



## Talk to Us About GP services

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

Between July and September 2019 we undertook a Question of the Month survey to gain a greater understanding of people's views of GP services.

The aim of this survey was to understand people's experiences of accessing the booking system and making appointments.

The questions we asked were:

- Does the booking system at your GP practice work for you?
- If yes, please give details
- If not, why not?
- Are weekend/evening GP appointments offered?
- Can you ask about more than one thing at your appointment?
- What do you think about the length of GP appointments?
- Please give us any further detail about the answers you have given.

Responses to this survey were from local people across Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County. Surveys were collected through face to face public events such as 'Talk to Us' points and through an online SNAP survey linked to our website.

The total number of responses received was 755 with 41.7% (n=315) being from citizens of Nottingham City and 53.6% (n=405) from residents of Nottinghamshire County.

Completed Responses	No	%
Nottinghamshire County	405	53.6%
Nottingham City	315	41.7%
Out of area	35	4.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>100%</b>

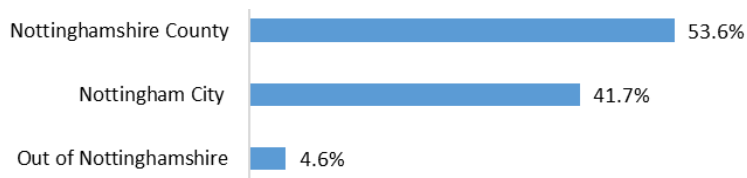


Table 1 - source all respondents (n=755)

*NB: The out of area responses were not analysed within this report. The Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City responses were analysed separately as can be seen below.*

The main findings of this survey are presented separately for Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City.

## Nottinghamshire County

### Participants were asked the following questions:

Does the booking system at your GP practice work for you?

Response	No	%
Yes	257	63.5%
No	144	35.6%
Not answered	4	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>100%</b>



Table 2- source Nottinghamshire County respondents (n=405)

Out of the 405 participants, 63.5% (n=257) answered 'yes' the booking system works for them, 35.6% (n=144) said 'no' it doesn't, and 1.0% (n=4) did not provide an answer.

Reasons given as to why booking systems worked well included:

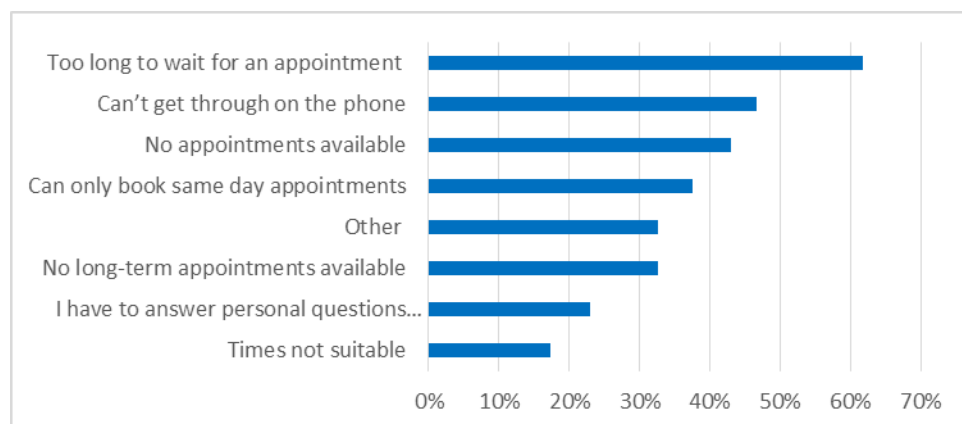
*'can use NHS app for booking non-urgent appointments', 'simple and straightforward', 'online is efficient and easy', 'I can do it online and ring up for emergency appointments if needed', 'the reception team are excellent and go out of their way to fit you in. The daily urgent call back service works very well. We can also book appointments online. Couldn't want for more', 'if it's an emergency they fit you in'.*

Respondents were then asked to indicate how the booking system did not work for them.

If not, why not?

Response	No	%
Too long to wait for an appointment	89	61.8%
Can't get through on the phone	67	46.5%
No appointments available	62	43.1%
Can only book same day appointments	54	37.5%
No long-term appointments available	47	32.6%
Other	47	32.6%
I have to answer personal questions before I can get an appointment	33	22.9%
Times not suitable	25	17.4%

Table 3- source Nottinghamshire County respondents who said the booking system did not work for them (n=144)



Out of the 144 participants who said the booking system did not work for them 61.8% (n=89) answered 'too long to wait for an appointment', 46.5% (n=67) 'can't get through on the phone', 43.1% (n=62) 'no appointments available', 37.5% (n=54) 'can only book same day appointments', 32.6% (n=47) 'no long-

term appointments available', 32.6% (n=47) 'other', 22.9% (n=33) 'I have to answer personal questions before I can get an appointment', and 17.4% (n=25) said 'times not suitable'.

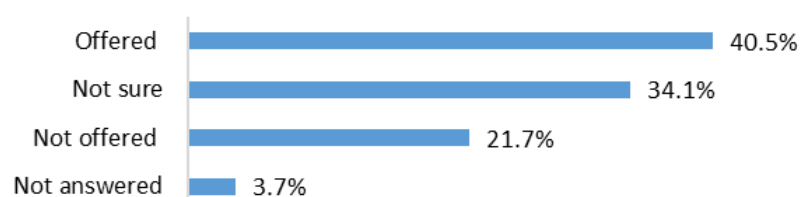
Reasons given for 'other' included:

*'You can never get an appointment, you have to call at 8am on day', 'Either too long a wait, 2 day appointment lottery or urgent same day. More regular appointments needed', 'If it's an emergency they have daily appointments. Something serious/routine may have to wait weeks!', 'The choices seem to be same day if it's urgent -and then you might have to take whichever doctor is available - or waiting up to a month (or longer!) to see your own named GP. For someone like me, with several long-term conditions that means I need the continuity of a GP who is familiar with my history, this is frustrating and can be distressing', 'You can't book an appointment online if you have another one already booked. I may have a long term appointment booked in for a check-up and that means I can't then book another one online if I need to be seen for another reason. This is very frustrating. Routine appointments for a preferred doctor can't be booked even 6 weeks in advance as there aren't any.'*

#### Are weekend/evening GP appointments...

Response	No	%
Offered	164	40.5%
Not sure	138	34.1%
Not offered	88	21.7%
Not answered	15	3.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4 - source Nottinghamshire County respondents (n=405)

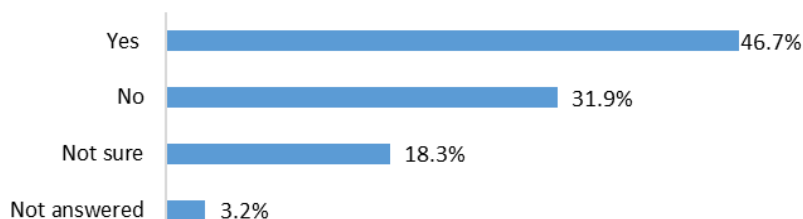


Out of the 405 participants 40.5% (n=164) answered 'weekend/evening appointments are offered', 34.1% (n=138) said they were 'not sure' if they had been offered these appointments, 21.7% (n=88) had not been offered weekend/evening appointments, and 3.7% (n=15) did not provide an answer.

#### Can you ask about more than one thing at your appointment?

Response	No	%
Yes	189	46.7%
No	129	31.9%
Not sure	74	18.3%
Not answered	15	3.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5- source Nottinghamshire County respondents (n=405)

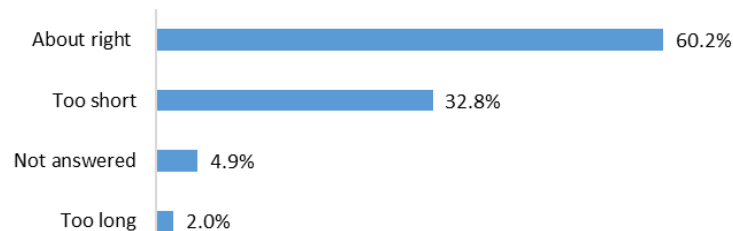


Out of the 405 participants 46.7% (n=189) answered 'Yes' they could ask about more than one thing at their appointment, 31.9% (n=129) said 'No' they could not, 18.3% (n=74) were 'not sure' if they could ask about more than one thing, and 3.2% (n=15) did not provide an answer.

#### What do you think about the length of GP appointments?

Response	No	%
About right	244	60.2%
Too short	133	32.8%
Not answered	20	4.9%
Too long	8	2.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 6 - source Nottinghamshire County respondents (n=405)



Out of the 405 participants 60.2% (n=244) answered 'About right', 32.8% (n=133) 'Too short', 4.9% (n=20) did not provide an answer, and 2.0% (n=8) said 'Too long'.

## Conclusions - Nottinghamshire County

Out of the 405 Nottinghamshire County participants almost two thirds (63.5%, n=257) suggested that the booking system at their GP practice worked well for them. Examples of good practice included always being given an appointment in the case of an emergency, the NHS app and online booking system being simple and efficient and the reception team being excellent. However 35.6% (n=144) indicated that the booking system at their GP practice does not work well for them. The most common reason given was that the wait for an appointment was too long (61.8%, n=89), closely followed by not being able to get through on the phone line (46.5%, n=67) and no appointments being available (43.1%, n=62). While it is encouraging that a majority of County GP users are satisfied with the booking system, the significant proportion who do not find it works for them have major concerns around accessibility.

Although 40.5% (n=164) of the Nottinghamshire County respondents were aware that their GP practice offered weekend/evening appointments, 21.7% (n=88) believe that their GP practices does not and around one third (34.1%, n=129) were not sure whether weekend/evening appointments are offered. It seems there is considerable work still required to make patients aware of the options for routine appointments in the evenings and weekends.

Out of the 405 respondents, 46.7% (n=189) stated that they could ask about more than one thing at their appointment whilst 31.9% (n=129) indicated that they could not.

Approximately two thirds of County respondents felt the length of their GP appointments is about right (60.2%, n=244) whereas 32.8% (n=133) felt that appointments are too short.

## Recommendations - Nottinghamshire County

- Maintain the use of online booking systems and the NHS app as respondents are finding these useful.
- Advertise the online booking systems and NHS app to patients as a way of managing their appointments in order to try and free up the phone line for those needing to book emergency appointments and those without access to the other booking methods.
- Make the availability of weekend/evening appointments clear to patients so that they can make the most of these appointment slots.
- Offer appointment slots of varying lengths, including longer appointments to patients with more complex needs.

## Nottingham City

### Participants were asked the following questions:

Does the booking system at your GP practice work for you?

Response	No	%
No	170	54.0%
Yes	145	46.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>

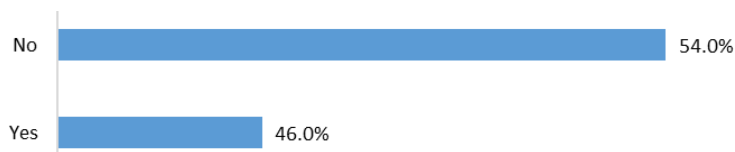


Table 7- source Nottingham City respondents (n=315)

Out of the 315 participants 54.0% (n=170) answered 'No', and 46.0% (n=145) 'Yes'.

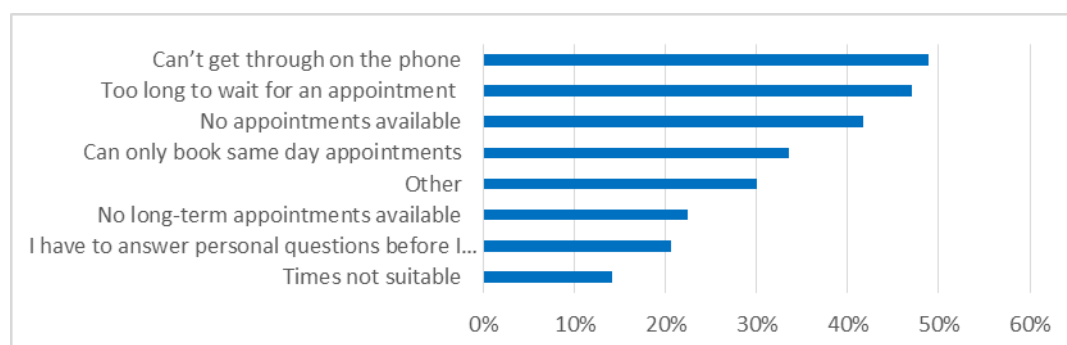
Reasons given as to why booking systems worked well included:

*'Frequent open appointments and friendly/helpful reception staff', 'You can usually book a GP appointment in the surgery for that day or book an appointment to speak to a doctor on the phone on that day', 'Online, fast and effective. Has the ability to cancel and re-book also.', 'I can usually get the sort of appointment I need', 'availability of range of medical services, e.g. nurses, GPs', 'Book via online system', 'I can book online, and am given details of the slots available.', 'Online only. I don't have to wait in a telephone queue for a long period of time to be told there's no appointments'.*

If not, why not?

Response	No	%
Can't get through on the phone	83	48.8%
Too long to wait for an appointment	80	47.1%
No appointments available	71	41.8%
Can only book same day appointments	57	33.5%
Other	51	30.0%
No long-term appointments available	38	22.4%
I have to answer personal questions before I can get an appointment	35	20.6%
Times not suitable	24	14.1%

Table 8- source Nottingham City respondents who said the booking system did not work for them (n=170)



Out of the 170 participants who said the booking system did not work for them 48.8% (n=83) answered 'can't get through on the phone', 47.1% (n=80) 'too long to wait for an appointment', 41.8% (n=71) 'no appointments available', 33.5% (n=57) 'can only book same day appointments', 22.4% (n=38) 'no long-term appointments available', 20.6% (n=35) 'I have to answer personal questions before I can get an appointment', and 14.1% (n=24) 'times not suitable'.

Reasons given for other included:

*'Hard to get through. If it is an emergency they will let you through', '15 days wait', 'If I ask to see the nurse, I can get an appointment on another date. But if I want to see the doctor, it is same day unless*

*booking online (although not many online appointments) Therefore I tend to make nurse appointments', 'I keep having to re-register online to book an appointment for repeat prescriptions'.*

#### Are weekend/evening GP appointments...

Response	No	%
Not offered	108	34.3%
Offered	100	31.7%
Not sure	93	29.5%
Not answered	14	4.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 9 - source Nottingham City respondents (n=315)

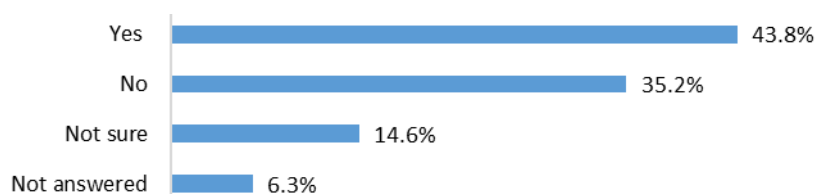


Out of the 315 participants 34.3% (n=108) answered weekend and evening appointments were 'not Offered', 31.7% (n=100) said they were 'offered', 29.5% (n=93) were 'not sure', and 4.4% (n=14) did not provide an answer.

#### Can you ask about more than one thing at your appointment?

Response	No	%
Yes	138	43.8%
No	111	35.2%
Not sure	46	14.6%
Not answered	20	6.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 10- source Nottingham City respondents (n=315)

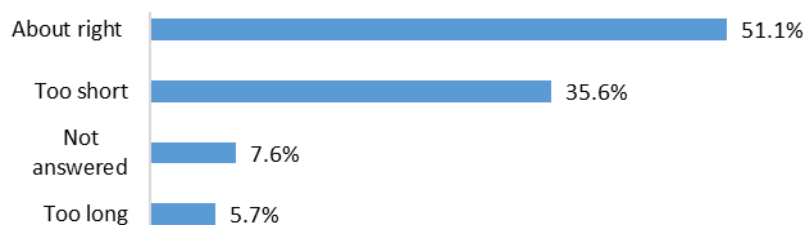


Out of the 315 participants 43.8% (n=138) answered 'yes', they could ask about more than one thing 35.2% (n=111) said 'no' they couldn't, 14.6% (n=46) were 'not sure', and 6.3% (n=20) did not provide an answer.

#### What do you think about the length of GP appointments?

Response	No	%
About right	161	51.1%
Too short	112	35.6%
Not answered	24	7.6%
Too long	18	5.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 11- source Nottingham City respondents (n=315)



Out of the 315 participants 51.1% (n=161) answered 'About right', 35.6% (n=112) 'Too short', 7.6% (n=24) did not provide an answer, and 5.7% (n=18) 'Too long'.

## Conclusions - Nottingham City

Just over half (54.0%, n=170) of the 315 Nottingham City respondents suggested that the booking system at their GP practice did not work well for them, a lower proportion than in Nottinghamshire County. The three most common reasons given were 48.8% (n=83) not being able to get through on the phone, 47.1% (n=80) said it was due to the wait for an appointment being too long and 41.8% (n=71) no appointments being available. Of the 145 (46%) respondents who suggested that the booking system at their GP practice worked well for them, they said that this was because they could usually book a GP appointment in the surgery for that day or book an appointment to speak to a doctor on the phone on that day, or that the online system is fast and effective and also has the ability to cancel and re-book appointments.

A number of Nottingham City respondents indicated that their GP practice did not offer weekend/evening appointments (34.3%, n=108). 31.7% (n=100) were offered these appointments and almost one third 29.5% (n=93) were not sure whether their GP practice offered weekend/evening

appointments. This finding indicates there is still significant work to be done promoting evening and weekend appointments.

Out of the 315 respondents, 43.8% (n=138) stated that they could ask about more than one thing at their appointment whilst 35.2% indicated that they could not.

Around half of the Nottingham City respondents (51.1%, n=161) thought that the length of GP appointments was about right whereas 35.6% (n=122) felt they were too short.

## Recommendations - Nottingham City

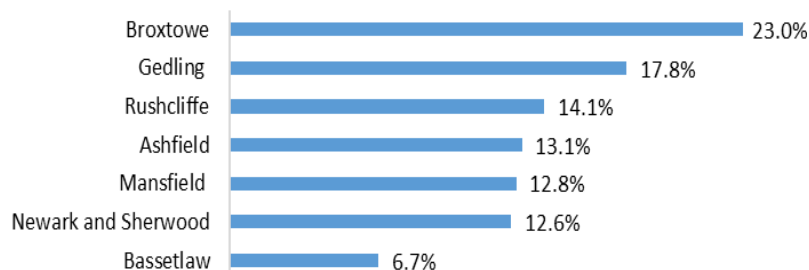
- Maintain the use of online booking systems and the NHS app as respondents are finding these useful.
- Advertise the online booking systems and NHS app to patients as a way of managing their appointments in order to try and free up the phone line for those needing to book emergency appointments and those without access to the other booking methods.
- Make the availability of weekend/evening appointments clear to patients so that they can make the most of these appointment slots.
- Offer appointment slots of varying lengths, including longer appointments to patients with more complex needs.

## Who answered our Question of the Month? - Nottinghamshire County

We received 755 responses in total. 405 of our respondents were from Nottinghamshire County.

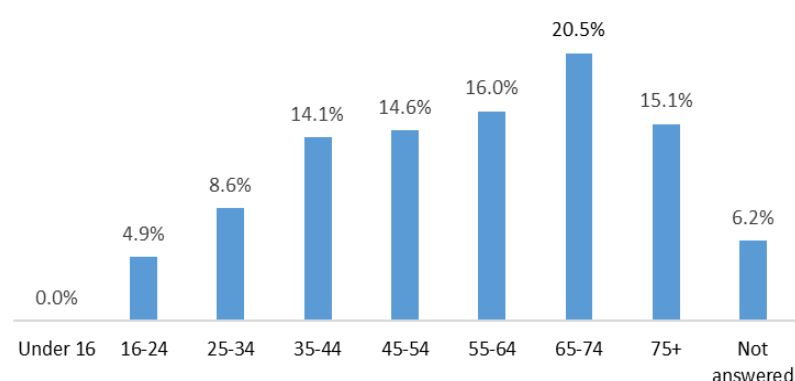
District	No	%
Broxtowe	93	23.0%
Gedling	72	17.8%
Rushcliffe	57	14.1%
Ashfield	53	13.1%
Mansfield	52	12.8%
Newark and Sherwood	51	12.6%
Bassetlaw	27	6.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 12 - Source: Nottinghamshire County respondents (n=405)



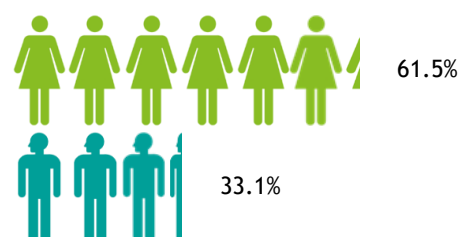
Age Group	No	%
Under 16	0	0%
16 - 24	20	4.9%
25 - 34	35	8.6%
35 - 44	57	14.1%
45 - 54	59	14.6%
55 - 64	65	16.0%
65 - 74	83	20.5%
75+	61	15.1%
Not answered	25	6.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 13 - Source: Nottinghamshire County respondents (n=405)



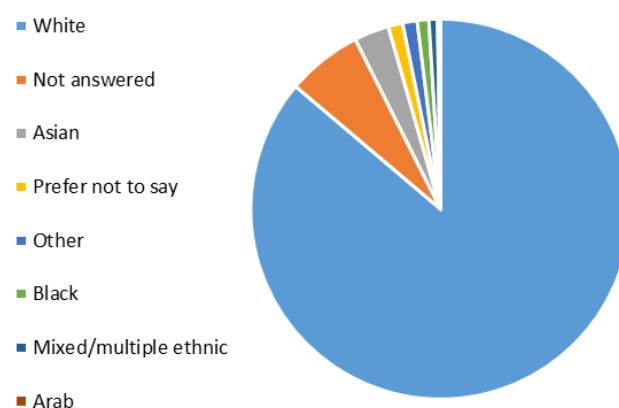
Gender	No	%
Female	249	61.5%
Male	134	33.1%
Not answered	20	4.9%
Prefer not to say	1	0.2%
Non-binary	1	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 14 - Source: Nottinghamshire County respondents (n=405)



Ethnicity	No	%
White	349	86.2%
Not answered	26	6.4%
Asian	12	3.0%
Prefer not to say	5	1.2%
Other	5	1.2%
Black	4	1.0%
Mixed/multiple ethnic	3	0.7%
Arab	1	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>100%</b>

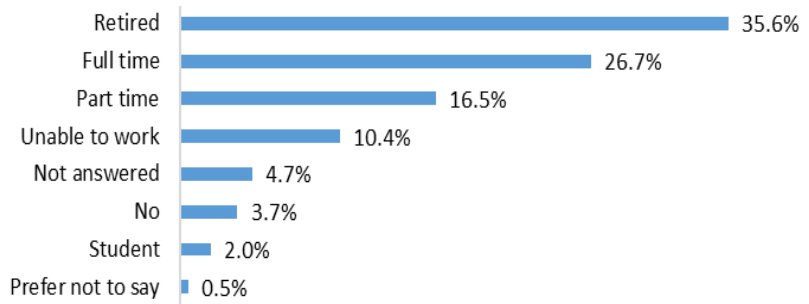
Table 15 - Source: Nottinghamshire County respondents (n=405)





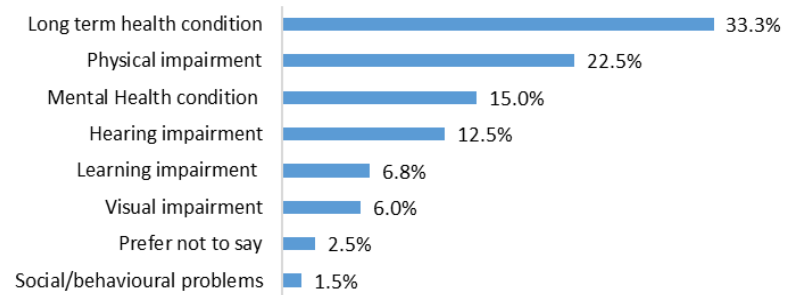
Employment status	No	%
Retired	144	35.6%
Full time	108	26.7%
Part time	67	16.5%
Unable to work	42	10.4%
Not answered	19	4.7%
No	15	3.7%
Student	8	2.0%
Prefer not to say	2	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 16 - Source: Nottinghamshire County respondents (n=405)



Disability	No	%
Long term health condition	133	33.3%
Physical impairment	90	22.5%
Mental Health condition	60	15.0%
Hearing impairment	50	12.5%
Learning impairment	27	6.8%
Visual impairment	24	6.0%
Prefer not to say	10	2.5%
Social/behavioural problems	6	1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 17 - Source: Nottinghamshire County respondents (n=400)

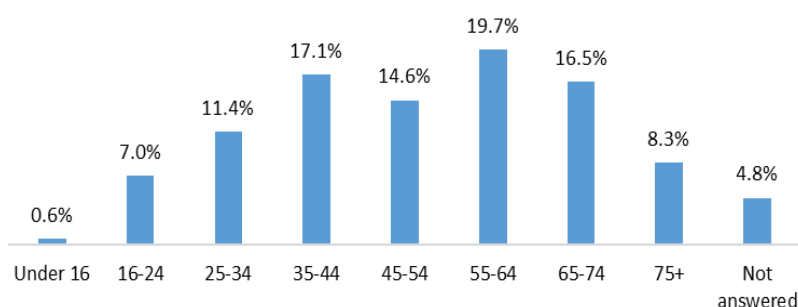


## Who answered our Question of the Month? - Nottingham City

We received 755 responses in total. 315 of our respondents were from Nottingham City.

Age Group	No	%
Under 16	2	0.6%
16 - 24	22	7.0%
25 - 34	36	11.4%
35 - 44	54	17.1%
45 - 54	46	14.6%
55 - 64	62	19.7%
65 - 74	52	16.5%
75+	26	8.3%
Not answered	15	4.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 18 - Source: Nottingham City respondents (n=315)



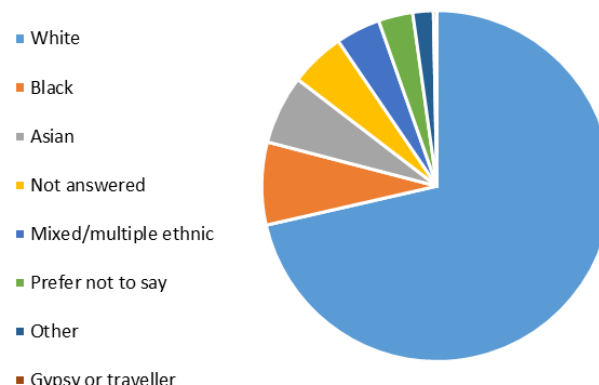
Gender	No	%
Female	242	76.8%
Male	61	19.4%
Not answered	11	3.5%
Prefer not to say	1	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 19 - Source: Nottingham City respondents (n=315)



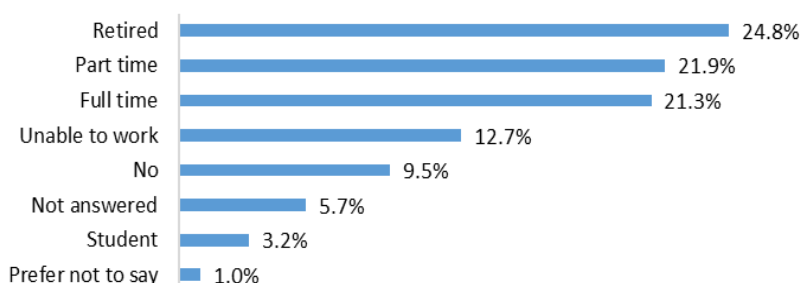
Ethnicity	No	%
White	225	71.4%
Black	24	7.6%
Asian	20	6.3%
Not answered	16	5.1%
Mixed/multiple ethnic	13	4.1%
Prefer not to say	10	3.2%
Other	6	1.9%
Gypsy or traveller	1	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 20 - Source: Nottingham City respondents (n=315)



Employment status	No	%
Retired	78	24.8%
Part time	69	21.9%
Full time	67	21.3%
Unable to work	40	12.7%
No	30	9.5%
Not answered	18	5.7%
Student	10	3.2%
Prefer not to say	3	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 21 - Source: Nottingham City respondents (n=315)



Disability	No	%
Long term health condition	77	27.7%
Physical impairment	56	20.1%
Mental Health condition	51	18.3%
Hearing impairment	35	12.6%
Visual impairment	24	8.6%
Learning impairment	17	6.1%
Social/behavioural problems	10	3.6%
Prefer not to say	8	2.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>100%</b>

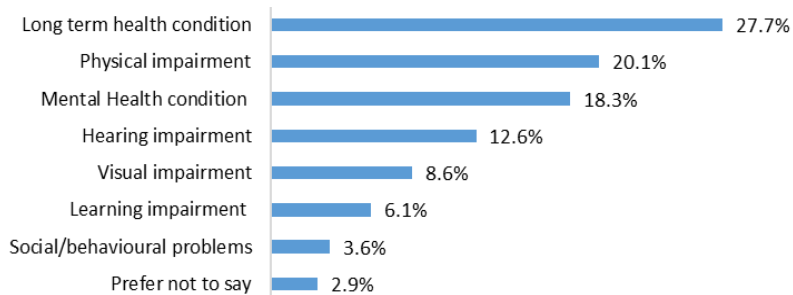


Table 22 - Source: Nottingham City respondents (n=315)

## Contact Us


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## Special Thanks

Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire would like to thank Evidence and Insight volunteer, Amy Chamberlain for analysing the data and compiling this report.