



## Accessing Care over Christmas

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

The subject of the QOTM we asked was 'How would you access care over the Christmas period?' This had been the subject of a previous QOTM by HWNN in 2017, enabling us to compare the results.

The aim of the question was to explore awareness of opening times for health services, and what people would do if these were not available.

The questions we asked were:

1. Which of the following services in your area do you think would be open on the dates shown? (Pharmacy, NHS111, Doctor/GP, Dentist, Walk in Centre)
2. If you were unsure, where would you look for information about what may be open over this period?

Christmas Eve (Tuesday Dec 24th)

Christmas Day (Wednesday Dec 25th)

Boxing Day (Thursday Dec 26th)

New Year's Eve (Tuesday Dec 31st)

New Year's Day (Wednesday Jan 1st)

The actual opening times for the services were:

- NHS 111 - 365 days a year - 24 hours per day
- Walk-in Centre - most centres open 365 days a year although hours can vary
- Pharmacy - at least one pharmacy open all days in all districts of Nottinghamshire
- Doctor/GP - open except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. (Call 111 or emergency number outside of these hours)
- Dentist - most open except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day (For an emergency dentist call 111)

## How we collected responses...

We gathered views from local people across Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County in the following ways:

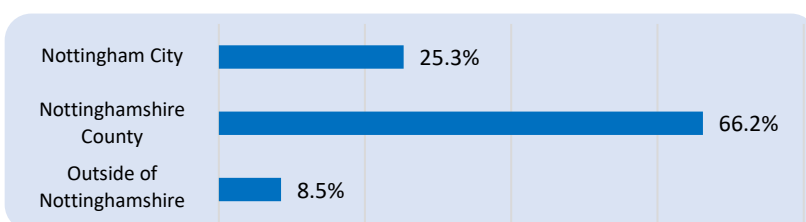
- Face to face with local people at public events and community groups and organisations, including Talk 2 Us Points in public venues across Nottingham City and at various community support groups in the County.
- Through an online question linked to our website. The link was also included in our newsletters to our mailing list.
- By sending question cards to community groups we have worked with before and who have agreed to give them out to local people on our behalf.

When we didn't give them the question card in person we provided freepost envelopes so that people could return the completed survey to us directly.

The total number of responses received was 352 with 25.3% (n=89) being received from Nottingham City residents and 66.2% (n=233) from Nottinghamshire County residents.

Completed Responses	No.	%
Nottingham City	89	25.3%
Nottinghamshire County	233	66.2%
Out of Nottinghamshire	30	8.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 – source all respondents (n=352)



NB: The out of area responses were not analysed within this report leaving a total of 322.

## Participants were asked the following two questions:

### 1. Which of the following services in your area do you think would be open on the dates shown?

#### Responses from 2019 survey

Service	Actual opening	24-Dec	25-Dec	26-Dec	31-Dec	01-Jan
NHS 111	Open all dates	99.4%	93.5%	94.1%	97.2%	91.3%
Walk-in Centre	Open all dates	92.9%	62.7%	72.0%	87.9%	66.8%
Pharmacy	Open all dates	91.3%	26.1%	52.2%	85.4%	36.0%
A Doctor / GP	Open all dates except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day	74.2%	10.9%	20.5%	71.4%	14.0%
A Dentist	Open all dates except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day	65.2%	6.5%	14.9%	64.0%	10.2%

Table 2 – source all respondents (n=322)

The total number of responses received was 322. The service that most people expected to be open over Christmas was NHS 111 -this ranged from 91.3% (n=294) to 99.4% (n=320) over the days surveyed.

Most people expected walk-in centres to be open on working days but only two-thirds thought that they would be open on bank holidays [25<sup>th</sup> (n=202) and 26<sup>th</sup> December (n=232) and 1<sup>st</sup> January (n=215)].

The lowest expectation for a service being open was for dentists, with the expectation of one being open on Christmas Day being only 6.15% (n=21).

Just over a fifth of respondents 20.5% (n=66) thought that their doctor/GP would be open on Boxing Day

The responses from our 2017 survey are shown in table 3 below. As we did not interview exactly the same people, the differences in results may be due to chance. However, it is still interesting to compare the results as there are large differences in responses, despite the actual opening days being the same in the two time periods.

## Responses from 2017 survey

Service	24-Dec	25-Dec	26-Dec	31-Dec	01-Jan
NHS 111	84.7%	73.4%	74.0%	78.2%	75.3%
Walk-in centre	75.6%	47.1%	56.2%	68.5%	55.2%
Pharmacy	67.9%	23.4%	40.6%	58.4%	31.5%
Doctor/GP	55.8%	16.2%	27.3%	51.0%	20.8%
Dentist	45.1%	8.1%	20.8%	40.9%	13.3%

Table 3 - source all respondents (n=308)

## Change in percentages of answers between 2019 and 2017 surveys

Service	24-Dec	25-Dec	26-Dec	31-Dec	01-Jan
NHS 111	14.6%	20.1%	20.1%	19.0%	16.0%
Walk-in centre	17.2%	15.7%	15.9%	19.4%	11.6%
Pharmacy	23.4%	2.7%	11.6%	27.0%	4.5%
Doctor/GP	18.4%	-5.4%	-6.8%	20.5%	-6.8%
Dentist	20.1%	-1.6%	-5.9%	23.1%	-3.1%

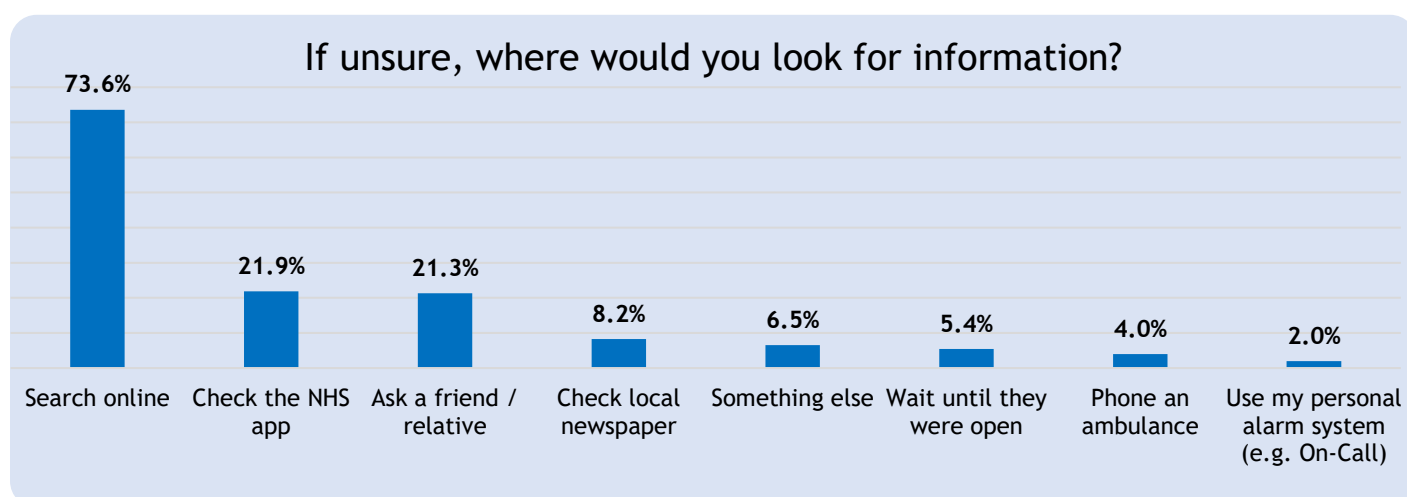
Table 4 - percentage change in answers between 2019 and 2017

Most respondents now displayed an increase in awareness of their availability of services during the festive period. The largest increase of these was for pharmacies which increased by 27% (n=95) on December 31<sup>st</sup> since the last survey in 2017.

There was also an increase of approximately one fifth in awareness of being able to use NHS111 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> December.

Fewer respondents now indicated that they expected Doctor/GPs and dentists to be open on 25<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> December and 1<sup>st</sup> January.

## 2. If you were unsure which services were open, where would you look for information about what may be open over this period?



Response from 2019 survey	No.	%
Search online	259	73.6%
Check the NHS app	77	21.9%
Ask a friend / relative	75	21.3%
Check local newspaper	29	8.2%
Something else	23	6.5%
Wait until they were open	19	5.4%
Phone an ambulance	14	4.0%
Use my personal alarm system (e.g. On-Call)	7	2.0%

Table 5 – source all respondents (n=322)

Responses from 2017 survey	No.	%
Search online	170	55.2%
Go to Accident & Emergency	97	31.5%
Ask a friend/relative	96	31.2%
Wait until they were open	63	20.5%
Phone an ambulance	56	18.2%
Check local newspaper	25	8.1%
Use my personal alarm system (e.g. On-Call)	11	3.6%

Table 6 - source all respondents (n=308)

Over half of responders 55.2% (n=170) indicated that they would search online.

Change in responses between 2017 & 2019 surveys	Plus or minus	% change
Search online	+89	18.4%
Check the NHS app	-	-
Ask a friend / relative	-21	-9.9%
Check local newspaper	+4	0.1%
Something else	-	-
Wait until they were open	-44	-15.1%
Phone an ambulance	-42	-14.2%
Use my personal alarm system (e.g. On-Call)	-4	-1.6%

Table 7 - percentage change - \*Indicates where answer was not an option in current survey

There was an increase of nearly one in five of since 2017 of the number of people who would look for information online 18.4% increase (n=89). There was a decrease of 14.2% (n=42) in those who said that they would phone an ambulance.

Fewer respondents stated that they were likely to ask a friend or relative, wait until services were open, phone an ambulance or use their personal alarm system.

Note: the option for 'check the NHS app' was not part of the 2017 survey.

## Conclusions

The aim of this survey was to explore awareness of opening times for health services, how services could be accessed and what people would do if these were not available.

There is good awareness (93.5%) of the 365 day a year service that NHS 111 provides. However far fewer people are aware that Walk in Centres are open (62.7%) on Christmas Day and even fewer (26.1%) know that at least one pharmacy in their district is open on 25<sup>th</sup> December.

While the findings indicate the improved effectiveness of NHS England's publicity campaign for holiday opening hours since our 2017 survey, there is still further awareness raising needed around Walk in Centres and Pharmacies.

## Recommendations

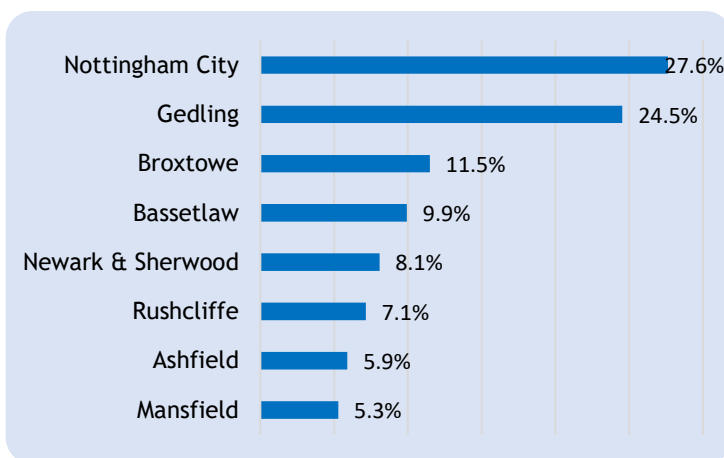
- Increase awareness raising of opening times of Walk in Centres and Pharmacies over the Christmas/New Year period 2021.
- Clearly display on the front page of service providers websites opening times in the run up to the Christmas and New Year period.

## Who answered our Question of the Month?

In total, we received 352 responses to our survey. 25.6% (n=89) were from Nottingham City and 62.3% (n=233) from Nottinghamshire County. 8.5% (n=30) were from outside of Nottinghamshire and were not included in the analysis.

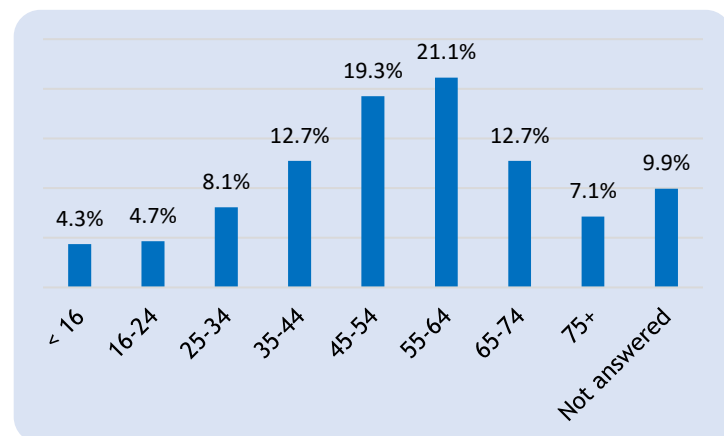
District	No.	%
Nottingham City	89	27.6%
Gedling	79	24.5%
Broxtowe	37	11.5%
Bassetlaw	32	9.9%
Newark & Sherwood	26	8.1%
Rushcliffe	23	7.1%
Ashfield	19	5.9%
Mansfield	17	5.3%
Nottingham City	89	27.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 8 - Source: all respondents (n=322)



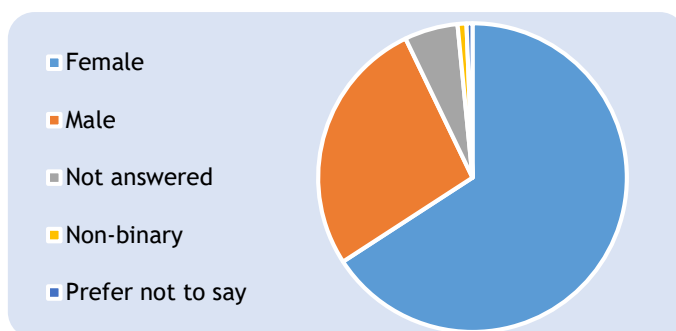
Age Group	No.	%
< 16	14	4.3%
16-24	15	4.7%
25-34	26	8.1%
35-44	41	12.7%
45-54	62	19.3%
55-64	68	21.1%
65-74	41	12.7%
75+	23	7.1%
Not answered	32	9.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 9 - Source: all respondents (n=322)



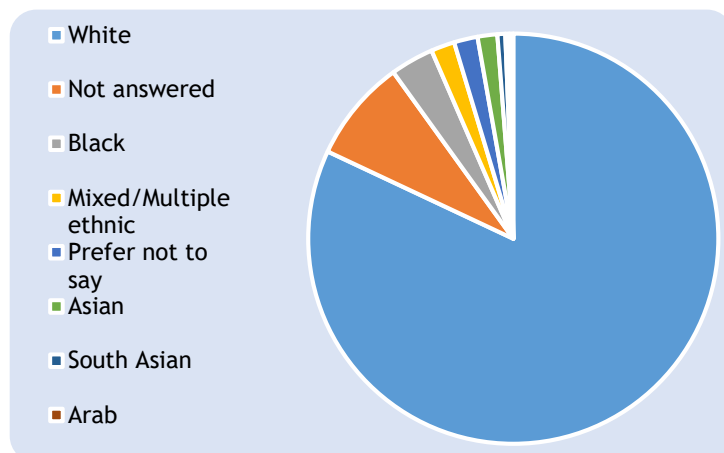
Gender	No.	%
Female	212	65.8%
Male	87	27.0%
Not answered	18	5.6%
Non-binary	3	0.9%
Prefer not to say	2	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 10 – Source: all respondents (n=322)



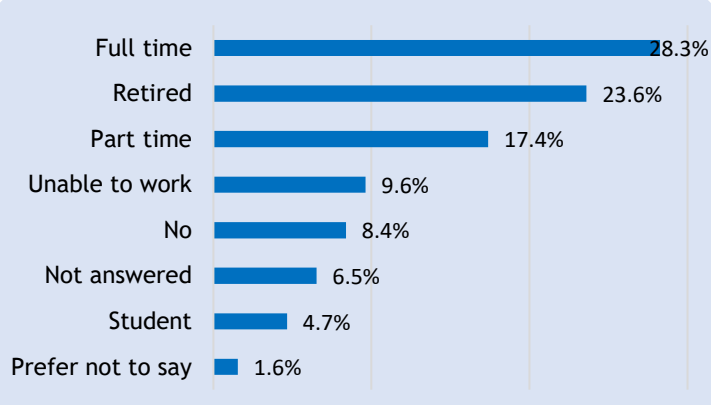
Ethnicity	No.	%
White	264	82.0%
Not answered	26	8.1%
Black	11	3.4%
Mixed/multiple ethnic	6	1.9%
Prefer not to say	6	1.9%
Asian	5	1.6%
South Asian	2	0.6%
Arab	1	0.3%
Gypsy or traveller	1	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 11 - Source: all respondents (n=322)



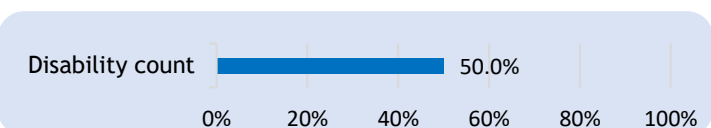
Employment status	No.	%
Full time	91	28.3%
Retired	76	23.6%
Part time	56	17.4%
Unable to work	31	9.6%
No	27	8.4%
Not answered	21	6.5%
Student	15	4.7%
Prefer not to say	5	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 12 - Source: all respondents (n=322)



Disability count	No.	%
People -with >=1 disability	161	50.0%

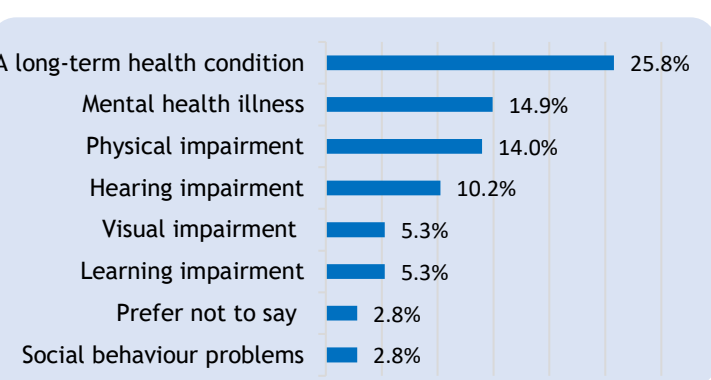
Table 13 - Source: all respondents (n=322)



Disability Type	No.	%
A long-term health condition	83	25.8%
Mental health illness	48	14.9%
Physical impairment	45	14.0%
Hearing impairment	33	10.2%
Visual impairment	17	5.3%
Learning impairment	17	5.3%
Prefer not to say	9	2.8%
Social behaviour problems	9	2.8%

Table 14 - Source: all respondents (n=161)

Note: total is greater than 161 as some respondents indicated they had more than one condition.



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