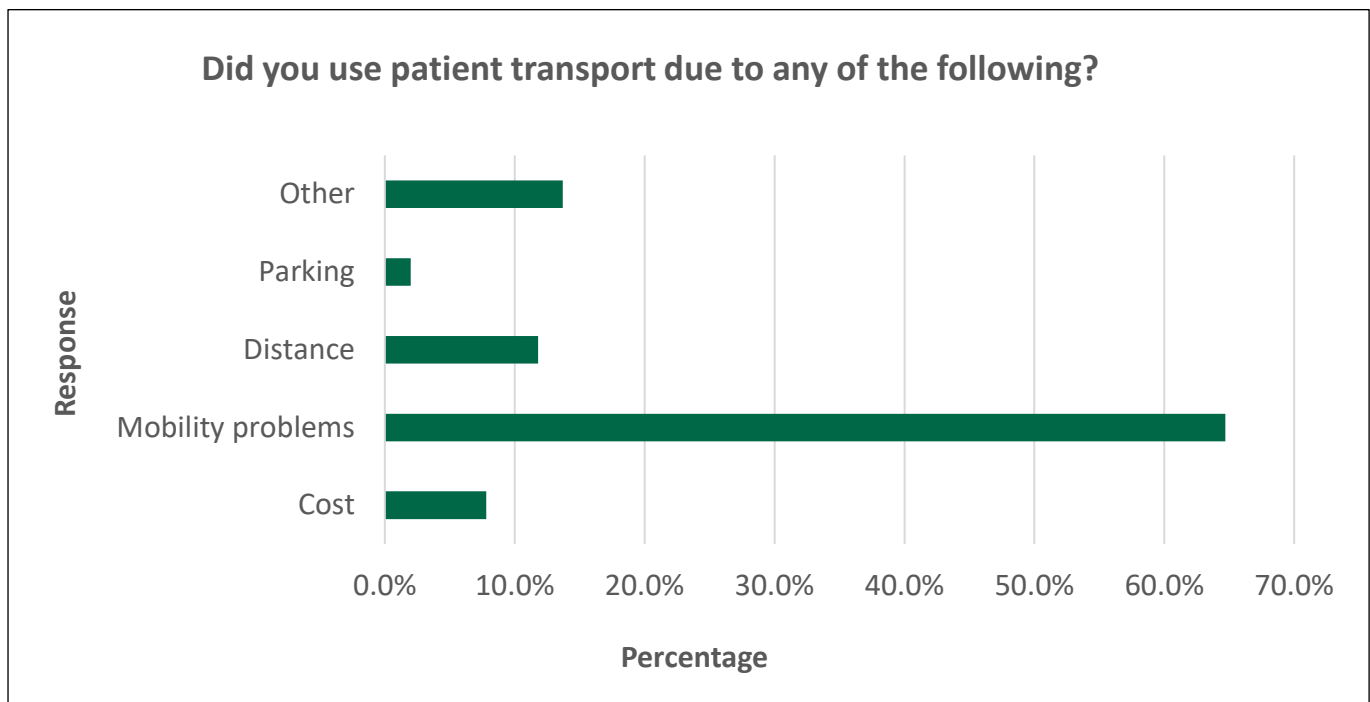


Various responses were provided in relation to how the patient would have travelled to hospital had transport not been provided.

20 (54.1%) out of 37 respondents advised that they could not have attended their appointment. Other responses included: 'taxi' (18.9%), 'relative, carer or friend' (13.5%), 'public transport' (2.7%), 'private car' (8.1%) and 'other' (2.7%).

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)



Various responses were given in relation to the reason for using patient transport. 33 (64.7%) of 51 responses cited 'mobility problems.' Other responses included: 'other' (13.7%), 'distance' (11.8%), 'cost' (7.8%) and 'parking' (2.0%).

The below comments were also received:

- *"I am partially sighted - 86 years, "(Patient 23, November)*
- *"Called for by GP." (Patient 24, November)*
- *To ensure I did not have to wait several hours to be returned to the care home." (Patient 38, December)*
- *"Would not have been able to attend." (Patient 43, December)*

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

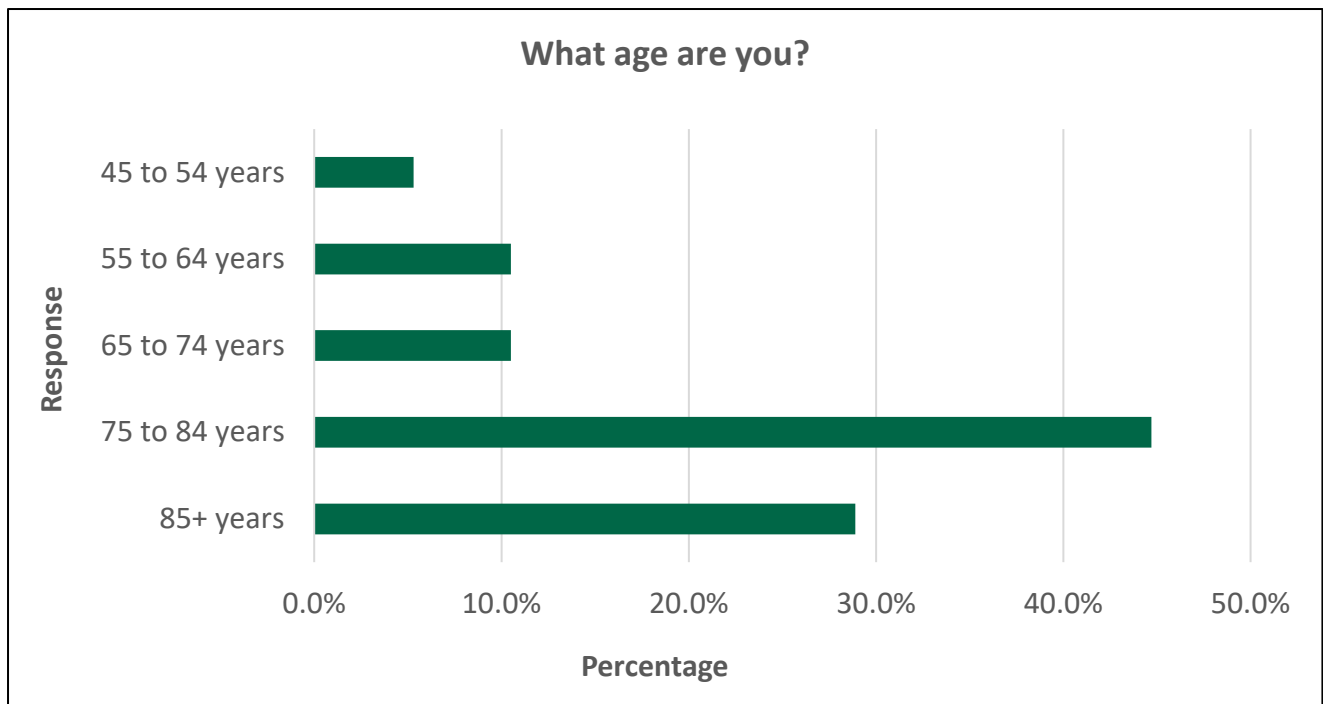
Patient	Month	Comments received
4	October	Nothing, it was all good.
5	October	Nothing, it was brilliant.
6	October	All went well. As I didn't attend with my husband a few questions I couldn't comment on. For us a very necessary service which we appreciate.
8	October	Staff are amazing and polite.
9	October	Could not have done better.
14	October	The hospitals are being organised for specific illnesses which is understandable, but public transport is not available most of the time and for distances make it practically impossible to tie in for clinic appointments.
48	October	Everything was excellent.
15	November	The staff were excellent; however, the vehicle was a little uncomfortable
18	November	Absolutely nothing. The crew were tip top, and it was wonderful to know that you were in safe hands. All the blood which came from my head was really scary, but the crew had everything under control.
26	December	Nothing of importance.
27	December	Nothing. I was brought home from hospital after 5 weeks stay. Everyone was friendly and helpful.
29	December	No nothing at all everything went smoothly.
31	December	5-hour delay waiting for ambulance was not ideal. note: we do not blame the ambulance service or NHS for the delay.

Patient	Month	Comments received
40	December	Nothing could have been better everything was as it should be.
42	December	Nothing.
43	December	Nothing.
45	December	You are already doing a very good job. Thank you for your kindness and consideration.
46	December	Personally, I have never had any issues and have always been satisfied with the way the staff have made me feel safe and comfortable.

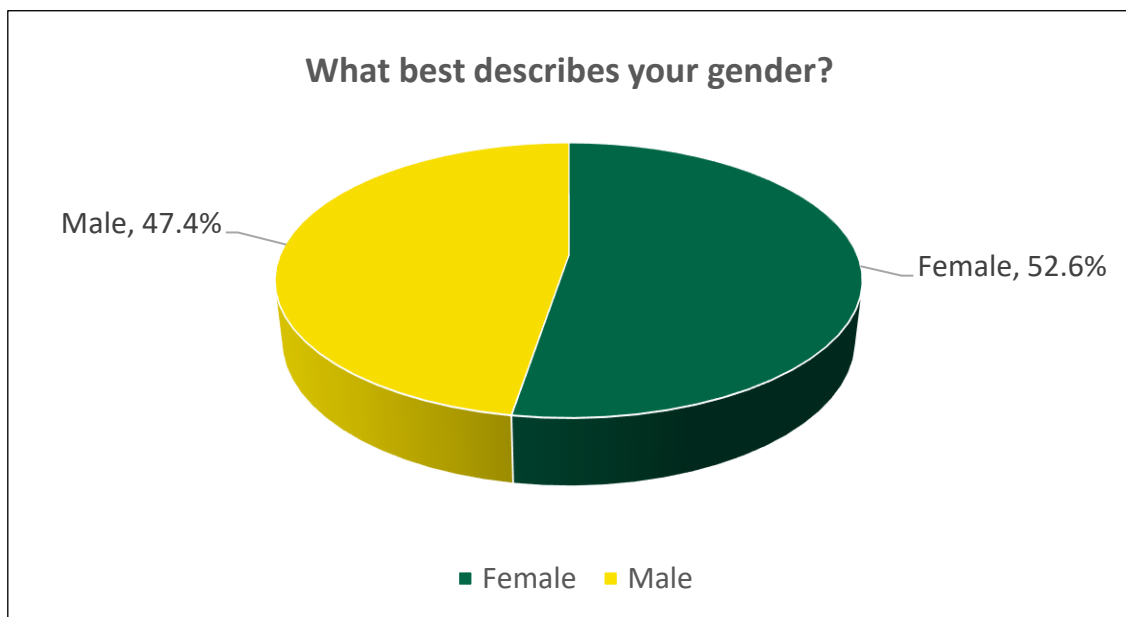
Patient	Month	Suggested improvements
13	October	Advise of late arrival and. Have staff that are helpful and empathetic.
19	October	Use private car if available.
2	November	The only reason we were late arriving at Addenbrookes was because of road works. I found the seats were small and I had to enter the vehicle by walking up the ramp with nowhere to hold onto. I was told that because of health and safety the sliding door at the side of the vehicle could no longer be used which I personally think was ridiculous. I found walking up the back ramp was unsafe.
3	November	Answer the telephone. Recruit more staff to drive and answer the phone. Adhere to your commitments. Complete overhaul required. Most unsatisfactory experience which added to the stress and strain of my illness.
28	December	Make sure patients are warm while waiting for transport in cold weather and ask if they're hungry and give them a snack, it's the waiting time that was the problem travelling to Hemel was ok.
37	December	I think they should phone you when they are on their way.
38	December	There are insufficient ambulances to collect patients and take them home. I waited alone for almost 5 hours at Lister (discharge room). The chair did not allow my feet to be elevated and the following day my 'fluid retention' returned with a vengeance. Legs and feet were so badly swollen that the doctor had to prescribe medication. What is needed is better arrangements at the hospitals to ensure patients are not waiting in unsuitable surroundings for any length of time. There is nothing ambulance staff can do if they do not have enough ambulances.

# Equality and Diversity Information

## What age are you?

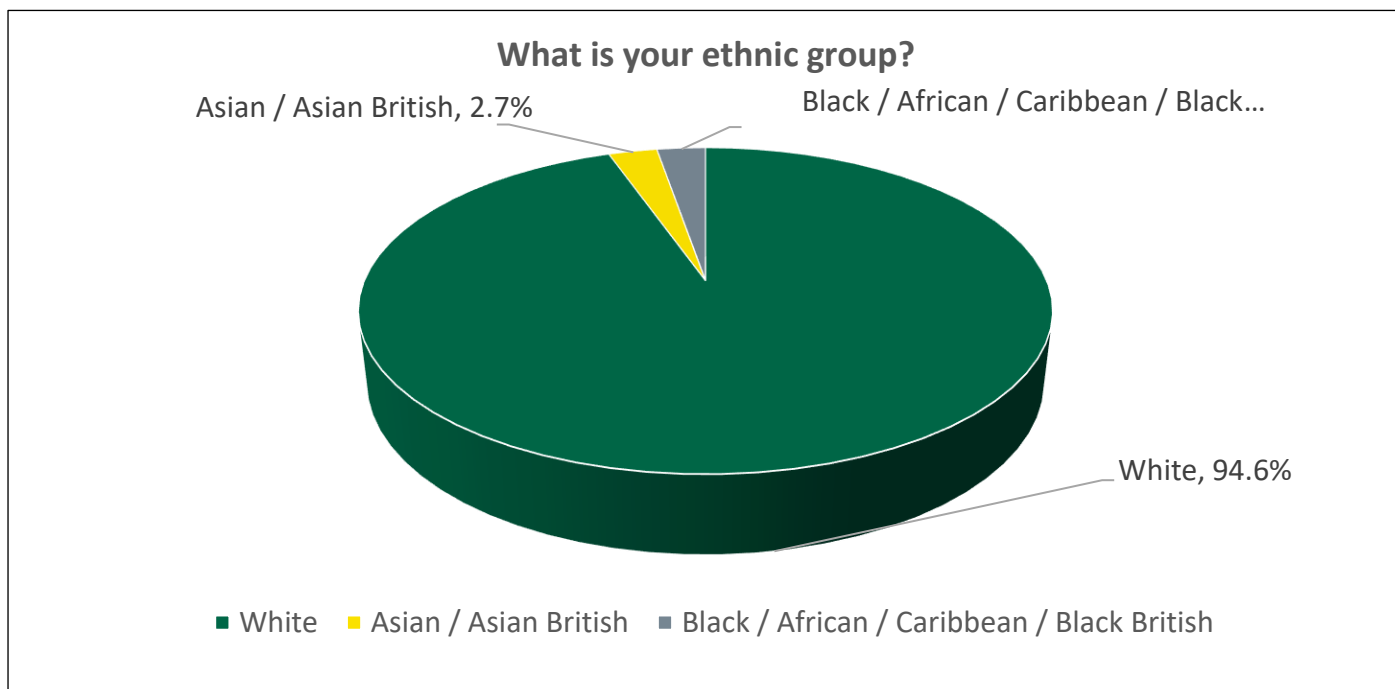


## What best describes your gender?

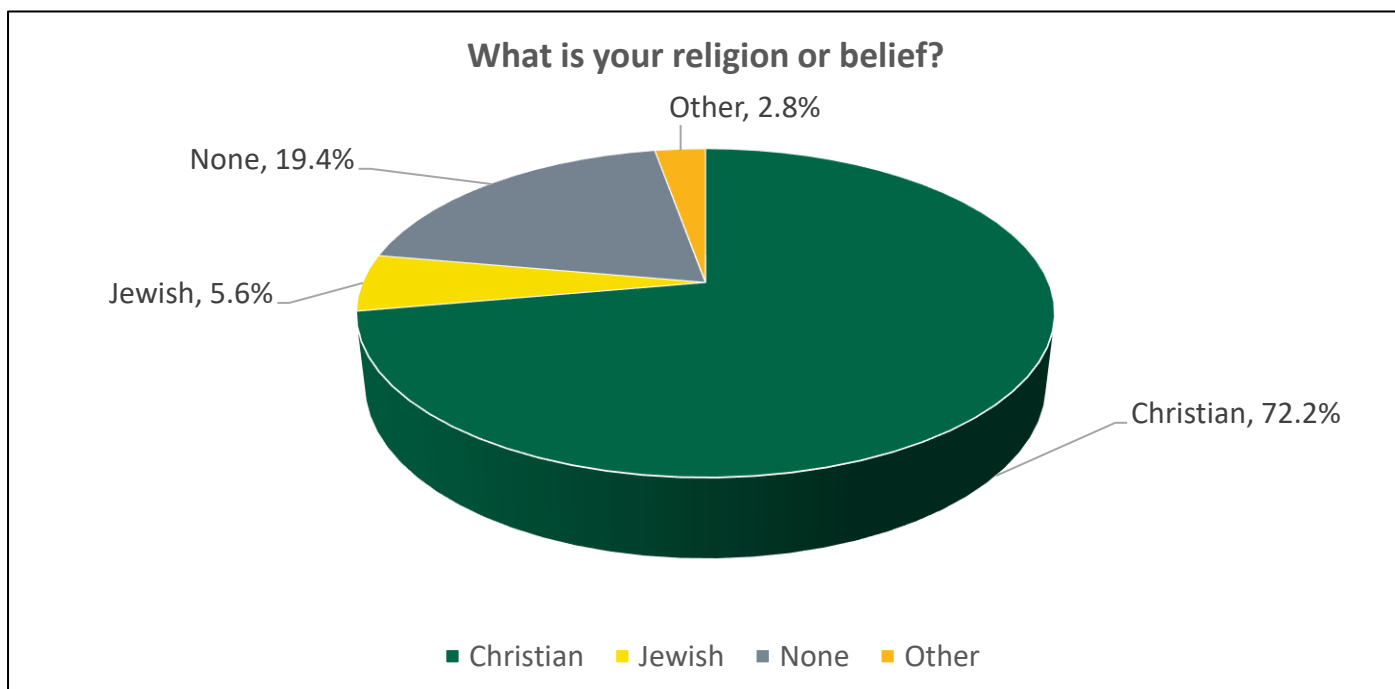


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## What is your ethnic group?



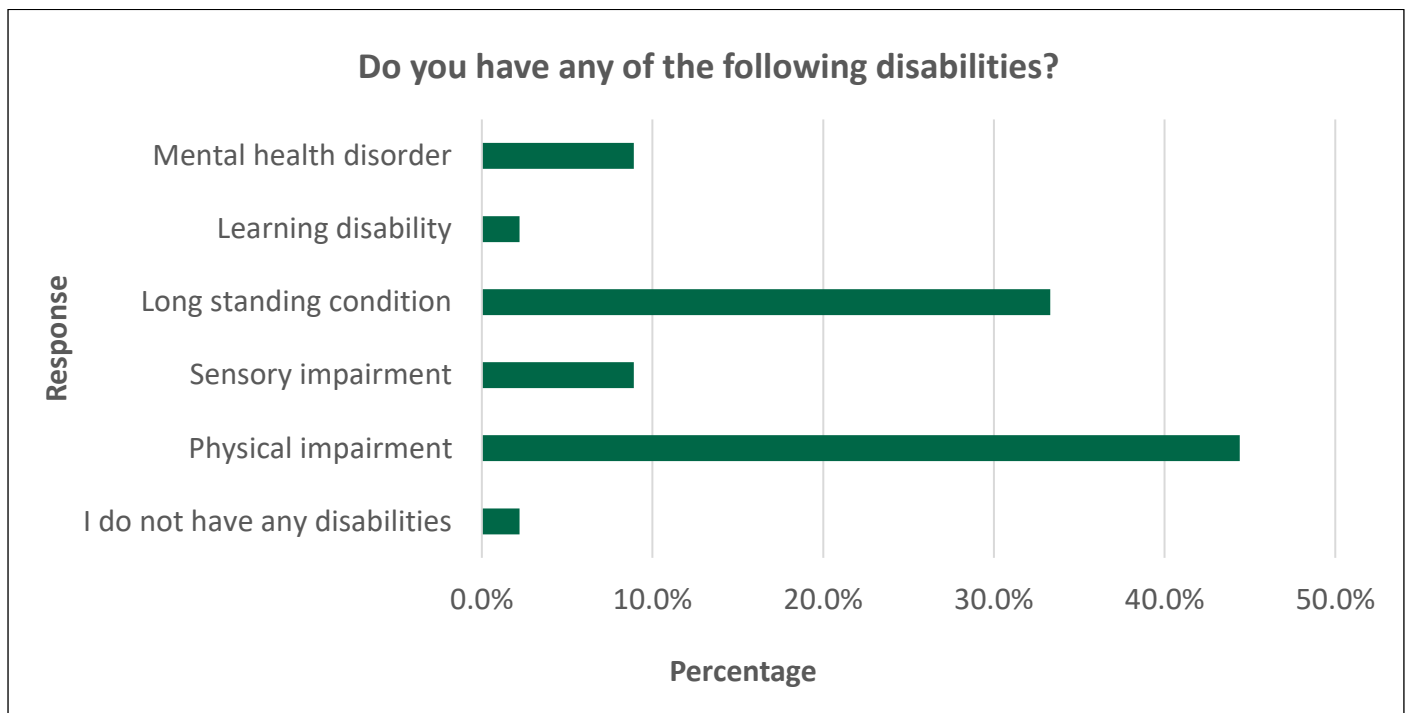
## What is your religion or belief?



## What is your sexual orientation?

All 35 respondents who answered this question advised that their sexual orientation was heterosexual / straight.

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



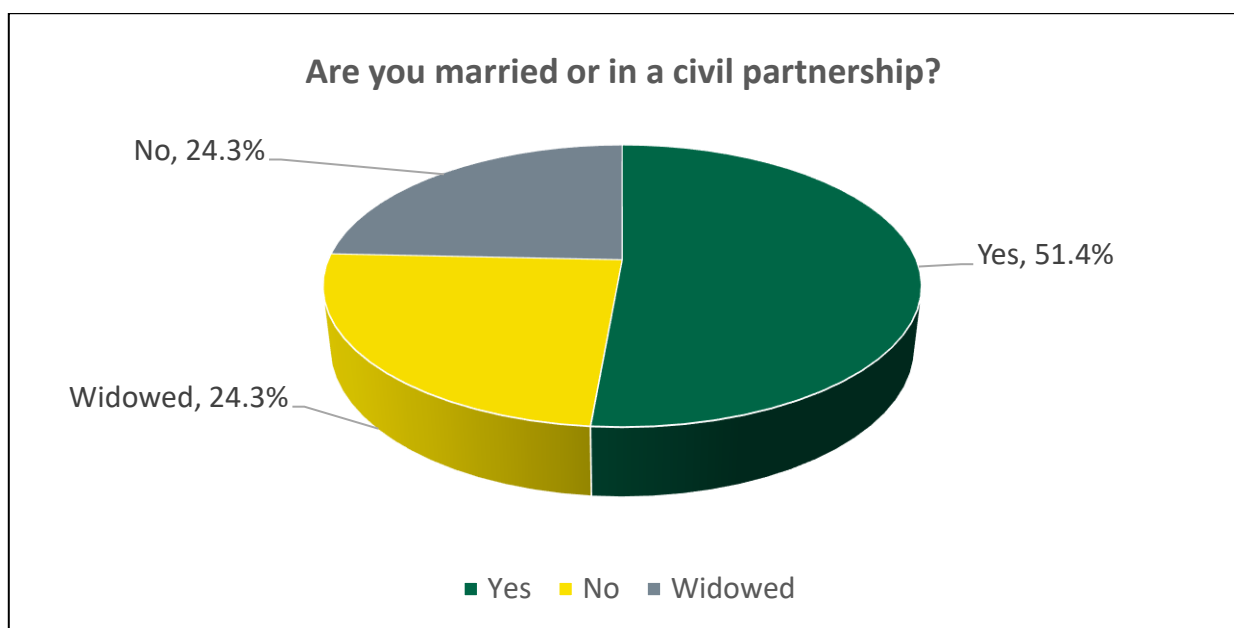
Overall, patients were most likely to have a 'physical impairment' (44.4%) or 'long standing condition' (33.3%). Other responses included: 'mental health disorder' (8.9%), 'sensory impairment' (8.9%), 'learning disability' (2.2%) and 'other' (8.9%). One patient did not have a disability.



The below comments were received from the patients that responded 'other' to this question:

- "Progressive supranuclear palsy." (Patient 9, October)
- "I am partially sighted." (Patient 23, November)
- "COPD." (Patient 24, November)
- "Cancer bladder." (Patient 37, December)
- "Arthritis, knee replacement." (Patient 44, December)
- "COPD, Anxiety, Op for cancer, Some walking disability." (Patient 46, December)

### Are you married or in a civil partnership?



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

No respondents were either 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.