

# Digital Health Services Engagement Report

Author: Rachel Richardson, Patient & Public Engagement Manager



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# Introduction

Between 24<sup>th</sup> May and 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019 we spoke to patients and residents about digital health services.

Digital health services are those which you access online or via technology, such as:

- Online health records;
- Patient Online services - where you can book GP appointments, order repeat prescriptions or view your GP record online;
- Health applications (apps);
- Video Consultations;
- Text messages.

Through our engagement work we wanted to find out:

- What people do online now;
- If people have access to use digital services;
- What digital services people would be willing to use;
- If people have any concerns;
- If there are any individuals or groups who experience barriers to accessing such services.

Using a mixture of online, face-to-face engagement and a survey we had over 600 contacts. This report summarises what people told us.

We also gathered lots of insight from people from different protected characteristic groups. We have produced an “Equality Impact Assessment” to sit alongside this report.

The feedback from this engagement work will be shared with Jonathan Kerry, Senior Assistant Director of Primary Care. In a few months time (around November 2019) Jonathan will be asked for feedback on what has happened with this information. We will publish a “you said, we listened” document on our website.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to speak to us or complete a survey.

**Rachel Richardson, Patient Engagement Manager**

# How did we engage with people

We produced a survey that was available online. The questions on the survey formed the basis of the conversations we had with people in person.

## Face-to-face activities:

- Workshop with Patients Forum;
- Workshop at our Annual Conference;
- Workshop with our Equality Reference Group;
- Visits to GP practice patient groups;
- Visits to Health Centres chatting to people (e.g. Platt Bridge, Golborne and Atherton);
- Visits to Voluntary Community Sector groups:
  - Think Ahead Stroke;
  - Dementia Carers Support Group;
  - Carers Centre;
  - Support for Wigan Arrivals (SWAP);
  - Higher Folds Community Centre;
  - Wigan & Leigh People First;
- Healthwatch Wigan & Leigh Launch Event.

## Online activities:

- Regular posts on our social media pages;
- Information in newsletters, such as our Shape Your NHS community newsletter and the Health Champions newsletter;
- Included on internal newsletters to our 60 GP practices and staff;
- A page on our website with more information and survey.

## Some of our GP practices also discussed the topic at their patient group meetings:

- Lilford Park;
- Beech Hill;
- Pemberton Surgery;
- Foxleigh Surgery;
- Standish Medical Practice;
- Brookmill Medical Centre.

**248 COMPLETED  
SURVEYS**

**357 FACE-TO-  
FACE CONTACTS**



# Summary of the results

- Almost an equal number said they would be willing to use the internet (15) versus those who would not (14);
- Most said they don't use the internet because they don't have access, either to the internet or a device (11). After this, the most popular answers were that they were concerned about security (5) or they preferred face-to-face contact (5);
- The fact that some people said they would be willing to use the internet but didn't have a device or the internet suggests there is a barrier for some people;
- Most said they prefer to speak to someone for health advice, either a doctor/nurse (33) or from family/friends (11) over digital methods like text/telephone calls/video calls;
- Most said they'd prefer to get advice from a doctor in person (33) or over the telephone (29) over digital methods like text/telephone calls/video calls;
- When faced with the scenario of not being able to get an appointment with the GP, most said they would choose to phone back at 8am the next morning (22) or ring the evening/weekend service (19) over choosing any digital methods like text/telephone calls/video calls;
- When asked how likely they would be to accept a video call with a doctor or nurse (1=not at all to 10=very likely) there was a mix of answers. Most put themselves under 5 on the scale (18) whilst a smaller number put themselves on the higher end of the scale (11). Some people who don't currently use the internet would be willing to give this a go;
- When asked what types of issues are appropriate for a video call there were lots of different answers. The most popular was "minor issues" (8) followed by "all" (5). A small number of people felt that no issues were appropriate to discuss over a video call (5);

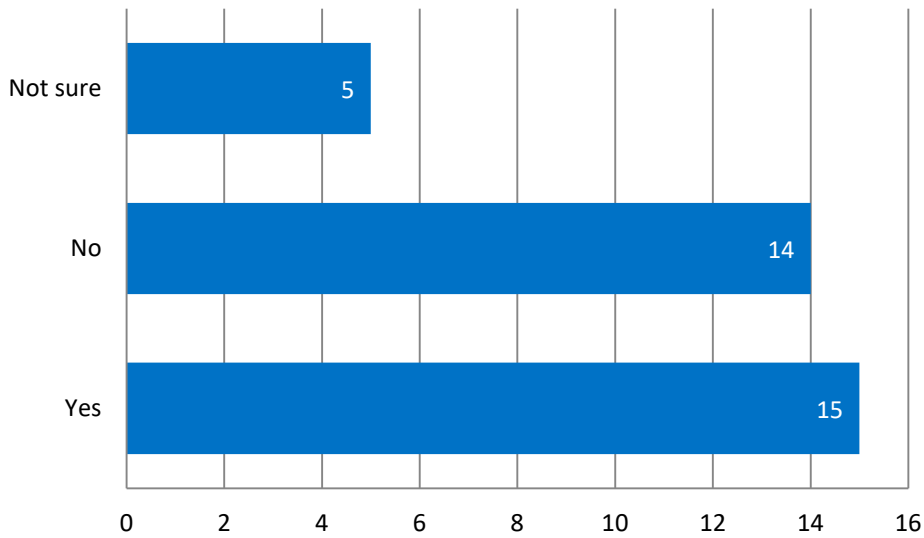
# Summary of the results

- When asked how comfortable they are with the cost of the internet or data to use services (1=not at all to 10=very likely), there was a range of answers. Most put themselves under 5 on the scale (15) whilst some put themselves above 5 (12);
- When asked how comfortable about security of online records (1=not at all to 10=very likely), the trend was much clearer. The majority put themselves under 5 on the scale (20). A much smaller number put themselves above 5 on the scale (6). This suggests there is concern about security of health records;
- When asked how comfortable they are about how easy online services are to use (1=not at all to 10=very likely), the trend was much clearer. The majority put themselves under 5 on the scale (20). A much smaller number put themselves above 5 on the scale (5);
- When asked how comfortable they are about the confidentiality of video call (1=not at all to 10=very likely), the trend was much clearer. The majority put themselves under 5 on the scale (20). A smaller number put themselves above 5 on the scale (10);
- Most would be comfortable for a health professional to use their own device to connect to their internet (16). Some people did say they'd prefer a health professional to use pen and paper only (10);
- Most people who said they don't currently use the internet over the age of 65 (21) and most were retired (22);
- There were more women (20) who said they don't use the internet compared to men (6);
- Most people who said they don't use the internet are not in work (21) or education (22).

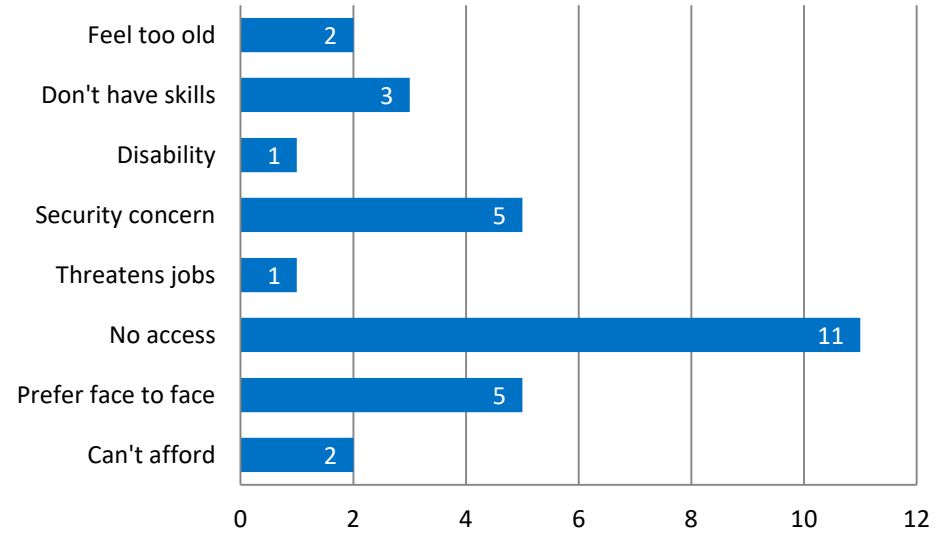


# Full results

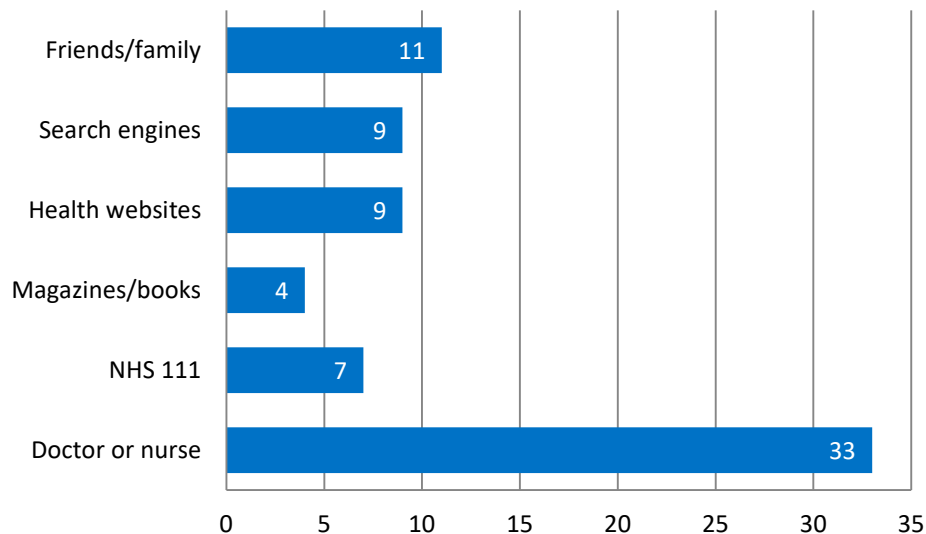
## Do you want to use the internet or go online?



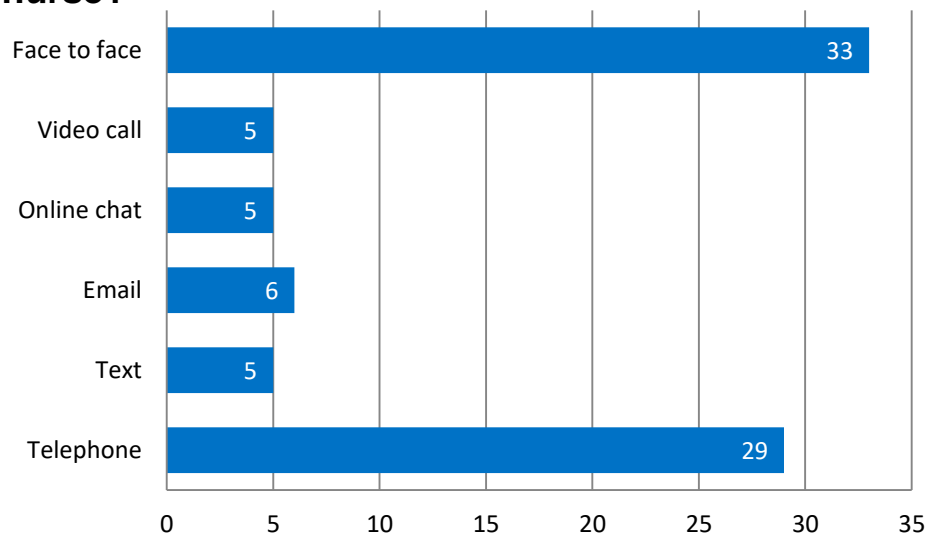
## Why don't you use the internet?



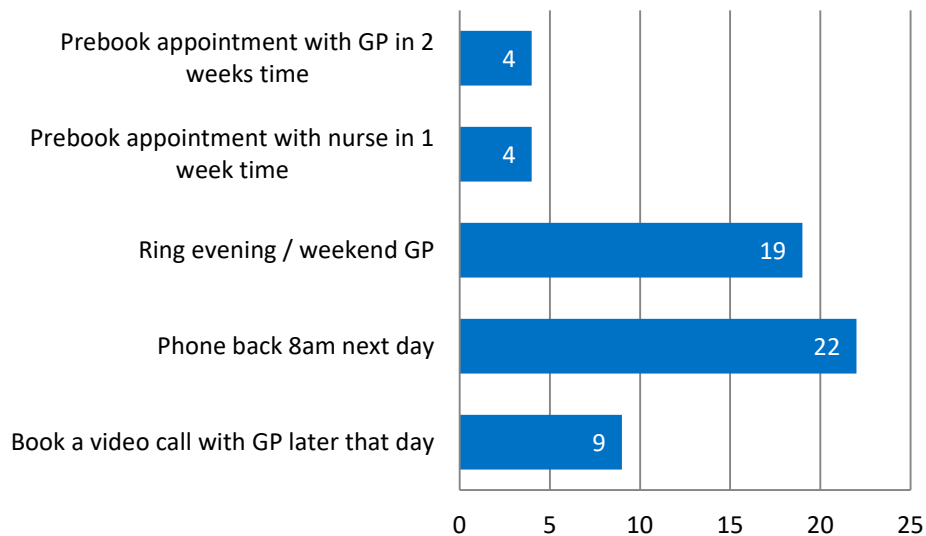
## Where do you look for health advice?



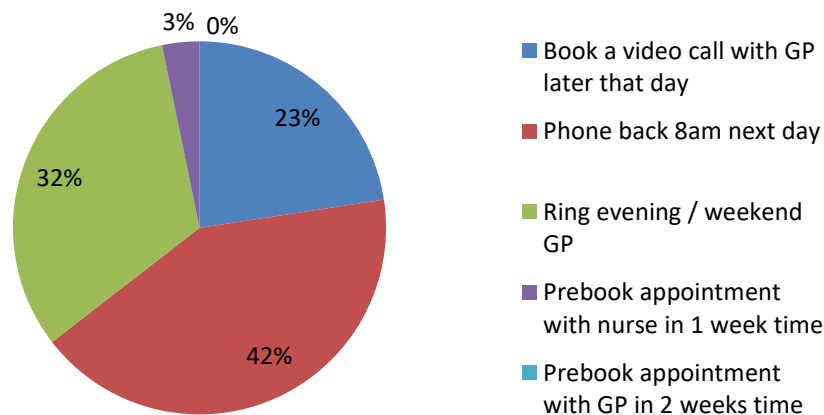
## How would you like to get advice from a doctor or nurse?



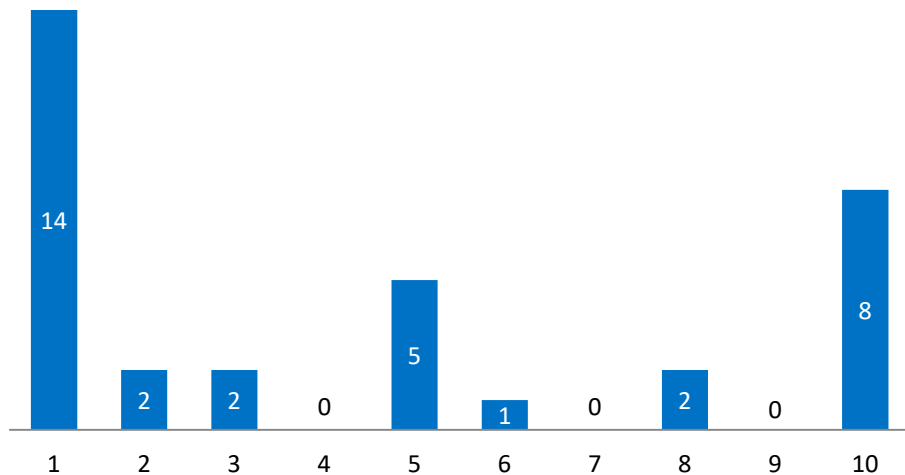
**Scenario question: You ring your GP practice but there are no appointments left for that day. You are offered some different options all appropriate for your symptoms. Which would you accept?**



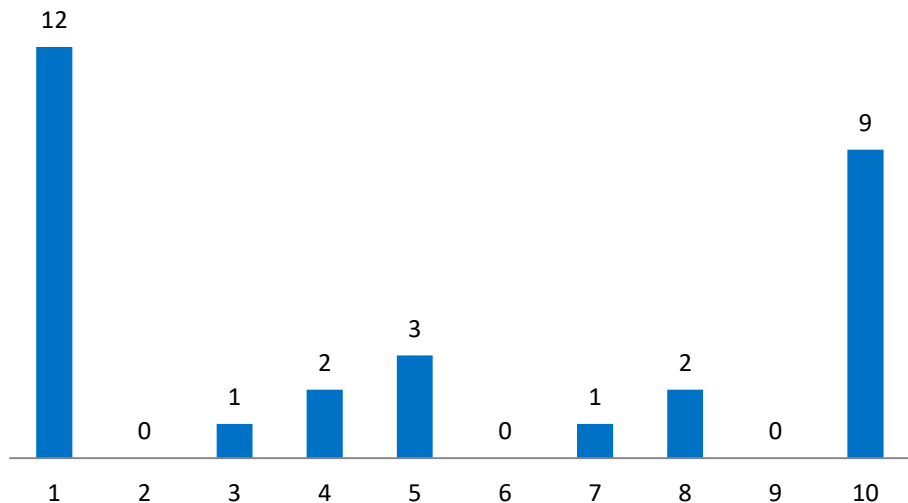
## 1st choice option



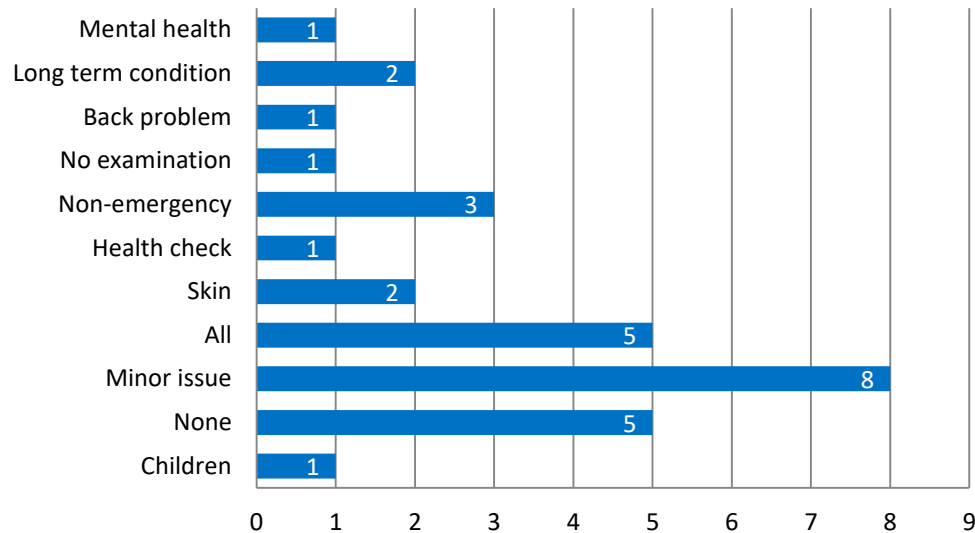
**If a doctor or nurse wanted to video call you, how likely would you be to say yes? (1 = not at all, 10 = very likely)**



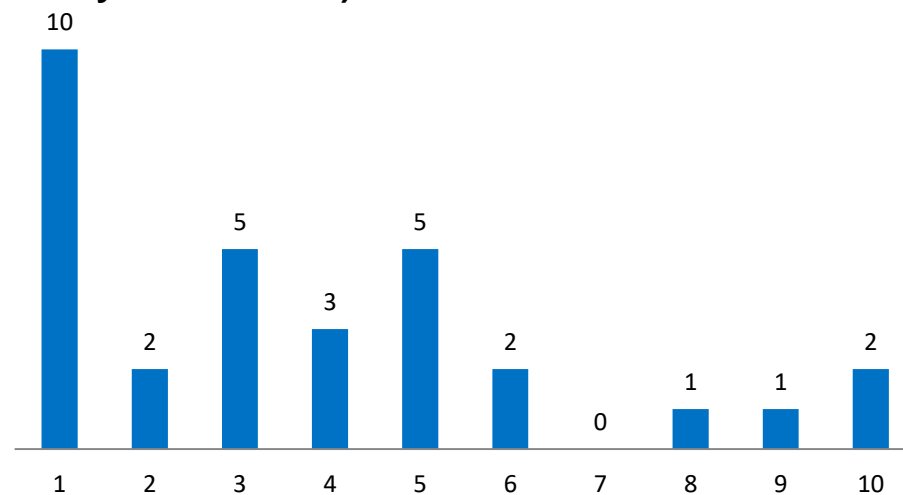
**How comfortable/concerned about the cost of the internet or data to use health services online (1 = very concerned, 10= very comfortable)**



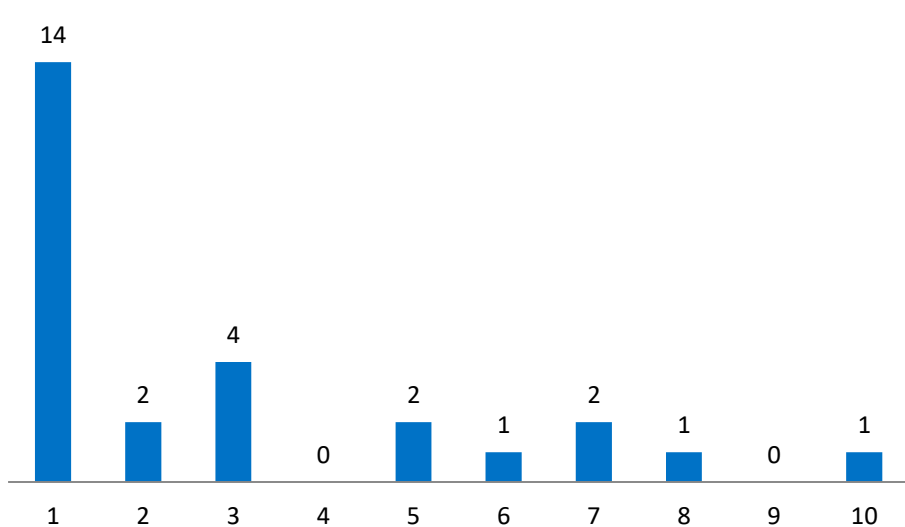
**Types of issues / illnesses you think are appropriate for a video call?**



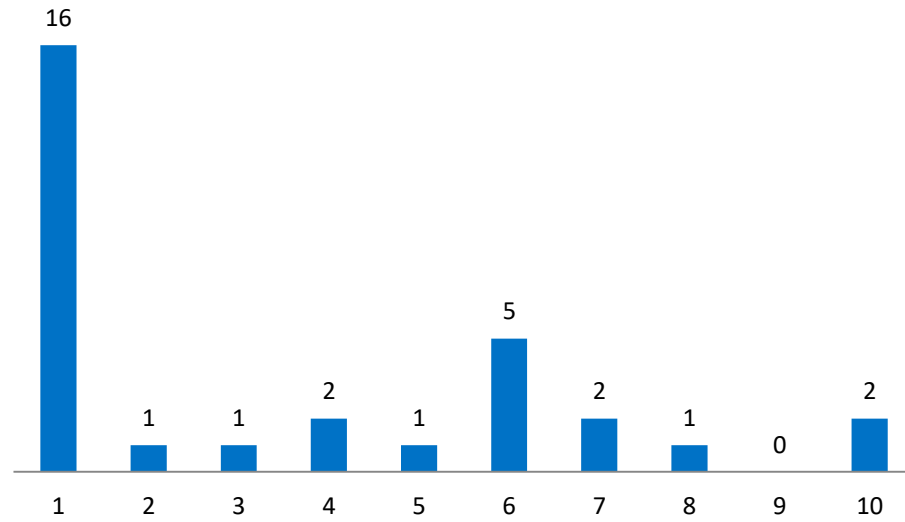
**How comfortable/concerned about how secure your online health records are (1 = very concerned, 10= very comfortable)**



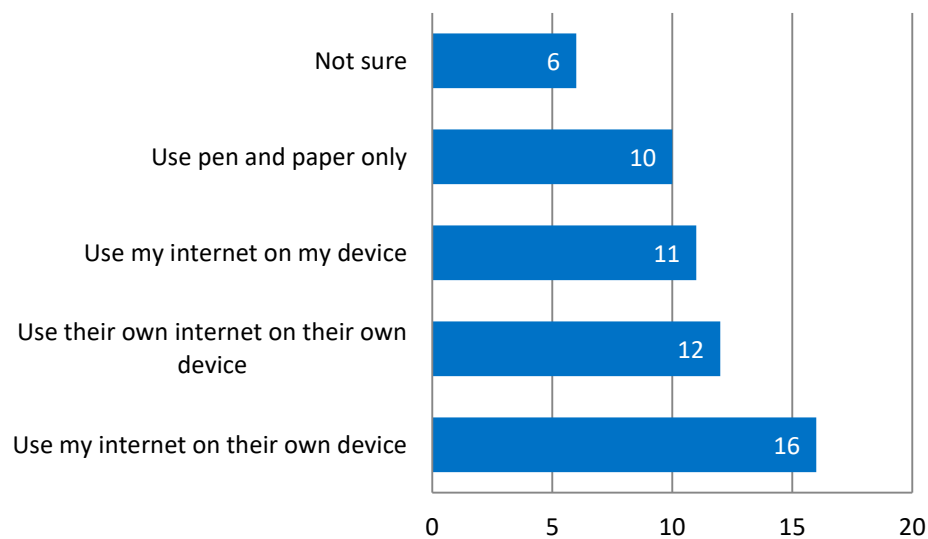
**How comfortable/concerned about how easy online health services and apps are to use (1 = very concerned, 10= very comfortable)**



**How comfortable/concerned about how confidential video call conversations are (1 = very concerned, 10= very comfortable)**



**If a doctor or nurse visited your home to give you care and advice, you would be happy for them to:**

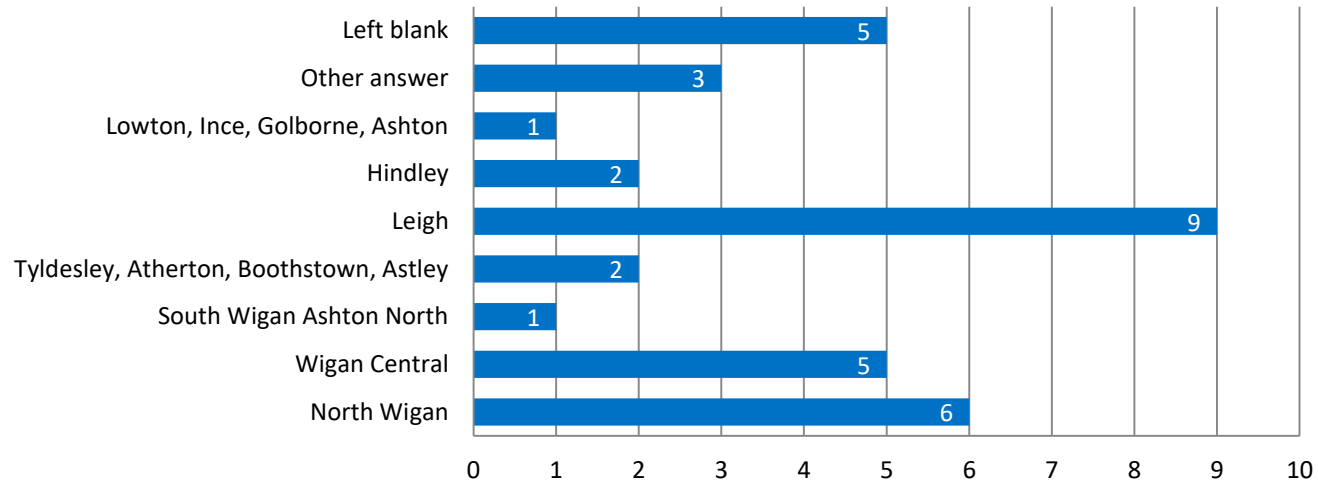


# Additional comments

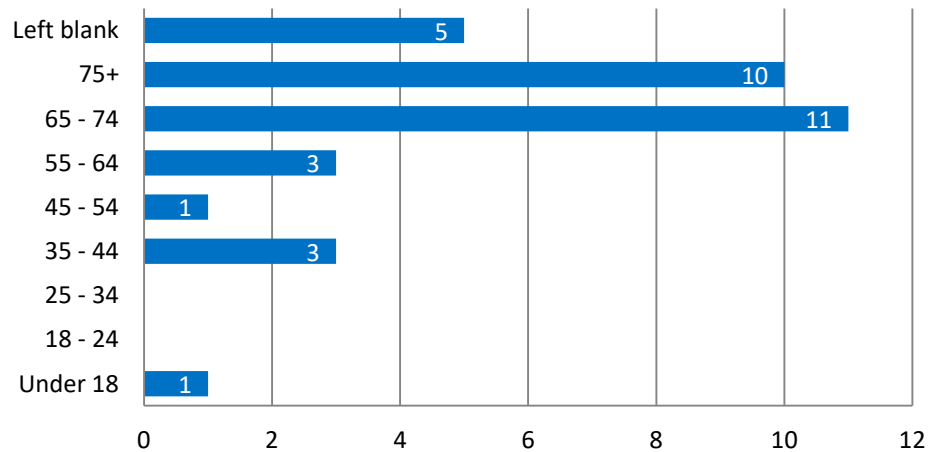
- There is concern about the move to digital (online) health services and the loss of connection from speaking to people in person;
- Some people would be willing to give it a go if they were shown how to use it;
- Good to give people online options to make services less busy;
- Don't eliminate services from people who don't want the internet;
- The paperwork to sign up to Patient Online puts me off

# Equality Monitoring Information

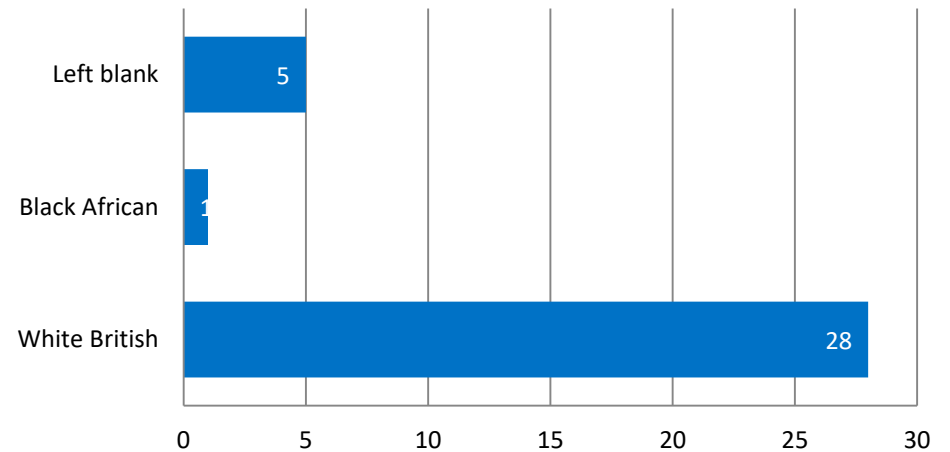
## Where do you live?



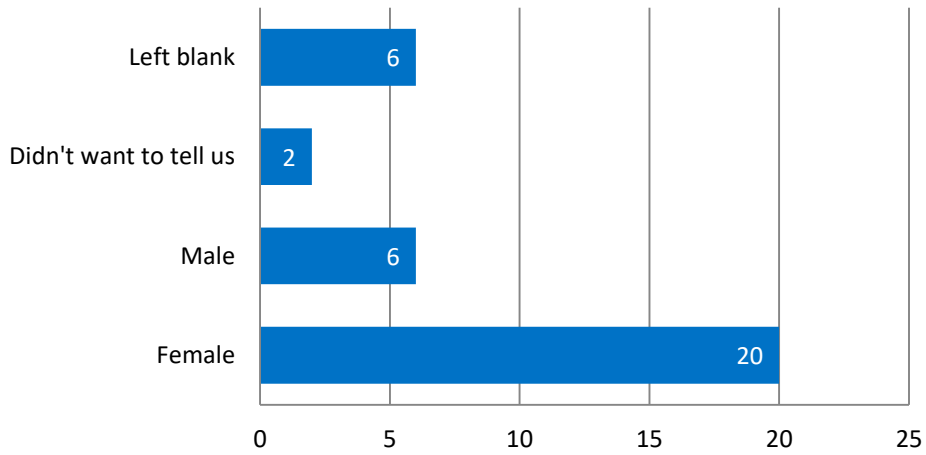
## Age



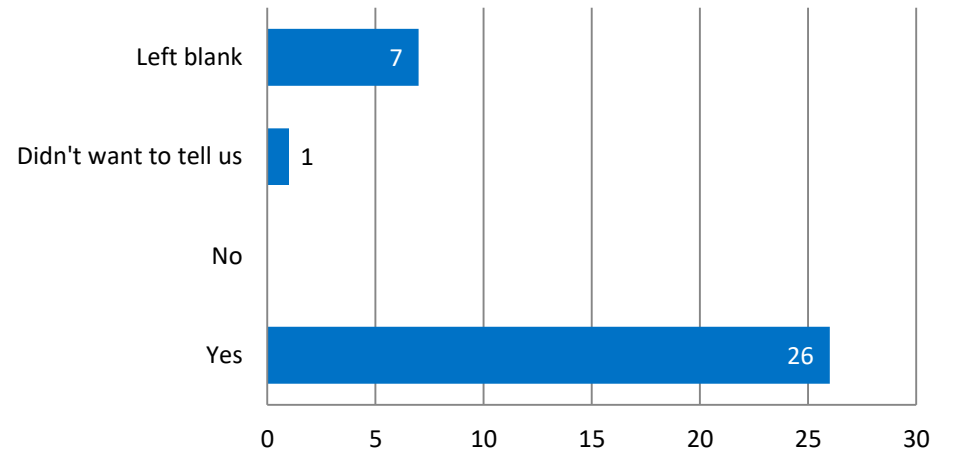
## Ethnicity



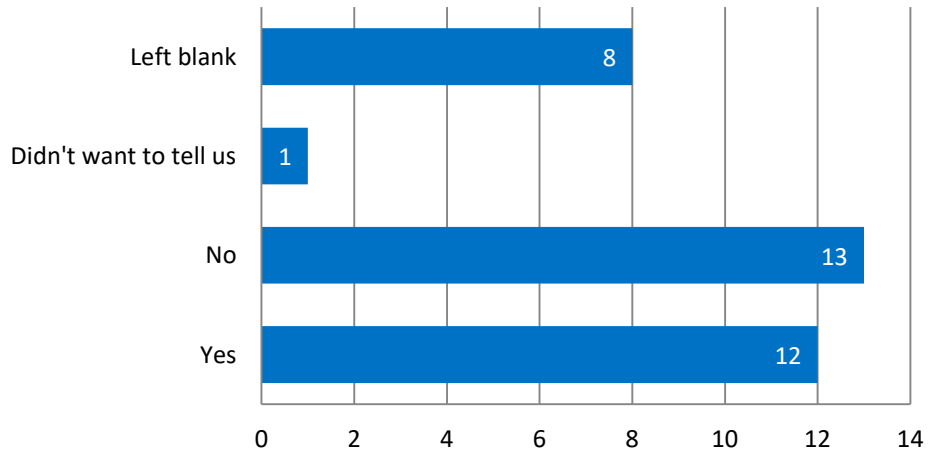
## Gender



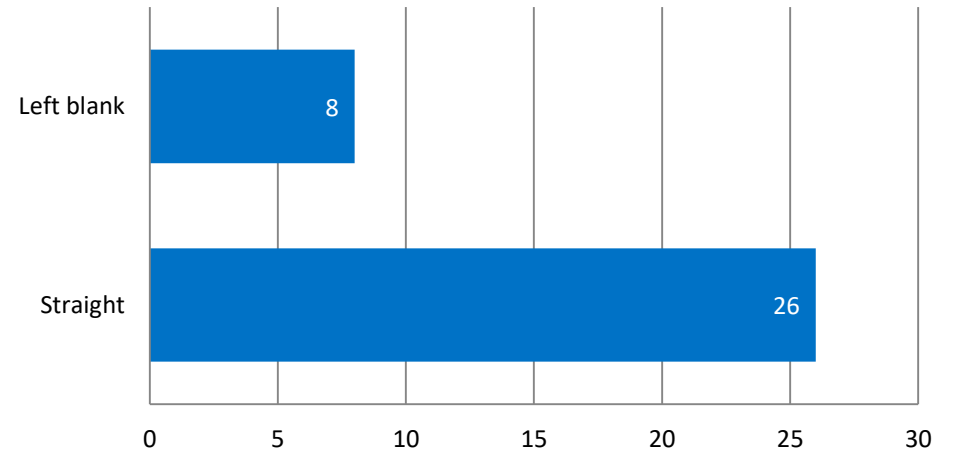
## Same gender they were born



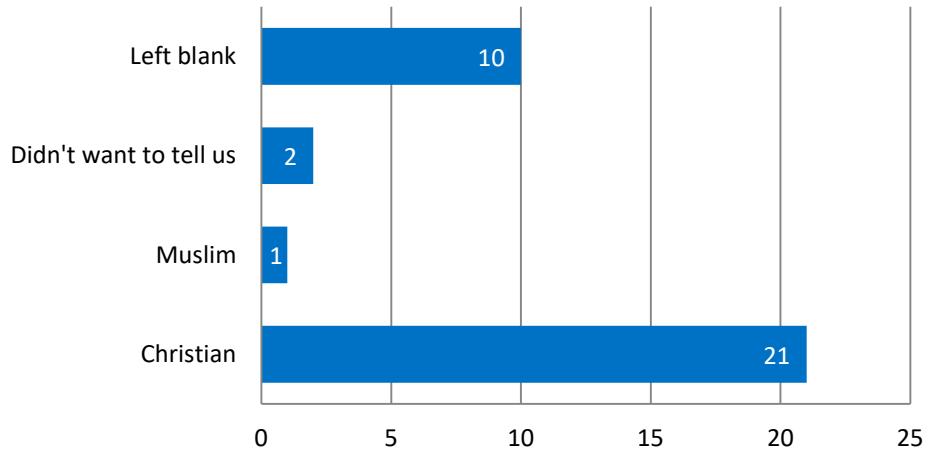
## In a relationship



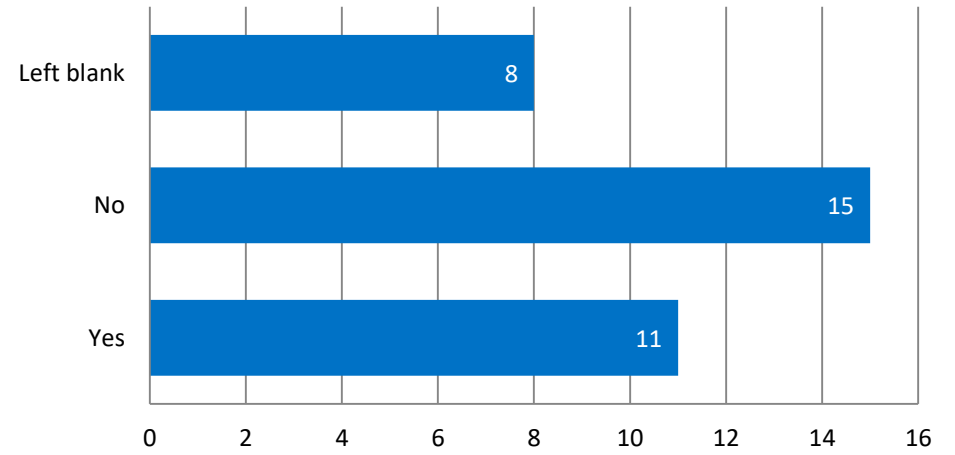
## Sexual orientation



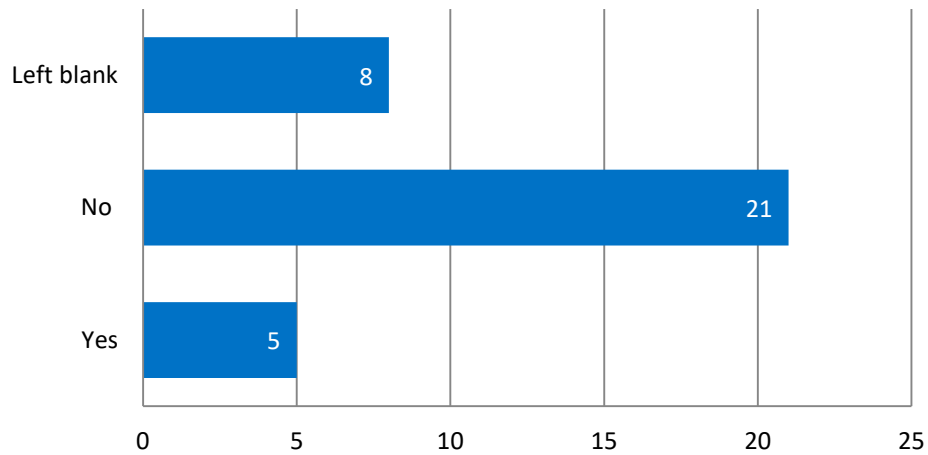
## Religion



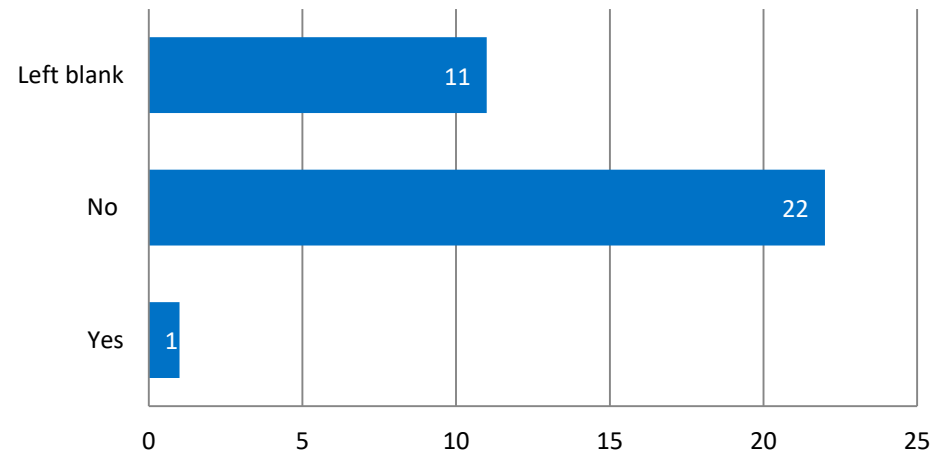
## Disabled



## In work

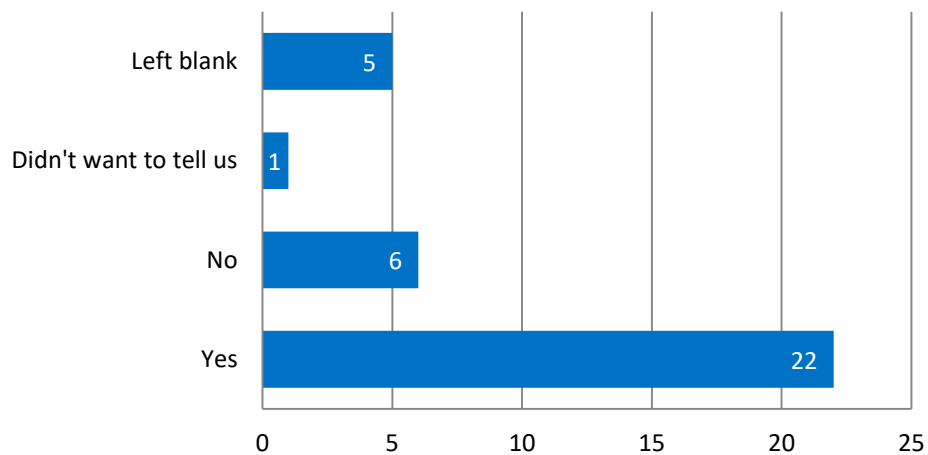


## In education

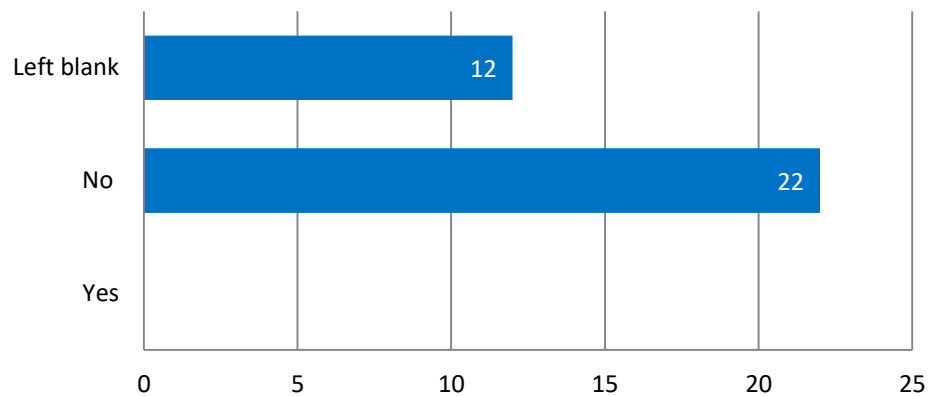




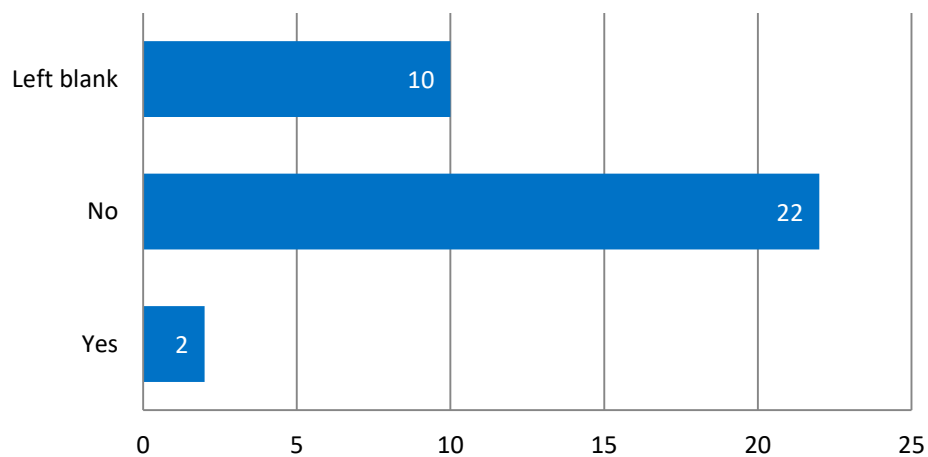
### Retired



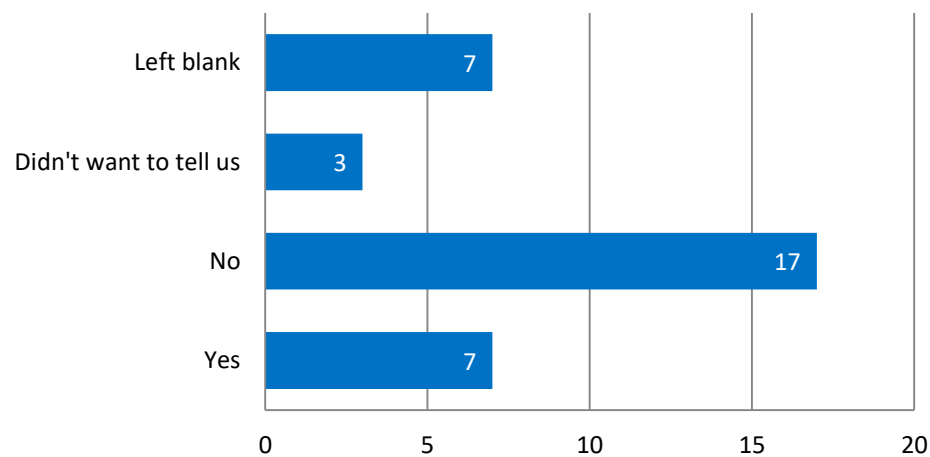
### Currently serving the navy, army or airforce



### Veteran



### Caring responsibilities





# Summary of the results

- Most have the internet at home (188) or use the internet on a contract phone or tablet (122);
- Most have a mobile phone (195), a laptop or computer (163) or a tablet (139). A good number also use an eReader or Kindle (79);
- Most people use emails (197) and social media platforms. The most popular social media platforms were WhatsApp (142) and Facebook (136);
- Less than half said they use Patient Online services (88);
- Most go online to do shopping (166), banking (154) and planning travel (149);
- More than half said they video call with someone at the moment (113) and the most popular video call provider was tied between Facetime (65) and WhatsApp (65);
- Most look to a doctor or nurse for health advice (163), but many also said that they would look online to Health websites (139) or search engines (114);
- The most common things they do online around health is to search symptoms and conditions (127);
- More people said that they “book or cancel appointments” (110) or “order repeat prescriptions” (92) online, which is more than the people who declared they use Patient Online services. This might suggest people didn’t recognise the term Patient Online Services;
- When asked how willing they would be to book/cancel a GP appointment online (1=not at all to 10=very likely) most put themselves at 10 as being very likely to do so (152). Lots of other people scored themselves above 5 (26);
- When asked how willing they would be to try ordering repeat prescriptions online (1=not at all to 10=very likely) most put themselves at 10 as being very likely to do so (146). Lots of other people scored themselves above 5 (22);

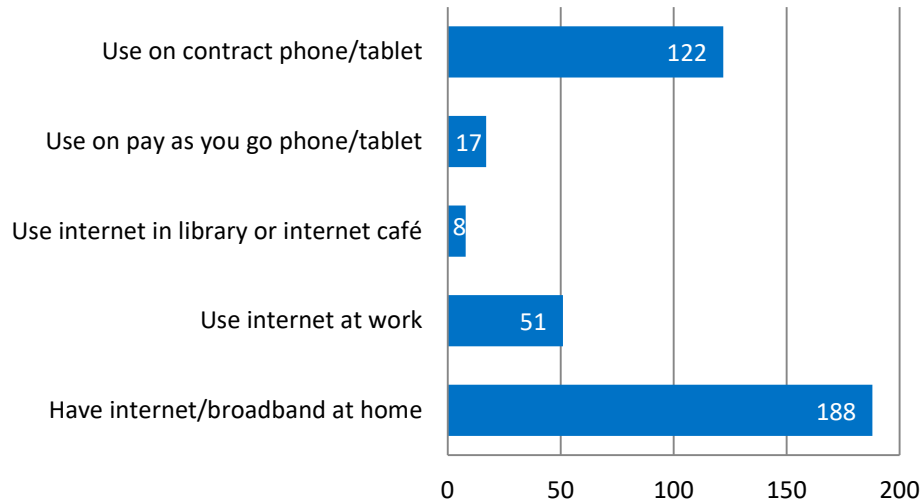
# Summary of the results

- When asked how willing they would be to try ordering repeat prescriptions online (1=not at all to 10=very likely) most put themselves at 10 as being very likely to do so (146). Lots of other people scored themselves above 5 (22);
- When asked how willing they would be to view health records online (1=not at all to 10=very likely) most put themselves at 10 as being very likely to do so (144). Lots of other people scored themselves above 5 (28);
- Most said they'd prefer to get advice from a doctor in person (179) or over the telephone (176). Other digital methods were popular, such as online chat (114), email (114), text (99) and video call (97);
- When faced with the scenario of not being able to get an appointment with the GP, most said they would choose to ring the evening/weekend service (140) or book a video call with a GP later that day (134);
- When asked how likely they would be to accept a video call with a doctor or nurse (1=not at all to 10=very likely) the majority scored themselves 10 as being very likely to say yes (91). Lots of people scored themselves above 5 (56);
- When asked what types of issues are appropriate for a video call there were lots of different answers. The most popular was "minor issues" (61) followed by "all" (42). A small number of people said they didn't think any issues were appropriate for a video call (13);
- When asked how comfortable they are with the cost of the internet or data to use services (1=not at all to 10=very likely), the majority scored themselves 10 as being very comfortable (100). Lots of people scored themselves over 5 (28);

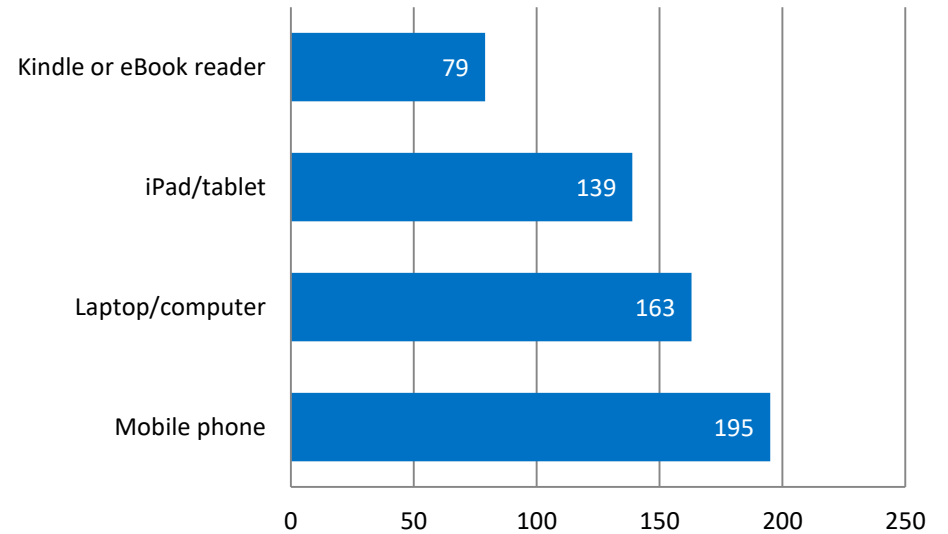
# Summary of the results

- When asked how comfortable about security of online records (1=not at all to 10=very likely), there was more of a spread of answers. A smaller majority scored themselves 10 as being very comfortable (53) with a further number of people scoring above 5 (61). A larger number of people were in the middle and not sure (29). A fair number of people score below 5 (46);
- When asked how comfortable they are about how easy online services are to use (1=not at all to 10=very likely), there was spread of answers. The majority put themselves at 5 in the middle (44) on the scale (20). A large number put themselves in the middle at 5 (44) whilst a similar number scored themselves a 10 as very comfortable (40). A number of people scored themselves below 5 (55) as being concerned;
- Most would be comfortable for a health professional to use their own device to connect to their internet (163). A small number of people said they'd prefer a health professional to use pen and paper only (30);
- There was a more even spread of ages of people who said they do use the internet. Whilst most of our respondents were over the age of 65 (75), 31 people were under the age of 35;
- More women responded (138) over men (57);
- A larger number of people said that they currently work (90) and we had some people who are still in education (8).

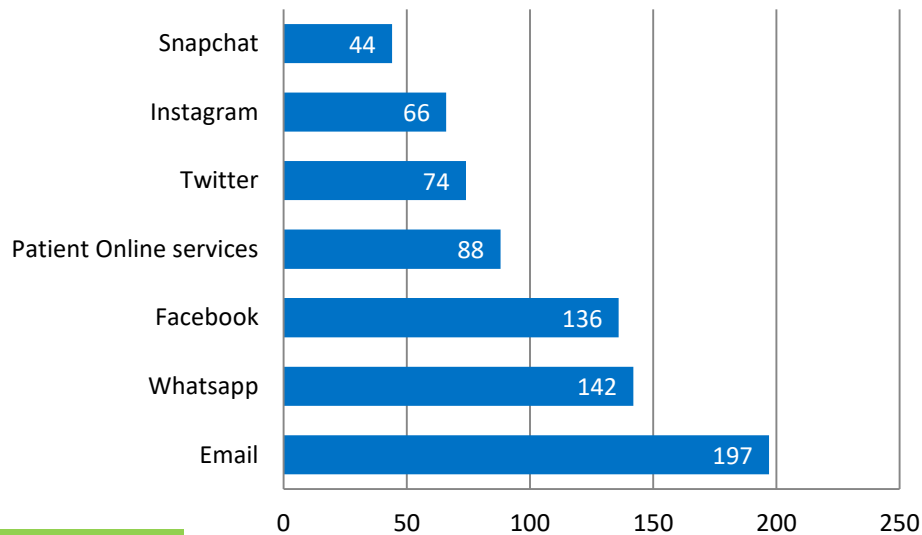
## How do you access the internet or go online?



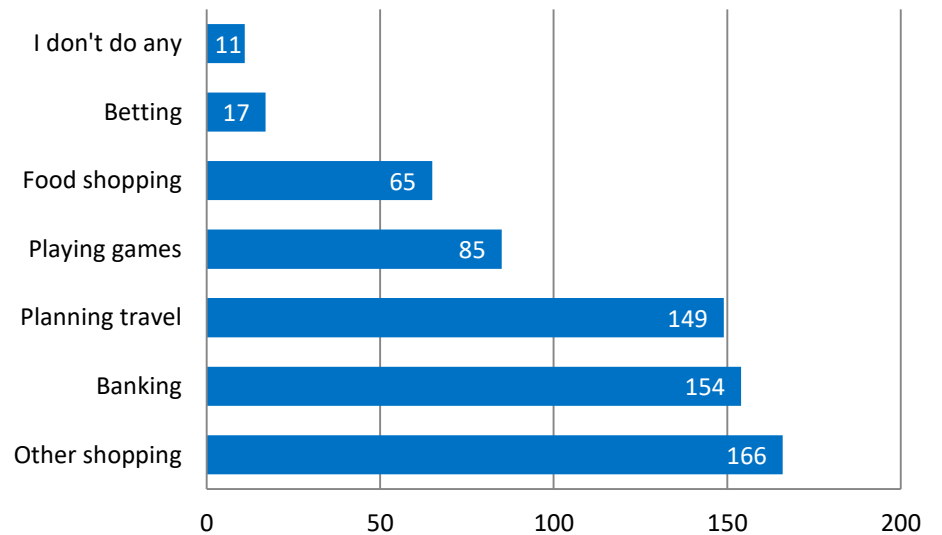
## Do you use any of these?



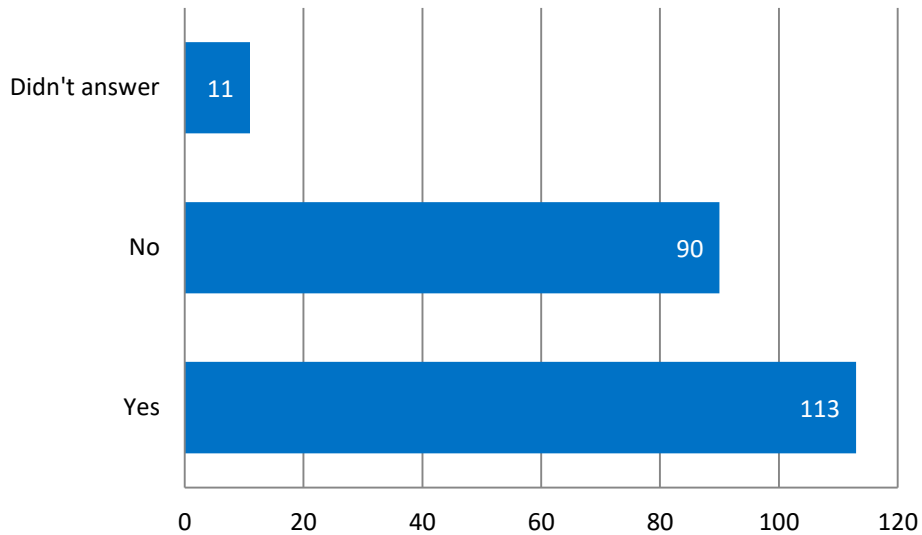
## Do you use any of these?



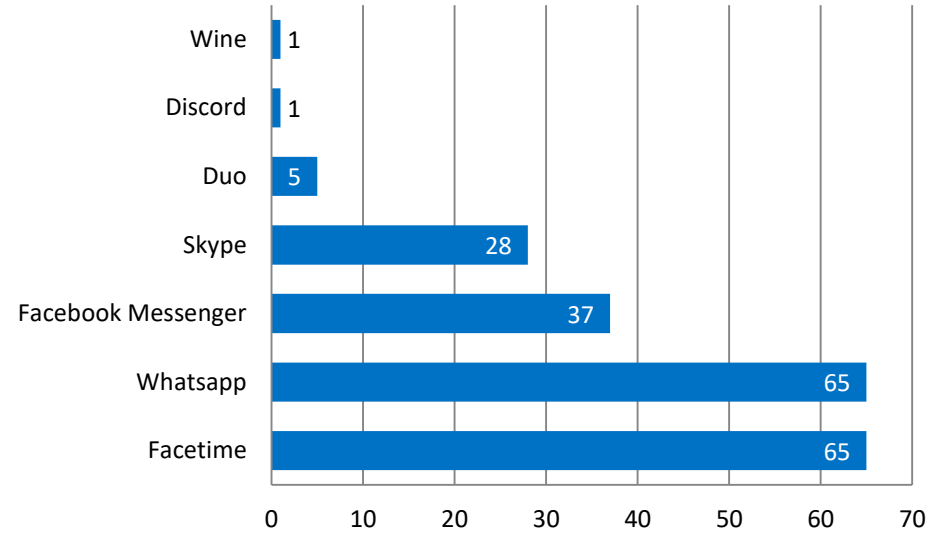
## Do you do any of the following online or on an app?



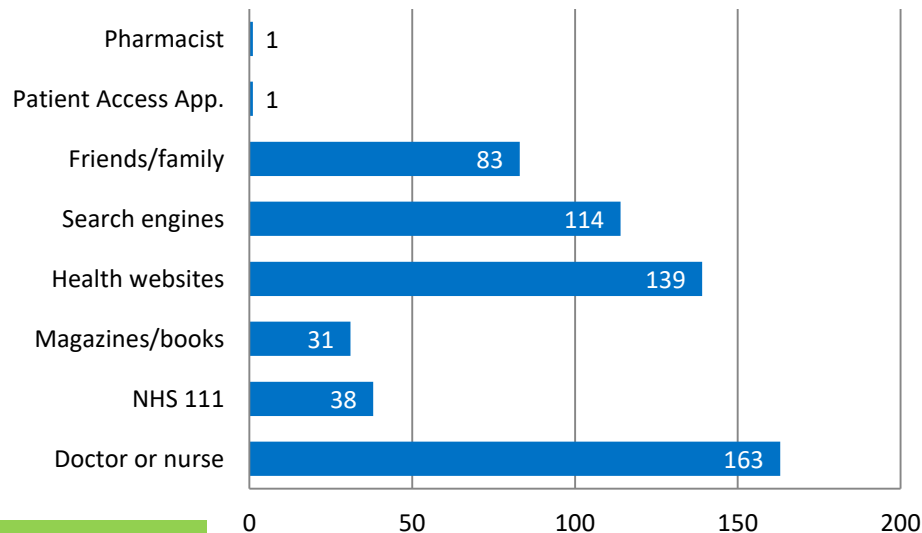
## Do you video call with anyone?



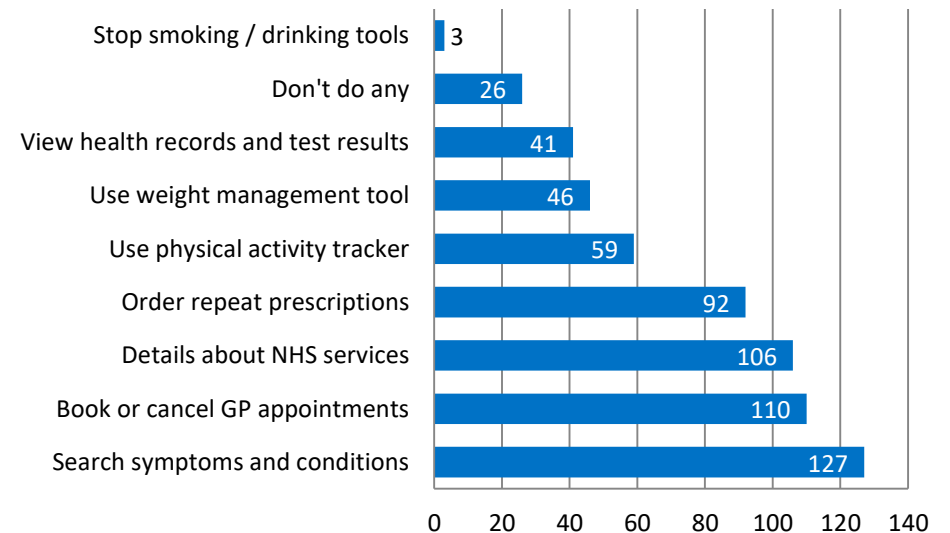
## If so, which video call provider do you use?



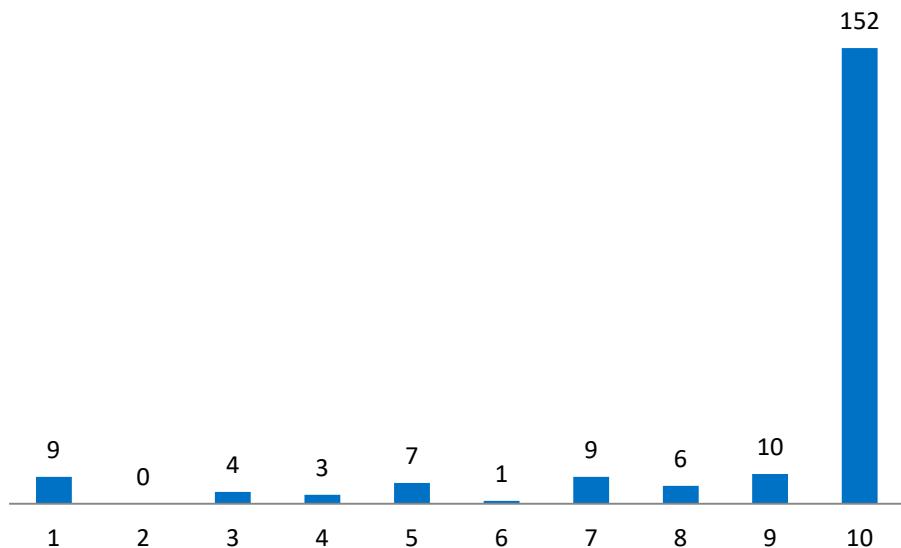
## Where do you look for health advice?



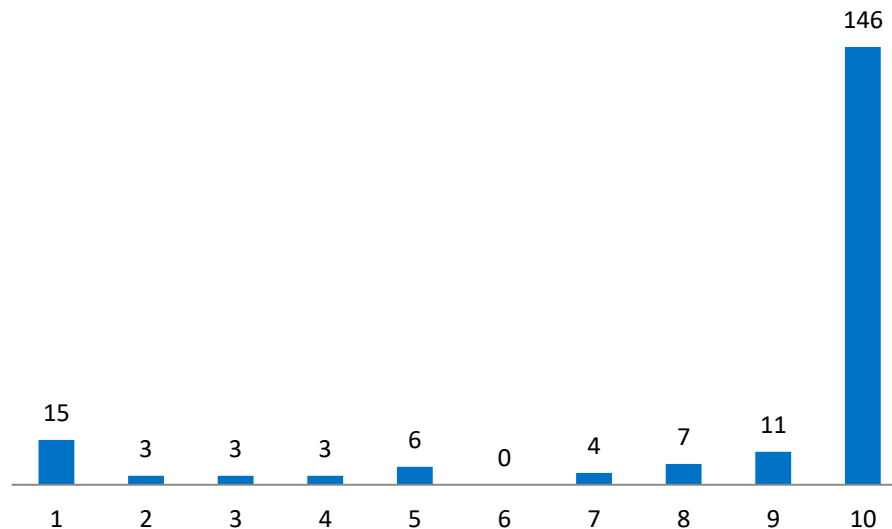
## Do you do any of the following online or through an app?



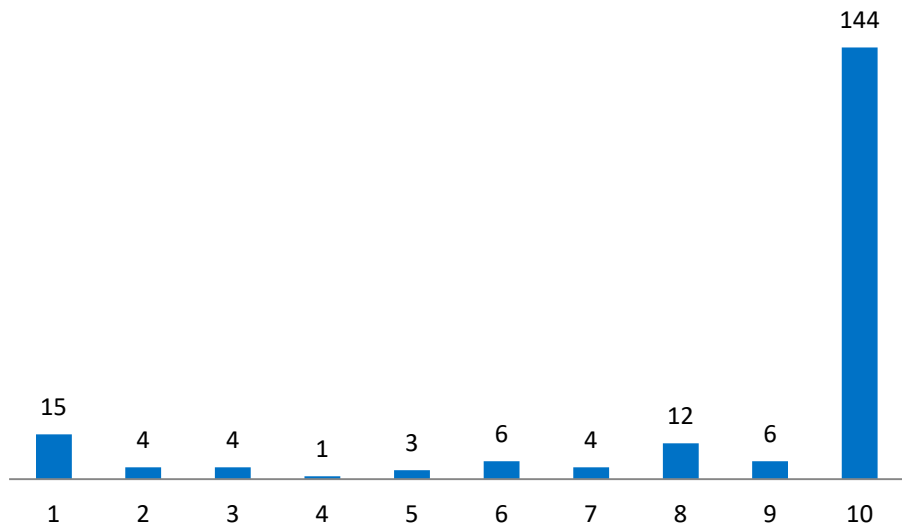
**How will are you to try booking or cancelling a GP appointment online (1 = not at all, 10 = very likely)**



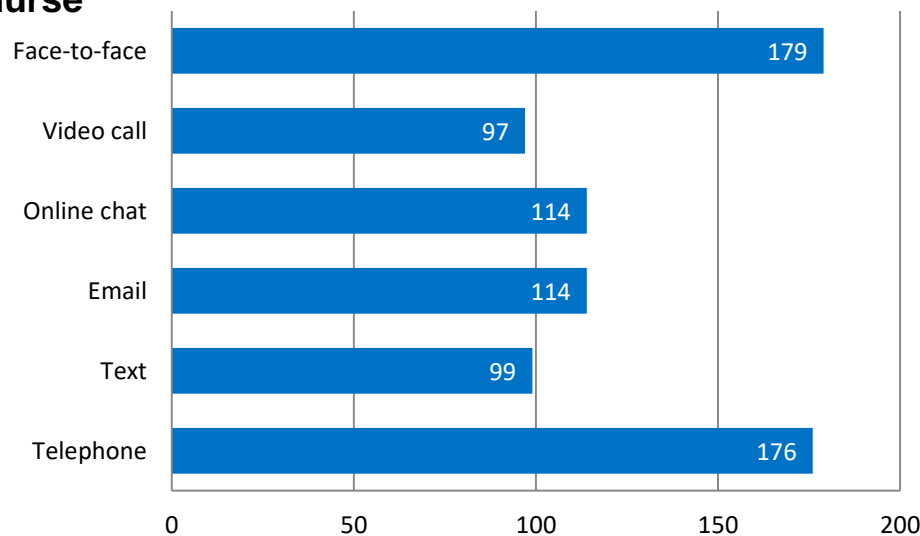
**How will are you to try ordering repeat prescriptions online (1 = not at all, 10 = very likely)**



**How will are you to try viewing your health records online (1 = not at all, 10 = very likely)**

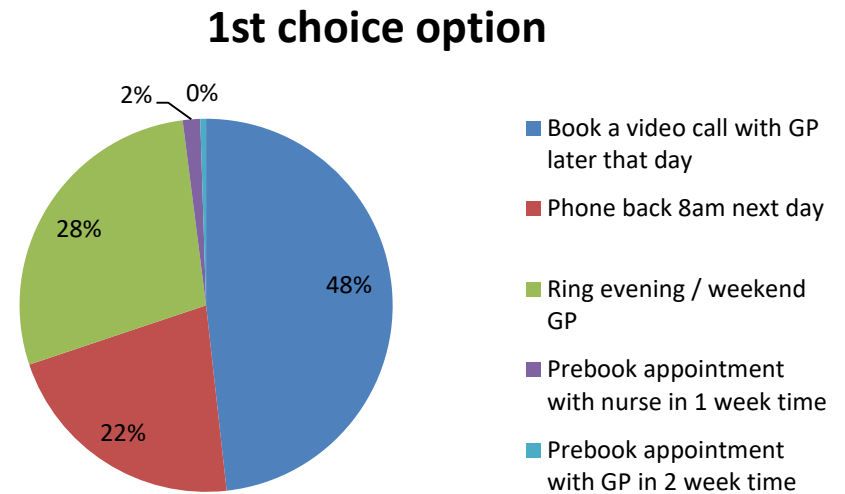
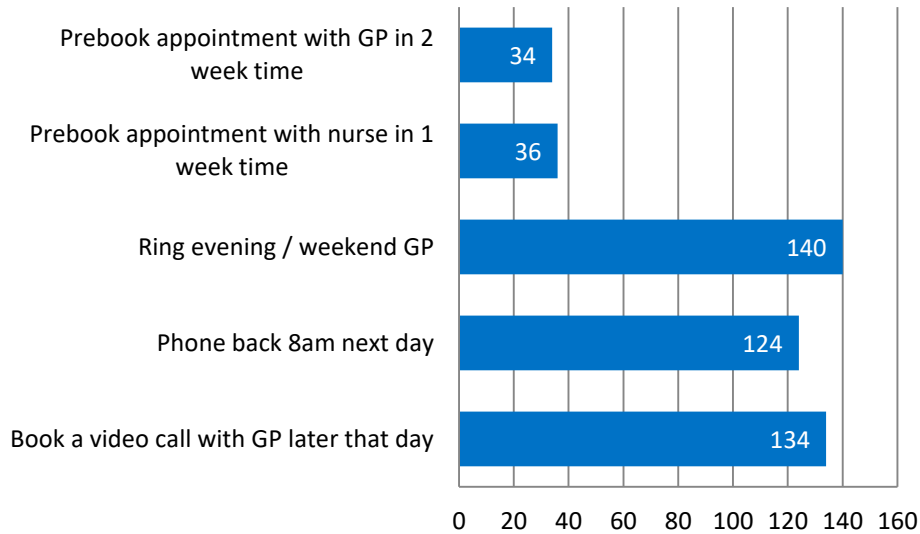


**I would be happy to get advice from a doctor or a nurse**

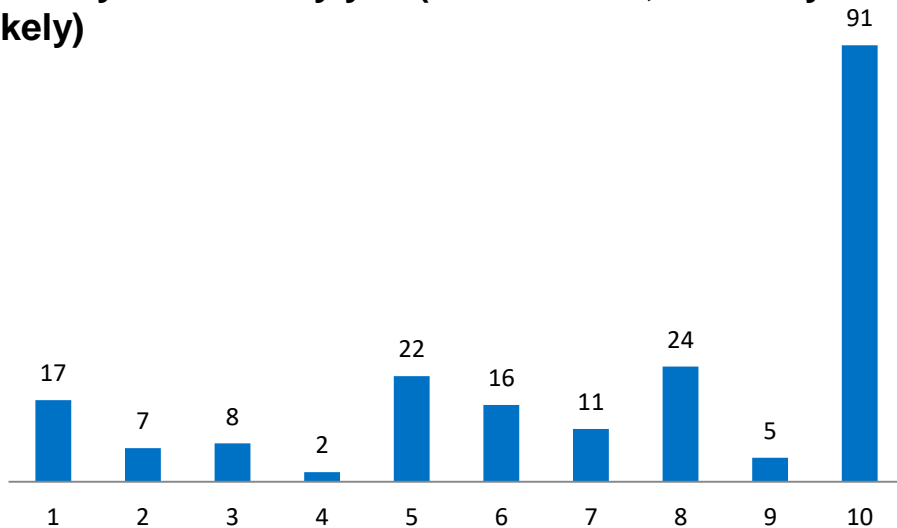




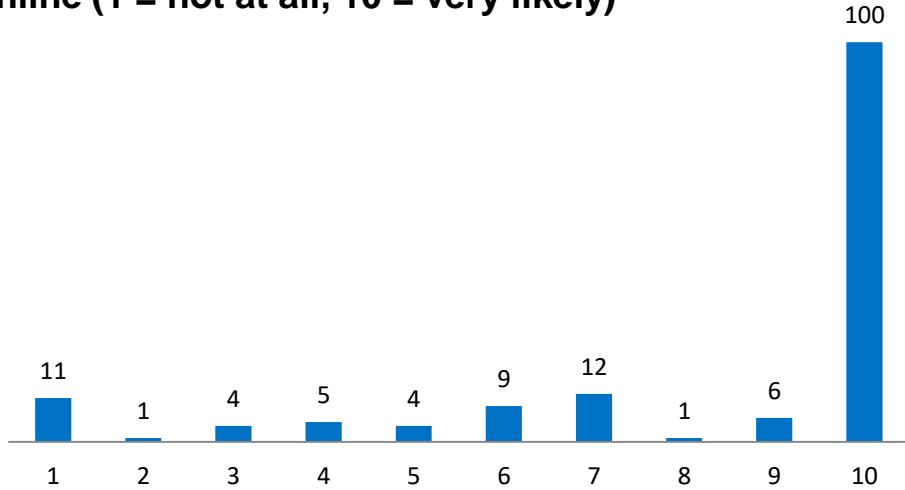
**Scenario question: You ring your GP practice but there are no appointments left for that day. You are offered some different options all appropriate for your symptoms. Which would you accept?**



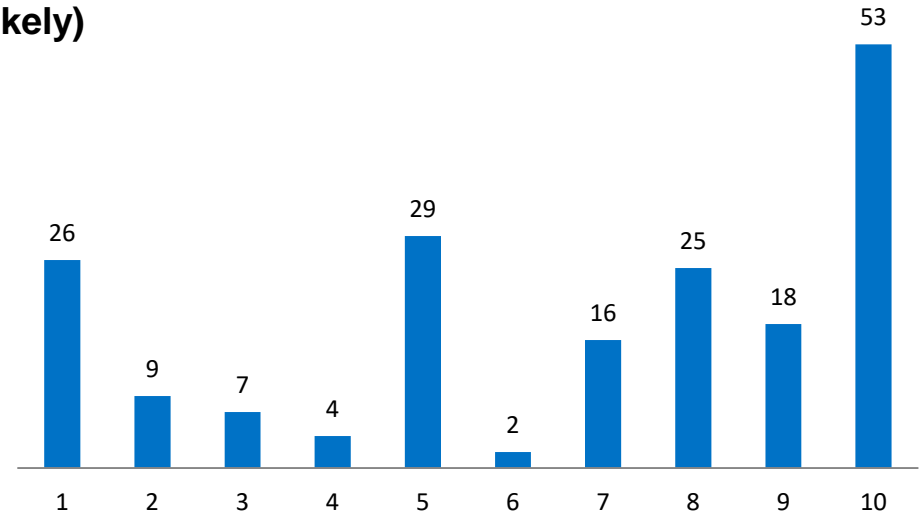
**If a doctor/nurse wanted to video call you, how likely would you be to say yes (1 = not at all, 10 = very likely)**



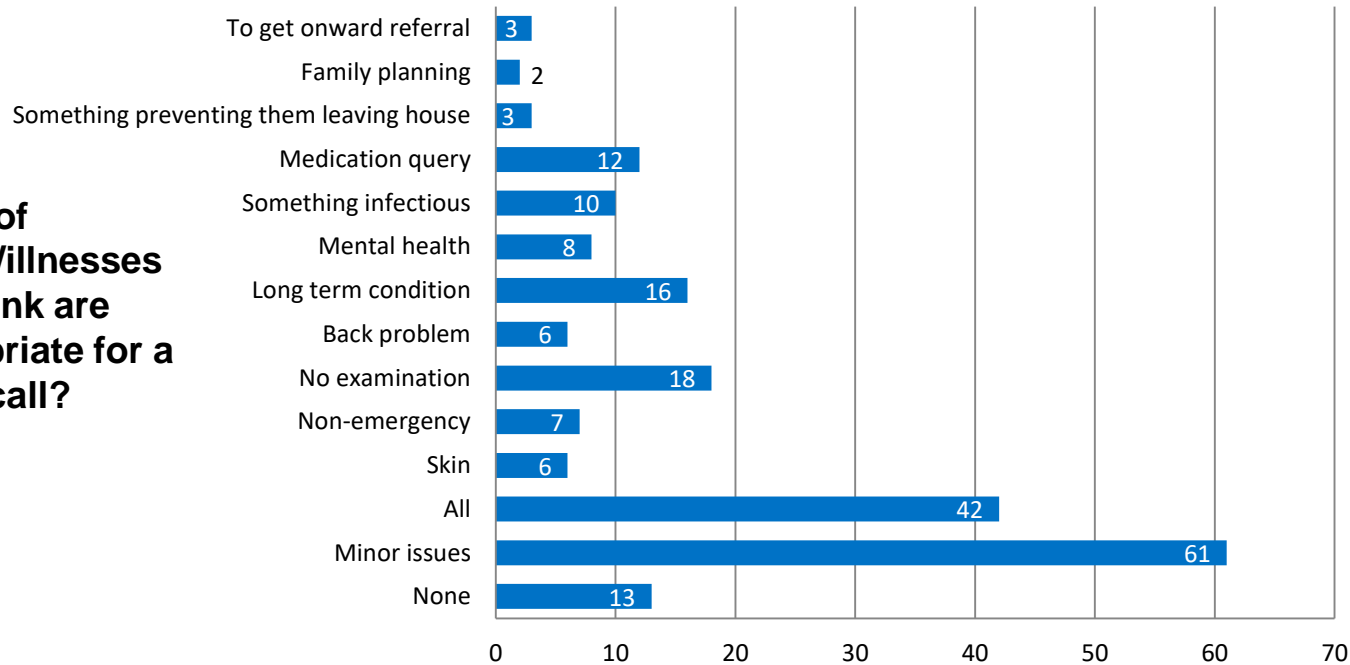
**How comfortable/concerned do you feel about the cost of the internet or data to use health services online (1 = not at all, 10 = very likely)**



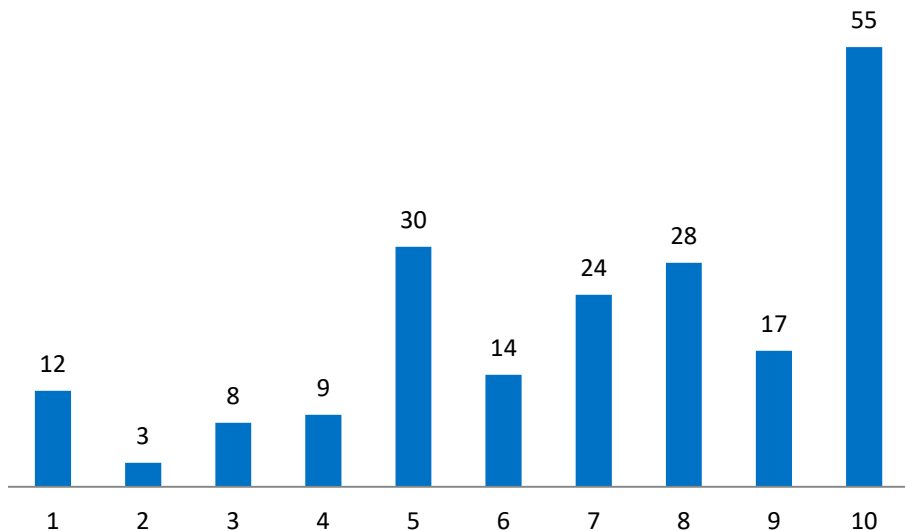
**How comfortable/concerned about how secure your online health records are (1 = not at all, 10 = very likely)**



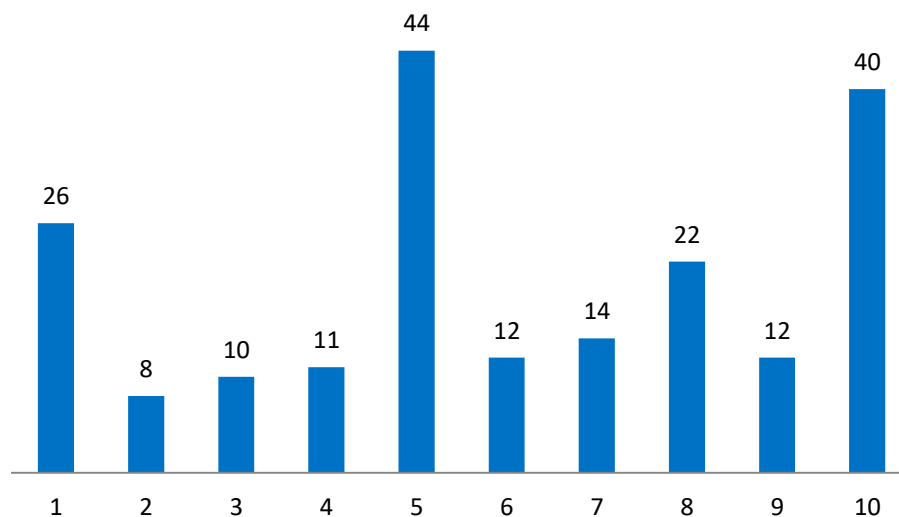
**Types of issues/illnesses you think are appropriate for a video call?**



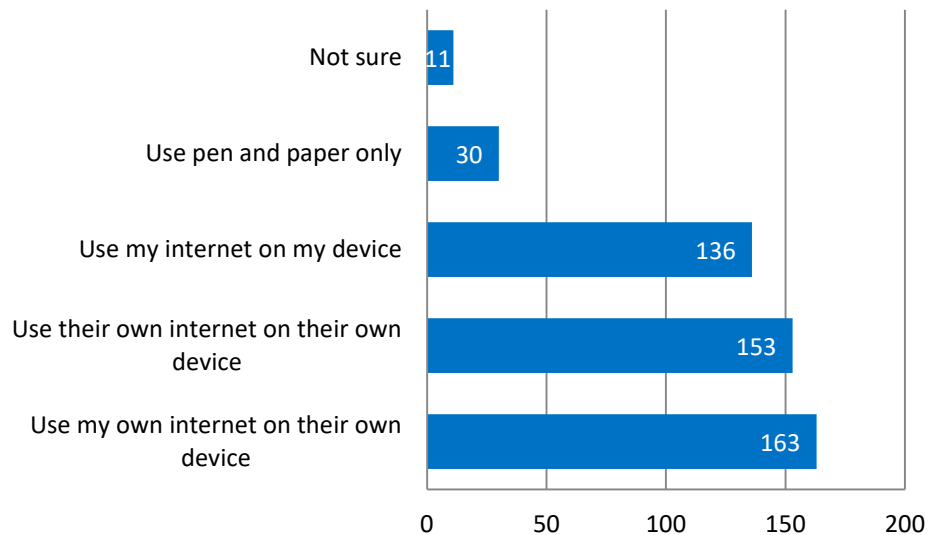
**How comfortable/concerned do you feel about how easy online health services and apps are to use (1 = not at all, 10 = very likely)**



**How comfortable/concerned do you feel about how easy online health services and apps are to use (1 = not at all, 10 = very likely)**



**If a doctor or nurse visited your home to give you care and advice, you would be happy for them to:**

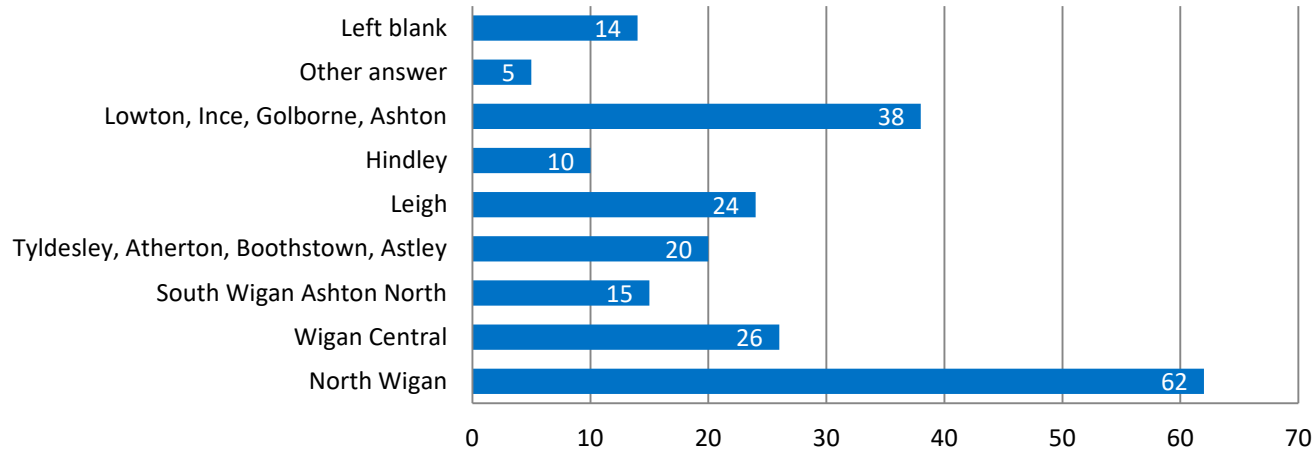


# Other comments

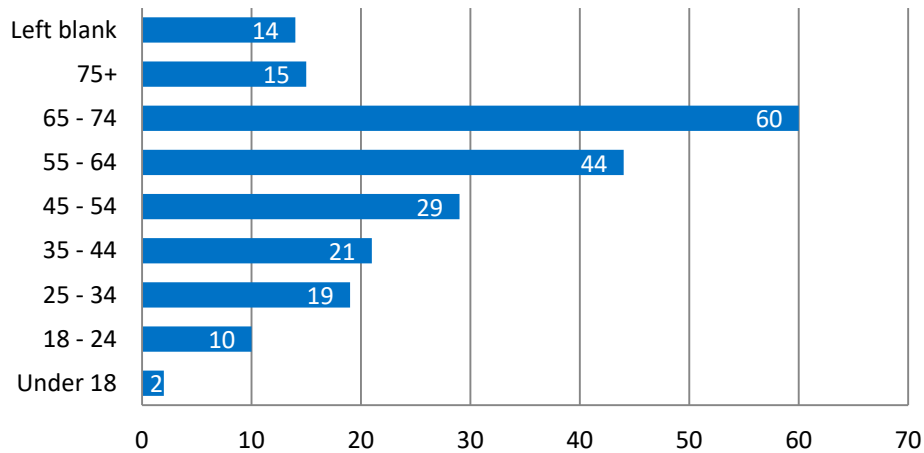
- Signing up for Patient Online account but then experiencing issues with the service, such as there being no appointments available, is something that stops people from using it;
- General comments about how difficult it can be to get a GP appointment;
- Good to have a range of options and services;
- Some GP practices allow parents/carers to link to the patients Patient Online Account but others don't;
- Need for more visual services for people with Autism or Learning Disabilities;
- Some concern about the doctor missing important things if done via video calls;
- Some GP practices do not enable patients to see summary health records via the Patient Online app;
- Need for training and support materials around the use of these services;
- Concerns about security;
- The NHS needs to join up all records across all services to improve communication between services;
- Would help people who struggle to travel;
- There are too many options for apps and websites already.

# Equality Monitoring Information

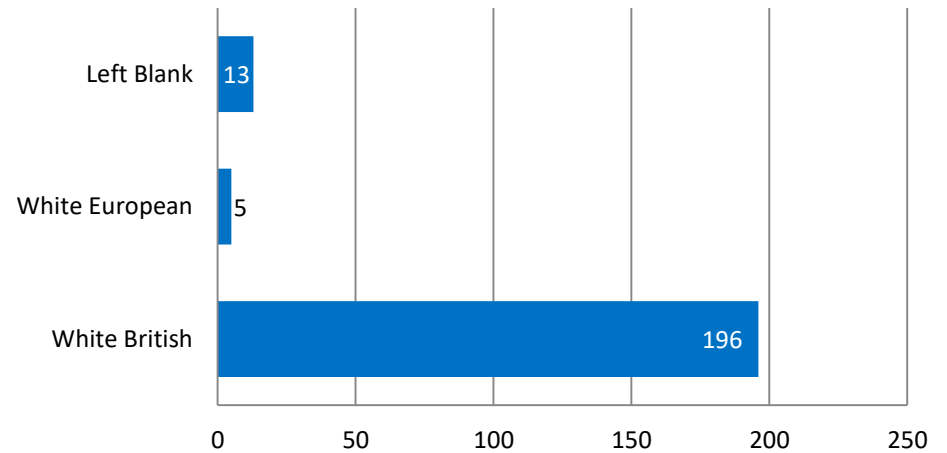
## Where do you live?



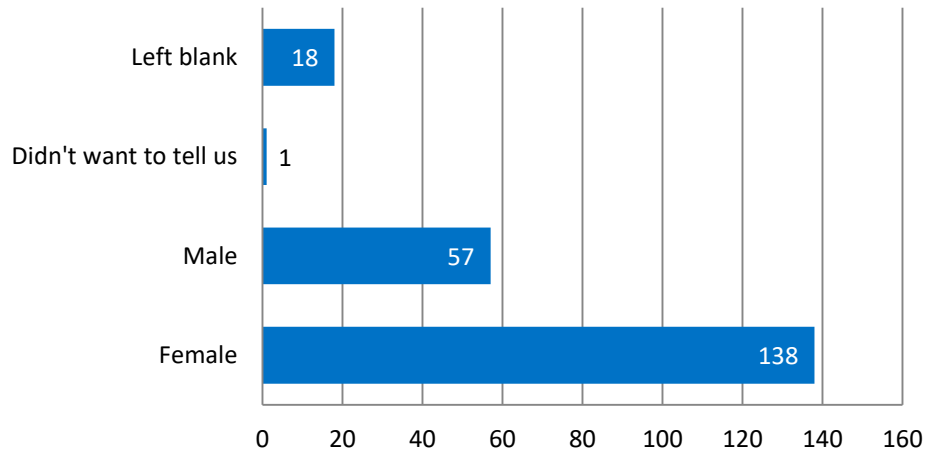
## Age



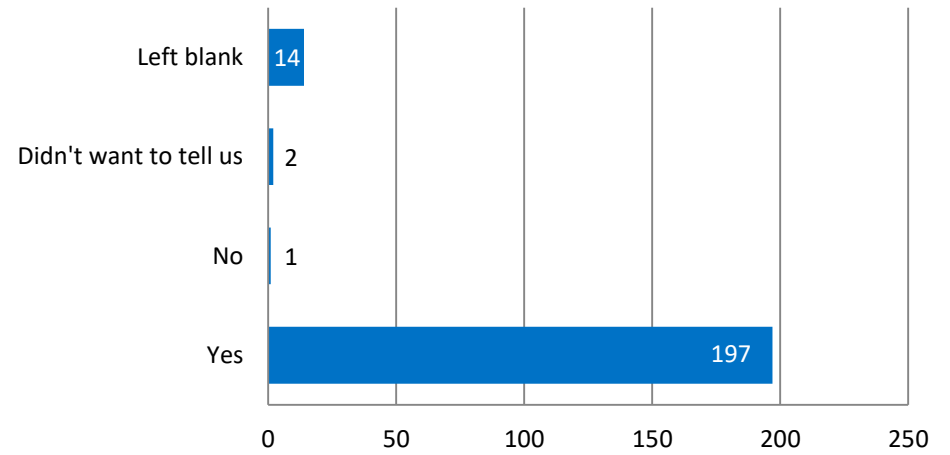
## Ethnicity



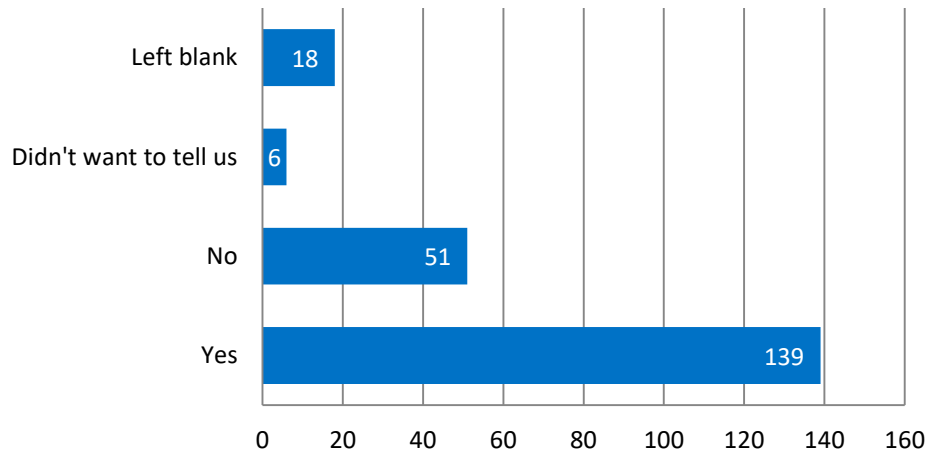
## Gender



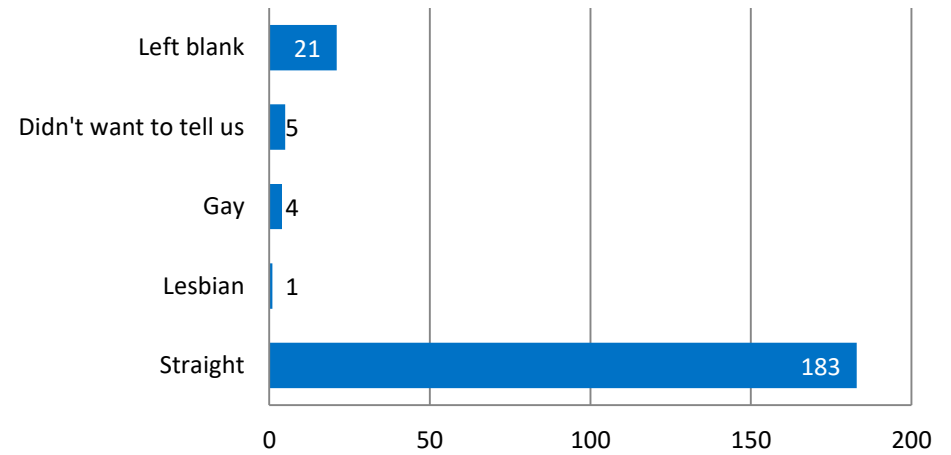
## Same gender they were born



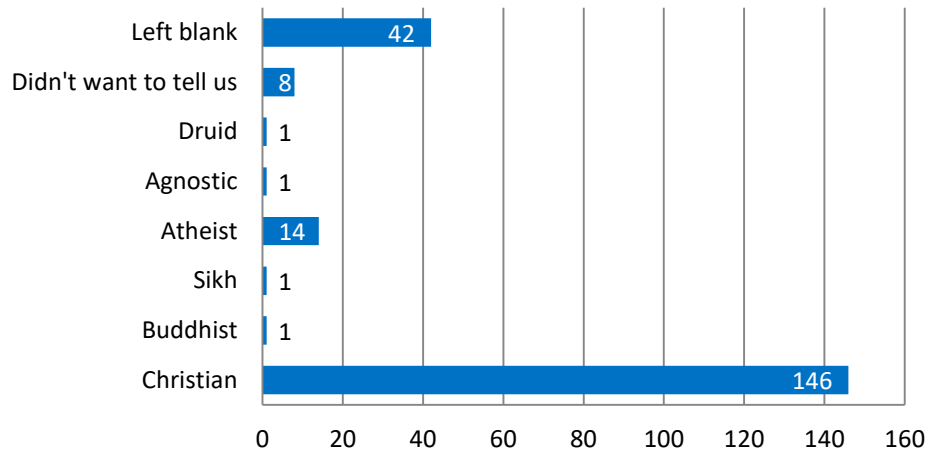
## In a relationship



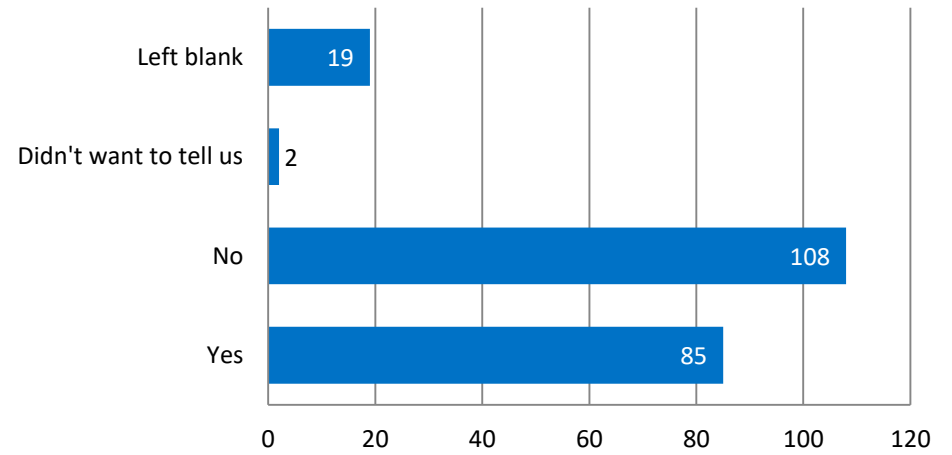
## Sexual orientation



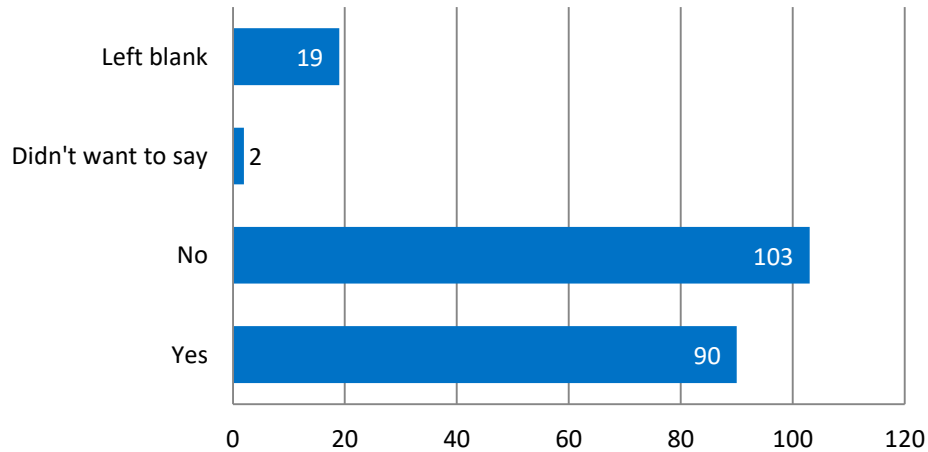
## Religion



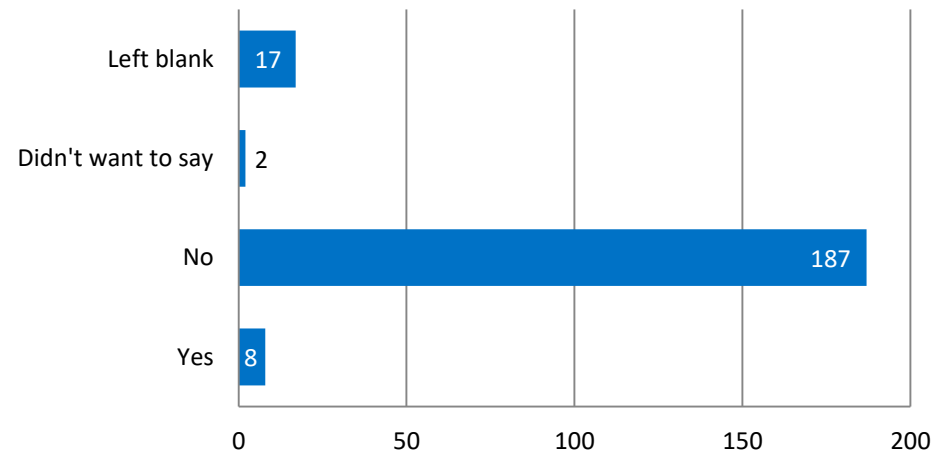
## Disabled



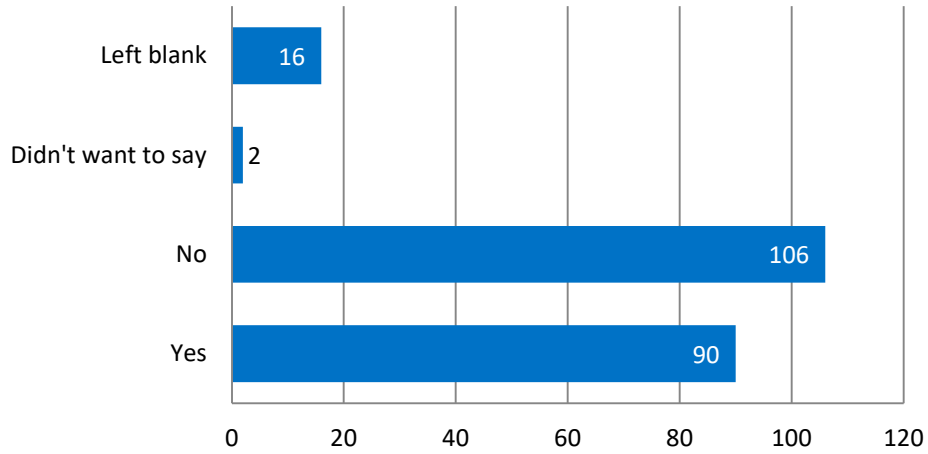
## In work



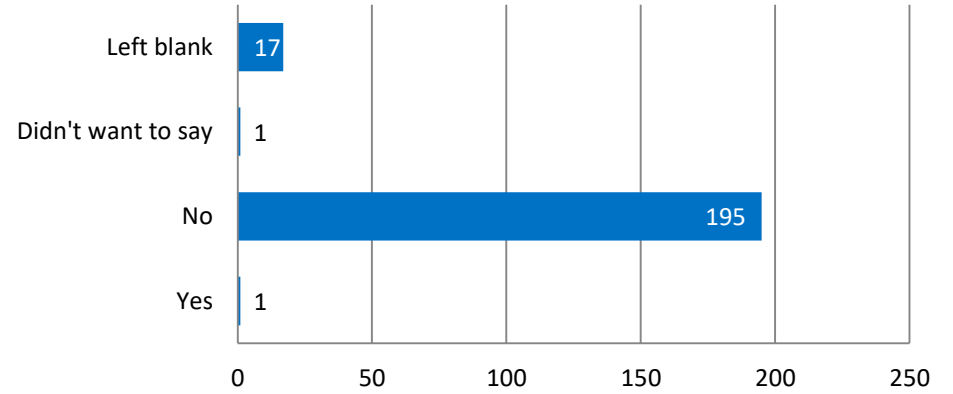
## In education



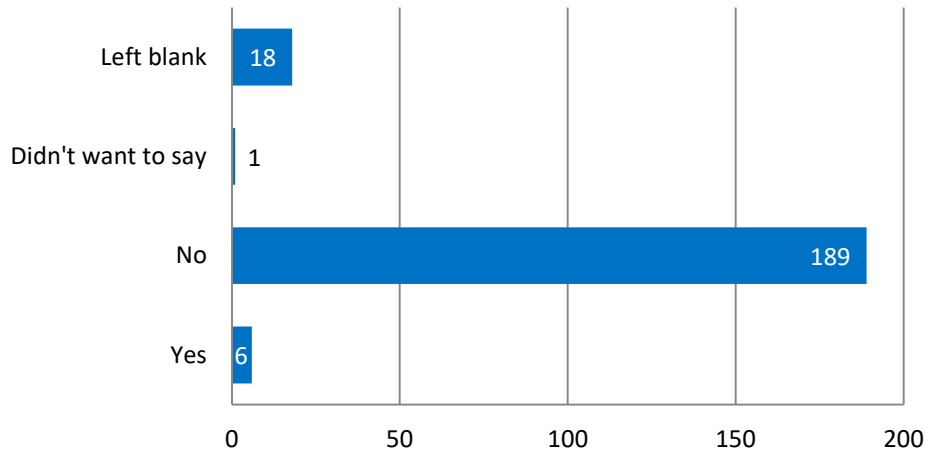
### Retired



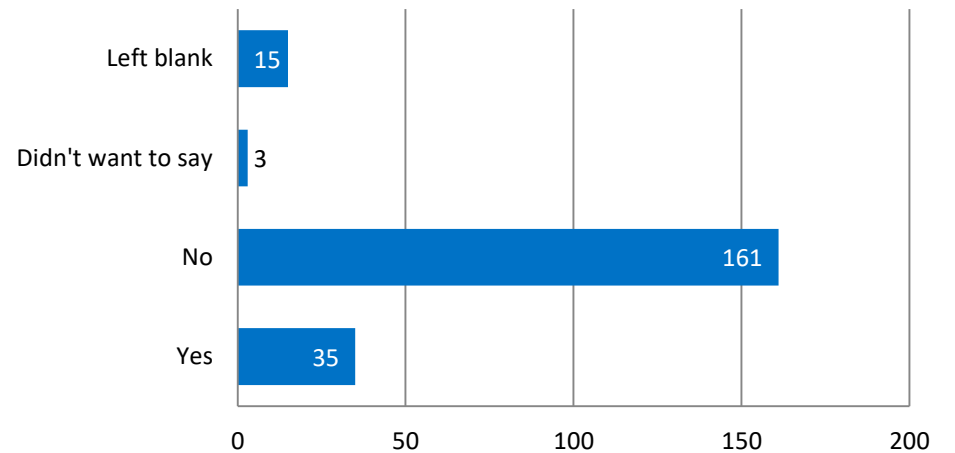
### Currently serving in the navy, army or airforce



### Veteran



### Caring responsibilities





# Section 4:

## Face-to-face engagement our other activities



# Patients Forum

We held a workshop with our Patients Forum on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019. A summary of the key points below:

## **Benefits of digital (online) services:**

- Lots of opportunity to improve access and services for patients who can use them;
- They can promote independence and quality of life;
- There are more patients signed up to Patient Online than many think;
- Some people in the room find Patient Online easy to use;
- Younger people are growing up with the internet and technology now and this plans for them;
- These services could reduce the workload on GP practices and free up some appointments.

## **Concerns:**

- We still need to cater for people who don't use the internet;
- Some people may sign up to Patient Online and then not use it if they experience an issue such as not getting an appointment;
- The number of different Apps and websites is very confusing;
- There are lots of abbreviations and complex language in online records which still makes them inaccessible;
- Concerns about security of services and the steps taken locally to protect people;
- Any digital services need to be easy to use and reliable;

- They don't want the NHS to follow the Local Authority in being Digital by Default – this is a barrier for some people;
- Concern about increase in digital services impacting on those who rely on the contact, e.g. socially isolated people.

## **Ideas and suggestions:**

- Keep services simple and accessible;
- Progress needs to be in controlled incremental steps;
- Produce a visual road map that explains where we are now, where we are going and what's coming up around digital services;
- Think about the support and training people will need to use the services;
- Could the CCG recommend a particular app/apps that would make it easier for patients to choose?;
- There needs to be more promotion around Patient Online services – but alongside that making sure that practices are offering enough appointments via the service of it won't be used;
- Could the CCG set up a Patient Online training account for patient groups who could do sessions to show patients how to use it?.

# Equality Reference Group

Our new Equality Reference Group met on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2019 and we focused the entire session on Digital (online) health services. A summary of the key points below:

## **NHS 111 service:**

- Deaf people struggle with this service. Interpreters are only available 8am – midnight and they use a national system which isn't suitable for some.

## **Text messages:**

- If deaf people could have two way communication with their GP practice via text this would be a huge help;
- It's useful to get appointment reminders and texts from the Pharmacy to tell you your prescription is ready.

## **Patient Online:**

- It could be more accessible for some groups;
- We need to think about the options for those people who don't understand written English, which would include deaf people;
- More pictures and use of videos needed.

## **Video consultations:**

- They feel there are pros and cons to this approach;
- There was some concern about how this could be used to make a new diagnosis if the doctor cannot do an examination;

- They feel it would be appropriate for follow up checks and medication reviews;
- It could help people who struggle to travel into the practice if they are ill or have a disability;
- There would be big barriers for the deaf community, how would they work with sign language interpreters;
- This type of consultation may help people nearing the end of a neurological condition, such as Huntington's Disease, who cannot travel;
- It might be a handy option for carers or people who are house bound.

## **Other points:**

- We need to think about how we would meet accessible information requirements within digital (online) health services;
- Members of the public need much more information around these services so they can make an informed choice about whether to use;
- There is some concern about the confidentiality and security of these services.

# Other comments

We visited lots of other voluntary and community sector groups to speak to people. We've summarised some of the main things we learned below:

At **Support for Wigan Arrivals project (SWAP)** most of the people we spoke to had a device. Whilst people are applying for asylum status they are very unlikely to have Wi-Fi at home. Some people we spoke to had different devices to do different things but no one had heard of Patient Online services. Most of the people we spoke to don't get texts from their GP practice. Everyone we spoke to at the group would prefer a face-to-face consultation with a doctor as they already communication barriers.

We spent some time in different **GP practices and Health Centres** across the Borough. There was a real divide in people who stated that they would not be willing to use digital (online) health services and those that would. Some people said they would be encouraged to use digital services if they were easy and worked consistently. Some people told us about issues booking appointments online via Patient Online and find it easier to ring up.

On 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019 we had a stall at the **Healthwatch Wigan & Leigh Launch Event**. People asked us to consider training for patients on how to use these services. Whilst Wigan Council offer some training it is basic and wouldn't cover the skills needed here. Some people had not heard of Patient Online and some people told us how difficult it was for them to get an appointment with the GP.

At **Shevington Patient Participation Group** there were lots of different views on the use of digital (online) health services. We got into a discussion about triaging and how patients would be directed to the different options. Patients at Shevington are used to being asked some simple questions by the receptionist when they call in. The receptionists have a set script which the patients can see. We are aware by word of mouth that some patients don't like being asked questions by receptionists and feel it's intrusive.

When we visited a **Dementia Carers Support Group** that meets at Tesco they were generally in favour of digital (online) services so long as they are easy to use. People in the group sometimes find it difficult to take their loved one out for appointments so anything that would make it easier at home would be a benefit. We talked about how helpful it would be to be able to contact the GP practice rather than ringing at 8am and sitting in a queue, perhaps an email address or text line. Sometimes they need to get in touch with a simple query.

At **Wigan and Leigh People First** most people had access to a device that could access the internet. Some people get texts from their GP practices and it's really useful. None of the group had used Patient Online services and suggested that the patients level of learning needs to be taken into account when rolling out any digital (online) health services.



# Recommendations

A number of suggestions have emerged from our engagement work. We will ask for feedback against these points in a few months time:

- We need to reiterate to patients and residents that digital health services are an enhancement to service and won't replace face-to-face services. A concern expressed by some people that they would be forced to use them.
- We need to provide patients and residents with more information around the plan for digital health services. Could we produce a visual road map around digital health services (where we are now, what's coming next and where we are going)?
- We need to provide patients and residents with more information around security and confidentiality so they feel able to make an informed choice.
- We need to consider training / education requirements around digital health services. There were some people who would be willing to use digital health services but would like to be shown how to. There was mention of Wigan Council access to online training but this is basic and doesn't cover the skills needed.
- We need to think about the role of patient groups in the Borough. Some patient groups already promote Patient Online and there was an ask if the CCG could set up a training account to enable them to train patients without using their own accounts.
- We need to look at the number of appointments being available for people to book online. A lot of people told us they had signed up to Patient Online but then not been able to book an appointment. This is a reason some people stopped using the service.
- We need to clarify the situation with regards to patients and carers being able to be linked to the Patient online account of the patient. Some GP practices do this and some don't. This would be a big help to some people.

# Recommendations

- We need to review the feedback from people about how difficult it can be to get in touch with a GP practice or get an appointment. Many people would be supportive of any digital service that would enable easier communication without having to wait in a telephone queue (e.g. 2 way texts, online comments, emails?)
- We need to clarify the situation with regards to patients being able to access a summary of their health record on Patient Online. Some patients told us their GP practices don't enable this whilst others do.
- We need to take into account the different information/communication needs of different sections of the community, e.g. use of picture or videos
- Can we clarify any plans with regards to joining up patient records between the GP practice, hospitals and other services as this would make sense for many people
- Can the CCG recommend the best Patient Online app, there are lots of options and it's confusing for patients.
- There are some protected characteristic groups we need to do some more engagement work with, e.g. Younger people, LGBTQ+ and religion.

# Next steps & Contact Details

- This report will be shared with Jonathan Kerry, Senior Assistant Director of Primary Care to review with the necessary teams.
- This report will be published online and we will share it with our local patient groups / engagement membership.
- We will review these results with some of our patient groups. Our Equality Reference Group will review the equality impact assessment.
- In a few months time we will ask Jonathan to provide some feedback about how the recommendations have, or will be, actioned. We will publish this further feedback in due course.

If you have any questions or if you would like the report in a different format please don't hesitate to contact us:

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