



Patient Transport Service Patient Experience Report

Patient Transport Service
North Essex: October to December 2023

Author: Laura Mann, Patient Experience Manager (Surveys)

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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 to the PTS experience survey, for patients who used the service within the North Essex area during October to December 2023.

Methodology

The online survey is available on the Trust's public website and has been promoted using various methods, including the Trust's social media channels and patient information cards (which include the survey web link and QR code). 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). 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 to the above methods, SMS survey signposting was implemented during December 2023; 409 patients were sent an SMS message, with an invitation to complete the online survey.

Sample

The PTS online survey is undertaken by way of a self-selected sample via EEAST's public website.

A random sample of PTS patients is also collated each month, with these patients either sent an invitation to feedback letter (approximately 150 patients) or an SMS survey signposting message (between 400 to 800 patients) with a link to the online survey.

Conclusion

Overall, 83.0% of respondents (44) who answered the FFT question and had used the Trust's PTS within the North Essex area during October to December 2023, rated the service as either 'good' or 'very good.'

80.0% of respondents (36) advised their transport booking call had been answered 'quickly,' with most respondents also satisfied with the booking system. Respondents were generally satisfied (88.2%) with the length of time their journey took, with 91.8% of patients (45) arriving 'on time' (44.9%), 'early' (38.8%) or 'very early' (8.2%) for their medical appointment. 65.1% of respondents (28) had waited up to 60 minutes for their return transport. However, 15 patients (34.9%) had waited over one hour following their appointment.

PTS staff were generally rated as 'good' (11.3%) or 'excellent' (84.9%), with most respondents also advising that they had been treated with dignity and respect.

Additional comments received were mostly positive and highlighted the professionalism, kindness and care provided by staff. Areas of dissatisfaction generally related to transport delays/communication and the PTS vehicle design/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.

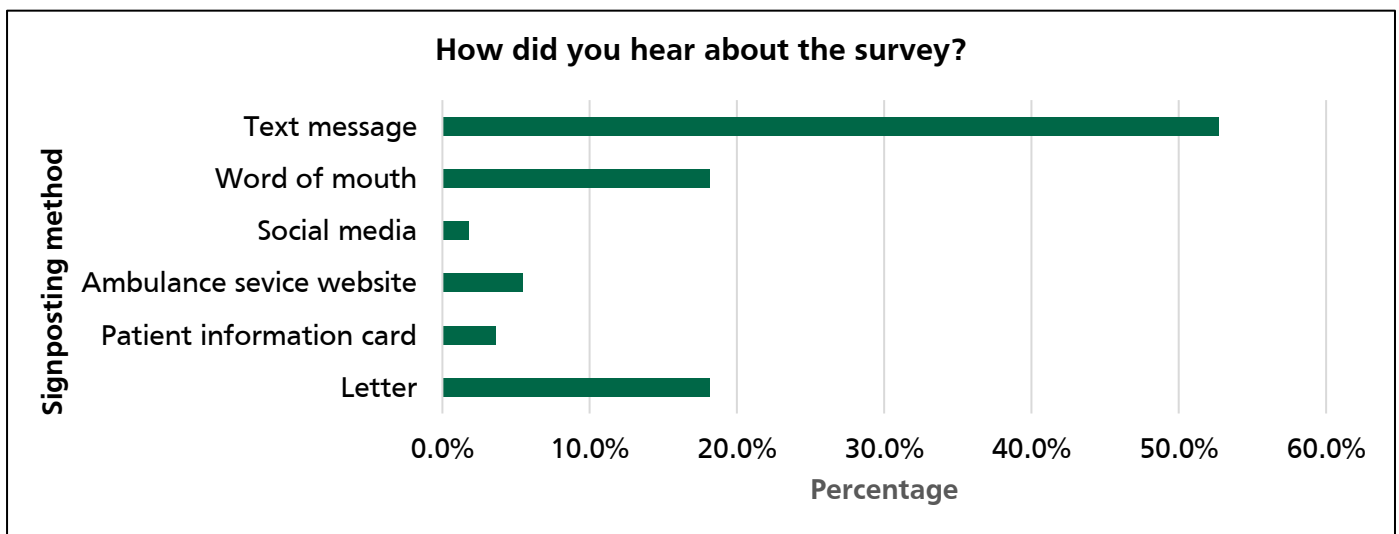
Results

Overall, 55 completed survey submissions were received from patients who had used the PTS within the North Essex area during Quarter 3 of 2023/24: October (8), November (8) and December (39). 43 (81.1%) out of 53 respondents advised they were the patient.

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' or 'preferred not 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, 29 respondents (52.7%) had heard about the survey through SMS survey signposting. Other responses included 'letter' (18.2%), 'word of mouth' (18.2%), 'ambulance service website' (5.5%), 'patient information card' (3.6%) and 'social media' (1.8%).

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, 53 respondents answered the FFT question. 44 (83.0%) of these respondents rated the service received as either 'good' (9.4%) or 'very good' (73.6%). Other responses included: 'neither good nor poor' (1.9%), 'poor' (7.5%) or 'very poor' (7.5%).

Please can you tell us why you gave this answer?

Patient	Month	Positive comments received
2	Oct-23	Everyone was very helpful, and kind and I have no complaints whatsoever. Thank you for providing and excellent transport service.
3	Oct-23	I cannot fault the service. I would award 5 stars in all parts of the hospital. Keep up the good work.
5	Oct-23	Excellent service as always and under so much pressure grateful for everything they do for me Thank you so much.
6	Oct-23	Staff very helpful. On time for collection and return. Made me feel important.
52	Oct-23	Both the NHS people on the ambulance were very polite and helpful couldn't have asked for better.
11	Nov-23	I used the service 4 times in a 5-week period which included trips to ward admission and discharge. plus, trips to various hospitals for medical investigations. On all occasions the drivers were extremely helpful and felt secure and safe.
12	Nov-23	Always on time and the crew could not be more helpful.
15	Nov-23	Excellent service and excellent journey. The drivers were so friendly too, very happy.
40	Nov-23	Very efficient drivers, friendly and helpful.
14	Dec-23	I gave the answer because the crew that came were pleasant, considerate, polite, and very nice.
18	Dec-23	The care was second to none. They helped me to get in and out of my home which I was very worried about which has made me feel a lot more confident in myself.
19	Dec-23	The driver was very professional and friendly. The vehicle was clean and comfortable.
21	Dec-23	Transport arrived within timescale given and the ambulance crew were very professional, but also friendly, putting us at our ease.

Patient	Month	Positive comments received
22	Dec-23	Staff were so friendly and helpful, they made me feel really safe.
28	Dec-23	Very helpful, wonderful staff.
30	Dec-23	Journey out very good driver plus care he had given us. Return Journey the driver was brilliant. He picked two of us up. Then got to pick up another two patients from the wards to transfer to a rehabilitation ward at another hospital. One lady was not fit to leave to go to the other hospital she should have had a career with her. The driver could have refused. He telephoned to get help to get this patient off the seat to transfer to a wheelchair then to take her to her new ward. He was such a lovely person and helped the PTS transport on his day off. This man under the stress and time he worked he needs a gold medal.
31	Dec-23	Friendly driver and perfect.
32	Dec-23	The staff were excellent and very helpful.
33	Dec-23	They were very pleasant and professional. I could not wish for better service.
34	Dec-23	Staff were very polite.
38	Dec-23	Courteous driver on time.
41	Dec-23	Staff was polite very helpful.
42	Dec-23	I am disabled and, in a wheelchair, and they were very sympathetic to my needs, and it was all carried out very smoothly nothing was too much trouble.
44	Dec-23	Staff so helpful took care of you. On time great service.
45	Dec-23	I was on the stretcher reassurance given to keep me for my comfort. Very pleasant gentleman with us in back of ambulance. Very smooth ride from driver between Colchester and Clacton, thank you very much for excellent service.

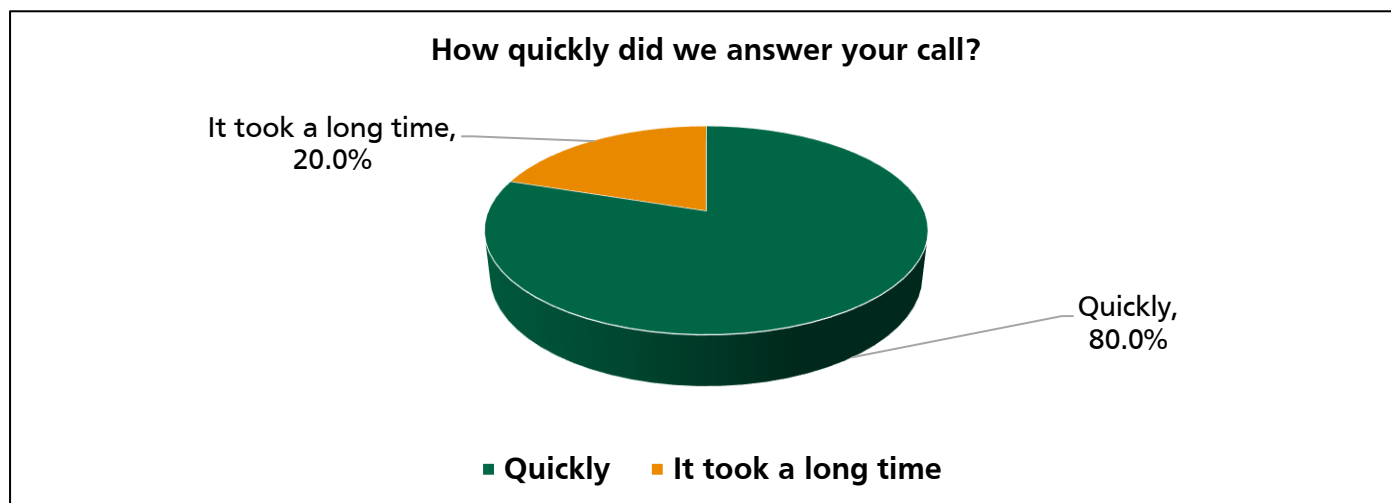
Patient	Month	Positive comments received
46	Dec-23	Operatives arrived on time and were very friendly and efficient.
48	Dec-23	Friendly, professional, openness.
54	Dec-23	Very professional.
26	Dec-23	Transport was on time, got me to appointment early.

Patient	Month	Mixed/Neutral comments received
1	Oct-23	<p>We were collected ok to take us to appt. My husband had a scan at 11 am at hospital. We were ready 2 hours before and all ok on way there.</p> <p>He had his scan and radiology phoned for transport to collect us. I wheeled him back to near the main entrance. I sat watching the door asking every driver in uniform whether they were picking us up. We were not on anybody's list.</p> <p>One of the drivers phoned chasing for me. Eventually one came in and said he had only just been given it. We had been waiting 2 hours freezing cold. No complaints with any drivers - always very helpful. I'm not sure if it may have been because it was a Saturday but assume it was an admin problem?</p>
37	Oct-23	Give us a time when they would come, and they were on time or early.
13	Nov-23	<p>My Father, who is 92, required transport by stretcher and was collected at 8am which was great. His hospital appointment with consultant was completed by 9:50am.</p> <p>However, he did not arrive home until after 3pm. Apart from the long wait to get collected for his journey home he then had to endure 1.5 hour wait in back of open ambulance on an extremely cold day whilst they collected and loaded 2 other patients. The ambulance personnel were extremely pleasant, but it was a terrible experience, and it will be difficult to persuade him to go for the next appointment in case it will be the same awful experience.</p>

Patient	Month	Mixed/Neutral comments received
8	Dec-23	<p>The ambulance crew were exceptional as they have been for the nearly twenty years I have used the service.</p> <p>More recently I have been travelling in some of the white ambulances which are horrifyingly poor. I have had direct experience of having to wait in the rain in my wheelchair while the crew had to remove the stretcher.</p> <p>Today 6th of December 2023 was the worst experience so far. In the biting cold another passenger had to come off the ambulance and the stretcher had to be removed in order to get me on. Worst still, the winch was not working so it took both crew and a patient escort to get me up the ramp and then tip me over the points that hold the stretcher in place. I have three more journeys to make before Christmas and there is no telling what further indignities I will have to face.</p>
10	Dec-23	The taxi got me to my appointment on time and collected me not too long after it was due to.
35	Dec-23	Because I didn't have the same driver coming back.
50	Dec-23	The ambulance people were brilliant providing assistance but when you have a driver in a car, they just drop you at hospital no assistance and doesn't pick you up. You have to find him in the car park which was very hard when you can hardly walk or breathe.
53	Dec-23	The service less punctual making.

Patient	Month	Negative comments received
7	Nov-23	Absolute appalling service. From beginning (pick up), to waiting for collection from hospital which never took place.
36	Dec-23	<p>Over an hour and half late for my 10-11am pick up when my appointment was 12.10pm. Then went via Clacton. Didn't get to hospital until 12.45pm.</p> <p>I finished my appointment at 1.45 and then waited for over 2 hours in A&E for transport to arrive with another lady. We were then left waiting in the bus/van for over half an hour while they decided whether to bring another patient which didn't happen as they needed a stretcher.</p> <p>The journey in both directions was extremely uncomfortable for me as I am in pain from the waist down and the vans had dreadful seats and no suspension, by the time we had dropped the other lady at St Osyth (over rough roads and endless potholes) I was in agony and then had to get home. I arrived home at 5.45pm beside myself and had to go straight to bed. I was still in pain the following day.</p> <p>The two-ambulance people were very good and as helpful as they could be but with such a poor-quality vehicle, they were in a no-win situation.</p>
39	Dec-23	Pick up scheduled was for 9.30am arrived 11.15am Took 2 hours...Arrived at 3.10pm appointment was 1.30pm. On journey home scheduled 5.30pm, didn't arrive until 6.45pm driver sent to wrong hospital.
51	Dec-23	A couple of the vehicles had issues with exhaust fumes entering the seating area due to poor door seals.

How quickly did we answer your call?

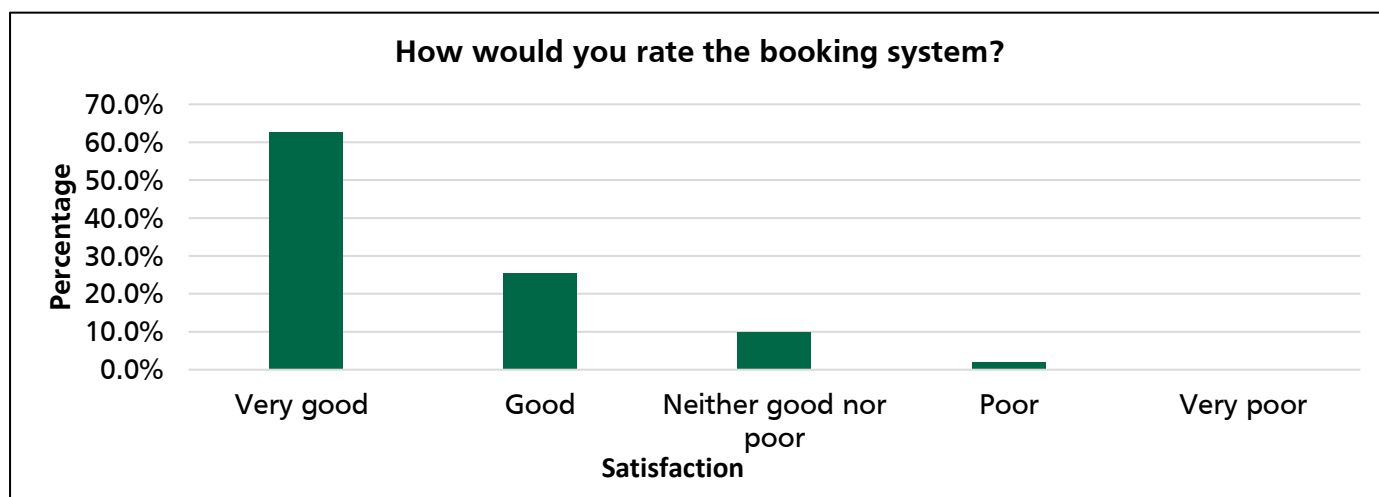


Overall, 36 (80.0%) out of 45 respondents recalled their call to the booking line being answered 'quickly.' However, nine respondents (20.0%) felt that it took 'a long time' for their call to be answered.

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

All 51 respondents who answered the above question advised that they had been clearly informed of the date and time of their transport booking.

How would you rate the booking system?



45 (88.2%) out of 51 respondents rated the booking system as either 'good' (25.5%) or 'very good' (62.7%). One respondent rated the system as 'poor' (2.0%).

Did the service staff introduce themselves?

48 (92.3%) out of 52 respondents recalled the PTS staff as having introduced themselves upon their arrival. Four respondents (7.7%) did not remember receiving an introduction.

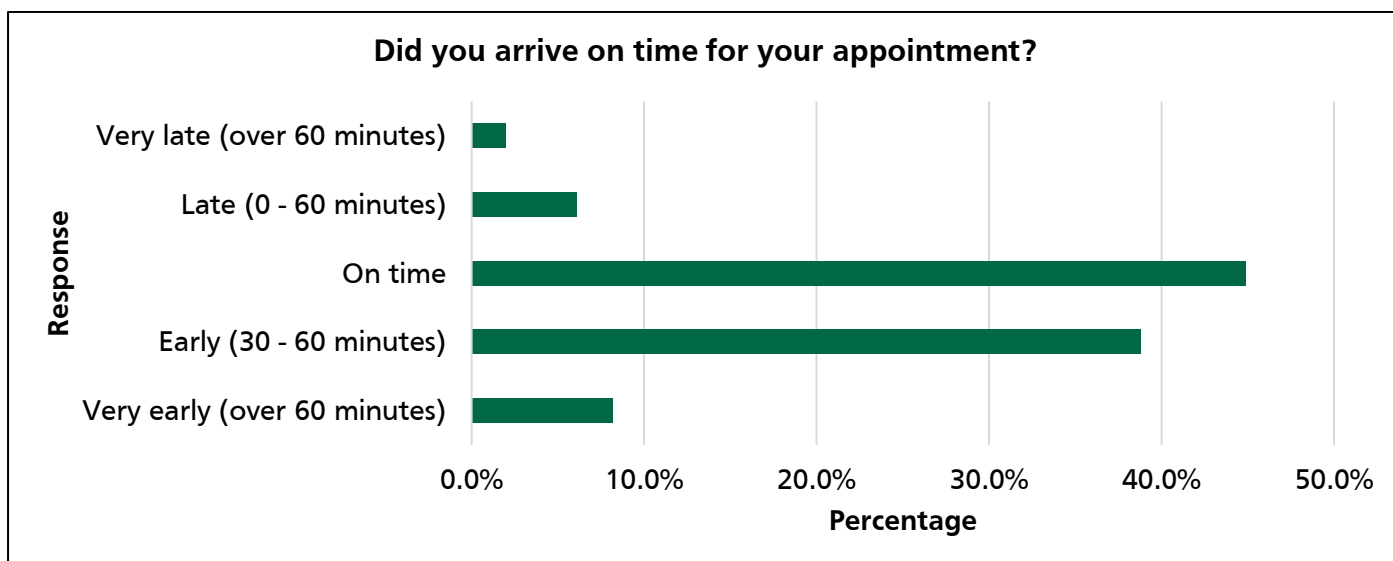
How would you describe the length of time your journey took?



45 (88.2%) out of 51 respondents rated the length of time their journey took as either 'good' (41.2%) or 'very good' (47.1%).

Three respondents (5.9%) rated journey length as 'neither good nor poor' and a further three respondents (5.9%) described the length of journey as 'very poor' (5.9%).

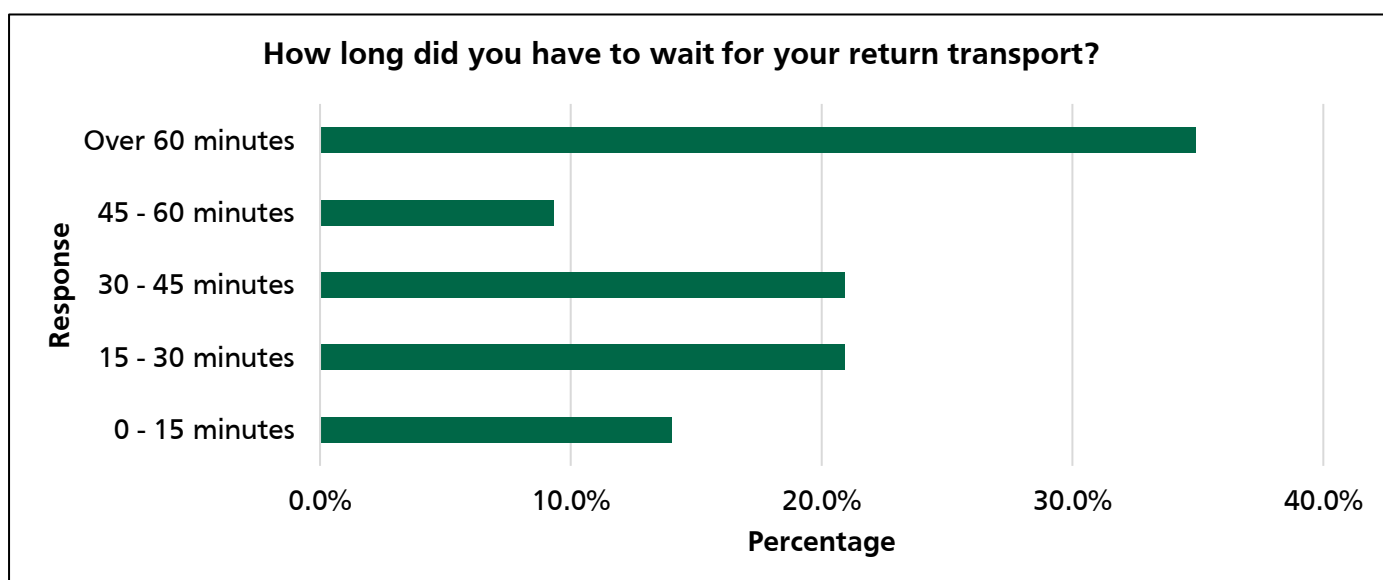
Did you arrive on time for your appointment?



45 (91.8%) out of 49 respondents had arrived either 'on time' (44.9%), 'early' (38.8%) or 'very early' (8.2%) at the hospital/clinic. Four patients had arrived 'late' (6.1%) or 'very late' (2.0%), with these patients advising that they had not been informed of the delay.

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

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

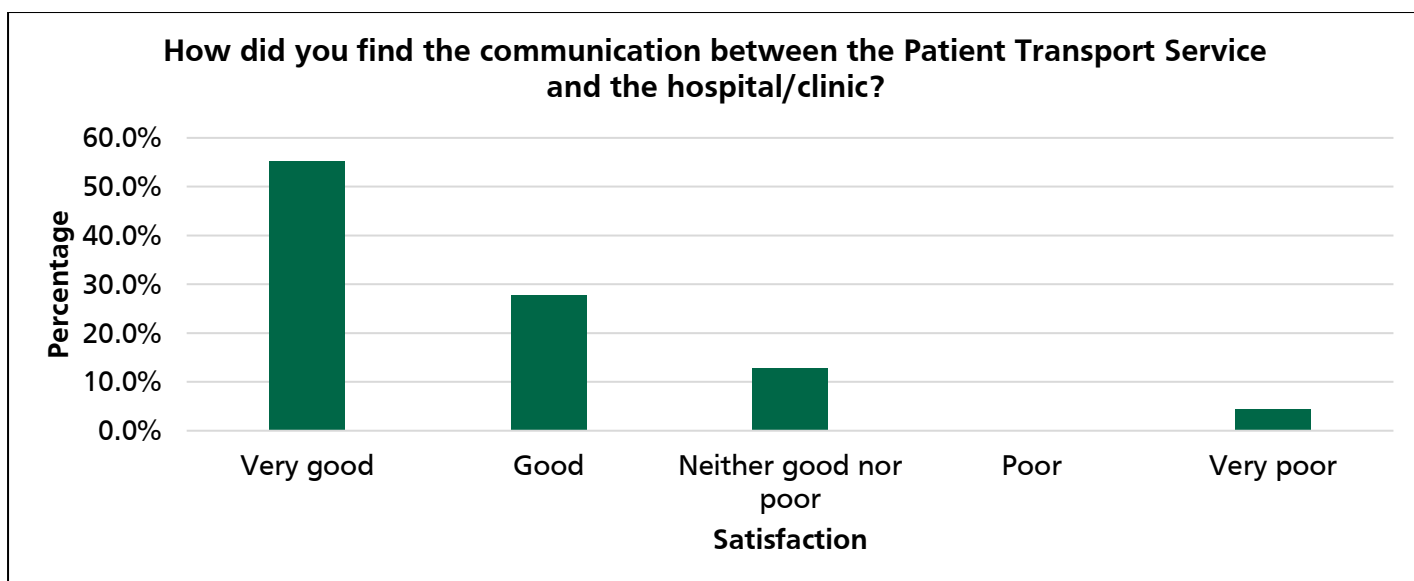


Overall, 65.1% of respondents (28) who answered the above question had waited up to one hour for return transport: 0 to 15 minutes (14.0%), 15 to 30 minutes (20.9%), 30 to 45 minutes (20.9%) and 45 to 60 minutes (9.3%).

15 patients (34.9%) 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?

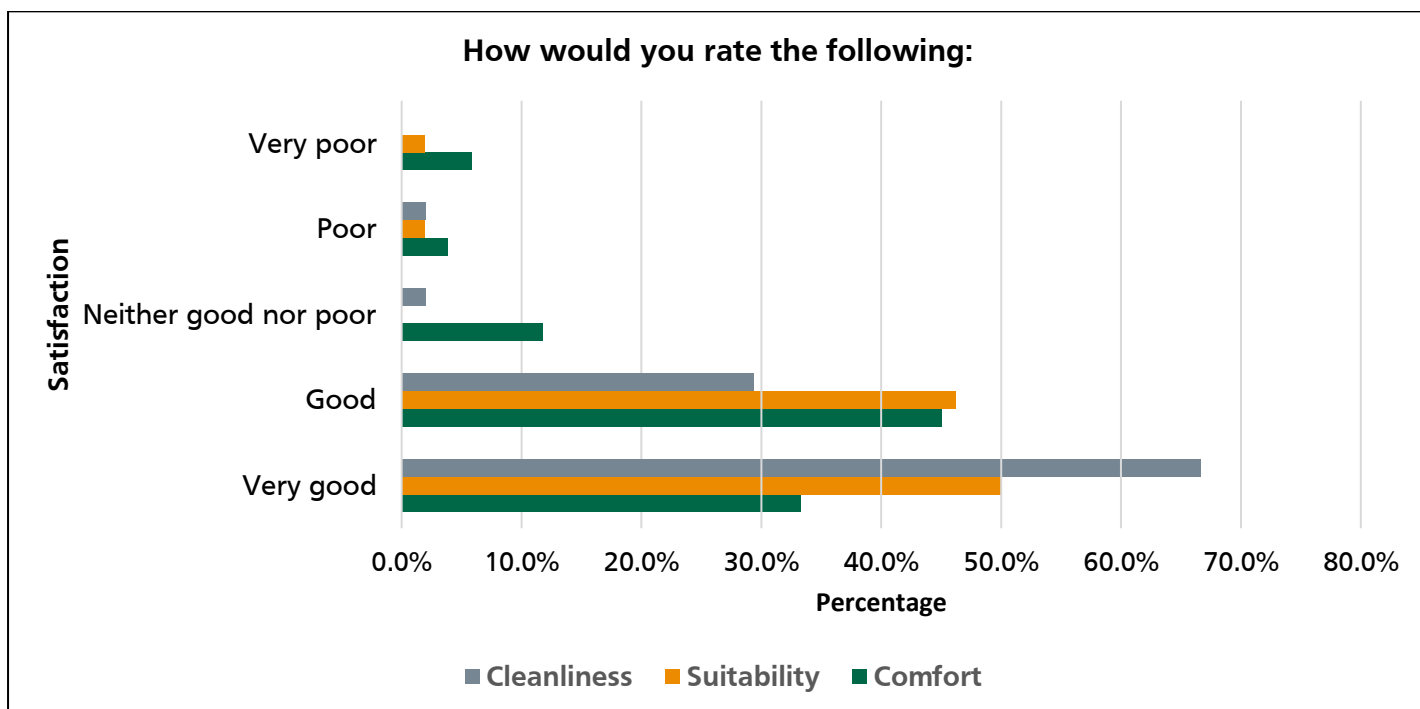


Overall, 39 (83.0%) out of 47 respondents rated the communication between the PTS and the hospital/clinic as either 'good' (27.7%) or 'very good' (55.3%).

Six respondents (12.8%) rated the communication as 'neither good nor poor' and two respondents recalled the communication as being 'very poor' (4.3%).

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

How would you rate the following?

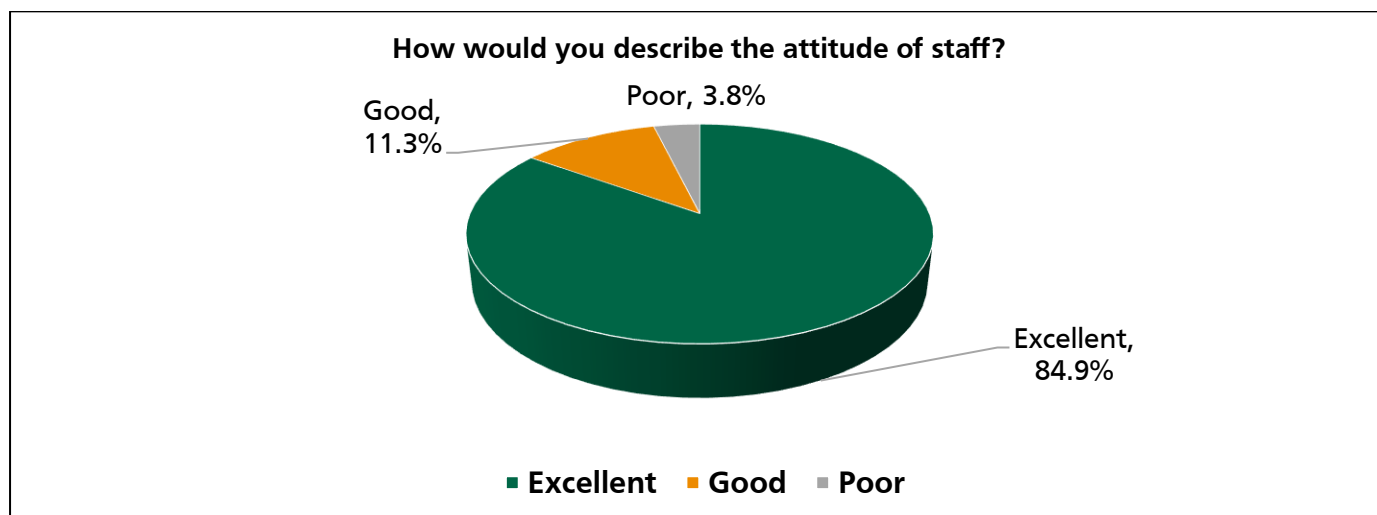


Some variance was seen in relation to satisfaction with the PTS vehicle, with vehicle cleanliness rated most highly as either 'good' (29.4%) or 'very good' (66.7%).

Patients were also satisfied with the vehicle suitability, with most respondents providing 'good' (46.2%) or 'very good' (50.0%) responses.

Vehicle comfort was rated less favourably, although over three quarters of respondents (78.4%) described the vehicle comfort as 'good' (45.1%) or 'very good' (33.3%).

How would you describe the attitude of the staff?



Overall, 51 (96.2%) out of 53 respondents rated staff attitude as either 'good' (11.3%) or 'excellent' (84.9%). Two respondents (3.8%) rated the attitude of staff as 'poor.'

Did the staff treat you with dignity and respect?

51 (96.2%) out of 53 respondents advised that they had been treated with dignity and respect ('definitely' (92.5%), 'to some extent' (3.8%). Two respondents (3.8%) did not feel they had been treated respectfully or with dignity.

Did the service staff drive safely?

All 51 respondents who answered the above question advised that the PTS staff had driven safely.

Did the staff offer assistance if required?

Overall, 48 (96.0%) out of 50 respondents advised that assistance had either been offered (94.0%) or had not been required (2.0%). Two respondents (4.0%) did not recall the offer of assistance.

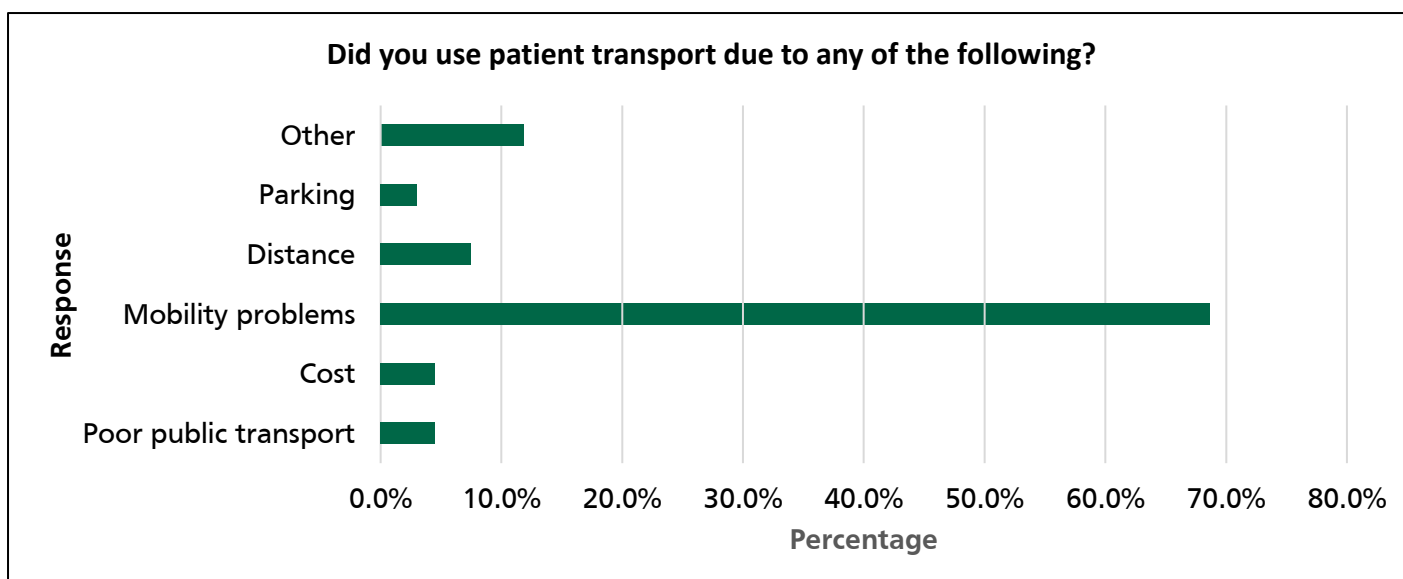
If you had not travelled with the ambulance service, how would you have travelled to hospital? *(All answer types listed, some multiple responses)*



Various responses were received in relation to how the patient would have travelled to hospital had transport not been provided. 33 (62.3%) of the 53 responses received stated that the patient **could not** have attended their appointment.

Other included: 'private car' (11.3%), 'taxi' (11.3%), 'relative, carer or friend' (5.7%), 'other' (5.7%) and 'public transport' (3.8%).

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



46 (68.7%) of the 67 responses received cited mobility problems as the reason for requiring patient transport.

Other responses included: 'other' (11.9%), 'distance' (7.5%), 'cost' (4.5%), 'poor public transport' (4.5%) and 'parking' (3.0%). The remaining respondents did not complete this question.

The below comments were also received:

- *"I was a patient in the hospital rehabilitation centre." (Patient 37, October)*
- *"In hospital." (Patient 11, November)*
- *"I need a wheelchair to get me to the ward for my treatment." (Patient 14, December)*
- *"Not sure if the bus would get me there on time, and your driver said I would have to find the clinic myself." (Patient 35, December)*
- *"Vulnerable person." (Patient 38, December)*
- *"Transfer on stretcher between hospitals." (Patient 45, December)*

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

Patient	Month	Comments received
1	Oct-23	Not sure if short staffed on this particular day in the office but transport only arrived after 2 hours when one of the drivers chased for me.
3	Oct-23	Very good all round.
5	Oct-23	Excellent service all good.
37	Oct-23	Happy with the service.
12	Nov-23	No complaints at all.
15	Nov-23	Nothing, as was excellent.
10	Dec-23	I cannot think of anything at the moment.
18	Dec-23	There is nothing I can think of I found it a good service.
22	Dec-23	The delay for the return journey was totally out of their control, major road shut for hours. Nothing could have been done better.
32	Dec-23	Absolutely nothing.

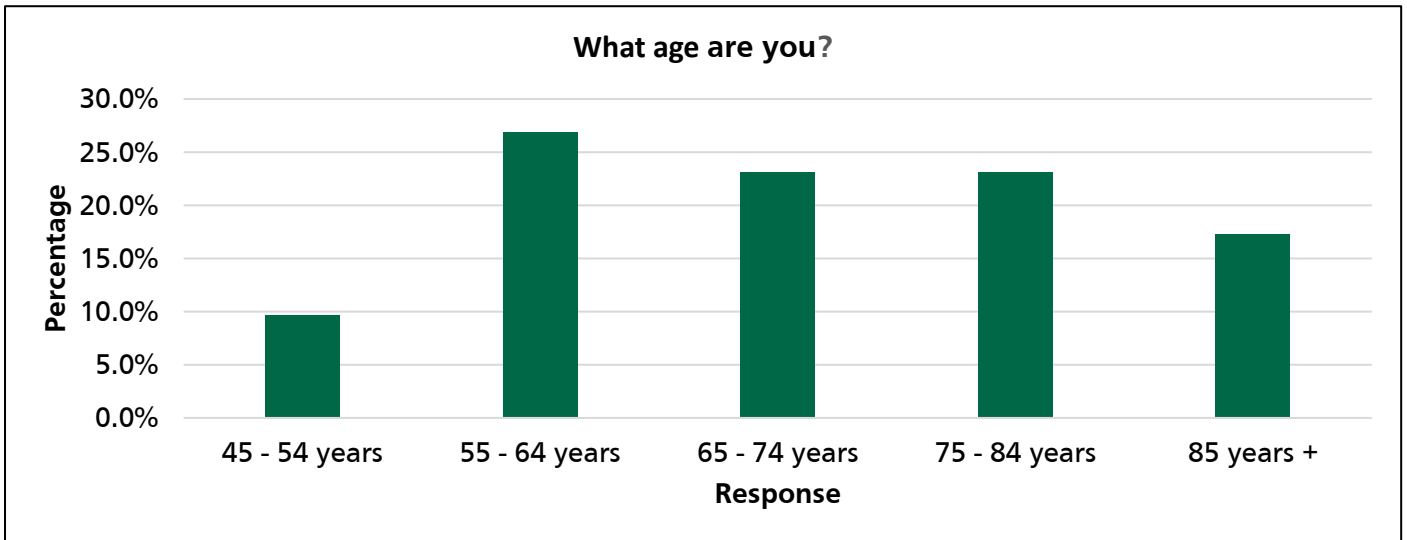
Patient number	Month	Comments received
34	Dec-23	I suffer from mobility problems and on 1 occasion I was refused transport I was unable to go for my scan as I do not have any family or friends close enough to take me. When I told the booking staff, I was told we have people with alzegers and worse but I'm sure some of those have family and friends who could of took them.
38	Dec-23	All fine.
45	Dec-23	Nothing as service was very good no complaints. Thank you for the excellent service.
46	Dec-23	Was completely satisfied with my experience.

Patient number	Month	Suggested improvements
6	Oct-23	I have to use a bariatric wheelchair and it is very low and the leg rests are wide apart.
13	Nov-23	Shorter wait time. Only taken to ambulance, if possible, to be kept warm. Be mindful of dealing with people in their 90's not being able to endure such extremely long wait times.
8	Dec-23	Please improve the quality of the ambulances. The yellow ones may be old but the white are really not fit for purpose.
26	Dec-23	Less of a wait when booking journey would appreciate knowing where you are in queue.
30	Dec-23	Just to make the driver and patient get the proper assistant.
35	Dec-23	The driver could have cleaned the car before I got in and after the school run where the children had been eating sweets in it.
36	Dec-23	Improve the conditions of the transport vehicle. The seats at the back are appalling and as you are transporting people who are poorly, not acceptable. In fact, I would not want to travel in one if I was well.
39	Dec-23	Kept information given to us the same to driver. Instead of us both being given different information.

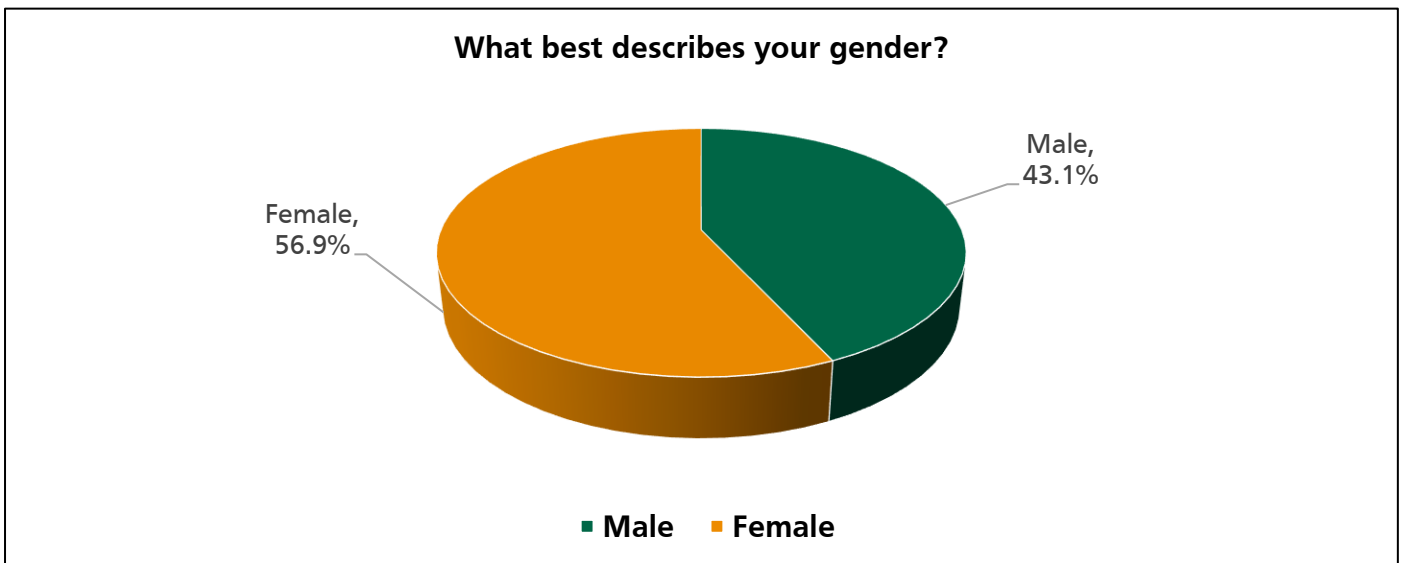
Patient number	Month	Suggested improvements
7	Nov-23	<p>When the ambulance arrived at 9.20 for a 10am appointment which was really cutting it fine, I told the ambulance driver that I needed a wheelchair (which I had prearranged with the hub) for my mum, and he said I had not booked one. After an altercation with him I finally got him to get a wheelchair for her. My Mum is 94, I am 68 and I do not need this stress even before we get to the hospital. When we finally got to the hospital the other driver arranged for a return ambulance for 1pm.</p> <p>The ambulance driver arrived (different man). Mum was still in surgery, so he left. I telephoned the ambulance service at 1.15 for a return journey home and was told it would take up to 3 hours. I then telephoned again at 14.50 to try and find out approx. when they would be picking Mum up and was told they don't know. I tried to ring at 16.19 but could not get through. In the meantime, the nurses had also telephoned and were told the ambulance would be there at 4pm, as the ambulance never arrived, they telephoned again but still no ambulance.</p> <p>In all between myself and the nurses, we contacted 6 times. The nurses then offered a taxi home for Mum but as she needs wheelchair assistance I had to defer their kind offer. I just don't know how the NHS can run a so-called service like this.</p> <p>If they could not supply an ambulance home for my Mum, then the control desk should have said. We eventually got home at 6pm when a relation came along to pick us up and managed to get her into her home.</p> <p>I cannot stress, how awful the day was for my mum waiting for the transport home which never came.</p>
50	Dec-23	<p>Drivers in the cars offer support and help you. Into the hospital and meet you. Not have to find them in the car park.</p>

Equality and Diversity Information

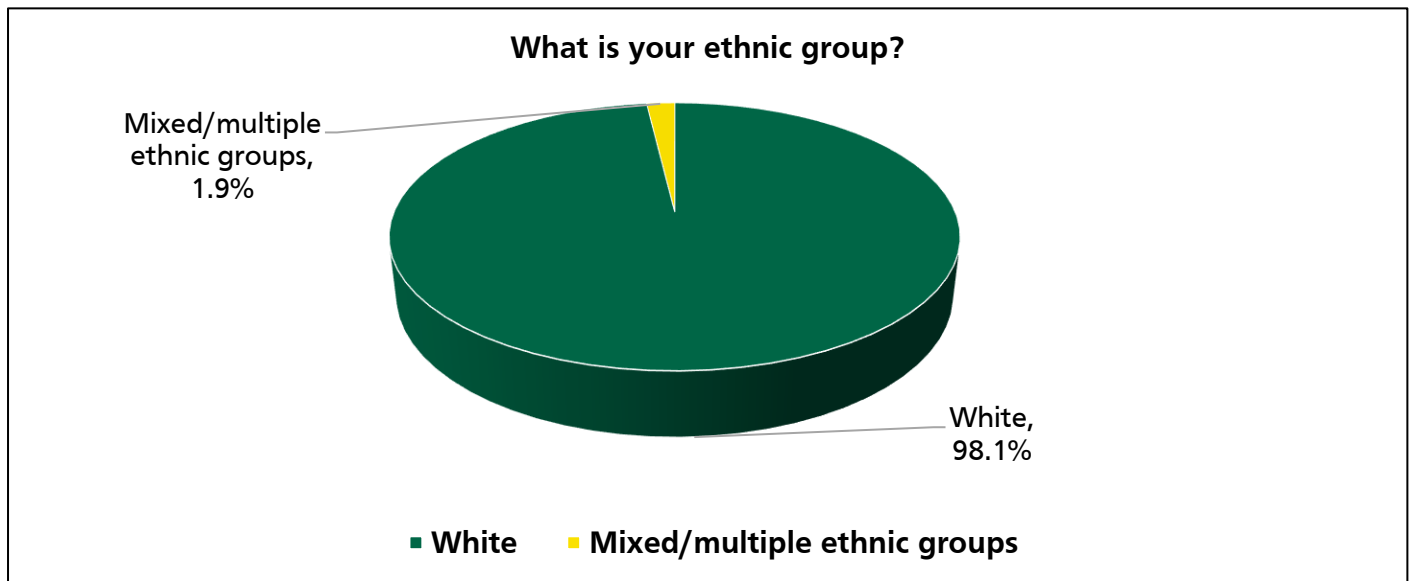
What age are you?



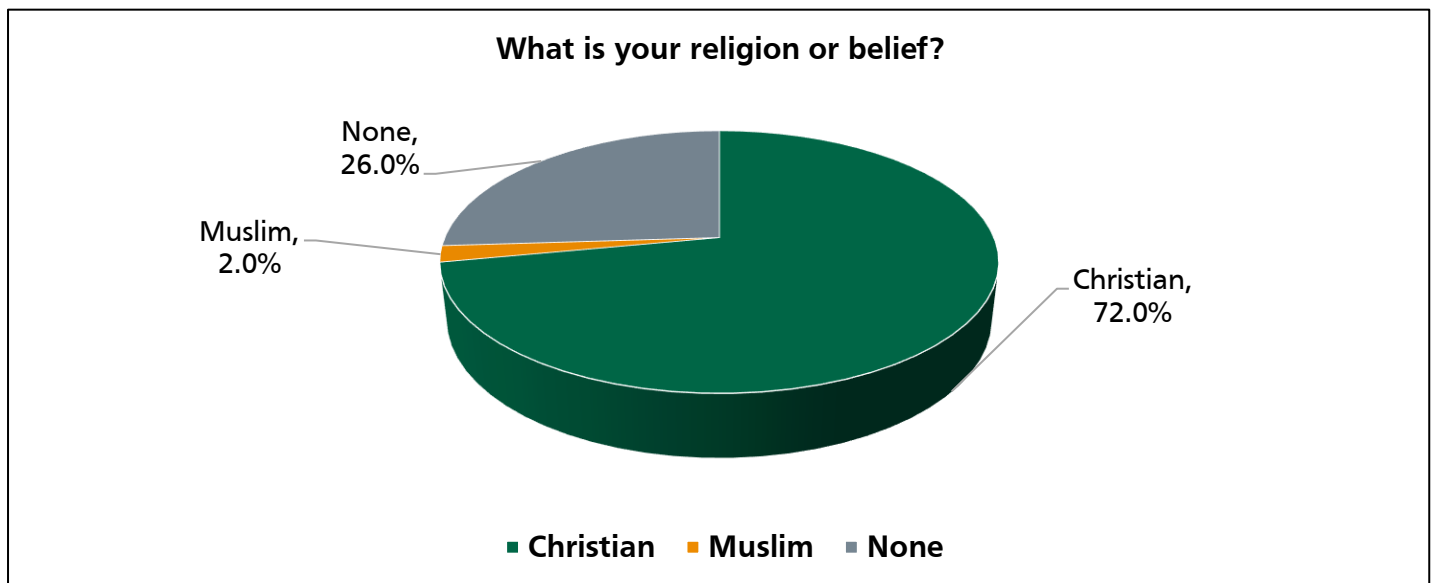
What best describes your gender?



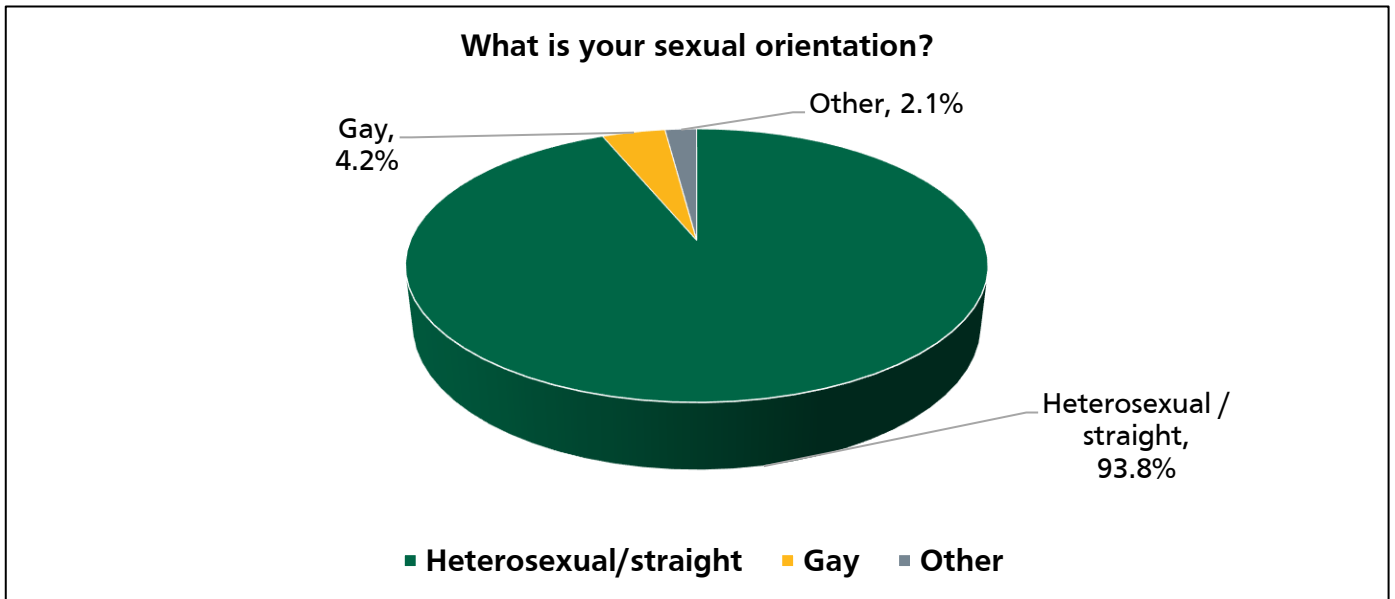
What is your ethnic group?



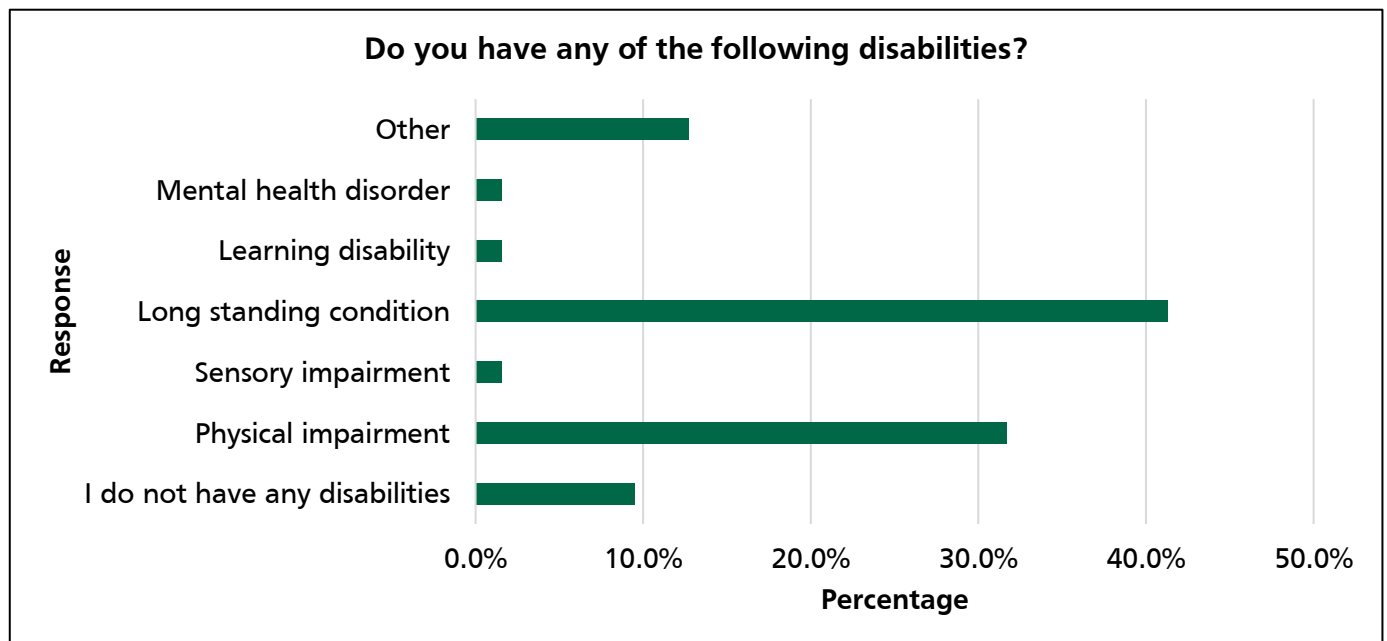
What is your religion or belief?



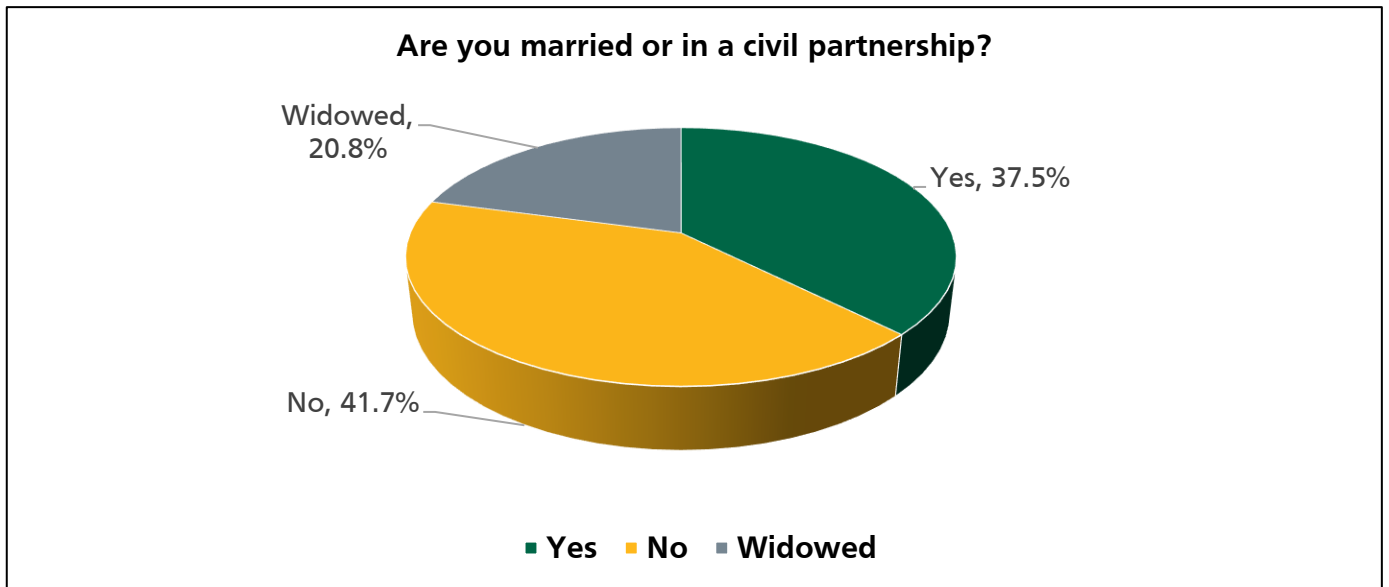
What is your sexual orientation?



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



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.