



East Sussex Roadshows 2022

Feedback on Health and Care Services
August 2022

healthwatch
East Sussex

Introduction

Healthwatch were invited by NHS colleagues from the Sussex Integrated Care System (ICS) to join them on their Summer Roadshows. These focused on engaging residents across East Sussex at summer events and local venues to talk about their health and care experiences.

We wanted to identify if services are doing enough to listen to the public and patients, explore how they gather feedback and identify what could be improved so patients feel confident that their health and care issues are heard.

Our aims were to:

1. Understand if people give feedback to health and care services and what their experiences have been of giving feedback.
2. Find out how many people have heard of Healthwatch or our Feedback Centre.
3. Establish whether residents feel listened to and/or feel that the NHS and local authority act upon their opinions.
4. Listen to any other experiences, both good and bad that people have had when accessing and using health and care services locally.
5. Promote Healthwatch to people and services in East Sussex.

What we did

During the Roadshows we used surveys to ask residents questions related to the theme of “**Do you feel listened to?**”

We also had a matrix [sticker chart] for residents to rate their experiences of different health and care services.

Our Healthwatch staff and volunteers attended these events and engaged with **230 people** of which **133 people** answered our survey.

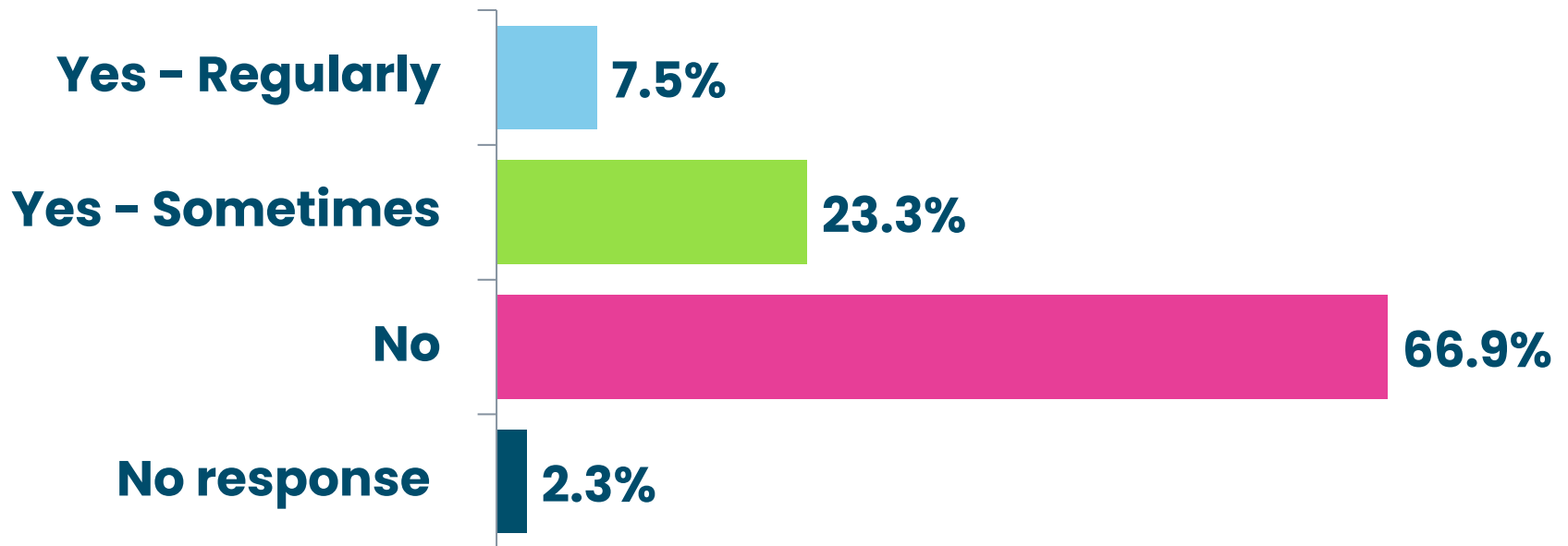
We visited the following locations:

- Peasmarsh Jempsons
- Bexhill Tesco
- Rye Market
- 999 Display Event (Eastbourne)
- Uckfield Big Day
- Hellingly Young at Heart
- Hailsham Leisure Centre
- Crowfest (Crowborough)



Survey Results

Have you given feedback on a health or care service before?



Survey Results

Have you given feedback on a health or care service before?

- Of the 130 people who completed this question there was a large proportion (66.9%) of respondents who answered that they had never given feedback.
- We received 105 comments about respondents' experiences of sharing feedback. The 3 most common responses were:
 - They had never been asked (29.5%)
 - They didn't know how to give feedback (21.9%)
 - They hadn't needed to (10.5%)
 - They didn't think anything would change if they gave feedback (8.5%)
- Furthermore, 9.5% of respondents mentioned that it would be useful to know how to give feedback.
- Despite this, 30.8% of respondents said that they had given some form of feedback. We found that most of these people had done so either directly contacting their health service or completing a feedback form after using a service.

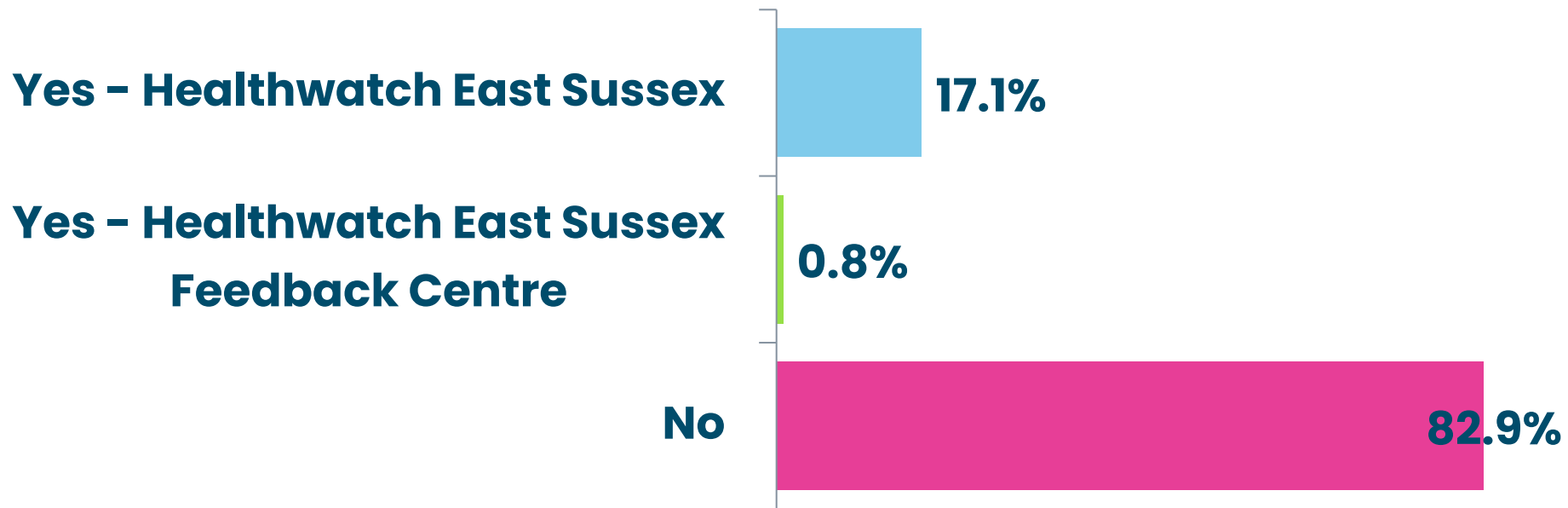


“This is the system and that's the way it is”

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Survey Results

Have you heard of Healthwatch East Sussex and our Feedback Centre? *Please tick all that apply*



Survey Results

Have you heard of Healthwatch East Sussex and our Feedback Centre?

- We heard that 82.9% of the 129 respondents that answered this question had not heard of Healthwatch or our Feedback Centre.
- Whilst this trend is disappointing, our engagement provided an opportunity to explain our role and recent activities to the public and services.
- We gave explanatory flyers and copies of reports to those who had not heard of Healthwatch before and asked about their experiences of health and care services.
- For the respondents who had heard of us, we discovered that they had found out about Healthwatch through a variety of sources, such as via the internet, another local organisation, a friend or at a local healthcare service.

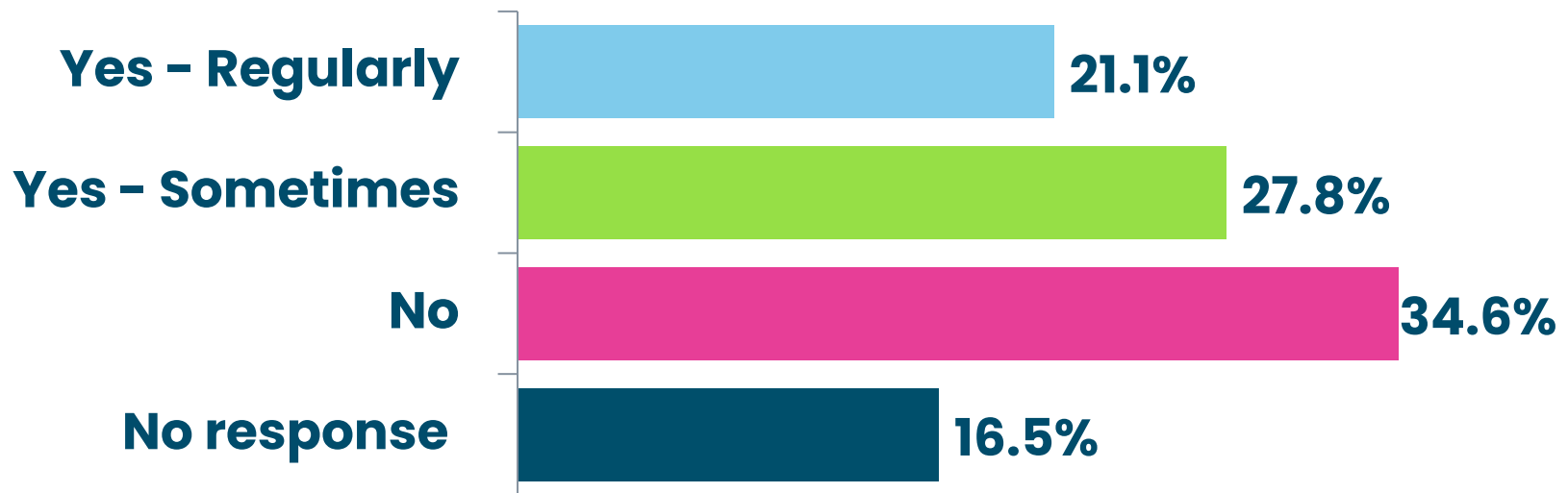


*“I've supported residents to share
their views and local health
services with Healthwatch.”*

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Survey Results

**As a member of the public,
do you feel listened to when
it comes to your health and
social care needs?**



Survey Results


As a member of the public, do you feel listened to when it comes to your health and social care needs?

- It was positive to hear that nearly half (48.9%) of the respondents said that they feel that their health and care needs are regularly or sometimes listened to. Explanations as to why they feel listened to included:
 - They have received a very good service.
 - Their needs are met.
- However, more than a third (34.6%) of respondents told us that they **do not** feel listened to.
 - The main reason given was that health and care services have not been accessible. Many people commented that they had struggled to get an appointment with their GP and there needed to be more face-to-face appointments for them to feel like they were being listened to.

Survey Results


As a member of the public, do you feel listened to when it comes to your health and social care needs?

- Some residents shared suggestions of how they felt they could be listened to better. These included:
 - Listening to everyone's problems, issues or views, regardless of age.
 - Making it easier to see key services such as GPs and dentists (including face to face appointments).
 - There needs to be more mental health services and support, and this needs to be easier to access.
 - Pro-actively ask everyone for their opinions in an accessible form and on a regular basis.



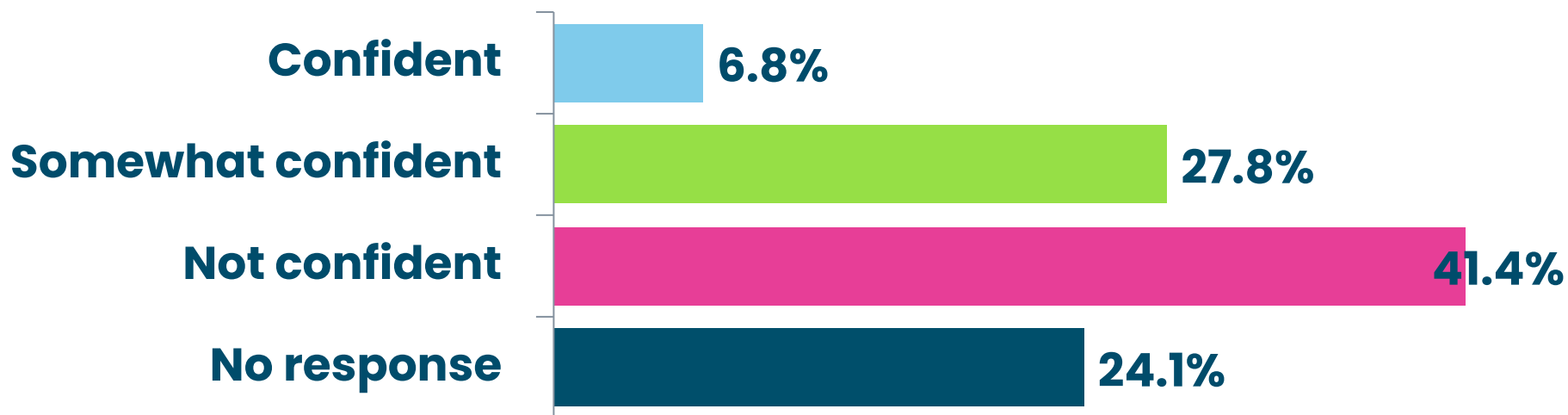
“The service I have received has always been excellent. Even with short appointment slots the service is excellent, really personable.”

“I only got help from the GP because I was really ill. If I was really ill I would get care - A&E have queues ... Some people have difficulty talking on the phone or telling symptoms to a receptionist.”



Survey Results

How confident are you that health and social care services or the local authority act upon your opinions and feedback?



Survey Results

How confident are you that health and social care services or the local authority act upon your opinions?

- Whilst around a third of respondents felt like they may be listened to, a greater proportion felt that these opinions would not be acted upon.
- 41.4% of respondents stated that they are *not confident*, supporting this opinion with the following reasons:
 - They hadn't seen any changes in response to their views.
 - They are aware that the NHS is understaffed and under funded, so they feel that their views won't be acted upon as the system is already under stress.
 - There is a lack of communication so it can be hard to be heard and monitor if someone is or has acted on your opinions.
- However, 34.6% of respondents do feel *confident* or *somewhat confident* that their opinions will be acted upon. These individuals stated that they had seen changes and many shared positive experiences of health and care services supporting them when they were in need.



*"Decisions have already been made before
you've given your opinion."*


*"You know wherever you go, you'll be
listened to."*

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Survey Results

Is there anything else you want to tell us about health or care services?

- Of the 105 people who shared further experiences of health and care services:
 - **56.2%** gave **negative** responses.
 - **22.9%** gave **positive** responses.
 - **21.0%** gave **neutral** responses.
- 51 respondents made comments about GPs. Of these only 9 people gave positive experiences, whereas 29 people gave negative experiences. Many related to not being able to get an appointment or face-to-face appointment.
- Nearly 25% of the respondents mentioned experiencing long waits for: operations, ambulance services, appointments with GPs, specialists and dentists.
- The positive experiences that were shared highlighted the fact that people were very happy with the service they received once they had gained access, with comments highlighting that they had a good experience with their GP, dentist, nurse, mental health service, care home and further services.



“We seem to be the only country that folded our health services during Covid. I’ve watched the NHS squander all my money. And now when I need it where are they? The GP phone system is terrible – why is there only one line? I am taking up the space of someone seriously ill by having to join the same telephone line if I just need test results.”



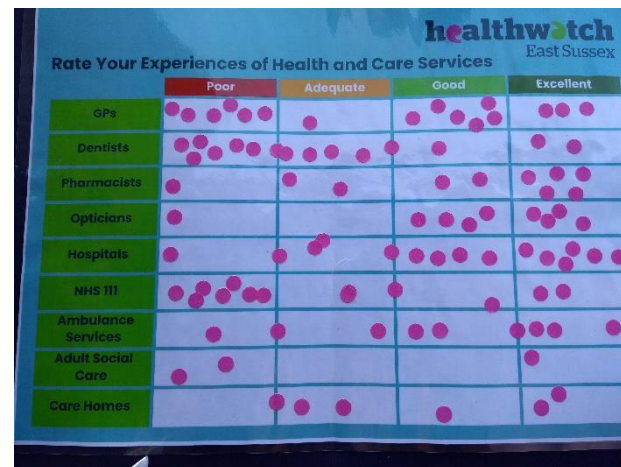
Sticker Chart

In addition to the survey questions we asked, we used a review matrix [sticker chart] for individuals to rate the services they had used, rating them from poor to excellent.

The sticker chart rated both health and care services including GPs, ambulance services, NHS 111, care homes and others.

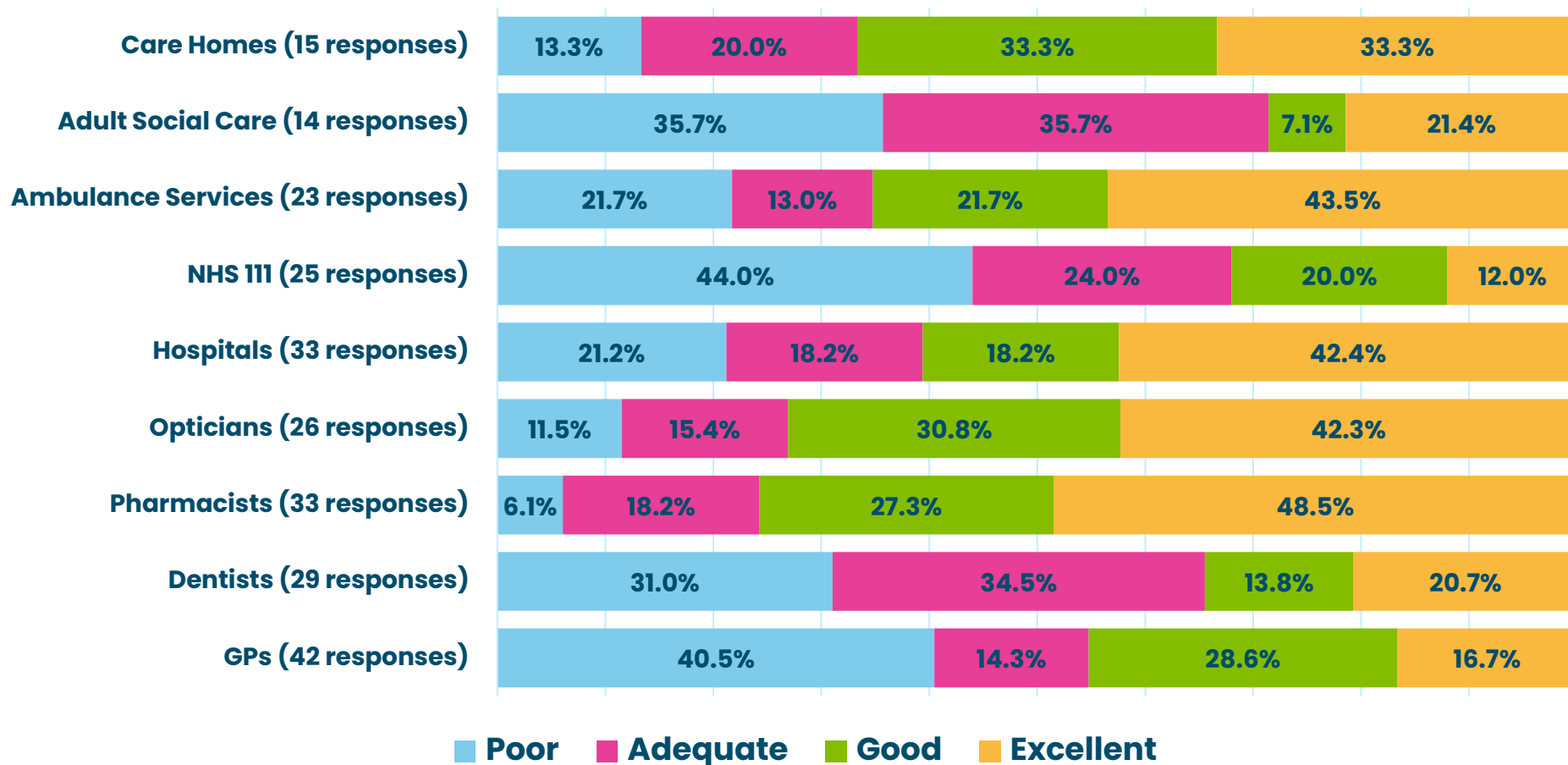
GPs were the service most rated. Adult Social Care were least rated, with many people commenting that they either had no experiences of using these services or weren't aware of what this included.

Overall, the services which had the most positive ratings were pharmacists and opticians, compared to NHS 111 and GPs rating the lowest. The results are overleaf.



Sticker Chart

Experiences of Health and Care services: Sticker Chart Results



Conclusions

- Most of the people we engaged with didn't know how to give feedback or had never been asked to on their health and care services. A lot of people would like to know how they can give feedback.
- The majority of those who have given feedback had done so through a service provider's feedback form.
- Feedback we received suggests that it is not being made clear how to give feedback about health and care services or that there are not enough health and care staff asking the public or patients for their opinions on services.
- The majority of people we asked didn't know who Healthwatch were. For this reason, residents are not aware that they can leave independent feedback with us nor get help from our Information and Signposting Service.
- Whilst many people regularly or sometimes feel like they are listened to, there is still a large proportion who do not. It appears that those who do feel listened to have received a good service, whereas those who do not, tend not to be able to easily access the health or care service they need.

Conclusions

- Some individuals feel their opinion is acted upon by the local authority or NHS, however, a greater number believe the contrary.
- Many people are also aware of the strain that is on the NHS with a lack of staff and being underfunded. Whilst this may be true, communication of how this will be overcome, and showing that patients' voices are listened to does not always appear to be clear to the public.
- Further comments made to Healthwatch show that patients are unhappy about how inaccessible some health and care services currently are. The positive comments tell us that when individuals are able to see their GP or dentist, they receive a very good service. However, being unable to access these health services leaves patients feeling pessimistic.
- Furthermore, these issues with accessing a GP may also be reflected in the results of the sticker chart we encouraged residents to complete. The majority of respondents rated their GP service as "poor" compared to pharmacy services, which were rated "excellent" in most cases. This could be a result of GPs not being accessible enough compared to pharmacies.

Recommendations

1. Pro-actively provide opportunities to leave feedback on services

This could be achieved by:

- Healthwatch promoting its Feedback Centre with the public and services.
- Providers and commissioners encouraging more patients to share both positive and negative feedback and giving a clear explanation on how to do this.
- All parties to emphasise the importance of sharing positive feedback to the public.

2. Healthwatch East Sussex must work harder to be known by the public

This could be achieved by:

- Being present at more local events and venues.
- Encouraging stakeholders and health and care providers to inform more people of Healthwatch East Sussex.
- Sharing even more promotional materials both physically and online which explain our role and demonstrate our value.

3. Health and care services need to listen more

This could be achieved by:

- Making more appointments available and especially face to face appointments.
- Public involvement teams determining the best situations and occasions to listen to as many patients as possible on a regular basis.

Recommendations

4. The NHS and local authority need to act on opinions and have better communication with the public and services users

This could be achieved by:

- The NHS and local authority making direct changes based on patients' views and experiences and demonstrating the linkage in clear terms.
- Highlighting the changes that they have made because of listening to public preferences and patients' needs.

5. The NHS and local authority need to boost the public's confidence in health and care services

This could be achieved by:

- Showing how they will improve services so that neither a lack of funding nor being understaffed will negatively impact the health and care the public receive.
- Acknowledging that there are a lack of GP and dentist appointments at the moment and acting on this issue to show patients that they are taking this seriously.

Next Steps

- We will share our findings with local healthcare providers and commissioners and are willing to discuss any points raised in this report.
- Healthwatch East Sussex will make an information video to highlight how patients can leave feedback with us, as well as the different services you can speak to when you need to speak up about your experiences of using services, both good and bad.
- Healthwatch East Sussex will attend further events and local venues across the county to have a presence and reach out to as many residents as possible.
- We will use the learning from these roadshows to inform our 2022 Listening Tour and other engagement exercises during 2022 and 2023.

For more information

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