

Patient experiences of Weston General Hospital Accident and Emergency department

Neighbourhood health and wellbeing insights – July 2026



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Aim

During this project Healthwatch North Somerset engaged and collected feedback from people living in North Somerset who have used Weston General Hospital Accident and Emergency Department, and/or Clevedon Minor Injuries Unit to design a survey to look at service access and quality of patient experience. This summary report is specific to Weston General Hospital Accident & Emergency department.

About Healthwatch

Healthwatch North Somerset's statutory duty and remit is to provide an independent voice for people who use health and social care services. We give people an opportunity to have a say about their local health and social care services and we report these experiences to influence service providers and improve outcomes. We have a representative on the Health and Wellbeing Boards, Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and at the Integrated Care Partnership and Board. We feed issues back to local care providers and nationally via Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission.

Equalities statement

Healthwatch North Somerset is committed to promoting equality and diversity and tackling social exclusion. We aim to ensure equitable access to our projects for all. We include peoples lived experiences in our work and identify and mitigate against barriers to enable people to become involved in our research. We address the participation needs of those who share one or more protected characteristic, or those that experience hidden discrimination, or are part of an 'invisible minority.' We provide access to communication support to adjust for people's needs and proactively assist people in attending events and meetings we hold. Healthwatch North Somerset will connect with existing patient, service user and voluntary sector organisations to develop relationships with diverse communities, and especially with people whose voices can be harder to hear.

Background

The Healthwatch North Somerset survey was developed in response to feedback received by Healthwatch North Somerset and priorities identified by members of the Healthwatch North Somerset Local Advisory Group.

Weston General Hospital's A&E, established in 1986, is open seven days a week, 52 weeks a year between 8am and 10pm and gives emergency medical treatment and clinical care. It has faced significant challenges, including staffing shortages leading to temporary overnight closures in 2017/2018 and high "trolley waits". It merged with UHBW in 2020 and is now focusing on a Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) unit, expanded in 2023 to reduce admission pressures.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the insights and experiences shared by the people who contributed to this report.

Patient feedback received by Healthwatch North Somerset indicates the need for Weston General Hospital A&E department to:

- Provide clear and accessible information to patients on opening hours and expected waiting times in A&E.
- Give clear information to patients, their families and carers when a patient is transferred to another hospital department.
- Inform patients what provision is available for patients with additional needs including disability, physical and sensory impairment.

Engagement

Healthwatch Engagement Officers received patient feedback at Weston A&E prior to promoting the survey. Survey posters were put up in Weston General Hospital main reception and in the A&E waiting room, survey leaflets were also put up in local GP surgeries within central Weston-Super-Mare and distributed to GPs across North Somerset. North Somerset GP practices were invited to share the survey link via patient text. The survey was also posted on the Healthwatch North Somerset website, and across Healthwatch North Somerset networks.

Healthwatch North Somerset Engagement Officers conducted three engagement visits to Weston A&E. One of these involved collecting feedback with people in the A&E waiting area during a weekday from 1 – 4 pm, prior to the survey being disseminated. Another visit included one engagement session in the minor injuries ward of Weston General Hospital A&E, and one in the A&E waiting area.

The survey was open online from 25th February – 20th of March 2026.

Outcomes

Project outcomes will be shared with local health commissioners, Healthwatch England, the CQC and local voluntary and community service providers.

Survey findings

Healthwatch North Somerset received 119 completed online surveys. This included patient experience data on experience of Weston General Hospital A&E. Survey respondents had accessed Weston General Hospital A&E between January 2022 – March 2026. We also spoke to people face to face and carried out the survey in A&E. This report summary is specific to Weston A&E.

Demographic details

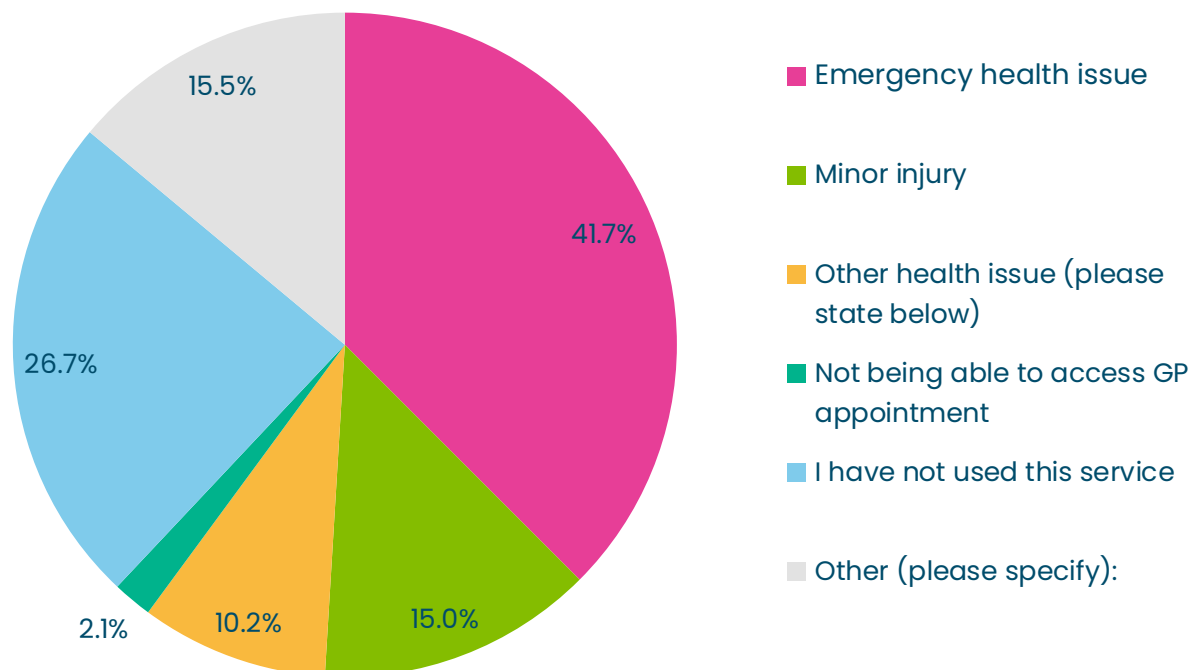
67% of respondents were women and 31% were men. 56% respondents were aged 65–79 years, 15% were aged 50–64 years, 13% were aged 25–49 years and 12% were 80+ years. 10 % of survey respondents identified as carers. 23% of survey respondents stated that they had a long-term condition and 7% stated that they had a disability. In relation to NHS health inclusion groups 6% of respondents stated that they had limited family or social networks, 0.9% stated that they were geographically isolated; 0.5% stated that they were homeless; 0.5% stated that they live in poverty and 0.5 % of respondents stated that they were an asylum seeker or refugee (see appendix for demographic charts).

Survey feedback on Weston A&E

The key reasons why survey respondents accessed Weston A&E were:

- acute injuries and trauma
- cardiovascular and respiratory emergencies
- severe pain and infections
- specialist care and complications

Please can you tell us why you accessed Weston General Accident and Emergency?



How satisfied were you with the care at Weston A&E?	
Very satisfied	73
Satisfied	26
Neutral	9
Unsatisfied	8
Very unsatisfied	4
Total responses	120

The above demonstrates that 82.5% of respondents stated they were very satisfied or satisfied at their overall level of care.

Length of time waiting to see a clinical member of staff	
1-2 hours	90
2-3 hours	10
3-4 hours	12
4 hours	2
5+ hours	12
Total responses	126

This table shows that the majority of patients (71.4%) were seen within 1–2 hours, while only 9.5% experienced the longest wait times of 5 hours or more.

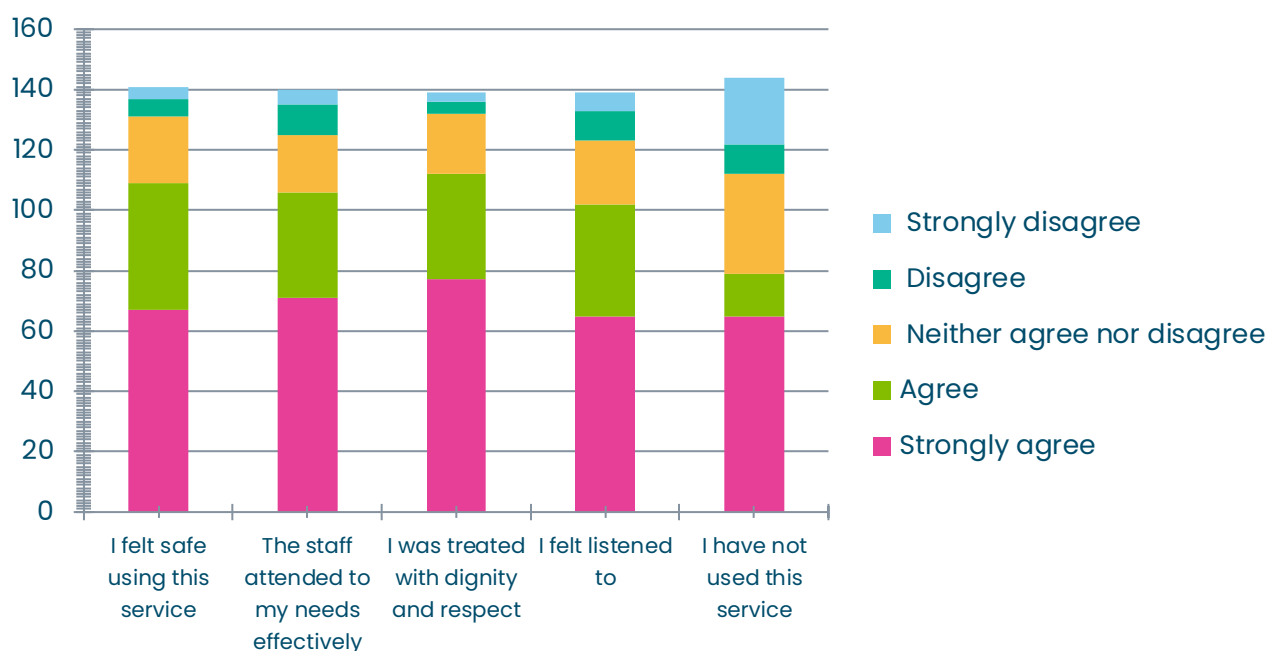
Did a nurse/clinician introduce themselves to you at the appointment?

91.8% of survey respondents said that a nurse or clinician introduced themselves to them when they were seen at Weston A&E department.

Did you feel involved in decisions about your care?

83% of survey respondents said that they felt involved in decisions about their care at Weston A&E department.

Weston General Hospital A&E: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



"I felt safe using this service"

The vast majority of patients felt secure during their visit, with over 100 respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Very few expressed safety concerns, making this one of the most positive areas of the report.

"The staff attended to my needs effectively"

Patient needs were generally met with high efficiency. While the bulk of the feedback is strongly positive, there is a small, notable segment of patients who felt neutral or dissatisfied with how their specific needs were handled.

"I was treated with dignity and respect"

This statement received the highest level of "Strongly Agree" responses. It suggests that interpersonal care and bedside manner are significant strengths of the A&E staff, with almost no "Strongly Disagree" feedback.

"I felt listened to"

While still largely positive, this category shows more variety in patient experience. Most felt heard by their clinicians, but there is a slightly larger group of neutral and disagreeing voices compared to the "dignity and respect" category.

"I have not used this service"

This category serves as a control for the data. Interestingly, even though these respondents haven't used the service, their "agreement" levels are likely linked to their general perception or reputation of the hospital.

Factors delaying access to care at Weston A&E department

The main factors delaying access to care at Weston A&E department were cited by survey respondents as long waiting times (39 respondents), no one calling them back or difficulty navigating phone systems (11 respondents) and online only referral systems (10 respondents).

Qualitative data

The overall themes that arose from the open text survey responses were:

- [Efficiency and] access to care
- Diagnostic accuracy and quality
- Communication between staff and patients
- Patient dignity and wellbeing
- Environmental factors

Experience of care at Weston General Hospital A&E – impact on patient health and wellbeing

Positive feedback related to patient experience of timely diagnosis, good communication between staff and patients, smooth transitions to different hospital departments, experience of timely follow-up care and accessible follow-up appointments.

Diagnostic accuracy and quality

“They worked with Bristol Haematology and Oncology Centre to diagnose me with a rare and aggressive blood cancer that meant I was a medical emergency, and they were able to give me the transfusions I needed and then blue lit me to BHOC (Bristol Haematology and Oncology) for immediate treatment. They saved my life as it could have been fatal if they had not taken the right path that led to my prompt diagnosis”.

Communication between staff and patients

“I had excellent care at the hospital and was then put on a Virtual Ward and the care I received was first class”.

“I am really anxious about what is wrong with me, staff have been great at explaining things and have kept me up to date with what's going on and I have been on the move quite a bit to different departments, so it hasn't felt like I have been waiting that long”.

"I was in considerable pain. I was in the department for several hours. After I returned home, I had a message from the doctor's receptionist offering me an appointment".

"I continue to need a catheter and the nurse is excellent".

"I'm on my way to recovering. Weston have giving me a six-month open appointment if I have any issues".

Patient dignity and wellbeing

"I was dealt with professionally, with dignity, listened to and put at ease. My medication was discussed and new medication prescribed with good results".
(Individual taken in with suspected TIA)

"My health condition massively impacts on my health and wellbeing and day to day living and the years of fighting to get a diagnosis and some sort of treatment for my condition has had a huge impact to me in terms of mental wellbeing, experience of care at A&E has been fantastic".

Patient concerns about Weston A&E included clinical errors, poor communication, and long wait times in some cases causing distress, anxiety, and worsened physical health, leaving some patients feeling ignored. These are illustrated by the following comments:

"The triage nurse didn't have my shoulder X-rayed at Weston A&E despite the pain and me informing her that it was my shoulder I hurt. She sent me for an x-ray on my elbow which was clear then told me it was muscular, moved my arm upwards, causing great pain then told me to keep moving it".

"[In relation to] My dad's, mum's and mine (health). Stress and anxiety over the constant errors and mishandling of my father's diagnosis and care".

"I feel that as I attend here regularly that I am not always treated with respect and don't feel that I am always listened to".

"We are scared to become ill as the service at Weston is so poor".

"It took me a further 2 weeks to see a GP during my mobility decreased and has not yet fully returned my anxiety has also not improved and I have been left feeling unheard and sidelined". (Older patient after a fall had to wait 6 hours to be seen at Weston A&E).

"Made me very anxious having to wait 7 hours and grew more ill. Had to wait nearly a week for sputum test results and wasn't told after the hospital admission following A&E that I had heart failure and partially collapsed lung. Only found this out on the hospital discharge. No one gave face-to-face information about my health conditions or after or at follow up care. Discharged home with a 6-day care package". (Individual detailed a 7 hour wait in A&E, with suspected COPD flare up).

The issues survey respondents highlighted that could be improved at Weston A&E were:

- waiting times
- opening hours particularly access overnight after 10pm
- communication between clinical staff and patients
- communication between A&E, and different hospital departments
- availability of parking

Several patients reported waiting times of between 7 – 10 hours at A&E, and one patient reported a waiting time of 24 hours to be admitted on to a ward at Weston General Hospital. Others commented on patient privacy issues for example scan results were shared in “small, cramped areas with no privacy” and that personal details were often taken within earshot of other patients.

Availability of parking for patients was seen as problematic by some patients at Weston A&E department.

What could be improved?

Opening hours

“Having another doctor on (available) past 10pm”.

“A 24/7 A&E with enough staff for busy periods”.

“I am concerned that the A&E service is not available 24/7 for life threatening illnesses that require urgent care especially given the growing population here”.

Communication

“A consultant that listened to the patient”.

“Each department knowing what the other department is doing, planning. Not cancelling appointments without letting us know. Bad care while dad was staying at the hospital. Zero duty of care”.

“Should have been listened to. Triage nurse just assumed my injury was mild. Didn't ask me about my pain level and put down level 4 out of 10 when I was in extreme pain and couldn't stand or walk due to the knee injury”.

“Information I was given was incorrect, it wasn't until I saw the consultant last December and he arranged an ultrasound at Southmead in December, that I had in fact been suffering with two torn ligaments which would require surgery”.

“Don't isolate an elderly person as it really does impact on their mental health and their wellbeing”.

"On a previous visit to the hospital (Weston A&E) I was left feeling very depressed and isolated due to being placed in a room on my own, (there was) no contact with anyone and no interaction whatsoever".

Waiting times

"Less waiting time, I waited 10 hours and I'm sure I was going to be sent home at 2 am from waiting room. I virtually collapsed then suddenly everyone seems to take notice and give me the care I needed".

"In both cases the wait to be seen was long, particularly in Weston. The waiting area wasn't very welcoming, Clevedon was better. After my husband had a CT scan, we were seated in a very small, cramped area with a lot of other people until the results came through. There was no privacy as we were told the results of the scan and as the doctor had a very quiet voice it was difficult to hear what he was saying. A printout of the scan results and what to do next would have been helpful. When stressed it's easy to forget instructions and to remember to ask all the right questions. Reading results on a piece of paper might trigger questions to ask which should be asked. Once we were seen by a doctor the CT scan was organised very quickly and the doctors were very thorough and helpful".

"Weston A&E - we were waiting around with minimal updates or information for 12 hours. Although my husband was seen intermittently. Eventually my husband was given an overnight bed in A&E but still didn't get to a ward until the following late morning (24 hours after arrival).

"It was a very long wait, but I understand services are under pressure. But the car park costs were horrendous. There were also some very scary people in the waiting room. I was scared for my safety".

"Speed of service mainly but also significant improvement in joined up care".

Identity, culture and personal background

Relating to patient experience of Weston A&E, 79.6 % of respondents said Yes to the statement 'Did you feel the care you received reflect and respect your identity, culture, or personal background?' and 20.3 % said No. (128 people responded to this question out of the total number of 217 survey respondents).

In relation to the above it should be acknowledged that 199 survey respondents identified as White British, 14 identified as White Other, 2 as White Irish, and 1 preferred not to say.

Feedback from people with additional needs

"I have additional needs and feel that staff have always been considerate of my difficulties and needs, taking their time to explain things and answer any questions that I may have and at times I have been overwhelmed they have found somewhere for me to go to be on my own".

“Because no-one asked if I had any special needs even though I was wearing a sunflower lanyard, no provision could be made for my sensory needs”.

Provider response

Sarah Abdulgani, Deputy Director of Nursing, Weston Management Team

Thank you for sharing the recent patient feedback gathered by Healthwatch North Somerset, regarding Weston General Hospital’s Emergency Department. We really value this feedback, and we are committed to acting on the recommendations raised to improve patient experience within our Emergency Department.

We would like to outline the actions that are currently being implemented, alongside further planned actions in response to the feedback received.

Provide clear and accessible information to patients on opening hours and expected waiting times in A&E.

We have recently been working to strengthen how we communicate the expected waiting times to see a clinician in the department with our patients. When waiting times are longer than expected, a consultant and an experienced Safety Sister provide verbal updates in the waiting room to help keep patients informed of current delays and expected timescales to be seen by a clinician.

Digital screens are positioned at the entrance to the department, displaying up to date waiting times for both triage and assessment by a clinician. Information regarding opening times is displayed at the entrance to the department. In addition, the main hospital entrance displays this information alongside a phone which patients can use to contact NHS 111 or 999 depending on the urgency and nature of their condition.

We are currently reviewing the placement of screens and signage throughout the department to ensure key information is easily visible and accessible in the patient waiting areas. Additional signage will be introduced to clarify to patients what to expect after the department closes at 10:00pm.

We have supported the Health Equity Lead for Weston with attending the Disabled Access and Inclusion Forum, collaborating with individuals with a lived experience, on how we can improve our signage in the department.

Give clear information to patients, their families and carers when a patient is transferred to another hospital department.

At present, there is no robust process in place for ED staff to routinely contact a patient’s next of kin when they are transferred between departments. We are

working to strengthen this by forming a working group, aiming to develop clearer processes with the teams on our assessment units and the wards, to ensure that patients, their families, and carers are kept fully informed when transfers to other departments occur.

This will include ensuring timely communication with the patient's next of kin at the point of transfer, with clear information about the reason for transfer and details of the receiving location. In addition, information will be shared on posters and in leaflet form, to support with informing and preparing our patients for the possibility and rationale for moves within the hospital.

Inform patients what provision is available for patients with additional needs including disability, physical and sensory impairment.

We are continuing to improve the support available for patients with disabilities, sensory impairments, and neurodiverse needs. Sensory resources, including fidget tools and distraction items, are already available within the department. Further developments include the creation of a dedicated neurodiverse room, which will provide a calmer environment with features such as low-level lighting, sensory equipment, and quiet seating.

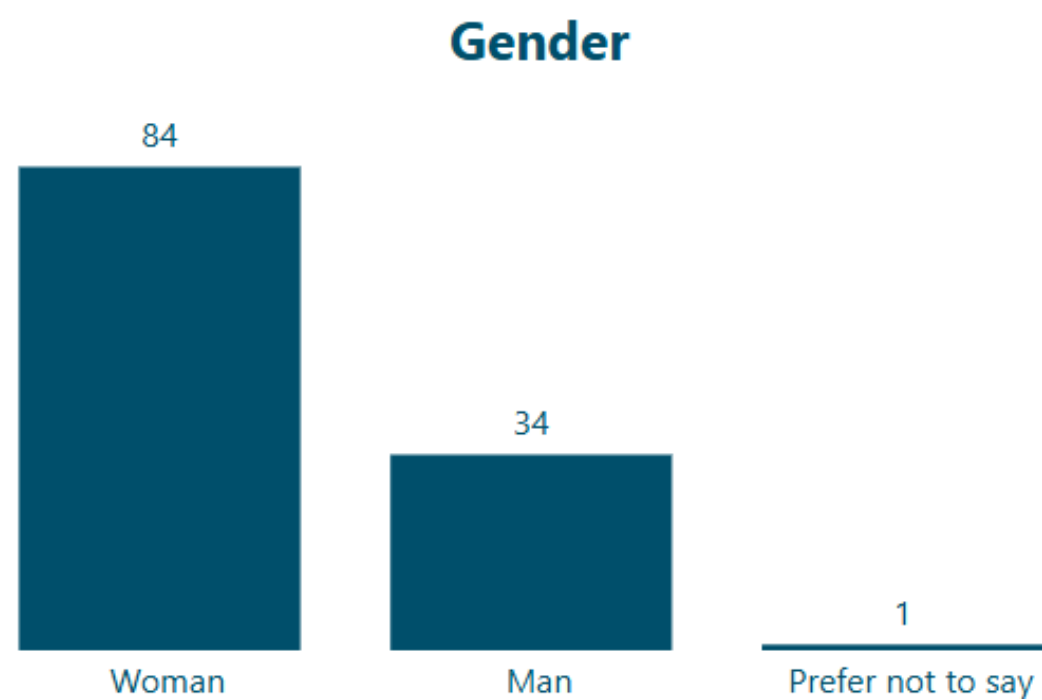
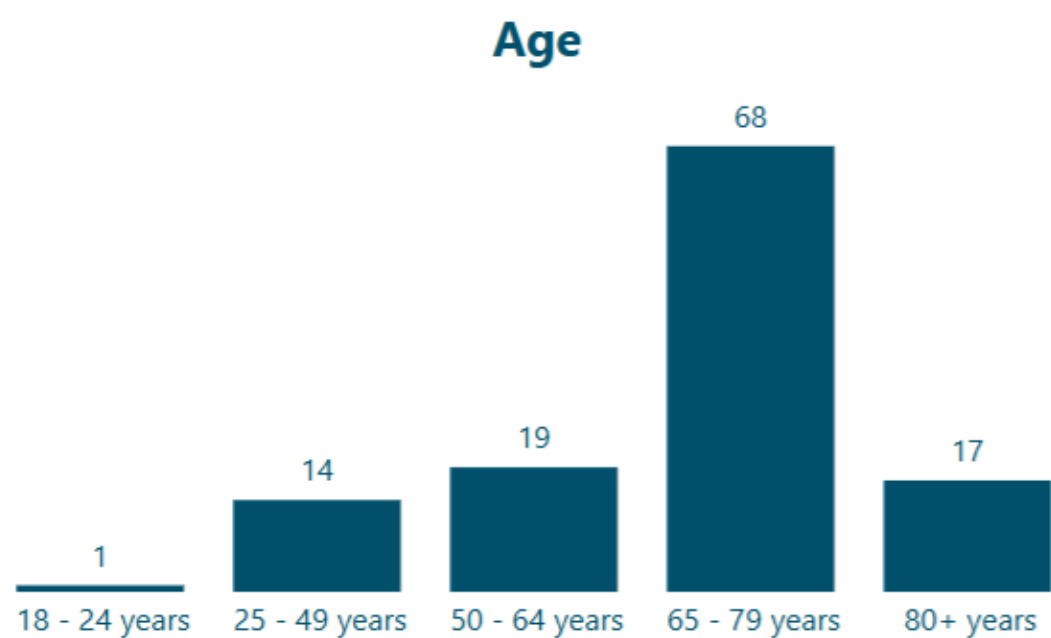
Support from specialist roles, including our Learning Disability and Autism Practitioner and Health Equity Lead, is available and accessible. Staff can request support for a patient from these specialist practitioners. Once a referral has been completed the specialist practitioners will be able to offer guidance, recommendations or reasonable adjustments for the individual. We are currently reviewing the information that we have displayed in the department and will ensure that leaflets are accessible, and posters displayed, to communicate what provisions are available for patients with additional needs.

We are committed to ensuring equitable care to all patients and will continue to monitor the impact of these actions and welcome ongoing feedback to support further improvements.

We would like to thank you again for your valuable feedback. We remain committed to completing the above actions to address the concerns raised, and to continuously improve the experience and quality of care provided to patients within our Emergency Department.

Appendix

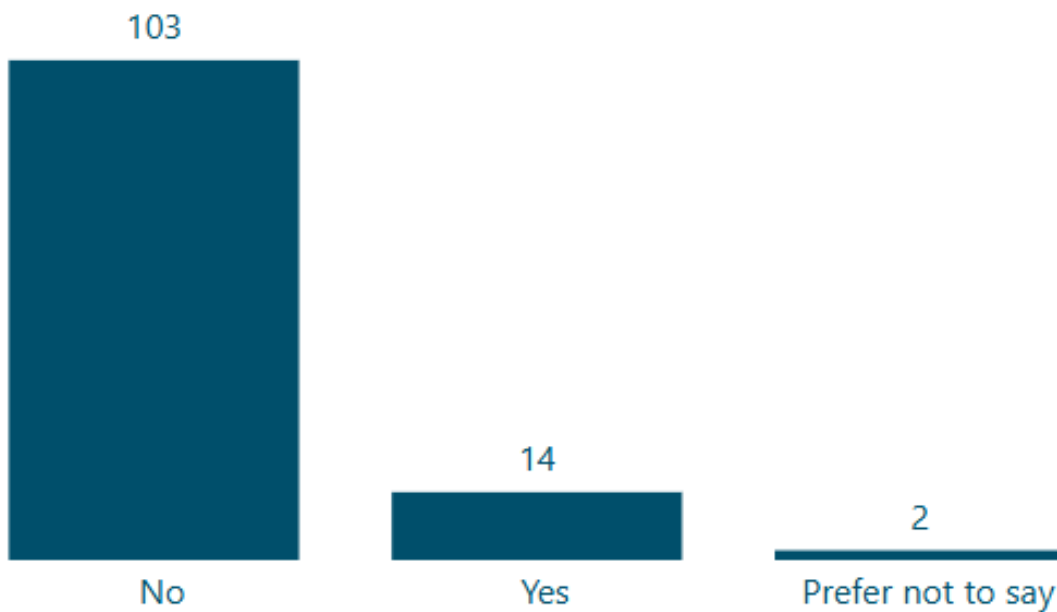
Weston General Hospital survey response demographics



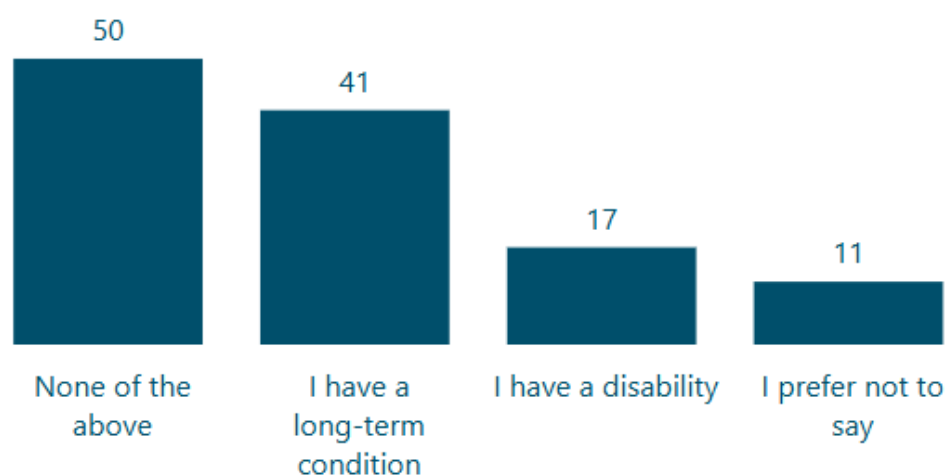
Ethnicity



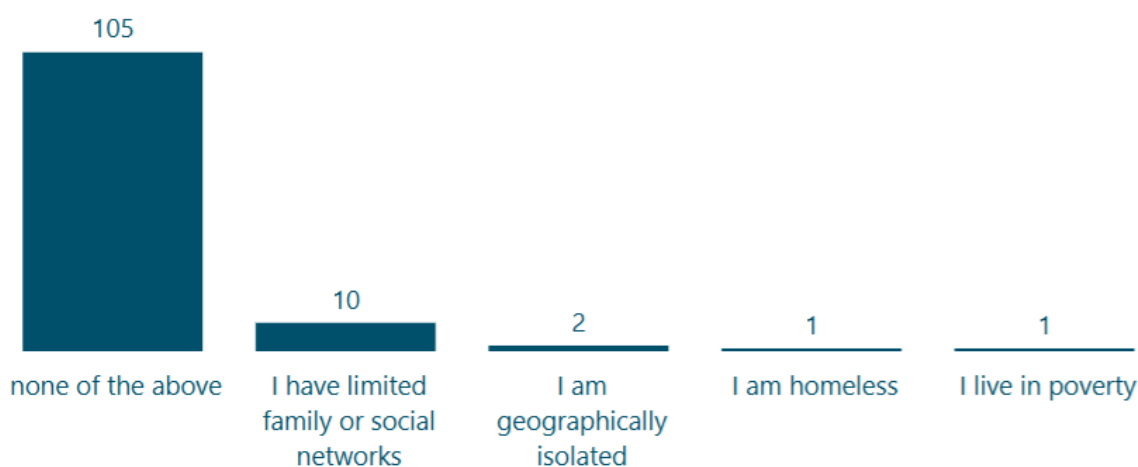
Do you consider yourself to be a carer?



Do you consider yourself to have a long-term condition or disability?



Health inclusion groups



Survey questions

Has your experience of care had any impact on your health or wellbeing?

Is there anything that could have been improved about your care at Weston Accident and Emergency Department/Clevedon MIU?

Did you feel the care you received reflect and respect your identity, culture, or personal background.



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