

Young People's GP Experience Survey

November 2013

*This document has been prepared for Children's Takeover Day and is subject to
further change*

Healthwatch Warwickshire - Young People's experience of GP Services Survey Analysis

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1. Survey Background

- 1.1 Healthwatch Warwickshire published a report in August 2013 on the experience of accessing GP appointments. The information was sourced pre- existence of Healthwatch Warwickshire when Warwickshire LINK was in place. Warwickshire LINK had been concerned for some time that obtaining an appointment to see a GP was problematic for many people. This belief was based on anecdotal reports and complaints submitted by local residents.¹
- 1.2 The survey was not specifically targeted at children and young people. There were 317 respondents and only 5 respondents classified themselves as under 25.
- 1.3 In Healthwatch Warwickshire's 2013 survey, respondents' views of their GP receptionist services were very mixed. Some were positive and incredibly complimentary. However, some issues were raised about receptionists being perceived as unhelpful and "gatekeeping" appointments. This echoes with stories that are heard on a regular basis by Healthwatch Warwickshire at outreach sessions with groups of all ages.
- 1.4 When local healthwatches were established they were given the legal responsibility for ensuring that children and young people's experiences and concerns are heard.
- 1.5 At the 2012 DH Children and Young People's Health Outcomes Forum it was noted that there were "too many examples where only adults' views or health outcomes were measured".²
- 1.6 The "You're Welcome!" - Quality criteria for young people friendly health services (2011) placed standards for young people friendly health services which organisations should try to achieve. These include issues of access, complaints services and confidentiality.³
- 1.7 Warwickshire LINK had commissioned WCVYS (Warwickshire Children and Voluntary Youth Services) to undertake a report into how young people's voices could be heard in health and social care services.⁴
- 1.8 Healthwatch Warwickshire decided as part of their work to ensure young people's voices were heard it would endeavour to find out what Warwickshire young people think of their GP surgeries.

¹ Healthwatch Warwickshire GP Access report 2013 – available at www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk

² Report of the Children and Young People's health outcomes forum, 2012

³ "You're Welcome!" – Quality criteria for young people friendly health services , Department of Health, 2012

⁴ "Giving young people a voice in health and social care", Warwickshire LINK/ WCVYS, May 2012

2. Methodology

- 2.1 A questionnaire was drafted to include some of the issues that were raised in the original survey and also to include young people specific questions based on the "You're Welcome!" criteria.
- 2.2 The draft survey was taken to a pilot group of young people at the PUSH project⁵ for comment and minor alterations were made accordingly.
- 2.3 Contact was made with a number of young people's community groups and arrangements were made for workers to fill in questionnaires with young people or for Healthwatch Warwickshire to visit and fill in as part of a focus group approach.
- 2.4 WAYC (Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs) and WCVYS, who are Warwickshire 3rd sector infrastructure organisations, provided contacts and put the survey link on twitter, blogs and Facebook to increase the reach of young people. It was also placed on Ask Warwickshire and the schools post website.
- 2.5 Communities of interest groups were identified such as Young Carers and the Children in Care Council where young people are known to be at risk of increased health inequalities and whose voices are seldom heard.
- 2.6 Representatives from the Clinical Commissioning Group Patient Participation groups (CCGPPG) were informed of the survey and the link was placed on all 3 of Warwickshire's CCG websites.
- 2.7 Two Patient Participation groups requested surveys and information from Healthwatch Warwickshire and encouraged patients directly to take part.
- 2.8 The Health Store in Nuneaton gave young people the survey when visiting a range of professionals including Health Advisors, trained Family Planning Nurses, Housing Advisors, Youth Workers and specialist Substance Misuse workers.
- 2.9 Healthwatch Warwickshire attended Warwickshire College Fresher's Fair and supported young people to fill in the questionnaire and gathered information for case studies. Contact was made with Health and Social Care tutors and a session was delivered to Health and Social Care students at both Leamington and Rugby sites. A large number of students have identified that they would like to be considered as potential Healthwatch Warwickshire volunteers as a result of this session.
- 2.10 A total of 323 responses were received. However, 50 of those were received from young people registered with GP practices out of county. The young people's experiences have been noted but not included in statistical data.

⁵ PUSH projects is a Warwick based support group for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender young people.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the report is circulated for feedback and comments. The findings of the report will be presented by young people as part of the Children's Commissioner for England's annual Takeover Day.
- 3.2 That young people's views are actively sought as part of Patient Participation Groups annual surveys and that Patient groups consider having a representative to act as a children and young people's champion who will consider issues and complaints, identify trends and how services can be improved for children and young people within their individual practices.
- 3.3 That discussion takes place with Clinical Commissioning groups about how to increase involvement of young people in commissioning intention consultations and other matters that affect them.
- 3.4 That discussion takes place around recognising the impact of negative perception of young people's behaviour and the possibility of training for front line staff in order to break down barriers and increase levels of confidence in young people trying to access services independently.
- 3.5 That discussion takes place and consideration is given to addressing the issue of young people's particular difficulty in making early morning phone calls to secure appointments with GPs.
- 3.6 That assumptions should not be made by staff that young people will know how to use health services and feel confident in doing so, and that the systems that are in place to make appointments, order repeat prescriptions etc. are young people friendly.
- 3.7 That discussion takes place about raising staff awareness of young people's right to be involved in making decisions about their care.
- 3.8 That the introduction of simple, plain English, well-advertised complaints system is considered for all GP practices.
- 3.9 That Young Healthwatch volunteers consider creating simple "how to" guides for making appointments, ordering repeat prescriptions and registering with GPs/dentists.
- 3.10 That the work from the Office of the Children's Commissioner: "Child friendly complaints processes in health services: Principles, pledges and progress" (Sept 2013) is discussed and built upon at a local level and that children and young people's experiences are viewed from a consumer rights perspective.

4. Results

- 4.1 68% of the young people had attended the doctor's surgery within the last 6 months. So the majority of the young people's experiences are current. 22% had been within the last 6-12 months and only 9% of young people had not been to their GP practice within the last 12 months.
- 4.2 171 of the respondents had experience of making appointments themselves, although they do not always choose to do so. When young people don't make their own appointments these were always done by parents, grandparents, older siblings or their foster parents or carers.
- 4.3 Those young people aged 13-15 were less likely to be making their own appointments. Some were unaware they were allowed to do so, thinking they had to wait until they were 18 years old. A significant proportion of 16-18 year olds still had parents/carers making appointments and a number of reasons were given for this including:-
- Don't like speaking on the phone to strangers
 - Don't know how to make an appointment/request repeat prescriptions
 - Felt they needed to be forceful to make convenient appointments
 - Young people are being asked why they want the appointment
 - Ringing to make appointments is inconvenient when young people are expected to call at 8.30am when travelling on public transport to school/college
 - Ringing and being held in queues is difficult and costly when on as a pay-as-you-go mobile

"Feel uncomfortable and shy explaining why I need an appointment." – Female, aged 17

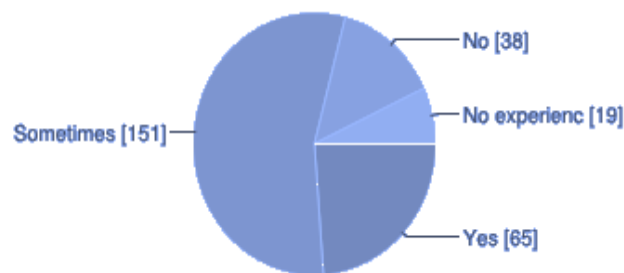
"I've never been told that I am allowed to make my own appointments" – Female, aged 15

- 4.4 The majority of young people 69% are happy to use traditional methods of phoning or making GP appointments in person. However, 31% of young people would prefer to make their own appointments using technology, such as SMS text messaging, online or via email.

*"I get intimidated because they don't always seem friendly on the phone" –
Female, aged 15*

*"Ringin' up is hard to get an appointment – don't want to do it on the bus" –
Male, aged 17*

- 4.5 When asked if young people felt they were able to have choice about appointment times 55% said that they were only able to have a choice sometimes. Young people who are in school or college during the day reported having to take time out to go to appointments. This can also prove difficult with travelling to and from appointments if their school/college site isn't near their GP practice. Many young people described how they didn't want to say no if they were offered appointments and didn't want to try to negotiate a more convenient time as they felt that they would be perceived as not actually needing a same day appointment. There was also questions from school/college about why they were taking time off during their school/college day.



"...not understanding that I can't just get back from college quickly for appointments. Told me if I was ill and it was an emergency I would find a way to get there." – Female, aged 18

"Mum does it for me because it's awkward to get an appointment at a good time so you have to be tough" – Female, aged 17

- 4.6 Where an emergency appointment is needed, it would appear that the majority of young people 53% feel that a GP will usually be available, although 9% of patients reported never being able to get an emergency appointment. However, this raises some concern as it is assumed that the default position of young people and their parents/carers would be to attend a walk-in-centre or A&E service if they are unable to secure an emergency appointment.

- 4.7 36% of young people said they were unable to make advance appointments. Again this is problematic for young people to fit in with school/college and changing part-time work rotas. Worryingly, several young people in focus groups talked about being given 2 weeks of medication to try and were asked to return to the GP, but were unable to secure appointments within the 2 week time frame leaving a gap in medication.
- 4.8 Young people had very different experiences of what happens when they are late depending on their individual surgery policy. Many have no experience of being late for appointments, either because they still attend with parents/carers or they fear losing their appointment. 32% report being seen by a GP if they are able to wait. However, some young people said they felt that they were being reprimanded by reception staff and that when their lateness had a valid reason (e.g public transport) then it was not appropriate to be made to feel like that. 33% were told to make a new booking. Again the concern is that if the young person deemed their need to see a GP to be urgent they may then choose to go to a walk-in centre or A&E.

"I saw my GP and they prescribed me two weeks of anti-depressants and told me to go back in two weeks. There weren't any appointments and I didn't want to see another doctor or else I would have had to say everything all over again. I tried to explain this but they wouldn't listen to me so I ended up with a gap in my anti-depressants" – Female, aged 17.

"I was 5 minutes late due to the bus being late. I tried to book in on the screen and my appointment wasn't showing. I spoke to reception and they were really funny with me about it. I explained why I was late but they didn't listen and said it was my responsibility to get there on time. Didn't need to be told off in public like a child. I waited over an hour to see the doctor – felt like I was being punished" – Male, aged 19

- 4.9 Some young people had a positive experience of the receptionist service at their surgery reporting that they were helpful, kind, friendly and professional. However, the majority had either had a negative experience or knew a friend or family member that had; the biggest issue being around "gatekeeping". Receptionists are regularly asking young people why they need an appointment. There is some belief that this is done in order to direct people to the best healthcare professional for the concern rather than needing to see the GP every time. However, young people do not want to discuss their sexual or mental health issues with reception staff as they find it intrusive and embarrassing and have concerns about confidentiality. There is also the perception that you need to be "firm" to get a convenient

appointment. Young people feel that staff assume they know how to make appointments and to complete tasks such as getting repeat prescriptions. There have been many accounts from young people which worryingly refer to staff being rude, unhelpful and unfriendly towards them. Appendix 4 shows a word cloud created using young people's descriptions of the reception services. The bigger and more prominent the word indicates it has been repeated more often.

"...very unhelpful and inflexible" – Female, aged 16 "Felt like I was begging" – Female, aged 17
"Friendly if I'm with my mum – stern when I'm on my own" – Male, aged 16

- 4.10 Most younger people knew they could request to see a GP without their parent/carer being present. The 15% of young people who were not aware were all in the 13-15 age range.
- 4.11 40% of the young people did not feel that they were involved in making decisions about their care and described healthcare professionals ignoring them and talking to parents/carers instead or just telling them what will happen next with little or no discussion taking place.
- 4.12 Many young people were surprised that you are able to make a complaint or raise concerns about your care or the service you receive within the NHS. Only 9% felt they knew how to make a complaint and would be confident to do so. 7% felt that they didn't know but that they probably wouldn't want to anyway. The reason for this is that they had very little confidence in their complaint being taken seriously or any change happening as a result. However, 35% felt that they knew how to go about raising concerns but would not feel confident to use the system. Almost half the young people did not know how to complain but felt that it was something that they would want to do. Young people worry that due to their age they wouldn't be listened to and taken seriously or that the process would not be confidential and this may affect getting appointments or receiving good care in the future. This is clearly a perception that needs to change as feedback needs to be used to drive up quality and make changes to ensure the service is meeting the needs of the service users.

5. Areas of concern

- 5.1 When talking to young people about Healthwatch Warwickshire and its functions there have been several concerns repeated numerous times -
- Young people report that they have been made to feel that they go too often to the doctors and then are put off going again.
 - Decisions are made for young people without their understanding or agreement.
 - Young mums often feel patronised when they take their babies and children to the doctors and are made to feel it is their age not their inexperience of being a mother that is the problem.
 - Young people have been sent home from GP surgery when they are late for appointments.
 - Young people have been used as interpreters for their parents who do not speak English in both GP and hospital environments.
 - Booking systems that require early morning phone calls and being held in queues are not young people friendly.
- 5.2 Young carers report having to exaggerate their parent's condition to both GPs and the 111 service in order to get seen.

"I have to tell them she (Mum) is worse than she is to get anyone to come out because I'm scared they won't come. When they do come they usually take her to hospital – so I was right to be worried wasn't I?" – Male, aged 16

- 5.3 Young people in Local Authority Care report having to keep telling their story every time they go to the doctors. This can be because there isn't consistency of seeing the same GP at the practice or due to changing GPs each time they have a new placement. There was also some concern that there are often delays to annual health checks.
- 5.4 Even though young people were assured of confidentiality when completing the survey, where young people have given examples of negative experiences or shared their concerns a large number have chosen not to give the name of their GP practice to ensure they can't be identified.

Appendix 1: Young people's Questionnaire - Doctors Surgery Experiences

At Healthwatch Warwickshire, we want to hear from people of all ages, and are asking young people to share their experiences in booking an appointment to see your doctor/nurse and how you feel about your Doctors' surgery.

All your answers to this questionnaire will be **confidential** - So you can be as honest as you like!

It is not necessary for you to provide your name and contact details. (Unless you would like to be entered into the prize draw - we will remove your personal details when we receive your completed questionnaire.)

This survey can be completed online until 31st October 2013 at www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk or by visiting <http://tinyurl.com/mwxlker>

Please circle or underline your answer.

1) If you know the name of your Doctors Surgery or your Doctors name can you write it down below?

2) When did you last visit your Doctors surgery?

Within last 6 months 6-12 months 12 months+

3) Do you normally make your own appointment to see someone at your Doctors?

Yes No

4) If you do NOT normally make your own appointment who does this for you?

5) Can you tell us why you feel unable to make your own appointment to see someone at your Doctors surgery?

6) How would you prefer to make your appointments?

Phone Call	Online	Email
In person	Text	Other (Please state).....

7) Do you get a choice of appointment time?

Yes Sometimes No No Experience

8) In an emergency, can you always be seen if you are prepared to wait?

Always Usually Never No Experience

9) Do you get a choice of days / times for advance appointments?

Yes No

10) What happens if you are late for your appointment?

Make a new booking Seen if you wait No Experience

11) Do you have any comments you would like to tell us about your Doctors receptions service?

12) Are you aware that you can be seen without your parent/carer?

Yes No

13) Do you feel that your Doctor/Nurse involves you in decisions about your care?

Yes Sometimes No

14) Would you know how to make a complaint if you were not happy about your experience at your Doctors' surgery?

Yes No

The following details help us to monitor that we are talking to a range of different people across the county (Please circle below)

Are you: male female What is your age _____

Do you have a disability yes no

What is your ethnic origin?

Please return your completed questionnaire using the freepost address below:

Freepost RSUE-UETG-XACH
Healthwatch Warwickshire
4-6 Clemens Street
LEAMINGTON SPA CV31 2DL

You can also contact us on **01926 422823** if you would like to tell us your experiences in more detail or find us on facebook or twitter

Appendix 2: Demographic Information

Age ⁶	Gender ⁷	Disability ⁸	Ethnicity
13-15 20%	Female 69%	Yes 16%	White British 88%
16-18 yrs 54%	Male 31%	No 81%	White European 4%
19-21yrs 21%		Not indicated 3%	Black Caribbean 2%
22-25yrs 5%			Black African 2%
			Asian 3%
			Other 1%

Appendix 3: List of supporting organisations

Thanks to:-

Health and Social Care students - Rugby and Leamington Sites

WAYC

WCVYS

WCAVA

Bromford Hub

Targeted Youth Support Services -WCC

Schools Post Website - WCC

PUSH project

WRCC

South Warwickshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Warwickshire North Clinical Commissioning Group

Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group

Young Carers - The Gap

Children in Care Council

Nuneaton Healthstore

Lillington Children's Centre - Young Parents group

Family Voice Warwickshire

⁶ The high number of 16-18 year old respondents reflects the high level of responses from Warwickshire College Students.

⁷ The majority of respondents were female due to the attendance at groups Healthwatch Warwickshire had access to.

⁸ Specific groups for young people with disabilities were unable to support respondents in the time frame due to other commitments. However, mechanisms are in place to gain views on an ongoing basis.

