healthwatch Cheshire West

Accessibility of Health and Social Care Services in Neston

August 2019

healthwatch Cheshire West

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Introduction

Healthwatch Cheshire, consisting of Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West, is an independent consumer champion for health and care across Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester, forming part of the national network of local Healthwatch across England. Our role is to make sure that those who run health and care services understand and act on what really matters to local people.

Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West undertake continuous engagement activities with the public to hear about concerns and compliments regarding health and care services. The information we gather is then analysed so that we can identify and act upon trends and common themes by presenting our findings to decision makers in order to improve the services people use.

What we did

Why did we do this project?

The market town of Neston and the inclusive postcode area of CH64 lies within the local authority boundary for Cheshire West and Chester. West Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group commission the three GP practices that cover this area. These are:

- Neston Surgery, Mellock Lane, Neston
- Neston Medical Centre, Liverpool Road, Neston
- Willaston Surgery

Through general engagement carried out by Healthwatch Cheshire West, a number of concerns had been raised about the accessibility of some health and social care services for those residing within the CH64 postcode. Of particular concern were issues relating to location and access of community-based services following hospital discharge, and the choice of location for NHS and Social Care Services. It was decided to conduct some further insights by carrying out a survey with local people to gain their views about the accessibility of their local services.

What did we want to learn?

- To identify health and social care services accessed by local people residing in the CH64 area within a 12 month period.
- To establish location of services used and how they had been accessed (e.g. own car, local transport).
- To establish how easy these services were to access and identify any cross-boundary issues or other location issues.
- To identify any local community support being accessed.

What did we do?

In order to reach a broad spectrum of local people, we designed both a paper survey and a survey to be distributed online, via email and social media. We worked closely

with local organisations in the Neston area to ensure that we were linking in with well attended groups but also making sure that we were reaching people who may not always engage with community groups (by attending local places such as the Friday market and the library). The engagement took place over a number of months from January to March 2019, and in summary we achieved the following:

1. Survey designed, developed and circulated via partners, internet and social media.

2. Specific engagement activity in and around the town of Neston. Engagement centred around the following locations where local people were invited to complete our survey:
    - Neston Friday Market – stand – 2 engagement days.
    - Neston Library – stand - 2 engagement days.
    - Neston Community & Youth Centre - survey and drop box on reception and attendance at:
        - The Neston Angels event (supporting those who are socially isolated in the community).
        - Alzheimer's Support Group.
        - Surveys circulated to the local carers group.
    - Neston Costa Coffee – stand.
    - Neston Methodist Church (number of visits).
    - Welcome Café (Fridays) – general engagement.
    - Teapot Café (Wednesdays) – general engagement.
    - Neston Let's Play Toddler Groups – general engagement.
    - Neston Recreation Centre – stand.

We received over 120 responses to our survey, via paper and online. A copy of the survey is attached in the appendices (Appendix 1)

Survey Type	Number
Paper surveys	93
Online surveys (via email and social media)	30
Total	**123**

Stakeholders and Partners

In order to gain input from partners and responding to some concerns already raised by the community, we met with a number of stakeholders and partners to share with

them our insight plans and the methodology that we planned to use. These were members of the Public Health Team, a Local Councillor and the Centre Manager for Neston Community Youth Centre.

Summary of Findings

- **Arrowe Park was the most commonly accessed service** across all respondents (40%), followed by the Countess of Chester Hospital (12%) and Clatterbridge Hospital (9.5%) respectively.
- When asked why they accessed the service mentioned in a particular location **just over a quarter of all respondents said they were not offered a choice**, with a further 22% saying they were offered a choice, and 17% because it was the easiest for them to access.
- **75% of respondents said that yes, the service was easy for them to access**. However, when broken down according to method of transport this shows that of these respondents **three-quarters had driven themselves** or had a friend or relative take them.
- Of all the respondents to the survey across all services accessed**, only 4% used local transport (bus or train),** 3% a local taxi service and a further 7% used a patient or community transport service.
- Broadly, one of the most common concerns was not being able to have a **choice as to where the service was accessed**, even if the service was available in another location. Typically, respondents felt that patient choice was not considered and a service was allocated without their involvement.
- A number of respondents reported that when receiving in-hospital services on the Wirral the community discharge offered was less than satisfactory due to living within a CWAC postcode, **resulting in a cross-boundary concern.**
- **A lack of public transport** issues was commonly mentioned in particular in relation to accessing the Countess of Chester Hospital. Reinforcing this was a number of respondents commentating that services are only easy to access if you have a car.
- Almost half of all respondents felt that they had **a joined-up approach to their treatment**, with just over a quarter only partially agreeing with this, and a further quarter stating that they did not feel that there was a joined-up approach.

General Survey Feedback

Which GP Surgery are you registered with?

Of those who responded to the survey, the split according to GP surgery registered with is as follows:

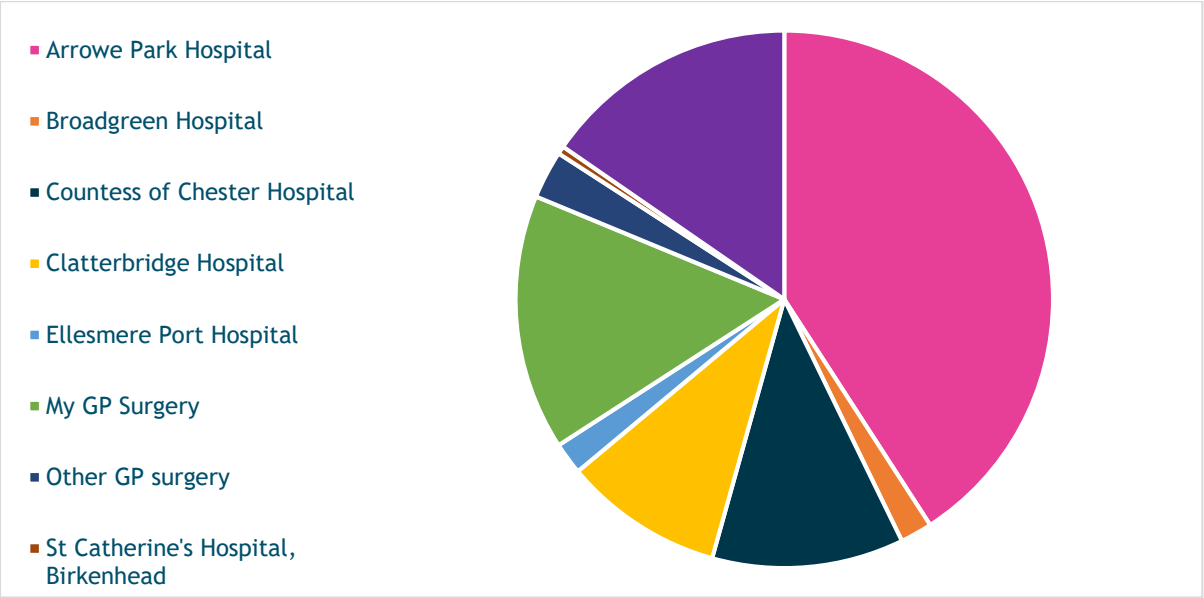
- 64 were registered with Neston Surgery (Mellock Lane).
- 50 with Neston Medical Centre (Liverpool Road).
- 8 registered at Willaston Surgery.

1. Which health and/or social care services have you accessed in the last 12 months and where were they located?

We asked survey respondents to tell us about the services they had accessed in the last 12 months and where they were located. Although 123 people responded to the survey, in many cases more than 1 service had been accessed, resulting in 201 responses to this question.

Respondents were provided with a tick box list of locations, including an open field for other locations not listed. **Chart 1** provides an overview of the location of services accessed, with the largest percentage (40%) accessing services at Arrowe Park, followed by the Countess of Chester Hospital (12%) and Clatterbridge Hospital (9.5%). Respondents were also given the option of their own GP Surgery (16%), *though this excludes a general GP appointment*. See Table 1 for a breakdown of services accessed by location.

Chart 1: Summary of location of Health Services accessed



Other locations mentioned were: One To One Midwifery Service, Wrexham Maelor. Private Health Care providers, The Royal Liverpool Hospital, RJAH Orthopaedic Hospital (Gobowen), Walton Hospital and Community based health services at Parklands Children's Centre and Neston Community Centre.

Table 1: Total number of services visited by location (excluding regular GP appointment)

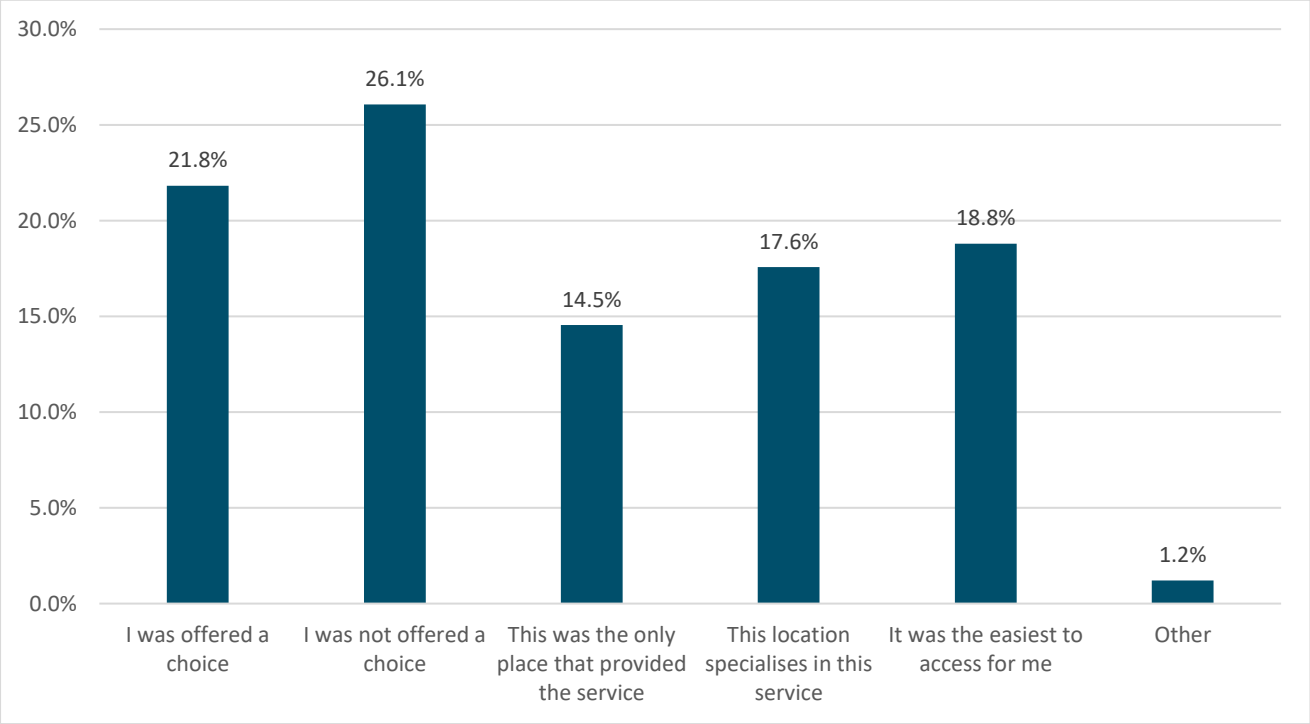
	Arrowe Park Hospital	Broadgreen Hospital	Countess of Chester Hospital	Clatterbridge Hospital	Ellesmere Port Hospital	My GP Surgery	Other GP surgery	St Catherine's Hospital, Birkenhead	Other location *	Total
Cardiology Services	9	4	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	**19**
A&E	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**19**
Physiotherapy Services	2	0	3	3	3	4	2	0	1	**18**
Maternity Services (Antenatal Care)	1	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	3	**17**
Maternity Services (Birth)	13	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	**16**
Podiatry Services	0	0	1	0	0	5	3	0	6	**15**
Orthopaedic Services	7	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	2	**13**
Cancer Care Services	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	**12**
Ophthalmology Services	5	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	1	**12**
Diabetic Services	2	0	2	1	0	4	0	0	1	**10**
Dental Services	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	**9**
ENT Services	5	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	**8**
Neurology Services	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	**7**
Dermatology	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	**5**
Mental Health Services	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	**5**
Sexual Health Services	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	**5**
Out of hours	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Phlebotomy	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Paediatric Services	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Continence Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	**2**
Total	80 (40%)	4 (2%)	24 (12%)	19 (9.5%)	4 (2%)	32 (16%)	6 (3%)	1 (0.5%)	31 (15%)	**201**

2. Why did you access the service in this location?

Chart 2 shows that just over a quarter of respondents to this question stated that they were not offered a choice over the location of the service and a further 14% stated that they accessed the service at this location because 'this was the only place that provided the service'.

However, a further 22% stated that they were offered a choice in location and 17% because 'it was the easiest to access for me'.

Chart 2: Why did you access the service in this location?



We asked respondents to state why they accessed their specific service in this location. Of those who responded to this question, Maternity Services (birth) had the largest percentage stating because they were offered a choice, see **Table 2**. A third or more of respondents to the following services; Antenatal Care, Diabetic Services, Mental Health Services and Sexual Health services, did so stating it was 'the easiest to access for me' indicating there was an element of choice in the decision.

Half of all respondents who attended ENT and Neurology Services said they were not offered a choice (this was highest at 62.5% for A&E, though this is less significant due to the nature of the service).

Half of all of those accessing podiatry services attended in a specific location because they felt that this was the only place that provided the service.

Over half of all those accessing Cancer Services accessed them in a specific location because the location specialised in the service.

Table 2: Why did you access the service in this location? (by department)

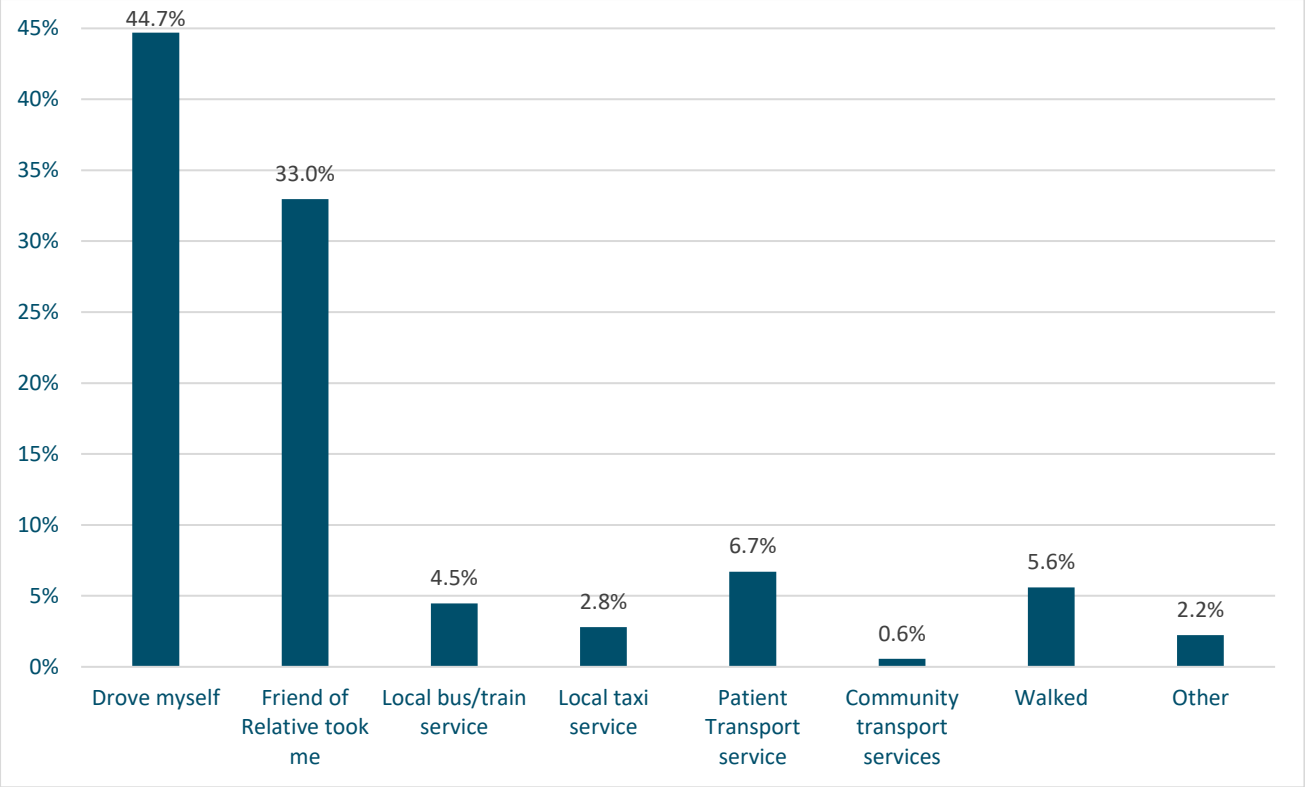
	I was offered a choice	I was not offered a choice	This was the only place that provided the service	This location specialises in this service	It was the easiest to access for me	Other	Total
Cardiology Services	1	1	5	7	3	0	17
A&E	0	10	1	1	4	0	16
Physiotherapy Services	2	6	1	3	2	0	14
Maternity Services (Antenatal Care)	7	3	0	1	6	0	17
Maternity Services (Birth)	13	1	1	0	1	0	16
Podiatry Services	1	1	7	0	4	1	14
Orthopaedic Services	1	5	1	1	3	0	11
Cancer Care Services	0	1	4	6	0	0	11
Ophthalmology Services	4	4	1	1	1	0	11
Diabetic Services	3	3	0	1	3	0	10
Dental Services	0	1	0	2	0	1	4
ENT Services	1	3	0	1	1	0	6
Neurology Services	0	3	1	2	0	0	6
Dermatology	2	3	0	0	0	0	5
Mental Health Services	1	0	0	1	1	0	3
Sexual Health Services	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
Out of Hours Services	0	2	0	1	0	0	3
Phlebotomy	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
Paediatric Services	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
Continence Services	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total (%)	**39 (22%)**	**49 (28%)**	**24 (14%)**	**31 (18%)**	**30 (17%)**	**2 (1%)**	**175**

3. How did you get there?

It was useful to establish how people accessed the services in the locations specialised, in order to determine how easy this was, and by what means of transport.

Chart 3 shows that almost half of all respondents to this question stated that they drove themselves to the locations and a further 33% relied on a friend or family member to take them. Only a small percentage used local transport (4%).

Chart 3: How did you get to the service specified?



We looked at how people got to the individual services **(Table 3)**. 12 of the services responded to had at least half of all their respondents accessing their service by driving themselves. ENT, Ophthalmology, Neurology Services, Cancer Care Services and Maternity (Birth) services had the highest number relying on a friend or relative to take them (this could be due to the nature of the treatment leading to a reliance on being driven).

Table 3: How did you get to the service, specified by department?

	Drove myself	Friend of Relative took me	Local bus/train	Local taxi service	Patient Transport	Community transport	Walked	Other	Total
Cardiology Services	10	6	1	1	1	0	1	0	20
A&E	2	7	0	1	9	0	0	0	19
Physiotherapy Services	8	4	1	0	1	0	1	0	15
Maternity Services (Antenatal Care)	11	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	15
Maternity Service (Birth)	5	9	0	0	0	0	0	1	15
Podiatry Services	6	4	1	0	0	0	2	0	13
Orthopaedic Services	5	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	11
Cancer Care Services	4	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	10
Ophthalmology Services	3	8	0	0	0	0	0	1	12
Diabetic Services	6	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	10
Dental Services	6	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	9
ENT Services	2	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	8
Neurology Services	0	5	0	1	0	1	0	0	7
Dermatology Services	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
Mental Health Services	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
Sexual Health Services	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
Out of Hours Service	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Phlebotomy	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Paediatric Services	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Continence Services	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	85 (45%)	**62 (33%)**	**8 (4%)**	**6 (3%)**	**12 (6%)**	**2 (1%)**	**10 (6%)**	**4 (2%)**	**189**

How easy was the service to get to?

Respondents were asked to rate how easy accessing the service was, by answering 'Yes', 'No', or 'Somewhat'. Significantly, just under three-quarters said that yes, the service was easy to get to. However, this could well be related to the fact that almost half of respondents were able to drive themselves to appointments.

Was the service easy to get to?	Drove myself	Friend of Relative took me	Local bus/train service	Local taxi service	Patient Transport service	Community transport services	Walked	Other	Total
Yes	52	35	4	0	11	0	7	3	112
No	4	4	0	2	1	1	0	1	13
Somewhat	9	9	3	4	0	0	1	0	26
Total	65	48	7	6	12	1	8	4	151

4. Do you have any other comments about service accessibility?

This question gave respondents an opportunity to expand on the quantitative answers already provided. It is worth noting that although this question was designed to provide more information on the physical accessibility of the service, this question was also interpreted as how accessible services were in terms of obtaining appointments.

In order to provide an overview, this additional qualitative information was analysed by grouping responses into themes. The following themes were identified:

Theme	Number of comments
Choice of service – general and cross-boundary	17
Getting an appointment	11
Parking	11
General feedback	11
Accessibility	10

Choice of service location

Broadly, one of the most common concerns was not being able to have a say in where the service was accessed, even if there were a number of locations where the service was available. Typically, respondents felt that patient choice was not considered and a service was allocated without their involvement.

There is also some crossover with comments relating to location, and the impact of a lack of local transport. Where comments relate to both, this has been indicated next to the comment by the following **(A):**

- *"I was not given the choice to have any physiotherapy at Neston clinic and I am still waiting for my appointment to come through at Arrowe Park."*
- *"For a routine mammogram I was again not given a choice and had to go to Clatterbridge - why was I not given the choice to go to St Cath's?"*
- *"For years I had treatment for a blood disorder relating to diabetes at Clatterbridge but I was not offered a choice. I had too much iron in my blood so they should have been removing blood but they didn't, so I had awful blisters. Since I complained and was moved to Arrowe they regularly removed my blood and I now have no blisters. I should have been offered a choice."*
- *"I was not offered antenatal midwifery at my GP but was referred to Parklands Children's Centre, which was ok because I can drive."* **(A)**
- *"There was a delay in being treated by Cardiology as the GP had specified a specialist at Broadgreen - but he had a 6-8 month waiting list."*
- *"I never realised that there was a choice available to me" [maternity services]*
- *"GP gave me no choice as to where to access ENT and referred me straight to Arrowe Park. The waiting list was too long so I returned to my GP and asked to be referred elsewhere."*
- *"There is a real issue with the lack of podiatry services in Neston and this is a common problem for elderly people. There is no local service in Neston."*
- *"I have had to access lots of services as my son has learning and development issues. It does not feel like the services are joined up and I feel like I have to tell my story over and over again. The transition from paediatrics at Arrowe to Adult services was not good and he lost his support team."*
- *"Would like to be able to get blood tests done at Neston clinic but do not offer a walk-in service (only at Arrowe) and takes far too long to access appointments."* **(A)**
- *"Dressings clinic at Neston surgery are only offered on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings – otherwise I have to travel to Eastham which is too far to go."* ***(A)***

Choice of service – cross-boundary

A number of respondents reported that when receiving in-hospital services on the Wirral the community discharge offered was less than satisfactory due to living within a CWAC postcode, resulting in a cross-boundary concern.

- *"I was diagnosed with a stroke at Arrowe Park. I was initially told that I would be able to access community support including speech therapy (commissioned from the Stroke Association). However due to my postcode I was then refused this and told I had to attend outpatients at The Countess. No speech therapy or community support was offered. I was not offered Clatterbridge even though they offer this service."*
- *"Although my treatment for my ankle injury was carried out at Arrowe Park I was not offered the free 6-week home support offered to Wirral residents as had a CWAC postcode. Had no follow up support at home and very immobile. Was told that this was because I was on the border"*
- *"Unable to access the 'Home Start At Home' support service after the birth of my baby even though I had my baby at Arrowe Park. This is only available if I live on the Wirral."*
- *"I was very disappointed that I couldn't have hydrotherapy physio at Clatterbridge because my GP is in Neston and we are not on the Wirral. However, other services are eligible at Clatterbridge. I paid privately for 6 treatments instead. I prefer to attend Arrowe Park and Clatterbridge as I am familiar with these hospitals. Chester is far more difficult to get to from Neston."* ***(A)***
- *"With my first child I was offered a choice between the Countess and Arrowe Park. With my second child I was not given the option but allocated Arrowe Park. I was told I would have to self-refer if I wanted to attend the Countess of Chester."*
- *"I suffer with continence problems but the nearest clinic is in Great Sutton and there is no bus. There is a continence service at St Cath's which I would be able to get to by bus but this is not offered as a choice to me because of where I live."* **(A)**
- *"There is a diabetes kit now available that avoids regularly having to take finger pricks. This would be available for free if I lived on the Wirral but have to pay £60 per month as a Neston resident."*

Accessibility (transport)

There were a significant number of comments themed around accessibility issues relating to transport. In particular a lack of public transport issues was commonly mentioned and in particular in relation to accessing the Countess of Chester Hospital. A number of respondents also commented that services are only easy to access if you have a car.

- *"Appointments at the Countess [Of Chester] tend to be early in the morning and my bus pass does not kick in until 9.30am. Buses to Chester also only run every hour. I have not been offered any patient transport."*
- *"Without a car or taxi, it would be difficult to access any of the locations listed. Public transport is dreadful for the services out of Neston, though we have no choice."*

- *"Limited times, buses."*
- *"Didn't go directly by bus to Countess from Neston but parked at a friend's in Ellesmere Port & caught bus from there"*
- *"Being dependent upon public transport can be stressful if services become irregular. Though hospital transport is excellent"*
- *"It is fine if you have a car."*
- *"When I visited A&E the NWAA got lost en-route as they do not know the area!"*
- *"Although I was given the option of patient transport, I did not feel I was sick enough to justify taking this up."*
- *"Having to go to Liverpool is expensive - tunnel plus parking. Also driving through an unknown area like Liverpool can be stressful to those with neurological problems."*
- *"Although I was offered a choice the waiting lists at Arrowe Park were far too long. Yet the local transport to Chester is very poor. No bus that could get me there on time."*

Getting an Appointment

A number of respondents viewed how accessible services were in relation to booking an appointment. Where innovations in technology have been mentioned, i.e. being able to book on-line, comments are positive. However, a number of comments reflect frustrations in being able to get through to services, particularly in relation to GP surgeries.

- *"Getting an appointment is really difficult - impossible to get through on the phone in the morning."*
- *"To get an appointment with my GP is very frustrating. Having to sit re-dialling multiple time and by the time you get through all the appointments have gone. Getting to the Countess for neuro appointment the transport was late so she arrived half an hour after appointment."*
- *"Dermatology is slow and takes a fair amount of time to get appointment."*
- *"Unable to gain an appointment at Neston clinic after transfer of care from hospital."*
- *"GP only offers appt once you have a call from the doctor, not a fan of this service as it can delay being seen."*
- *"The fact that you have to wait for the GP to ring you back before getting to see your GP."*
- *"Internet appointment making service available. Telephone consultations possible. Very good service."*
- *"Can book GP appointment over the internet - good accessibility."*
- *"I find on-line GP appointments bookings superior because I can match my diary and the GP's availability. Eye clinic appointments are the devil's own job to arrange - one visit usually has three parts - so why post three letters?"*
- *"Difficult to get appointments at GP surgery."*
- *"Trying to get an appointment with my GP can take a long time."*

- *"I have heard not a single thing back from Physio. Not even an indication as to roughly how long I might have to wait for an appointment."*

Parking

Accessibility of services in terms of being able to park at the location also emerged as a common theme. Comments tend to refer to lack of parking spaces and parking charges.

- *"Not enough parking spaces at Arrowe Park."*
- *"Parking is awful at Countess of Chester hospital. Waiting times long."*
- *"Sometimes it is difficult to park at Arrowe but at least it is free."*
- *"Extremely difficult to park prior to hospital appointment."*
- *"Decided not to choose the Countess when offered a choice as the parking is too expensive."*
- *"Parking is always a problem along with waiting times."*
- *"The parking at Arrowe Park is not good."*
- *"When I was having my cancer treatment at Arrowe Park I was given a car park pass for Haematology so that I had no problems parking - really good."*

General Feedback

A number of respondents left more general feedback in relation to service accessibility, the majority of which were positive, e.g. good service, location and accessibility overall.

- *"Don't mind which GP I see so I can get appointments in a timely way. But I do not like discussing personal issues with receptionist first - find this really horrible. People can hear, you are in front of local people, neighbours."*
- *"Community centre, health clinic and surgery are all very well located."*
- *"Although the phlebotomy service is based at the Countess, I have been provided with a self-monitoring kit so I only have to attend a couple of times a year."*
- *"Cardiology department was excellent."*
- *"GP services sometimes incur 'delay' and on one occasion after 1 month delay, referred to Out of Hours GP unit at the Countess of Chester where an immediate and excellent service was received."*
- *"Operation has been cancelled over the last three months because of my heart problem and has now been rescheduled."*

5. Do you find that services work together to offer a joined-up approach to your treatment?

We also asked respondents to consider how joined up they felt the approach was towards their care. Overall of those who responded to this question the following stated:

Yes	47% (44)
No	25% (23)
Somewhat	28% (26)

Almost half of all respondents felt that they had a joined-up approach to their treatment, with just over a quarter only partially agreeing with this, and a further quarter stating that they did not feel that there was a joined-up approach.

46 respondents provided further comments, of these 5 comments were neutral, 25 were negative and 16 were positive. A snapshot of the comments provided are detailed below. Of the comments grouped as negative there was a common theme around a lack of communication between different departments, where a patient has one or more illness/ailment. Contrary to this however, of the comments grouped as positive, respondents talked about a joined-up approach to their care:

Nature of comment	Comment
Neutral	*"I drove the process and made requests."*
	"It helps to understand how the NHS works in order to maximise the benefits of treatment."
	"There should be a one-stop shop in Neston to go to get support."
	"They try to get you somewhere local but not always."
Positive	*"Work together to get me the appointment I need and provide a good service in relation to referring me to hospital appointments if needed."*
	"Physio and consultants shared notes and treatment plans."
	"Referred to Arrowe Park hospital where I was seen and dealt with in 3 hours."
	"Dentist referral to hospital, hospital to physiotherapist."
	"Ophthalmology at Countess of Chester has written to my GP."
	"Superb - GP emailed ACU to let them know I was on my way. Very joined up approach."

	"Ophthalmologist contacted nephrologist with concerns about safety of eye drops because of my kidney problems."
	"Cardiology team seems to work well with my GP."
	"Good communication."
	"Really good communication between GP surgery and hospital."
Negative	*"It took the intervention of a Councillor to let me go to Clatterbridge Stroke Unit- 1.5 miles away. I was told to go- (unable to drive on my own) to CHESTER 8.5 miles away and unable to speak, by non-existent public transport! Arrowe Park accepted me so I can be followed up-it was traumatic being expected to argue 7 days after a stroke. I was also not offered any speech therapy service at home."*
	"I don't see why the NHS doesn't have a central database where all information from all hospitals, clinics and surgeries are in one place and accessible by all facilities with authorisation from the individual and by the individual also - this would speed up any treatment, and avoid any mistakes in diagnosis or treatment."
	"Waiting list far too long."
	"NHS does not operate on a patient centred model so eyes seen in isolation to heart yet treatments applied to the individual are planned and executed separately."
	"In the past accessing different services concerning my condition was akin to treating each symptom in isolation not seeing the whole picture. Not helped by the different centres not having access to all info."
	"Communication not always good."
	"It's difficult for the Doctors /Consultants etc to access all medical info when working across 2 different NHS providers in Wirral and Cheshire."
	"The services do not talk to one another."
	"Orthopaedic communication with heart specialist insufficient - there was no letter sent to confirm that I was ok to have the op. Extremely angry about this - in this day and age all personal information should be available to different departments."

Included in **Appendix 3** of this report is a snapshot of the accessibility of the most commonly mentioned services. These are **Cardiology Services, Physiotherapy Services, Maternity Services, Podiatry Services, Orthopaedic Services, Cancer Care Services and Ophthalmology Services.**

6. What other Health and Social Care Support do you access in the Community?

We asked respondents to tell us if they had accessed any further community support relating to health and social care. Only a small number responded to this question - 18 responses in total. Of those that responded the following support was identified:

Community Support	Type/Location
Parenting Support	Toddler Groups and Breastfeeding support groups (Neston CYC)
Cardia Rehab	12 week community rehab at Chester University and the Gym as Heswall Fire station
Cancer Support	Maggies at Clatterbridge
L&D Support	First Enable at Bridge House for the under 25s
Neuro Rehab	Clatterbridge
Stroke Rehab	Stroke Association (location not specified)

Respondents were also asked why they haven't accessed any further support in the community. Of the 34 people who answered this question, 31 reported that they did not need any additional support in the community.

7. Do you have any other comments about Health and Social Care Services?

We asked respondents to feedback if they had anything else to share with us about their health and social care services. For ease, the comments have been themed according to the main topic covered.

GP Appointments

There were a number of comments relating to frustrations with getting appointment, but also the quality of the appointment:

- *"Getting an appointment at Mellock Lane is poor - will park outside surgery at 8.15am and flag down staff just to be first in the queue."*
- *"GP surgery is supposed to offer extended hours but at Neston the additional hours offered are really limited and they are not offering any at the weekend."*
- *"I want to see my own doctor as I have a history of issues. I have had the experience of seeing a different doctor and I spent most of the appointment*

giving the doctor my past history and not getting a proper review of my current issue. The GP clinic is too open - you can hear consultations and personal information being shared."

Lack of Mental Health service provision

Respondents talked about the lack of mental health services available:

- *"Mental health is underfunded particularly for those under 25."*
- *"Extreme lack of mental health support. When I needed support whilst dealing with cancer it took several months to get some short-term counselling which was not appropriate support and felt rushed!"*
- *"More mental health services needed."*

General positive feedback

- *"Fairly happy with service when I get an appointment, though not all staff that friendly"*
- *"I am aware of baby and toddler groups in Willaston Primary School and also a new Baby Sensory group in Willaston. However, I have not yet had time to go! I am also aware of the breastfeeding support group in Neston but do not feel I need it."*
- *"It's been great - no waiting - only a week for a referral when I needed help"*
- *"Everything is fine - I know where to go if I need help"*
- *"I am satisfied with my health and social care services"*

Cross-boundary issues

- *"Just long waiting lists, and friends have had problems accessing services in the community that Arrowe Park or Clatterbridge say they need, because we are classed as Cheshire."*
- *"Being pushed to go to CHESTER instead of WIRRAL denies Patient Choice."*
- *"We are badly served in access to Out of Hours and Dressing Clinics, Emergency Podiatry, Continence Services, all of which are available at St Cath's but have never been offered."*
- *"As long as the 22 and 487 bus services are available I am usually able to use them to reach Arrowe Park and Clatterbridge. It would not be possible to access the Countess of Chester hospital from my address."*

Waiting Times

A number of people commented on their frustrations with waiting times:

- *"Once 'in the system' they are good - it is frustrating waiting to be 'in the system'"*
- *"Waited a year for a reply from the respiratory department"*

8. About You

Finally, we asked respondent to tell us a little bit more about themselves so that we can understand how we reflect the diversity of our community:

Age groups

Under 16	0%	0
16-25	5%	6
26-35	10%	12
36-50	18%	21
51-65	23%	27
Over 65	43%	50
Rather not say	1%	1

Gender

Male	28%	32
Female	71%	83
Rather Not say	1%	1
Other (please specify)	0%	0

Ethnicity

White British	98%	85
Any other White background	2%	2

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes	16%	14
No	80%	69
Rather Not say	4%	3

Observations and Conclusion

The Neston project has provided valuable insight into issues that can be taken into consideration when looking at future commissioning of services, particularly in relation to local transport, the location of services provided and communication across services.

It is timely that the Neston Report publication also coincides with the publication of the draft Local Authority and West Cheshire CCG 'Cheshire West and Chester Place Plan' and subsequent consultation, and its focus on Cheshire West and Chester becoming a healthier place to live. This determinant includes the provision of sustainable transport options and reduction in pollution, and an integrated approached to health and care, well located services and the part that local communities can play. It is hoped that the findings from this report could support the final Place Plan going forward.

Key observations are:

- Being offered a **choice** as to where a service could be accessed, but also being aware that a choice could be made, varied across different services. There does not appear to be a consistent approach, even if the service is available elsewhere, and this is not always communicated well.
- **Cross-boundary** care issues were mentioned in relation to a number of different services, but primarily related to hospital discharge and community rehabilitation services, i.e. that the community care offered to Wirral residents was not offered to Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) residents. Also, some respondents were aware of services being available at Wirral locations that were easier for them to access but they were not offered these. This led to confusion as to why some Wirral locations and services were offered and some were not.
- Although almost half of all respondents felt there was a joined-up approach to their care, comments did regularly refer to **communication issues** across different services hindering their care due to a lack of awareness of different conditions that a patient may have.
- Of those who completed the survey, the majority had accessed services by car (either independently or being driven by a friend or relative). However, of those who used **public transport** or were aware of its limitations, there was criticism of the routes on offer and their regularity. A further exploration of local transport options would be useful, particularly in relation to transport available to the Countess of Chester Hospital.
- Individual services presented different issues in relations to accessibility. For example, **Cardiology** care and service was frequently referred to as excellent, and accessibility was seen as easy, though the majority of respondents did access the service by car. Of those who referred into community rehabilitation services this was primarily offered at University of Chester, again, accessed by car.
- In relation to **Maternity Services** - there was a mixed response to awareness of choice of service location, although the majority of respondents used their GP Practice for antenatal care and Arrowe Park for the birth of their babies.

There was some use of the One to One midwifery service with positive and negative views in relation to quality. One respondent mentioned the Wirral Homestart at Home Service that she was unable to access because of living at an address with a CWAC postcode. Further research however had found that Homestart Wirral, a local charity, have now trained a group of volunteers to roll out this service to Neston residents, with funding provided by the Neston Fund.

- For those accessing **Orthopaedic Services**, situated in a number of locations, almost half of respondents stated they were not offered a choice of location. A variety of issues were mentioned, relating to lack of communication and waiting times and issues relating to cross-boundary.

Next Steps

Who will this report be shared with?

This report will be published on the Healthwatch Cheshire West website for the public to view. It will also be shared with key partners in delivering the project who we are thankful to, including Cheshire West and Chester Councillor for Little Neston, Public Health at Cheshire West and Chester Council, and Neston Community Youth Centre. Furthermore, copies will be sent directly to service providers involved in the engagement and commissioners, notably:

- West Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
- Cheshire West & Chester Council
- Neston Methodist Church
- Neston Recreation Centre (Brio Leisure)

The report will also be shared widely via social media.

Appendix 1: Copy of questionnaire

Accessibility of services for people living in Neston and surrounding villages

Healthwatch Cheshire West is the local independent consumer champion for Health and Social Care services in Cheshire West and Chester.

You may have seen one of our team or volunteers out and about around Cheshire trying to gain people's views and experiences of the Health and Social Care services they receive, in order to help inform the priorities and quality of services commissioned by the NHS and local authorities.

We are looking at how people living in the Neston area access health services, such as GP Practices or hospitals, and social care services, such as care homes or support workers. In particular we are interested in the practicalities of accessing these services cross-boundary, for example, accessing certain services on the Wirral and others in West Cheshire.

We would really appreciate if you could please take a few minutes to answer this brief survey, either for yourself or behalf of somebody that you care for. All information collected is anonymous.

Healthwatch Cheshire West are particularly focused on issues pertinent to the Neston area in this survey, so can we please have the first part of your postcode to ensure this survey matters to you:

Which GP Surgery are you registered with?

Please continue to the next page

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Which health and/or social care services have you accessed in the last 12 months and where were they located? Please only tick more than one if relevant

	Location of Service						
Service Accessed	**Arrowe Park Hospital**	**Countess of Chester Hospital**	**Clatterbridge Hospital**	**Ellesmere Port Hospital**	**My GP Surgery**	**Other GP Surgery**	**Other Location (Please specify)**
Cardiology Services							
Cancer Care Services							
Dementia Care Services							
Drugs and Alcohol Support Services							
ENT Services							
GP Appointment							
Maternity services (Antenatal care)							
Maternity Services (Birth)							
Mental Health Services							
Occupational Therapy Services							
Podiatry Services							
Paediatric Services							
Physiotherapy Services							
Sexual Health Services							
Other (please state)							

1. **Thinking about the services you've mentioned above, why did you access the service in this location? Please only tick more than one if relevant**

Service Accessed	I was offered a choice	I was not offered a choice	This was the only place that provided the service	This location specialises in this service	It was the easiest to access for me	Other
Cardiology Services						
Cancer Care Services						
Dementia Care Services						
Drugs and Alcohol Support Services						
ENT Services						
GP Appointment						
Maternity services (Antenatal care)						
Maternity Services (Birth)						
Mental Health Services						
Occupational Therapy Services						
Podiatry Services						
Paediatric Services						
Physiotherapy Services						
Sexual Health Services						
Other (please state)						

healthwatch Cheshire West

2. **Thinking about these services, how did you get there? Please tick as many as apply and indicate how easy getting to each service was in the final column.**

Service Accessed	Drove myself	Friend or relative took me	Local bus/train service	Patient transport service	Community transport service	Other (please specify)	Was this easy to get to? Please circle
Cardiology Services							Yes No Somewhat
Cancer Care Services							Yes No Somewhat
Dementia Care Services							Yes No Somewhat
Drugs and Alcohol Support Services							Yes No Somewhat
ENT Services							
GP Appointment							Yes No Somewhat
Maternity services (Antenatal care)							Yes No Somewhat
Maternity Services (Birth)							Yes No Somewhat
Mental Health Services							Yes No Somewhat
Occupational Therapy Services							Yes No Somewhat
Podiatry Services							Yes No Somewhat
Paediatric Services							Yes No Somewhat
Physiotherapy Services							Yes No Somewhat

Sexual Health Services							Yes No Somewhat
Other *(please specify)*							Yes No Somewhat

4. Do you have any other comments about service accessibility?

5. Do you find that services work together to offer a joined-up approach to your treatment?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Somewhat

Why is this?

6. What other health and social care support do you access? For example, through Community Groups or organisations such as The Alzheimer's Society, Parent & Toddler Groups. If you haven't accessed any, please go to question 7.

Support	Where?
Mental health support	
Parenting support	
Dementia support	
Carers support	
Befriending	
Other (please state)	

7. What is your experience of accessing the Support you have mentioned above?

8. Are there any reasons why you haven't accessed any further support in the community? Please tick as appropriate

Support	I don't need any	The support I need is not available	I cannot get there	I don't know about any support	Other (please specify)
Mental health support					
Parenting support					
Dementia support					
Carers support					
Befriending					
Other (please state)					

9. Do you have any other comments about the Health and Social Care services?

About you:

Please tell us a bit more about yourself so that we can understand how we reflect the diversity of our community:

What is your age group?

☐ Under 16 ☐ 16-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-50 ☐ 51-65 ☐ Over 65

☐ Rather not say

What is your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female
☐ Other (please specify)
☐ Rather not say

What is your sexual orientation?

☐ Heterosexual ☐ Gay/lesbian ☐ Bisexual
☐ Other ☐ Prefer not to say

What is your ethnicity?

☐ Arab ☐ Bangladeshi ☐ Caribbean ☐ Chinese

☐ White British ☐ Gypsy or Irish Traveller ☐ Indian ☐ Pakistani

☐ Asian British ☐ African ☐ Black British ☐ Any other Asian background

☐ Any other Black background ☐ Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background

☐ Any other White background

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Many thanks for taking the time to respond to our survey, your effort is much valued and appreciated.

Appendix 2: Additional services

Included below is a list of services mentioned who had one response only. Also included are services originally included in the drop-down list that did not receive any responses:

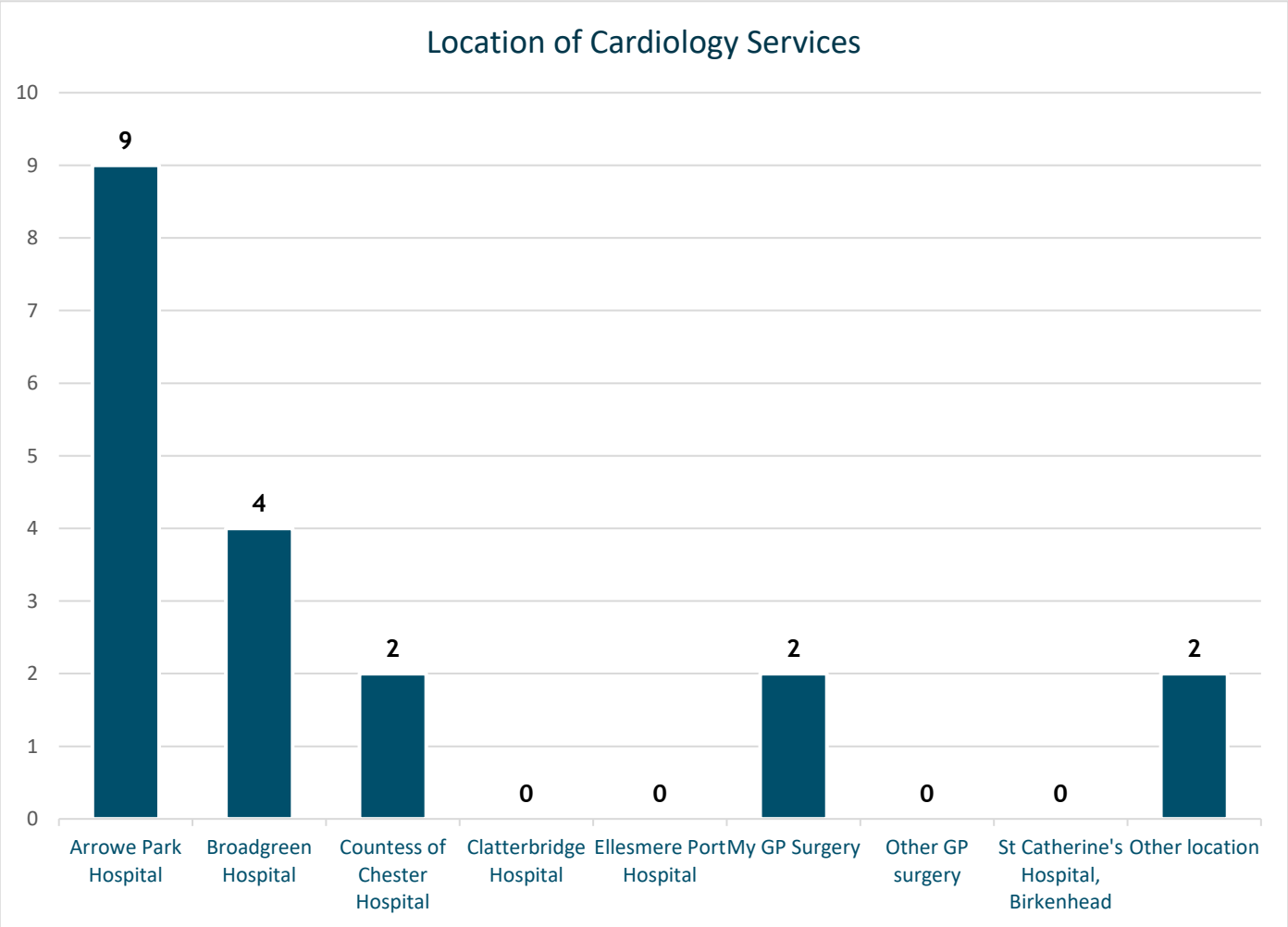
	Arrowe Park Hospital	Broadgreen Hospital	Countess of Chester Hospital	Clatterbridge Hospital	Ellesmere Port Hospital	My GP Surgery	Other GP surgery	St Catherine's Hospital, irkenhead	Other location *	Total
ACU	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Asthma	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Breast screening	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Colonoscopy	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Epilepsy	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Gynaecology	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
MS	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Nephrology	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Occupational Therapy Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Pain management	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Spinal clinic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
Stroke service	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Dementia Care Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Drugs & Alcohol Support Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**

Appendix 3: Snapshot on Accessibility of Individual Services

We asked survey respondents to tell us a little more about their experience of accessing specific services. For ease of analysis we looked at the most commonly visited services in isolation, to get a more in-depth picture of accessibility and to help to determine any issues pertinent to particular departments.

Cardiology Services

The location of cardiology services accessed varied over a number of different locations, although almost half were located at Arrowe Park Hospital and just over a fifth at Broadgreen Hospital.



- In terms of choice offered for the location of the service, over two-thirds (71%) used the service at this location because it was either the only place that provided the service, or that it specialised in the service. A further 18% chose the service for ease of access, and only 6% stated that they were not offered a choice of location.

- 80% either drove themselves or had a friend or relative take them to their appointment, with 10% using a bus, train or taxi.
- 89% felt that the service was easy to access.

Further comments specific to Cardiology services:

Some specific comments showed that respondents felt that the services offered was excellent, including the community rehab programmes, though accessibility was easy if you had a car to access. This is reflected in the quantitative findings where 80% accessed the service by car (either themselves or a friend or relative driving them).

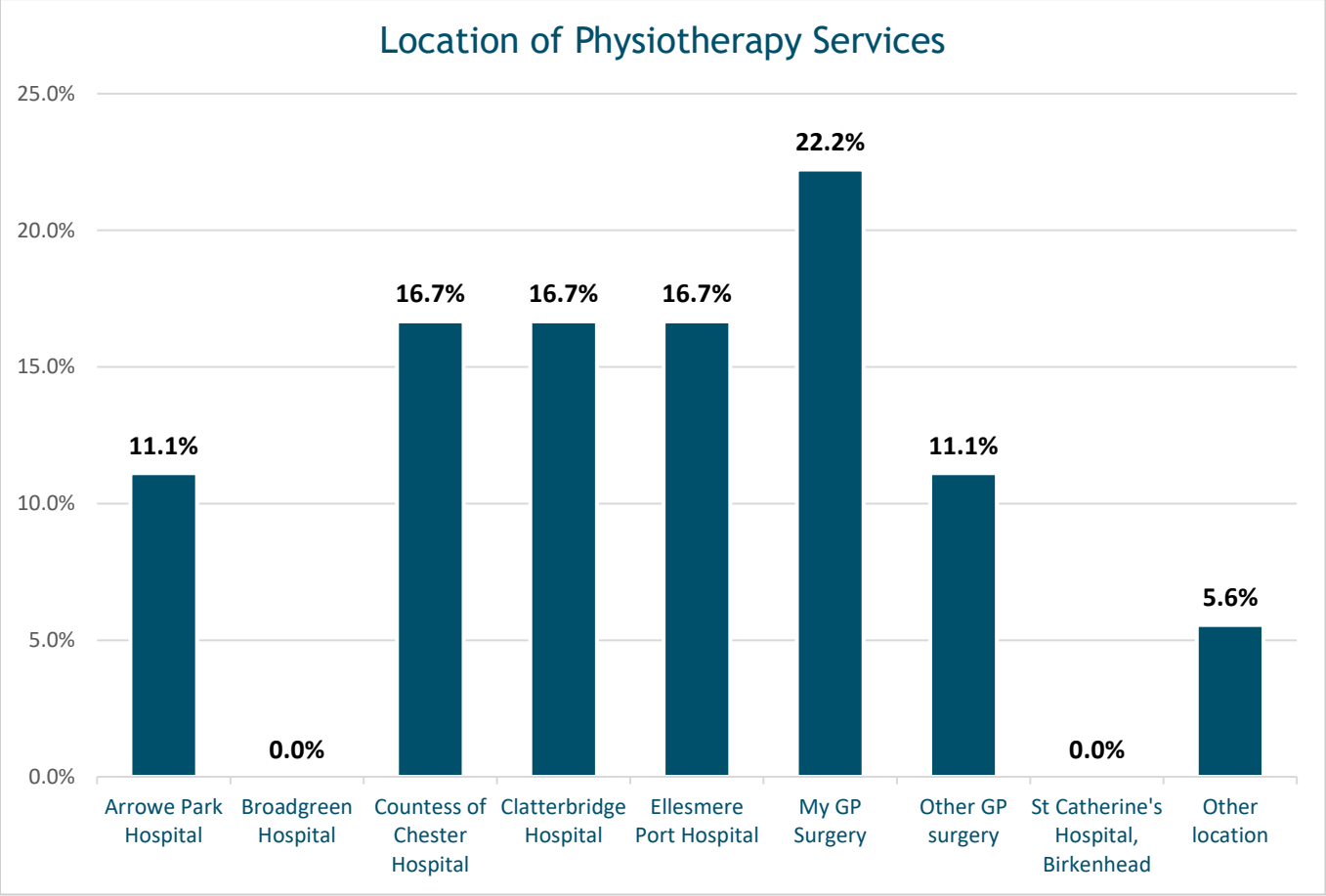
- *"Excellent service, very supportive. Easy to access if you have a car."*
- *"There was a delay in being treated by Cardiology as the GP had specified a specialist at Broadgreen - but he had a 6-8 month waiting list."*
- *"Cardiology Department was excellent."*
- *"Cardiology team seems to work well with my GP."*

6 respondents also referred to community rehab programmes that they were offered following the use of Cardiology services, located at Chester University (12-week programme) and Heswall Fire station:

- *"Fantastic service, though had to do the 12-week programme at Chester University first before Heswall follow up (I was initially offered Ellesmere Port fire station but I couldn't get there so I was offered Heswall instead). Ok because I could drive there."*
- *"Excellent service, very supportive. Easy to access if you have a car!"*

Physiotherapy Services

Physiotherapy services were accessed over a breadth of different locations with no significantly dominant location, although 22% did access the services via their GP, and a third either via their own GP or another GP surgery.



43% stated that they were not offered a choice of location for the service, with 80% either driving themselves of relying on a friend or relative to take them. Although 61% said that yes, the service was easy to get to, 31% only found the service 'somewhat' easy to get to.

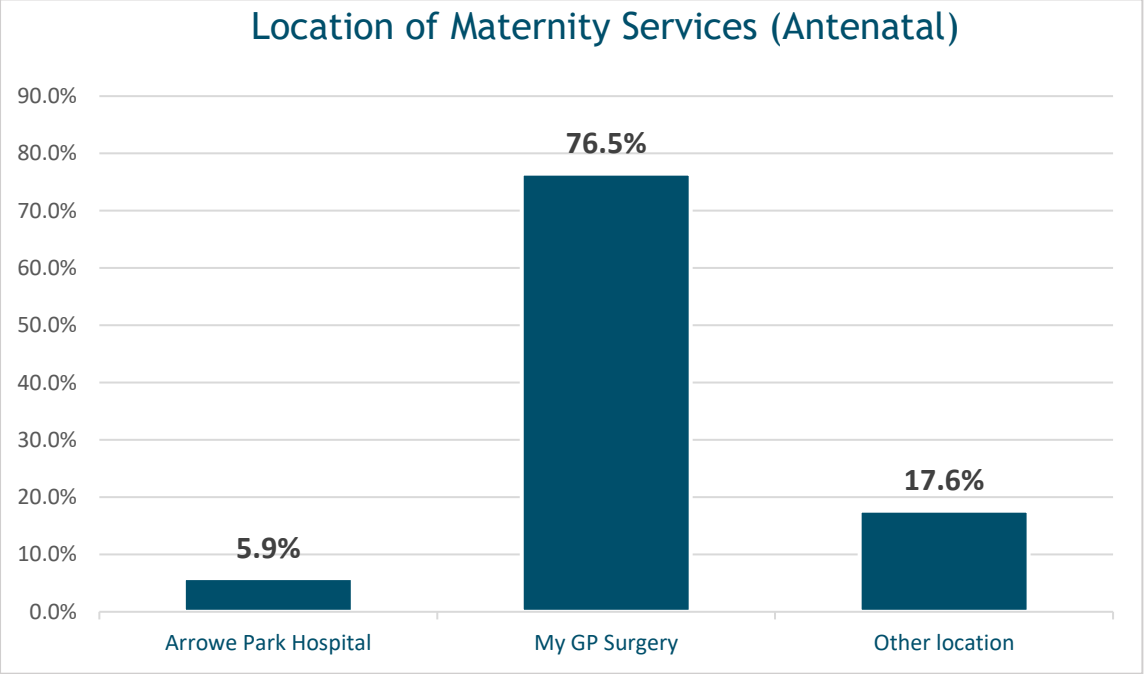
- *"I was not given the choice to have any physiotherapy at Neston clinic and I am still waiting for my appointment to come through at Arrowe Park."*

Maternity Services

Antenatal care

The majority of those accessing antenatal care accessed this via their GP surgery, just over three-quarters of respondents. Of those who chose another location (17%) the majority accessed antenatal care via the one-to-one midwifery at home service.

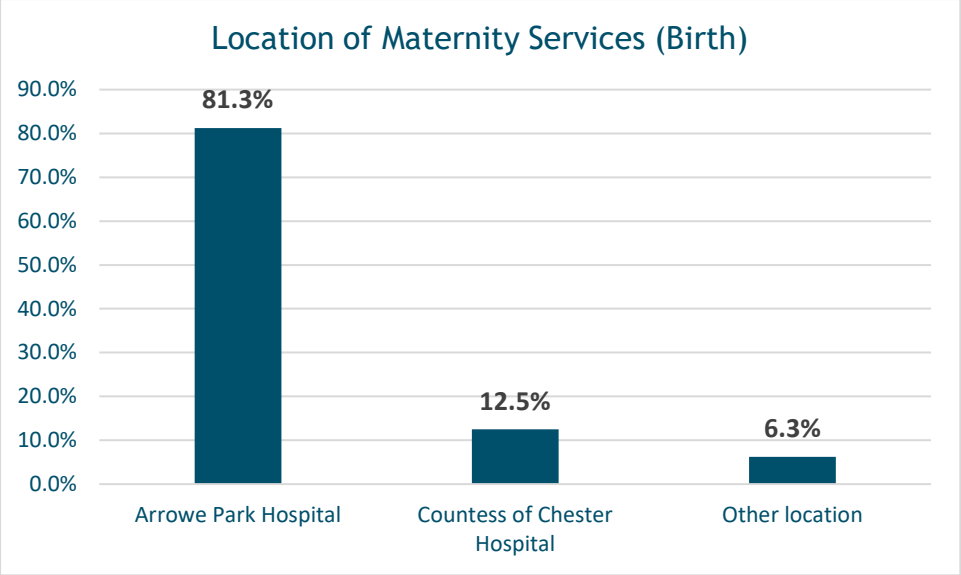
41% stated that they were offered a choice of location and a further 35% because it was the easiest location for them to access. However, a further 18% stated that they were not offered a choice of location. 87% either drove or walked to the location for their antenatal care.



Maternity Services Birth

The majority (81%) gave birth to their child at Arrowe Park hospital, with a further 13% at the Countess of Chester Hospital.

81% stated that they were offered a choice of location for the birth of their child (compared to 41% stating they were offered a choice for their antenatal care) and 100% that the location was easy to get to.



Further comments specific to Maternity Services

- *"I was not offered antenatal midwifery at my GP but was referred to Parklands Children's Centre, which was ok because I can drive."*
- *"I never realised that there was a choice available to me."*
- *"I was offered the choice of the One to One midwifery service and had a home birth. Fantastic service."*
- *"Good communication between GP and hospital."*
- *"With my first child I was offered a choice between the Countess and Arrowe Park. With my second child I was not given the option but allocated Arrowe Park. I was told I would have to self-refer if I wanted to attend the Countess of Chester."*
- *"Unable to access the Homestart At Home support service after the birth of my baby even though I had my baby at Arrowe Park. This is only available if I live on the Wirral."*
- *"Had 1:1 midwifery service for my antenatal care with both of my children. Excellent service the first time around but the second time around it was very poor. A very badly managed service with high staff turnover - had 7 midwifes in total - some who had worked 48 hour shifts."*

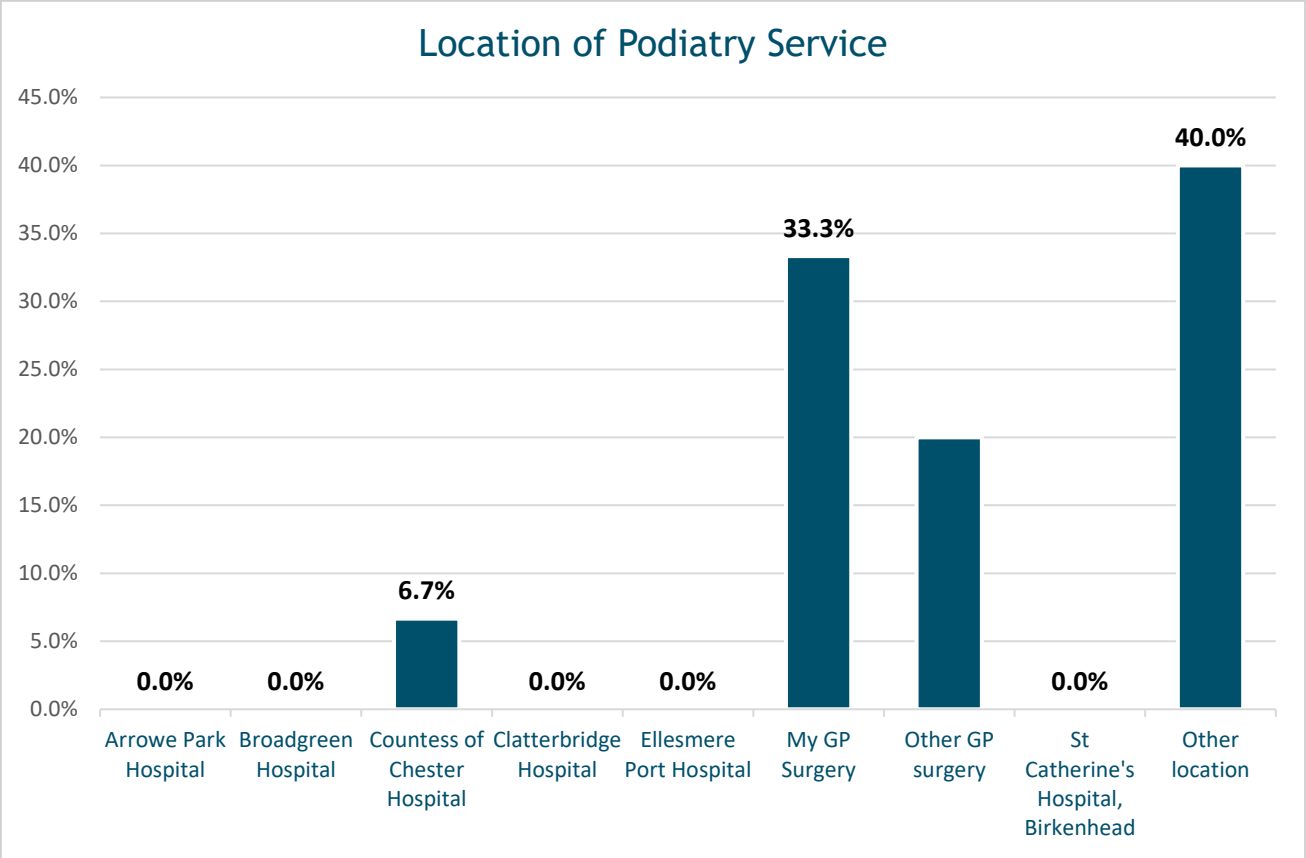
Community Support

- *"My son was a head butter and the health visitor was a great help. Let's Play is great - free good company for all who attend."*
- *"Good as they are experienced practitioners."*
- *"I am aware of baby and toddler groups in Willaston Primary School and also a new Baby Sensory group in Willaston. However, I have not yet had time to go! I am also aware of the breastfeeding support group in Neston but do not feel I need it."*

- *"I only heard about the Neston CYC group through word of mouth. I find it difficult to find out about other groups as they are not well advertised and I am not always on social media."*

Podiatry Services

Just over half of those accessing Podiatry services accessed them at their own or another GP surgery and 40% accessed this service in an 'other location' (e.g. private/community settings).



Half of all respondents accessing his service did so in this location because it was the only place that offered this service. Two-thirds felt that the service was easy to access with 25% stating that it was 'somewhat' easy to get to. Over three-quarters of those accessing the service either drove themselves of relied on a friend or relative to take them.

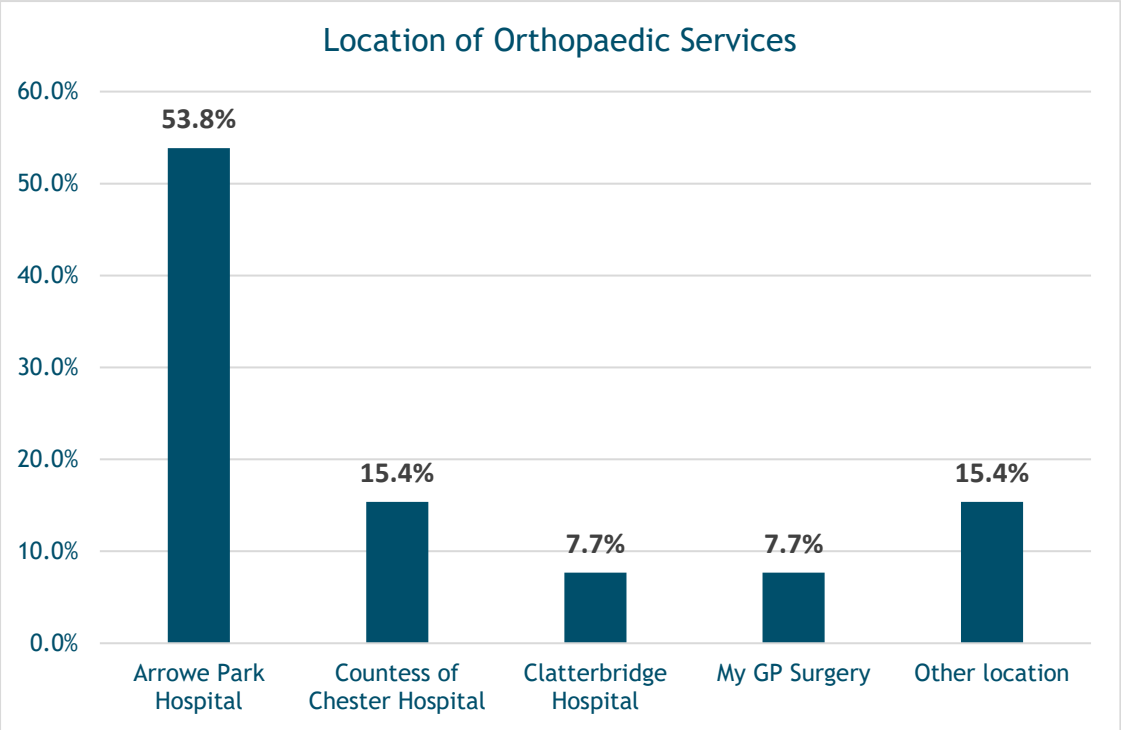
Further comments specific to podiatry service

- *"There is a real issue with the lack of podiatry services in Neston and this is a common problem for elderly people."*
- *"It is fine if you have a car."*

Orthopaedic Services

54% of those who accessed orthopaedic services accessed them at Arrowe Park Hospital and 15% at The Countess of Chester Hospital. Other locations were specified including private healthcare settings and Out of Area settings.

45% stated that they were not offered a choice of location and just under two-thirds stated that in order to access the service they either drove themselves or relied on a friend or family member to take them.



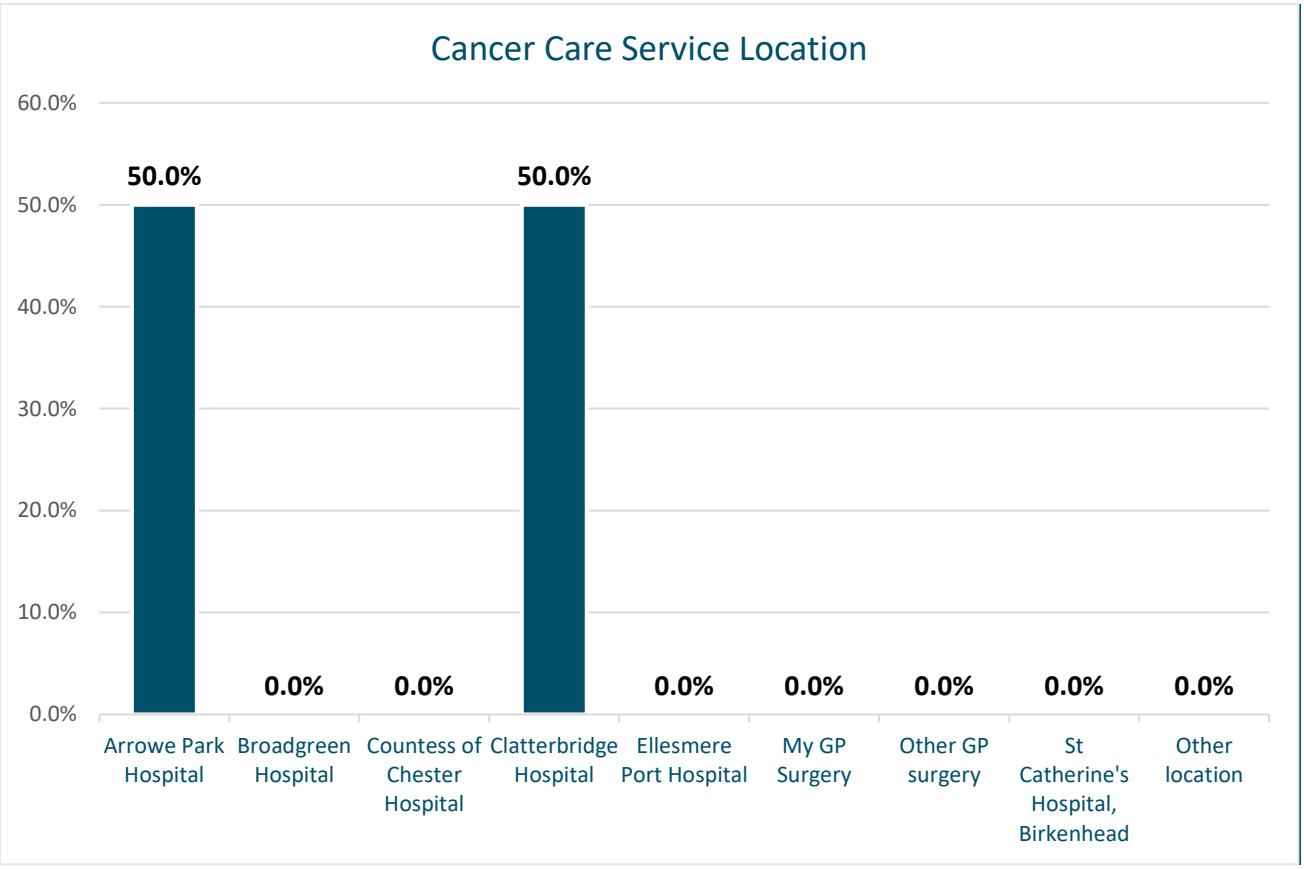
Specific comments relating to Orthopaedic services

- *"Although my treatment for my ankle injury was carried out at Arrowe Park I was not offered the free 6-week home support offered to Wirral residents as had a CWAC postcode. Had no follow up support at home and very immobile. Was told that this was because I was on the border."*
- *"Orthopaedic communication with heart specialist insufficient - there was no letter sent to confirm that I was ok to have the op. Extremely angry about this - in this day and age all personal information should be available to different departments."* And *"operation has been cancelled over the last three months because of my heart problem and has now been rescheduled."*
- *"Mother in law was given a different set of walking sticks because she was 'out of area'."*
- *"Waited for 2 months for hospital appointment and when I had to cancel the first appointment as it was inconvenient waited for a further 6 weeks as I had to go to the bottom of the list again."*

Cancer Care Services

Of those who responded who accessed cancer care services, the service was offered in to locations, Arrowe Park Hospital and Clatterbridge Hospital. The vast majority (91%) accessed the Cancer Care service in these locations because the 'location specialised in the service' or 'it was the only place that offered the service'.

90% of respondents either drove themselves of relied on a friend or family member to take them, however 100% said that the Cancer Care services were easy to get to.



Specific comments relating to Cancer Care Services

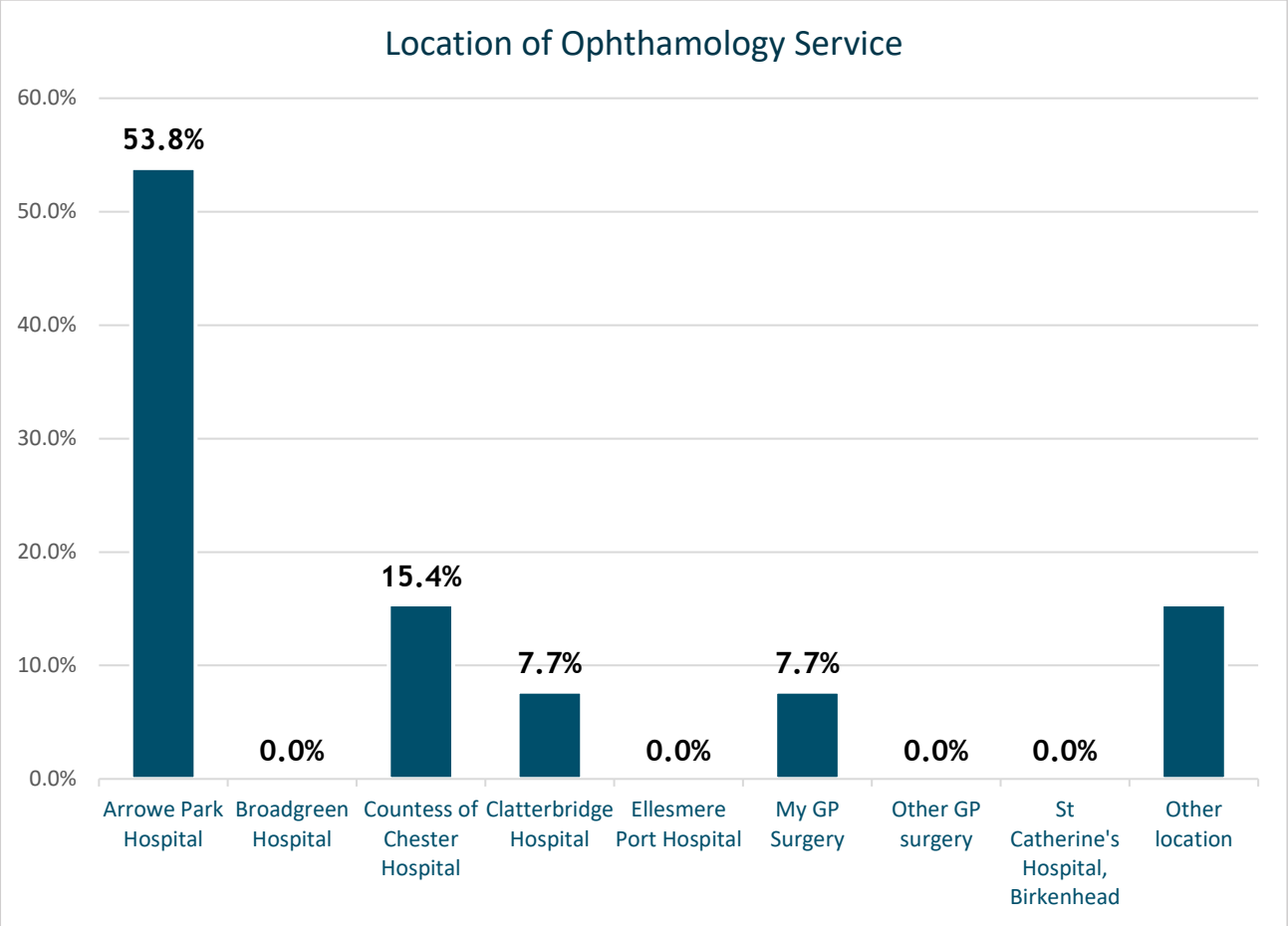
- *"When I was having my cancer treatment an Arrowe Park I was given a ca park pass for Haematology so that I had no problems parking - really good."*
- *"Sometimes it is difficult to park at Arrowe but at least it is free."*
- *"Traumatic time but good experience due to support."*
- *"Clatterbridge had all my details for my consultation including results, then sent to my GP. Date for my procedure followed."*
- *"A lot of the time it is myself who has to push for answers...it is frustrating that GP and hospital don't seem to be able to access each other's info about you the patient."*

- *"Extreme lack of mental health support. When I needed support whilst dealing with cancer it took several months to get some short-term counselling which was not appropriate support and felt rushed!"*

Ophthalmology Services

Over half of those accessing Ophthalmology Services accessed them at Arrowe Park Hospital, and 16% at The Countess of Chester Hospital.

Just over a third of respondents said they were offered a choice of location, and equally just over a third of respondents said that they weren't offered a choice of location. However, of those accessing ophthalmology services 64% stated that they were easy to get to. Over two-thirds relied on a friend or family member to take them.



Specific Comments relating to Ophthalmology Services

- *"Eye clinic appointments are the devil's own job to arrange - one visit usually has three parts - so why post three letters?"*
- *"Appointments at the Countess tend to be early in the morning and my bus pass does not kick in until 9.30am. Buses to Chester also only run every hour. I have not been offered any patient transport"*
- *"Although I was offered a choice the waiting lists at Arrowe Park were far too long. Yet the local transport to Chester is very poor. No bus that could get me there on time."*
- *"Service usually excellent, communication hit and miss, appointments and cancellations at very short notice, sometimes only a few days."*