

**May 2018**

**Self-Care Advice Survey  
Looking at Pharmacist Advice, A&E and  
111 use in Hampshire**

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# Introduction

Healthwatch was created to gather and represent the views of the public. The aim of Local Healthwatch is to give citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how services are provided.

Every voice counts when it comes to shaping the future of health and social care, and when it comes to improving it for today. Everything that local Healthwatch does will bring the voice and influence of local people to the development and delivery of local services. People need to feel that their local Healthwatch belongs to and reflects them and their local community. It needs to feel approachable, practical and dynamic and to act on behalf of local people. Healthwatch needs to be able to clearly demonstrate effectiveness and impact on service change.

NHS England have put a lot of work into promoting the 111 helpline service and advice services from pharmacists to the general public, in order to alleviate the pressure on A&E. With this in mind Healthwatch Hampshire decided to do a survey in conjunction with Citizens Advice Hampshire to get feedback from the general public who have recent experience of using 111 telephone service, pharmacy advice, and A&E and whether they consulted with these 111 telephone advice or a pharmacist before visiting A&E.

**healthwatch**  
Hampshire



Healthwatch Hampshire developed a short survey for people to complete dependant on which services they had experience of, and we simply asked how satisfied they were with the service they received and if they had any other comments on that particular service. We also asked on the A&E questionnaire if they had sort advices from either 111 telephone service or a Pharmacist. We chose to concentrate on people who were seeking 1:2:1 advice over the phone or face to face as we thought this cohort would be more likely to visit A&E.

During February two Healthwatch Hampshire Project Officers visited community venues across Hampshire and set up stall with the surveys for people to complete. The Citizen Advice had surveys available for completion in the receptions of their offices across Hampshire during February 2018 which anyone visiting their offices could complete.

In total we got feedback from XXX of people who had used the 111 telephone service, sort advice from their pharmacist and/or visited A&E.

# Summary of findings



During February Healthwatch Hampshire visited 9 community venues across Hampshire, while Citizens Advice had surveys available in their receptions for anyone visiting. This resulted in 861 responses



80% of respondents stated that they were satisfied with the service received from their pharmacist. 20% were unsatisfied, quoting issues around privacy, staffing & waiting times

84% of respondents said they were satisfied with the advice from the 111 telephone service. One major issue was how inaccessible it is for many service users, e.g. deaf or learning disability



81% were satisfied with the service received when visiting A&E. 50% of those sought advice from their pharmacist or 111 telephone service before visiting A&E. One issue raised was long waiting times

Very few respondents were younger than 18 years of age; the majority were aged 35 to 64 years. Most respondents were female and associated with a British ethnicity.



Our findings showed positive feedback from users of all three services. Negative themes running throughout included accessibility, waiting times and staffing levels

# Survey findings



“The NHS is great when you have a crisis. Please don’t lose it.”

57 year old female

## Demographics

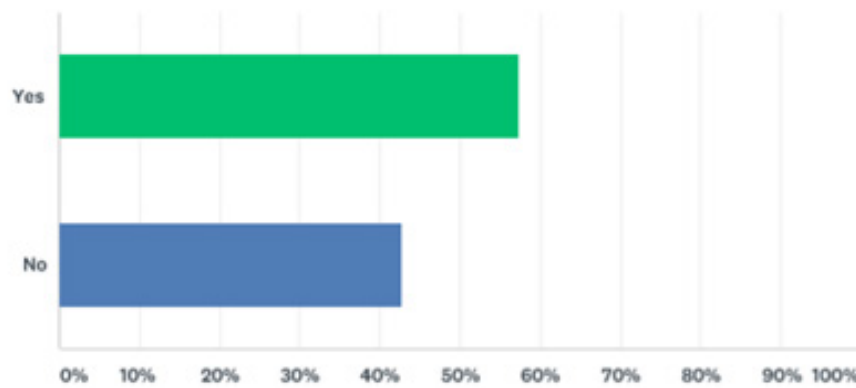
Across Healthwatch Hampshire and Citizens Advice’s surveys the age of respondents ranged from brackets 0-17 to 65+, with very few respondents under 18. The meridian being between 35-64 years old. We also found that almost double the number of male respondents were female. Healthwatch Hampshire believe this may be due to females tending to take on a caring role within the family and could therefore be seeking advice for elderly relatives or young children.



## Pharmacist advice



Q6 In the last 12 months, have you gone to your local Pharmacist for advice?



ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

Yes

57.38%

No

42.62%

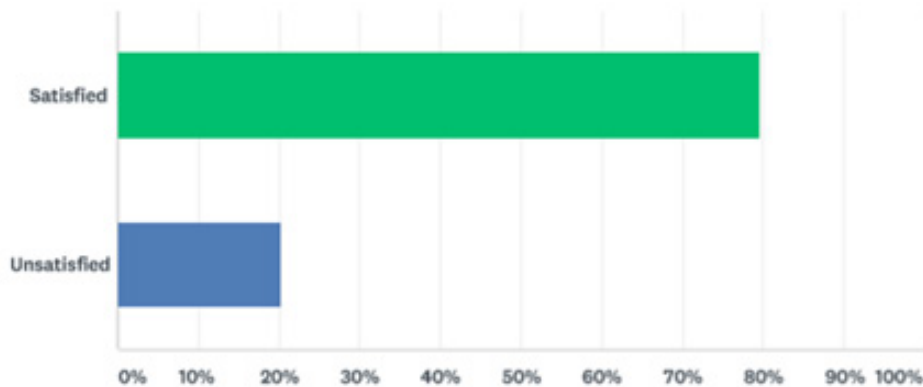
Graph from Healthwatch Hampshire Survey Monkey

Overall, across both surveys, 42% of respondents had visited their pharmacist.



## Feedback

Q7 If yes, how satisfied were you with the service provided?



ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

Satisfied

79.73%

Unsatisfied

20.27%

Graph from Healthwatch Hampshire Survey Monkey

## Positive feedback

**63 year old male:** “Brilliant - should be used more - and they should be able to prescribe antibiotics. Not used enough, and a couple of times have been better than doctors.”

88% of those respondents stated that they were satisfied with the service they received. Respondents generally seemed very pleased with the advice that their pharmacist was able to provide them with, many commenting that it had saved them a trip to their GP or even A&E.

Positive comments alongside these responses included:

**60 year old male:** “I have a very good relationship with my pharmacy. This an independent run one so users of the service become well know & an excellent service is provided. One of the best in the area. I feel its most important that patients use there pharmacy more often so as to free up urgent appointments.”

**30 year old female:** “Very helpful and informative, saved me a trip to the doctor!”

**58 year old female:** “If I hadn’t have received such helpful advice from the pharmacist I may have considered visiting A & E.”

## Negative feedback

**55 year old female:** “Poor, communications skills inadequate. They are so busy, very little time for anything other than dispensing. You cannot push a problem elsewhere unless you resource, upskill, improve the service over all the areas.”

Negative feedback from the remaining 12% of respondents that weren't happy included comments on a lack of privacy, with many suggesting that pharmacists should be able to dispense antibiotics.

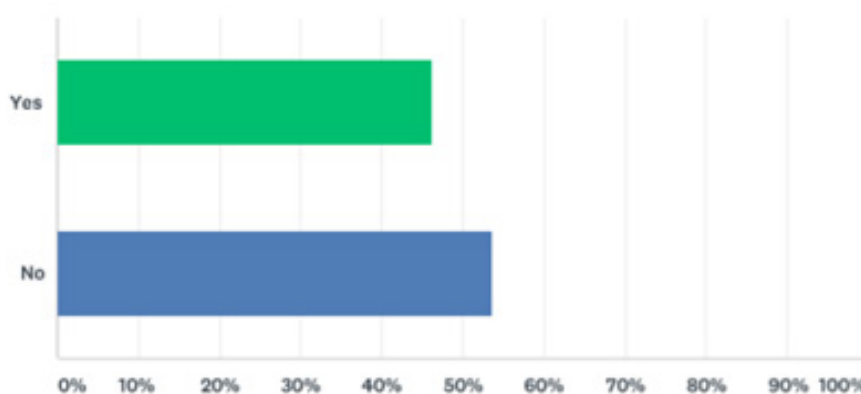




## 111 telephone service



Q9 In the last 12 months, have you called the 111 telephone service for advice?



ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

Yes

46.15%

No

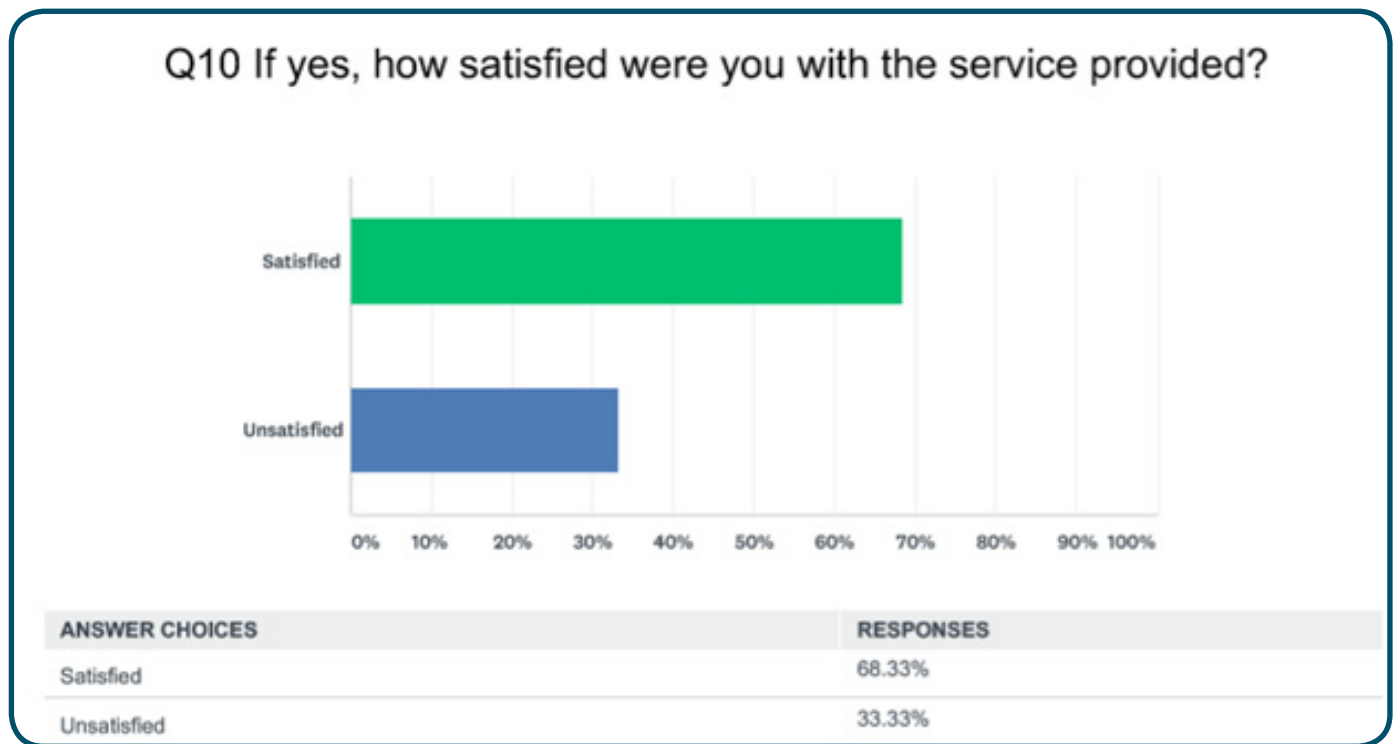
53.85%

Graph from Healthwatch Hampshire Survey Monkey

Overall, across both surveys, 41% of respondents had phoned 111 for help or advice. This shows 111 being the least used service out of the three.



## Feedback



Graph from Healthwatch Hampshire Survey Monkey

## Positive feedback

**25 year old female:** “The lady on the phone was very reassuring as a very scary time. She kept me calm and informed me of everything she was doing and why she was doing it. She ordered a nonemergency ambulance who then took me to hospital. I didn’t have to wait too long. Without the 111 service who assessed me and got me an ambulance I wouldn’t be here today as I has sepsis.”

84% of those respondents stated that they were satisfied with the service they received during the 111 phone call. Respondents found the advice given to them, through 111, was satisfying.

Positive comments alongside these responses included:

**73 year old female:** “I have used the service in the past and find it a useful addition to gain advice - such as can a relative who uses wharfarin have an alcoholic drink after receiving very bad news - the answer was yes. Also I had mild pain in the chest and I was advised to go straight to A & E.”

**62 year old female:** “Efficient, informative and friendly service”



## Negative feedback

**57 year old female:** “How can deaf people access if they cannot use the phone to hear? This is making access to medical services difficult. Consider looking at other ways of communication - text messages via mobile phones.”

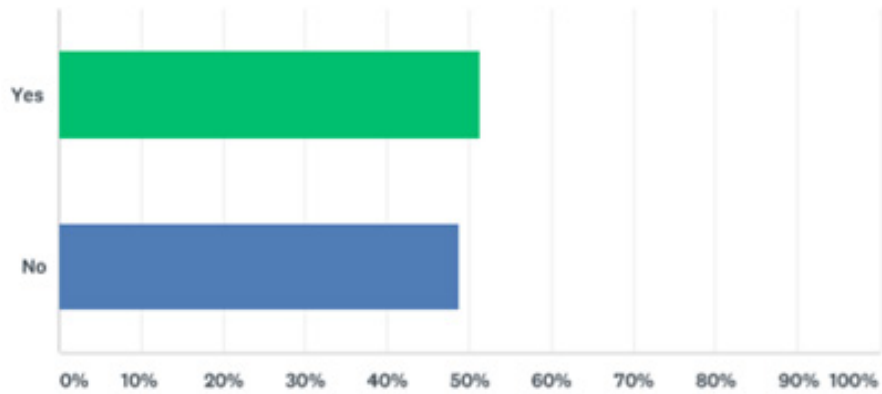
Many of the negative comments regarding 111 included a lack of accessibility for those unable to use telephones. Feedback from the remaining 18% of respondents that weren't happy included comments that they would not use the service again, however provided no further information on why. Others commented on the fact that the service seems scripted.



## A&E



Q12 In the last 12 months, have you gone to A&E?



ANSWER CHOICES

Yes

No

RESPONSES

51.33%

48.67%

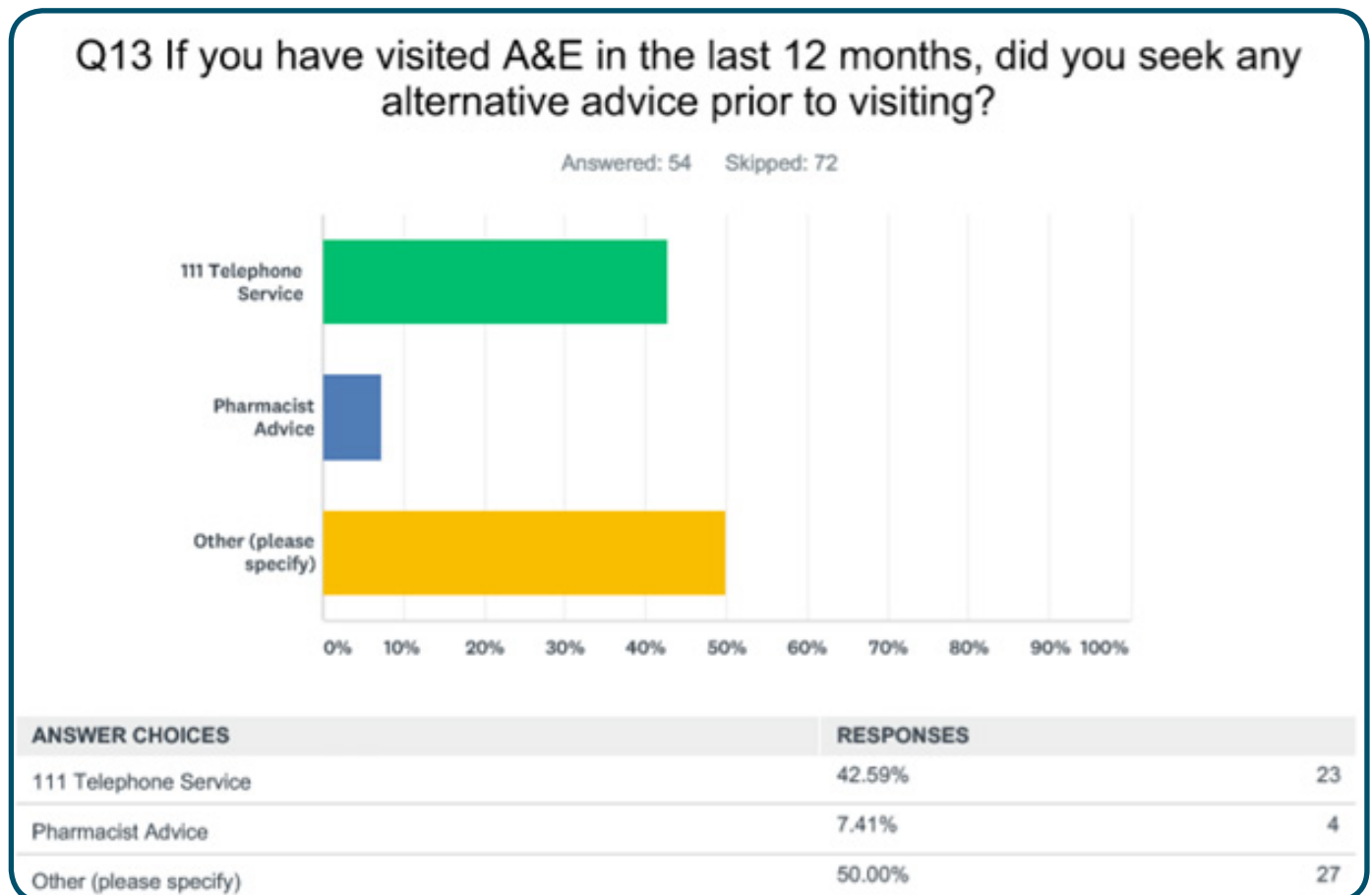
Graph from Healthwatch Hampshire Survey Monkey

Overall, across both surveys, 49% of respondents had phoned 111 for help or advice. This shows A&E being the most used service out of the three.



## Feedback

We asked respondents that have visited A&E if they had sought alternative advice before visiting A&E.



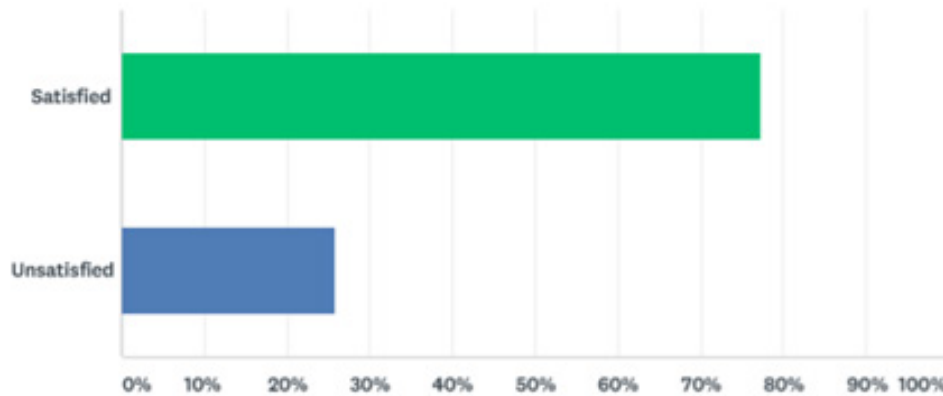
Graph from Healthwatch Hampshire Survey Monkey

Only 8% had been to their pharmacist for advice, with 43% contacting 111 prior to their visit to A&E. 50% selected “Other” with most answers stating GP.



## Q14 If you have visited A&E in the last 12 months, how satisfied were you with the service provided?

Answered: 62 Skipped: 64



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Satisfied	77.42%	48
Unsatisfied	25.81%	16

Graph from Healthwatch Hampshire Survey Monkey

## Positive feedback

**25 year old female:** “I was taken to Winchester Hospital and diagnosed with sepsis. The sister in the department was fantastic and immediately gave me fluids and medication, the doctors were very supportive and told me what they were doing. They informed me that I would be staying in and what was happening. They even gave support to my fiancé who stayed with me. Without the support from the A&E staff who if they didn’t act quickly I wouldn’t be here today. Very satisfied! Our NHS is amazing!”

81% of those respondents stated that they were satisfied with the service they received while attending A&E. Respondents were generally incredibly praising of the staff and service received while at A&E.

Positive comments alongside these responses included:

**55 year old male:** “A and E were brilliant...GP was useless...the cost of 10 mins appointments nearly cost me my life.”

**47 year old female:** “Could not fault”



## Negative feedback

**35 year old female:** “I attended A&E on the advice of my GP due to feeling suicidal. I was told there was no mental health team and sent home. Maybe a month later I took an overdose and was taken to A&E via ambulance. I waited on a bed in the corridor for hours before I was seen and it was 20 hours before I saw the Psychology team. I begged the acute Mental health team for help but was told as it wasn’t out of hours they wouldn’t help me (it was 4pm). I called the community mental health team but there was no answer. I have begged every service imaginable for help and got turned away every time. Disgusted.”

Many of the 17% of negative comments regarding A&E were from people suffering with mental health complications. Feedback included waiting times being too long, service users with non-critical issues being seen first and staff rudeness in front of patients.

# For consideration...

The feedback from the survey shows that generally people who had used 111 telephone advice, pharmacy or A&E in the last year had found it to be a positive experience. The advice they were given was good and they staff were helpful. The negative feedback we received was mostly regarding staff being very busy and waiting times. This is not surprising as we know how big the demand for medical advice can be, and in Hampshire we have a growing population so the demand on services will increase.

## Reccomendations



### Pharmacy Advice

On the whole people completing the survey reported that they had received helpful advice from the pharmacy, some were advised which over the counter medication to take and others were advised to seek help from their GP where appropriate. A particular problem with visiting a Pharmacist for advice was the fact that at certain times for example during flu season, they can be extremely busy and in some smaller pharmacies there is nowhere to talk to a pharmacist is private, and this left people feeling embarrassed and risked them not discussing in full what their problem is.

#### Recommendation

Provide private areas within pharmacies where people can get advice without risking being overheard by others.



## 111 Telephone Service

The majority of respondents to the survey stated that they had received very good advice from the 111 telephone service, and ambulances were sent when needed or doctors would call back to do a phone assessment and advise accordingly. There were however issues with the amount of time it took for the call to be answered, this did not appear to be happening on a regular basis but at times when this did happen people felt they were best to visit A&E. On some occasions respondents said that they didn't receive a call back or that it took so long for the call to come through that they went to the GP or A&E.

### Recommendation

In order to avoid people going to A&E the 111 telephone service needs to adequately manned, and if people are waiting for a telephone assessment from a doctor this should be done within the timescale given by the call handler.

Another area of concern that was raised within the survey was the lack of accessibility to the 111 telephone advice service for people who had hearing impairments and were unable to use the phone. Although they are able to use NHS websites they may be wanting reassurance from 1:2:1 contact, and would like to be able to have a consultation with a doctor without visiting A&E.

## Accident and Emergency Departments

Although there were a lot of negative comments regarding the waiting times in A&E, mostly the treatment that people received was of a high standard, and although it was noted how busy the staff were respondents felt they were helpful and the care they or their loved ones received was very good. We are all aware of the constraints on accident and emergency services and this can be elevated by members of the public using 111 telephone service or visiting a pharmacy for advice, and only going to A&E when appropriate.

There were a number of negative comments from respondents who had visited A&E with mental health issues. Respondents to the survey stated that they felt abandoned by the system as A&E is not equipped to deal with mental health crises.

### Recommendation

Having effective and accessible alternative services available to the general public, so they can get quick, appropriate medical advice that averts them from going to A&E. This would alleviate waiting times and take pressure off of staff.



# Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who shared their views in the survey and Citizens Advice Bureau.



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