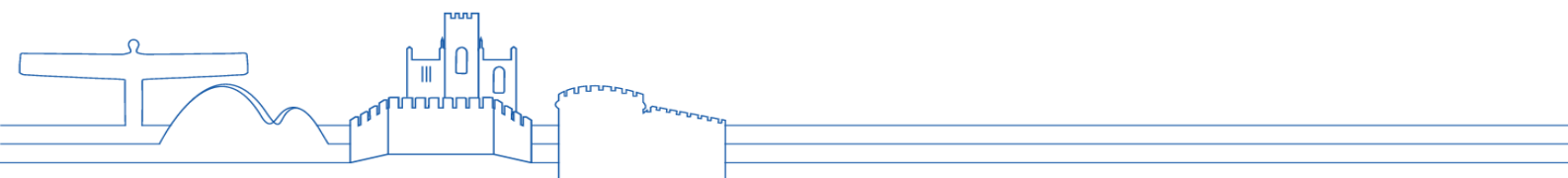




**North East and
North Cumbria**

Patient views of extended access to GP services in Gateshead

August 2022



Involve North East

This report was produced by Involve North East on behalf of North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board. We are an independent organisation who specialises in involvement and engagement. We work with integrity, ensuring people's voices influence the design of services they receive.

We have vast experience and expertise in gathering the views and opinions of patients, carers and the general public in relation to health services. For example:

- service evaluations
- changes to care pathways
- locating new services

We employ quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques including:

- Questionnaires – paper-based and online
- Participatory appraisals
- Drop-in events
- Face-to-face and telephone interviews
- Focus groups
- Informal group discussions

For more information about the services we can provide please contact Andrew White on 0191 226 3450 or email andrew@involve.org.uk. Visit our website at: www.involve.org.uk

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Introduction

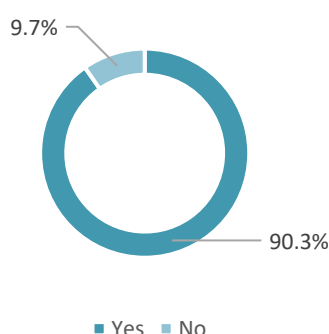
- Extended access refers to GP services which are provided outside of normal operating hours. GP practices in Gateshead already provide extended access services but from October 2022 Gateshead's five Primary Care Networks (PCNs) will take over the running of these services.
- Ahead of this, the PCNs were keen to understand what extended access patients would find useful, in order to ensure that services meet their needs.
- Patients were asked about access to:
 - o Evening and weekend appointments
 - o Appointments away from their GP practice
 - o Urgent mental health appointments over the phone
 - o Appointments for having bloods taken
- Due to the tight timescales of this project, data collection was primarily via an online survey with patients who were also offered the opportunity to request it in a different format.
- The survey was publicised widely across statutory and voluntary and community organisations in Gateshead in July 2022. 526 people shared their views (see Appendix 1 for profile of respondents). The following is a brief report of the findings of the survey.

Key points

- There is strong support for all of the extended service suggestions highlighted in the survey with over four in five respondents stating that they would use them:
 - o Appointments at weekends – 94.2% support
 - o Appointments after 6pm during the week – 90.3%
 - o Appointments at alternative locations to GP practice – 87.4%
 - o Telephone appointments for urgent mental health problem – 86.8%
 - o Appointments for bloods in the evening – 89.6%
 - o Appointments for bloods at weekends – 84.4%
- It should be noted however that some respondents did not support these ideas, citing a variety of reasons for each, but most notably a request for face-to-face appointments for urgent mental health problems and a need to consider accessibility in its varying forms when developing alternative locations for appointments.
 - o It is suggested that time is taken to review the reasons highlighted in this report to ensure that the future services meet the needs of all patients and crucially, that there is equitable access to these services for all.

Patient views

Would you find GP appointments on weekdays after 6pm useful?



No. of respondents – 526

- Nine in ten patients (90.3%) said that they would find GP appointments on weekdays after 6pm useful, the remaining 9.7% do not feel it would be useful.
 - o Those who felt it would be useful cited being able to get an appointment after work and having access to more appointments in particular:

Reasons for finding evening appointments useful	Percentage of respondents (%)
Work during the day	72.0
It would make more appointments available	24.0
I could fit it around school commitments	8.0
It is too busy during the day	4.0
I could arrange childcare more easily	4.0

*Respondents could give more than one answer

**No of respondents - 25

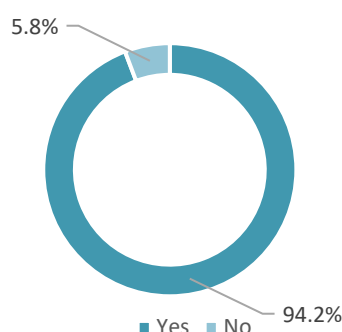
- o Of those who did not feel it would be useful the majority had no commitments during the day so could get appointments then, or simply stated that they had no difficulties getting daytime appointments. A minority prefer daytime appointments.

Reasons for not finding evening appointments useful	Percentage of respondents (%)
Retired so don't need an evening appointment	25.6
Able to go during the day	18.6
Have no difficulties getting a daytime appointment	16.3
Would prefer to be seen during the day	14.0
Will still be hard to get appointments	4.7
Staff work too long hours as it is	4.7
Would prefer to leave these appointments for people who can't attend during the day	4.7
Housebound	2.3
Would mean fewer daytime appointments available	2.3
Work nights	2.3
Would find 6pm too busy	2.3
GP already has extended hours in morning	2.3

*Respondents could give more than one answer

** No of respondents - 43

Would you find GP appointments at weekends useful?



No. of respondents – 520

- Over nine in ten patients (94.2%) said that they would find GP appointments at weekends useful, the remaining 5.8% do not feel it would be useful.
 - Those who felt it would be useful worked full-time and liked the fact that they could be seen before Monday if they were ill over the weekend.

Reasons for finding weekend appointments useful	Percentage of respondents (%)
Work full-time so will make easier to get appointment	14
Don't have to wait until Monday if have a health issue	4
Would find Saturday appointments useful	1

* Respondents could give more than one answer

** No of respondents - 18

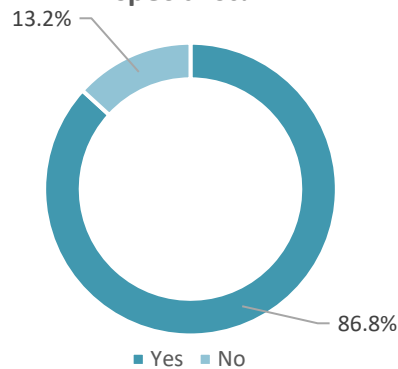
- Those who would not find weekend appointments useful were concerned that staff already worked long hours, some stated that they did not want to spend time on the weekend at GP appointments whilst others do not have commitments during the week so are able to access appointments at this time.

Reasons for not finding weekend appointments useful	Percentage of respondents (%)
Staff work too long hours as it is	27.3
Don't want to take up weekend attending GP appointment	22.7
Retired so don't need a weekend appointment	22.7
Have no difficulties getting a weekday appointment	13.6
Would prefer to leave these appointments for people who can't attend during the day	9.1
If ill will make time to be seen whenever	4.5
Will still be hard to get an appointment	4.5
Prefer to go to walk-in centre	4.5

* Respondents could give more than one answer

** No of respondents - 22

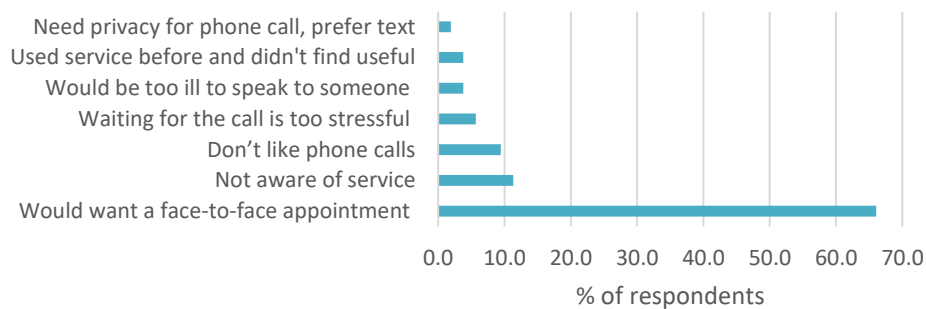
If you had an urgent mental health problem, would you use a phone appointment with a mental health specialist?



No. of respondents – 514

- Over four-fifths of patients (86.8%) said that they would use a phone appointment for an urgent mental health problem, the remaining 13.2% would not use this service.
 - o Those who felt they would not use a phone appointment cited the following reasons:

Reasons for not using a phone appointment

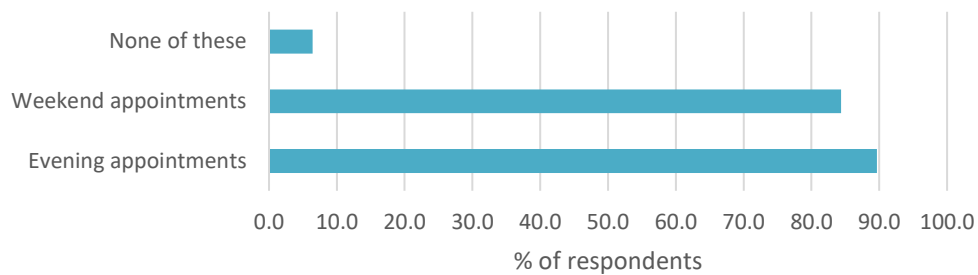


*Respondents could give more than one answer

**No. of respondents – 53

- o Over two-thirds of patients felt that a telephone appointment would not be suitable for someone who had an urgent mental health problem. Face-to-face contact is better as it is more personal, enables body language, facial expressions and physical health to be observed and will result in an accurate diagnosis or treatment plan. People with poor verbal skills or people who have difficulties using a phone will also find this a barrier.
- o Others said they were not aware of the service so would not know how to use it.
- o Several people felt that having to wait for the phone call would lead to greater stress and anxiety for the patient.

Would you value appointments for bloods to be taken at the following times?

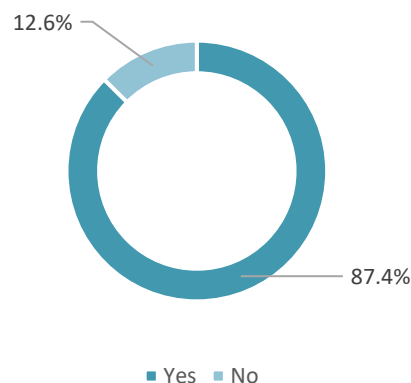


*Respondents could give more than one answer

**No. of respondents – 512

- There was strong support for having access to appointments for bloods in the evening (89.6%) and at weekends (84.4%). However 6.4% of patients would not value having appointments at these times.

As well as usual appointments at your GP surgery, would you find alternative locations across Gateshead useful?



■ Yes ■ No

No. of respondents – 508

- Nearly nine-in-ten patients would find having access to appointments at alternative locations such as at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Blaydon, Gateshead Stadium areas useful. Over one-in-ten would not find this useful.
 - o Those who would not find alternative locations useful gave reasons why including not being able to drive there, preferring to see their own GP, poor transport links to those locations and locations being too far away.

Reasons for not finding alternative locations useful	Percentage of respondents (%)
Don't have access to a car/don't drive	34.4
Want to be seen by own GP	23.0
Locations are too far away	14.8
My GP practice is closer	14.8
Public transport links poor	14.8
Wouldn't want to travel if unwell	4.9

Have a disability making travel difficult	3.3
It depends on the location	3.3
Public transport too expensive	3.3
Don't like travelling in the dark	1.6
Don't like travelling alone	1.6
More chance of missing your appointment if unfamiliar area	1.6
Only use them in emergency	1.6
Poor parking at these sites	1.6
Would take a long time to get there	1.6

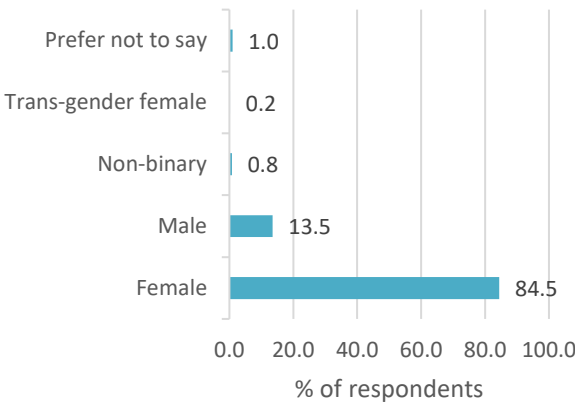
*Respondents could give more than one answer

** No of respondents - 61

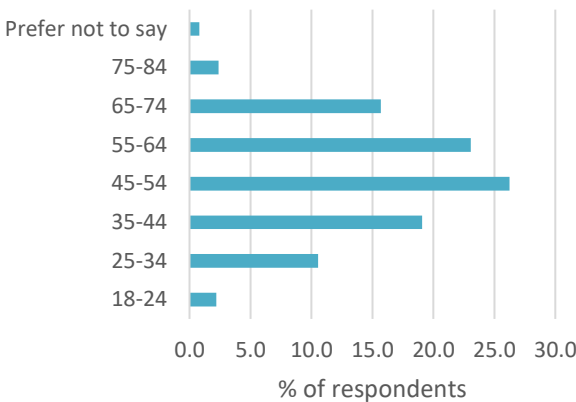
Appendices

Appendix 1: Profile of respondents

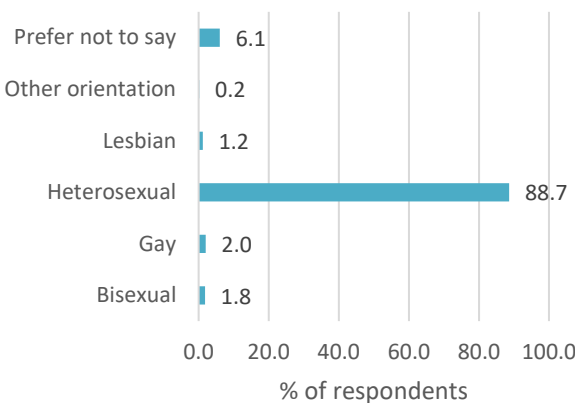
Gender



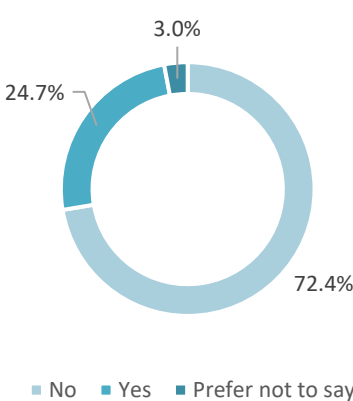
Age



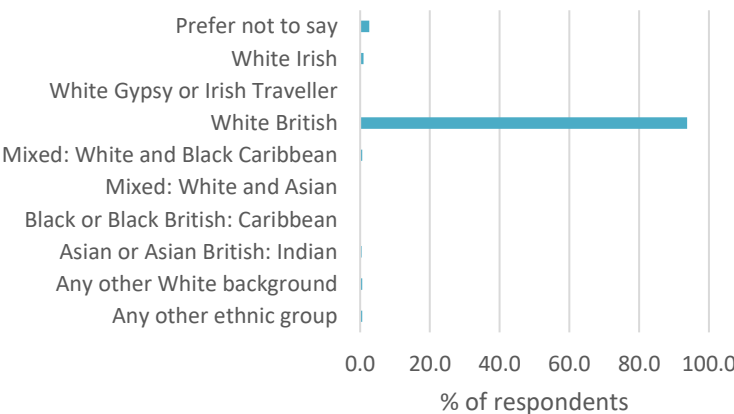
Sexual orientation



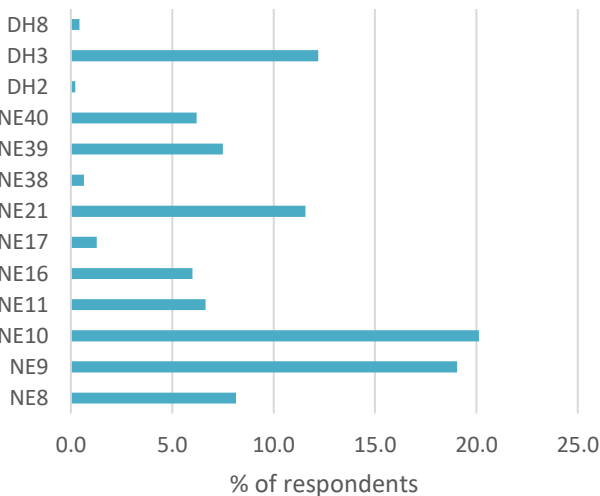
Disability or limiting long term illness



Ethnic background



Location



Other ethnic groups: USA, British English