



**NHS England Quality Surveillance Group Report
Healthwatch Cumbria Activity and Trend Analysis**

11th September 2014



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Introduction

This report updates the NHS England Quality Surveillance Group with current work priorities and a broad analysis of the issues that have been shared by the public, through the numerous intelligence gathering techniques utilised by Healthwatch Cumbria.

Section One sets out the key work priorities that Healthwatch Cumbria are currently delivering, the action that prompted the work and details of progress to date.

Section Two sets out analysis of the issues that have been shared with us by the public, from April 2013 until September 2014. The analysis shows broad trends of the type of issues that are being shared, the type of service or condition they relate to, whereabouts within the patient pathway the issues concerned and what aspects of the care attributes the experience relates to.

Also attached (in Appendix 1) is a report produced from a survey relating to the discharge of frail and elderly patients from Cumbria Health and Social Care settings. The survey was carried out by Healthwatch Cumbria to support Healthwatch England in their first national enquiry into discharge experiences for the frail and elderly, those with mental health illnesses and the homeless.

Section One - Key Work Priorities

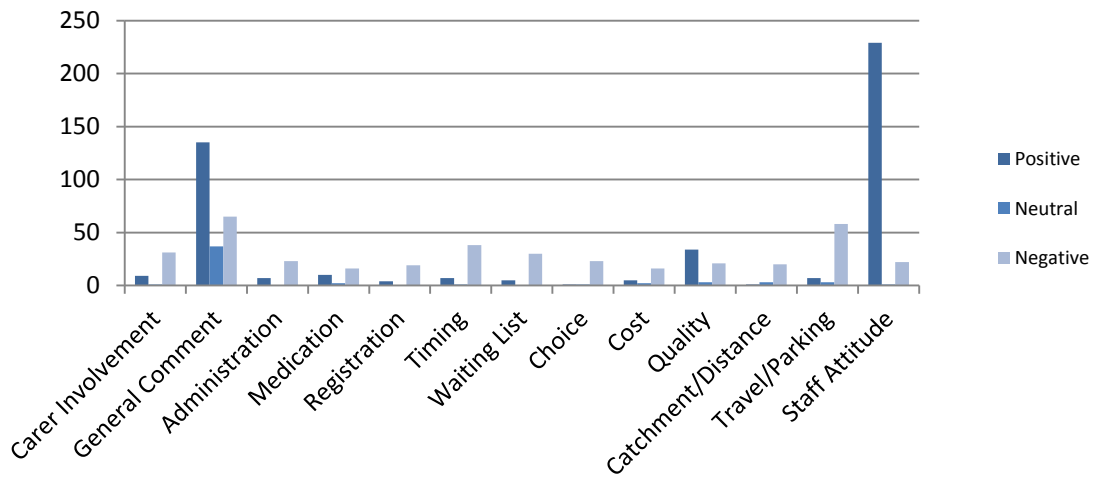
Key Issues / Priorities	Action	Progress to Date
<p>Cancer Service Review</p>	<p>Patient feedback received about cancer services in Cumbria, intelligence also presented by cancer support groups.</p> <p>Healthwatch Cumbria to carry out a review of services through large surveying, local and national research and enter & view (where appropriate). Reporting findings to Services, Commissioners and regulators as necessary.</p>	<p>Local and national research in progress</p> <p>Task and Finish group developed and focussing on key concerns and recommendations where necessary</p> <p>Survey created and circulated between 9th Sept - 20th October.</p> <p>Online survey created and available from 10th Sept.</p> <p>Clinic visits taking place between 22nd Sept and 17th October</p> <p>Findings analysed and report presented to Services, Commissioners, Regulators and Healthwatch England by 7th November 2014</p>
<p>Complaints Handling Review</p>	<p>Review of complaints handling across all health and care services in Cumbria, in partnership with Cumbria County Council Health Scrutiny Overview Committee.</p> <p>Phase 1. Presentations from services - explaining their policies and procedures providing an overview of how learning is shared and embedded</p>	<p>Presentations provided by services</p> <p>Summary of findings from phase 1 completed</p> <p>Progressing phase 2 to be complete by 30th September</p> <p>Phase 3 site visits to be completed by 31st October</p>

	<p>Phase 2. Public experience of complaints handling gathered - specific cases (with permissions) for each service</p> <p>Phase 3. Visit to services to understand if and how learning has been shared and embedded within services</p>	and reporting to be completed by 30 th November 2014
Mental Health Service Review	Review in response to public experiences and research carried out by 3 rd sector (NAS)	Review to begin mid-October 2014
Car Parking Review	Issues raised with parking at North Cumbria University Hospital Trust sites - Carlisle and Whitehaven.	<p>Task and Finish group established</p> <p>Local research carried out</p> <p>NCUHT meeting taken place and feedback provided for Task and Finish Group.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring of issues and reporting to NCUHT required by 20th October 2014</p>

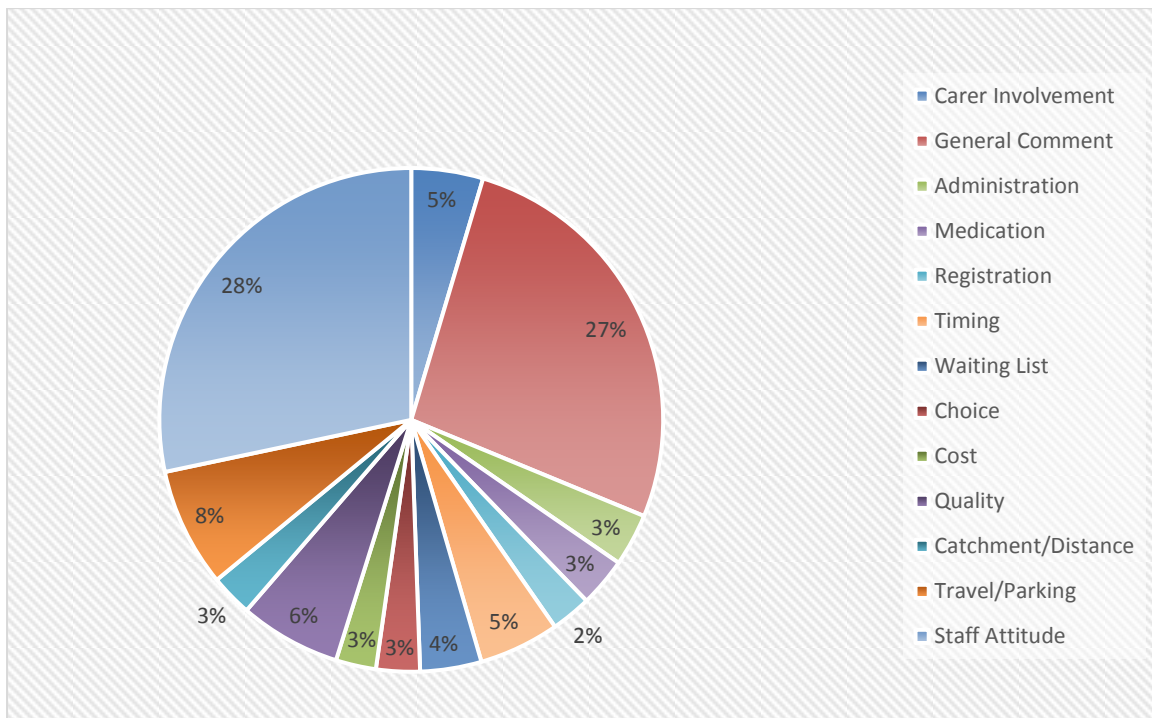
<p>Hawkshead Medical Practice (threat of rural surgery closure)</p>	<p>Issues and concerns raised by Hawkshead Medical Practice PPG and by the local community, concerned about the potential closure of the practice. Issue appears to be wider with other PPG groups coming forward in the South Lakeland area.</p>	<p>First facilitated meeting between GP, NHS Area Team, CCG, Local Councillors and others took place in January 2014. Commitment to explore opportunities provided NHS Area Team and CCG.</p> <p>Second facilitated meeting taking place on 24th September following concerns about lack of progress by commissioners.</p> <p>Healthwatch Cumbria escalated issue through Healthwatch England procedure on 2 occasions - awaiting outcome 9th Sept.</p>
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Section Two - Trend Analysis April 2013 to Sept 2014

1. Top Trends:



Graph 1: Trends - Numbers of experiences



Pie Chart 1: Trends - % of experiences

28 % of experiences related to Healthwatch Cumbria related to Staff Attitude, of which the vast majority (229 out of 252) were positive;

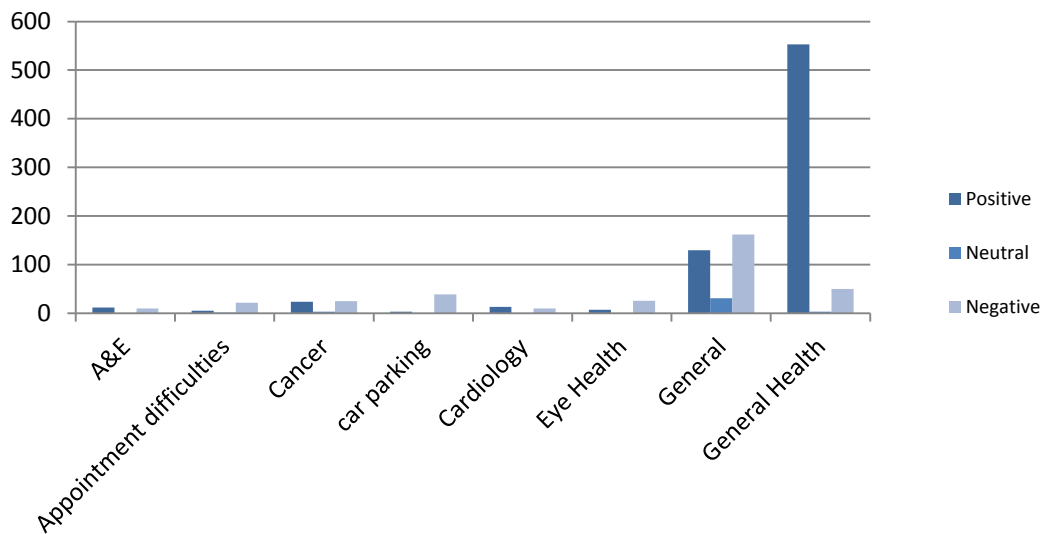
27 % of experiences were coded general unspecific comments (eg “GP is good/bad” etc), of which the majority (135 out of 237);

8 % of experiences were coded Travel/Parking of which the majority (58 out of 68) were negative.

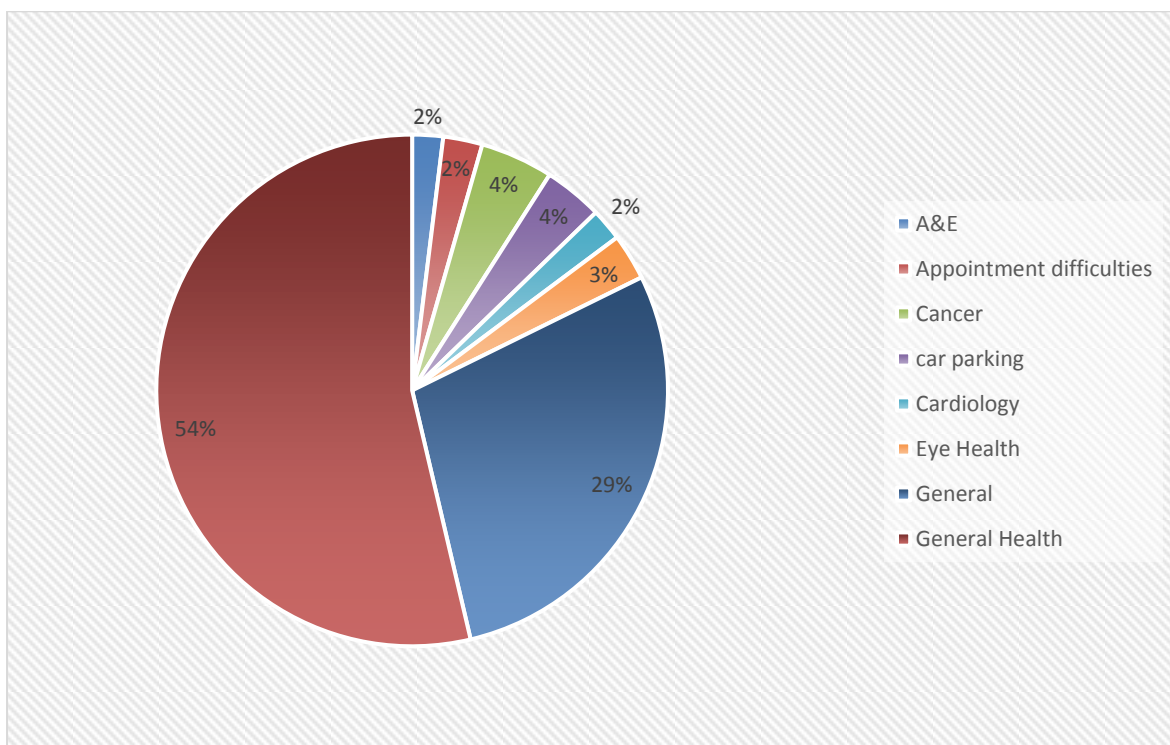
Key Issues Identified:

- Those that have shared experiences clearly believe that staff attitude is good;
- A lot of experiences include very general observations about services, which do not identify what specifically has led to the view, this will be addressed through constant refinement of engagement techniques;
- Parking (as well as travel arrangements to and from settings) is a key issue for those who presented their experiences with Healthwatch Cumbria;
- The quality of services is a key issue for those who shared their experiences with Healthwatch Cumbria;
- Timing of appointments, most often delays, is a key issue for those who shared their experiences;
- Waiting Lists, and delays in referrals to other services/for other treatments is a key issue for those who shared their experiences with Healthwatch Cumbria.

2. Top Conditions:



Graph 2 Top Conditions- Numbers of experiences



Pie Chart 2: Trends - % of experiences

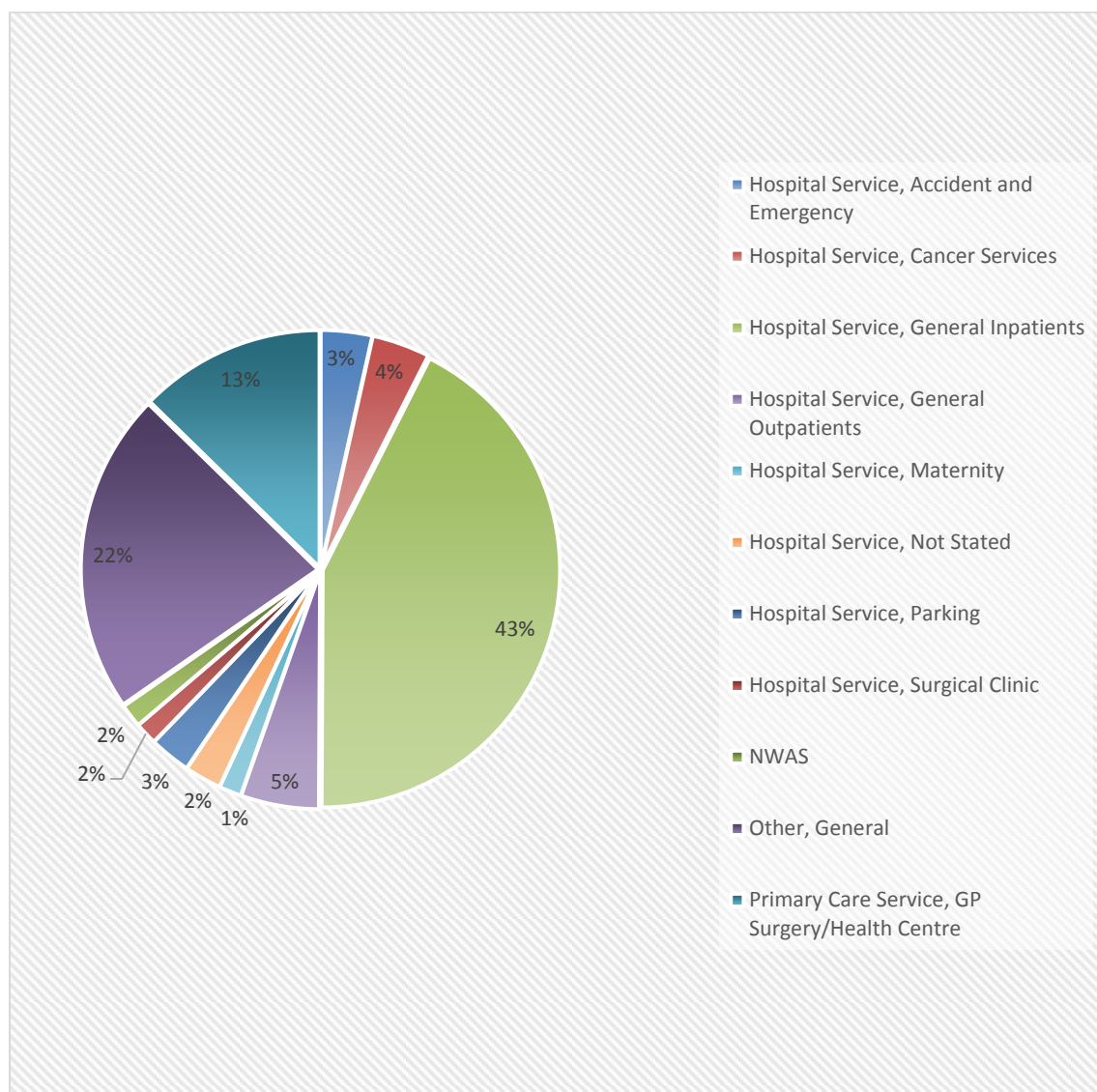
The vast majority of experiences recorded on our database included more than one issue within them (General and General Health) representing 83 % of experiences collected;

Cancer and Car Parking were the largest number of “Single Condition/Theme” experiences shared with us.

Key Issues Identified:

- Those that have shared experiences have about a variety of health conditions (though this number is possibly artificially increased by activity such as *Together for a Healthier Future* engagement);
- Of those single issue experiences, the following conditions/issues were identified the most:
 - Cancer Services
 - Car parking
 - Eye Health Services
 - Appointment issues (Non-service specific)
 - Cardiology
 - Accident and Emergency
 - Adult Social Care
 - Ambulance Services
 - Diabetes Services
 - Dentistry
 - Children's Health

3. Top Service Types:



Pie Chart 3: Service Type - % of experiences

43 % of experiences related in some way to Inpatient Services at Hospitals;
22 % of experiences were general observations about health and social care services and unspecified about a particular service or more than one service;
13 % of experiences related to GP Surgeries.

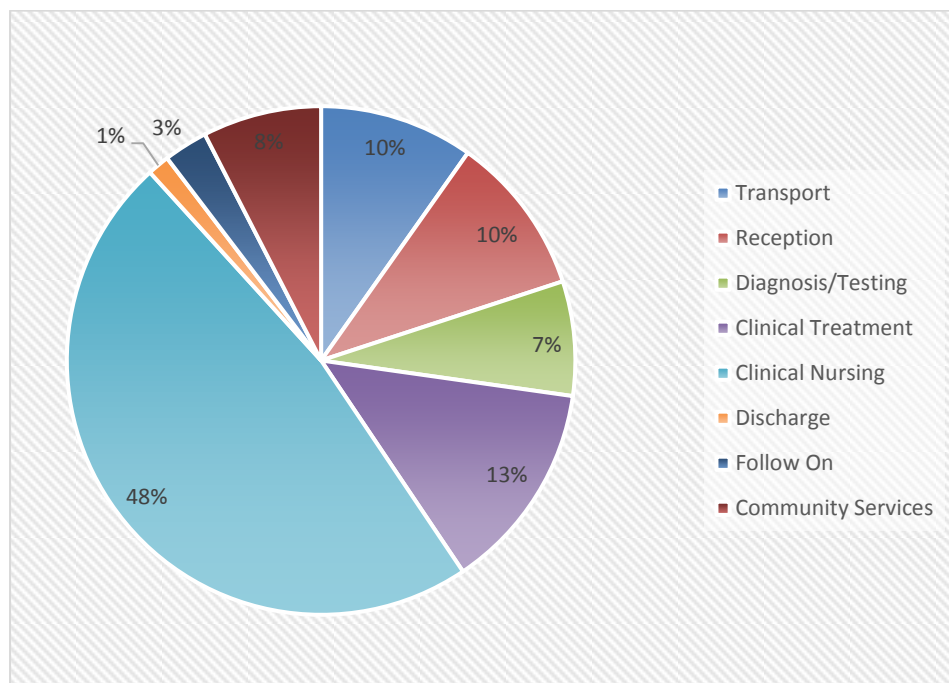
Key Issues Identified:

- Those that have shared experiences have shared details about General, unspecified, Inpatient Services;
- Nearly a quarter have shared experiences which detail general health and social care service observations;
- Of those that have stipulated a setting, the following were identified the most:
 - GP Surgeries;
 - General Outpatient Services;
 - Hospital Cancer Services;

- Parking Services;
- Accident and Emergency;
- North West Ambulance Service;
- Hospital, Surgical Clinic.

4. Care Pathway Detail:

All experiences are coded relating to where in the Patient Pathway the issues raised occur and what the issue relates to (Care Attribute). Pie chart 4, below, illustrates where in the patient pathway the issues raised occurred (please note that experiences can be coded with more than one code).



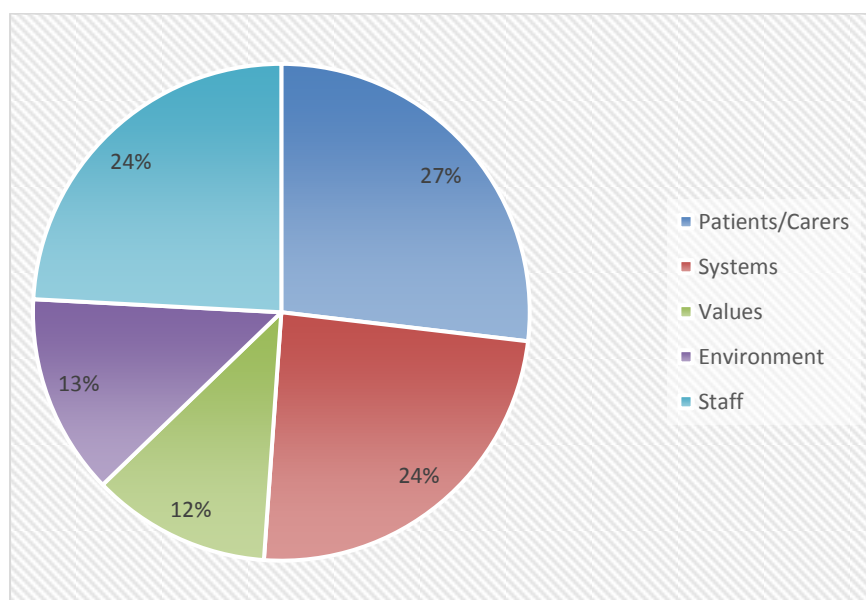
Pie Chart 4 - Where in the Patient Pathway experiences related to

Transport 10 %	Anything relating to the getting to or from the setting or treatment that the comment relates too. Including: non-service provider travel (buses and access), NHS arranged transport (NWAS, CHoC and volunteer).
Reception 10 %	Anything relating to booking and arranging treatments and appointments. Including Practice Management with GP, waiting lists and appointments, reception and administration of all service providers.
Diagnosis/Testing 7 %	Anything relating to diagnosis, testing and identifying condition. Including anything relating to medical related benefits assessments.
Clinical Treatment 13 %	Anything relating to the process of treatment by any service provider. Including GPs, other clinicians, surgery and pharmacy.
Clinical Nursing 48 %	Anything relating to nursing and pre and post treatment care. Including Practice Nurse, Inpatient care and midwifery.
Discharge	Anything relating to discharge from a clinical setting, including

1 %	Acute Hospitals, mental health settings, A&E, residential care.
Follow on 3 %	Anything relating to follow on care after discharge. Including care plans, after care, medication.
Community 8 %	Anything relating to care and treatment provided within the community. Including residential care, health & social care.

5. Care Attribute Detail:

All experiences are coded relating to where in the Patient Pathway the issues raised occur and what the issue relates to (Care Attribute). Pie chart 5, below, illustrates which aspect of the patient's care the issues raised relate to (please note that experiences can be coded with more than one code).



Pie Chart 5 - Which Care Attribute the experience related to.

Patient / Carer 27 %	Anything relating to the involvement of patient and carer, information provided and general comments.
Systems 24 %	Anything relating to systems that support patients within the care system including access to services, delays in appointments, waiting lists, medical records and the prescribing and provision of medication.
Values 12%	Anything relating to choice, nutrition, privacy and quality within services.
Environment 13 %	Anything relating to the physical environment where care is delivered including infection risk, distance travelled to setting, parking, equipment and layout of the setting..

Staff 24 %	Anything relating to behaviour of staff including conduct, attitude and any omissions.
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Special Inquiry into Unsafe Discharge - Frail & Elderly
Cumbria

August 2014



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Introduction

In June 2014, Healthwatch England launched a Special Inquiry into perceived unsafe discharge of patients from hospital, care and mental health settings. The purpose of the inquiry was to establish a deeper understanding of consumer experiences of a discharge from a hospital, nursing or care home, or secure mental health setting in England with a view to using Healthwatch England's informational and advisory powers to ensure the consumer voice is heard and action is taken by system players. The specific consumer focus was on the frail and elderly, people with mental health conditions and people who are homeless.

In order to inform the Inquiry, Healthwatch England asked local Healthwatch to gather patient experience regarding discharge. As a result, Healthwatch Cumbria sought to engage with the local frail and elderly population, to capture their experiences of discharge across all health and care settings.

Intelligence gathered by Healthwatch Cumbria in response to the special inquiry has been shared with Healthwatch England. This intelligence contributes to our wider evidence base and will assist us in identifying good practice and where necessary making recommendation for service improvement.

This report summarises the key findings from the experiences shared with Healthwatch Cumbria.

Methodology

A 20 question survey was designed by Healthwatch England and made available locally through an on-line survey via the Healthwatch Cumbria website. Hard copies were circulated through existing contacts and networks.

Responses to the survey were collated and analysed, and findings were shared with Healthwatch England.

A total of 35 responses were received prior to the Healthwatch England deadline of 28th July 2014. A summary of results are presented through tables and graphs as follows.

Findings

The survey questions used have been included in each section along with a summary and analysis of findings.

Question 1. Who are you completing this survey on behalf of?

Table 1 and Chart 1, below, illustrate the results of question 1, relating to who you are completing the survey on behalf of.

70 % of respondents were completing the survey on behalf of a family member.

Table 1 - table showing results from question 1

Are you completing this survey on behalf of:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yourself	12.1%	4
Family member	69.7%	23
Friend	18.2%	6
<i>answered question</i>		33
<i>skipped question</i>		2

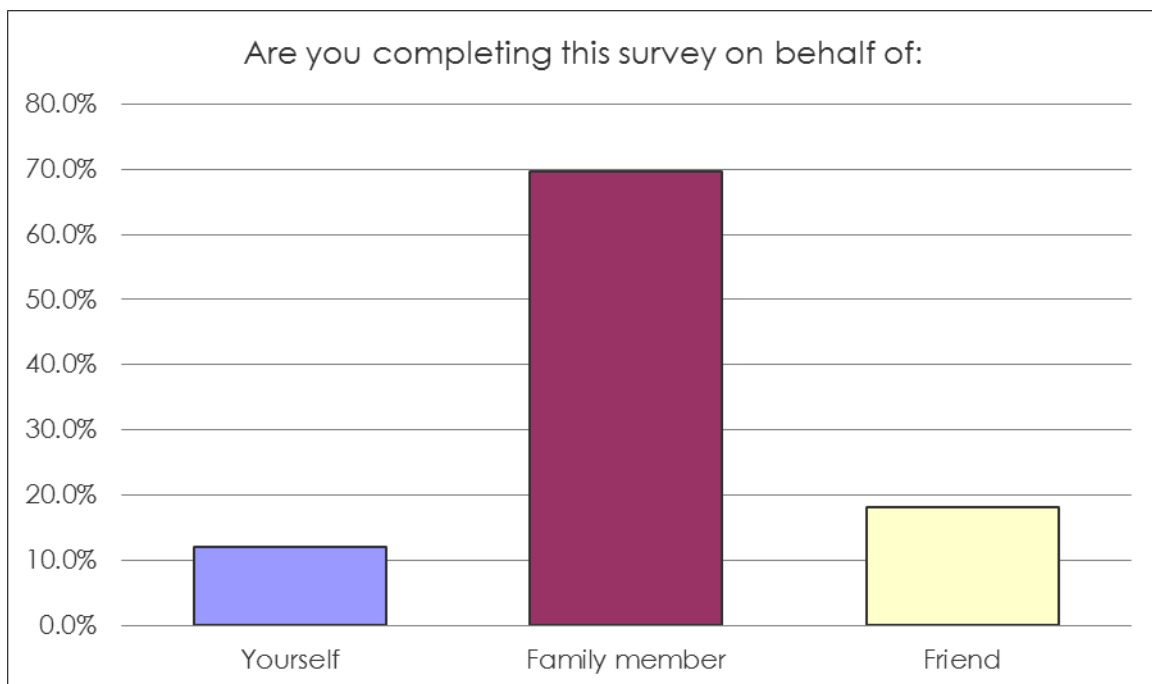


Chart 1 - Graphical display of results from question 1

Question 2. How many times have you/the patient been discharged from a hospital/care home setting in the last 18 months?

Table 2 and Chart 2, below, illustrate the results of question 2, asking how many times the patient had been discharged from any setting within the last 18 months.

29 % of respondents had been discharged from a setting three or more times within the last 18 months, with 71 % having been discharged once or twice within the last 18 months.

Table 2 - table showing results from question 2

How many times have you/the patient been discharged from a hospital/care home setting in the last 18 months?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	32.4%	11
2	38.2%	13
3	8.8%	3
more than 3	20.6%	7
<i>answered question</i>		34
<i>skipped question</i>		1

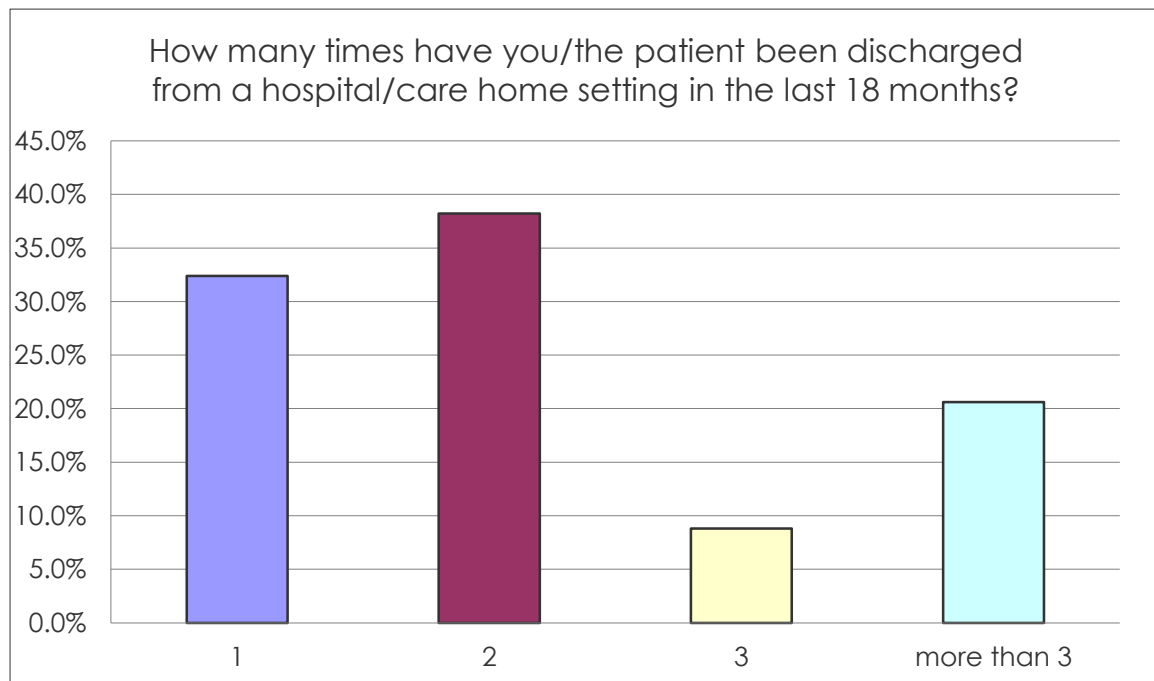


Chart 2 - Graphical display of results from question 2

Question 3. What kind of ward did you/the patient stay in?

Table 3 and Chart 3, below, illustrate the results of question 3, dealing with the type of setting the patient was discharged from.

Respondents shared experiences from discharge from a wide variety of Health and Social Care settings, with 44 % being discharged from a “General Hospital Ward”.

Table 3 - table showing results from question 3

What kind of ward did you/the patient stay in?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Acute Medical Unit	29.4%	10
Coronary Care Unit	11.8%	4
Dementia Unit	8.8%	3
High Dependency Unit	17.6%	6
Medical Assessment Unit	20.6%	7
Oncology Unit	2.9%	1
Renal Unit	2.9%	1
General Hospital Ward	44.1%	15
Mental Health Unit	0.0%	0
Care Home	8.8%	3
Other (please specify)	23.5%	8
answered question		34
skipped question		1

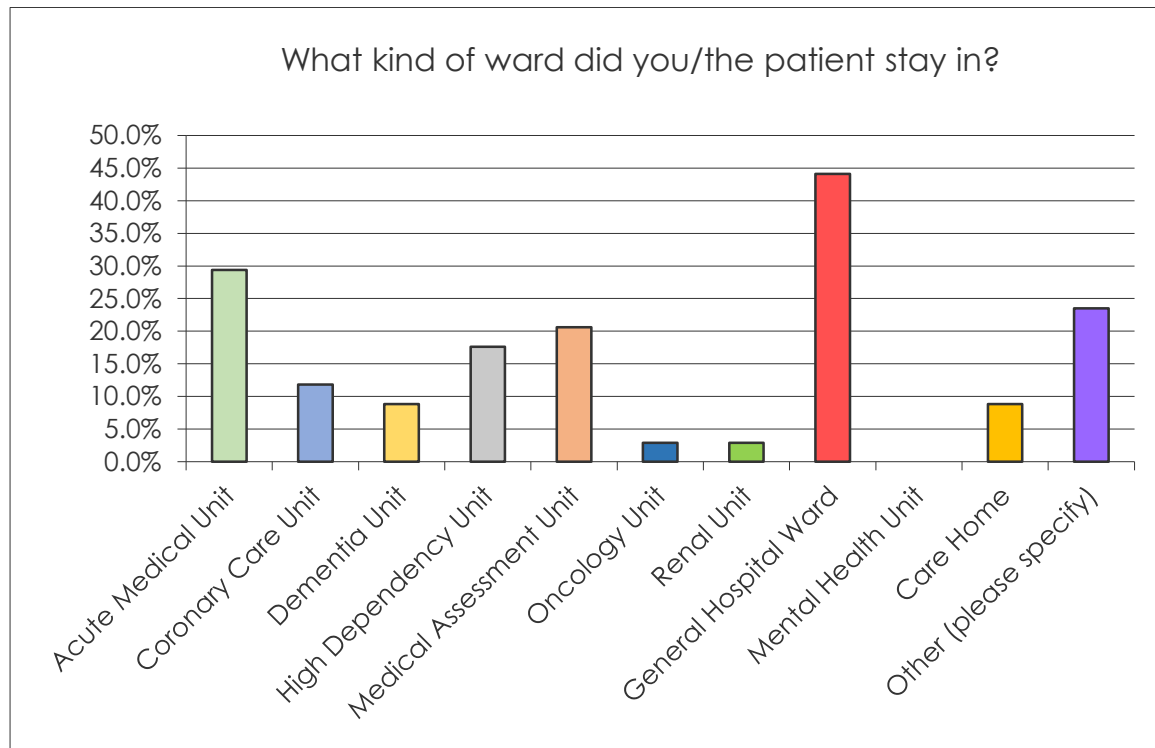


Chart 3 - Graphical display of results from question 3

Question 4. How long was the stay in hospital?

Table 4 and Chart 4, below, illustrate the results of question 4, asking about the amount of time the patient stayed in hospital.

62 % of respondents were in the setting for less than three weeks prior to discharge.

Table 4 - table showing results from question 4

How long was the stay in hospital?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
less than 1 week	32.4%	11
1-2 weeks	29.4%	10
3-4 weeks	17.6%	6
over 4 weeks - please specify length of stay	20.6%	7
<i>answered question</i>		34
<i>skipped question</i>		1

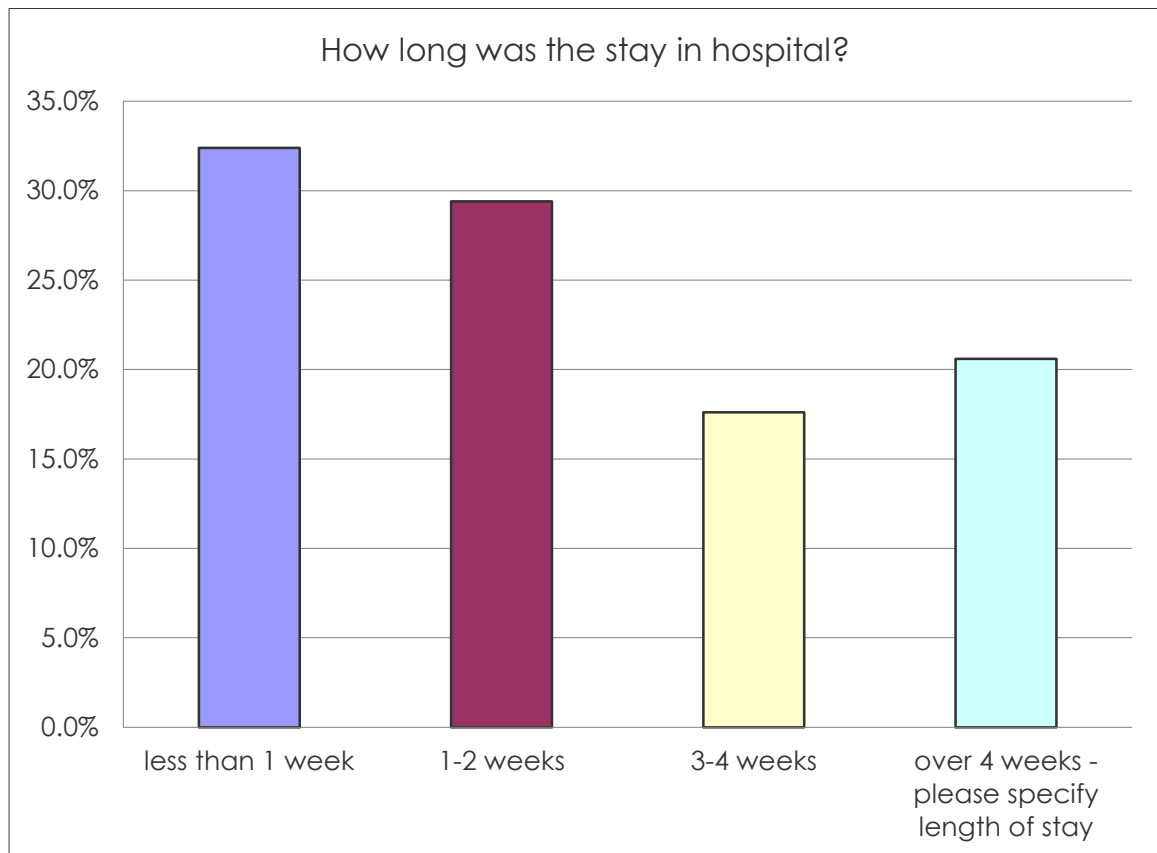


Chart 4 - Graphical display of results from question 4

Question 5. How satisfied were you/the patient with the treatment received by the healthcare staff?

Table 5 and Chart 5, below, illustrate the results of question 5, enquiring about patient satisfaction with the treatment received from the healthcare staff.

57 % of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the clinical treatment they received whilst within the setting. 31% were dissatisfied and a further 11.4% were very dissatisfied.

Table 5 - table showing results from question 5

How satisfied were you/the patient with the treatment received by the healthcare staff?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very satisfied	28.6%	10
Satisfied	28.6%	10
Dissatisfied	31.4%	11
Very dissatisfied	11.4%	4
<i>answered question</i>		35
<i>skipped question</i>		0

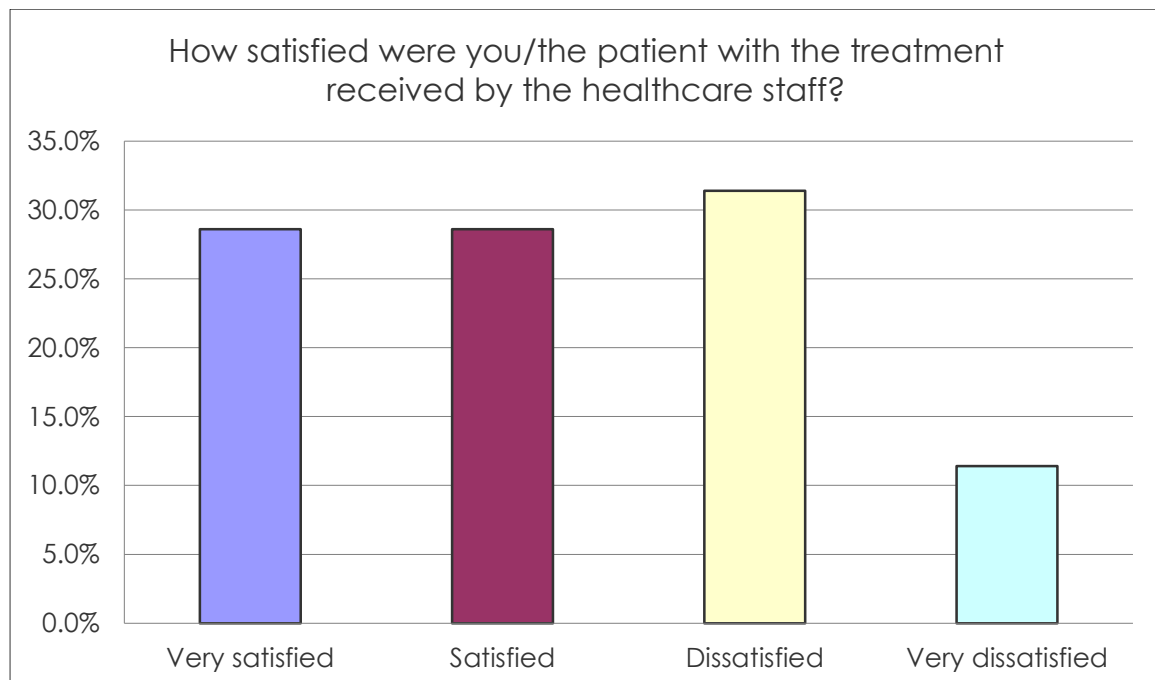


Chart 5 - Graphical display of results from question 5

Question 6. If you/the patient had more than one health issue - do you think all issues were considered when planning the discharge?

Table 6 and Chart 6, below, illustrate the results of question 6, dealing with the number of conditions that the patient was receiving treatment for prior to discharge.

59 % of respondents felt that all of their health issues were not considered when discharge was planned.

Table 6 - table showing results from question 6

If you/the patient had more than one health issue, do you think all issues were considered when planning the discharge?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	40.6%	13
No	59.4%	19
<i>answered question</i>		32
<i>skipped question</i>		3

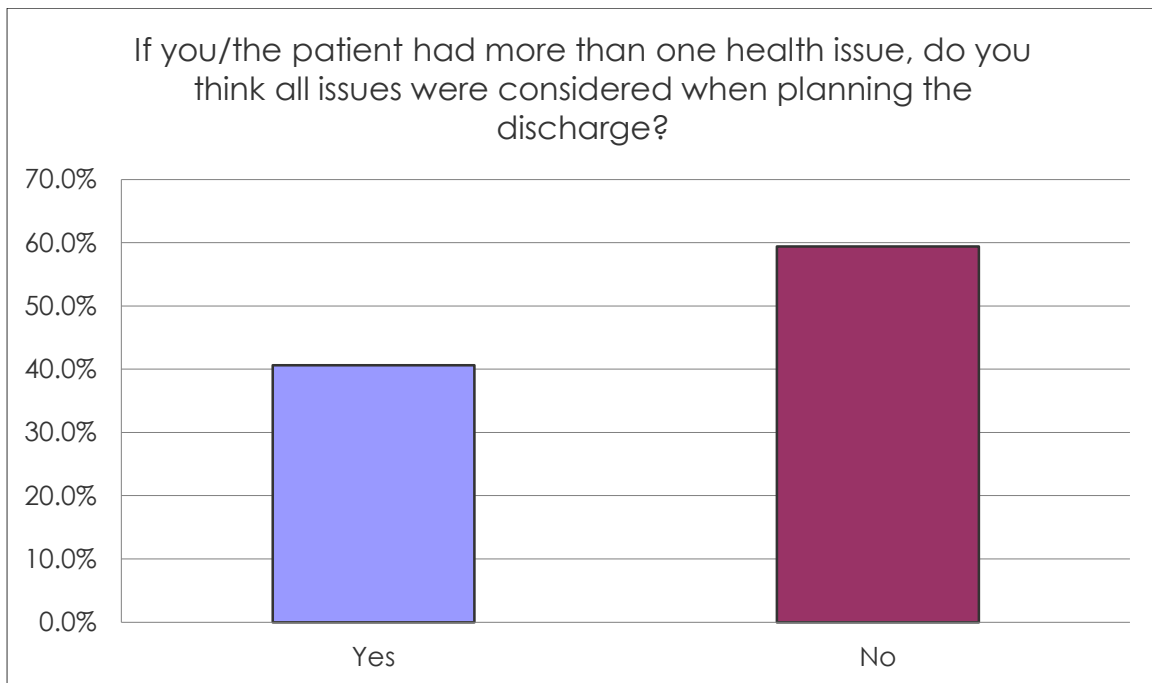


Chart 6 - Graphical display of results from question 6

Question 7. Did the staff ask you/the patient about the support that would be in place on discharge (home/family/community support)?

Table 7 and Chart 7, below, illustrate the results of question 7, concerning whether the patient was asked what support was made available to them post-discharge.

56 % of respondents were asked about available support at home for post-discharge.

Table 7 - table showing results from question 7

Did the staff ask you/the patient about the support that would be in place on discharge (home/family/community support)?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	56.3%	18
No	43.8%	14
<i>answered question</i>		32
<i>skipped question</i>		3

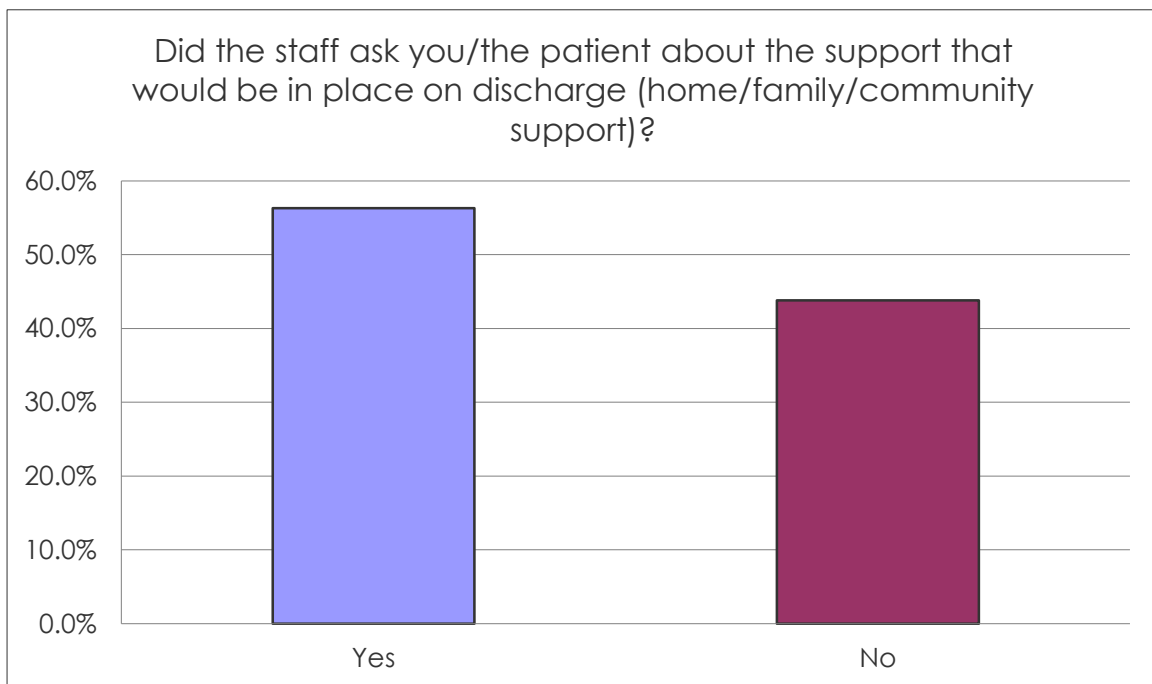


Chart 7 - Graphical display of results from question 7

Question 8. Did you/the patient feel ready to be discharged from hospital?

Table 8 and Chart 8, below, illustrate the results of question 8, concerning whether the patient felt that they were ready for discharge. Half of the respondents felt they were not ready to be discharged from hospital.

Table 8 - table showing results from question 8

Did you/the patient feel ready to be discharged from hospital?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	50.0%	16
No	50.0%	16
<i>answered question</i>		32
<i>skipped question</i>		3

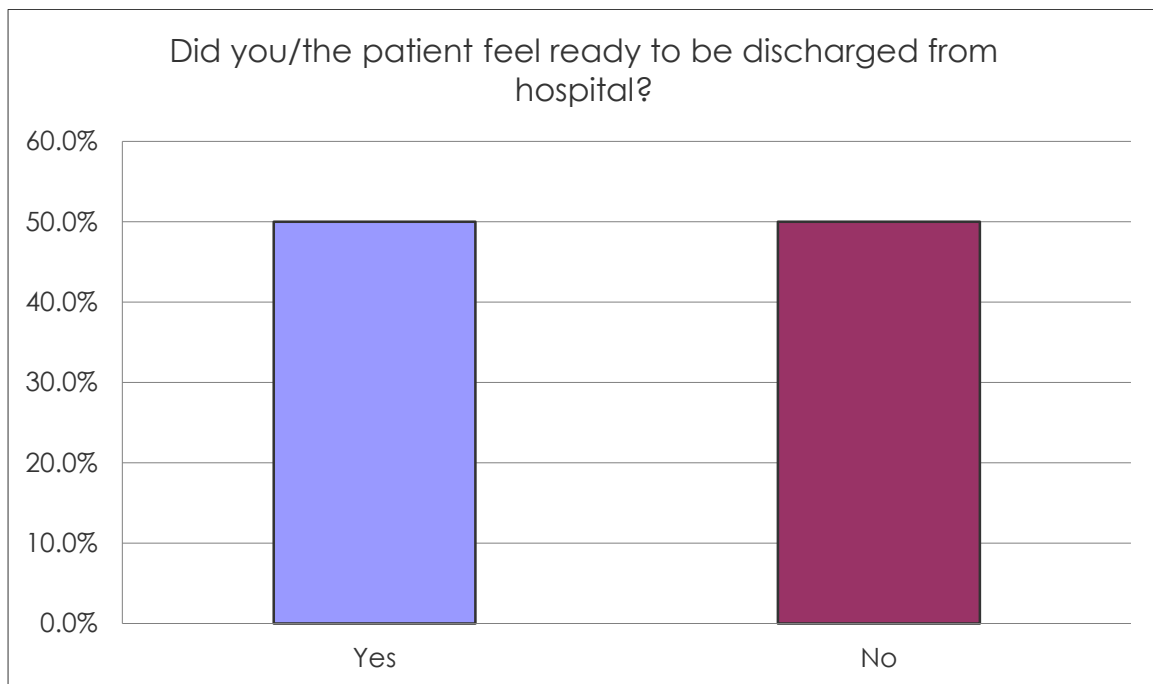


Chart 8 - Graphical display of results from question 8

Question 9. Did you/the patient feel involved in the decision making process regarding discharge?

Table 9 and Chart 9, below, show the results of question 9, asking whether the patient felt that they were sufficiently involved in the discharge decision making process.

60 % of respondents felt the patient was not involved in discharge decision making.

Table 9 - table showing results from question 9

Did you/the patient feel involved in the decision making process regarding discharge?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	40.0%	12
No	60.0%	18
<i>answered question</i>		30
<i>skipped question</i>		5

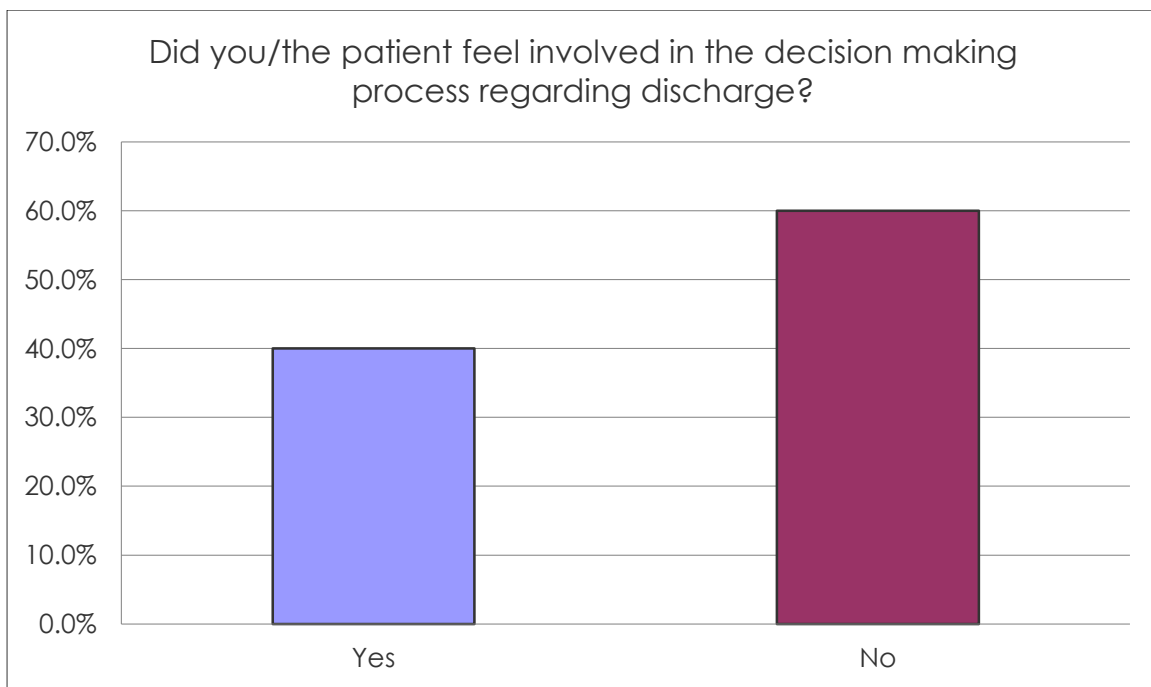


Chart 9 - Graphical display of results from question 9

Question 10. Did you/the patient feel the discharge was made?

Table 10 and Chart 10, below, show the outcome from question 10, concerning whether the patient felt that the timing of the discharge was correct.

47 % of respondents felt that the discharge was too early and 41 % felt it was at the right time, with 13 % feeling discharge was too late.

Table 10 - table showing results from question 10

Did you/the patient feel the discharge was made:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Too soon	46.9%	15
Right time	40.6%	13
Too late	12.5%	4
<i>answered question</i>		32
<i>skipped question</i>		3

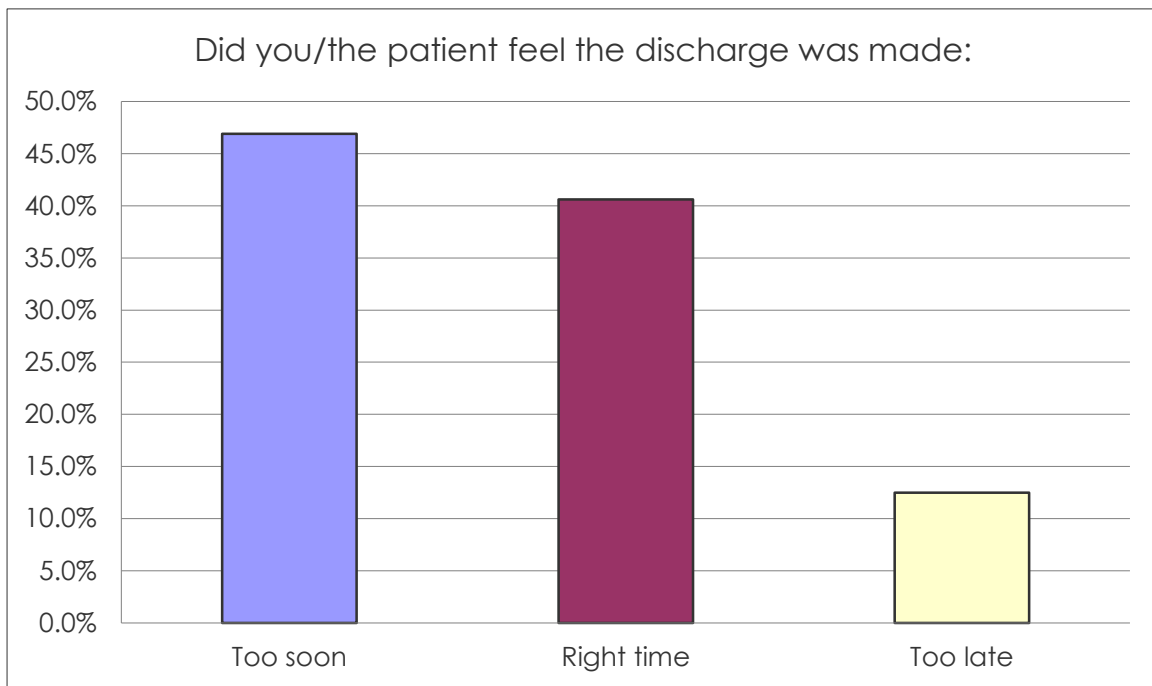


Chart 10 - Graphical display of results from question 10

Question 11. On discharge - were you/the patient given a treatment plan?

Table 11 and Chart 11, below, show the result from question 11, concerning whether there was given a post-discharge treatment plan.

56 3% of respondents were not given a care plan on discharge.

Table 11 - table showing results from question 11

On discharge - were you/the patient given a treatment plan?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	18.8%	6
No	56.3%	18
Don't know	25.0%	8
<i>answered question</i>		32
<i>skipped question</i>		3

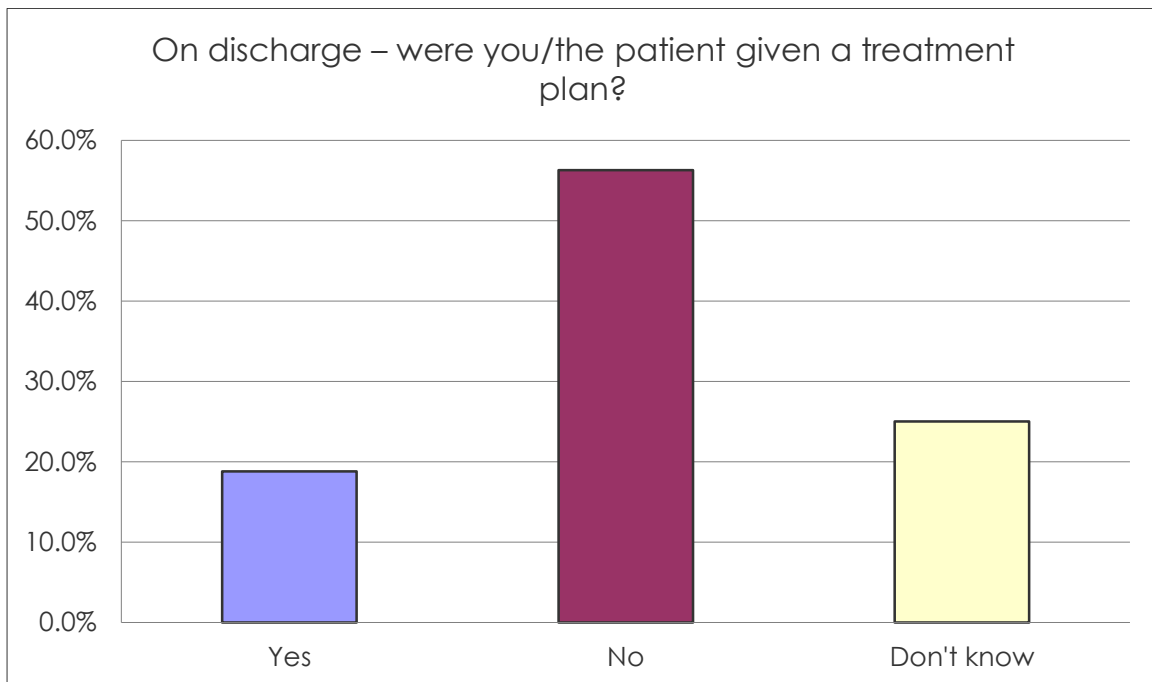


Chart 11 - Graphical display of results from question 11

Question 12. Where were you/the patient discharged to?

Table 12 and Chart 12, below, show the result from question 12, which asks where the patient was discharged to.

Three quarters of respondents reported that the patient was discharged to their home.

Table 12 - table showing results from question 12

Where were you/the patient discharged to?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Home	75.0%	24
Care Home	15.6%	5
Other hospital setting i.e. community hospital	6.3%	2
Other (please specify)	3.1%	1
answered question		32
skipped question		3

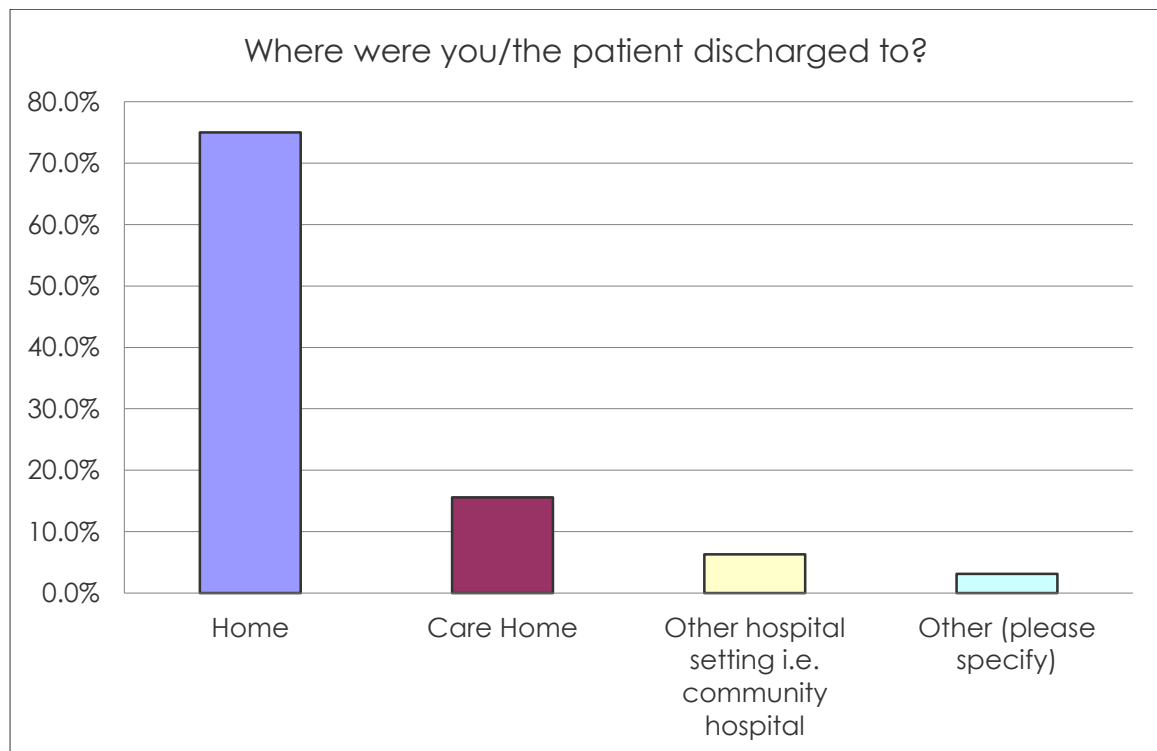


Chart 12 - Graphical display of results from question 12

Question 13. What time of the day did the discharge take place?

Table 13 and Chart 13, below, show the result from question 13, enquiring about the time of day the patient was discharged.

38 % of respondents said that discharge occurred between 4pm and 7pm and 19 % between 7 pm and 7 am.

Table 13 - table showing results from question 13

What time of the day did the discharge take place?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Between 7am - 10am	3.1%	1
Between 10am - 1pm	18.8%	6
Between 1pm - 4pm	21.9%	7
Between 4pm - 7pm	37.5%	12
Overnight between 7pm - 7am	18.8%	6
answered question		32
skipped question		3

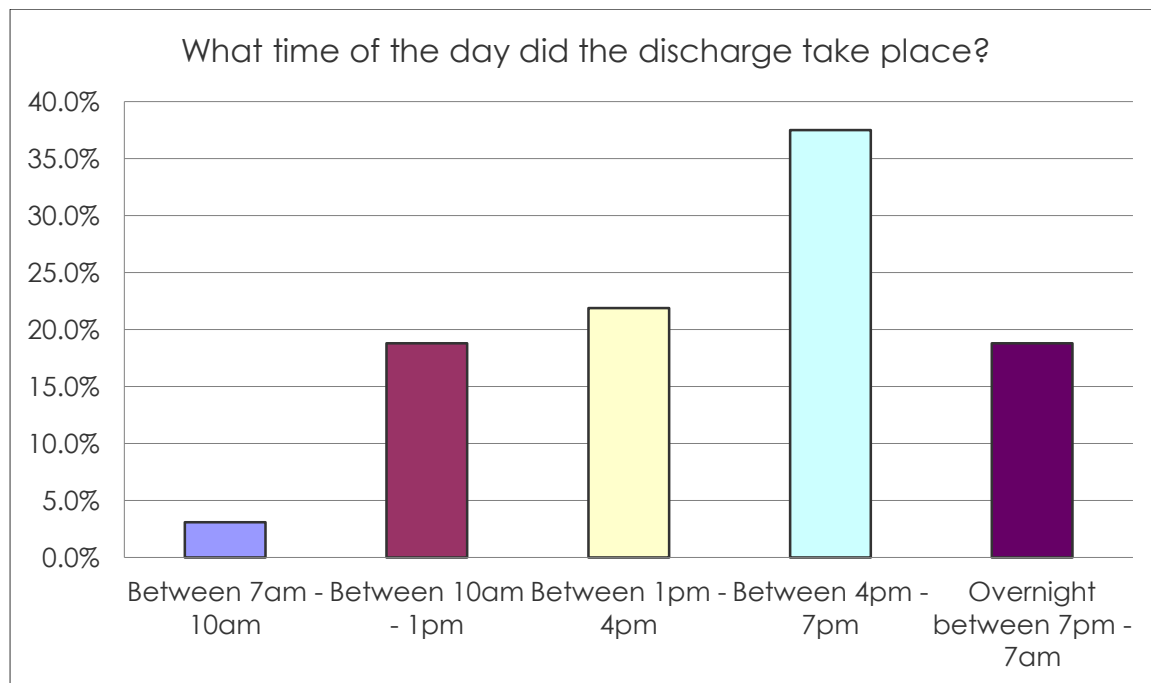


Chart 13 - Graphical display of results from question 13

Question 14. Was transport arranged on discharge?

Table 14 and Chart 14, below, show the result from question 14, concerned hospital organised for discharge.

56 % of respondents had no transport arranged for them on discharge.

Table 14 - table showing results from question 14

Was transport arranged on discharge?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	43.8%	14
No	56.3%	18
<i>answered question</i>		32
<i>skipped question</i>		3

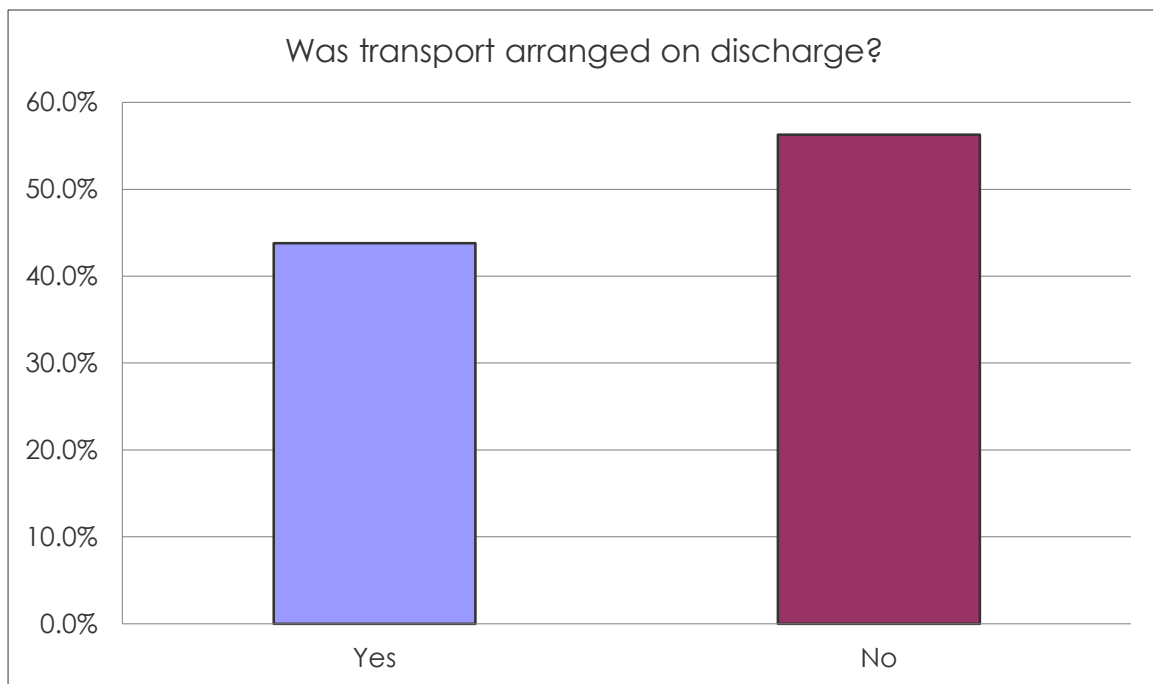


Chart 14 - Graphical display of results from question 14

Question 15. Did healthcare staff check the patient fully understood any instructions regarding follow up care/medication etc.?

Table 15 and Chart 15, below, show the result from question 15, asking whether the healthcare staff ensured that the patient fully understood instructions regarding follow up care.

59 % of respondents reported that healthcare staff did not check that the patient fully understood follow up care and medication requirements.

Table 15 - table showing results from question 15

Did healthcare staff check the patient fully understood any instructions regarding follow up care/medication etc?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	40.6%	13
No	59.4%	19
<i>answered question</i>		32
<i>skipped question</i>		3

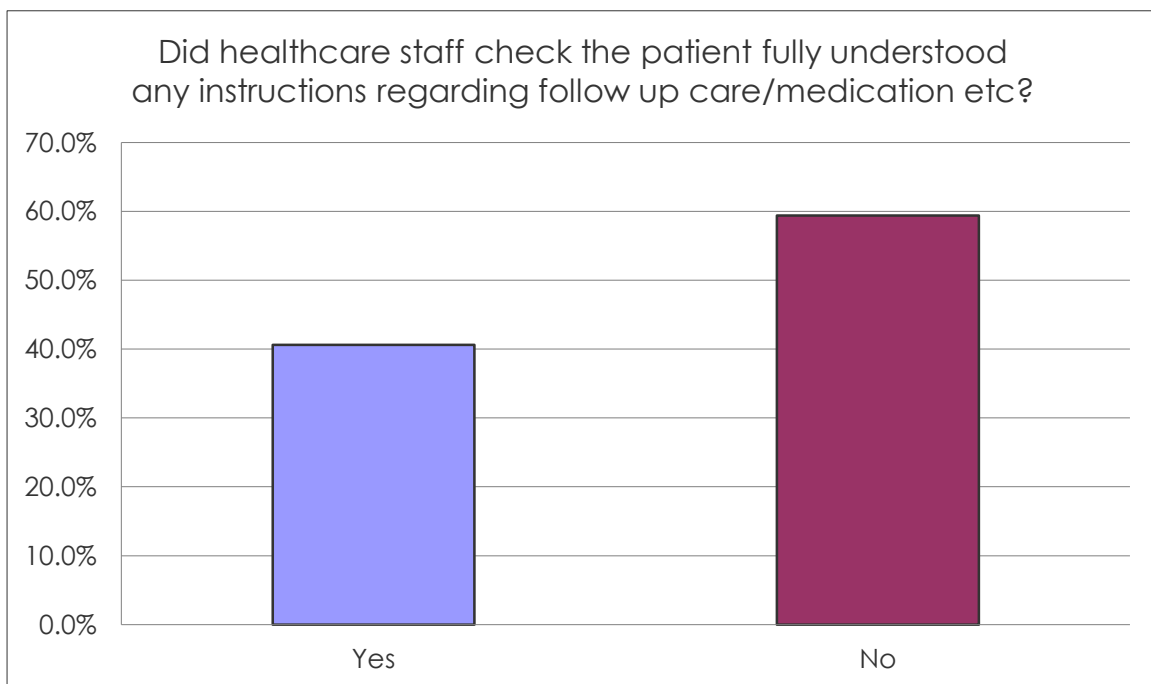


Chart 15 - Graphical display of results from question 15

Question 16. Were you/the patient readmitted to hospital within 28 days?

Table 16 and Chart 16, below, show the result from question 16, covering whether the patient had been readmitted to hospital within 28 days of discharge.

60 % of respondents were readmitted to hospital within 28 days, and of those, 59% were readmitted for the same condition (see question 17, below).

Table 16 - table showing results from question 16

Were you/the patient readmitted to hospital within 28 days?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	40.0%	12
No	60.0%	18
<i>answered question</i>		30
<i>skipped question</i>		5

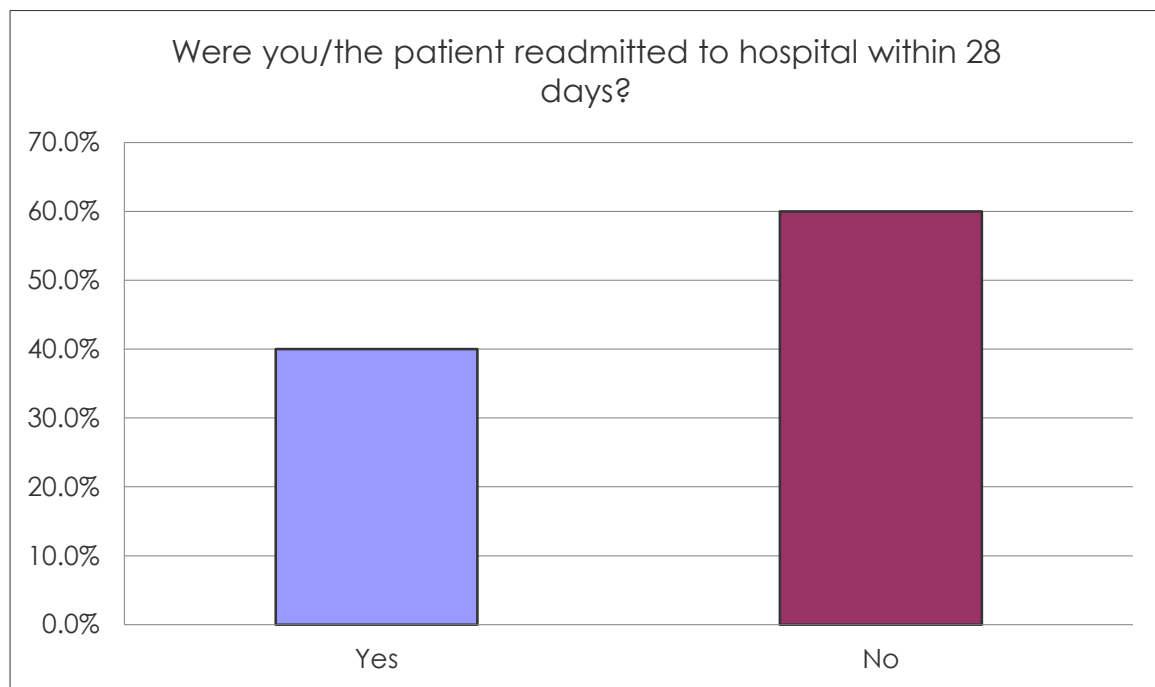


Chart 16 - Graphical display of results from question 16

Question 17. If answer to 18 was 'Yes', was this for the same condition?

Table 17 and Chart 17, below, show the result from question 17, asking whether, if the patient had been readmitted to hospital within 28 days of discharge, whether that readmission was for the same condition.

Of the 60 % of patients who were readmitted to hospital within 28 days of discharge, 59% were readmitted for the same condition.

Table 17 - table showing results from question 17

If yes to question 16 above, was this for the same condition?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	58.3%	7
No - please specify if possible	41.7%	5
	<i>answered question</i>	12
	<i>skipped question</i>	23

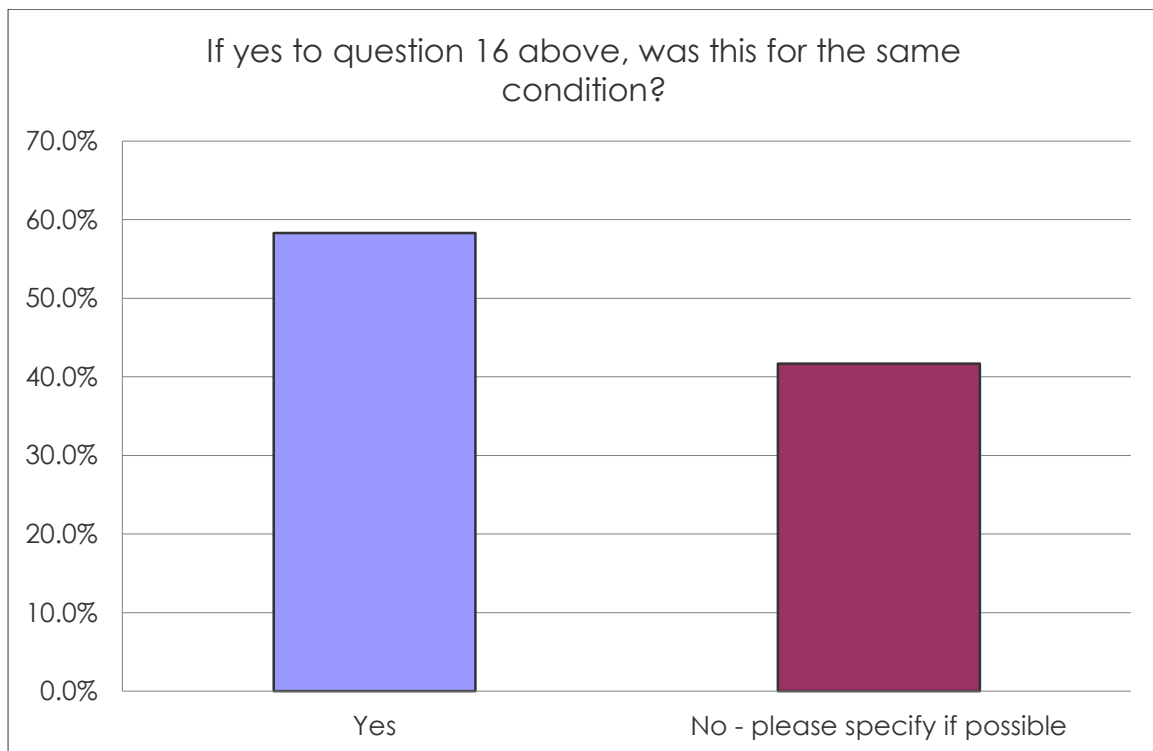


Chart 17 - Graphical display of results from question 17

Question 18. How easy did was it to access/obtain support following discharge?

Table 18 and Chart 18, below, show the result from question 18, enquiring how easy it was for the patient to access support after discharge.

50 % of respondents found it either difficult or very difficult to access / obtain support following discharge, with 7 % unable to access support at all.

Table 18 - table showing results from question 18

How easy did was it to access/obtain support following discharge?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very easy	23.3%	7
Easy	20.0%	6
Difficult	40.0%	12
Very difficult	10.0%	3
Unable to access support (please give reasons)	6.7%	2
Reasons unable to access support		5
answered question		30
skipped question		5

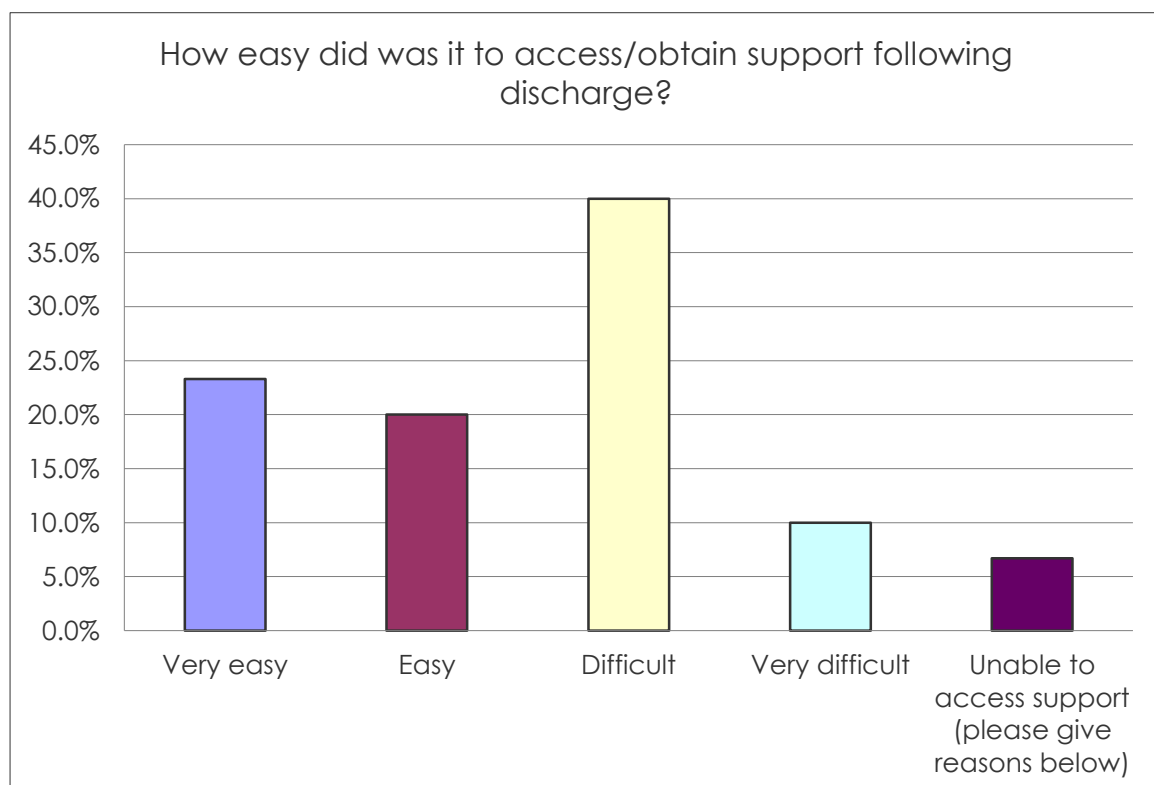


Chart 18 - Graphical display of results from question 18

Question 19. Did you/the patient visit their GP following discharge?

Table 19 and Chart 19, below, show the result from question 19, which asks whether the patient visited the GP after being discharged.

52 % of respondents visited their GP post-discharge

Table 19 - table showing results from question 19

Did you/the patient visit their GP following discharge?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	51.6%	16
No	48.4%	15
<i>answered question</i>		31
<i>skipped question</i>		4

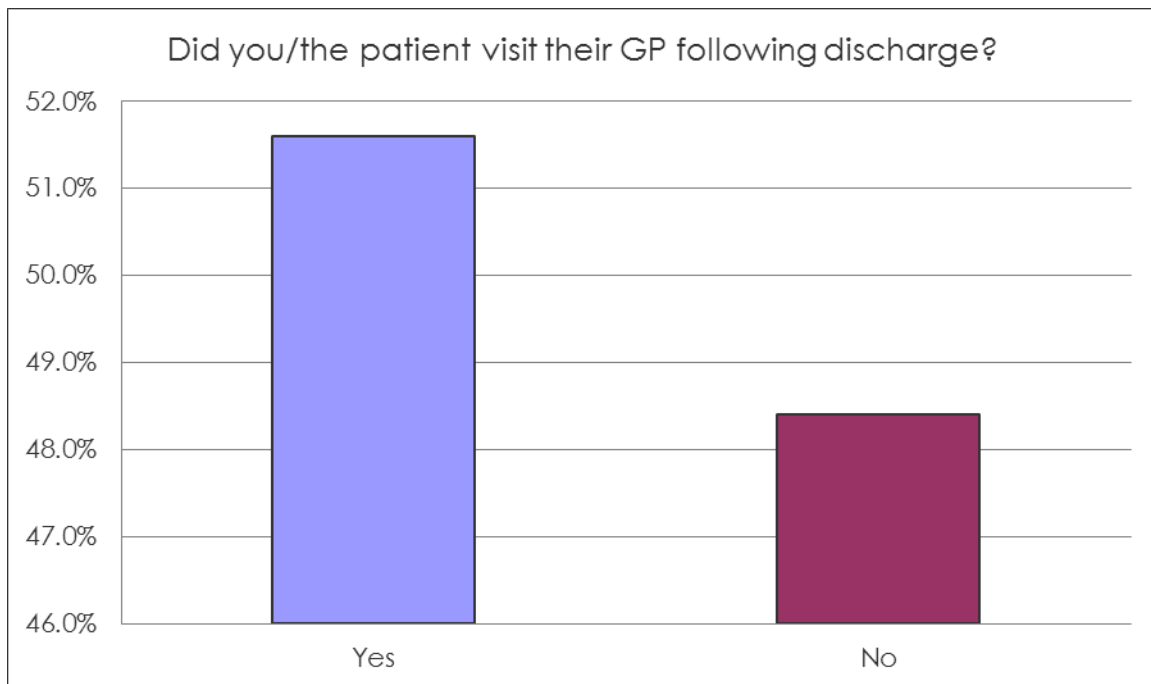


Chart 19 - Graphical display of results from question 19

Question 20. Did anyone from the healthcare service make contact to find out how you/the patient was getting along following discharge?

Table 20 and Chart 20, below, show the result from question 20. When asked whether the patient had contact from the relevant healthcare service,

70 % of respondents reported that there was no contact from the relevant healthcare service following discharge.

Table 20 - table showing results from question 20

Did anyone from the healthcare service make contact to find out how you/the patient was getting along following discharge?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	30.0%	9
No	70.0%	21
<i>answered question</i>		30
<i>skipped question</i>		5

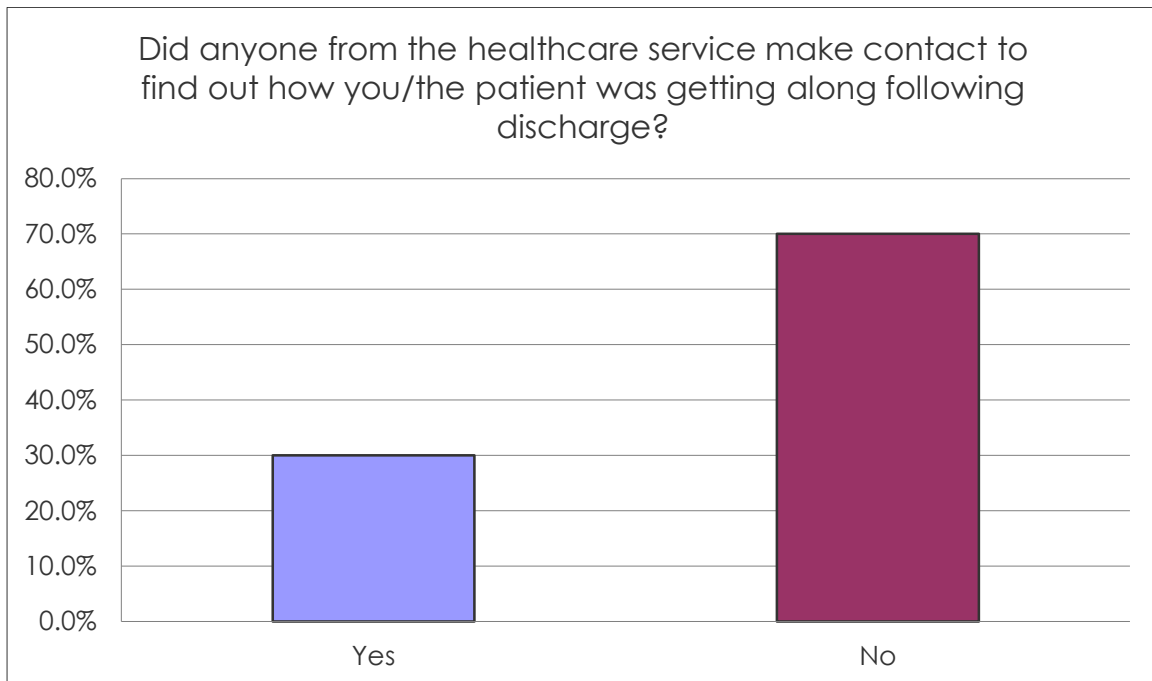


Chart 20 - Graphical display of results from question 20

Question 21. Demographics of Respondents:

All respondents, 15 of whom completed the demographics section of the survey, described their ethnicity as either *British* or *White-British*.

Table 21, below, illustrates that of the 14 respondents that answered the question, 79 % regarded themselves as having a disability.

Table 21 - table showing results from question on disability of respondents

Are you registered as having a disability?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	21.4%	3
No	78.6%	11
	<i>answered question</i>	14
	<i>skipped question</i>	21

Conclusions

Although the survey sample size is relatively small one several trends can be identified with discharge of frail and elderly patients from Cumbrian health and care settings.

The majority (44%) of respondents related to being discharged from a general hospital ward and 57% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the care received during their stay. 56% were asked, by clinical/medical staff, about available support at home post discharge.

However, more than half of the respondents felt unready for discharge and 60% were not involved in the decision to discharge. 47% felt their discharge was too early and 41% felt it was at the right time for them. 13% felt their discharge was too late.

56% were not provided with a care plan or information prior to discharge and where discharge information was provided, 59% of respondents stated that healthcare staff did not check that they fully understood follow up care and medication requirements.

70 % of respondents reported that there was no contact from the relevant healthcare service following discharge and 50 % of respondents found it either difficult or very difficult to access / obtain support following discharge, with 7 % unable to access support at all

52 % of respondents visited their GP post-discharge.

60 % of respondents were readmitted to hospital within 28 days (of those 59% were readmitted for the same condition).

In relation to discharge transport 56% of respondents had no transport arranged. 38% of respondents reported that discharge took place between 4pm and 7pm and a further 19% were transported post discharge between the hours of 7pm and 7am.

Overall whilst the level of care provided is considered by service users to be at least satisfactory there are concerns relating to the discharge process.

From the evidence presented there is a clear need for service providers to review their discharge policies and to ensure that staff responsible for patient interface are carrying out discharge procedures effectively.

This will ensure that patients receive the correct information at the correct time to ensure their onward recovery and to enable other services such as pharmacies and community carers to carry out their role for the patient.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are made by Healthwatch Cumbria to all health and Social Care Service Providers and Commissioners to improve patient and carer discharge experience.

1. Ensure healthcare professionals discuss the discharge process with patients and families/carers and ensure that patients are involved in the decision making process.
2. Ensure that ALL patients are provided with comprehensive discharge information.
3. Ensure that patients, families and or carers fully understand discharge information.
4. Ensure that discharges for the frail and elderly do not take place between the hours of 7pm and 7am.
5. Ensure that where necessary follow-up contact is made as detailed in patient care plans and discharge information.