



# What Matters Most?

Your feedback and experiences of health  
and social care services in Slough.

Spring 2021

## What Matters Most?

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## What Matters Most?

### At a Glance

#### Summary



We heard from **101 residents** in Slough

We asked what they thought of their local services:

**115 positive experiences**

**98 negative experiences**

#### Service Ratings



We asked residents to rate their local services:

**COVID-19 Vaccinations** was the highest rated service  
**Mental Health Services (Children)** was the lowest rated service

**49%** of residents found it **difficult to access** services

#### Health and Wellbeing



We heard that:

**Video/Zoom calling friends and family** was the biggest support to residents in the past 12 months

**Exercise and fitness** related goals were the most desired for the next 12 months

#### Healthwatch Slough Priorities



We asked what Healthwatch Slough's future focus should be:

**36%** said we should focus on **GP Services**

**17%** said we should focus on **Mental Health Services**

**18%** said to improve **Access to Services**

## What Matters Most?

### Introduction

#### About Healthwatch

Local Healthwatch organisations are independent champions for people who use health and social care services. We are here to find out what matters to people and help make sure their views shape the support they receive.

#### Project Background

In March 2021, the three local Healthwatch organisations across East Berkshire (Bracknell Forest, Slough, and Windsor, Ascot, and Maidenhead) worked together to develop their foundation of knowledge about the local communities, including their health and social care needs. The survey ran until May 2021 and collected people's opinions, concerns, and experiences of using, and accessing, health and social care services.



The responses we received focused on a variety of NHS services, ranging from GP surgeries to blood tests, and hospitals to COVID vaccination sites. Responses also gave an insight into the biggest health and wellbeing support across the past 12 months, and health and wellbeing goals for the next 12 months. The same survey was asked across the three Healthwatch localities; this report focuses solely on the responses received from residents in Slough.

#### About the Survey

We asked Slough residents about:

- Health and social care services they had used in the past 12 months
- Any positive or negative experiences with health and social care services
- How easy/difficult they found accessing the services
- Health and wellbeing support used in the past 12 months
- Individual health and wellbeing goals for the next 12 months

Participants were able to tell us their views anonymously via an online survey. This could be accessed privately, via the Healthwatch Hub call centre, and during forum meetings. We engaged with local community forums such as the Slough Co-Production Network and the Special Voices Parent/Carer Forum. The survey was also promoted by a range of stakeholders such as the local councils, voluntary sector organisations and NHS trusts. This was via newsletters, announcements (text, emails, and virtual meetings) and on social media sites.

The total number of responses received for Slough was 101; this does not include any partial responses as these were excluded from analysis.

## What Matters Most?

### Services used in the past year

Participants were asked to select the health and social care services which they had used in the past year and rate these services as ‘Excellent’, ‘Good’, ‘Ok’, or ‘Poor’. The number of responses for each service ranged from 11 (Screening Services) to 88 (GP Services). The most used health and social care services used by the participants in the past year were:

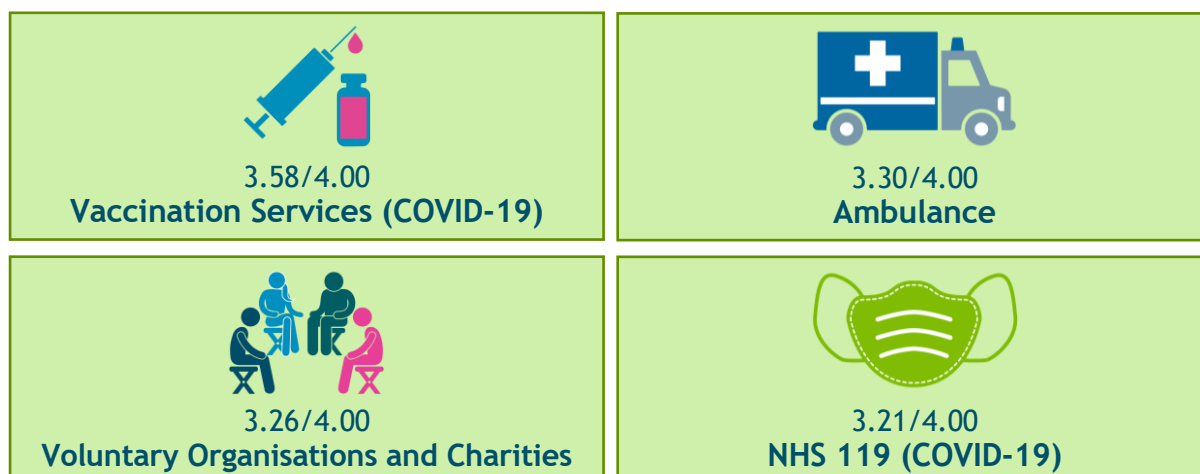
- GP Services - 88 responses
- Pharmacy - 76 responses
- COVID-19 Vaccinations - 74 responses
- Blood Tests - 59 responses
- Dental Services - 55 responses

### Service Ratings

The ratings for each service were coded to find the average rating, so that the number of responses would be taken into consideration. ‘Excellent’ was coded as 4, ‘Good’ as 3, ‘Ok’ as 2, ‘Poor’ as 1; this meant the highest average rating a service could achieve is 4, and the lowest rating could be 1. All the service ratings are shown in the graph on page 6.

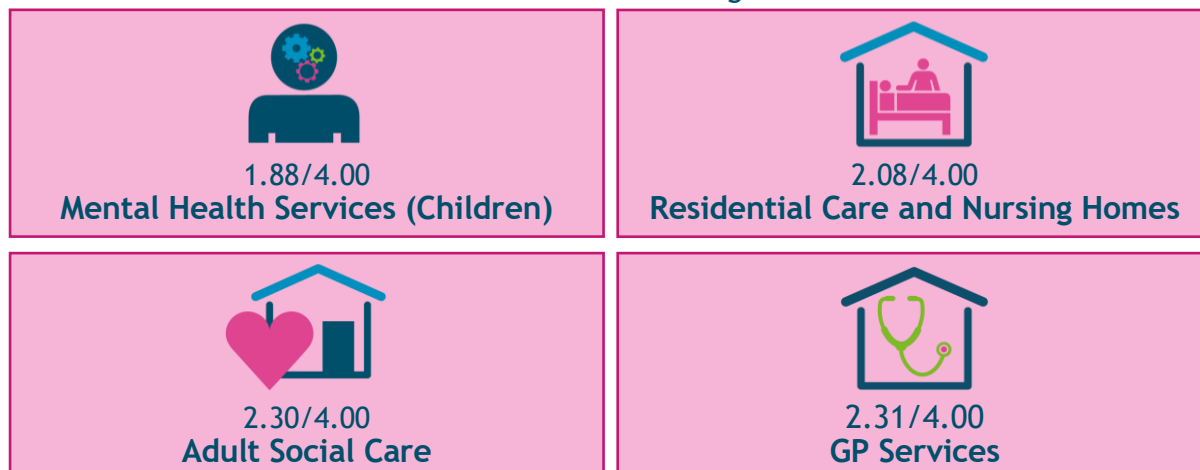
### Highest-rated Services

The highest rated health and social care services in Slough are:

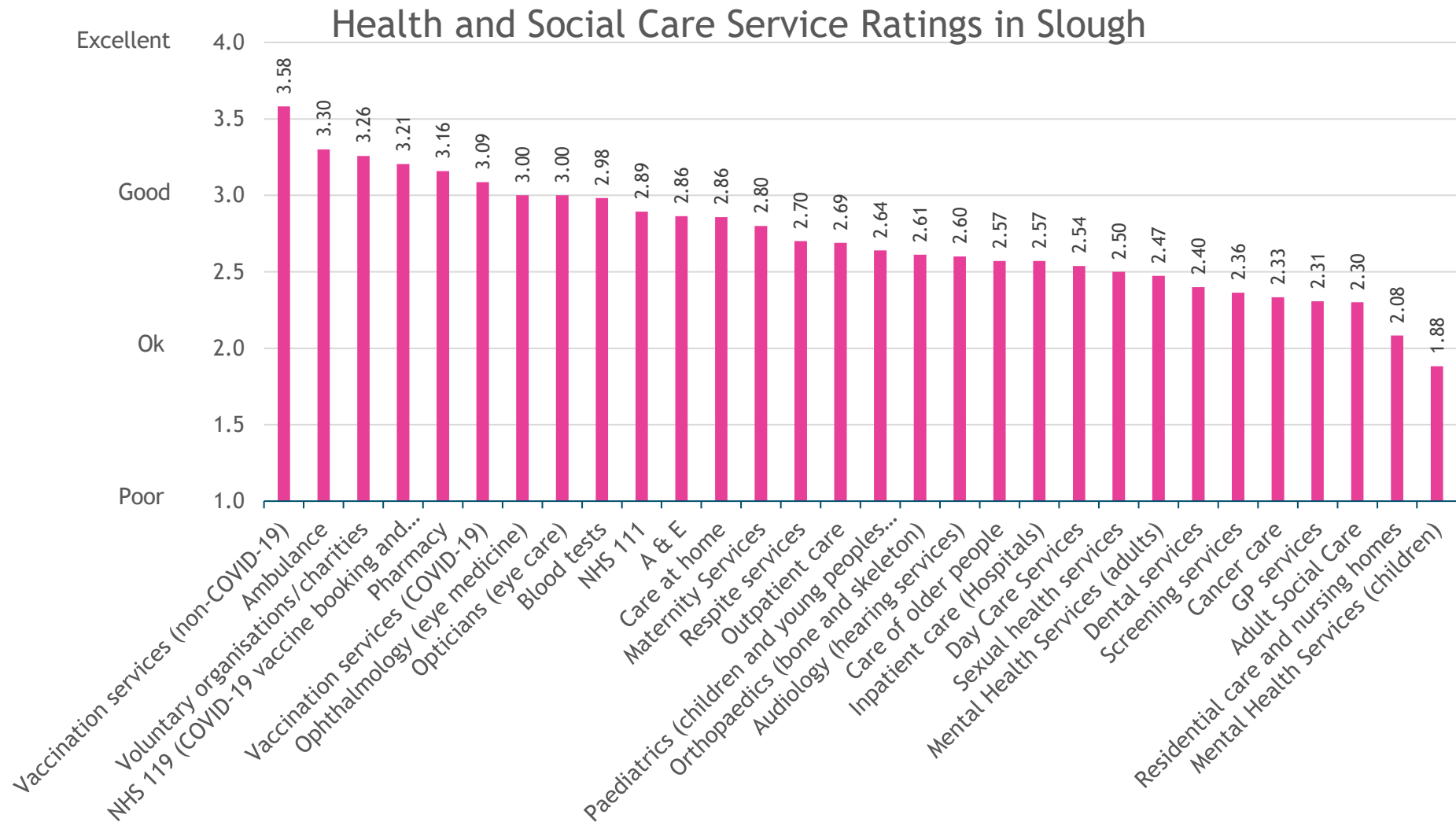


### Lowest-rated Services

The lowest rated health and social care services in Slough are:



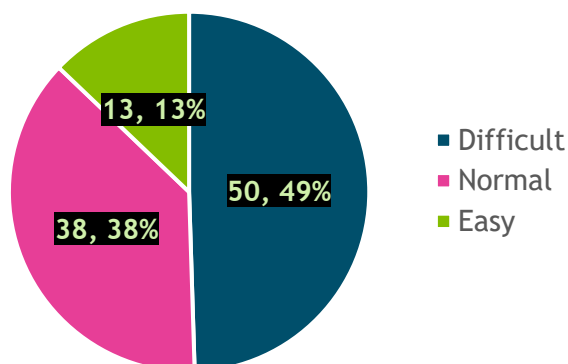
## What Matters Most?



## What Matters Most?

### Access to Services

Participants were asked how easy or difficult they found accessing health and social care services within the past 12 months. There were options of 'Easy', 'Normal', or 'Difficult'. The findings are in the graph below, showing number of participants who selected each option.



### Easy to Access

Services which were described as 'Easy' to access and get help from:

- Farnham Road Surgery
- Maidenhead Orthodontist
- NHS 111 and A&E Departments
- Special Voices Parent/Carer Forum

Factors which made the services easier to access included:

- 'Simple' booking system
- Clear information and guidance provided by services
- Receiving a quick response to enquiries about booking appointments, treatment, or diagnosis

### Normal to Access

Some who selected 'Normal' described a mixed review of services (some easy to access, some difficult), and some stated that the services were "as expected".

Services which were described as 'Normal' to access and get help from:

- Berkshire Vision
- Kumar Medical Centre
- Royal Berkshire Hospital (Eye Unit)
- Social Care Services (normal access to the service but the access is described as "poor")

### Difficult to Access

Services which were described as 'Difficult' to access and get help from:

- Social Care Services (communication)
- Farnham Road Practice
- Cippenham Surgery
- Dental Services (no specific locations named)

Factors which made the services more difficult to access:

- Backlog/waiting lists of patients for examinations and treatments
- Appointments, surgeries, and check-ups cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic
- Lack of face-to-face appointments; replaced with technology or telephone in various services
- Difficulty contacting the services and booking appointments
  - Poor customer service received when able to speak to staff member
  - Long waiting times when contacting via telephone; calls are sometimes cut off whilst waiting

## What Matters Most?

### Positive Experiences from Slough Residents

#### Summary

We heard **115** positive experiences of using health and social care services

COVID-19 services (vaccinations and testing), and other vaccination services, were mentioned most with a combined total of 25 people commending the services: specifically at Salt Hill Park, Langley Health Centre, and Wexham Park Hospital.

Some responses stated the factors which contributed to their positive experience but omitted the name of the service provider. Of the responses which did mention the service provider, Wexham Park Hospital and Salt Hill Park appeared most frequently (*9 responses each*), followed by Langley Health Centre (*4 mentions*).

People valued health and social care services which had:

- Efficient and well organised service
- Professional, helpful, and friendly staff/volunteers
- Easy to book appointments
- Short waiting times upon arrival
- Good and effective communication
- Safety measures in place for COVID-19

#### GP Services

20 positive experiences concerned GP services; some service providers were not mentioned by name. The GP Services mentioned in response to this question were:

- Langley Health Centre (*3 mentions*)
- Chapel Medical Centre (*2 mentions*)
- Manor Park Medical Centre
- The Avenue Medical Centre

Positive feedback was given to surgeries which had a simple method of booking an appointment, which was relatively soon, whether that was a phone, online or face-to-face consultations. Doctors, nurses, and administrative staff were commended for being helpful, kind and offering suitable advice when required. Some specific experiences detailed how patients felt that staff had gone above and beyond for them; by offering alternative access methods and by addressing more than one result or symptom in a single appointment (removing the need to booking multiple appointments).

“Chapel Medical Centre’s online consult has been excellent, much faster and more efficient than the usual booking. I have been able to still have blood tests in the pandemic and my family have had face to face GP appointments when required.”

“...There was good communication and follow up check-ups were also offered. In addition, appropriate medication was prescribed.”



## What Matters Most?

### Dental Services

There were 11 positive experiences about Dental Services in, and around, Slough. Around half of these did not specify the location of their dental appointment. However, these experiences show that people value feeling safe and comfortable during the appointments (COVID-19 related, or apprehensions about dental visits), good customer service from staff members, and receiving prompt treatment/referrals. The Dental Services mentioned by name were:

- Dentalcare Langley
- Maidenhead Orthodontist
- Village Dental Care
- Moonlight Dental Surgery

### Parent and Carers' Positive Experiences

Another common finding within the responses was that some were from parents and carers. As a result, this section highlights experiences from these participants. There were 16 participants who described themselves as a parent and/or carer. From these 16 participants, 19 positive experiences with health and social care services were shared, 9 of which specified the service type.

#### *GP Services - Langley Health Centre*

Four positive comments commended Langley Health Centre for meeting individual accessibility needs. This included speaking to patients on the phone whilst looking at them through a window to ensure comfort with COVID-19 concerns) and providing additional chairs and support whilst receiving COVID-19 vaccinations.

#### *Wexham Park Hospital*

Two services were commended at Wexham Park Hospital: Phlebotomy department and A&E department. This was due to the care and compassion shown by staff members working in these departments. The staff were able to put the children and young adults at ease and make them feel more comfortable.

#### *Special Voices*

Special Voices is a group of parents and/or carers of children and young people with additional needs. This was described as a large support for parents/carers in the past year and remained accessible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Wexham A&E are fantastic also the children’s ward at Wexham park. The staff are absolutely incredible.”

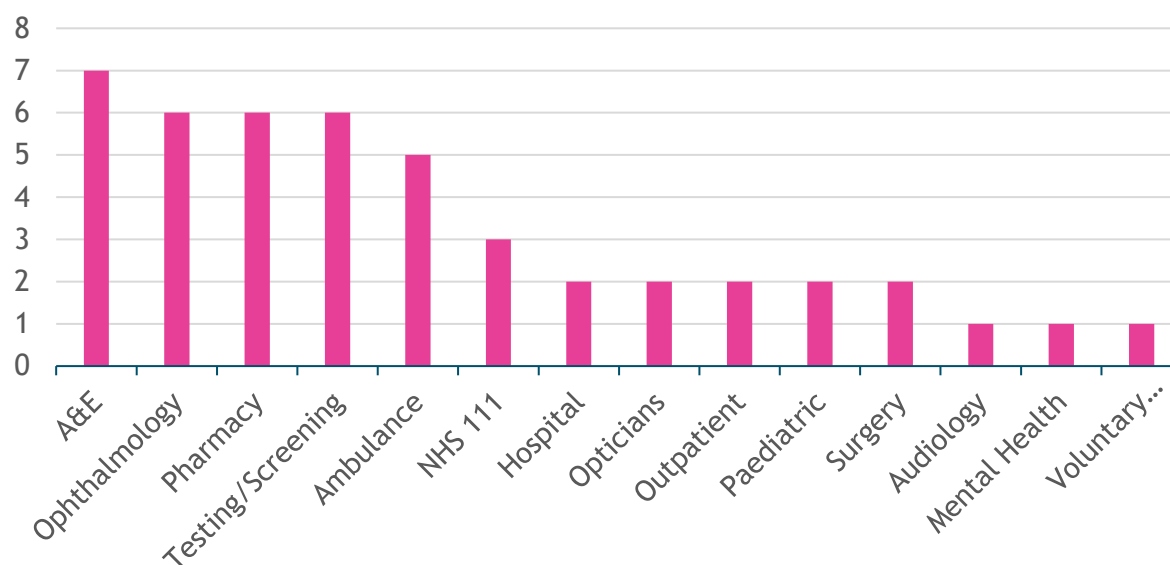
“Doctor at Langley Health Centre went out of his way to access our son by hanging out of a window and talking to us on the phone, so we all stayed safe.”

“Special Voices has been very accessible during the last year with weekly zoom meetings. This has enhanced my well-being seeing and speaking with others whilst on lockdown.”

## What Matters Most?

### Other Services

There were other positive experiences which mentioned other health and social care services, but these were not mentioned as frequently as the above services. The additional services which were positively mentioned have been included in the graph below.



## Negative Experiences from Slough Residents

### Summary

We heard **98** negative experiences of using health and social care services

Some comments were made by those who felt they had received poor care. 77 of the negative experiences shared with us did not specify the exact service location but did provide details about what made the experience poor. Factors which contributed to poor experiences with health and social care services:

- Difficulties contacting and accessing services
- Waiting times for appointments
- Negative/poor staff attitudes
- Lack of follow up care
- Heavy reliance on technology
- Facilities (costly parking and cold rooms)
- Poor communication (lack of information and presence of language barriers)

### GP Services

44 of the negative experiences concerned GP Services, 33 of these omitted the service provider's name. However, from these 31 responses we can see that people's experiences were perceived as poor if there is difficulty to contact the GP Service (on hold for a long time) and to see a doctor (either due to reception staff acting as "barriers", or long waiting lists), and a lack of communication or follow up.

## What Matters Most?

There were several comments about difficulties booking GP appointments. This included inappropriate times to call the service (due to prior commitments), or relying on technology (difficulties using technology, and unreliable system). Some residents prefer utilising telephone/video appointments, and some prefer face-to-face appointments; this seems to depend on personal situations.

The GP Services receiving negative feedback in response to this question were:

- Farnham Road Practice (6 mentions)
- Cippenham Surgery
- Herschel Medical Centre
- Manor Park Medical Centre
- The Bharani Medical Centre (Lansdowne Avenue)
- The Orchard Surgery

“When calling GP ... practice it take good 30-60mins for the calls to be answered.”

“Farnham road doctors’ surgery are very difficult to get hold of on the phone you can be on hold in a queue for over an hour and when you get to the Start of the queue it can cut off., or just ring for over 30 minutes until someone answers it.”

“Waiting times to get an appointment. The fact you have to call up as many times as 100 times just to see if there are appointments available and if there is none, you go through the same process over again.”

## Dental Services

Of the 6 negative experiences with Dental Services, the common themes which emerged were: varying appointment fees at different practices, unable to access or contact the service, and delayed waiting times for referrals or follow up appointments. No specific service providers were mentioned in the responses, but there were mentions of both dentists and orthodontists.

## Pharmacy Services

There were 6 negative mentions of Pharmacy Services which concerned not having the correct medication in stock, not being accessible during the day, and staff members communicating poorly and not checking if prescriptions are suitable. Pharmacies receiving negative feedback included:

- Moonlight Pharmacy
- Pyramid Pharmacy
- Wexham Road Pharmacy

## Parents and Carers’ Negative Experiences

Due to several participants being parents and/or carers, this section highlights negative experiences from their viewpoint. 18 negative experiences were shared from parents/carers, and 12 of which specified the service type.

## What Matters Most?

### *Mental Health Services*

The main factor which made experiences with Mental Health services negative was difficulties getting an appointment due to long waiting lists. From the response received, children's mental health assessments have waiting lists from 23 months to over 3 years. There are suggestions from all participants, not just from parent/carer participants, focused on improving these waiting lists as delays can cause conditions to worsen. Early diagnosis allows schools to better prepare and support the children's additional needs.

“The main thing is the atrocious waiting list for children’s mental health. I am waiting for my daughter to be assessed for autism and been told there is a 23-month waiting list. Disgusting!”

### *GP Services*

Negative experiences with GP Services for parents and/or carers involved difficulties accessing the service to book appointments or to get advice. These difficulties arise from long delays when trying to telephone the GP surgeries, from difficulties navigating online systems, and GPs having incorrect contact details for patients and their parents/carers.

Another issue described was delays in prescriptions for children and young adults being signed off by GP doctors and sent to pharmacies. There were also reports of GP surgeries not knowing about the Learning Disability Register, or no longer offering annual check-ups for those on the register.

“Farnham Road surgery the waiting time to get through to speak to a receptionist is very frustrating It often takes up to an hour & when you are phoning for your child with a disability this is time consuming & very hard to stay on a phone for this length of time while trying to see to my child's needs.”

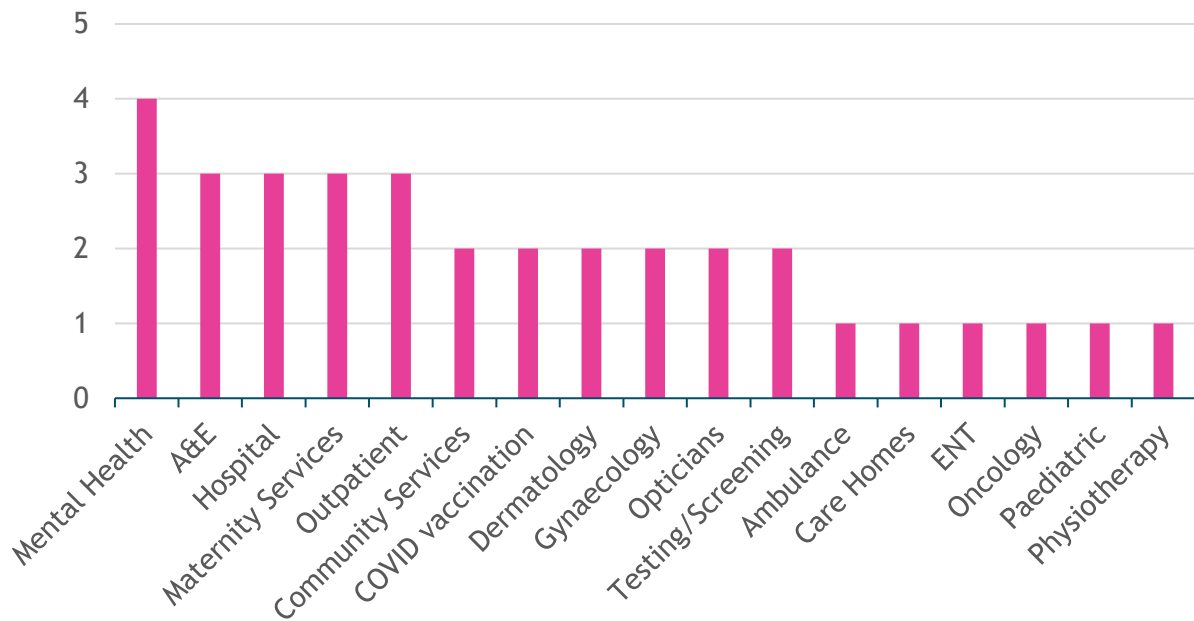
### *Social Care and Day Services*

Poor experiences with Social Care Services concerned being unable to contact the service to address issues with carer's and finding it difficult having multiple people deal with one case. This leads to the service user explaining the situation several times; there is a suggestion of a single person assigned to each case. There have also been difficulties accessing Day Services during the COVID-19 pandemic, despite arrangements prior to any lockdowns occurring.

### *Other Services*

There were other negative experiences which mentioned other health and social care services, but these were not mentioned as frequently as the above services. The additional services which were negatively mentioned have been included in the graph on the following page.

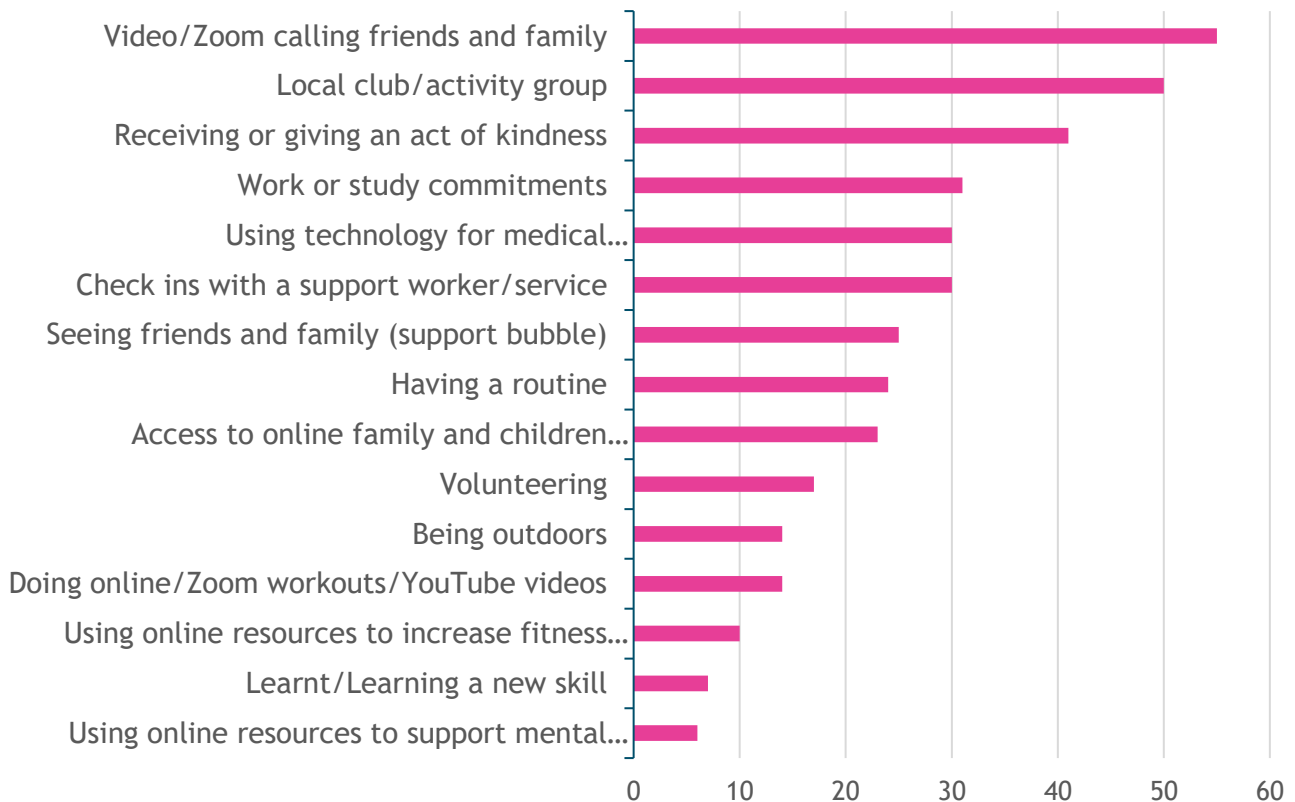
## What Matters Most?



## Health and Wellbeing

### Looking Back

We asked participants what they felt the biggest support to their health and wellbeing was during the past 12 months.

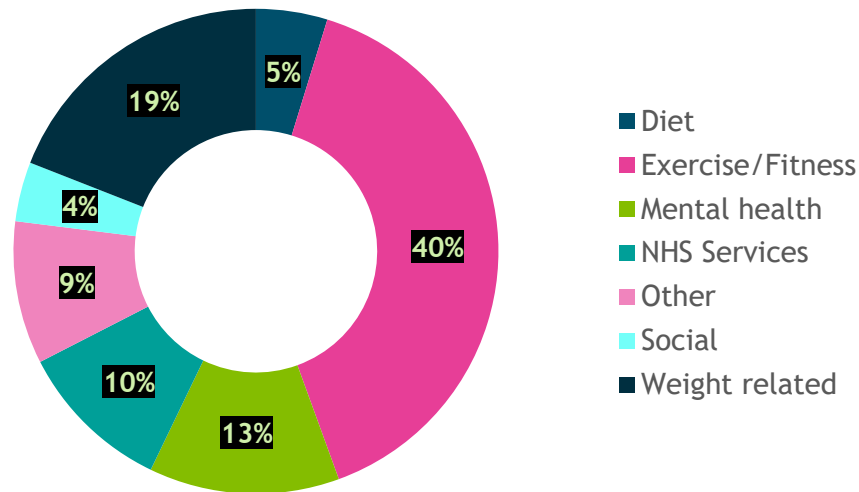


'Other' answers included: support from family and friends, pets, Special Voices support group on Zoom and community work with Ahmadiyya Muslim Association.

## What Matters Most?

### Looking Forward

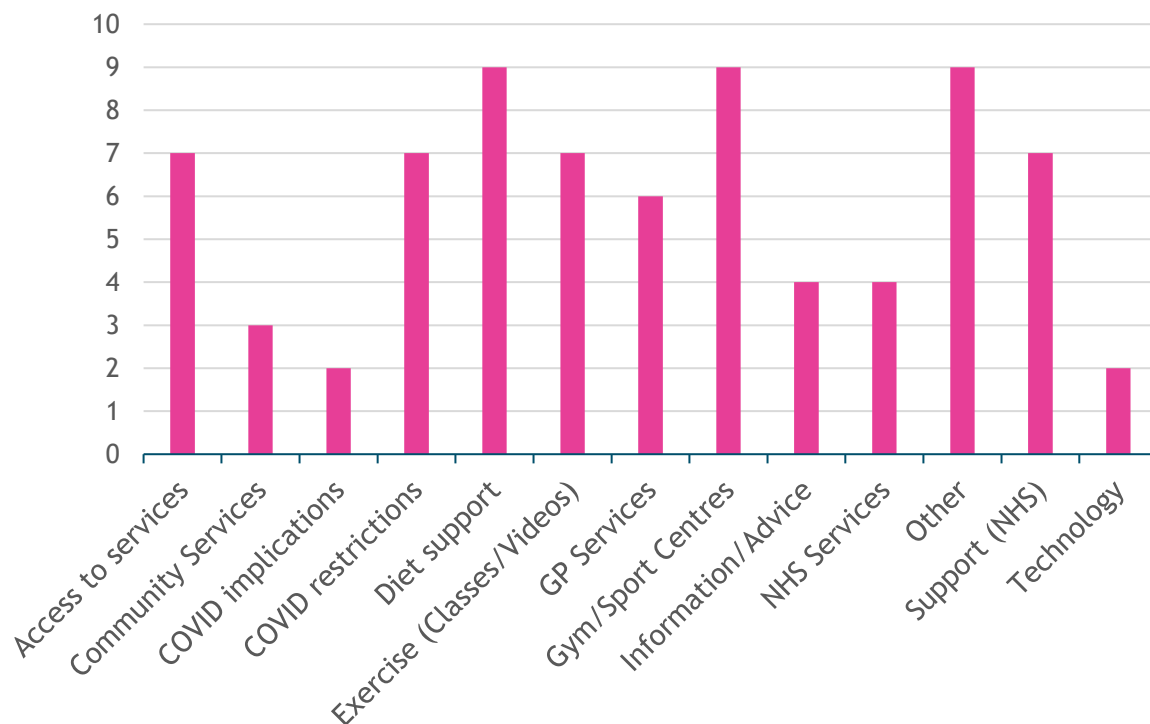
We then asked participants what health and wellbeing goals they have for the next 12 months.



‘Other’ answers included: improve sleep patterns, increase mobility, stop smoking, improve work/life balance, meet specific needs of family members, find help with bereavement grief, and some answered that they have no goals.

‘NHS Services’ answers included: managing existing conditions with their required service provider, catching up with postponed treatments and assessments, and getting timely help and advice from specific services (GP Services and Pharmacy).

To achieve these health and wellbeing goals, participants asked for the following help and support shown in the graph below. Some responded that they were unsure of what help or support they would need, and some stated that they did not require any help or support.



## What Matters Most?

'Other' answers included: school and workplaces being able to offer a better work/life balance, access to assessments for children educational needs, and better fitness sources for those without technology such as fitness watches. There was a specific example of boards put up in public spaces stating how many steps have been completed, or how many calories have been burnt, so far.

'NHS Services' answers excluded GP services, as this was mentioned enough to warrant its own category. The services mentioned were mental health, pain management, dietitian, and physiotherapy.

'Support (NHS)' answers did not specify an NHS Service, just that continued support and understanding from the NHS would be appreciated to help achieve individual goals. Also further support from NHS in travelling to medical appointments.

"More support put in for the younger generations about their future and more opportunities. If opportunities are already present- then to make them more heard about!"

"Get my daughter assessed as I am close to having a break down due to the pressure this has added on the family"

"Make the GP experience better - easier to get an appointment and a better service from the Dr when you actually get one."

"Support with transport to appointments and the goodwill of family and friends to provide this."

## What Matters Most?

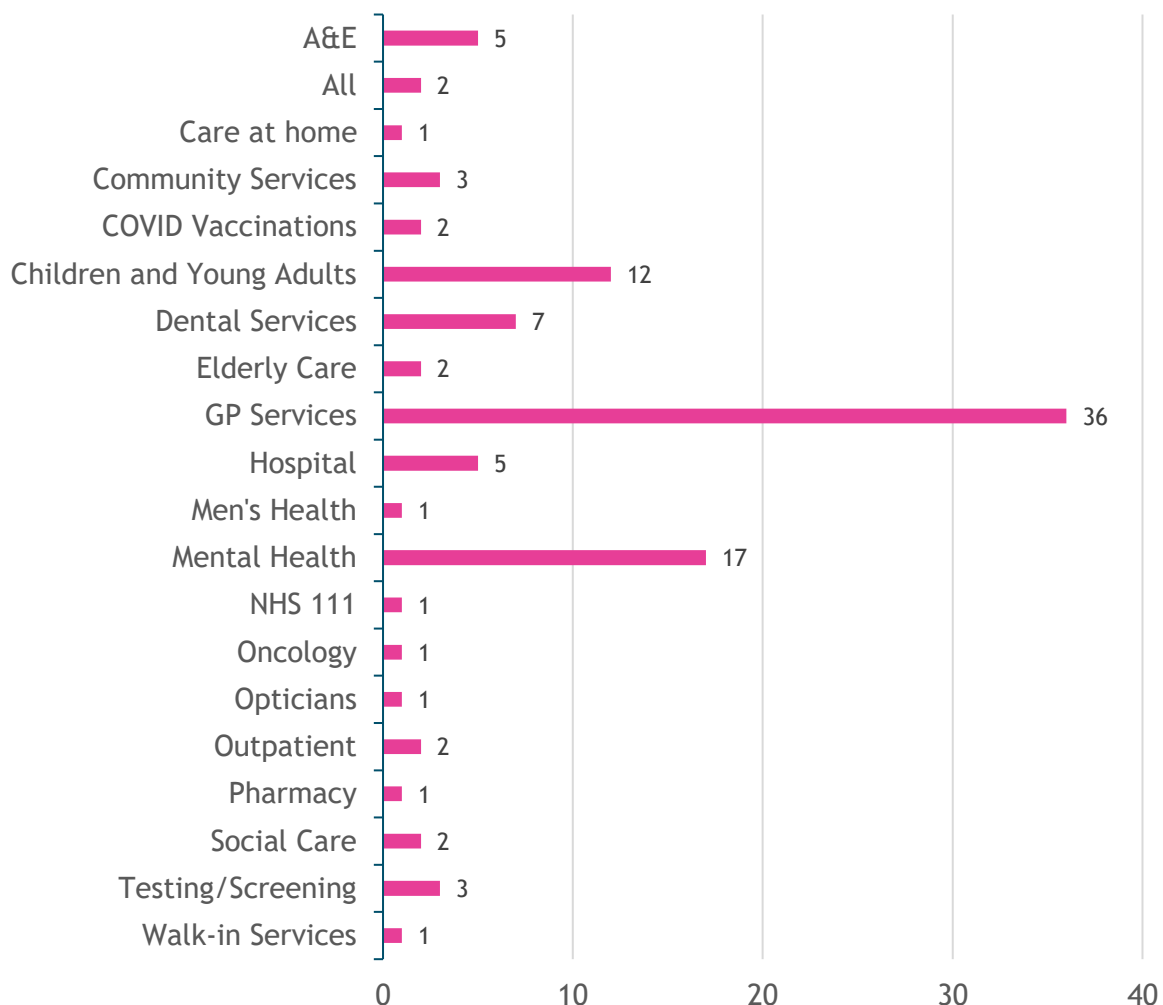
### Healthwatch Priorities

#### Services

We asked participants what they think Healthwatch Slough’s priority should be for the next 12 months; the graph below shows the results. The services with the most mentions were:

1. GP Services
2. Mental Health Services
3. Children and Young Adult Services
4. Dental Services

Services for Healthwatch Slough to prioritise



“Doctor’s surgeries definitely. This is an ongoing problem and will not be rectified in one year. There are too many obstacles in place to get an appointment and staff are unhelpful and lack empathy. Covid has just made this worse”

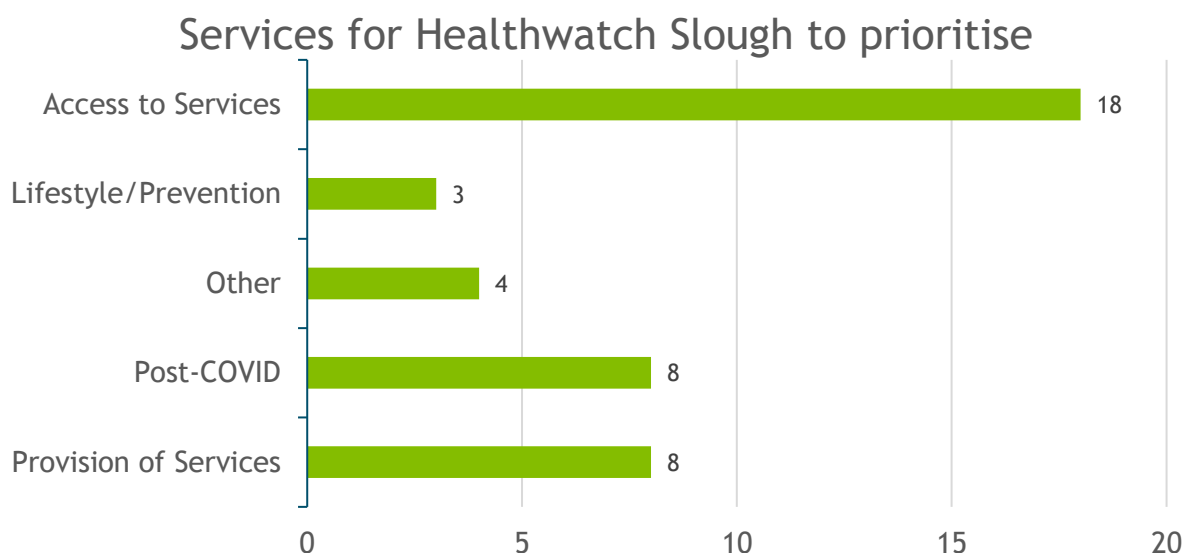
“Definitely need more support with children’s mental health in order to cut the waiting list down and keep it low”



## What Matters Most?

### Themes

Residents also asked Healthwatch Slough to focus on certain themes within health and social care services. These are shown on the graph below.



The 'Other' responses included face-to-face bereavement support and better NHS apps which could answer patients' health questions. The 'Lifestyle/Prevention' theme focused on promoting healthier diets, going outdoors and being more active. It was suggested to concentrate on the prevention of diseases and illnesses to alleviate pressure on the NHS to treat the conditions or its symptoms.

### Access to Services

The most common theme suggested for Healthwatch Slough to focus on is improving patients' access to health and social care services, specifically Mental Health Services, GP Services, Day Care Services (for elderly), and Dental Services. There were a few factors surrounding accessing services which appeared more frequently:

- Increase number of local services to reduce travel times
- Extended operating for services such as GP Services
- More online/video consultation options, including sending doctors information and pictures prior to appointments

There was an agreement amongst participants that contacting services, especially GP Services, needs to be improved. This was due to waiting lists to book appointments and the time it takes services to answer the phone. This was also noted as an improvement for NHS 111. Responses suggested reopening Walk-In Centres to relieve pressure on GP Services and make more appointments available and reduce waiting times.

### Post-COVID

Responses regarding health and social care services following the COVID-19 pandemic included:

- Catching up on the backlog of treatments which were cancelled
- Offer supporting those with long-covid, especially residents unable to return to work as a result
- Offer Mental Health support
- Continuing with the COVID-19 vaccine programme

## What Matters Most?

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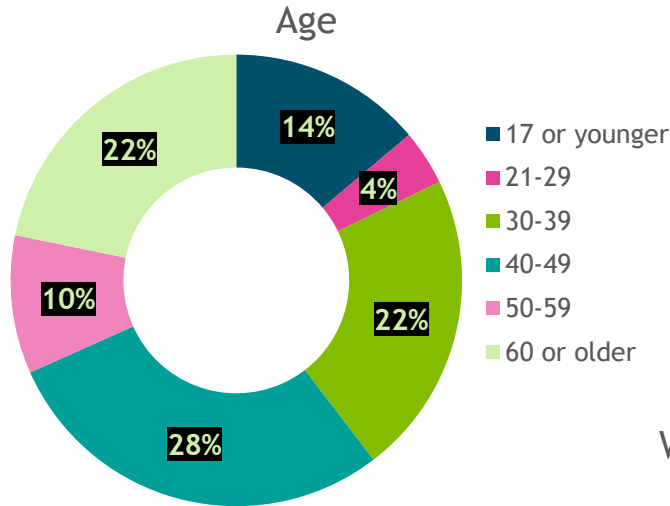
### *Provision of Services*

This theme reemphasised the factors valued by patients within their health and social care services:

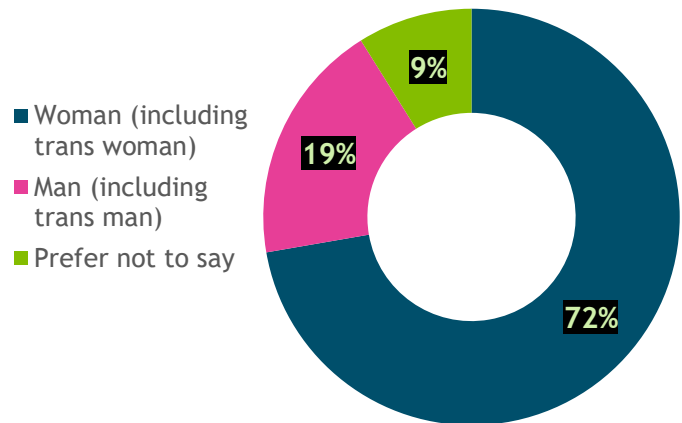
- Clear communication and information
  - Between different health and social care services when concerning a patient referral
  - Information about reasons for delays or difficulties to book appointments
- Provide a more personal and caring service to patients
- Improved discharge process, including hospital transfer if appropriate
- Better follow up care after appointments, procedures, and treatments
- Staff to use more professional and appropriate terminology/phraseology

## What Matters Most?

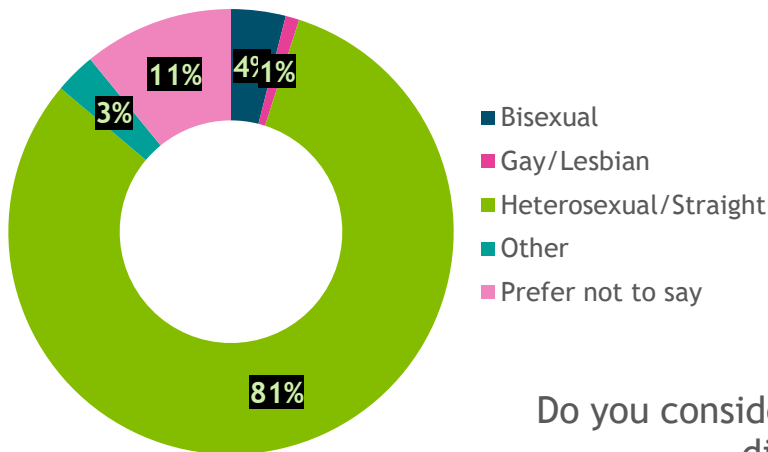
### Survey Demographics



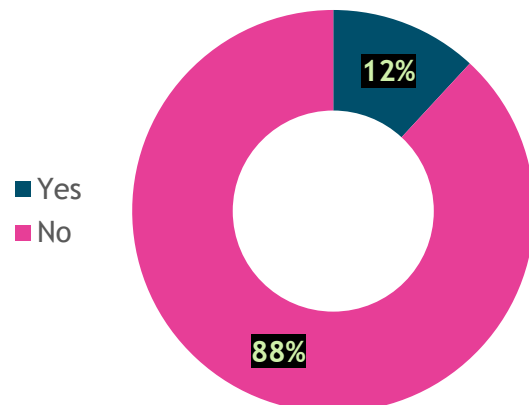
### Which gender do you identify as?



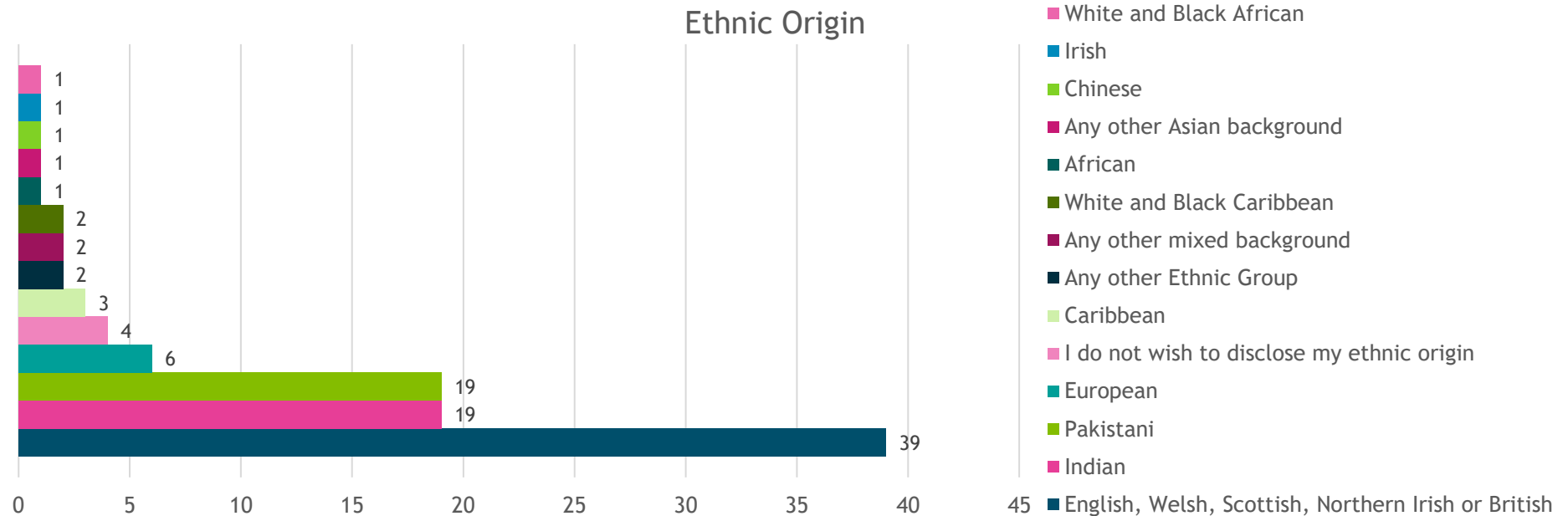
### Sexual Orientation



### Do you consider yourself to have a disability?



## What Matters Most?



Additional answer options were given for all six demographic questions, as well as an ‘Other’ option. Only the options which were selected by participants were included in the graphs above. The ethnic diversity from this campaign is an adequate reflection of Slough’s population (as stated by ONS Census, 2011).

### Thank you

Healthwatch Slough would like to thank all 101 participants who took the time to complete the survey and tell us about their experiences. A big thank you to Slough Borough Council, our Healthwatch volunteers, and our partner organisations who helped promote our survey.

We would also like to thank:

- One Slough COVID-19 Response Group for their help with promoting the survey
- Mandy Gunn at the Special Voices Parent and Carer Forum for allowing Healthwatch to join the sessions and promote the campaign
- Rob Deeks at Aik Saath for assisting Healthwatch in presenting this campaign to young people and gaining responses

## What Matters Most?

### Talk to us

If you have questions about the content of this report, please either call 0300 012 0184 or email [chaia.dechen@healthwatchslough.co.uk](mailto:chaia.dechen@healthwatchslough.co.uk).

#### How will this report be used?

This report summarises 101 responses from the What Matters Most survey to highlight common themes, findings, and opinions. This provides the Healthwatch organisations across East Berkshire with a better foundation of information about their local communities, including what their focus should be in the future.

The report will be shared with the relevant service providers, and other external stakeholders, to support local health and social care services in providing improved care to its users. Healthwatch will also conduct further analyses of the data

## ADVICE AND INFORMATION

We are here to help, advise, give information, and listen to your experiences

Healthwatch are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to find out what matters to people and to help make sure their views are heard.

We also help people find the information they need about health and social care services or support in East Berkshire.

Here to help you on the next step of your health and social care journey.

We have the power to make sure that the government and those in charge of services hear people's voices. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them.



Contact Us: 0300 012 0184



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