

Public
Experience

In Accessing
Urgent Care

INTRODUCTION

In November, Healthwatch North Yorkshire asked members of the public about their experiences in accessing Urgent Care. Working together with Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group, we designed a 13 question survey to learn more about how people seek help when they have an urgent but non-emergency problem.

Urgent care services include Accident and Emergency Departments (A&E), Minor Injury Units, Out of Hours GP Services, NHS 111, and 999 services. Locally, Harrogate and Rural District CCG is looking to create a system where any urgent need can be dealt with through a single phone call 24/7. Moving forward, the information gathered in this engagement will be used by the CCG to guide future decision making about Urgent Care in Harrogate and Rural District. The CCG aims to provide the best possible service with the money that is available, and part of that is ensuring that everyone is efficiently and compassionately directed to the care that they need.

In order to reach people, we handed out surveys at six different events in November:



18th: Pately Bridge Livestock Auction (11.30am)

20th: Ripon Library Drop-in (10am - 5.30pm)

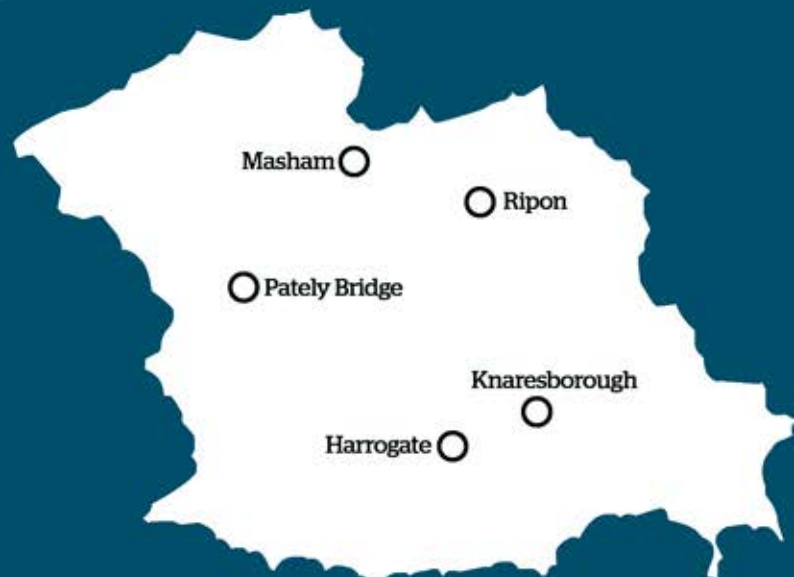
26th: Henshaws Arts & Crafts Christmas Market, Knaresborough (11am - 4pm)

27th: Harrogate Library Drop-in (9am - 4pm)

29th: Masham Library Drop-in (10am - 3pm)

30th: Ripon Market (9.30am - 3pm)

We gathered 130 responses from the public. While a small number (6) were not from the Harrogate area, this is indicative of something that became very clear over the course of our information gathering: many individuals move outside of CCG boundaries as they seek care. (E.g., Northallerton, Leeds)



INTRODUCTION

SOCIAL MEDIA STATS



Facebook posts publicising the survey reached 3,834 people and prompted 98 post engagements



The Healthwatch North Yorkshire Mailing List (970 recipients) received a link to the press release and the survey



15 Twitter Posts had 4,100 impressions over the consultation period

Ultimately, 74 surveys were filled out online and 56 were filled out in person.

Through the course of the consultation, Healthwatch stalls also recieved footfall and traffic from approx. 480 members of the public.

Right: a member of the public fills out the survey at the Ripon Market Healthwatch Stall

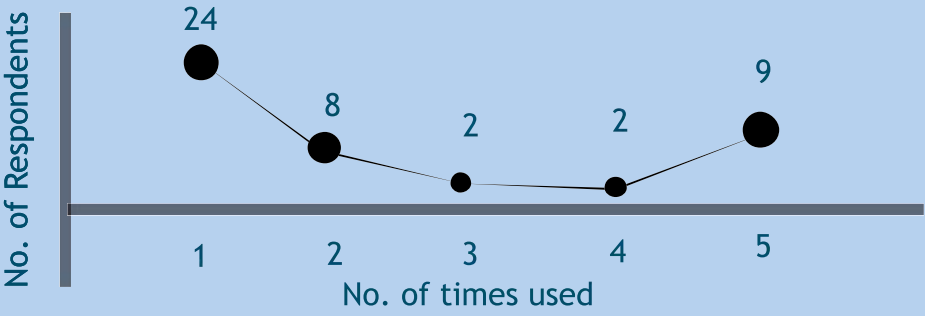


USE OVER THE LAST YEAR

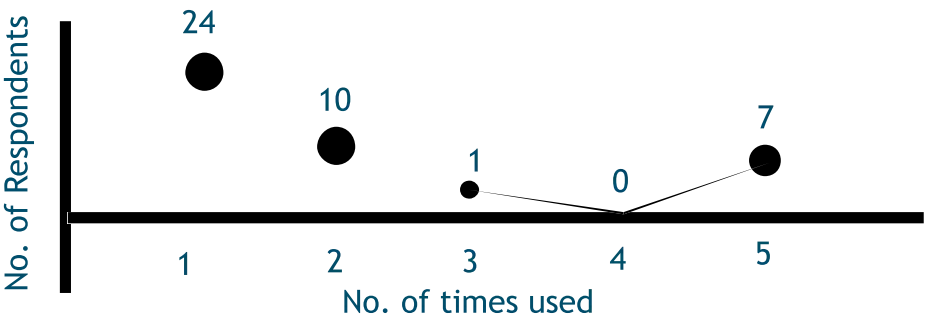
To open the survey, we asked respondents how many times they had used urgent care services over the last year:



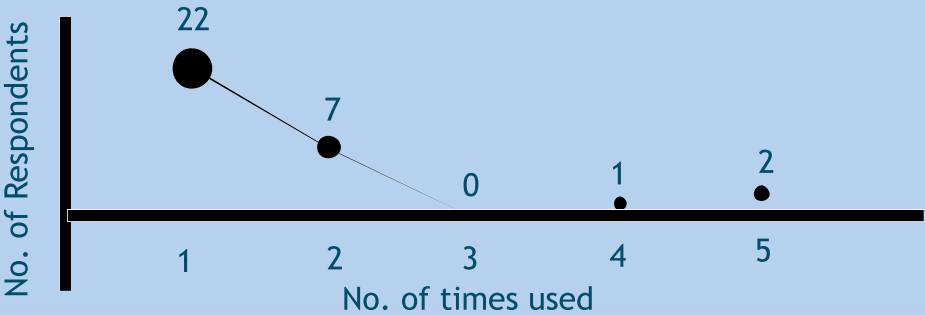
NHS 111



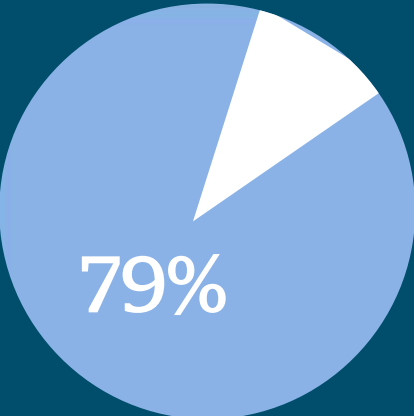
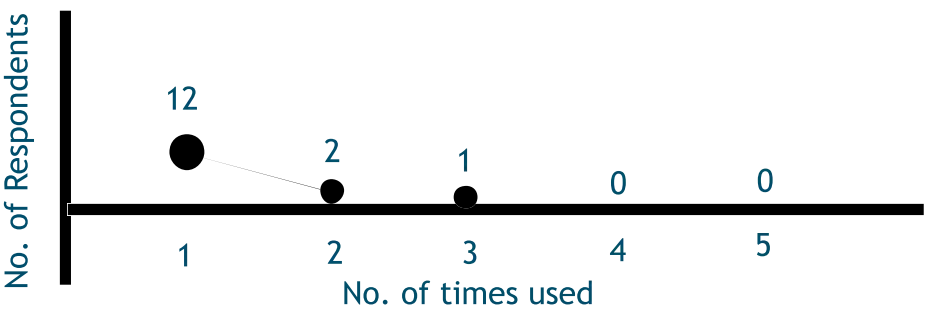
Harrogate A&E



Out of Hours Service Centre



Ripon Minor Injuries

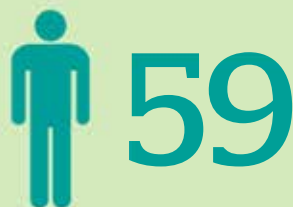


79% of respondents felt that if they had an urgent medical concern and they could not reach their GP, they would know where to go.

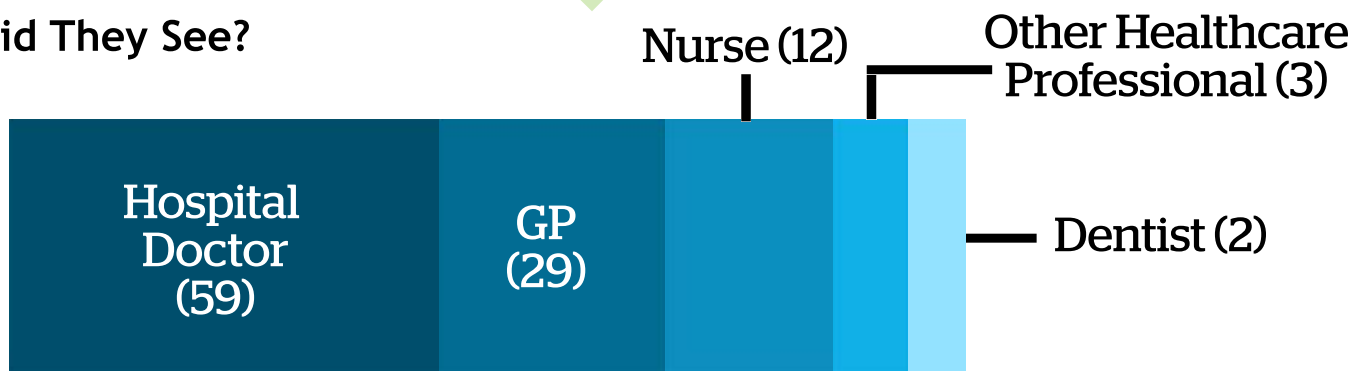
THE LAST USE OF URGENT CARE

For the remaining series of questions in the survey, we asked respondents to consider the last time that they used Urgent Care Services.

59 respondents used it for a problem they had, **14** for a child that they cared for, and **42** for an adult that they cared for.



Who Did They See?



102 respondents felt that they saw the Healthcare Professional that they wanted to see, while **14** felt that they did not.

Of those 14, 6 said they wanted to see their GP, while 4 said they wanted to see a hospital doctor. The other 4 were not sure.



92% of respondents given a prescription were able to obtain their medication when they needed it



91% of respondents felt that they recieved adequate information (verbal and written)

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF URGENT CARE?

“Being Seen Quickly” was considered to be the most important element of urgent care, with the highest number of related comments by a wide margin (41). This concern with speed was found in all elements of the process: being able to quickly reach the point of first contact, fast turnaround when waiting for a return phone call, and low waiting times at clinics and A&E.

“Proper care. Not waiting for hours in A&E”

“To gain quick access to the most appropriate person with the skill and knowledge required”

“qualified, knowledgeable staff who can triage effectively and quickly where necessary and direct callers to the most appropriate service without delay, if necessary initiating emergency services asap”

“Expertise” was the second most commonly cited aspect of urgent care (19 comments), with an emphasis on seeing an individual who could be trusted to provide appropriate, knowledgeable, and accessible care.

“Seeing the most appropriate professional in the most appropriate place when you need to”

“Safe, accessible care available 24 / 7 locally when required, with priority for life / limb threatening conditions. Range of health care professionals trained, skilled and expert in their field. Right care, right time always available”

Several themes related specifically to elements of interactions between Healthcare services and the public: **“Easily Accessible”** (10 comments), **“Good Advice”** (9 comments), **“24 Hour Access”** (7 comments), **“Know Who to Contact”** (9 comments), and **“Reassurance”** (7 comments).

“Being able to see (speak) to someone who can alleviate any anxieties and put the patient's/relatives' minds at rest”

“Arrange an appointment if you need it- 24 hr late night service”

“Accessibility, clarity around what is provided, not being redirected to another area because you don't quite fit the service specification.”

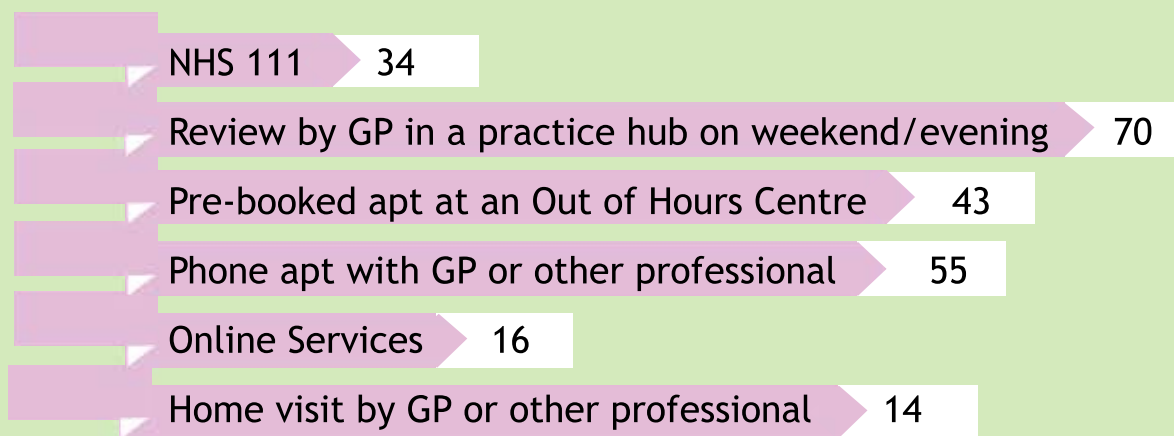
Finally, 8 comments fell under the category of **“Appropriate Use”** - that patients were not using Urgent Care for concerns that were neither urgent or serious. This was mainly related to frustrations about overburdening the system.

“That it is not abused by people not going to gp”

“Issue solved quickly, not having to attend GP or hospital if the issue can be resolved”

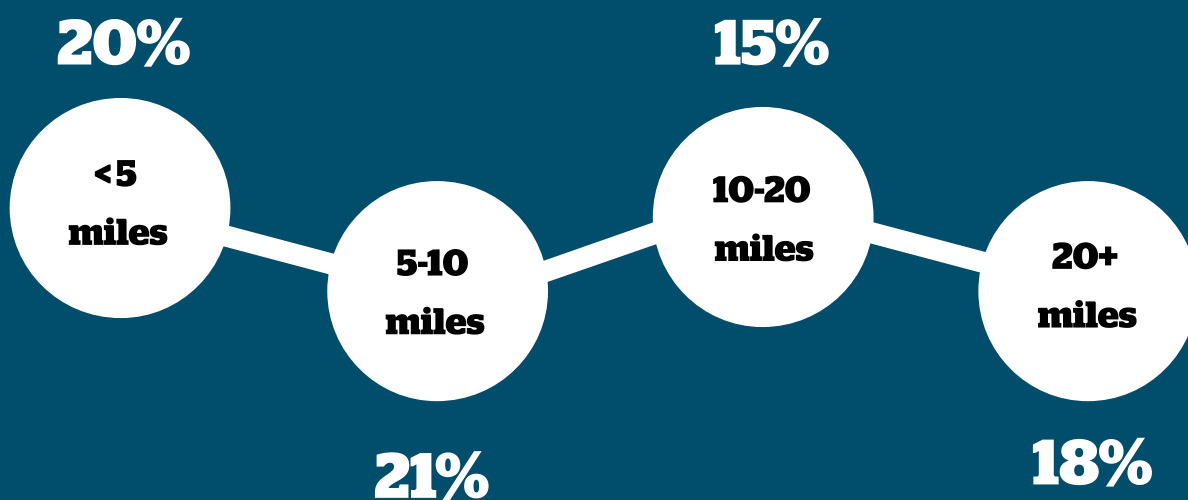
THE FUTURE OF URGENT CARE

Respondents were also asked to indicate what kind of service they would want from Urgent Care, if given the choice:



70% of respondents said that they would like to be able to see a clinician other than a GP (E.g. Pharmacist, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, or Physiotherapist)

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate how far they would be willing to travel:



While the majority of respondents would be willing to travel for Urgent Care, 6 individuals wrote that they would be unable to go any distance due to mobility, transit, or health problems.

OTHER COMMENTS

As respondents were given a chance to provide additional comments, the answers were analysed qualitatively to search for themes. Broadly speaking, the comments could be divided into three sections:

Positive Experiences. 25 comments were focused on expressing satisfaction with the state of services as they are now, emphasising that individuals had received good care.

“I've always found the service to be really good in this area”
“Extremely good when I needed them”
“I'm quite happy with 111- they give adequate information”

Suggestions. 21 comments did not focus on personal experience, but rather generally commented about the state of local NHS services. Two comments, for example, spoke about the importance of the Friarage remaining open. Other broad suggestions were also made:

“Generally we are lucky to have such a FREELY available service, when we do not have to pay up front. I do not think we should have to pay extremely high parking charges when someone is ill.”
“The important thing is separating/uncluttering the access from those whose needs are not really urgent. Cluttered access means that people who really need care can't get it when they do need it.”
“Any changes need to be in addition to, not at the expense of, existing GP services. I am very concerned that moves towards 24 hour services will be at the expense of continuity and local care.”

Negative Experiences. 17 comments, however, shared negative experiences and concerns. The bulk of these (11 comments) focused on lack of trust about the reliability of NHS 111.

“My experience of NHS 111 is poor - they acted only as a referral service with no quality input. I could have made the same decisions myself.”
“Concerned about safety of current 111 - heard of bad experiences, not heard of one good one, some of which gave incorrect info which was dangerous”
“Mental health care urgent care services required- the system for access is deeply confusing”



Are you a resident of
North Yorkshire?

Want to have your say
about health and social care?

Come talk to us!

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