

Follow up Report to the Enter and View Visit Undertaken by Healthwatch Staffordshire on 15th April 2024

On 14th May a further poster with the link to the survey was displayed in the Renal Unit at Royal Stoke Hospital, along with paper copies of the survey, which when completed were posted into a locked box. These surveys were collected on 5th June. These surveys are analysed in this report.

The surveys were completed by 10 patients and 1 friend/relative. The survey used can be found here:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/QR2FUQ/>

Q4 – How many times per week do you attend treatment?

- 8 people received dialysis three times a week
- 1 person four times a week
- 1 person five times a week.
- 1 person skipped this question.

Q5 – What transport do you use to travel to the hospital?

- 1 person used their own vehicle,
- 1 was taken by a friend or relative,
- 8 used the hospital's Non-Emergency Patient Transport (NEPT).
- 1 person travels to the appointment with NEPT but returns home in their own vehicle.

Q6 – Why do you use this method of transport?

The 1 person who used their own vehicle, said they do this, so they don't have to wait for NEPT.

The person who was taken by a friend or relative, said, 'because it allows me to be on time not having to wait for transport before or after treatment...'

Of the 8 who used NEPT, the reasons were –

- It is hard for family members to take them because of their work.
- 'NEPT is the best option for me, but very unreliable service always late and hours spent waiting,
- Being unable to walk and cannot get in a car as they have a wheelchair,
- Unable to drive or afford a taxi,
- No other means of travel (2 people)
- 'Because I am not very good going on my own'.
- 'No transport, unable to walk and cannot get into taxis'

The one person who was taken to dialysis by NEPT but returned home in their own vehicle said it was because of 'convenience'.

Q7 - If you use your own vehicle, do you have accessible parking at the hospital? For example, parking issues at the hospital etc

The 3 people who do not use NEPT answered 'yes' to this question. One person commented that –

'Sometimes the car park is full meaning we have to wait for someone else to leave. Sometimes the barrier's broken, then everyone just uses the parking, always takes a longtime to get the barrier repaired.'

Q8 - On average, how long do you wait for treatment to begin once you arrive at your appointment? / If you use Non-Emergency Patient Transport, how many minutes early are you dropped off prior to your entry time/appointment time?

10 people answered this question, with 1 choosing not to. 5 people said they waited up to 30 minutes, 4 said between 30-60minutes, while one person said anytime from up to 30 minutes to more than 2 hours.

Of the people who said they can wait up to 30 minutes, 3 used NEPT, 1 travelled with a friend/relative, and 1 travelled by NEPT but returned in their own vehicle. One person commented 'I attend the evening session so I understand that during the day some things can go wrong...so it's possible that a backup can happen.'

Of the 4 people who replied 30–60 minutes, 3 travelled by NEPT and 1 used their own vehicle.

The person who replied from up to 30 minutes to over 2 hours travels by NEPT.

Q9 – If you arrive late for your appointment, how does this impact your treatment?

Only 10 of the 11 respondents answered this question. Of these 4 people said they'd never been late. 2 of the 4 used NEPT, 1 their own vehicle, and one was taken by a friend/relative.

2 of the 10 respondents said it meant they were late getting home, both travelled by NEPT.

1 person said, 'it doesn't, just stay later' (they also travelled by NEPT).

2 people said that it didn't impact their treatment but did mean they were waiting for their NEPT to return home.

1 person said, 'You seem to be later and later' (they travelled by NEPT)>

Q10 – Do you feel well informed about your treatment plan, for example, the number of weeks of the treatment, the outcome of the treatment, and how the treatment will affect you?

Of the 10 patients that answered this question 7 gave a positive response, with a further two replying 'yes' but adding 'but I am always asking questions', and 'almost'.

1 person replied 'not always'.

Q11 - Do you feel that as a patient you are listened to and respected by all staff involved in your care, for example, consultants, healthcare assistants, nurses, and transport staff? Are you treated in a friendly and caring manner and feel that your privacy and dignity are respected?

7 out of 10 respondents replied positively, with 1 person adding 'Yes all are good at their job and friendly. I'm kept up to date with my treatment, and always listen to us'.

1 person said 'I feel respected by a lot of the staff but definitely not by all!

2 people said, 'yes' regarding hospital staff but highlighted NEPT saying 'Yes to all apart from the odd transport staff' and 'Yes to all except transport. Their hands are tied as the controllers and planner decides and sometimes make stupid decisions.'

Q12 - Do you feel your needs are accommodated whilst undergoing treatment?

Of the 10 respondents, all answered 'yes', with 3 people adding 'If I need any help I just have to ask it usually works', 'Yes I do, but I wish they were more careful whilst putting my needle in as it is very painful', and 'Yes, usually'.

Q13 - Do you feel that as a patient you are engaged and communicated with throughout your visit to the hospital and involved in all stages of your care/transport needs?

All 10 patients who responded to this question answered 'Yes', with comments being, 'I can ask any question and most of the nurses will listen and help.', 'I believe this happens because the staff know I would question everything.'. 3 respondents mentioned transport, saying, 'My husband fetches me to go home to avoid waiting for an ambulance which can be up to 1 ½ hours', 'Care is very good, but transport sometimes varies', and 'Yes care – no transport they suit themselves.'

Q14 - If you are having treatment do you feel that your nutritional/hydration/cultural needs are adhered to, and are you able to communicate them to the staff if there are any issues?

10 people answered 'yes', with 1 adding 'I don't have any issues here'. 1 person failed to complete this question.

Q15 - Do you feel safe while undergoing treatment/using non-emergency transport?

Of the 10 people who answered this question all answered 'yes'.

Q16 - Is there space to speak to staff confidentially?

10 people answered this question, and 1 person did not. Of these 10 people, 9 said 'yes', with one adding 'as I usually have a side room.'. The tenth person commented, 'That is something that's not really available.'

Q17 - If applicable, on average, how long do you wait for non-emergency transport to and from the hospital

All 8 people who use NEPT answered this question.

One person answered 30 minutes or less.

One person answered 30 – 60 minutes.

One person answered 1 – 2 hours.

Two people said 30 minutes – 2 hours, with one stating 'but mostly within an hour'.

Two people said less than 30 minutes – 2 hours, stating '..my longest wait has been over 3 hours on 2 occasions', and 'can wait from 30 mins to 1-2 hours or more or can go home straight away'.

One person didn't answer the question, but stated, 'I can't answer that 50% of the time 30minutes-1 hour, rest of time they arrive whenever, can be 2 hours.'

Q18 – If applicable, generally on average, how many hours are you away from home?

This question was completed by 10 of the 11 respondents.

This question asked for the shortest and longest times for treatment, and then for travel and waiting for transport.

People who use NEPT gave the following answers –

Treatment time

Best times – 4 hours (3 answers), 5 ½ hours

Worst times – 4 ½ hours, 5 hours, 6 hours, 8 hours.

Four people just completed the 'Best times' box for treatment, giving answers of 3 ½ hours, 3 hours, 4 hours, and 4 hours.

Travel and waiting for transport

Best times – 2 hours, 30 minutes, 10 minutes, 2 hours, 1 ½ hours, 1 hour.

Worst times – 2 ½ hours, 3 hours, 5 hours, 2 hours (2 answers), 4 hours.

Comments were –

'Transport leaves hospital 1 ½ hours after treatment ends',

'In the week transport is the worst time. I can be waiting to go home for more than 3 or 4 hours.'

'Morning transport usually quite good, afternoon transport can be a joke. Some days I am done at 4pm and have to wait for others 'til 6pm or so.'

'It's about 6 hours altogether from home to the hospital and back home.'

'Transport can be very late. Considering there is a contract in place [unable to read writing], I do not think we should wait more than 30 minutes.'

One person didn't answer the question, but commented, '...Then can wait up to 1-2 hours or more then sometimes can go home straight away. Number of hours away from home about 6 hours can be longer.'

A respondent who travels by NEPT but returns home in their own vehicle, gave the answers of –

Treatment, Best time – 4 hours, Worse time 5 hours

Travel and waiting for transport – Best time – 30 minutes, Worse time 1 hour.

A respondent who travels in their own vehicle gave the answers of –

Treatment, Best time – 3 ½ hours, Worse time 4 hours

Travel and waiting for transport – Best time – 30 minutes, Worse time 1 hour.

Q19 - If applicable, are your care needs accommodated after finishing treatment and while waiting for transport home?

9 people answered this question with one other commenting.

6 people said, 'yes' with one person adding 'But sometimes it's hard with being in a wheelchair as not supposed to be in it after 1 hour.' And another saying 'n/a own transport'.

3 people said 'no', giving comments of 'When I finish my treatment in the week there is someone who tells you when transport will arrive. On a Saturday you are just left in Reception on your own and you feel abandoned.', 'Left in reception, sometimes checked on sometimes not, just left in the Cold', 'We are never offered a drink or food as if you are [unable to read writing] this is wrong.'

The person who didn't answer the question, but commented, said, 'What care? We go and wait in reception and what we could do with a water fountain as get thirsty while waiting a long time.'

Q20 – If applicable, how does a delay in leaving the hospital impact your care/support needs/home life? for example personal care, medication, childcare, other family members Please specify.

10 people responded to this question, 2 of whom had their own transport home, so they said, 'Just delayed arrival home.' And I have no delay since my husband brings me home after dialysis.'

Of the remaining 8 respondents, all of use NEPT. Two told about the impact it has on others –

'When late home childcare is an issue when my son does shifts.'

Having to wait for evening meal when arriving home as the arrival time varies so much. Also impacts on any social activities for my carer.'

Five people told how it affects them –

'I can miss my tea with the journey and [unable to readd writing] not see anyone when I get home!'

'On dialysis day I arrive home Cold exhausted and fit for nothing. I eat my meal and go to bed.'

'This greatly impacts my home life. If I'm late leaving I'm at the point of passing out due to not eating/drinking.'

'Makes me late, can be uncomfortable by the time I reach home it's a complete full day left feeling tired.'

'It is quite stressful as I suffer with low BP and makes me sick then sometimes it takes up to 24 hours to get back to normal.'

One person didn't tell of an impact, but said, 'If I'm going to be late for whatever reason they telephone my wife and explain why I am going to be late.'

Q21 - If you have other health conditions, and attend other hospital departments or your GP, do you feel suitably supported by the health professional you see?

9 patients responded 'Yes' to both GP and Hospital Department.

2 people answered 'no' to GP and 'yes' to Hospital Department, commenting, 'Can't get to see GP not seen one since COVID. Hospital are brilliant.', and 'Even though I've been at this surgery for many years I only know my Doctor's name, I've never met them. I've given up trying to get an appointment, I actually get more help from the Receptionist.'

Q22 - Are you or your relative aware of how to raise a complaint/concern, for example, hospital or transport?

All 11 people answered this question.

8 people said 'yes', with one adding 'don't see the point because we don't believe the problems get solved.'

1 person said 'Yes with hospital care. No with transport.'

2 people said 'No' with one adding 'We only know that we only speak to the staff.'

Q23 - Additional comments.

The 2 additional comments received were,

'Transport people are very nice and helpful EXCLUDING ONE COUPLE WHO ARE RUDE OBNOXIOUS UNHELPFUL AND UNCARING – AND THIS IS NOT JUST MY OPINION – MANY FEEL THIS WAY. THEY DO NOT SUIT THIS TYPE OF JOB.'

'Just this week although I have a blue badge our car was blocked by someone who drove into the space between 2 disabled bays (they did not have a blue badge!). We went back into the Unit, but we were told they didn't know who the care belonged to and so could not help! Of course

they were very sorry! Fortunately, an ambulance driver said he would try to climb into the car, something myself and my husband are not able to do anymore. Luckily for us he managed to get the car out for us!

Strengths:

- A vast majority of patients felt that they were well informed about their treatment plan.
- Patients felt they were engaged with and listened to throughout their treatment by hospital staff.
- Patients felt their needs were accommodated while undergoing treatment.
- Patients felt their nutritional/hydration/cultural needs were adhered to.
- People felt safe while undergoing treatment and using NEPT.

Recommendations:

- Advise people that food and drink can be accessed in the reception area whilst waiting for transport.
- Put up a poster advising people there is a place they can speak with staff confidentially
- Put up a poster advising people who to speak with if they wish to make a complaint regarding both the Unit and NEPT.
- Provide more car parking spaces or an ability to park elsewhere on the hospital site free of charge

Response from University Hospital of North Midlands (UHNM)

Prior to publication this report was sent to the Matron of the Renal Units at Royal Stoke, County and Leighton, who addressed the points we had raised as follows:

Advise people that food and drink can be accessed in the reception area whilst waiting for transport.

- We are happy to provide this should patients ask especially if there is a significant delay with transport. Patients are offered cold food and drink during their dialysis session

Put up a poster advising people there is a place they can speak with staff confidentially

- We will action this

Put up a poster advising people who to speak with if they wish to make a complaint regarding both the Unit and NEPT.

- This will be completed this week

Provide more car parking spaces or an ability to park elsewhere on the hospital site free of charge

- (Response provided by the Estates and Facilities Team) Despite there being a provision of car parking spaces for UHNM Haemodialysis patients, we acknowledge that at times, due to patient activity, these spaces can be limited. That said, Haemodialysis patients are able to park in any alternative patient parking bay free of charge.

For many people who use NEPT it is their only transport option. We would recommend the following to improve the service:

- Ensure people are waiting no more than 30 minutes to be taken home following dialysis
- Prioritise transport for those who have caring needs or who are caring for others
- Ensure there is a person in place on a Saturday who can check if people waiting in reception for transport are ok.

Response from EMED

Prior to publication this report was sent to EMED, the NEPT provider for Staffordshire, who addressed the points we had raised as follows:

Ensure people are waiting no more than 30 minutes to be taken home following dialysis

- We agree that in an ideal world all patients would be collected within 30 minutes, but ICB [Integrated Care Board] have priority lists we work to, Renal is not one of them. We also have 60 minutes as a KPI (threshold 2) [Key Performance Indicator]. There are also lots of factors beyond our control, such as weather and traffic conditions.

Prioritise transport for those who have caring needs or who are caring for others

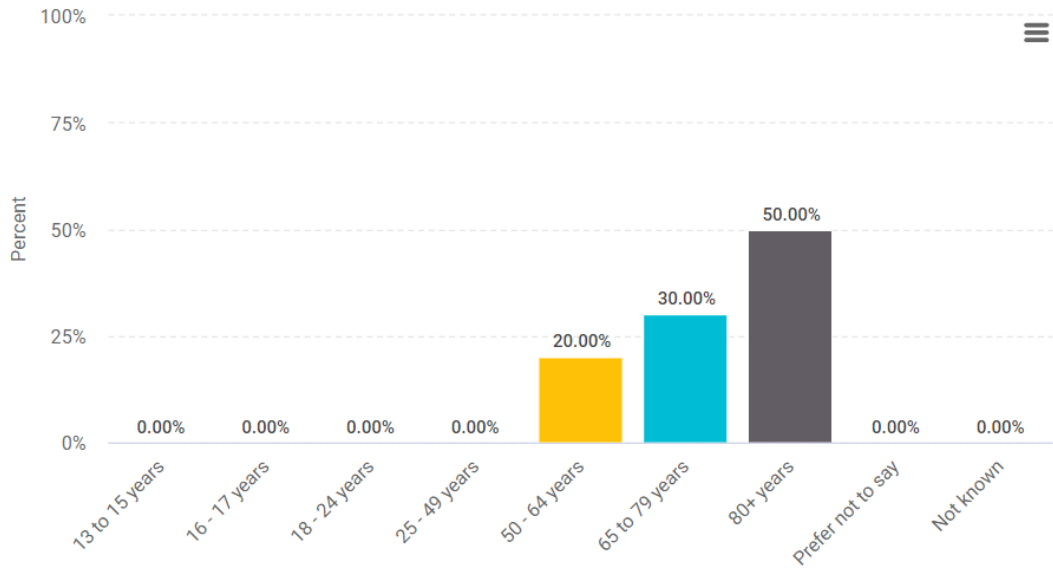
- We do prioritise patients with POC etc, but not patients that are carers, but we will always endeavour to get all patients home in a timely manner.

Ensure there is a person in place on a Saturday who can check if people waiting in reception for transport are ok.

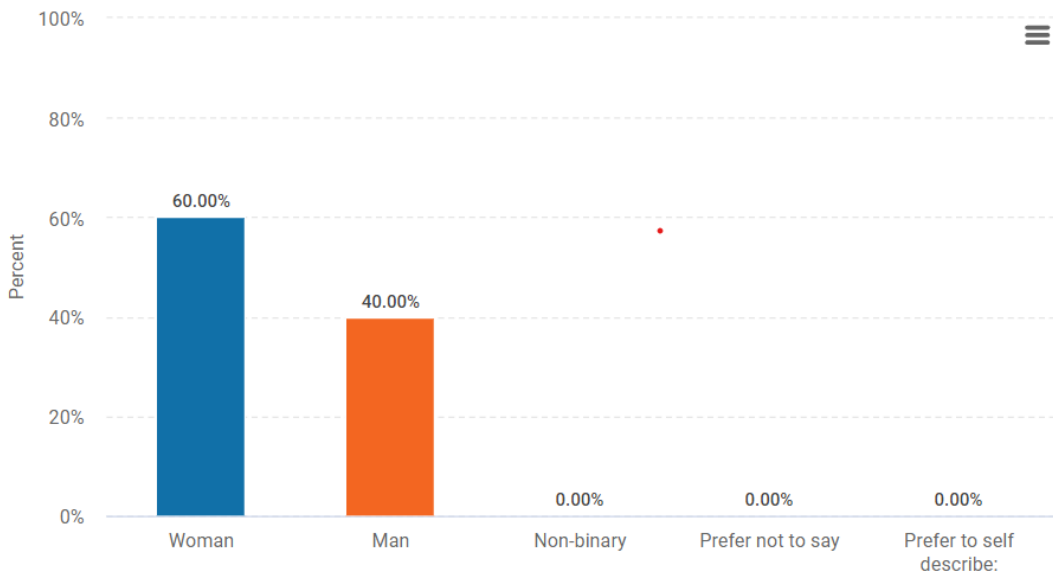
- We are not commissioned currently for this. It would require a CV with the ICB and funding. However, we have a 24hr control centre that the Unit staff can and do speak to.

Demographics of Respondents

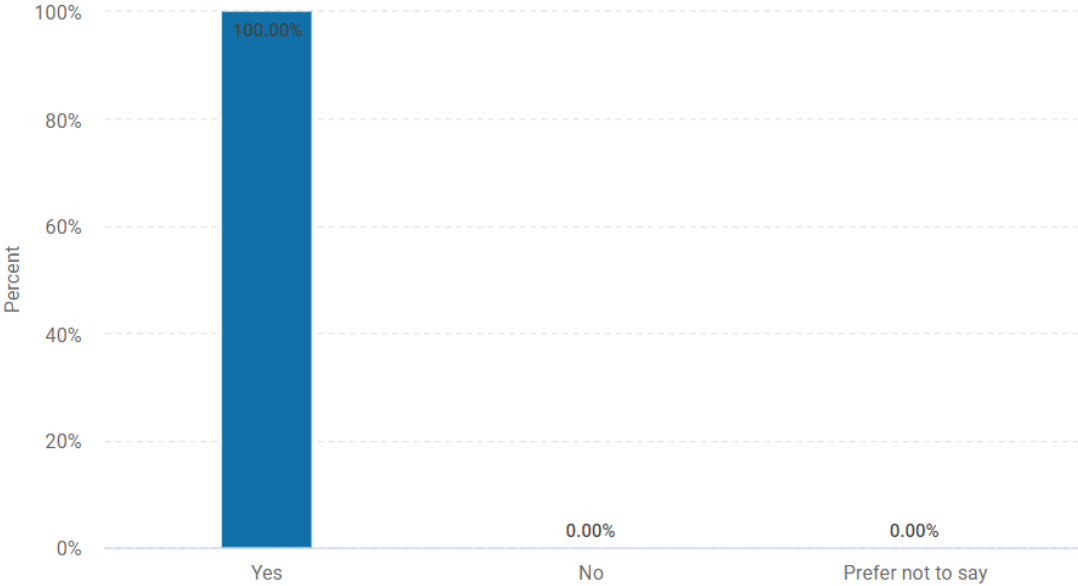
Please tell us your age



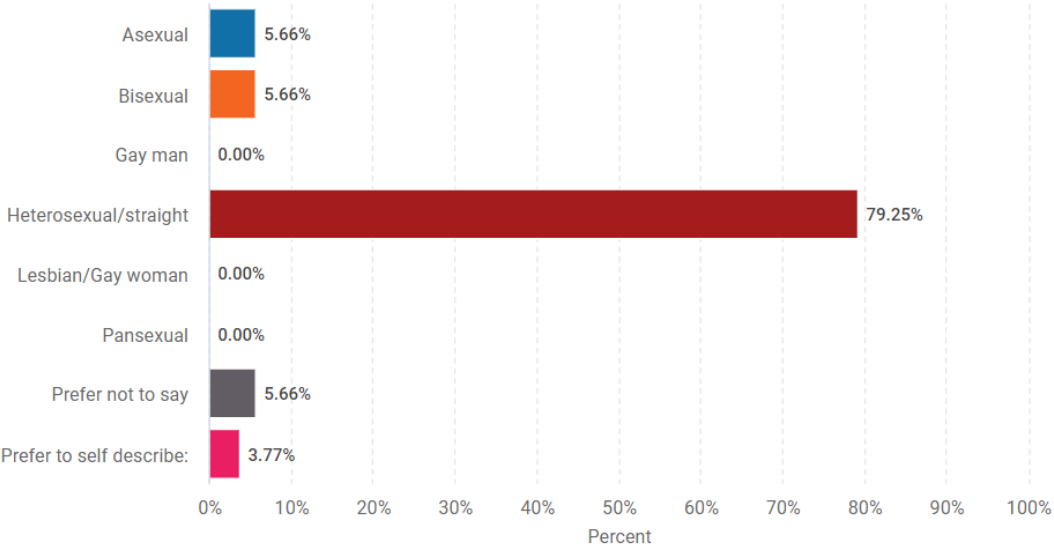
Please tell us your gender



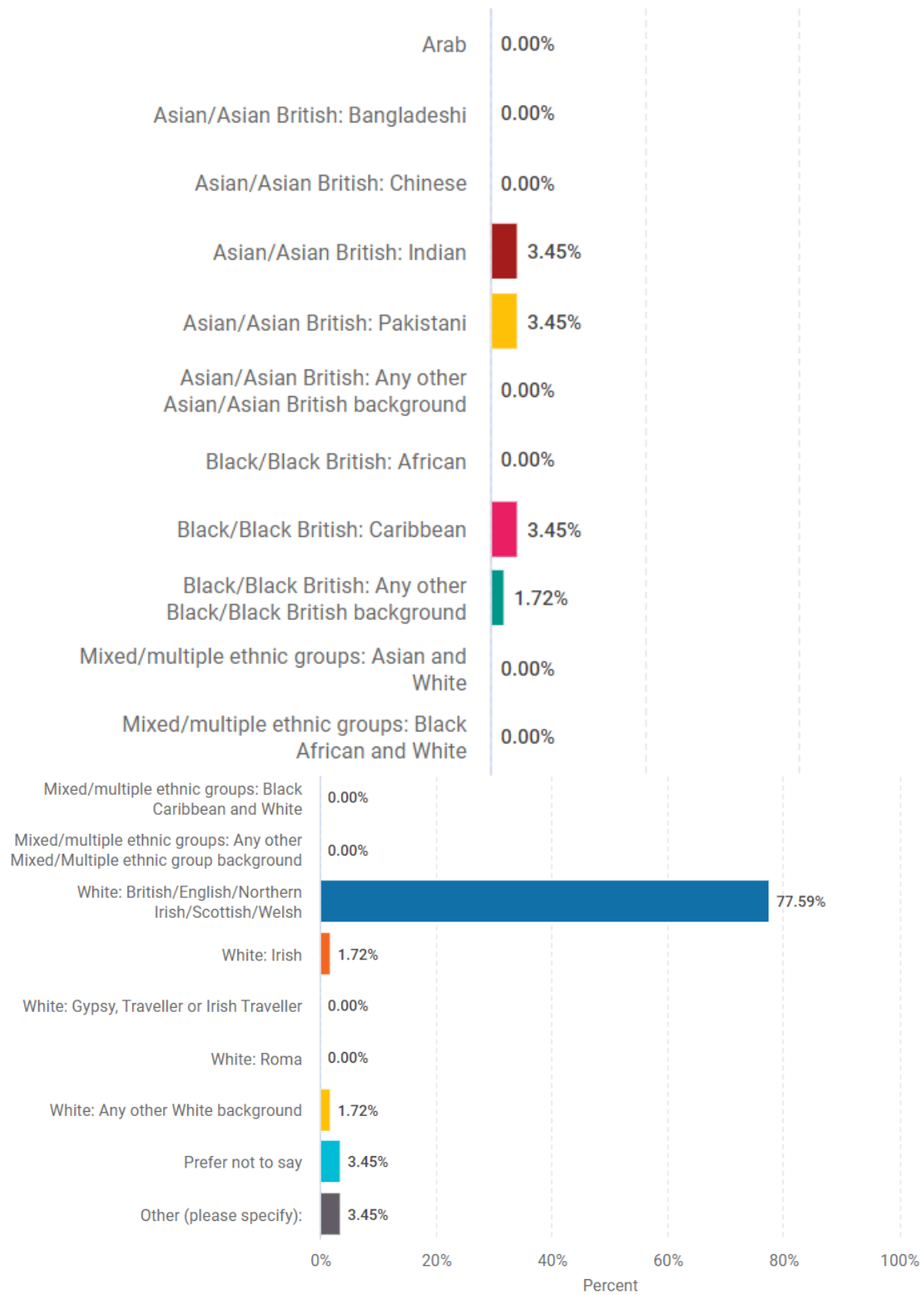
Is your gender identity the same as your sex recorded at birth?



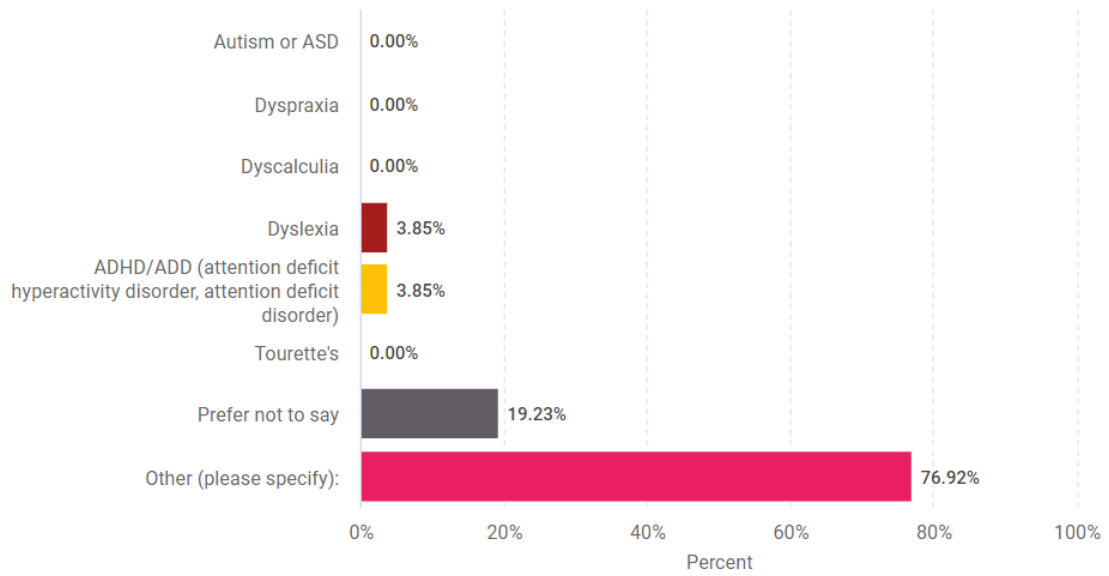
Please tell us which sexual orientation you identify with



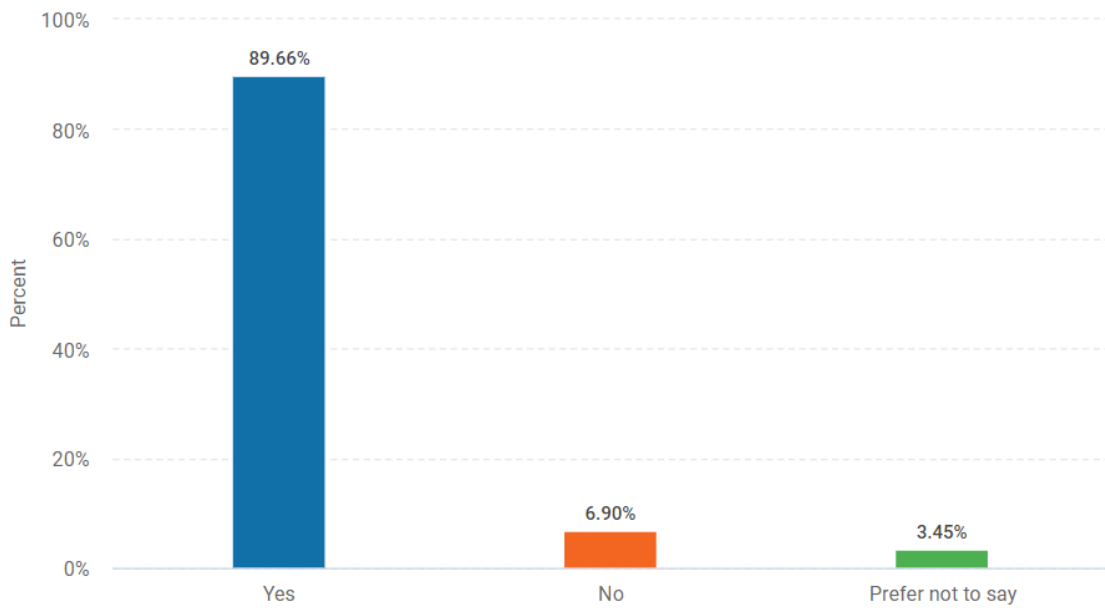
Please select your ethnicity



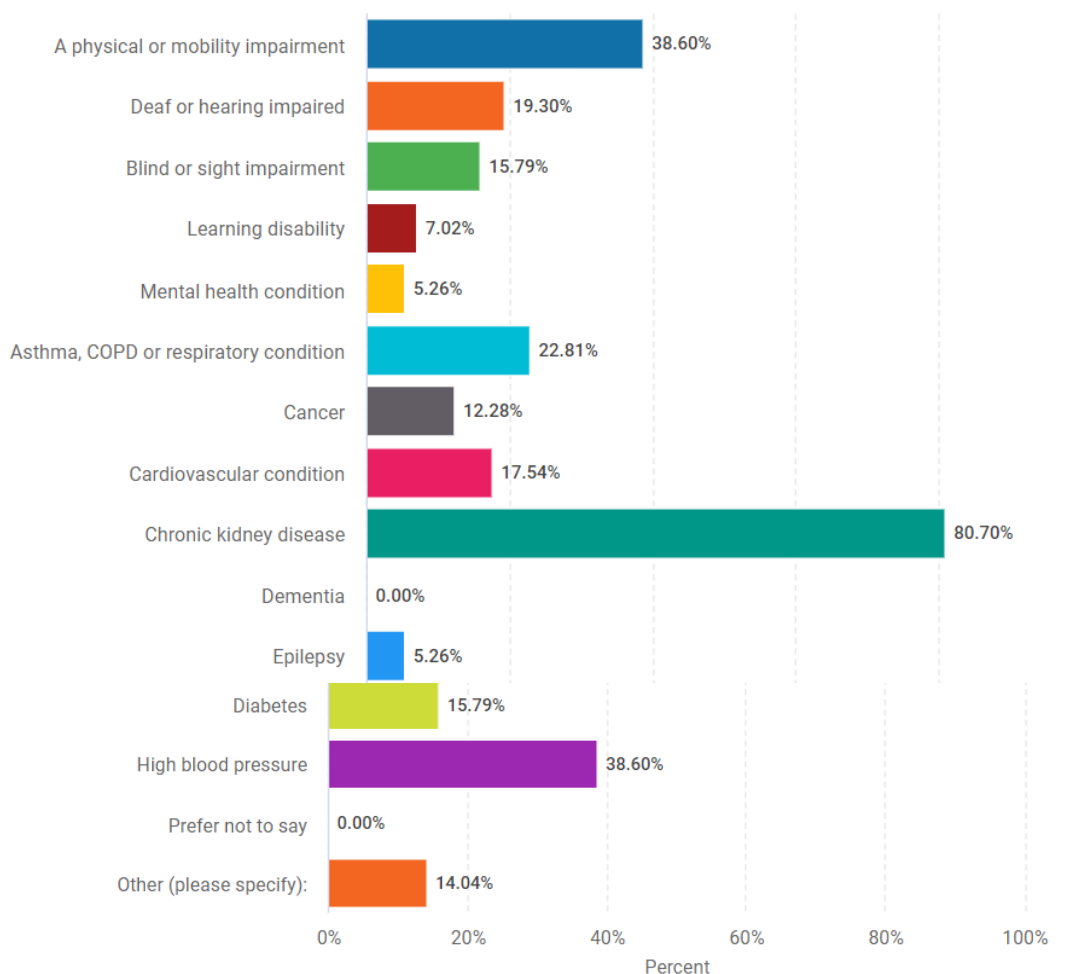
Have you been diagnosed with any of the following?



Do you have a disability or long term health condition?



Which of the following disabilities or long term health condition do you have?



Get in touch

Healthwatch Staffordshire

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