



**Staffordshire and  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Integrated Care Board**

# **People's Panel Survey Primary Care Access**

**Direct Data Analysis Ltd  
September 2023**

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# **Introduction**



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and objectives

This was a short People's Panel survey looking at Primary Care Access across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. The survey obtained feedback on following topics:

- Access to GP Services and additional roles
- The NHS App
- Health advice and treatment of minor ailments
- Community Pharmacy Services

## 1.2 Approach

The survey was designed with input from the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board, Primary Care Team, during July and August 2023.

Each questionnaire contained a unique survey ID, to identify non-respondents for the reminder survey and to allocate the survey response to a given demographic profile for any further analysis.

### Technical testing of the survey

As part of the design process, the questionnaire was tested as follows:

1. In-house, using a robust plan that fully tested the design and operability of the survey.
2. Piloting with five external members, who checked and reported on areas such as usability, complexity of wording, etc.
3. Software to check that the survey had an acceptable fatigue and accessibility score.

### Fieldwork

The survey fieldwork period was as follows:

- 11<sup>th</sup> August 2023 – Email invite to all panel members
- 19<sup>th</sup> August – Email reminder to all panel members who had not completed the survey
- 27<sup>th</sup> August 2023 – Final email reminder to all panel members, still to complete the survey
- 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023 – Survey closed

New members joining the panel during the fieldwork period were also given the opportunity to participate in the survey.

During the fieldwork period, six members unsubscribed from the panel.

## Who we spoke to

### Email invites



**1,257**  
Delivered

### Responses



**273**  
Completed

### Response Rate



**22%**  
Completion

### Prize draw

All completed questionnaires were entered into a prize draw to win one of two £50 love2shop vouchers, to be spent either in the high street or online. The prize draw took place in September 2023 and the two winning panel members were sent their £50 vouchers via email.

Survey, data analysis and report production undertaken by Direct Data Analysis Ltd, who run the panel on behalf of the Integrated Care Board.

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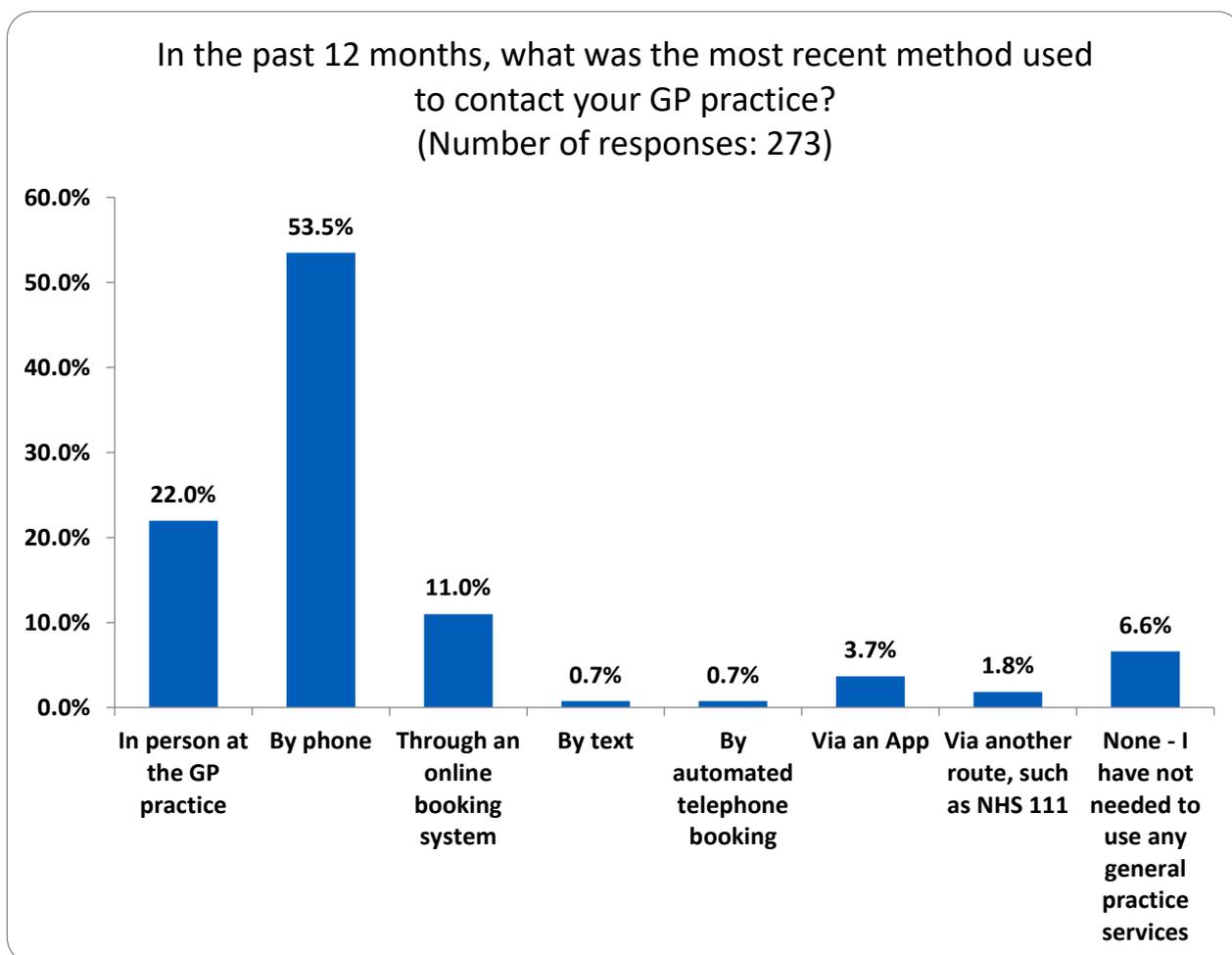
# **Survey findings**



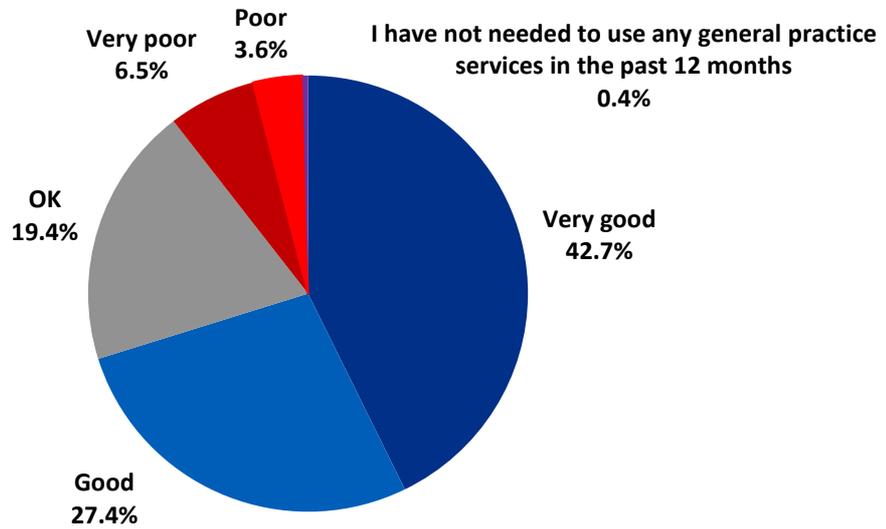
## Access to GP services

Members of the People's Panel were first asked a series of questions relating to their experiences in accessing GP Services during the past 12 months.

- **Telephone** was the main method of contact, with **53.5%** of respondents choosing this method.
- **70.1%** of respondents rated the overall experience of the service received from their GP practice on their latest visit as **good or very good**.
- **82%** of respondents had seen another health care professional other than a GP in the past 12 months, with **Nurse/Practice nurse/Nursing associate** being seen by **74%** of respondents.
- **21.8%** of respondents saw a health care professional other than a GP at **another health care practice site**.



How would you rate the overall experience of the service you received from your GP practice on your latest visit?  
(Number of responses: 248)



## How could the experience accessing your GP practice be improved in the future?

One hundred and eighty-two respondents provided further comment when asked how their experience of accessing their GP practice could be improved. A selection of those comments are shown below.

While the need to **call the GP practice at 8am** for an appointment was one of the most common issues respondents raised, a number of respondents felt that **an online system where you could book appointments in advance** would improve access to their GP practice.

Several respondents commented that their practice used to operate an advanced online booking system, but this was withdrawn during Covid and had not been reinstated.

*I cannot telephone since I am deaf, and trying to get a reply via email is a nightmare. The local practice here is appalling, especially in comparison to my previous one.*

*I was told by the GP I needed a follow up, but this could only be booked via online — why could he have not given me an appointment outright.*

*My GP surgery has recently started to use an online triage system, which is so much better than the previous system where you had to call at 8am.*

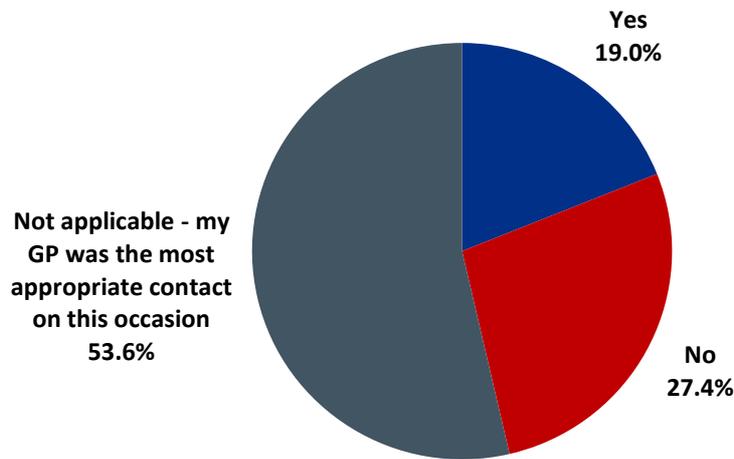
*Sometimes you only have a query but still use up an appointment. It would be nice if simple things could be dealt with, without taking up an appointment I'm sure someone else needs.*

*Open up the online booking system again - it no longer seems to work for routine appointments.*

*Have pre-bookable, non-emergency GP and nurse practitioner appointments available to book via patient access.*

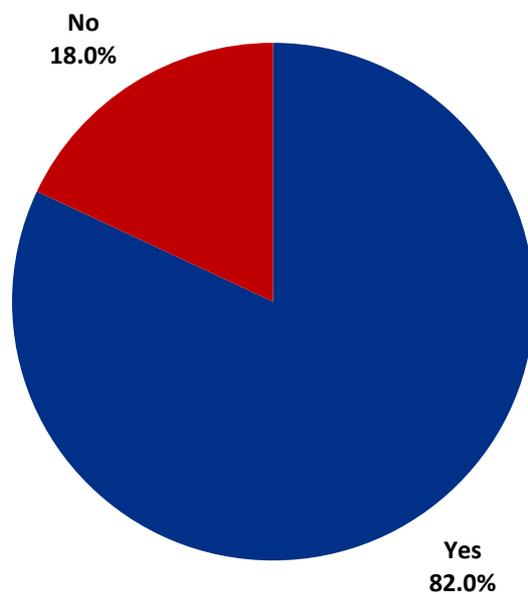
When you last contacted your practice, did they explain the reasons why sometimes a GP is not the most appropriate person to help you?

(Number of responses: 248)

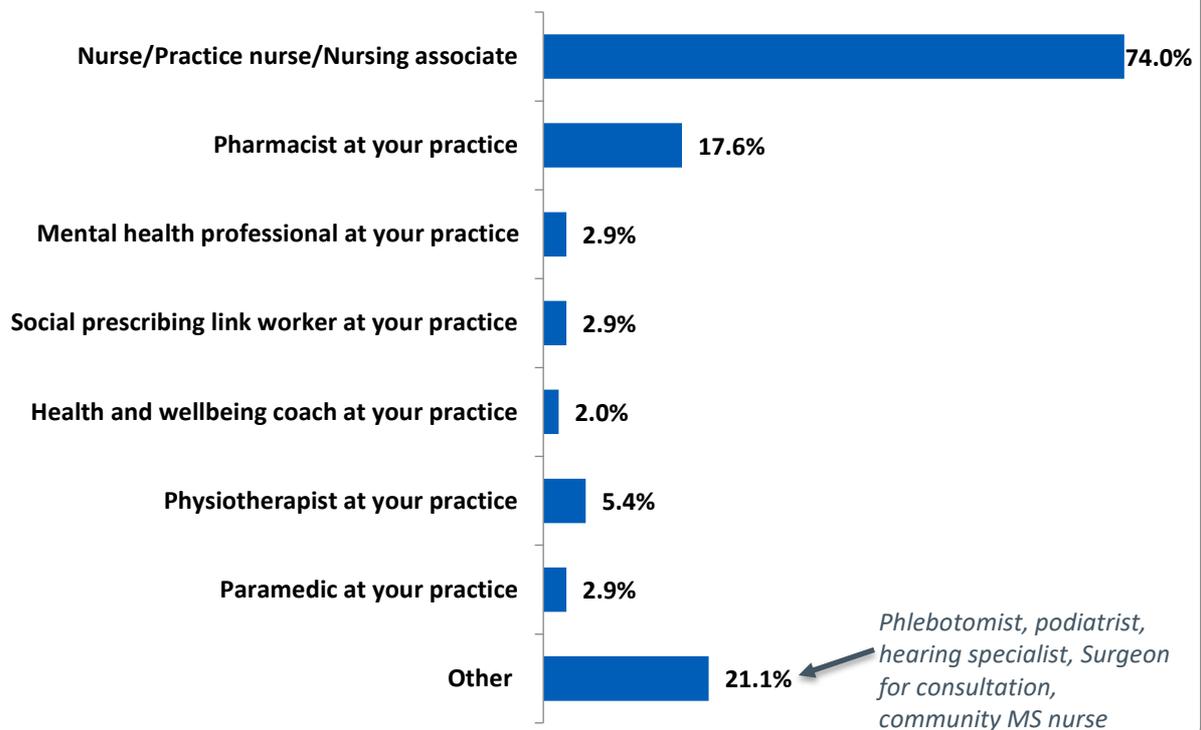


In the past 12 months, have you seen another health care professional other than a GP?

(Number of responses: 250)



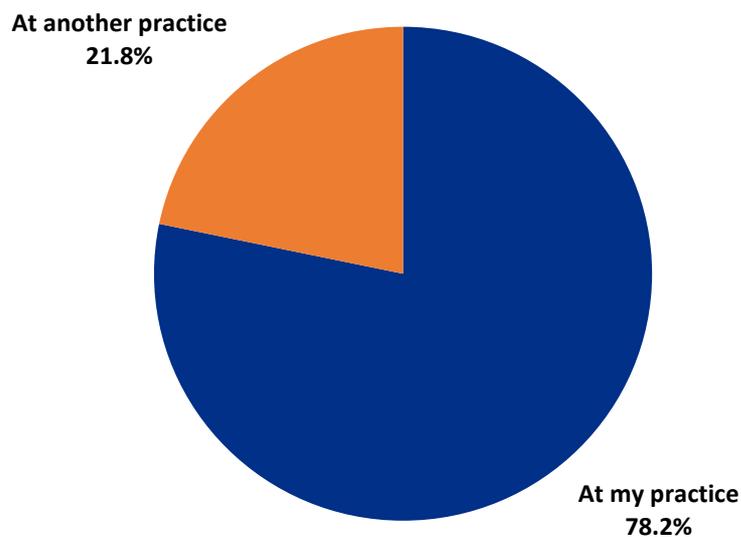
### Which health care professional other than a GP, did you see?(Number of responses: 204)



*Respondents could select more than one option.*

### Was this at your practice or were you seen at another practice site?

(Number of responses: 193)



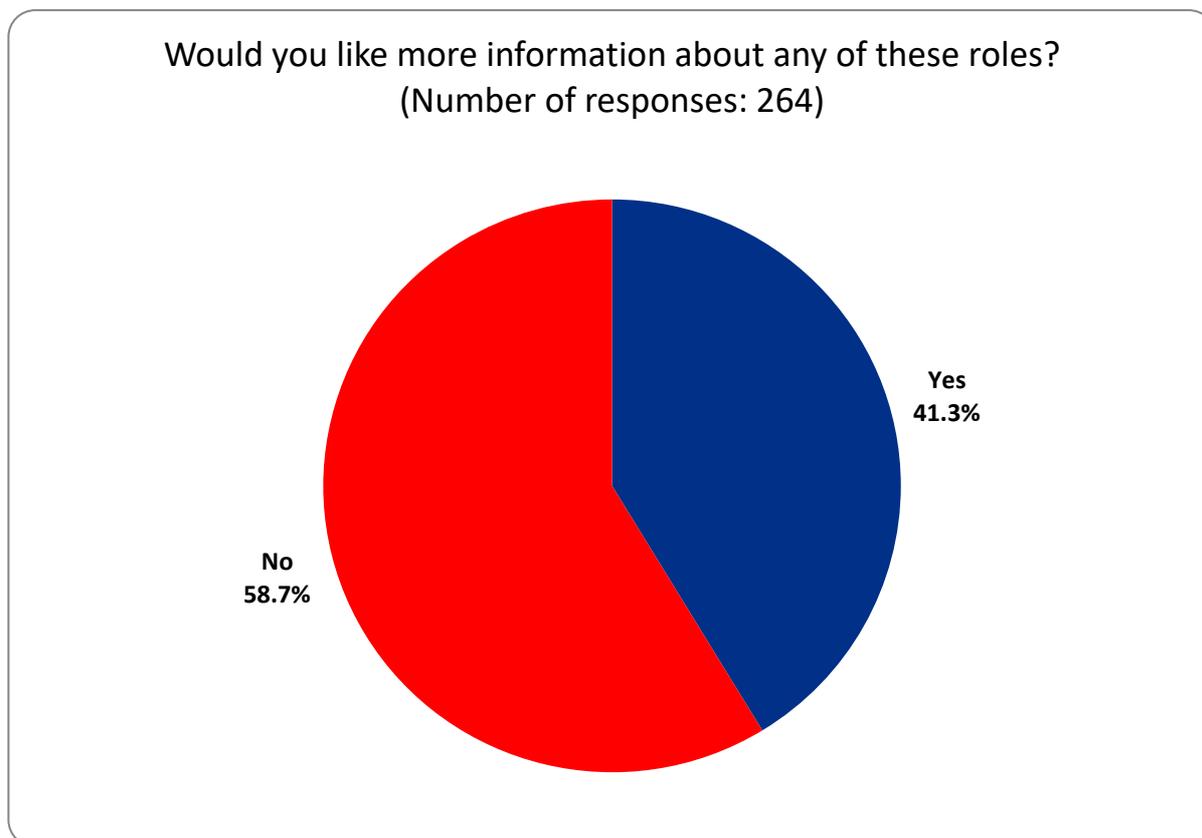
## General Practice - Additional Roles

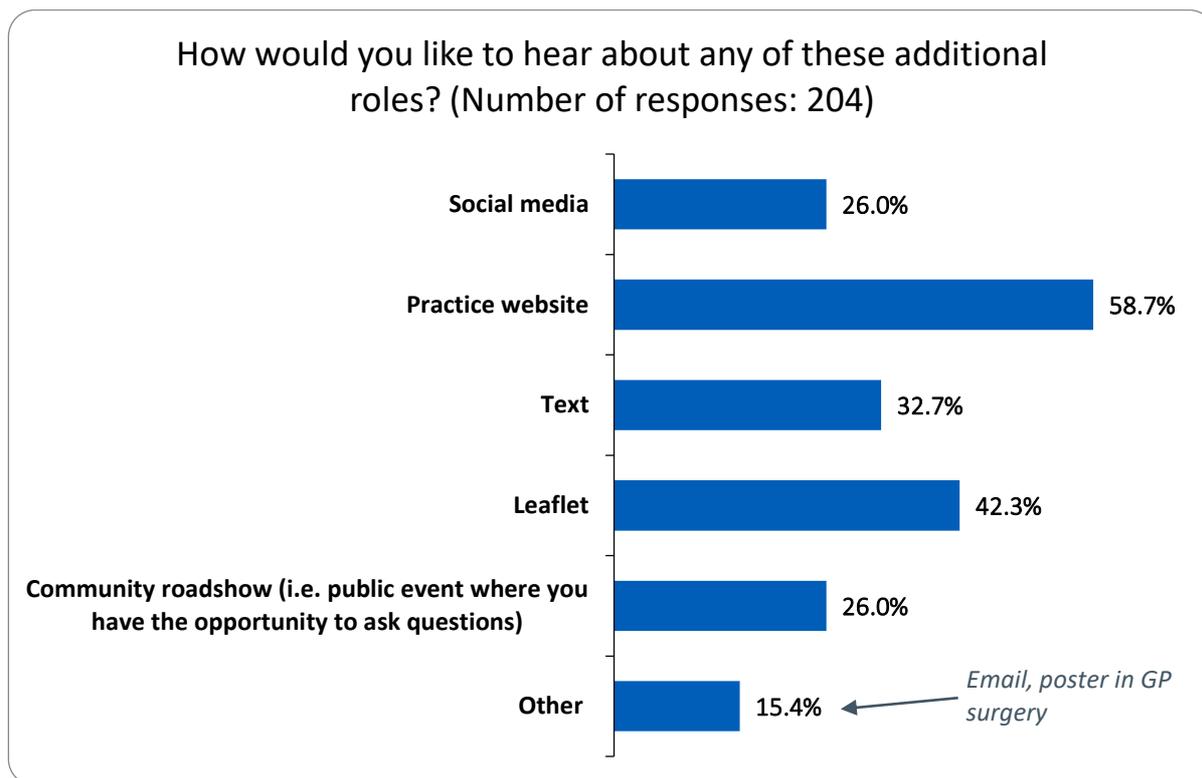
Since 2019, GP practice teams have grown to include more qualified, specialist staff to support GPs and help patients see the right person, first time. This includes roles such as pharmacists, first-contact physiotherapists, social prescribing link workers, health and well-being coaches.

For example, a patient with knee pain would be booked directly with the practice first-contact physiotherapist, instead of seeing a GP first.

The protocol means the reception team knows how to direct and book with the right clinician, and effective communication between the GPs and the reception team means that questions can be dealt with quickly if they are unsure where to book in.

- **41.3%** of respondents stated they would like **more information** on these roles.
- The **Practice Website** was the method respondents would most like to use (**58.7%**) to hear about these additional roles.

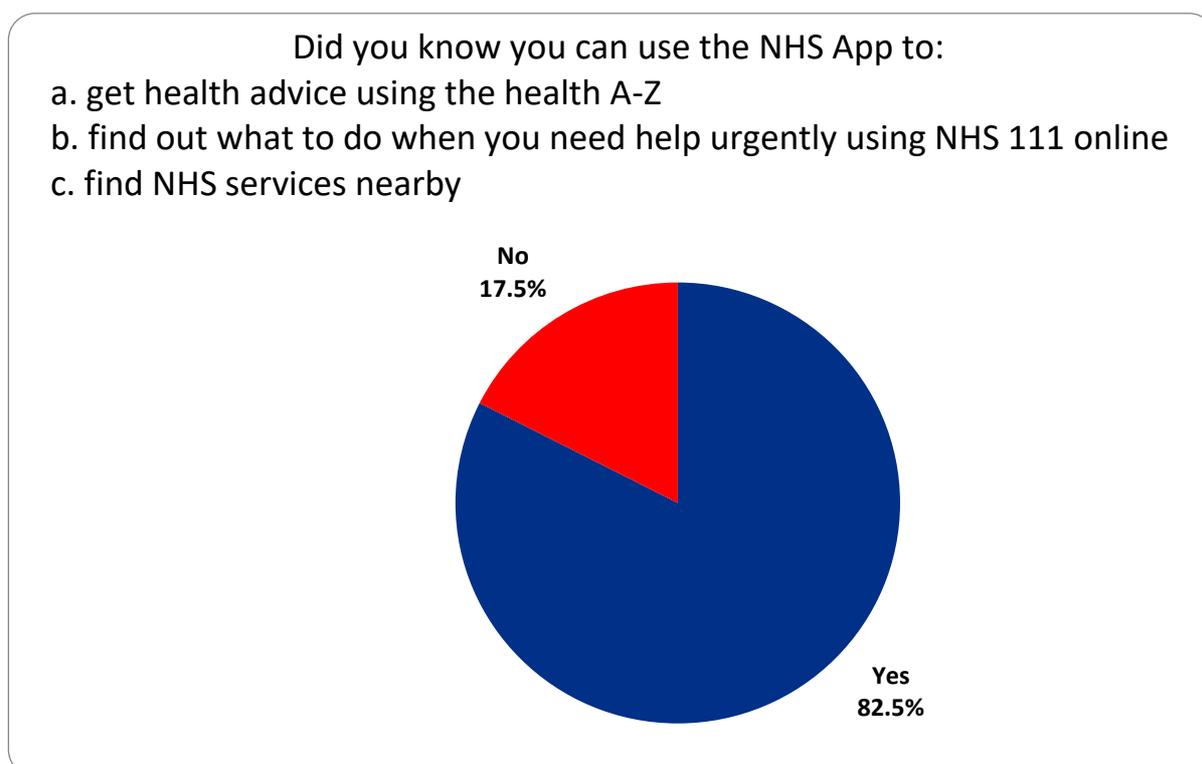




Respondents could select more than one option.

## The NHS App

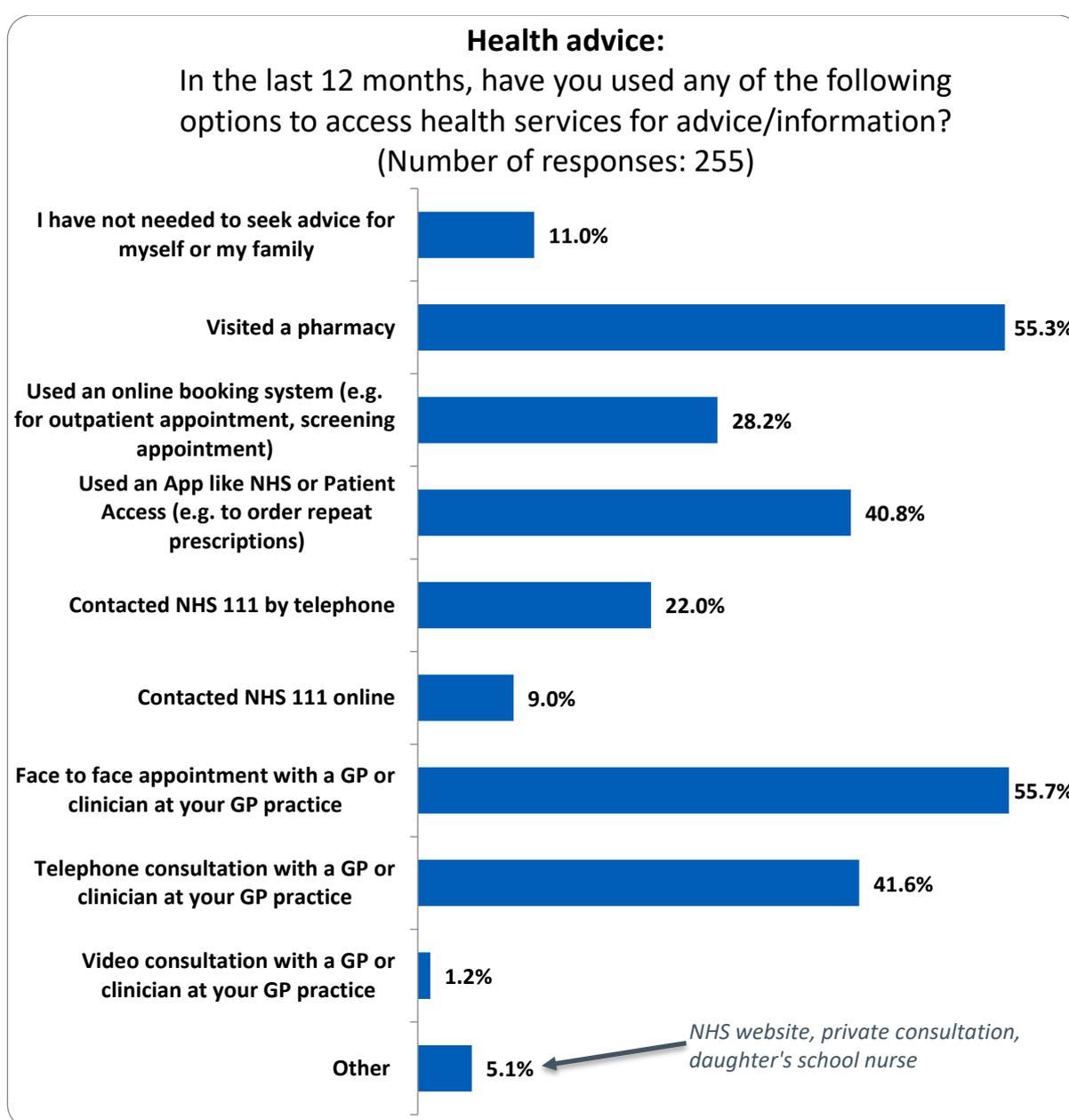
**82.5%** of respondents were aware they could use the NHS App to get health advice, find out what to do when they needed help urgently, and find NHS services nearby.



## Health advice and treatment of minor ailments

Panel members were asked what channels (if any) they had used to access health advice and treatment of minor ailments.

- **Health Advice:** Visiting a pharmacy (55.3%) and face to face appointments with a GP or clinician at a member's practice (55.7%) were the most common methods used by respondents to seek health advice.
- **Minor Ailments:** Visiting a pharmacy (48.8%) was the most common method used to obtain advice and treatment for minor ailments.

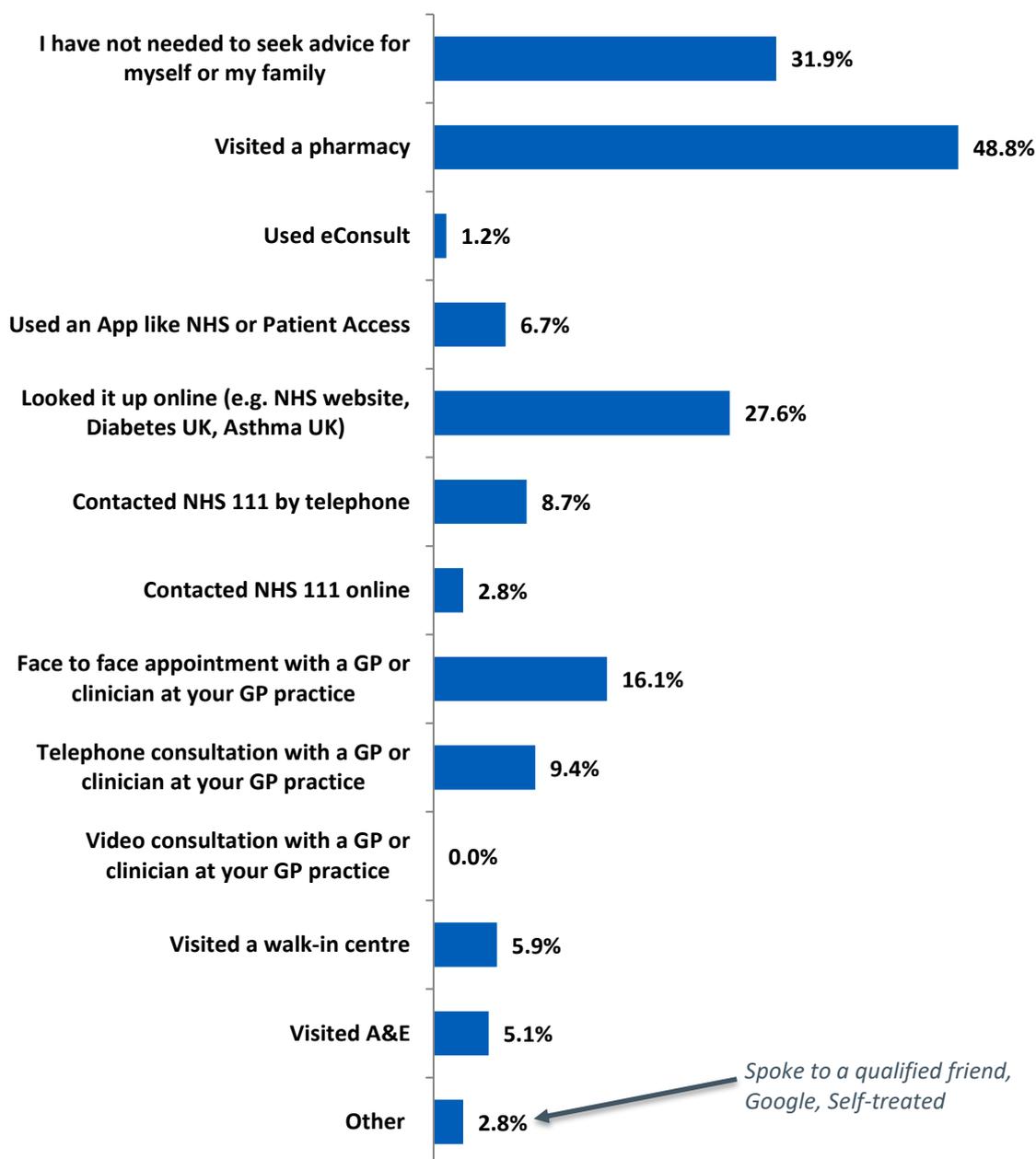


Respondents could select more than one option.

### Minor ailments:

In the last 12 months, thinking about occasions when you or a member of your family have needed advice for a minor ailment, e.g. cold, sore throat, upset stomach, where have you gone for advice?

(Number of responses: 254)

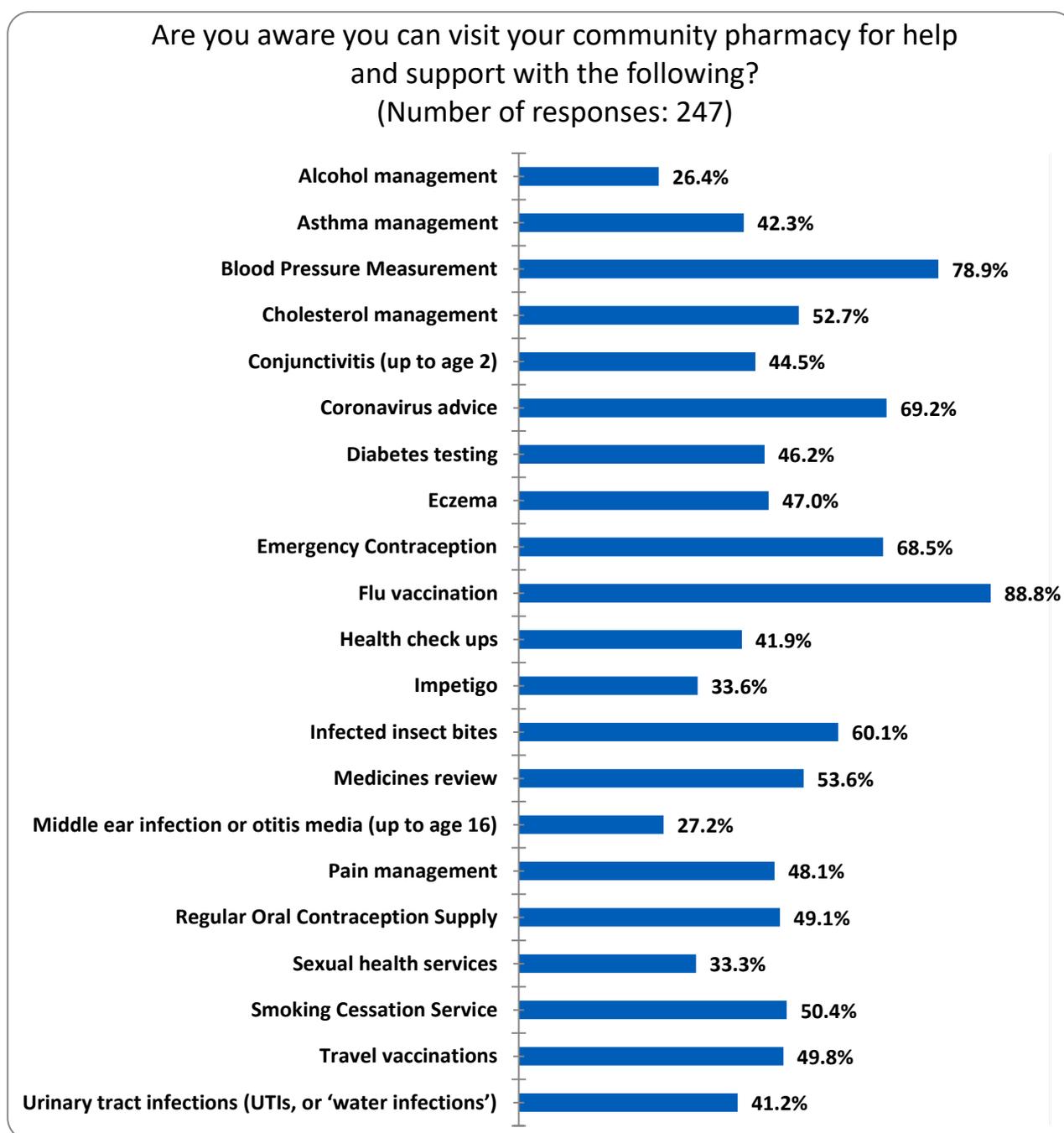


Respondents could select more than one option.

## Community Pharmacies

Panel members were asked for their awareness of services that could be provided by a community pharmacy.

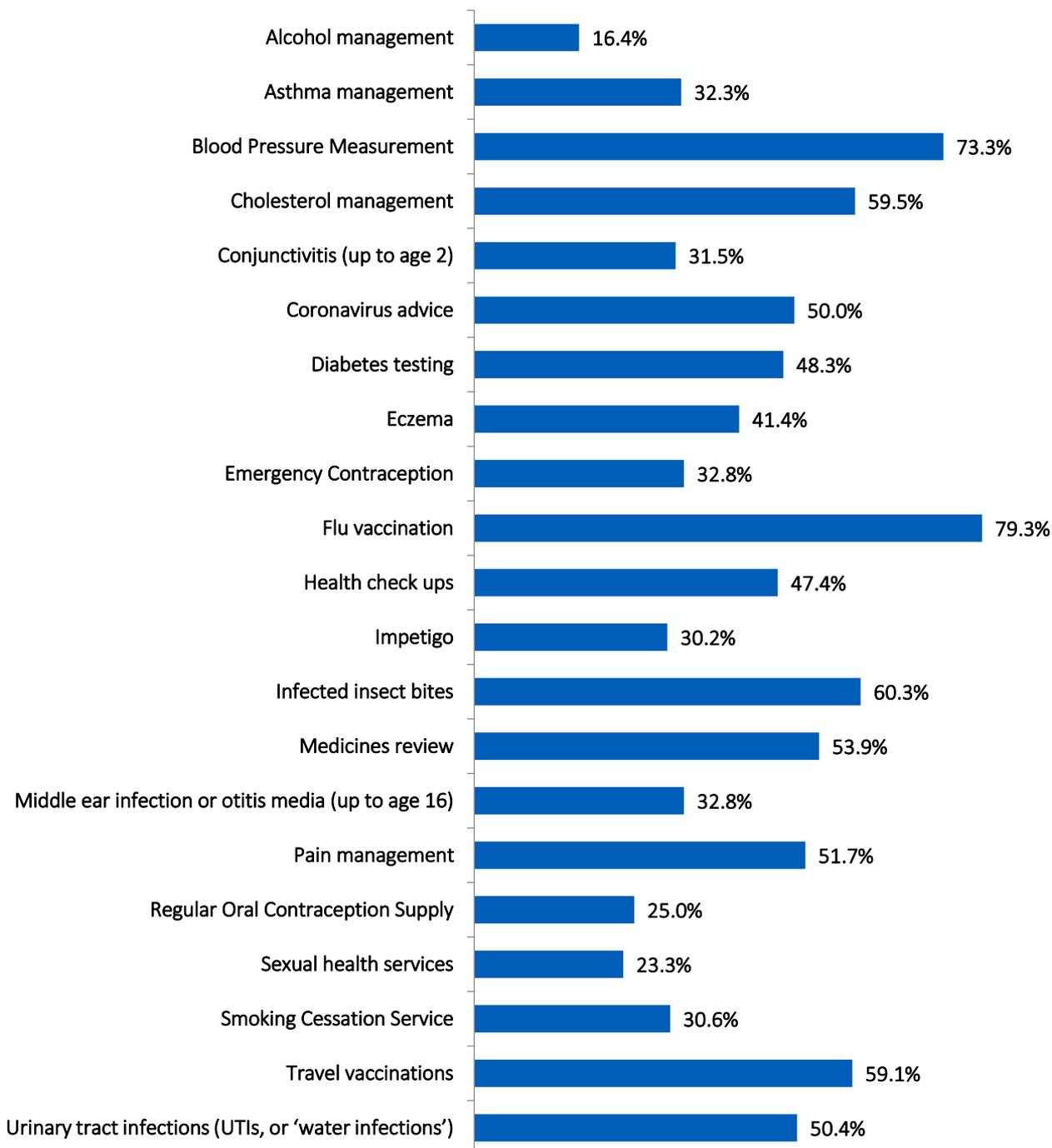
The majority of respondents were aware that **flu vaccinations (88.8%)** and **blood pressure measurements (78.9%)** could be provided by a community pharmacy. However, just **26.4%** were aware that **alcohol management** was a service that could be provided.



*Please note: Not all services may be available in your community pharmacy.*

**Flu vaccination (79.3%)** and **blood pressure management (73.3%)** were the services respondents would be **most happy to access** via a community pharmacy. **Alcohol management (16.4%)** and **sexual health services (23.3%)** were the services respondents would be **least happy to access** via a community pharmacy.

Which of the following services would you be happy to access via a community pharmacy?  
(Number of responses: 232)



*Please note: Not all services may be available in your community pharmacy.*

## If you have reservations about using a community pharmacy for any of the above services, please can you say why?

Respondents were asked to list any reservations they may have with regards to accessing services that could be offered by a community pharmacy. Ninety-two respondents provided a comment, with a selection of those comments shown below.

**Lack of privacy** and not having access to the patient's **full medical history** were two of the most common themes to arise from respondent comments.

*I do feel that pharmacists have a part to play in offering health advice, but would be concerned about them undertaking management of conditions such as asthma and diabetes. At a GP surgery there is usually a doctor available if the nurse or practitioner undertaking the screening has any concerns. Referral to a secondary care facility can be made without delay.*

*My local pharmacy is very small and it's not very private to ask for advice. There is a consulting room but you've got to give a lot of information before you can get in there. I think they may need to rethink the layout of many pharmacies.*

*The only reservations are that the pharmacist is so busy. I can't see how they could fit all the extra things in.*

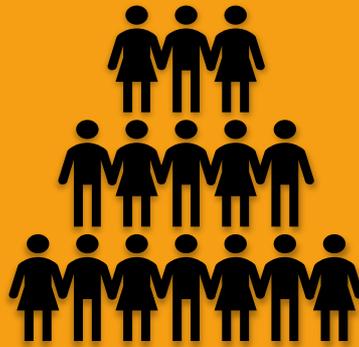
*I used one for an insect bite... no use at all. Sent me back to the surgery from where I had travelled, having being turned away to see a pharmacy!!!!*

*I would consider it a good option to see a pharmacist for the topics listed - as it might also act as an initial triage. Some issues like alcohol or pain management might be quite complex issues, which might need unwrapping by specialists - but this would be a good and accessible place to start.*

*Lack of privacy, you can generally hear what's going on in the consultation rooms as pharmacies are small.*

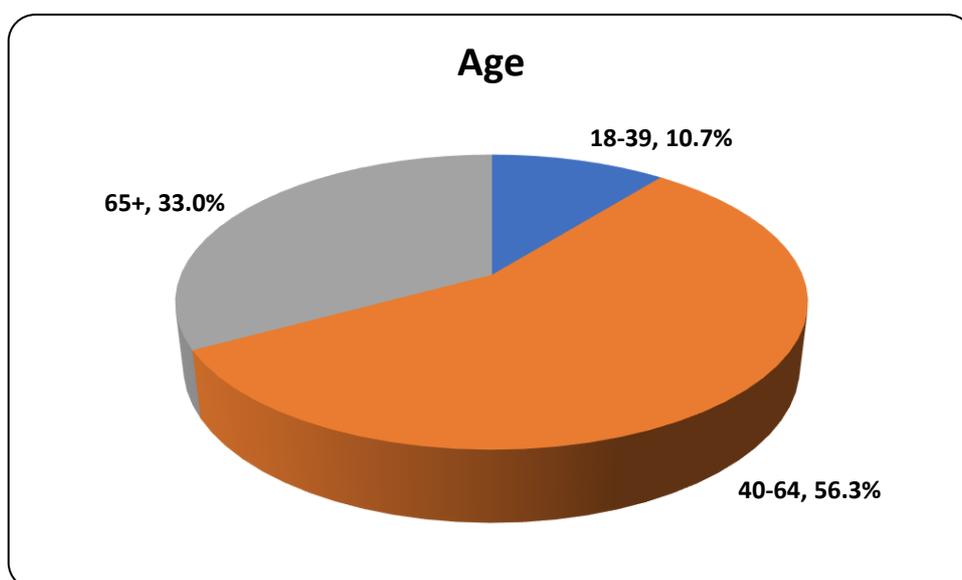
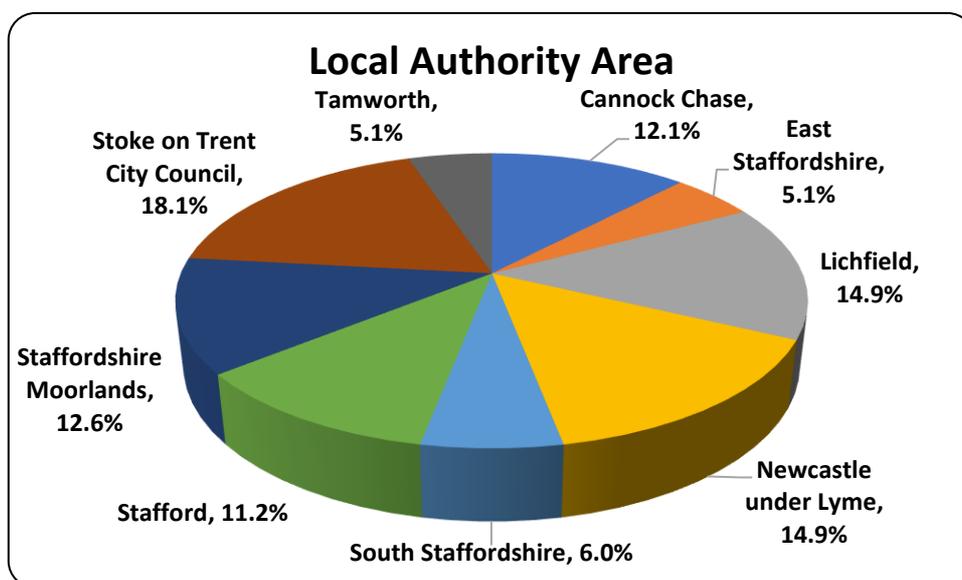
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## Respondent profiles



Demographics of the People's Panel are broadly representative of the profile for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent (ONS 2021 Census data for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent).

In this survey, the breakdown of responses by local authority area was similar to the panel and ONS 2021 Census data. However, the age of respondents was skewed slightly towards the mid and older age groups (10.7% of respondents were 18-39 years of age compared to around 26% of panel members). Likewise, females accounted for 61.2% of responses, compared to around 54% of panel members.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent have separate ONS Census data  
September 2023

