Question of the Month: Jan & Feb 2018

healthwatch
Nottingham & Nottinghamshire

Missed Appointments

Why did we ask this?

Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (HWNN) is an independent organisation that helps people get the best from their local health and care services.

The question we asked was 'Have you missed a NHS appointment in the last 12 months?' This had not been the subject of a previous evidence collection by HWNN.

The aim of the question was to explore the number of people who have missed a NHS appointment within the last 12 months along with the reason why. We also took the opportunity to canvass suggestions as to how the number of these missed appointments could be reduced.

This was an important question to ask patients in general as missed appointments might affect ongoing patient care, waste resources and cause others to have to wait longer for treatment.

We gathered views from local people across Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County through face to face public events and through an online question linked to our website.

The main finding was that respondents had missed mostly Doctor's followed by Dentist's and Hospital appointments. The main reasons were because they forgot, the date and time was not convenient and they were too ill to attend. Respondents felt that a reminder message or phone call would help to prevent missed appointments along with an easier cancellation process.

What people said...

The total number of responses received was 742 with 37.1% (n=275) being received from the City and 62.9% (n=467) from the County.

Completed Responses	No	%
Nottingham City	275	37.1%
Nottinghamshire County	467	62.9%
Total	**742**	**100%**

Table 1 – source all respondents (n=742)

City 37.1%
County 62.9%
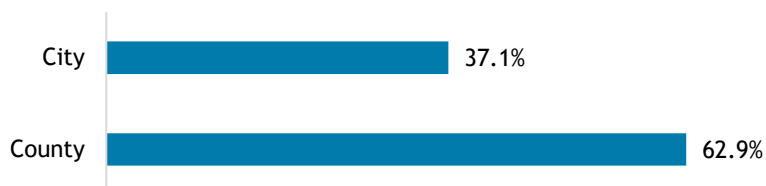
Number of respondents who have missed an appointment in the last 12 months

Area	No	%
Nottingham City	71	57.7%
Nottinghamshire County	52	42.3%
Total	**123**	**100%**

Table 2 – source: all respondents (n=742)

City 57.70%
County 42.30%

Appointments missed by service name

| Service missed	No	%
GP appointment	45	36.6%
Dental appointment	30	24.4%
Hospital outpatient	27	22.0%
Mental health appointment	8	6.5%
Other	7	5.7%
No service specified	3	2.4%
Optician	3	2.4%
Total	**123**	**100%**

36.6%

24.4%

22.0%

Table 3 – source: all respondents who have missed an appointment in the last 12 months (n=123)

The top three services that had the greatest number of missed appointments were GP appointments 36.6% (n=45), dental appointments 24.4% (n=30) and hospital outpatient appointments 22.0% (n=27). The service with the least number of missed appointments was opticians 2.4% (n=3).

Age groups of respondents who missed an appointment

Age Group	No	%
1 - 15	4	3.3%
16 - 17	0	0.0%
18 - 24	9	7.3%
25 - 64	73	59.3%
65 - 85	18	14.6&
85+	1	0.8%
Not disclosed	18	14.6%
Total	**123**	**100%**

Table 3A – source: all respondents who have missed an appointment in the last 12 months (n=123)
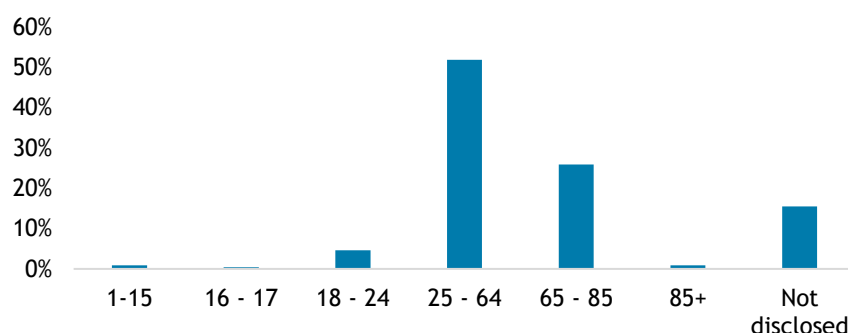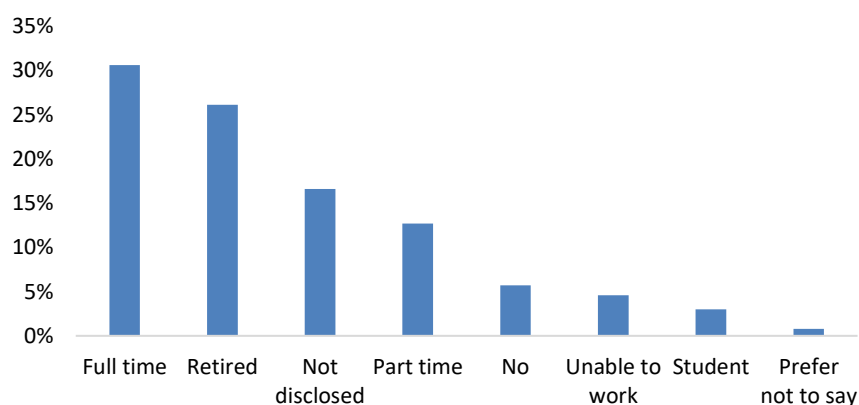
The age of respondents ranged from 11 years to 96 years of age

Employment of respondents who missed an appointment

| Employment status	No	%
Full time	31	25.2%
Not disclosed	22	17.9%
Retired	21	17.1%
Part time	14	11.4%
No	12	9.8%
Unable to work	12	9.8%
Student	9	7.3%
Prefer not to say	2	1.6%
Total	**123**	**100%**

Table 3B - Source: all respondents (n=742)

The greatest number of missed appointments indicated were from respondents who were in full time and part time work 36.6% (n=45). Retired respondents accounted for 17.1% (n=21) of answers.

Disability of respondents who missed an appointment

Disability	No	%
Mental health illness	14	25.5%
Physical impairment	10	18.2%
Visual impairment	10	18.2%
Learning impairment	9	16.4%
Hearing impairment	6	10.9%
Prefer not to say	5	9.1%
Social/behavioural problems	1	1.8%
Total	55	100%

Mental health illness ▬ 25.50%
Physical impairment ▬ 18.20%
Visual impairment ▬ 18.20%
Learning impairment ▬ 16.40%
Hearing impairment ▬ 10.90%
Prefer not to say ▬ 9.10%
Social/behavioural problems ▬ 1.80%

Table 3C - Source: all respondents (n=742)
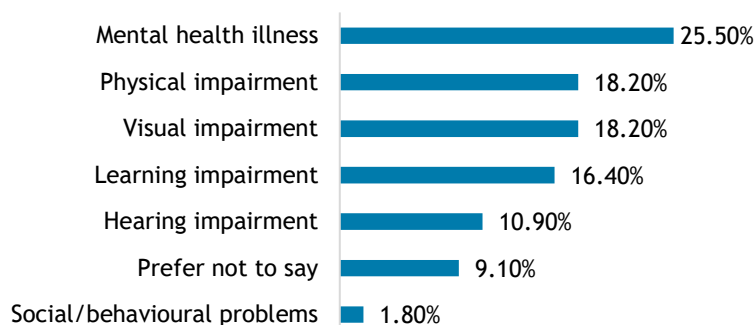
Of those who had indicated that they had missed an appointment, 44.7% (n=55) indicated that they had some sort of disability.

Reasons for missed appointments suggested by Healthwatch

Suggested Reason by HW for Missed Appointments	No	%
I forgot	33	20.6%
Other	31	19.4%
Date / time not convenient	21	13.1%
Too ill to attend	14	8.8%
I was not aware I had an appointment	12	7.5%
Work / school commitments	12	7.5%
Condition improved / got better	8	5.0%
I was worried / anxious about the appointment	8	5.0%
Family / carer commitments	7	4.4%
Transport / parking issues	7	4.4%
My carer was not available to take me	4	2.5%
The location was not convenient	2	1.3%
Not specified	1	0.6%
Total	160	100%

Table 4 – source: all respondents who have missed an appointment in the last 12 months (n=160 due to multiple answers)

Reasons for missed appointments stated by respondents

Other Reason Given	No	%
I did not have enough money to attend	5	12.5%

Table 4A – source: all respondents who have missed an appointment in the last 12 months (n=40 due to multiple answers)

Suggestions for prevention of missed appointments by Healthwatch

Suggested Reasons from Respondents for Prevention for Missed Appointments	No	%
Message to remind of appointment e.g. text / email	489	40.9%
Phone call to remind of appointment	187	15.6%
Improve the cancellation process	155	13.0%
Other	150	12.5%
A more appropriate appointment (please give detail below)	102	8.5%
Better information, e.g. directions or parking info	57	4.8%
Reduce the need for follow up appointments	56	4.7%
Total	1,196	100%

Table 5 – source: all respondents who have missed an appointment in the last 12 months (n=1196 due to multiple answers)

**Suggestions for prevention of missed appointments from respondents**

The 'other' suggestions that people gave to prevent missed appointments were introducing a fine or charge, agreeing the date and time of the appointment with the patient and increasing early morning/evening appointments and appointments at more convenient locations. The next most popular 'other' responses were to encourage patients to take more personal responsibility for not missing appointments, better reminders i.e. more reminders before and on the day of the appointment, making the cancellation process easier e.g. by text, improving parking and increasing the number of staff in order to reduce waiting times.

Who answered our Question of the Month?

We received 742 responses from local people. Our respondents were 275 from Nottingham City and 467 from Nottinghamshire County. The table below shows the percentage of respondents by District.

Age Group	No	%
1 - 15	7	0.9%
16 - 17	3	0.4%
18 - 24	34	4.6%
25 - 64	384	51.8%
65 - 85	192	25.9%
85+	7	0.9%
Not disclosed	115	15.5%
Total	**742**	**100%**

Table 6 - Source: all respondents (n=742)
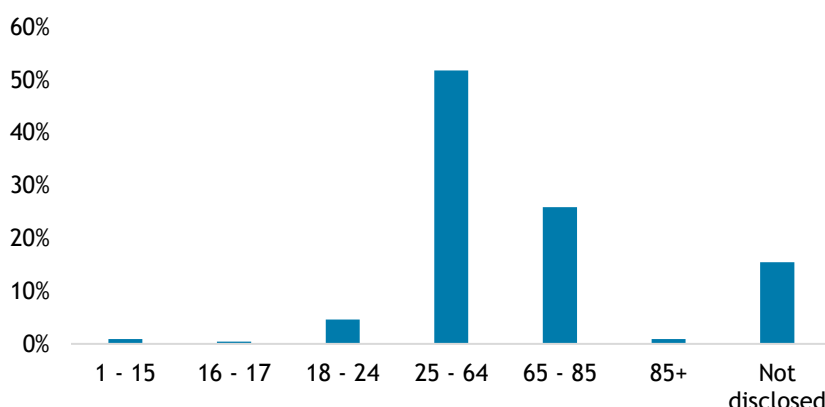
Gender	Number	Percent
Female	455	61.3%
Male	216	29.1%
Not disclosed	64	8.6%
Prefer not to say	6	0.8%
Gender fluid	1	0.1%
Total	**742**	**100%**

Note: 9.4% did not provide information
Table 7 - Source: all respondents (n=742)

61.3%

29.1%

District	No	Percent
Nottingham City	275	37.1%
Gedling	108	14.6%
Rushcliffe	92	12.4%
Ashfield	84	11.3%
Broxtowe	57	7.7%
Bassetlaw	48	6.5%
Newark and Sherwood	46	6.2%
Mansfield	32	4.3%
Total	**742**	**100%**

Table 8 - Source: all respondents (n=742)

QOTM Report Missed Appointments
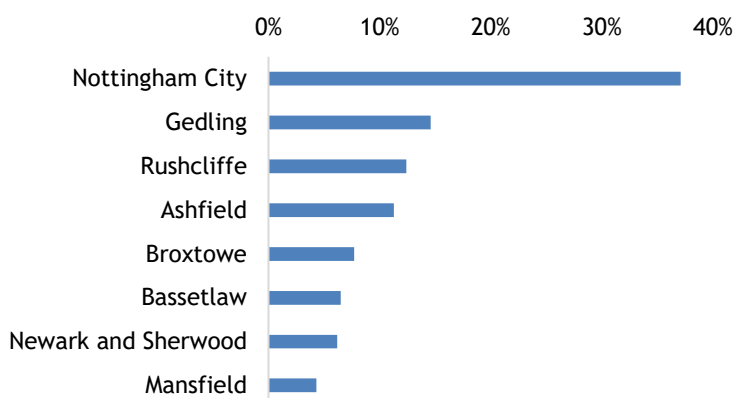
Ethnicity	No	%
White	512	69.0%
Not disclosed	107	14.4%
Asian	48	6.5%
Black	43	5.8%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group	13	1.8%
Prefer not to say	11	1.5%
Arab	5	0.7%
South Asian	3	0.4%
Total	742	100%
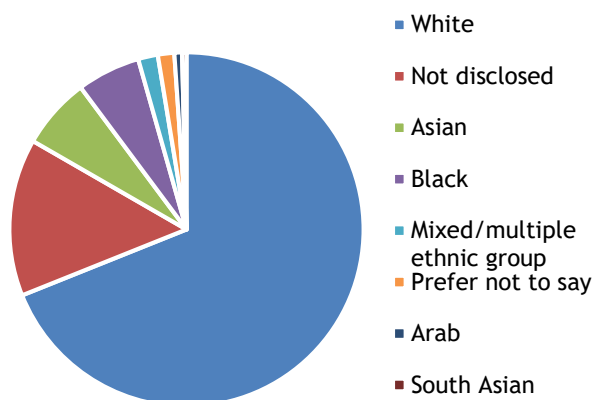
Table 9 - Source: all respondents (n=742)

Employment	Nor	%
Full time	227	30.6%
Retired	194	26.1%
Not disclosed	123	16.6%
Part time	94	12.7%
No	42	5.7%
Unable to work	34	4.6%
Student	22	3.0%
Prefer not to say	6	0.8%
Total	742	100%
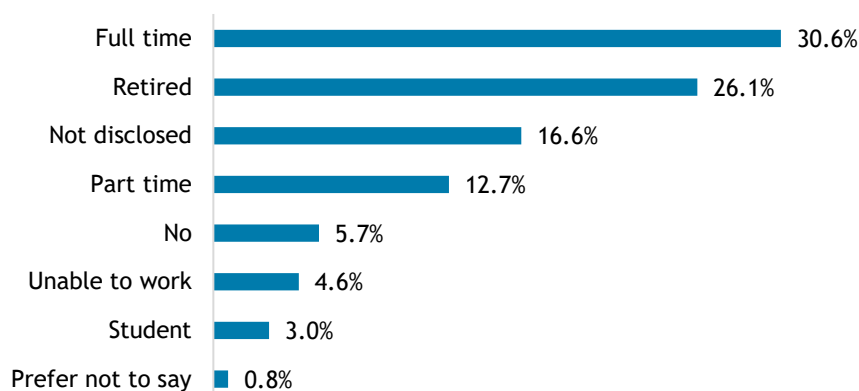
Table 10 - Source: all respondents (n=742)

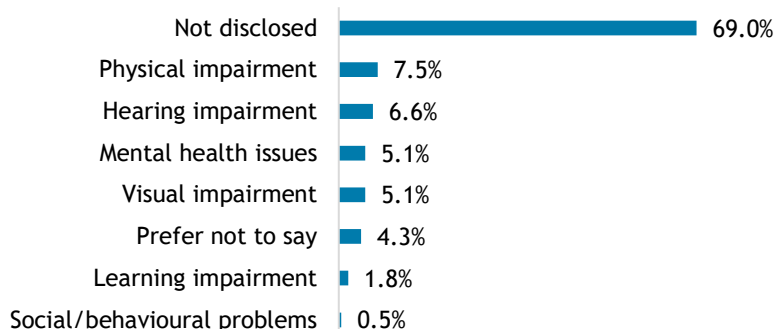| Disability	No	%
Not disclosed	512	69.0%
Physical impairment	66	7.5%
Hearing impairment	49	6.6%
Mental health issues	38	5.1%
Visual impairment	38	5.1%
Prefer not to say	32	4.3%
Learning impairment	13	1.8%
Social/behavioural problems	4	0.5%
Total	742	100%

Table 11 - Source: all respondents (n=742)

Out of the 742 respondents 31.0% (230) indicated that they had some sort of disability. Additionally, 20.4% (n=151) of respondents indicated that they were a carer.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The aim of the question was to explore the rate of missed appointments across the City and County, the reasons why respondents missed appointments, along with suggestions to help reduce the number of missed appointments.

The main reason people gave for missing appointments was because they forgot which it was suggested could be overcome by text message reminders, making the cancellation process easier i.e. by text, agreeing the date and time of the appointment with the patient.

In order to further improve the current system HW makes these recommendations based on our findings

Recommendation 1
All services to put in place a regular text message/phone call reminder service along with a text message cancellation process.

QOTM Report Missed Appointments

Recommendation 2
Services to attempt to make appointment cancellation/re-arrangement process easier for patients.

Recommendation 3
Increase the number of services where patients can choose their appointment date and time.

Appendix
A full appendix for the data collected can be found here:
http://hwnn.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Appendix_Missed-Appts.pdf