

The SHS patient survey 2024

Design process

We looked at previous survey topics and canvassed team leaders for topics that the practice would benefit from knowing the patient opinions on. The topics were distributed to the 74 members of the PPG (Patient participation group) and the areas identified as most important to the patients were used to form the survey. Please see the attached document to see details about our PPG.

Distribution

The survey was sent via SMS to 5,000 patients who had a consultation in the preceding 3 months. We received 120 responses to the survey. This was lower than in previous years, this is possible due to the Survey being sent just before the University Easter vacation. All questions were mandatory to answer.

Questions

The questions centered around these key areas:

- Access to appointments
- Awareness and experience with Allied Health Professional Services (First Contact Physio, Pharmacist, Social prescriber)
- Knowledge of how to access different sexual health services in Bristol
- Accessibility for patients who consider themselves to have a disability
- Respect for gender identity issues

Profile of respondents

- 74% undergraduate, 20% postgraduate, 6% former students still living in the area
- 75% UK, 6% EU and 21% international. This is fairly representative of the student population (25% international) and comparable to previous years.
- 89% are neither carer nor parents
- 40% consider themselves to have a significant, longstanding health condition. Although still a high percentage, this is lower than last year (75%). Patients with longstanding conditions are more likely to use our services and will therefore have more frequent reminders to give feedback. .
- 68% female, 19% male, 6% non-binary and 5% 'prefer not to say'

Questions

Have you had or attempted to get an appointment in the last six months?

85% of respondents replied that they had been able to get their preferred appointment type. Of those who did not get their preferred appointment type, only 4% said they had wanted a F2F appointment and 5% had wanted to see a specific GP.

Last year we asked patients about the use of telephone and video appointments as many of our appointments were still remote during and post-pandemic. This revealed that, while telephone appointments were often appreciated for convenience, many patients wanted to be offered in person appointments more often. Some patients fed back that they would prefer to be seen in person especially for mental health issues, if English was not their first language and also when they felt an examination was needed.

As a result of this feedback and working closely with clinicians and our clinical navigators, our Access Team have altered the appointment system so that some issues are automatically booked as in-person appointment e.g. skin issues and abdominal pain. Patients telephoning the surgery with mental health issues (apart from routine reviews) or who are clearly struggling with English are also offered a choice of appointments. The option of using an interpreter either by telephone or during an in-person appointment is also made clear.

Our ratio of telephone and F2F appointments is now approximately 40/60% There were two positive comments about accessibility being much better than respondents' experience of other GP services.

Of patients who were unsuccessful in getting an appointment, 6% felt they were having to wait too long on the telephone. We hope this issue will be resolved later this year with the installation of a new cloud-based telephone system.

If you have had an appointment was the waiting time for that appointment acceptable?

- 24% were offered a same day appointment.
- 33% were offered an appointment within a few days which was acceptable to them
- 21% were offered an appointment within two weeks which was acceptable to them
- 8% were offered an appointment more than two weeks later but this was still acceptable to them
- 8% were offered an appointment in a time frame that was longer than they wanted

There were two comments on difficulty booking for blood tests; we are aware of this issue which has arisen out of a staff shortage over the last few months, although wait times have seldom exceeded three weeks and urgent bloods are always accommodated. In some cases, GPs have taken urgent blood tests themselves.

Two respondents fed back on not being able to get a same-day appointment. All appointment requests are triaged by experienced care navigators, and we have a low threshold for requesting the duty doctor team to review requests. Two respondents also fed back that they would have preferred a face-to-face appointment but were offered a telephone assessment.

Any patient who is assessed by phone and thought to need a face-to-face assessment will then be asked to attend the surgery, so this may reflect patient expectations rather than clinical need.

We currently offer extended hours appointments listed below. Please select the times that you would find convenient to attend.

Of the times listed (Saturday morning, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings) all were equally popular with respondents 70-72%.

Other times that were suggested were Sunday (2 respondents), early one a weekday (1 respondent), Saturday afternoon (1 respondent) and Friday evening (1 respondent). All of these (These responses make up less than 2% of respondents)

Are you aware there is a First Contact Physiotherapy service at SHS which you can access without seeing a GP first?

Only 17% of respondents were aware of this service. Patients can be signposted directly by our care navigators if they call with a musculoskeletal problem. The service is mentioned on the SH website and patients can request it directly. This survey has highlighted that we could give greater visibility to the service.

If you have used the FCP service, please tell us about your experience.

Overall respondents found the service easy to access and agreed or strongly agreed that it was useful (72%). Only 6% of patients did not find the FCP service easy to access and only 16 % did not find it useful – there was limited feedback on the reasons for this but it included long wait times and, in one case, someone for whom physiotherapy turned out not to be the right option.

Are you aware that our pharmacy team can answer medication queries, perform most medication reviews and help with prescriptions? If you have had an appointment/telephone call with one of our pharmacists, please tell us about your experience.

57% of respondents were aware of the pharmacy service and of those that had used it, 47% found it easy to access. Of those, the vast majority (90%) agreed or strongly agreed that the service had been useful. Feedback included that the service was friendly and helpful.

Are you aware our service has a social prescriber who can connect patients with services and activities in the community?

Only 9% of respondents were aware of social prescribing. This service does require GP referral so is usually discussed during a consultation. Information about the service is available on the SH website but as a result of this feedback, we plan to make the information more visible with a shortcut from the mental health pages.

Do you know how to access Sexual Health appointments in Bristol?

Most respondents were aware of nurse appointments (63%) and self-test kits at the Students' Health Service (76%). There was less awareness of Unity Sexual Health, both for appointments and postal STD kits (40-42%) and even less awareness of Unity STD kit vending machines, although all of these are detailed on our sexual health advice pages on the SHS website. We have created an additional ACCuRx detailing Unity vending machines and their location.

Do you have any suggestions to make Student Health Service more accessible?

31% of respondents consider themselves to have a disability. We asked "Have you needed any adjustments in order to access the surgery?" 5% of respondents said they had needed adjustments to access the Surgery. Suggestions for helping with accessibility included more appointments, being able to book appointments online, shorter closure periods e.g. over Christmas and having hand sanitiser next to the check-in screen (from an immunocompromised patient)

Action: add hand sanitizer dispenser next to check-in screen

Comments: booking online appointments is now available for blood tests and specific health campaigns has proved popular but has not been rolled out routinely. There would be some complexity in arranging the service so that students booked an appointment with the right person, but it may be something we consider in the future e.g. for specific appointment types such as contraception or asthma reviews.

Do you know you can update your medical record to use your preferred pronoun?

18% of respondents were aware of this and a further 18% were not but would be interested in doing so. 63% were not aware but felt it was not relevant to them. These figures are the same as last year (19% aware). We again included information on how pronouns can be updated within the survey.

Of those who has made changes to their record of gender identity at SH, 100% had found it very easy or quite easy. This is an increase on last year (73%) which we hope reflects increased mention of this on posters in the waiting room, on our website and during consultations with clinicians.

93% of those for whom it was relevant felt their pronouns and gender identity had been respected at SH, with only 5% choosing 'other' - only one person provided feedback on this, which was that they had made the change too recently to comment. This is the same as last year (93% of those for whom it was relevant)