

Waterfront Practice - Patient Participation Group

Waterfront Practice PPG Survey 2025

Introduction

The Waterfront Practice PPG conducted full-scale patient surveys from 2017 to 2019 and published detailed analysis of the results which were made available online and in the surgery. In March 2020 the format of a revised patient survey was agreed, but the COVID-19 pandemic with all its necessary public health restrictions made this project impossible to run. The Waterfront Practice PPG resumed undertaking its own patient survey once again in 2023, to compare with the NHS National Patient Survey 2023. What had been a paper questionnaire, filled in by patients attending the surgery, was replaced by an online version of the Waterfront Practice PPG Patient Survey form inviting patients to complete after they had attended the surgery over four weeks in August 2023. The new format was completed by 156 respondents.

Last year the 2024 PPG Patient On-line Survey ran from the end of August into mid-September 2024 and was completed by 278 respondents. This year the survey was 'live' from May through to August and was completed by 477 respondents – our highest ever number. As a comparison the NHS Patient Survey sent out 530 surveys and 110 were sent back which means a completion rate of 21%.

Before going any further it is worth noting a few key points about the NHS GP Patient Survey 2025:

- The GP Patient Survey is an independent survey run by Ipsos on behalf of NHS England.
- The questionnaire is sent to a random selection of people registered with a GP in England.
- Questionnaires were sent out to over two million patients aged 16 or over registered with GP practices in England from the 30th December, 2024 to 1st April, 2025.
- Approximately 700,000 respondents completed the questionnaire nationally.
- The 2024 survey was the start of a new time series for the GP Patient Survey and questionnaire changes were kept to a minimum for the 2025 survey to ensure that results could be compared across 2024 and 2025.

Source: <https://gp-patient.co.uk/faq> + <https://Gp-Patient.Co.Uk/Patientexperience/Results?Code=M87010>

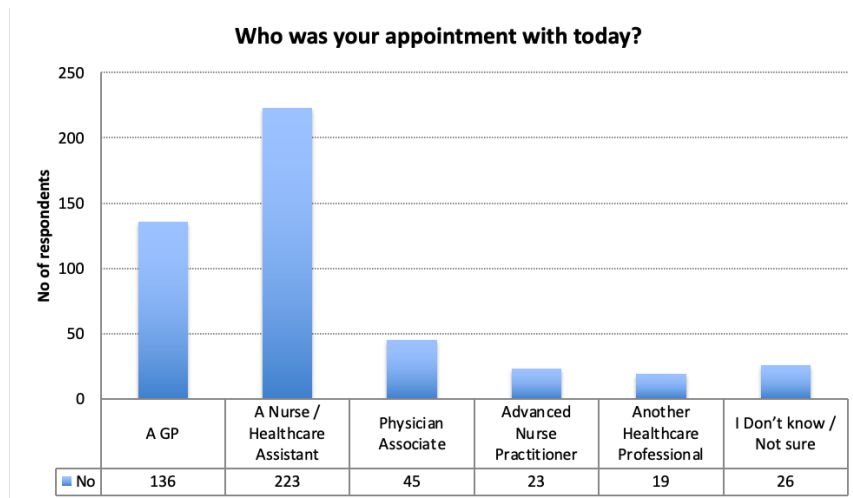
One very important aspect to stress is that the Waterfront Practice PPG is responsible for creating the survey as well as its analysis – it has always been an independent review of the Waterfront Surgery. The results were shared and discussed with the Waterfront Practice Manager at the September PPG meeting who then presented it to the GP Partners for their consideration and feedback to the PPG before publication on-line and in paper form in the surgery waiting room.

Waterfront Practice Patient List**Female:** 4437**Male:** 4737**Total:** 9174**Source:** Waterfront Practice Manager.**General Question**

The opening question was used to establish which healthcare professional the patient had contact with.

Who is your appointment with today?

Note: Five (1.0%) of all respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 1*Table 1*

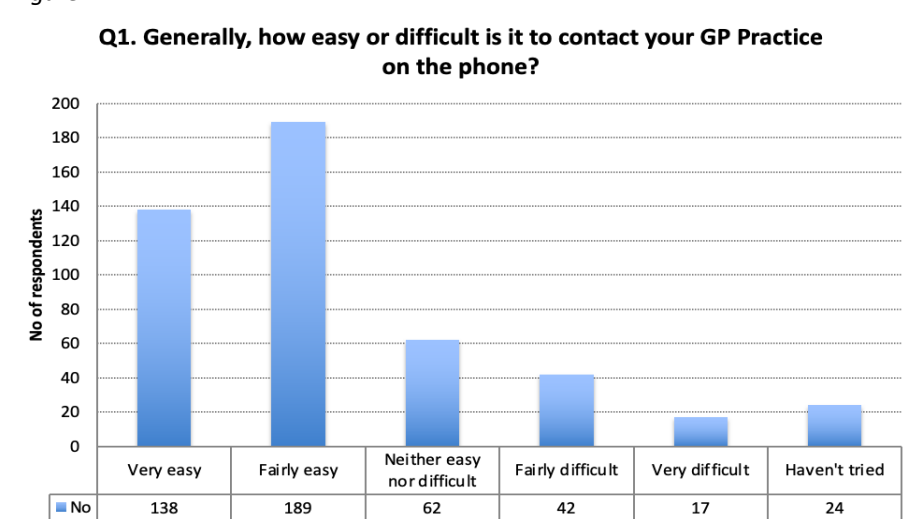
Healthcare Professional	No	%
A GP	136	28.8%
A Nurse / Healthcare Assistant	223	47.2%
Physician Associate	45	9.5%
Advanced Nurse Practitioner	23	4.9%
Another Healthcare Professional	19	4.0%
I Don't know / Not sure	26	5.5%
Total	472	100.0%
Not Answered	5	
Overall Total	477	

Contacting the Surgery

Question 1: Generally, how easy or difficult is it to contact your GP Practice on the phone?

Note: Five respondents (1.0%) did not answer this question.

Figure 2



Question 2: How easy or difficult is it to contact your GP Practice using their website?

Note: Seven (1.5%) of all respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 3

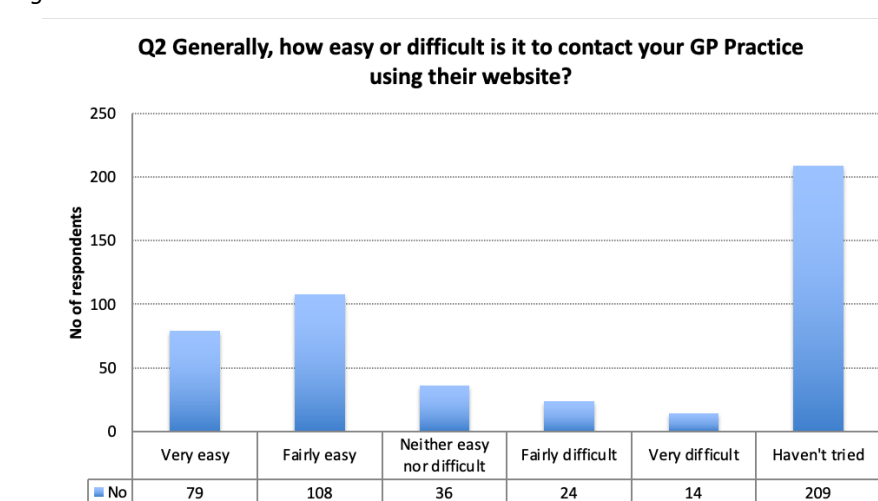


Table 2

Q1 Contacting GP Surgery by Phone	No	%
Very easy	138	30.8%
Fairly easy	189	42.2%
Neither easy nor difficult	62	13.8%
Fairly difficult	42	9.4%
Very difficult	17	3.8%
Total	448	100.0%
Haven't tried	24	
Not Answered	5	
Overall Total	477	

Table 3

Q2 Contacting GP Surgery using Website	No	%
Very easy	79	30.3%
Fairly easy	108	41.4%
Neither easy nor difficult	36	13.8%
Fairly difficult	24	9.2%
Very difficult	14	5.4%
Total	261	100.0%
Haven't tried	209	
Not Answered	7	
Overall Total	477	

Question 3: How easy or difficult is it to contact your GP Practice using the NHS App?

Note: Ten respondents (2.1%) did not answer this question.

Figure 4

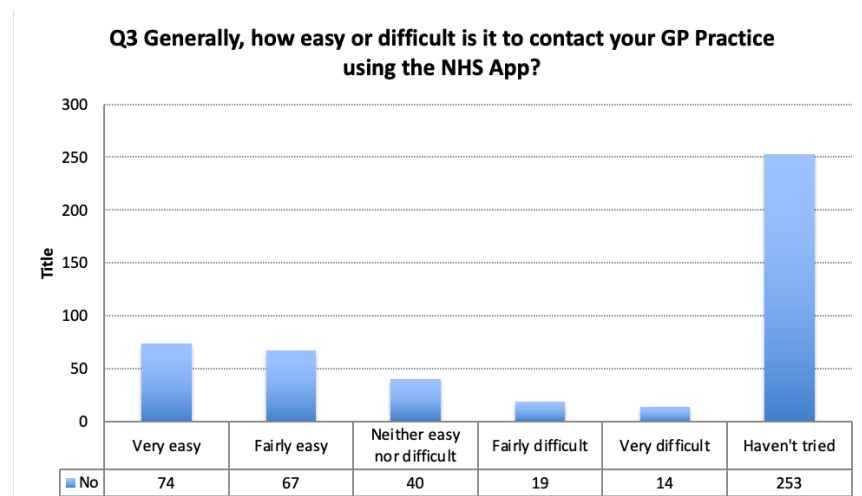


Table 4

Q3 Contacting GP Surgery using NHS App	No	%
Very easy	74	34.6%
Fairly easy	67	31.3%
Neither easy nor difficult	40	18.7%
Fairly difficult	19	8.9%
Very difficult	14	6.5%
Total	214	100.0%
Haven't tried	253	
Not Answered	10	
Overall Total	477	

Comparison Table 1

			GP Patient Survey Results 2025						
			National	ICS	PCN	Waterfront Practice			Excludes Not Answered &.....
No.	Contacting the Surgery	Answers counted				GP Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2024	
1	Generally, how easy or difficult is it to contact your GP Practice on the phone?	Very easy and Fairly easy	53%	48%	45%	52%	73%	78%	I haven't tried
2	Generally, how easy or difficult is it to contact your GP Practice using their website?		51%	46%	67%	63%	72%	73%	
3	Generally, how easy or difficult is it to contact your GP Practice using the NHS App?		49%	46%	57%	61%	66%	73%	

Reception

Question 4: Overall how helpful do you find the receptionist and administrative team at your GP Practice?

Note: Five respondents (1.0%) did not answer this question.

Figure 5

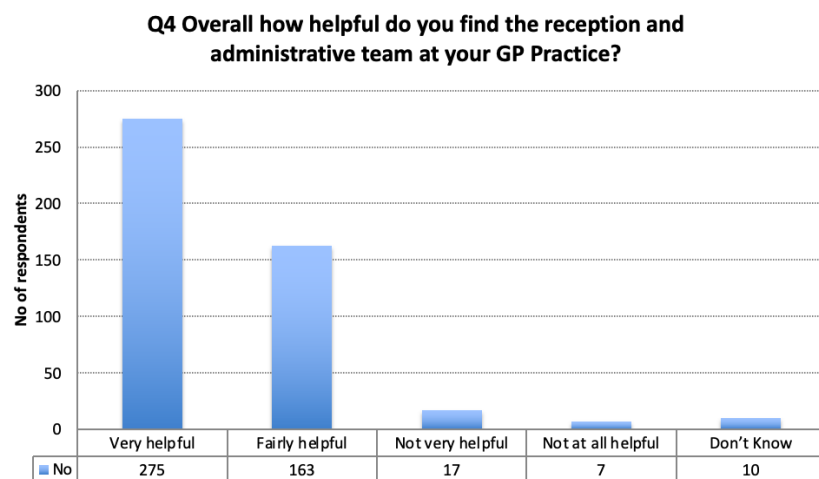


Table 5

Q4 Reception and Administrative Team	No	%
Very helpful	275	59.5%
Fairly helpful	163	35.3%
Not very helpful	17	3.7%
Not at all helpful	7	1.5%
Total	462	100.0%
Don't Know	10	
Not Answered	5	
Overall Total	477	

Comparison Table 2

			GP Patient Survey Results 2025						
No.	Reception	Answers counted	National	ICS	PCN	Waterfront Practice			Excludes Not Answered &.....
						GP Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2024	
4	Overall how helpful do you find the reception and administrative team at your GP Practice?	Very helpful and Fairly helpful	83%	79%	78%	86%	95%	94%	Don't know

Access to a Doctor**Question 5: If you need to see a GP urgently can you normally be seen on the same day?**

Note: Two respondents (0.4%) did not answer this question.

Figure 6

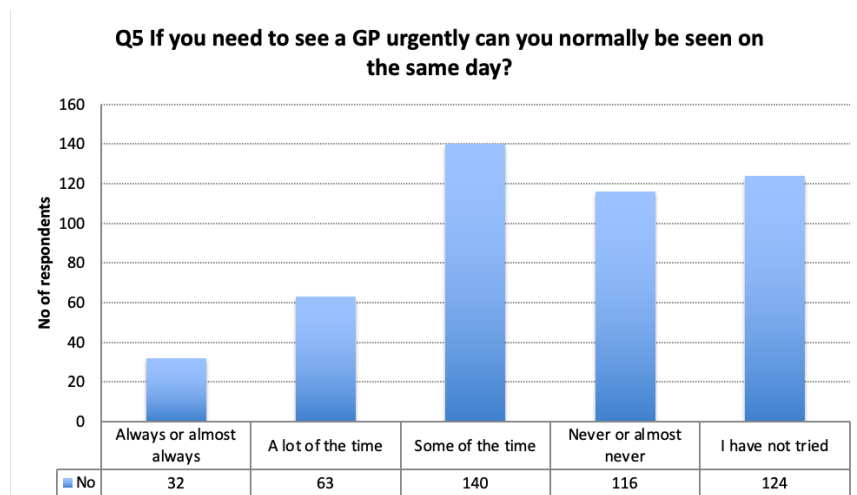


Table 6

Q5 See GP urgently on same day	No	%
Always or almost always	32	9.1%
A lot of the time	63	17.9%
Some of the time	140	39.9%
Never or almost never	116	33.0%
Total	351	100.0%
I have not tried	124	
Not Answered	2	
Overall Total	477	

Question 6: How often do see or speak to your preferred GP (healthcare professional – NHS Survey) when you would like to?

Note: Five (1.0%) respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 7

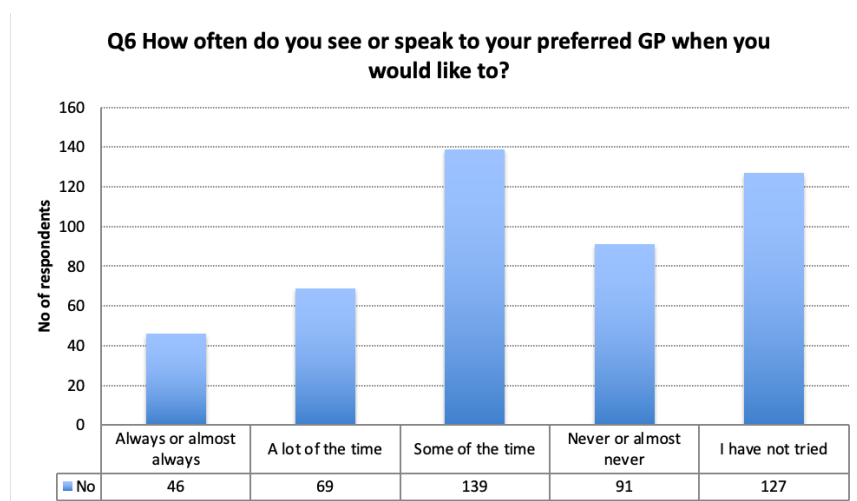


Table 7

Q6 See or speak to preferred GP	No	%
Always or almost always	46	13.3%
A lot of the time	69	20.0%
Some of the time	139	40.3%
Never or almost never	91	26.4%
Total	345	100.0%
I have not tried	127	
Not Answered	5	
Overall Total	477	

Comparison Table 3

			GP Patient Survey Results 2025						
No.	Access to a Doctor	Answers counted	National	ICS	PCN	Waterfront Practice			Excludes Not Answered &.....
						GP Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2024	
5	If you need to see a GP urgently can you normally be seen on the same day?	Always or almost always and A lot of the time					27%	30%	I have not tried
6	How often do you see or speak to your preferred GP when you would like to?		40%	36%	28%	33%	33%	34%	

Booking doctor appointments

Question 7: How did you book this appointment?

Note: Four (0.8%) of all respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 8

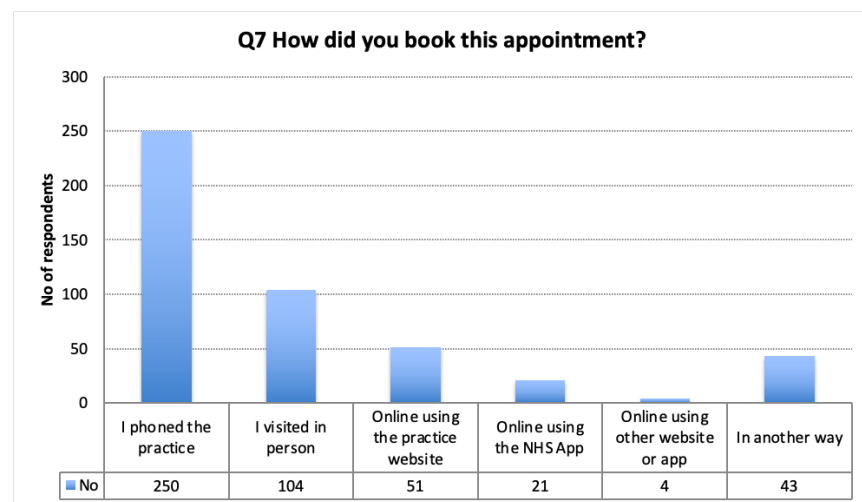


Table 8

Q7 How booked appointment	No	%
I phoned the practice	250	52.9%
I visited in person	104	22.0%
Online using the practice website	51	10.8%
Online using the NHS App	21	4.4%
Online using other website or app	4	0.8%
In another way	43	9.1%
Total	473	100.0%
Not Answered	4	
Overall Total	477	

Comparison Table 4

			GP Patient Survey Results 2025						
No.	Booking your appointment	Answers counted	National	ICS	PCN	Waterfront Practice			Excludes Not Answered &.....
	How did you book this appointment?					GP Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2024	
7	How did you book this appointment?								
	I phoned the practice	All	62%	68%	51%	60%	53%	59%	None
	I visited in person		14%	15%	9%	10%	22%	23%	
	Online using the Practice website		14%	10%	34%	26%	11%	9%	
	Online using NHS App		6%	5%	3%	4%	4%	3%	
	Online using Other website or app		2%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	
	In another way		2%	1%	2%	0%	9%	6%	

Timing of Your Appointment

Question 8: How long after you first contacted your GP Practice did the appointment take place?

Note: Four (0.8%) of all respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 9

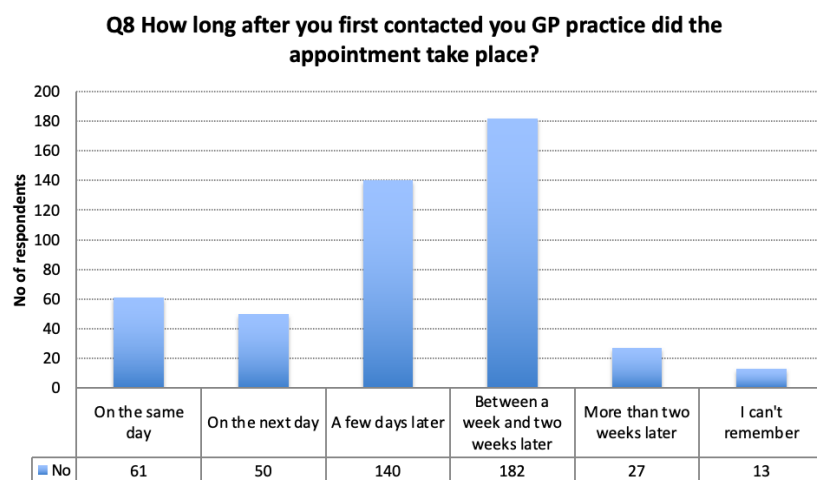


Table 9

Q8 Timing of your appointment	No	%
On the same day	61	12.9%
On the next day	50	10.6%
A few days later	140	29.6%
Between a week and two weeks later	182	38.5%
More than two weeks later	27	5.7%
I can't remember	13	2.7%
Total	473	100.0%
Not answered	4	
Overall Total	477	

Question 9: How do you feel about how long you waited for your appointment?

Note: Three respondents (0.6%) did not answer this question.

Figure 10

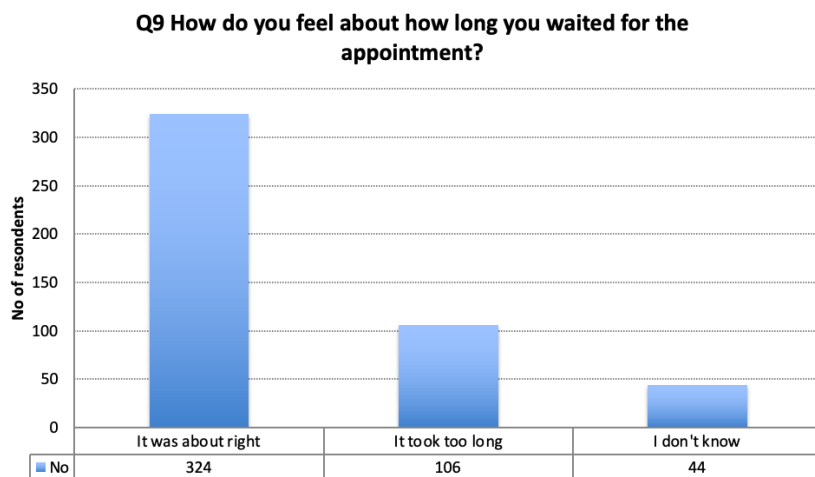


Table 10

Q9 Waiting for appointment	No	%
It was about right	324	75.3%
It took too long	106	24.7%
Total	430	100.0%
I don't know	44	
Not Answered	3	
Overall Total	477	

Comparison Table 5

GP Patient Survey Results 2025									
No.	Timing of your appointment	Answers counted	National	ICS	PCN	Waterfront Practice			Excludes Not Answered &.....
	How long after you first contacted your GP practice did the appointment take place?					GP Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2024	
8	On the same day	All	28%	29%	25%	15%	13%	13%	None
	On the next day		8%	8%	8%	6%	11%	8%	
	A few days later		22%	22%	27%	36%	30%	35%	
	Between a week or two weeks later		21%	19%	21%	28%	38%	33%	
	More than two weeks later		13%	12%	9%	8%	6%	9%	
	I can't remember		10%	10%	10%	7%	3%	2%	
9	How do you feel about how long you waited for your appointment?	It was about right	67%	61%	68%	64%	75%	70%	I don't know

In your appointment today, how good was the healthcare professional you saw at each of the following?

Question 10: Considering your mental wellbeing

Note: Three (0.6%) of all respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 11

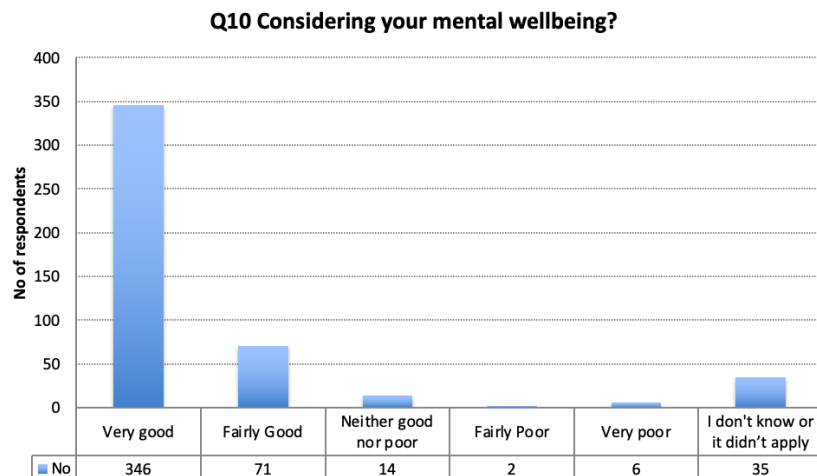


Table 11

Q10 Considering your mental wellbeing	No	%
Very good	346	78.8%
Fairly Good	71	16.2%
Neither good nor poor	14	3.2%
Fairly Poor	2	0.5%
Very poor	6	1.4%
Total	439	100.00%
I don't know or it didn't apply	35	
Not Answered	3	
Overall Total	477	

Question 11: Listening to you

Note: Four (0.8%) of all respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 12

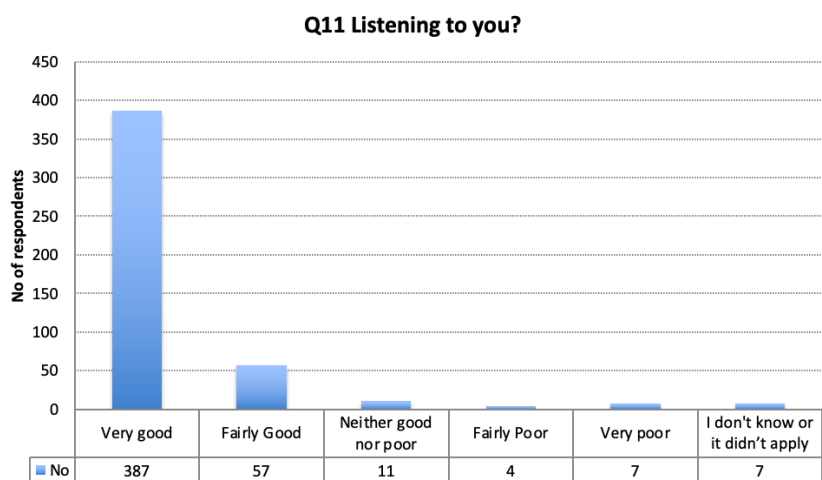


Table 12

Q11 Listening to you	No	%
Very good	387	83.0%
Fairly Good	57	12.2%
Neither good nor poor	11	2.4%
Fairly Poor	4	0.9%
Very poor	7	1.5%
Total	466	100.0%
I don't know or it didn't apply	7	
Not Answered	4	
Overall Total	477	

Question 12: Treating you with care and concern

Note: Four (0.8%) of all respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 13

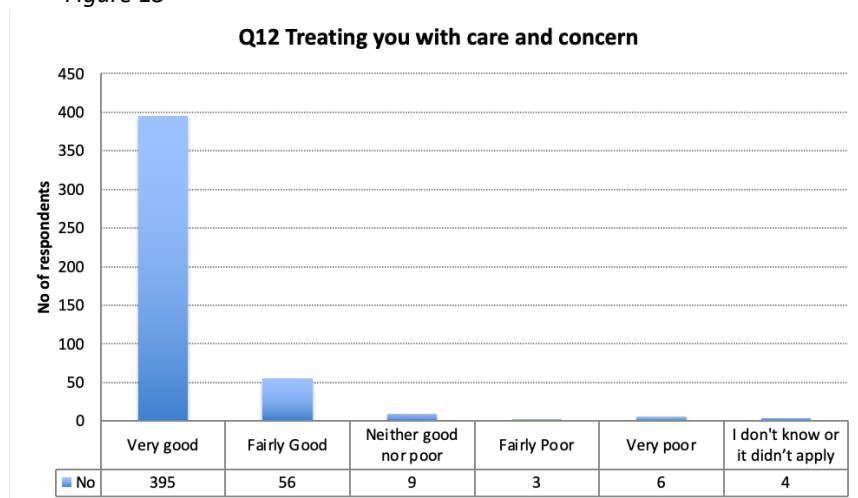


Table 13

Q12 Treating you with care and concern	No	%
Very good	395	84.2%
Fairly Good	56	11.9%
Neither good nor poor	9	1.9%
Fairly Poor	3	0.6%
Very poor	6	1.3%
Total	469	100.0%
I don't know or it didn't apply	4	
Not Answered	4	
Overall Total	477	

Comparison Table 6

			GP Patient Survey Results 2025						
No.	In your appointment today, how good was the healthcare professional you saw at each of the following?	Answers counted	National	ICS	PCN	Waterfront Practice			Excludes Not Answered &.....
						GP Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2024	
10	Considering your mental wellbeing	Very good and fairly good	74%	71%	74%	75%	95%	92%	I don't know or it didn't apply
11	Listening to you		87%	84%	86%	86%	95%	94%	
12	Treating you with care and concern		86%	82%	86%	88%	96%	95%	

During your appointment today.....

Question 13: Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment?

Note: Three respondents (0.6%) did not answer this question.

Figure 14

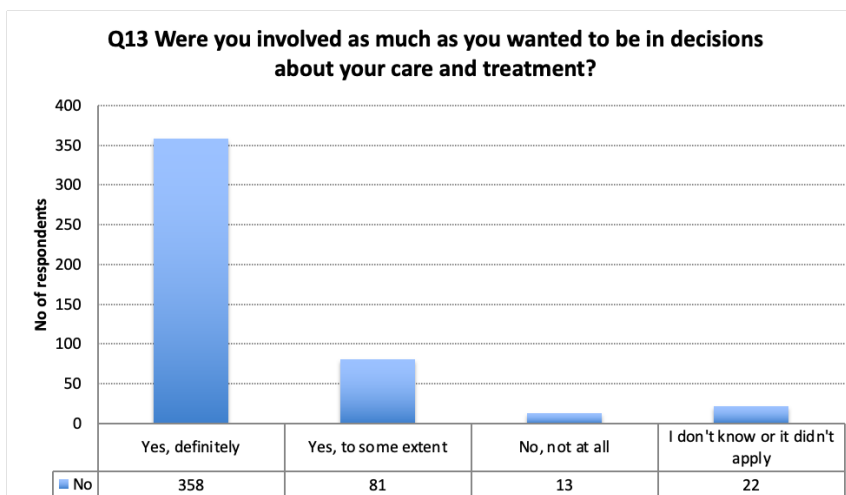


Table 14

Q13 Involved in care decisions	No	%
Yes, definitely	358	79.2%
Yes, to some extent	81	17.9%
No, not at all	13	2.9%
Total	452	100.0%
I don't know or it didn't apply	22	
Not Answered	3	
Overall Total	477	

Question 14: Did you have confidence and trust in the healthcare professional you saw?

Note: Eight respondents (1.7%) did not answer this question.

Figure 15

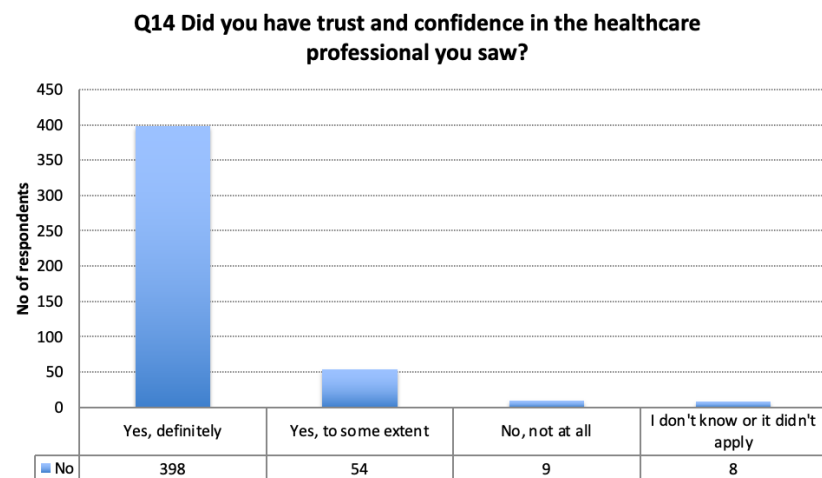


Table 15

Q14 Confidence and Trust	No	%
Yes, definitely	398	86.3%
Yes, to some extent	54	11.7%
No, not at all	9	2.0%
Total	461	100.0%
I don't know or it didn't apply	8	
Not Answered	8	
Overall Total	477	

Question 15: Thinking about the reason for your appointment were your needs met?

Note: Seventeen (3.6%) of all respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 16

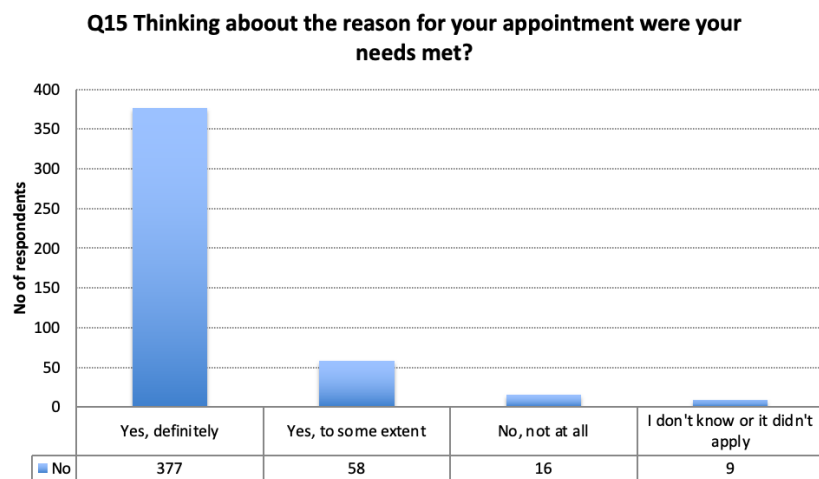


Table 16

Q15 Needs were met	No	%
Yes, definitely	377	83.6%
Yes, to some extent	58	12.9%
No, not at all	16	3.5%
Total	451	100.0%
I don't know or it didn't apply	9	
Not Answered	17	
Overall Total	477	

Comparison Table 7

			GP Patient Survey Results 2025						
			National	ICS	PCN	Waterfront Practice			Excludes Not Answered &.....
						GP Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2024	
No.	During your appointment today	Answers counted							
13	Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment?	Yes, definitely and Yes, to some extent	91%	90%	90%	88%	97%	94%	I don't know or it didn't apply
14	Did you have confidence and trust in the healthcare professional you saw?		93%	91%	92%	93%	98%	95%	
15	Thinking about the reason for your appointment were your needs met?		90%	88%	87%	83%	96%	95%	

About the Practice

Question 16: Overall, how would you describe your experience of your GP Practice?

Note: Two (0.4%) of all respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 17

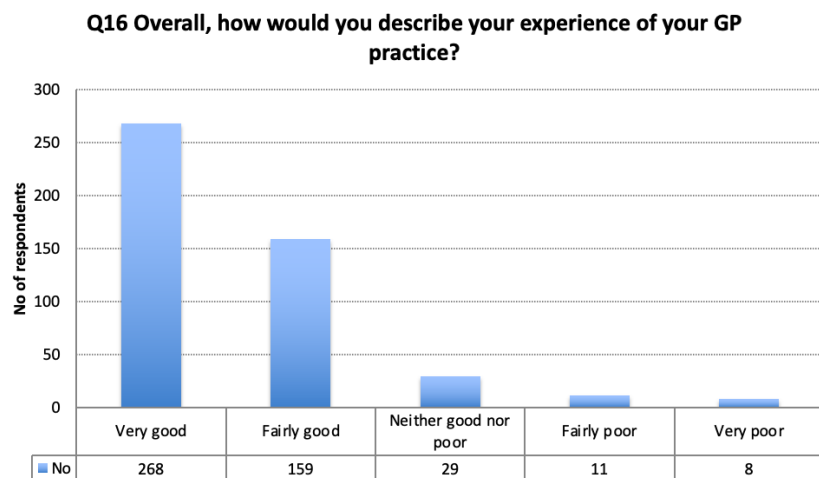


Table 17

Q16 Experience of GP Practice	No	%
Very good	268	56.4%
Fairly good	159	33.5%
Neither good nor poor	29	6.1%
Fairly poor	11	2.3%
Very poor	8	1.7%
Total	475	100.0%
Not Answered	2	
Overall Total	477	

Comparison Table 8

			GP Patient Survey Results 2025						
No.	Experience of GP Practice	Answers counted	National	ICS	PCN	Waterfront Practice			Excludes Not Answered &.....
						GP Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2024	
16	Overall, how would you describe your experience of your GP practice?	Very good and fairly good	75%	71%	72%	75%	90%	89%	None

Recommend the Practice**Question 17: How likely are you to recommend your GP Practice to friends and family if they need similar care and treatment?**

Note: Five respondents (1.0%) did not answer this question.

Figure 18



Table 18

Q17 Recommend GP Practice	No	%
Very likely	264	55.9%
Somewhat likely	126	26.7%
Neither likely nor unlikely	53	11.2%
Somewhat unlikely	13	2.8%
Very unlikely	16	3.4%
Total	472	100.0%
Not Answered	5	
Overall Total	477	

Comparison Table 9

			GP Patient Survey Results 2025						
No.	Recommend GP Practice?	Answers counted	National	ICS	PCN	Waterfront Practice			Excludes Not Answered &.....
						GP Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2025	PPG Survey 2024	
17	How likely are you to recommend your GP Practice to friends and family if they need similar care and treatment?	Very likely and Somewhat likely					83%	83%	None

One thing that would have made your experience even better

Respondents were asked to identify one thing that would have made the experience of their appointment even better. There were 269 respondents (56.4%) who did not answer this question: the remaining 208 respondents gave one or more suggestions which have been tabulated - a summary can be seen in the following table:

Table 19

Category	No	%
Not applicable / Nothing	49	22.3%
Positive comments about Practice, staff and appointment attended	39	17.7%
Access to earlier appointments	20	9.1%
Suggestions to improve patient experience	17	7.7%
Time delay waiting to go in to appointment	16	7.3%
Improve access to GPs	13	5.9%
Improve parking facilities	14	6.4%
Negative Feedback for GPs	10	4.5%
Negative feedback for Practice	10	4.5%
Can't think of anything	8	3.6%
Issues with booking appointments	8	3.6%
Miscellaneous	8	3.6%
Issues with Reception service	5	2.3%
Issues with contacting Reception	3	1.4%
Total	220	100.0%
Not answered	269	
Total	489	

More than half of all respondents did not answer this question implying that they were satisfied with the service that they received: this view is reinforced as over a quarter of respondents that did answer this question indicated that the question was “Not applicable / Nothing” 49 (22.4%) or that they “couldn’t think of anything” 8 (3.7%). There were 39 (17.8%) positive comments made about the Practice, staff and the appointment they attended.

ALL the comments which patients made in the survey have been passed on to the Practice Manager and will be reviewed by the GP Partners. The PPG feels that it is important that patients should feel able to raise issues, provide feedback or offer complaints as part of the survey or through the Practice Manager at other times and be treated with respect, understanding and where appropriate, or possible, provided with instructive feedback.

How old are you?

Note: Three (0.6%) of all respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 19

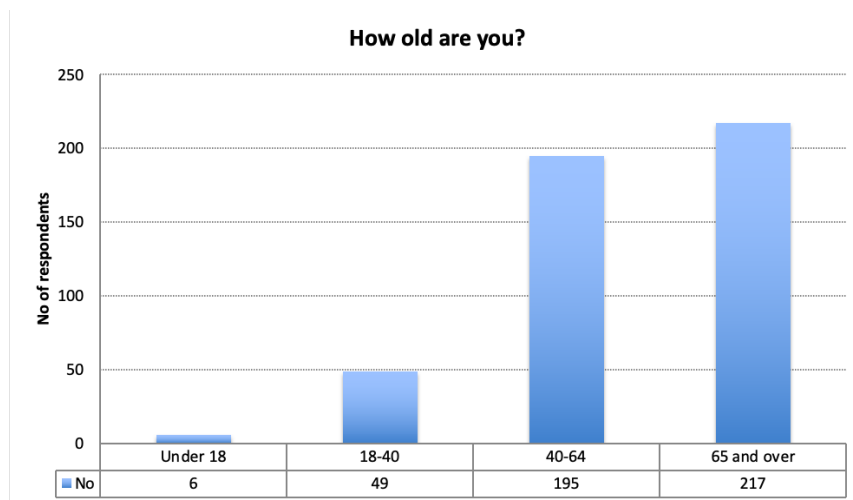


Table 20

Age	No	%
Under 18	6	1.3%
18-40	49	10.5%
40-64	195	41.8%
65 and over	217	46.5%
Total	467	100.0%
Not Answered	3	
Overall Total	470	

Which of the following best describes you?

Note: Six (1.3%) of all respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 20

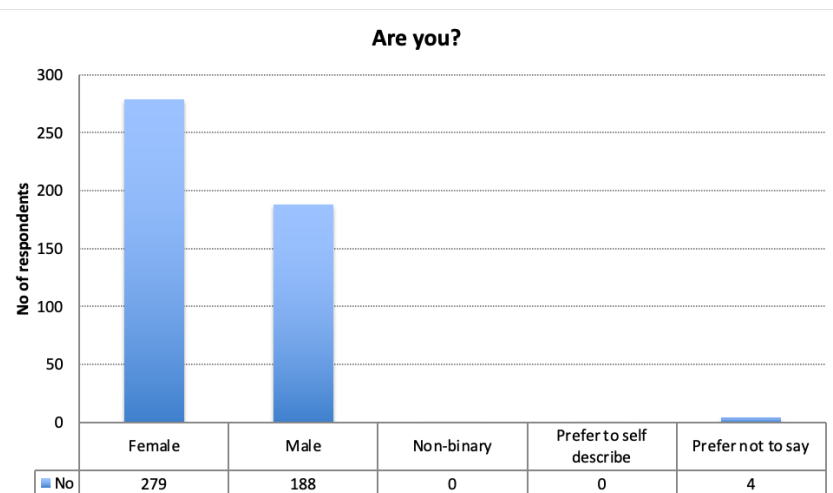


Table 21

Gender	No	%
Female	279	59.2%
Male	188	39.9%
Non-binary	0	0.0%
Prefer to self describe	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	4	0.8%
Total	471	100.0%
Not Answered	6	
Overall Total	477	

What is your ethnic group?

Note: Two (0.4%) of all respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 21

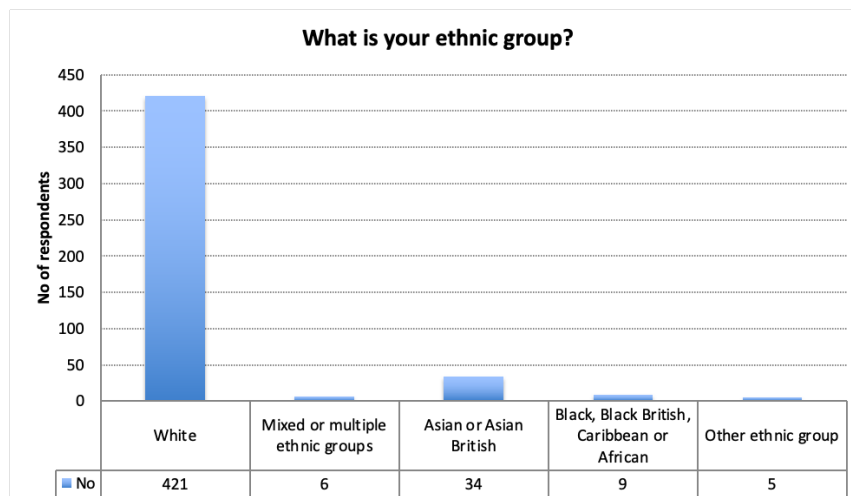


Table 22

Ethnic Group	No	%
White	421	88.6%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	6	1.3%
Asian or Asian British	34	7.2%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	9	1.9%
Other ethnic group	5	1.1%
Total	475	100.0%
Not answered	2	
Overall Total	477	

Conclusion

The Waterfront PPG is a small but active group which has always viewed the annual patient survey as an important means of assessing the effectiveness of the practice. From its inception in 2017 the GP Partners and Practice Manager have been supportive of the survey and keen, where possible, to improve any areas which are highlighted as in need of review in the patient feedback.

The first Waterfront PPG patient survey was conducted in 2017 through a paper questionnaire offered to patients in the surgery waiting room with PPG volunteers on hand to help deal with any queries or problems in their completion. In 2017 the Waterfront had 8,091 patients on its list and 128 completed survey compared to the 113 who returned the National GP Patient Survey. The survey was then run successfully in 2018 and 2019 but the COVID Pandemic made it impossible in 2020 and it was not until 2023 that the PPG was able to re-establish the annual survey.

This report is therefore the third successive assessment of patient perceptions of their treatment at the practice conducted as an on-line survey. The Waterfront Practice now has 9,174 patients – just over 1,000 more than when we ran the first survey. In the 2023 survey there were 157 completed forms, in the 2024 survey there were 278 completed forms while for 2025 the figure was an impressive 477 with 208 also offering comments which were invited by asking if there were any suggestions *‘that would have made your experience even better...’* It is important to stress that ALL respondents were providing feedback after face-to-face consultations at the surgery with GPs or healthcare professionals.

The National GP Patient Survey does not include the opportunity for respondents to offer suggestions on how to improve services, but the PPG felt this addition would be useful at surgery level. In 2024 and 2025 Respondents were also asked to identify one thing that would have made the experience of their appointment even better. Inevitably not all the comments offered practical suggestions on how to improve services but generated a range of observations which since they are the ‘patient’s voice’ have been categorised (page 17) in this report. All comments have also been passed on in full to the Practice Manager to be reviewed by the GP Partners.

Areas highlighted by the NHS GP Patient Survey 2025

Where patient experience is highest compared with the ICS result

63% of respondents find it easy to contact this GP practice using their website

ICS result: 46% | National result: 51%

61% of respondents find it easy to contact this GP practice using the NHS App

ICS result: 46% | National result: 49%

NHS England requires all GP Practices to have their online consultation form accessible during ‘core hours’ for non-urgent appointment requests, medication queries and admin requests. These results which are significantly higher than local and national benchmarks are encouraging since it might mean that, if they continue rising, that those patients phoning from 8.00 am onwards, are those with the most urgent need to see or speak to a GP or Healthcare professional ‘on

the day.’ Patients contacting the practice using the website form is an initiative that the PPG has discussed in several meetings over the past year: feedback from patients indicates that the online form has generally been useful and that the surgery had almost always responded in an appropriate time, quickly when necessary, or by midday if less urgent.

The Waterfront PPG notes that the NHS is in a transitional period. ‘Fit for the Future: Ten Year Health Plan’ Executive Summary (July 2025) offers a vision of a ‘neighbourhood care service’ and a move ‘from bricks to clicks’ where by 2028 the NHS App will be ‘a world leading tool for patient access, empowerment and care planning’ (pp.3-4). With this in mind, a number of concerns have been raised by the PPG – not everyone has internet access or the literacy skills to complete the forms in enough detail to be useful for accurate screening. For some there may be neurological access barriers. Whether by online form, or over the phone, patients or carers may find communicating serious symptoms or a detailed medical history challenging. For callers a professional, sympathetic and well-trained listener is needed to try to ensure that an accurate, sufficiently detailed report is given of a patient’s health issues or problems to enable the most suitable medical response.

87% of respondents knew what the next step would be after contacting their GP practice

ICS result: 79% | National result: 83%

A significant result which the Waterfront staff should be pleased to read. The positive feedback is confirmed by the 97% of patients who knew what the next step would be within two days of contacting their GP practice. Where patients are clear about the next steps in their diagnosis, treatment, aftercare or support, less stress is experienced and, hopefully, the more successful the outcome.

Where patient experience is lowest compared with the ICS result

83% of respondents felt their needs were met during their last general practice appointment

ICS result: 88% | National result: 90%

Disappointing in many respects though within range of both local and national results. It was therefore reassuring that in the PPG Patient Survey 96% of respondents (435) felt that their needs were met ‘definitely’ or ‘to some extent.’

33% of respondents usually get to see or speak to their preferred healthcare professional when they would like to

ICS result: 36% | National result: 40%

As the results indicate patients seeing or speaking to their preferred healthcare professional continues to be problematic locally and nationally. These outcomes are mirrored in the PPG Patient Survey where 33% of respondents were successful in seeing their preferred healthcare professional. Continuity of care is fundamental to achieving better outcomes for patients and thus avoiding, or at least reducing, hospital admissions. In a practice with a small number of GP Partners and salaried GPs it is inevitable that appointment slots are limited and you may not always be able to see the doctor you wish, particularly on the same day or even week. According to the *Royal College of General Practitioners*: as of August 2025, GP practices in England were responsible for around 63.8 million

patients but with a declining workforce: 957 fewer fully qualified full-time GPs than in 2015. Both nationally and locally, the difficulties of staffing and an increasing number of patients means that it is hard to see how access to a preferred GP or healthcare professional might be significantly improved.

It might be alleviated to a degree if the number of 'Do Not Attend' (DNA) appointments could be reduced. The PPG has a standing item on its agenda where the Practice Manager reports monthly on DNA numbers which often includes 'no shows' even for doctor appointments, most of those who do not attend fail to notify the practice so that other patients are denied an opportunity to attend a consultation. In August 2025 there were 179 DNAs and the Practice Manager as a trial has tasked staff to phone patients to confirm that they will be attending their appointment. The practice also now restricts patients with 3 or more DNAs to making an appointment on the day, though this has not been wholly successful - patients are still booking an appointment and then failing to attend. In some cases, there may be mental health issues or other reasons (attendance at A+E, condition has improved, referral to pharmacist etc) but for others, perhaps, there is a lack of appreciation that it would help other patients if their appointment could be re-assigned.

61% of respondents say they have had enough support from local services or organisations in the last 12 months to help manage their long-term conditions or illnesses

ICS result: 64% | National result: 69%

The Waterfront result is within range of the local score, but the practice needs to consider whether this might be improved by undertaking a review of the referral system and investigating whether local services and organisations are restricted by funding, resources in what they can offer patients?

Looking ahead

The 2025 PPG Patient Survey is very encouraging and the Waterfront GPs, healthcare professionals and administrative and support staff should be pleased with the outcomes. Being in the 'front line' of healthcare in a socially deprived area is always going to be challenging which makes the feedback in this latest survey extremely positive though, as ever, there is no room for complacency.

To continue to promote the Waterfront Surgery Website and NHS App

As mentioned earlier the NHS and Primary Care are in a transitional phase and the Waterfront has already managed to significantly increase the number of patients using the online form and NHS App. The Waterfront PPG supports these moves but would reiterate that it remains important that patients are able to phone or call in to the surgery to make enquiries, seek help and make appointments. So-called barriers to online communications may not simply be due to lack of knowledge of the service, or the sometimes challenging, activation process of setting up an account.

Patients who do not have mobile phones, tablets or computers or, if they do, lack the skills to navigate online bookings should not be disadvantaged. Inclusion should be paramount for all patients during a period in which the NHS and others are seeking to move 'interactions' online with not always successful outcomes. What is termed 'digital exclusion' does not seem to be mentioned in 'Fit for the Future: Ten Year Health Plan' Executive Summary (July 2025). According to Age UK, 'Facts and figures about digital inclusion and older people' in 2024 one-third of people over 75 years of age do not use the internet and they are often the patients with the most complex chronic conditions.

At the July PPG Meeting, Jim of juststraighttalk.org attended and gave a detailed, informative and engaging presentation on “Digi Dudley” which began in 2021 to help people requiring technology support who are over 65 or housebound. For IT novices or those who lack confidence there is a 7-session cycle which can be repeated, if necessary, that focuses on demystifying the NHS App, online banking and shopping. Unfortunately, although he would be happy to run sessions in Brierley Hill there is no funding for accommodation where courses might take place in the area. However, there is a potential solution with the possibility of using the Food Bank accommodation which is being investigated at the present.

Practice Demographic

As with last year’s PPG Patient Survey one concern is that while it was completed by a record number of respondents, it may not fully reflect the demographic of the practice. It would be useful to categorise the age range of patients, ethnicity, the percentage of patients with Long Term Conditions (LTC) and unemployed which might increase the demands on services. The PPG needs to work with the Practice Manager to clarify the practice demographic and, if necessary, seek ways of broadening the range of responses in the survey for 2026. One possibility may be running not only the on-line survey but offering patients the chance of completing questionnaires in reception.

Conclusion

Both the NHS GP Patient Survey 2025 and Waterfront PPG Patient Survey 2025 indicate very positive feedback on the Waterfront Practice across all areas. In the NHS GP Patient Survey 2025 75% of patients rated the Waterfront as ‘Good’ which is in line with the national result and higher than the ICS result. An encouraging outcome given that in this year’s NHS GP Patient Survey only four GP practices achieved a 100% ‘Good’ vote out of 6,229 practices. The Waterfront PPG Patient Survey 2025 records that 90% of 477 respondents would describe the practice as ‘Very good’ and ‘fairly good’ following appointments with GPs and healthcare professionals which deserves to be recognised.

Whilst the Waterfront PPG tries to provide a patient ‘voice’ to challenge and improve services where possible for all patients, it has also placed on record in many meetings its appreciation of the commitment of the GPs, healthcare assistants, back office and reception staff to delivering the best quality service in often difficult circumstances. With the increasing demand for GP services, the problem of recruiting and retaining staff as well as the uncertainty of the details of the *10 Year Health Plan* (3rd July, 2025) the road ahead remains challenging for everyone involved in primary care.

As noted the Waterfront PPG is concerned that moving to on-line forms may result in some patients with serious conditions not ‘self-reporting’ their symptoms clearly enough to be recognised as needing urgent care or referral to A+E. Prioritising a large number of on-line forms which may range from non-life threatening illness to end-of-life patients is always going to be difficult for all practices. Patient safety and welfare must always be at the forefront of any innovation or initiative – patients should always be able to contact their practice by phone or walking in and talking to receptionists