

Inspecting Informing Improving



Patient survey report 2004

- primary care



The survey of primary care service users was designed, developed and coordinated by the NHS survey advice centre at Picker Institute Europe.

Introduction

An important step to improving hospitals and other health services to ensure they are meeting the needs of the patient is to ask the patients themselves what they think about the NHS. One way of doing this is to carry out surveys of patients who have recently used health services. The Healthcare Commission is responsible for carrying out national surveys of the NHS. By running these surveys across the country and publishing the results, the Healthcare Commission is able to provide important feedback about the experience patients have of their local health services.

The Healthcare Commission has carried out five national surveys asking patients across England about their experiences of mental health, inpatient, ambulance, hospital care for children and primary care services. The NHS surveys advice center at Picker Institute Europe developed the questionnaires and methodology¹.

This is one of five reports published by the Healthcare Commission and Picker Institute Europe that summarise the key findings from the surveys and describe the experiences of patients of each of these services. In 1998 and 2002, the Department of Health carried out general practice surveys. The Commission for Health Improvement carried out the first local health services survey in 2003 and the Healthcare Commission repeated this in 2004.

This report summarises the key findings from the 2004 survey of primary care services, highlighting differences with the 2003 results.

The Healthcare Commission will use the survey results as one way of assessing the performance of the NHS, and we expect individual trusts to use the results to identify how their services can be improved for patients.

Who took part in the survey?

Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for providing access to a wide range of health services. These services are delivered by a team of healthcare professionals based at local health centres or surgeries, including GPs, family doctors, practice nurses, district nurses, midwives and health visitors. PCTs are also responsible for the services provided by NHS dental services and other health services within each local area. Everyone is entitled to register with a GP, and a list of all registered patients is maintained by each PCT.

Each PCT surveyed 850 eligible patients who were registered with one of their practices. Patients were eligible if they were over 16 years old. The respondents were asked to complete the survey by thinking about their most recent contact with local health services, either for themselves or for a child in their care. The sampled patients were sent a postal questionnaire and a covering letter, and up to two reminder letters were sent to non-responders.

The questionnaire was largely composed of closed questions, but the final section invited respondents to comment on things that were particularly good about their local health service and things that could be improved. The quotes in boxes throughout this report are drawn from these comments and illustrate the survey findings.

The 2003 and 2004 survey results were compared on all of the 32 questions that were directly comparable, that is, those questions that were unchanged between the two surveys, or for which response options could be matched up in a way that made them comparable. All the differences reported are statistically significant.

Survey results for every NHS trust in England are available in detailed reports on <http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk>

Questionnaires were sent to 249,538 patients and 122,113 completed questionnaires were returned. This represents a response rate of 49%, once undelivered questionnaires and deceased patients had been accounted for. Response rates varied between trusts from 22% to 64%. This is the same as the overall response rate for the 2003 survey, for which response rates from trusts varied from 26% to 65%.

The survey results show that, of respondents:

- 59% were women
- 21% were aged 16 to 35, 25% 36 to 50 years, 28% 51 to 65 years, 20% 66 to 80 years and 5% 81 or older
- 95% of respondents were white, 1% Asian or Asian British, 2% black or black British, less than 1% mixed race, Chinese or from other ethnic groups
- 59% left full time education aged 16 years or less, 19% were aged 17 to 18 and 18% were aged 19 years or over when they left full time education, and 4% were still in full time education
- 69% of respondents rated their own health as good to excellent in the previous four weeks and 31% very poor, poor or fair

There were significant differences in response rates by age and sex: The highest responding groups were women and men aged between 66 and 80 at 71%. The lowest response rate for any group by age and sex was men aged 16 to 35 at only 24%.

Contact with the surgery

Of the patients who responded to the survey, 88% had visited their local health centre or GP surgery during the previous 12 months.

A small proportion (6%) said that they had often been put off going to their GP surgery in the last 12 months because the opening times were inconvenient, while 16% said this had sometimes put them off. This total of 22% compares with 19% of respondents in 2003 who said inconvenient opening hours had often or sometimes put them off going to their GP surgery.

"I work full time. Therefore evening or early morning surgeries would be good"

"... always seem to get an appointment pretty quick and at a time to suit my work"

Accessing health services

It is important to patients that they are given an appointment within a short time of calling their health centre. When they arrive for their appointment they should be treated courteously by the receptionist and, if they have to wait, often prefer to be told how long their wait might be.

Waiting for an appointment

The NHS Plan stated that by December 2004 all patients would be able to be seen by a GP within 48 hours. The survey found that over half of the patients who had been in contact with their doctor during the past 12 months were seen within two working days. Twenty-nine per cent were seen on the same working day and 25% had to wait one or two working days for an appointment. A further 7% of patients were seen without an appointment, and 17% had a pre planned appointment or visit. However, 23% had to wait more than two days.

Between the 2003 and 2004 surveys, the percentage of patients seen on the same working day increased from 16% to 29%. Those who waited one or two working days increased from 15% to 25%. The proportion who waited more than two working days increased from 22% to 23%, but fewer people were seen without an appointment or with a pre-planned appointment or visit.

Over half felt they were given an appointment as soon as they thought was necessary, while 30% felt their appointment should have been a bit sooner, and 13% felt it should have been a lot sooner.

"Sometimes there is a wait of over a week to make an appointment. Anyone who can wait that long doesn't need to see a doctor!"

"I can now see my GP in two days instead of two weeks if I ring early enough"

Forty-four per cent of respondents who waited for more than a day for an appointment did so because they were unable to get an earlier appointment with any doctor at their GP surgery. However, 41% said the main reason they had to wait was that they wanted to see their own choice of doctor, and 11% said it was not convenient for them to have an appointment at any other time.

“I prefer to see the same doctor at each visit because my health record is very complicated”

Surgery waiting times

Of patients who had seen someone from their GP surgery/local health centre during the past 12 months, 24% reported that on their last visit to the surgery, they had been seen on time or early. Forty-seven per cent of patients waited up to 15 minutes after their stated appointment time, giving a total of 71% who were seen within 15 minutes of their stated appointment time. Twenty-two per cent waited between 16 and 30 minutes and 8% waited more than 31 minutes.

A small number of patients were told how long they would have to wait, and 49% were not told, but did not mind. Forty-three per cent were not told, but would have liked to have been.

“It would be nice to have a vague idea of how long one has to wait”

Surgery: reception

Of the patients that responded, 26% rated the courtesy of the receptionist as excellent when they arrived at the surgery and 59% rated it as either very good (34%) or good (25%). However, 11% of patients rated the courtesy of the receptionist as fair, 2% as poor and 1% as very poor.

“Receptionist is friendly and helpful”

Over two thirds of patients reported that other patients in the reception area could overhear them talking to the receptionist when they arrived but that they did not mind, and 14% said that other patients in the reception area could not overhear them. However, 18% of patients said they could be overheard by other patients and were not happy about this.

“Whoever is talking to the receptionist is very audible and the focus of attention of other waiting patients”

“You have to talk to the receptionist with a queue of people behind you and within hearing range of waiting patients”

Surgery: cleanliness

Nearly three quarters of patients rated the surgery or health centre as very clean and a further 25% said it was fairly clean. Only 1% thought the surgery was not very clean or not at all clean.

“Bright, clean pleasant surgery, easily accessible and friendly atmosphere”

Seeing a doctor

Patients should be treated with respect and dignity by the doctor, and it is important that they have trust and confidence in them. Patients should be given enough time to discuss their health problems and be involved as much as possible in decisions about their care and treatment. They should be given good explanations about their treatment, and any questions about it should be answered in a way they can understand.

Of the patients who responded, 85% had seen a doctor during the previous 12 months.

Almost all patients felt that the doctor had treated them with respect and dignity all of the time, 7% of patients felt they were treated with respect and dignity some of the time and 1% felt they were not treated with respect and dignity.

“My GP doesn’t seem to have much time to talk, but has always treated me as an intelligent human being and not just a name”

“GPs are very caring. The patients are treated with respect at all times”

Three quarters of patients said they definitely had confidence and trust in the doctor, 21% to some extent, and 3% said they did not have confidence and trust in the doctor.

“My GP is up to date with research, does not over-prescribe and is interested in trying new treatments”

“Superb relationship with one particular doctor. This has really been a success in terms of treatment, trust and results”

Sixty-nine per cent said the doctor definitely involved them as much as they wanted to be involved in decisions about their care and treatment. Twenty-seven per cent said they were involved in decisions to some extent, and 5% said they were not involved in decisions as much as they wanted to be.

“My GP listens and accepts my views and decisions in my own healthcare”

“Doctors need to discuss their patients’ medical problems with them in an open and informative way”

Communication issues

The survey identified several areas where communication between doctor and patient could be improved. Eighty-two per cent of patients said that the doctor had definitely listened to them, 17% felt that they had listened to some extent and 2% of patients said that the doctor did not listen to what they had to say.

“Doctors should look at you when they speak to you and, when they ask a question, listen to the reply”

“Doctors and nurses are very helpful, respectful and listen carefully to any problems”

Almost three-quarters of respondents said they were definitely given enough time to discuss their health or medical problem with the doctor. Twenty-two per cent said they were given enough time to some extent, but 4% said they were not given enough time to discuss their health or medical problem with the doctor.

Three-quarters said they were given an explanation of the reasons for any treatment or action that they could understand completely, but 21% said they were given an explanation that they could understand to some extent and 3% of patients were not given an explanation of the reasons for any treatment or action in a way they could understand.

“I always have things explained to me about my health and treatment by my doctor. He takes time with me”

“GPs could explain treatments/illnesses in more detail. They often presume that you understand without explaining the full implications of something”

Of those patients who had questions to ask, 76% said they definitely got answers they could understand from the doctor. Twenty-one per cent were given answers they could understand to some extent, 2% were not given answers that they could understand and 1% of patients did not have an opportunity to ask any questions.

Seeing another healthcare professional

Patients expect to be treated with respect and dignity by other health professionals, and to have good standards of communication with them.

Nearly half of the respondents had seen a healthcare professional other than a doctor from their health centre during the previous 12 months. Of these, 79% had seen a practice nurse or nurse practitioner, 3% had seen a midwife, 5% had seen a district nurse, 3% had seen a health visitor and 10% had seen someone else.

Almost all patients felt that the person they saw had treated them with respect and dignity all of the time. Five per cent of patients felt they were treated with respect and dignity only some of the time and 1% felt they were not treated with respect and dignity.

“Health visitors are friendly, approachable, helpful and knowledgeable”

“I am particularly impressed with the support I get from our local district nurses. They are kind, well-informed, very courteous and patient”

Most patients said they definitely had confidence and trust in the last healthcare professional they saw, while 17% said they had to some extent, and 2% said they did not have confidence and trust in that healthcare professional.

“Universally, the nursing staff are sympathetic and efficient”

“Health visitor cover has been very poor: missed appointments, poor advice, lack of interest and lack of information”

Survey results for each professional group are given in the appendix.

Communication issues

The survey identified several areas where communication between healthcare professionals and patients could be improved

Patients were asked about the explanations of the reasons for any treatment or action they were given by the healthcare professional they saw. Eighty-two percent said they were given an explanation that they could understand completely. Sixteen per cent said they could only understand it to some extent and 3% of patients were not given an explanation of the reasons for any treatment or action in a way they could understand.

The majority said the healthcare professional they saw involved them as much as they wanted in decisions about their care and treatment, but 18% said they were only involved to some extent, and 3% said they were not involved as much as they wanted to be.

Tests

Patients who need tests should receive good explanations about why they are necessary, how they will be carried out, and of the results.

Over half the patients who had seen someone from their local health centre/GP surgery during the previous 12 months had had tests carried out at the surgery, - for example, blood tests, swabs, smear tests. The survey identified two areas where information about these tests could be improved:

- 81% said that the purpose of their tests had been completely explained, 16% that the purpose had been explained to some extent and 3% that the purpose was not explained in a way they could understand. These figures do not include patients who were still waiting for their test results at the time they responded

Of those patients who had received their test results, 68% said the results had definitely been explained in a way they could understand. Twenty-three per cent said they had been explained to some extent and 9% that they had not been explained in a way they could understand. The percentage who said they had definitely had an explanation they could understand decreased from 72% in 2003 to 68% in 2004.

“Need a better explanation of test results. My last test result was normal, whatever that means.”

Referrals

Increasingly, patients are given a choice about which hospital they are referred to. It is important that, wherever patients are referred to, the healthcare professional they see has enough information about their treatment or condition.

Over one third of respondents had been referred to another healthcare professional such as a hospital consultant.

Of those patients who had been referred on, 26% were given a choice about which hospital they went to and 58% said they were not given a choice but did not mind. However, 16% said they were not given a choice and would have liked one.

Of those patients who had been seen by another healthcare professional, 63% said the person they saw seemed to have all the necessary information about them and their condition or treatment. Twenty-nine per cent of these patients said the person they saw had the required information to some extent, but 8% said that the person they were referred to did not have all the necessary information about them and their condition.

Medication

Patients should be informed and involved in decisions about their medication. Over half of the survey respondents had been prescribed new medicine including tablets, suppositories and injections by a doctor from their GP surgery/local health centre during the previous 12 months.

Of those patients, 59% said that the last time they were given a new prescription, they were definitely involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about the best medication for them. Twenty-nine per cent were involved to some extent and 12% were not involved in decisions about their medication as much as they wanted to be. The 59% figure in 2004 compares favourably to 55% in 2003.

The survey identified several issues where the information given to patients about their medication could be improved. Of those patients who were given new prescriptions and who wanted information, 80% said that they were given enough information about the purpose of their medication, 17% were given some but not enough information, and 3% wanted information but were not given any at all. Sixty-one per cent said they were given enough information about any side effects, while 21% were given some information, but not enough, and 18% wanted information but were not given any at all. Eighty-six per cent were given enough information about how to use their new medication, for example, when to take it, how long they should take it for and whether it should be taken with food. However, 11% of patients were not given enough information and 3% said they wanted this information but were not given it. Over half the respondents had been taking some prescribed medication for 12 months or longer. Of those, 76% had seen someone at their GP surgery to have their medication reviewed.

“Doctors need to explain why they’re giving their patients the medication they’re giving us.”

Health promotion

PCTs have responsibility for improving the health of their populations and reducing health inequalities. Health promotion initiatives have a role to play here.

Almost two thirds of all respondents reported that their blood pressure had been taken by someone at their GP surgery/local health centre during the previous 12 months.

The survey asked patients whether they had been offered a flu jab (influenza vaccination) during the previous 12 months. Of the respondents who were aged 65 or over and who thought they needed a flu jab, 84% had had one. Fourteen per cent said they had been offered a flu jab but didn’t want one, and only 2% said they had not been offered one. This 2004 survey showed that 76% of over-65s had a flu jab in 2003, not excluding those who did not think they needed one. This exceeded the Government target of 70% uptake of the flu jab in patients aged 65 and over in 2003/2004³.

Nearly one fifth of respondents said they smoke cigarettes. Of those, 19% had definitely been given advice or help from their local health service on giving up and 16% had been given advice to some extent. Nineteen per cent said they had not been given help or advice but would have liked some and nearly half said they did not want help or advice.

Dental services

Of all survey respondents, 58% were currently registered with a dentist as an NHS patient, while 21% were registered as a non-NHS patient, and 20% were not registered with any dentist at all. Of those respondents who were not registered with a dentist as an NHS patient, 67% said they would like to be.

“Definitely need more NHS dentist surgeries. I do not have a dentist due to this problem”

“There is a terrible lack of NHS dentists. I was forced to go private by my then NHS dentist”

Visiting the dentist

Over half (52%) had visited a dentist as an NHS patient within the previous 12 months. The survey identified some areas where NHS dental services could be improved:

- three quarters of patients had complete confidence and trust in the dentist, but 22% only had confidence and trust to some extent and 3% did not have any confidence and trust in the dentist
- seventy-seven per cent of patients said that staff had definitely done everything they could to help control their pain, 19% that staff had done what they could to control their pain only to some extent, and 4% that staff had not done everything they could to help control their pain
- seventy-seven per cent of patients said that the dentist had explained the reasons for any treatment or action in a way they could understand completely. Twenty per cent of patients said they could understand the explanation they were given to some extent, and 3% did not understand what they were told
- sixty-nine per cent of patients said they were definitely involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about their dental care and treatment, while 25% said they were involved to some extent and 6% were not involved as much as they wanted to be

While 75% said they were definitely involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about their care in 2003, by 2004 this had decreased to 69%. In 2003, 77% said they had confidence and trust in their dentist completely, whereas in 2004 that figure was 75%.

Conclusions

This is the second survey involving all primary care trusts in England. It describes the experience of over 120,000 people who use local health services.

Patients were highly satisfied with the amount of time they have in consultations with GPs, and the care they receive from clinical staff. Patients also reported being treated with dignity and respect, being listened to and having confidence and trust in GPs, nurses and dentists. The service from reception staff was also positively rated, although some patients had concerns about being overheard when talking to receptionists, and not being told how long they would need to wait to be seen.

There has been a notable increase in the numbers of patients obtaining GP appointments within two working days, the proportion rising from 31% in 2003 to 54% in 2004. Despite this increase, there remains a discrepancy between the reports from patients, and the official waiting time data that indicates that 97% of patients can see a GP within two working days⁴. The proportion of people who report having been put off going to the GP surgery because of inconvenient opening hours has increased from 20% in 2003 to 22% in 2004.

The 2004 survey found improvements since 2003, but there is still scope for better patient involvement in decisions about care and treatment, particularly decisions about medication and information about side effects.

There has been an encouraging increase in the proportion of over 65s who receive a flu jab, from 76% to 80%. However, of the smokers who would like help and advice to give up, a fifth are not receiving any.

Dental patients report a decline in their involvement in care and the quality of explanations of treatment. Access to NHS dentistry remains a concern: two thirds of people who are not registered with an NHS dentist said that they would like to be.

Appendix: Tables of results

National average results are presented for each question, along with tables comparing respondents and non-respondents, comparisons of results with the 2003 survey, for relevant questions, and selected cross-tabulations.

The results reported are results for the average NHS trust in England. The responses from each trust have an equal influence over the national average, regardless of differences in response rate between trusts.

The proportion of responses to each response option for each individual question was calculated for each trust. The overall national average for a given response was then calculated as an average of all the trusts' proportions.

However, the information about the demographics (for example age, sex and ethnic group) has not been adjusted in this way, as it is more appropriate to report the actual percentages of these variables, rather than adjusting them for variations among trusts.

Trust based national averages for responses to all questions.

A. Making an appointment

A1. Have you made an appointment with a doctor from your GP surgery/ health centre in the last 12 months?

	National average %	Number
Yes	85	
No	15	
Total specific responses		120964
Missing responses		1149

Answered by all

A2. The last time you saw a doctor from your GP surgery did you have to wait for an appointment?

	National average %	Number
No, I was seen without an appointment	7	
I was seen on the same working day	29	
I had to wait 1 or 2 working days	25	
I had to wait more than 2 working days	23	
It was a pre-planned appointment or visit	17	
Total specific responses		100316
Missing responses		2625
Can't remember		1378

Answered by those who had made an appointment with a GP in the last 12 months

A3. How do you feel about the length of time you had to wait for an appointment with a doctor?

	National average %	Number
I was seen as soon as I thought necessary	58	
I should have been seen a bit sooner	30	
I should have been seen a lot sooner	13	
Total specific responses		47670
Missing responses		2659

Answered by those who had made an appointment with a GP in the last 12 months and who had to wait a day or more for their appointment

A4. What was the main reason you had to wait?

	National average %	Number
I wanted to see my own choice of doctor	41	
I could not get an earlier appointment with any doctor	44	
Not convenient for me to have an appointment earlier	11	
Another reason	4	
Total specific responses		46563
Missing responses		3766

Answered by those who had made an appointment with a GP in the last 12 months and who had to wait a day or more for their appointment

Visiting the GP surgery**B1. Have you visited your GP surgery/ health centre in the last 12 months?**

	National average %	Number
Yes	88	
No	12	
Total specific responses		120353
Missing responses		1760

Answered by all

B2. When you arrived, how would you rate the courtesy of the receptionist?

	National average %	Number
Excellent	26	
Very good	34	
Good	25	
Fair	11	
Poor	2	
Very poor	1	
Total specific responses		106673
Missing responses		1587

Answered by those who had visited their GP surgery or health centre in the last 12 months

B3. In the reception area, could other patients overhear what you talked about with the receptionist?

	National average %	Number
Yes, and I was not happy about it	18	
Yes, but I did not mind	68	
No, others could not overhear	14	
Total specific responses		97546
Missing responses		1839
Don't know/can't say		8875

Answered by those who had visited their GP surgery or health centre in the last 12 months

B4. How long after your appointment time did you have to wait to be seen?

	National average %	Number
Seen on time or early	24	
Waited up to 15 minutes	47	
Waited 16-30 minutes	22	
Waited 31 minutes or longer	8	
Total specific responses		97723
Missing responses		2412
I did not have an appointment		5548
Can't remember		2577

Answered by those who had visited their GP surgery or health centre in the last 12 months

B5. Did someone tell you how long you would have to wait?

	National average %	Number
Yes	8	
No, but I would have liked to have been told	43	
No, but I did not mind	49	
Total specific responses		80110
Missing responses		2882
Not sure/can't remember		1915

Answered by those who had visited their GP surgery or health centre in the last 12 months and who either did not have an appointment or were not seen on time

C. Seeing a doctor**C1. Have you seen a doctor from your GP surgery/ health centre in the last 12 months?**

	National average %	Number
Yes	85	
No	15	
Total specific responses		120432
Missing responses		1681

Answered by all

C2. Did the doctor listen carefully to what you had to say?

	National average %	Number
Yes, definitely	82	
Yes, to some extent	17	
No	2	
Total specific responses		103007
Missing responses		1421

Answered by those who had seen a doctor from their GP surgery or health centre in the last 12 months

C3. Were you given enough time to discuss your health or medical problem with the doctor?

	National average %	Number
Yes, definitely	74	
Yes, to some extent	22	
No	4	
Total specific responses		101930
Missing responses		1448
I did not need to discuss anything		1050

Answered by those who had seen a doctor from their GP surgery or health centre in the last 12 months

C4. Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment?

	National average %	Number
Yes, definitely	69	
Yes, to some extent	27	
No	5	
Total specific responses		102383
Missing responses		2045

Answered by those who had seen a doctor from their GP surgery or health centre in the last 12 months

C5. Did the doctor explain the reasons for any treatment or action in a way that you could understand?

	National average %	Number
Yes, completely	75	
Yes, to some extent	21	
No	3	
Total specific responses		97819
Missing responses		1648
I did not need an explanation		3625
No treatment or action was required		1336

Answered by those who had seen a doctor from their GP surgery or health centre in the last 12 months

C6. Did you have confidence and trust in the doctor?

	National average %	Number
Yes, definitely	76	
Yes, to some extent	21	
No	3	
Total specific responses		102920
Missing responses		1508

Answered by those who had seen a doctor from their GP surgery or health centre in the last 12 months

C7. Did the doctor treat you with respect and dignity?

	National average %	Number
Yes, all of the time	92	
Yes, some of the time	7	
No	1	
Total specific responses		102933
Missing responses		1495

Answered by those who had seen a doctor from their GP surgery or health centre in the last 12 months

C8. If you had questions to ask the doctor, did you get answers that you could understand?

	National average %	Number
Yes, definitely	76	
Yes, to some extent	21	
No	2	
I did not have an opportunity to ask questions	1	
Total specific responses		97354
Missing responses		1644
I did not need to ask any questions		5430

Answered by those who had seen a doctor from their GP surgery or health centre in the last 12 months

D. Medications (for example tablets, ointment, oral contraceptives)**D1. In the last 12 months, have you had any new medication(s) prescribed for you?**

	National average %	Number
Yes	53	
No	47	
Total specific responses		118916
Missing responses		1748
Can't remember		1449

Answered by all

D2. Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about the best medication for you?

	National average %	Total
Yes, definitely	59	
Yes, to some extent	29	
No	12	
Total specific responses		62998
Missing responses		2157

Answered by those who had been prescribed new medicines from their GP surgery or health centre in the last 12 months

D3. Were you given enough information about the purpose of the medication?

	National average %	Number
Yes, enough information	80	
Some, but I would have liked more	17	
I got no information, but I wanted some	3	
Total specific responses		60666
Missing responses		1943
I did not want/need any information		1980
Don't know/can't say		566

Answered by those who had been prescribed new medicines from their GP surgery or health centre in the last 12 months

D4. Were you given enough information about any side effects the medication might have?

	National average %	Total
Yes, enough information	61	
Some, but I would have liked more	21	
I got no information, but I wanted some	18	
Total specific responses		52332
Missing responses		2207
I did not want/need any information		8372
Don't know/can't say		2244

Answered by those who had been prescribed new medicines from their GP surgery or health centre in the last 12 months

D5. Were you given enough information about how to use the medication?

	National average %	Number
Yes, enough information	86	
Some, but I would have liked more	11	
I got no information, but I wanted some	3	
Total specific responses		60417
Missing responses		2014
I did not want/need any information		2297
Don't know/can't say		427

Answered by those who had been prescribed new medicines from their GP surgery or health centre in the last 12 months

D6. Have you been taking any prescribed medication(s) for 12 months or longer?

	National average %	Number
Yes	53	
No	47	
Total specific responses		120050
Missing responses		2063

Answered by all

D7. In the last 12 months, have you seen anyone at your GP surgery to check how you are getting on with this medication?

	National average %	Number
Yes	76	
No	24	
Total specific responses		62497
Missing responses		2323
Don't know/not sure		1657

Answered by those who had been taking any prescribed medicine for 12 months or longer

E. Tests

E1. In the last 12 months, have you had any tests carried out by anyone from your health centre?

	National average %	Number
Yes	54	
No	46	
Total specific responses		119004
Missing responses		1630
Can't remember		1479

Answered by all

E2. Was the purpose of the test(s) explained in a way you could understand?

	National average %	Number
Yes, completely	81	
Yes, to some extent	16	
No	3	
Total specific responses		63531
Missing responses		1867
Not sure/can't remember		383

Answered by those who had had a test carried out by someone from their health centre in the last 12 months

E3. Did someone explain the results of the tests in a way you could understand?

	National average %	Number
Yes, definitely	68	
Yes, to some extent	23	
No	9	
Total specific responses		58943
Missing responses		2729
I am still waiting for the results		3340
Not sure/can't remember		769

Answered by those who had had a test carried out by someone from their health centre in the last 12 months

F. Referrals

F1. In the last 12 months, has anyone at your surgery referred you to a specialist (for example a hospital consultant)?

	National average %	Number
Yes	36	
No	64	
Total specific responses		120012
Missing responses		2101

Answered by all

F2. Were you given a choice about where you were referred (ie, which hospital)?

	National average %	Number
Yes	26	
No, but I would have liked a choice	16	
No, but I did not mind	58	
Total specific responses		42614
Missing responses		2309
Don't know/can't remember		300

Answered by those who had been referred to a specialist within the last 12 months

F3. When you first saw the person you were referred to, did he/she seem to have all the necessary information?

	National average %	Number
Yes, completely	63	
Yes, to some extent	29	
No	8	
Total specific responses		38645
Missing responses		2558
I have not been yet		3563
Don't know/can't remember		457

Answered by those who had been referred to a specialist within the last 12 months

G. Seeing another professional from a health centre

G1. Have you seen anyone else from a health centre other than a doctor in the last 12 months?

	National average %	Number
Yes	49	
No	51	
Total specific responses		119723
Missing responses		2390

Answered by all

G2. The last time you saw someone other than a doctor from a GP surgery or health centre, who did you see?

	National average %	Number
A practice nurse or nurse practitioner	79	
A midwife	3	
A district nurse	5	
A health visitor	3	
Someone else	10	
I was not sure who I saw	0	
Total specific responses		58592
Missing responses		2989

Answered by those who had seen someone from a health centre other than a doctor in the last 12 months

G3. Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment?

	National average %	Number
Yes, definitely	79	
Yes, to some extent	18	
No	3	
Total specific responses		54560
Missing responses		2317
No decisions had to be made		4704

Answered by those who had seen someone from a health centre other than a doctor in the last 12 months

G4. Did that person explain the reasons for any treatment or action in a way that you could understand?

	National average %	Number
Yes, completely	82	
Yes, to some extent	16	
No	3	
Total specific responses		52609
Missing responses		2457
G4_4rem		4089
No treatment or action was required		2426

Answered by those who had seen someone from a health centre other than a doctor in the last 12 months

G5. Did you have confidence and trust in that person?

	National average %	Number
Yes, definitely	81	
Yes, to some extent	17	
No	2	
Total specific responses		59040
Missing responses		2541

Answered by those who had seen someone from a health centre other than a doctor in the last 12 months

G6. Did that person treat you with respect and dignity?

	National average %	Number
Yes, all of the time	94	
Yes, some of the time	5	
No	1	
Total specific responses		58830
Missing responses		2751

Answered by those who had seen someone from a health centre other than a doctor in the last 12 months

Overall about your GP surgery/health centre

H1. In your opinion, how clean is the surgery/health centre?

	National average %	Number
Very clean	73	
Fairly clean	25	
Not very clean	1	
Not at all clean	0	
Total specific responses		117505
Can't say		3188
Missing responses		1420

Answered by all

H2. In the last 12 months, have you been put off going to your GP surgery because opening times are inconvenient for you?

	National average %	Number
Yes, often	6	
Yes, sometimes	16	
No	78	
Total specific responses		119544
Missing responses		2569

Answered by all

J. Dental care

J1. Are you currently registered with a dentist as an NHS patient?

	National average %	Number
Yes	58	
No, but registered with dentist as non-NHS patient	21	
No, I am not registered with any dentist at all	20	
Total specific responses		116263
Missing responses		2526
Don't know		3324

Answered by all

J2. Would you like to be registered with a dentist as an NHS patient?

	National average %	Number
Yes	67	
No	33	
Total specific responses		49810
Missing responses		4514

Answered by those not currently registered with a dentist as an NHS patient

J3. In the last 12 months, have you visited a dentist as an NHS patient?

	National average %	Number
Yes	52	
No	48	
Total specific responses		117712
Missing responses		3183
Not sure/can't remember		1218

Answered by all

J4. Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your dental care and treatment?

	National average %	Number
Yes, definitely	69	
Yes, to some extent	25	
No	6	
Total specific responses		61996
Missing responses		3337

Answered by those who had visited a dentist as an NHS patient in the last 12 months

J5. Did the dentist explain the reasons for any treatment or action in a way that you could understand?

	National average %	Number
Yes, completely	77	
Yes, to some extent	20	
No	3	
Total specific responses		55112
Missing responses		3350
I did not need an explanation		1798
No treatment or action was needed		5073

Answered by those who had visited a dentist as an NHS patient in the last 12 months

J6. Did dental staff do everything they could to help control any pain you experienced?

	National average %	Number
Yes, definitely	77	
Yes, to some extent	19	
No	4	
Total specific responses		38802
Missing responses		3856
Can't say/don't know		577
I did not experience any pain		22098

Answered by those who had visited a dentist as an NHS patient in the last 12 months

J7. Did you have confidence and trust in the dentist?

	National average %	Number
Yes, completely	75	
Yes, to some extent	22	
No	3	
Total specific responses		62020
Missing responses		3313

Answered by those who had visited a dentist as an NHS patient in the last 12 months

K. Health promotion

K1. Have you ever smoked a cigarette, a cigar or a pipe?

	National average %	Number
Yes	56	
No	44	
Total specific responses		118736
Missing responses		3377

Answered by all

K2. Do you smoke cigarettes at all nowadays?

	National average %	Number
Yes	35	
No	65	
Total specific responses		66304
Missing responses		3604

Answered by all those who had ever smoked a cigarette, a cigar, or a pipe

K3. In the last 12 months, have you been given advice or help from your GP surgery/health centre on giving up smoking?

	National average %	Number
Yes, definitely	19	
Yes, to some extent	16	
No, but I would have liked help/advice	19	
No, but I did not want any help/advice	46	
Total specific responses		23518
Missing responses		2702

Answered by those who smoke cigarettes nowadays

K4. In the last 12 months have you had your blood pressure taken by anyone from your GP surgery/ health centre?

	National average %	Number
Yes	64	
No	36	
Total specific responses		116156
Missing responses		1979
Not sure/can't remember		3978

Answered by all

K5. In the last 12 months, have you been offered a flu jab (influenza vaccination)?

	National average %	Number
Yes, and I have had a flu jab in the last 12 months	84	
I have been offered it but have not had a flu jab in last 12 months	14	
No, not been offered a flu jab in the last 12 months	2	
Total specific responses		30634
Missing responses		998
I do not think I need a flu jab		1318
Not sure/can't remember		1246

Answered by all, but data above refers only to patients aged 65 or over

L. About you

L1. Are you male or female?

	National average %	Number
Male	41	
Female	59	
Total specific responses		120033
Missing responses		2080

Answered by all

Age (From L2: What was your year of birth?)

	Percentage	Total
16-35	20	
36-50	25	
51-65	28	
66-80	21	
81 or over	6	
Base excluding missing responses (n)		116359
Missing responses (n)		5754

Answered by all

L3. How old were you when you left full time education?

	National average %	Number
16 years or less	59	
17 or 18 years	20	
19 years or over	18	
Still in full time education	4	
Total specific responses		118702
Missing responses		3411

Answered by all

L4. Overall, how would you rate your health during the past four weeks?

	National average %	Total
Excellent	13	
Very good	26	
Good	30	
Fair	22	
Poor	7	
Very poor	2	
Total specific responses		119887
Missing responses		2226

Answered by all

L5. To which of these ethnic groups would you say you belong?

	National average %	Number
White	94	
Asian or Asian British	3	
Black or Black British	2	
Chinese, Mixed, or Other Ethnic Group	1	
Total specific responses		119158
Missing responses		2955

Answered by all

Response rates for demographic groups

Adjusted response rates by SEX

		Adjusted response rate %	Base
Sex	Male	43	121742
	Female	55	127784
	Missing	75	12
Total		49	249538

Adjusted response rates by AGE GROUP

		Adjusted response rate %	Base
Age	16-35	32	80986
	36-50	45	67713
	51-65	63	54274
	66-80	71	34830
	81 or over	54	11725
	missing	90	10
Total		49	249538

Adjusted response rate by AGE GROUP and SEX

		Adjusted response rate %		
Female		16-35	41	40335
		36-50	54	33675
		51-65	69	27067
		66-80	71	18801
		81 or over	50	7906
	Total	55	127784	
Male		16-35	24	40648
		36-50	37	34037
		51-65	57	27207
		66-80	71	16029
		81 or over	61	3819
Total	43	121740		

Crosstabulations comparing different kinds of “other health professional”

NB Tables in this section are based on all responses, not on trust-based means.

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

		Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment?			Base (n)
		Yes, definitely	Yes, to some extent	No	
The last time you saw someone other than a doctor from a GP surgery or health centre, who did you see?	A practice nurse or nurse practitioner	82%	16%	2%	42763
	A midwife	76%	20%	4%	1419
	A district nurse	76%	19%	4%	2533
	A health visitor	72%	24%	4%	1540

Did you have confidence and trust in that person?

		Did you have confidence and trust in that person?			Base (n)
		Yes, definitely	Yes, to some extent	No	
The last time you saw someone other than a doctor from a GP surgery or health centre, who did you see?	A practice nurse or nurse practitioner	84%	15%	2%	46344
	A midwife	76%	20%	4%	1445
	A district nurse	82%	16%	1%	2694
	A health visitor	67%	28%	6%	1744

Did that person explain the reasons for any treatment or action in a way that you could understand?

		Did that person explain the reasons for any treatment or action in a way that you could understand?			Base (n)
		Yes, completely	Yes, to some extent	No	
The last time you saw someone other than a doctor from a GP surgery or health centre, who did you see?	A practice nurse or nurse practitioner	84%	14%	2%	41116
	A midwife	78%	19%	3%	1371
	A district nurse	80%	17%	3%	2464
	A health visitor	75%	22%	3%	1422

Did that person treat you with respect and dignity?

		Did that person treat you with respect and dignity?			Base (n)
		Yes, all of the time	Yes, some of the time	No	
The last time you saw someone other than a doctor from a GP surgery or health centre, who did you see?	A practice nurse or nurse practitioner	95%	4%	1%	46166
	A midwife	90%	8%	2%	1438
	A district nurse	94%	5%	1%	2673
	A health visitor	87%	11%	2%	1730

Tables of differences between comparable items in the 2003 and 2004 local health services surveys using trust based national averages

Note: All figures are rounded to whole numbers which may account for apparent inconsistencies between the columns showing results for each year, and the difference column

A2. The last time you saw a doctor from your GP surgery did you have to wait for an appointment?

	2003	2004	difference
No, I was seen without an appointment	9%	7%	-3%
I was seen on the same working day	16%	29%	12%
I had to wait 1 or 2 working days	15%	25%	9%
I had to wait more than 2 working days	22%	23%	1%
It was a pre-planned appointment or visit	35%	17%	-19%
Base excluding missing responses	89755	100316	

Answered by those who had made an appointment with a GP in the last 12 months.

B5 Did someone tell you how long you would have to wait?

	2003	2004	difference
Yes	11%	8%	-3%
No, but I would have liked to have been told	51%	43%	-11%
No, but I did not mind	34%	49%	14%
Base excluding missing responses	34216	80110	

Answered by all who had visited surgery in last 12 months and who either did not have an appointment or were not seen on time.

C3. Were you given enough time to discuss your health or medical problem with the doctor?

	2003	2004	difference
Yes, definitely	75%	74%	-4%
Yes, to some extent	20%	22%	3%
No	3%	4%	1%
Base excluding missing responses	91111	101930	

Answered by all who had seen a doctor from their GP surgery or health centre in last 12 months.

C4 Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment?

	2003	2004	difference
Yes, definitely	73%	69%	-5%
Yes, to some extent	22%	27%	5%
No	5%	5%	0%
Base excluding missing responses	90340	102383	

Answered by all who had seen a doctor from their GP surgery or health centre in last 12 months.

D2. Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about the best medicine for you?

	2003	2004	difference
Yes, definitely	55%	59%	4%
Yes, to some extent	30%	29%	-1%
No	15%	12%	-3%
Base excluding missing responses	55041	62998	

Answered by patients who had been prescribed new medicines by their doctor/nurse practitioner in the last 12 months.

E3 Did someone explain the results of the tests in a way you could understand?

	2003	2004	difference
Yes, definitely	72%	68%	-4%
Yes, to some extent	21%	23%	2%
No	6%	9%	5%
Base excluding missing responses	49842	62283	

Answered by all those who had had a test carried out by someone from their health centre in the last 12 months.

G4. Did that person explain the reasons for any action or treatment in a way that you could understand? (Health professional other than GP)

	2003	2004	difference
Yes, completely	82%	82%	0%
Yes, to some extent	16%	16%	0%
No	3%	3%	0%
Base excluding missing responses (n)	11885	52609	

Answered by patients who had seen a healthcare professional other than a doctor from their health centre in the last 12 months

H2. In the last 12 months, have you ever been put off going to your GP surgery/health centre because the opening times are inconvenient for you?

	2003	2004	difference
Yes, often	6%	6%	0%
Yes, sometimes	14%	16%	2%
No	80%	78%	-2%
Base excluding missing responses	121511	119544	

Answered by all.

J4. Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your dental care and treatment?

	2003	2004	difference
Yes, definitely	75%	69%	-6%
Yes, to some extent	20%	25%	5%
No	5%	6%	1%
Base excluding missing responses	61939	61996	

Answered by those who had visited a dentist as an NHS patient within the last 12 months.

J7. Did you have confidence and trust in the dentist?

	2003	2004	difference
Yes, completely	77%	75%	-2%
Yes, to some extent	20%	22%	2%
No	3%	3%	1%
Base excluding missing responses	62787	62020	

Answered by those who had visited a dentist as an NHS patient within the last 12 months.

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Acknowledgements

The Healthcare Commission would like to thank the patients, service users and parents who responded to the surveys, as well as the NHS trusts in England that participated. This report was written by Alison Chisholm, Rachel Reeves, Chris Graham and Nina Bullen of the Picker Institute Europe.