

# Patient feedback report: visit to Circuit Lane Surgery on May 25 2017



## About this report

This is a report of a visit carried out by Healthwatch Reading to Circuit Lane Surgery, 53 Circuit Lane, Reading RG30 3AN, to collect patient feedback.

This visit was carried out using statutory Enter and View powers available to local Healthwatch. This report can be read together with a report of a visit to Priory Avenue Surgery on 24 May 2017, as both are run by OneMedicalGroup.

## Why did we carry out this visit?

We wanted to find out if patients at both surgeries thought services had improved since January 2017, when both practices were rated 'inadequate' and placed into 'special measures' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The CQC is the national independent body that checks the quality of NHS-funded services. Our visit focused on getting feedback on main areas of previous concern, including access to appointments, and the turnaround time for repeat prescriptions.

## How did we carry out this visit?

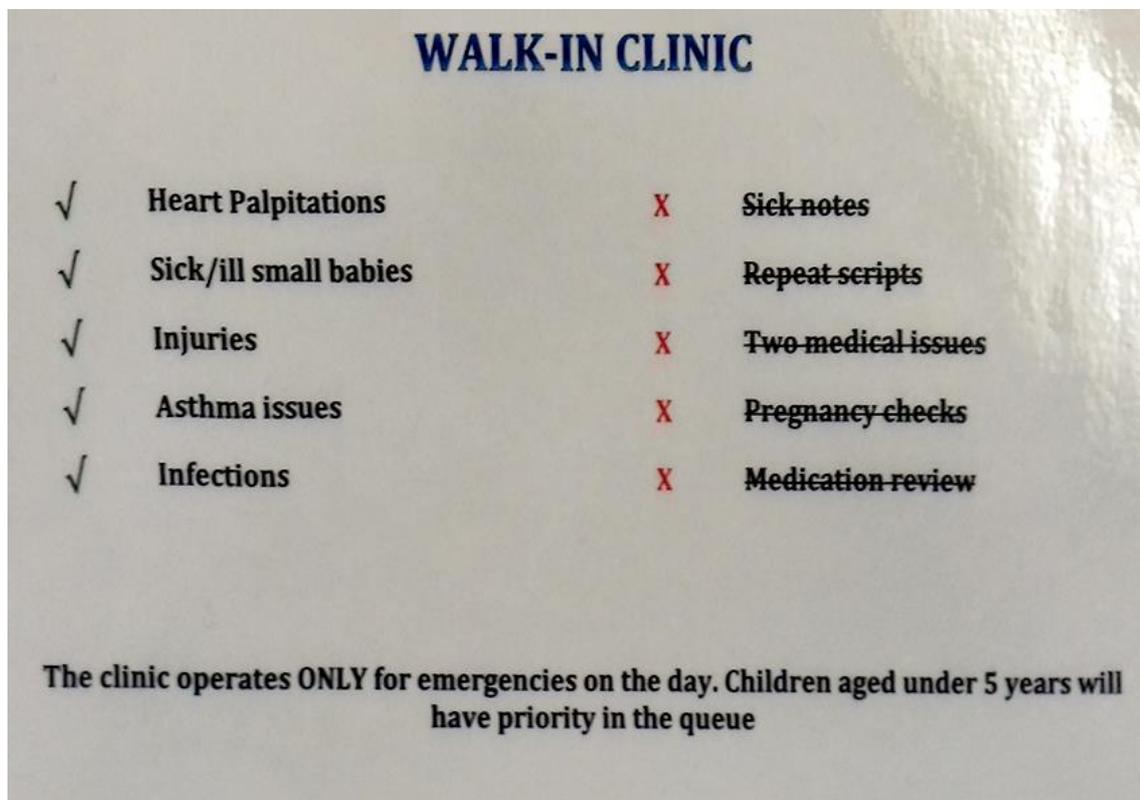
On May 22, we notified the surgery of the dates and times of our planned visits. Two Healthwatch Reading staff arrived at Circuit Lane Surgery at 7.45am on May 25, and left around 10.30am. We arrived early as we had heard that patients were sometimes arriving before the surgery opened, to be seen in a walk-in clinic the surgery had launched as an alternative to bookable appointments. We asked people in waiting areas to voluntarily complete an anonymous short survey, offering any help to complete it, and the opportunity to talk in more depth if desired. We also observed staff and the waiting areas.

## Main findings:

- 26 people answered the survey; (22 the patient, 4 a relative/friend)
- 14 people (58%) could not book an appointment for their preferred day
- 9 people (35%) found it 'difficult' to make an appointment, 2 found it satisfactory and 2 found it easy
- 11 people (44%) were due to see a GP they said they did not know
- 13 people (50%) were uncertain about their health professional's skills
- 21 people (80%) had needed a repeat prescription in the past three months and of these, 18 said it took longer than 48 hours to be ready
- 14 people (54%) did not feel the surgery was keeping them informed
- Most people (14 out of 23, 61%) would prefer to receive an emailed newsletter
- 10 people (44%) felt the surgery had made some improvements but more needed to change, while 6 (26%) felt their experience had got worse.

## Our observations

- The surgery doors opened at 8am, and 11 people were waiting outside
- Staff on duty that morning comprised: two receptionists, four doctors, two advanced nurse practitioners and one practice nurse, however this did not match information on the incomplete 'staff on duty noticeboard'
- The patient self-service check was not working and this annoyed or frustrated people who had pre-booked because they then had to queue with patients who had come to the walk-in clinic
- Reception staff were heard to say that the first appointment available for a patient was 13<sup>th</sup> June (nearly three weeks later)
- Some on-the-day appointments were available to book from 8am
- A laminated card was available to tell patients what conditions the walk-in clinic would/would not see, and that children would be prioritised:



- Patients did not appear to be told their place in the walk-in queue

- A notice showing patient feedback about the walk-in clinic suggested that working age people were more likely to be unhappy with the clinic system:

**WALK-IN CLINIC – GENERAL FEEDBACK**

*AGE GROUPS*

19/12/2016 – 06/04/2017

	Very unhappy	Unhappy	Neither happy nor unhappy	Happy	Very happy
0-14y	0%	6.67%		8.33%	12%
15 – 24y	6.67%	-	7.14%	5.56%	-
25 – 44y	20%	<b>46.67%</b>	35.72%	30.56%	28%
45 – 64y	<b>40%</b>	13.33%	<b>42.86%</b>	22.22%	<b>44%</b>
65+y	33.33%	33.33%	14.28%	<b>33.33%</b>	16%

- We overheard a receptionist speak kindly to a patient, who was then seated separately due to a potentially contagious viral infection
- Patient made extra comment to Healthwatch Reading that the surgery offered phlebotomy (blood test) appointments only weeks ahead so it was quicker to go to the Royal Berkshire Hospital for this
- The 'staff on duty today' noticeboard is not in the waiting room - it is on a wall on the way to the consulting rooms so might not be noticed by many patients as they concentrate more on finding their room to be seen in.

## Patients' comments:

### Concerns:

*"More than two weeks." [for appointment availability]*

*"I don't like seeing a different doctor each time."*

*"You can be waiting 2-3 weeks [for a prebookable appointment] when you really need to see someone as soon as possible."*

*"The walk-in clinic has taken a lot of time out from work for me. Also due to walk-in clinic, it's not easy to get routine appointment, it's always booked - other surgeries still operate on ringing in."*

*"No continuity. Difficult to book unless walk-in."*

*"Handed leaflet when walk in, leaflet says only emergency appointments and can only discuss one issue, I had three."*

*"Appointments are very difficult to get, phoning is impossible."*

*"It is now impossible to get appointment on day, you can't even get one when you queue from 7.30am and it is impossible to get through on phone."*

*"Answering the phone takes too long. Always waiting 20mins to answer."*

*"Calling to get an appointment is still quite difficult and usually can't get appointment on the same day."*

*"Booking an appointment usually takes two weeks and there seems to be no emergency procedure. I prefer to see an allocated doctor, similar to the previous custom."*

### Positive feedback

*"Since Christmas I have found that the reception staff have improved a great deal whereas it would be difficult to get an appointment or repeat, they are more helpful and understanding."*

*"Phones used to take forever to be answered but so much better now and walk in clinic is a great idea."*

### Positive feedback continued...

*“I have felt happy with my care.”*

*“I was surprised and delighted to receive an appointment two weeks after the point of requesting it. Processing of repeat prescriptions has improved dramatically.”*

*“The staff are very friendly and thorough with examinations.”*

### Suggestions for change/improvement:

*“Getting the proper patient care with the doctors actually taking time with the patients to listen properly and take history into consideration.”*

*“More female doctors available, more bookable appointments. Keep regular doctors so you don’t see a different doctor each time.”*

*“I would prefer the method of calling the surgery and booking appointment with doctors only.”*

*“Would prefer to make appointment with GP.”*

*“Would suit better to come on a Saturday.”*

*“The time I am on hold when I call could be improved. I have been waiting on average 22 minutes, the other day it was 34 minutes. This is hard when you only have a certain amount of minutes on your phone plan, they can run out then need to use a pay phone which is far from convenient.”*

### Discussion

People who read Enter and View reports should note that the findings are only a ‘snap-shot’ of a service on a particular date and time, and not an inspection or comprehensive judgement on the quality of the service. It is the role of the CQC to rate the quality of care of NHS services and Healthwatch Reading understands the CQC re-visited both surgeries at the beginning of June 2017.

Healthwatch Reading’s visit indicates that patients do believe some improvements have been made but there are still problems with being able to book timely appointments with doctors they know.

Many people volunteered comments that they missed continuity of care. The introduction of other primary care professionals to fill recruitment gaps does not seem to have included a full patient education campaign about these roles, given that half of patients surveyed said they were “uncertain if the professional can meet my health care needs” and 12% said they wanted “to know more about the skills and role of the professional I am seeing today”.

Patients also seem to be getting mixed messages about the role of the surgery’s walk-in clinic. On arrival, patients are given a card about the clinic that states the clinic ‘operates ONLY for emergencies on the day’, but one-third of patients told us that the surgery had told them to go to the walk-in clinic at the surgery after initially contacting the surgery to make a pre-bookable (rather than urgent) appointment.

Communication gaps are also evident in other findings - ranging from engaged phone lines, details on surgery noticeboards, to regular updates from the surgery.

Repeat prescribing turnaround appears to have improved but still falls short of what is contractually required.

### Healthwatch Reading recommendations

- The surgery should improve communication with patients by introducing a monthly emailed newsletter also available in the waiting room; improving noticeboard information and arranging reception staff capacity to answer calls more quickly at peak times
- The surgery (and Berkshire West CCGs) should carry out a patient education campaign on the role of different primary care professionals as they are increasingly used to fill GP recruitment gaps and/or as better skill mix
- The surgery should audit the walk-in clinic attendance to establish if it is being used as intended for emergencies only and to decide its future role (if any), and to clarify the message it sends to patients about the clinic

These recommendations were sent to OneMedicalGroup and the CCGs’ director of primary care, for a formal response, which are detailed below. Findings were also shared with the CQC, which used the findings to inform a follow-up visit by inspectors in the first week of June 2017.

## Written response from OneMedicalGroup:

‘This feedback report has been formulated through working together with our team and Patient Participation Group (PPG). It should be noted that the surgery has made a lot of progress since the January 2017 CQC inspection which has been recognised by the CQC in a recent re-inspection. The details of this will not be available until July 2017 at the earliest however the progress that has been made should be noted as a positive.

### Response to Main Findings

The visit was undertaken between 745am and 1030am and therefore is not fully representative of the patients registered at Circuit Lane Surgery. In addition, there is no comparison on how Circuit Lane is measured against the other GP Practices within the CCG which would be useful to provide context to the report.

26 people isn't really a reflective cross section of the patient population and reporting with % can be misleading, as patients won't necessarily refer back to the 26 people asked. 26 patients from a list size of 9222 patients only represents 0.3% of the registered patient population.

*58% of 26 patients could not book an appointment on their preferred day, 38% found it difficult, 8% found it satisfactory.*

We offer a wide range of availability but unfortunately we won't be able to accommodate every request made. Patients that need to be seen urgently or requested to be seen back within a week by the doctor will be booked an appointment. The reception team will always seek clinical advice if they are unsure if a request is urgent. We also promote online access to offer another alternative for patients wishing to book an appointment which is convenient to them.

*44% of 26 patients were due to see a GP that they said that they did not know:*

We are in a good position with regard to long term sessional GPs. We have several in post who have been with us for a number of months and who want to stay working at Circuit Lane. Patients feedback about these GPs has been very positive and we hope that patients will get to know the GPs working with our practice. If a patient wishes to see a specific GP there may be a longer wait but we would accommodate this.

*80% of 26 patients said their repeat prescription took longer than 48 hours:*

We state that prescriptions will take 2 working days as using the term 48 hours can be misleading.

We routinely turn repeat prescriptions around within this timeframe, prescriptions needing to be reauthorized or that raise a query will need to be seen by a GP and this may take a little longer however this is in exceptional circumstances only.

*54% of 26 patients didn't feel that the surgery was keeping them informed:*

We appreciate this comment and have been discussing with the PPG the production of a newsletter. This will be a joint newsletter led through the PPG. Our Patient Advisor is liaising with the PPG team to collate this.

*44% of 26 patients felt the surgery had made some improvements but more needed to change while 26% of 26 patients felt their experience had got worse:*

We have made great strides and improved our processes which has had a very positive impact on patient services. We recognize that we still have improvements to make and would value feedback from all patients to enable us to carry on with the improvements.

## **Response to Healthwatch Observations:**

### **Walk in Service**

Circuit Lane has been offering a 'walk in' service for our patients since December 2016. This service has proved to be very popular with patients, allowing them to access same day services without having to make an appointment, and with the reassurance that they will be seen that day. Patients are aware that we open at 08:00 and choose to arrive early. They are informed that the clinic runs until 11am and the first 30 patients will be seen. But should someone arrive outside of these criteria and be in obvious need of urgent attention they would be accommodated.

The PPG Chair was invited to comment on the Healthwatch report and provided the following feedback on this aspect: The fact that 11 people were waiting outside at 07:45 is not relevant. These patients have chosen to turn up early and queue outside, this is not something that the surgery can be held responsible for.

- The laminated card given to the patients on arrival is an excellent idea. This will help to ensure that there are no misunderstandings regarding what the appointments are for.
- Patients are not being told their place in the queue as this is not how the clinic works. Patients are seen by the relevant person for their medical problem, and in order of clinical need. This results in patients not being seen in order of arrival.

We have recently introduced the laminated card as patients were booking in with an appropriate condition but when being called into the clinician they were asking for sick notes etc, which isn't what the walk in service is designed for.

We did discuss the idea of numbering the cards with the PPG but it was felt that this could lead to more tension as patients are seen by the most appropriate clinician and by the most urgent conditions, which would mean being seen out of number order.

General feedback relating to working age groups accessing the walk in clinic; we appreciate that this service won't meet the need of every patient, but we do offer late night appointments and weekend appointments for patients that work during the week and find it difficult to attend.

### **Check In Screen**

We have had issues with the check in screen and a new machine is to be purchased. The screen has worked and was working on the day of the Healthwatch visit. Patients don't always follow the instructions to the end of the process and need to press 'OK' to complete the process. We have a sign above the screen informing patients that they need to press 'OK' to ensure that they are booked in.

PPG response:

- Patient self check in machine. The surgery is aware of the problem and have been in contact with supplier.

### **Staff On Duty**

We are aware that we need to take down the current board as this is out of date, we are in the process of ordering a new one that reflects the mix of clinicians that we have on site, and with new photos of team members.

We have ordered new uniforms for the nursing team so that they can be identified depending on their job title, Lead Nurse, ANP, Practice Nurse & HCA will all have their own distinctive uniforms.

We are appointing two Reception Leads from within our current team who will also have a different coloured tunic to make them more visible to patients and staff.

Appointment availability

We offer a wide range of appointments to meet patient need, the first available appointment date of 13th June was for a specific GP. The patient would have been able to access GP services either via the walk in, on the day appointments, duty telephone call or a pre-bookable with an ANP or different GP much sooner than this date.

The CCG are currently carrying out an appointment availability audit of all the surgeries in the area, this will enable practices to benchmark themselves and share learning.

## **Phlebotomy**

We run daily phlebotomy clinics in the mornings due to the pathology collection times. Patients are able to book in advance if they need regular monitoring for specific health conditions. Patients have a choice of booking to have their test at the surgery or attend the hospital if they find this more convenient.

## **Response to Patient Comments / Concerns:**

“More than two weeks (for appointment)” - for a routine appointment this is not an unacceptable timeframe, we offer a wide variety of appointments with GPs, ANPs PN and HCAs. On the day appointments are available, we are also looking at our appointment mix in relation to seasonal need.

“I don't like seeing a different doctor each time” - patients are able to see the same GP but may need to wait a little longer depending on appointment availability and the shift pattern of the GP concerned.

“You can be waiting 2-3 weeks for a prebookable appointment when you need to see someone as soon as possible” - Pre-bookable appointments are for routine issues and we would offer all other alternatives to the patient ie; walk in clinic, on the day, duty doctor phone call to assess clinical need.

“The walk in clinic has taken a lot of time out from work for me. Also due to the walk in clinic, it's not easy to get routine appointment, it's always booked - other surgeries still operate a ringing in” - We offer a wide range of appointments, the walk in clinic is only one option.

“Handed leaflet when walk in, leaflet says only emergency appointments and one issue, I had three” - this is standard across all practices nationally. If patients require a longer appointment then this can be requested. The walk in is for emergency on the day problems, but the GPs will make a clinical decision once the patient is in with them and will routinely deal with more than one problem during the 10 minute consultation.

“It is impossible to get appointment on the day, you can't even get one when you queue from 7.30am and it is impossible to get through on the phone” - If a patient needs to be seen for something urgent then this would be referred to the duty doctor to triage. They would then make a clinical decision and request the patient be booked in to be seen. We offer a wide range of appointments, but we are constantly looking to see if our mix is correct, pre-bookable versus on the day.

## **Response to Healthwatch recommendations**

### ***Improved communication***

The monthly newsletter is being reintroduced in July. This will be a joint newsletter led through the PPG. Our Patient Advisor is liaising with the PPG team to collate this. This will be emailed to patients, be available in hard copy in the waiting room and also displayed on the notice board. Our Patient Advisor will also be updating the notice boards on a regular basis displaying health campaign information linked to local and national campaigns. We are currently reviewing our reception team roles to ensure that they are available at the correct time to meet patient demand which includes the high volume of telephone calls at peak times.

### ***Patient Education***

As part of the monthly newsletter that is being reintroduced from July there will be a profile on different members of the team which explains skills, differences in role, what they are able to treat, when patients should book to see a particular professional etc to provide better clarity on the skill mixing to patients. This is an ongoing process as the team develops over time.

### ***Walk In attendance***

We are constantly reviewing attendance at the walk in clinic to ensure it is being used appropriately and offering an access point to patients with urgent medical needs. We appreciate that this service won't meet the needs of every patient. We have recently introduced the laminated card as patients were booking in with an appropriate condition but when being called into the clinician they were asking for sick notes etc, which isn't what the walk in service is designed for. We will continue to monitor the service and messages to patients.

### **Summary**

Overall we have made a lot of great improvements and receive compliments from patients on a daily basis, the atmosphere within the practice has significantly improved for the patients and staff. Our processes are more robust and monitored daily to ensure any slippage is escalated to management to deal with. We recognize that we still have some areas to concentrate on, but we can now move forward and improve all areas.'

## Written response from North and West Reading Clinical Commissioning Group

‘Thank you for sending us the draft report following the above Enter and View visit to Circuit Lane Surgery. We have discussed this with One Medical Group and attach their response which also includes commentary from the Patient Participation Group.

Following our discussions with the provider we would like to express some concerns regarding the format of the visit and the resulting report.

Firstly whilst the small sample size is noted, the main findings section is based largely on percentage figures which could be misleading.

Patients were asked questions before their appointment which meant that their answers were somewhat speculative in nature; for example on Question 5 a more rounded view could have been obtained by asking patients after their consultation how they felt about the type of professional they saw rather than asking them before they had seen the professional in question.

The categorisation the question in repeat prescriptions is unhelpful as there are separate categories for 48 hours and 2-5 working days when in fact the turnaround we measure the practice on is two working days. Finally a number of questions relate to a three month window which spans a period when we know significant changes have been made to processes and procedures. It is unclear whether patients commenting on appointment booking or repeat prescription requests had made single or multiple requests during that time.

With regard to the specific recommendations made in your report, the provider has responded to those directed at the surgery in their response. There was just one recommendation directed partly to the CCG to which our response is as follows:

***The surgery (and Berkshire West CCG) should carry out a patient education campaign on the role of different primary care professionals as they are increasingly used to fill GP recruitment gaps and/or as better skillmix.***

CCG response - we continue to work with One Medical Group to improve communications with regard to the types of professionals patients may see in the surgery. This is an ongoing process as the team develops over time.

As a CCG we have also undertaken engagement around skill-mix in primary care which was discussed in detail at a number of public events last year, supported by our film on the *Berkshire West Primary Care Strategy* which covers this topic.

Our primary care programme for the coming year, now linked to our local implementation plan for the *General Practice Forward View* identifies a need to build upon and further develop dialogue on this subject, working with Patient Participation Groups and other partners. We are aware that this subject was covered very effectively at your AGM last year and would look to work with you to engage further with patients.'

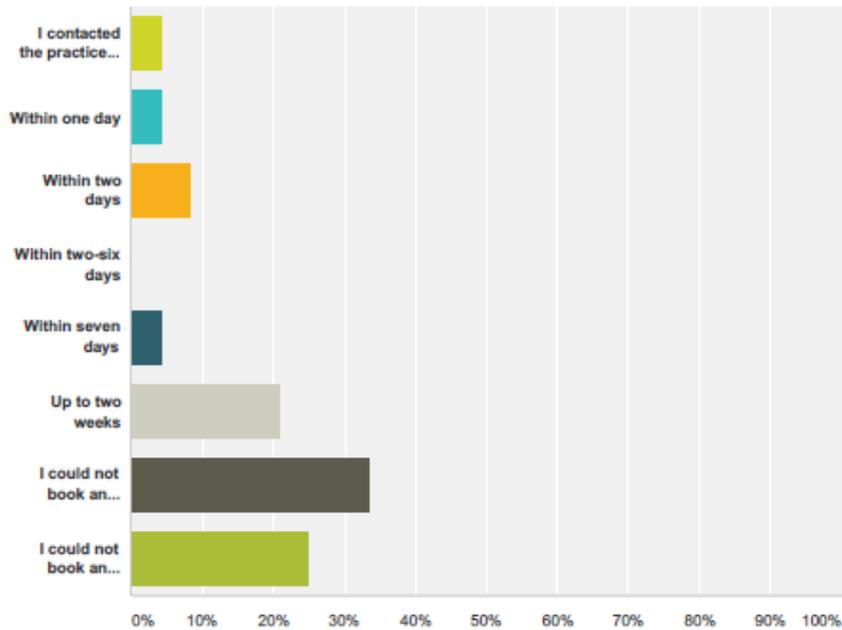
### Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Reading would like to thank patients for taking the time to share feedback. We also thank Circuit Lane Surgery staff for welcoming us into the surgery.

Appendix 1: Survey findings in full

**Q2 Tell us about when today's appointment was first available, when you first contacted the practice or went online to book it?**

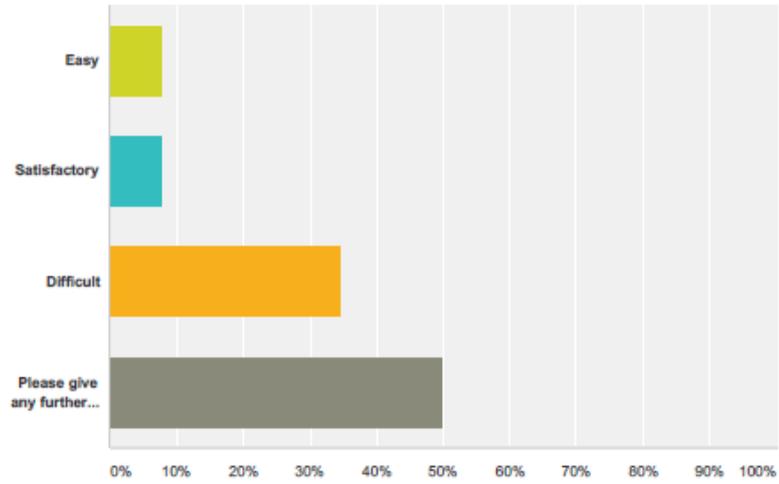
Answered: 24 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses
I contacted the practice today and was given an urgent appointment for today	4.17% 1
Within one day	4.17% 1
Within two days	8.33% 2
Within two-six days	0.00% 0
Within seven days	4.17% 1
Up to two weeks	20.83% 5
I could not book an appointment for my preferred day and was told by the surgery to come to the morning walk-in clinic at the surgery	33.33% 8
I could not book an appointment for my preferred day and decided myself to come to the morning walk-in clinic at the surgery	25.00% 6
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>

**Q3 In the last three months, how have you found making an appointment?**

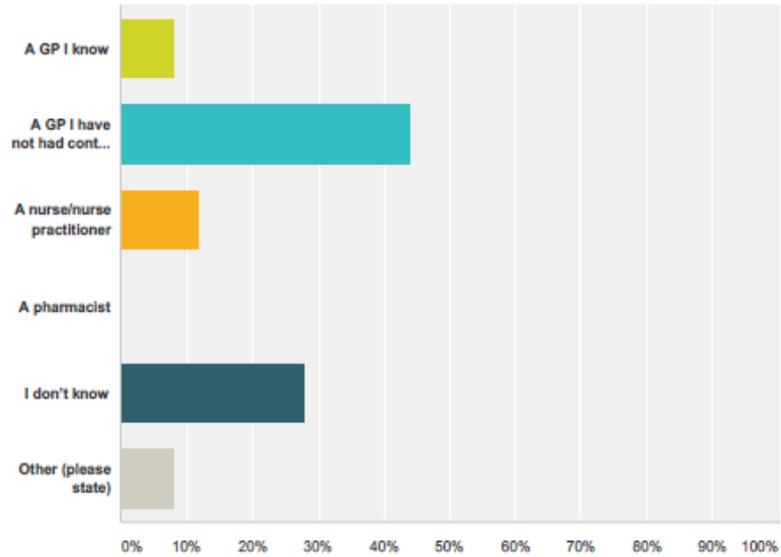
Answered: 26 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Easy	7.69% 2
Satisfactory	7.69% 2
Difficult	34.62% 9
Please give any further comment about your answer, if you wish	50.00% 13
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>

**Q4 What type of health professional are you due to see today for your appointment?**

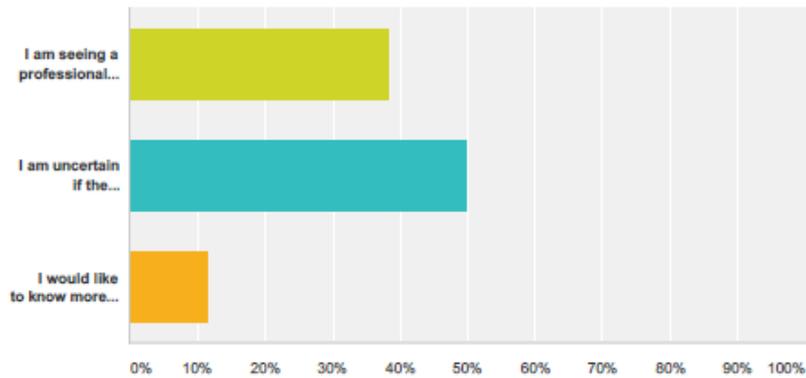
Answered: 25 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
A GP I know	8.00% 2
A GP I have not had contact with before	44.00% 11
A nurse/nurse practitioner	12.00% 3
A pharmacist	0.00% 0
I don't know	28.00% 7
Other (please state)	8.00% 2
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>

**Q5 How do you feel about the type of health professional you are due to see today?**

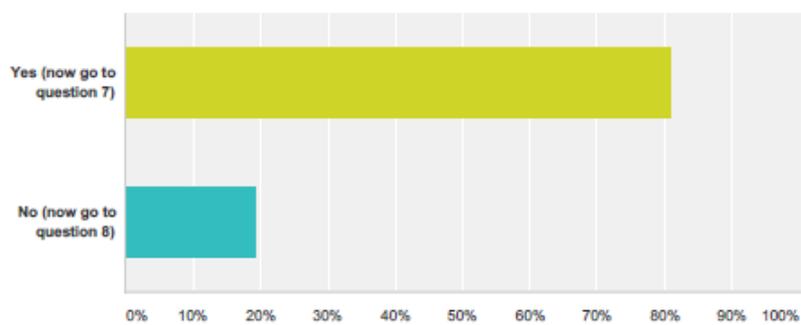
Answered: 26 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
I am seeing a professional best suited to meet my health care needs	38.46% 10
I am uncertain if the professional can meet my health care needs	50.00% 13
I would like to know more about the skills & role of the professional I am seeing today	11.54% 3
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>

**Q6 In the last three months, have you asked for a repeat prescription for regular medication?**

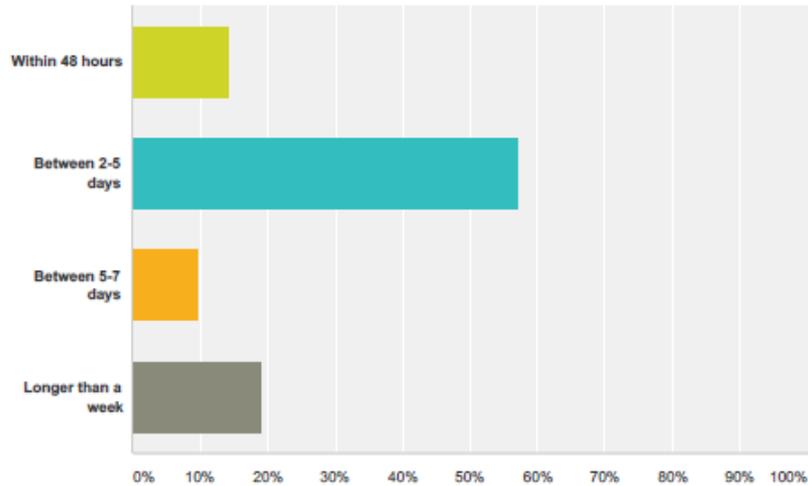
Answered: 26 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes (now go to question 7)	80.77% 21
No (now go to question 8)	19.23% 5
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>

**Q7 How long did it take for your repeat prescription to be ready?**

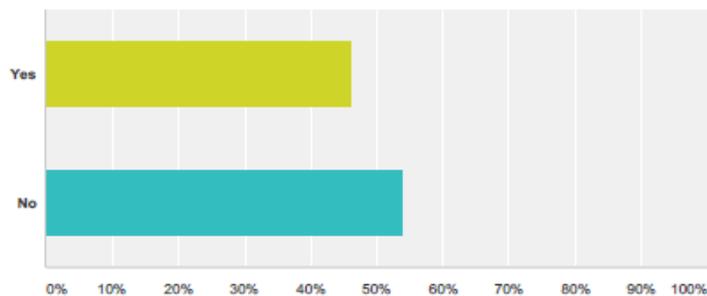
Answered: 21 Skipped: 5



Answer Choices	Responses
Within 48 hours	14.29% 3
Between 2-5 days	57.14% 12
Between 5-7 days	9.52% 2
Longer than a week	19.05% 4
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>

**Q8 Do you feel that the surgery is keeping you informed about any changes or improvements it is making to patient services?**

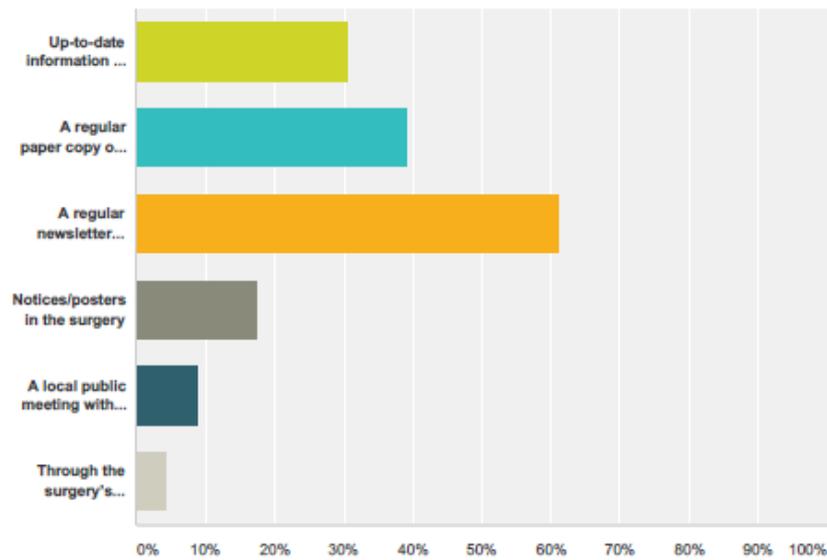
Answered: 26 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	46.15% 12
No	53.85% 14
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>

**Q9 How would you prefer to be kept informed about any changes, improvements or other important information about the surgery? (tick as many options as you wish)**

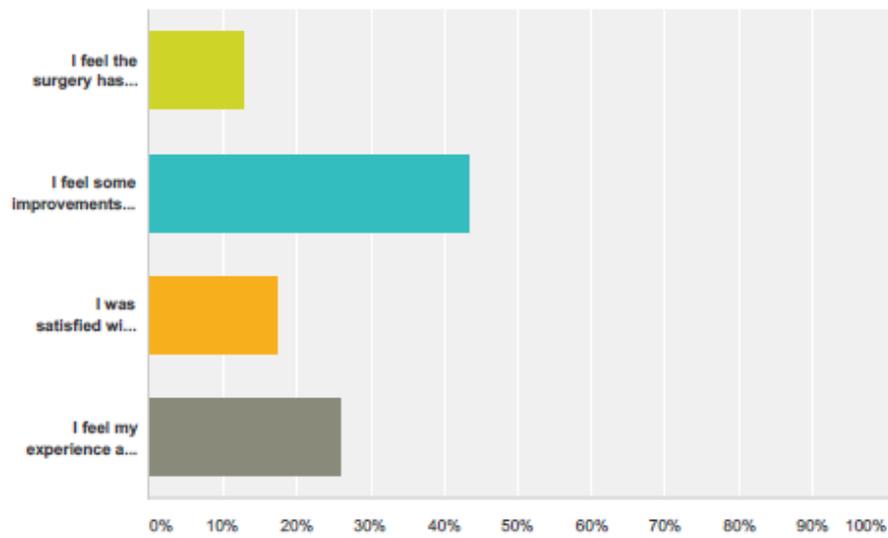
Answered: 23 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses
Up-to-date information on the surgery website	30.43% 7
A regular paper copy of a patient newsletter in the waiting area	39.13% 9
A regular newsletter emailed to patients	60.87% 14
Notices/posters in the surgery	17.39% 4
A local public meeting with surgery staff to answer questions	8.70% 2
Through the surgery's patient participation group	4.35% 1
<b>Total Respondents: 23</b>	

**Q10 Overall, which answer best describes your experience as a patient now, compared to your experience in the period September 2016 – January 2017?**

Answered: 23 Skipped: 3

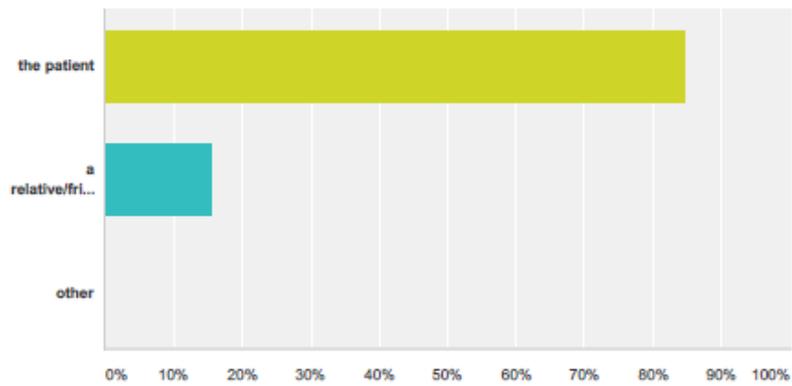


Answer Choices	Responses
I feel the surgery has improved a great deal	13.04% 3
I feel some improvements have been made but more needs to change	43.48% 10
I was satisfied with the surgery before and remain satisfied now	17.39% 4
I feel my experience as a patient has got worse	26.09% 6
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>

## Appendix 2: Demographic information

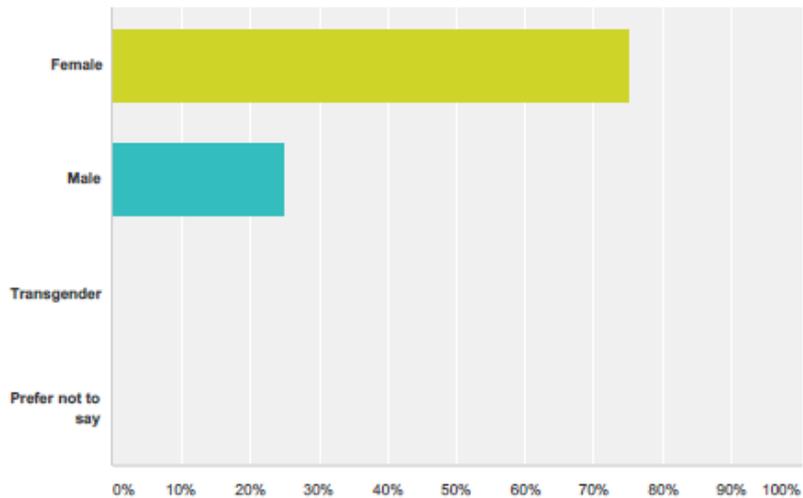
### Q1 Please tell us who you are (CIRCUIT LANE respondents)

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0



### Q12 Gender

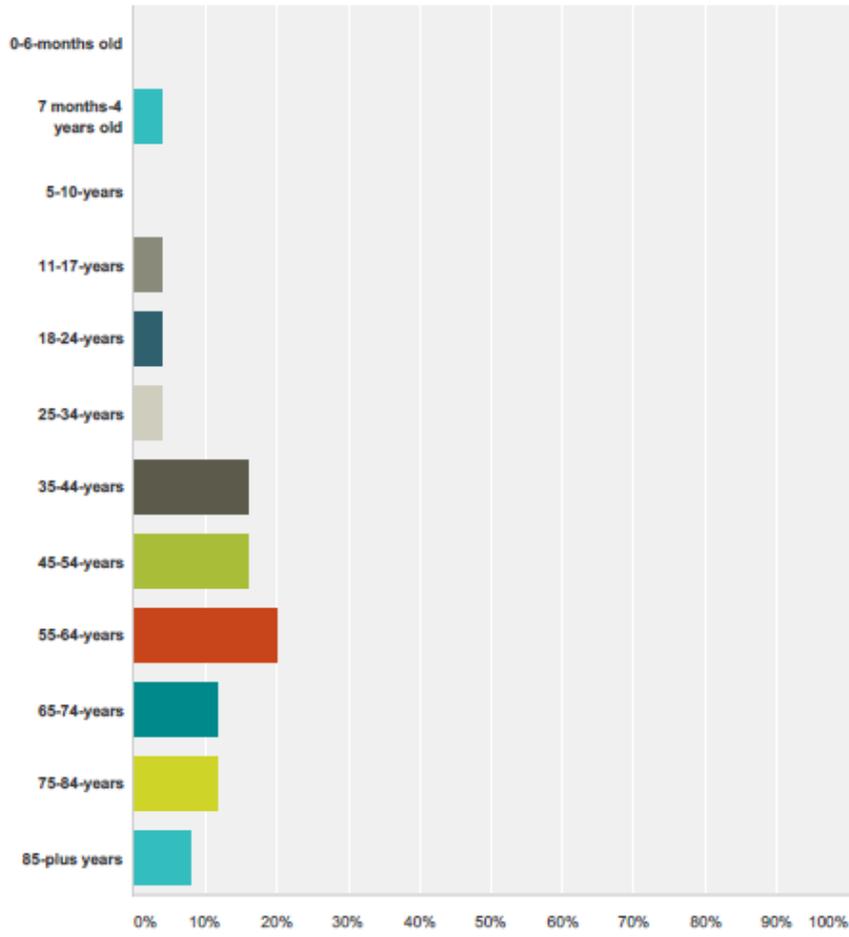
Answered: 24 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Female	75.00%	18
Male	25.00%	6
Transgender	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	0.00%	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>

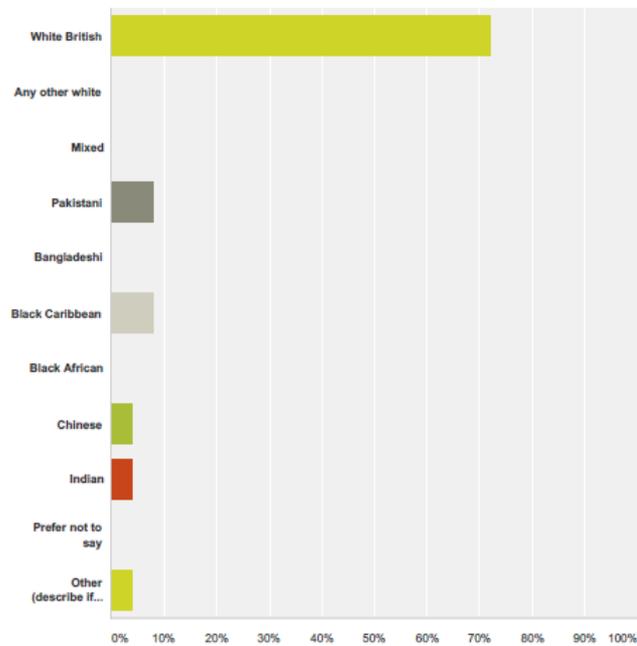
### Q13 Age:

Answered: 25 Skipped: 1



### Q14 Ethnicity

Answered: 25 Skipped: 1



#### Contact us:

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