

# Your health and wellbeing in the COVID-19 pandemic

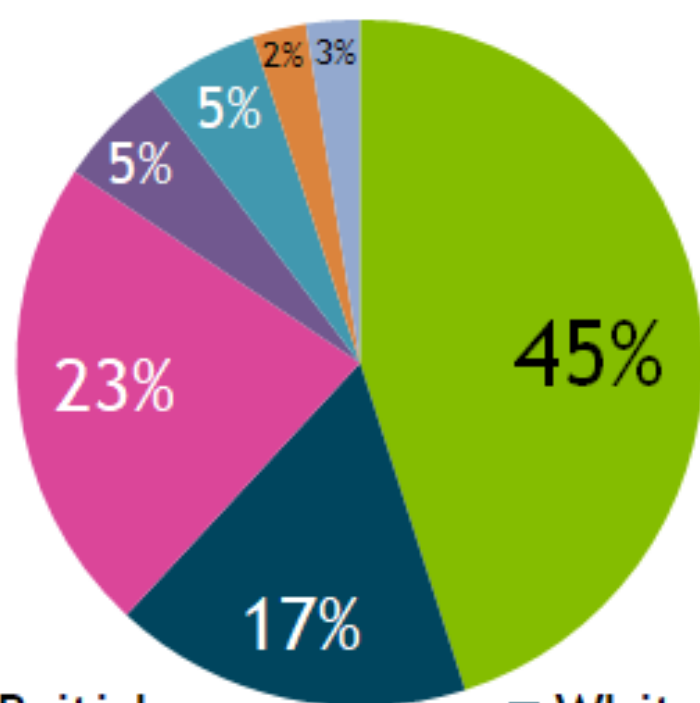


We are in the process of carrying out a survey online and via phone.

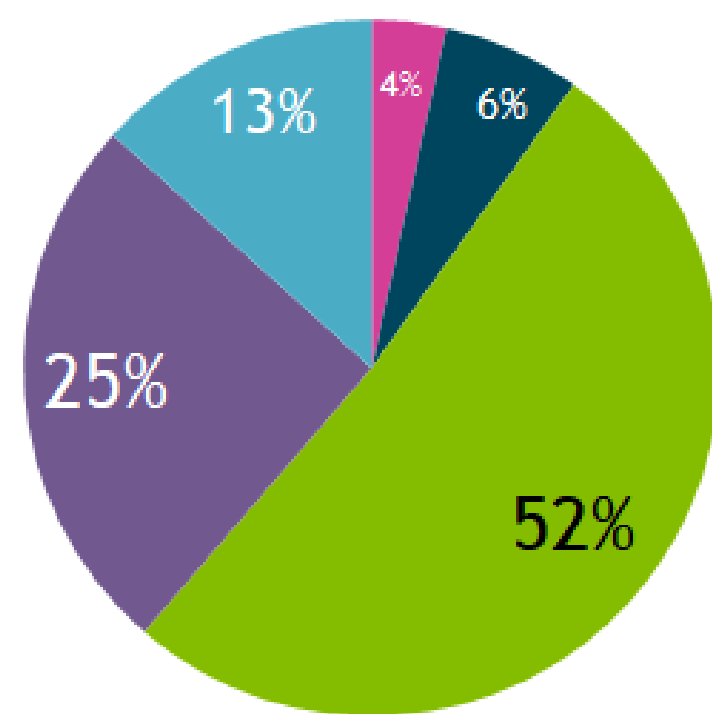
We also analysed comments from local people about GP surgeries via telephone and email, NHS Choices, patient opinion and social media.

**354**  
respondents to date

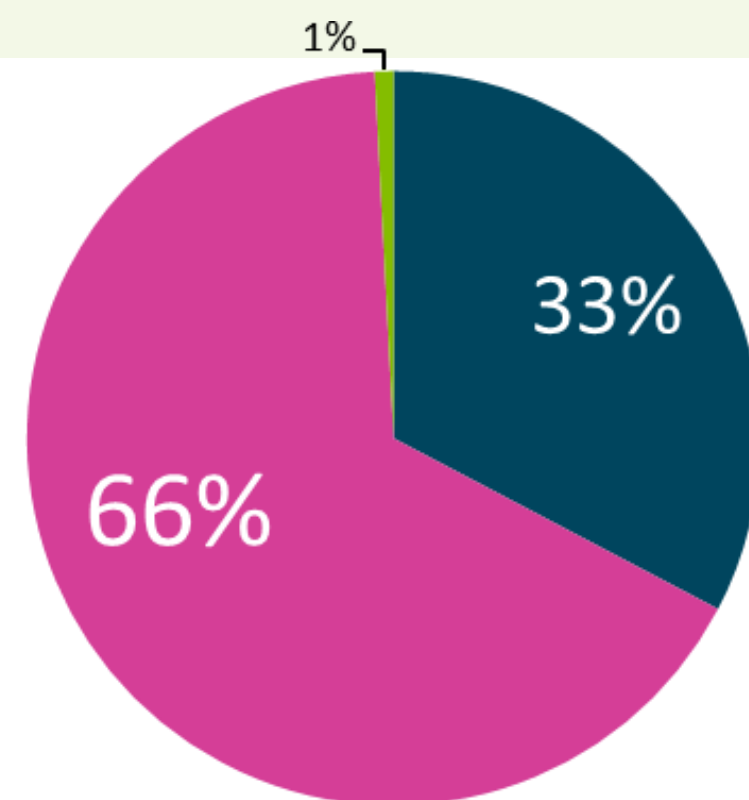
**1,237**  
further comments



- White British
- White Other
- Bangladeshi
- Other Asian
- Black or Black British
- Mixed
- Other



- Under 18
- 19 to 24
- 25 to 49
- 50 to 64
- 65+



- Men
- Women
- Nonbinary

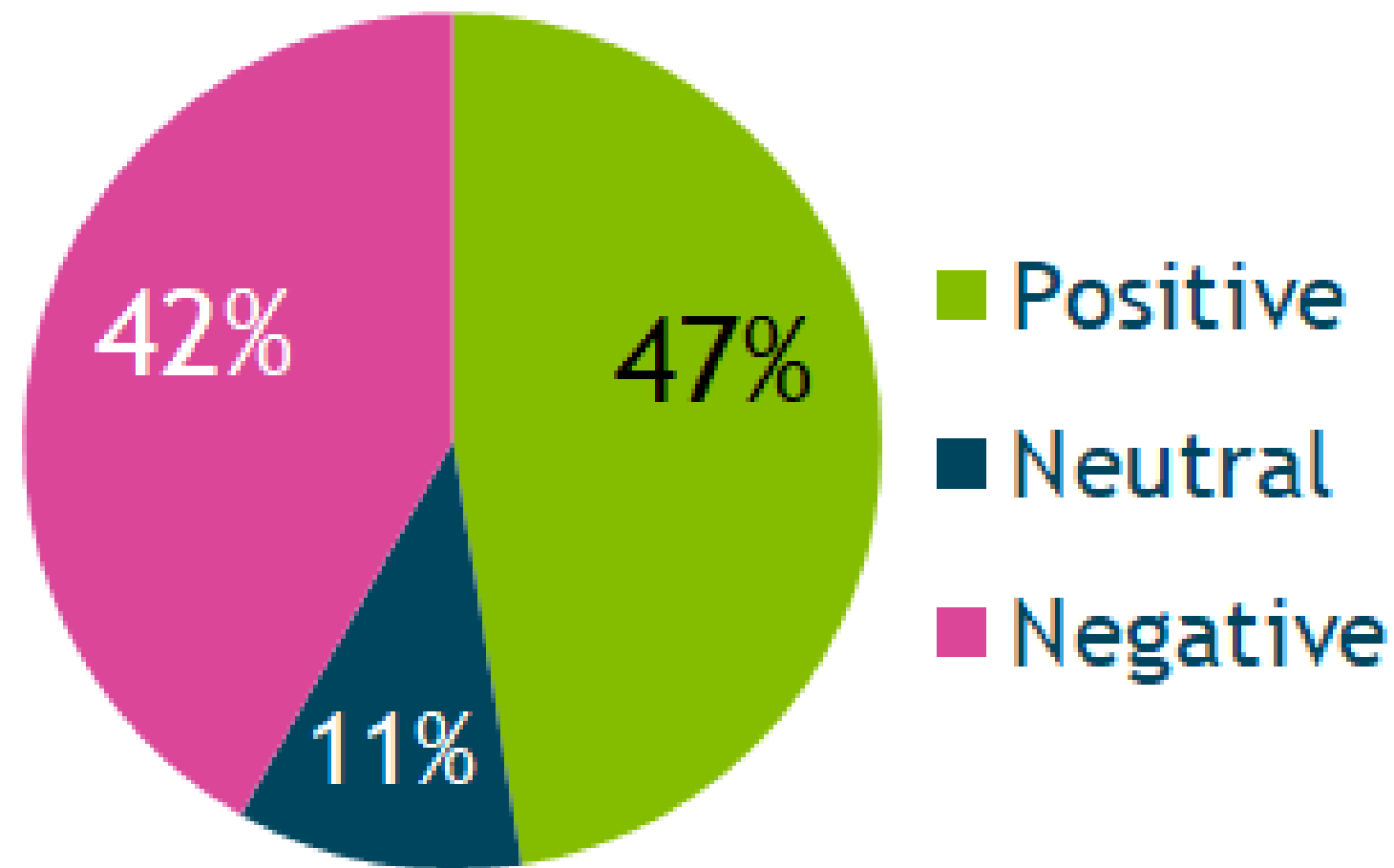
**22%**  
had children aged under 18

**5%**  
were carers for an adult

# Using NHS services during the pandemic

## GP surgeries

Local people's experience of GP surgeries in Tower Hamlets has been mixed.



Accessing GP services remotely

14%

of survey respondents had a telephone consultation with a GP or practice nurse.

5%

filled in an E-consult form to receive a call back.

3%

had an online consultation with a GP or practice nurse.

10%

ordered a repeat prescription online.

1%

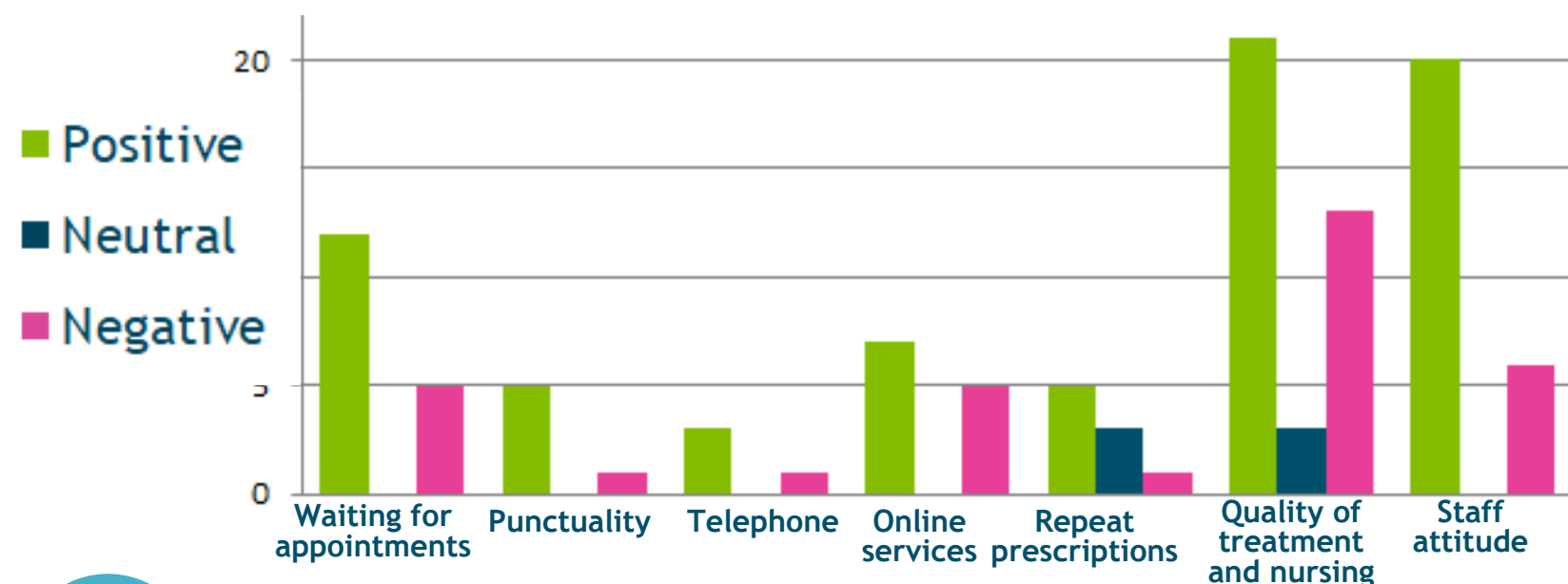
accessed test results or referrals online.



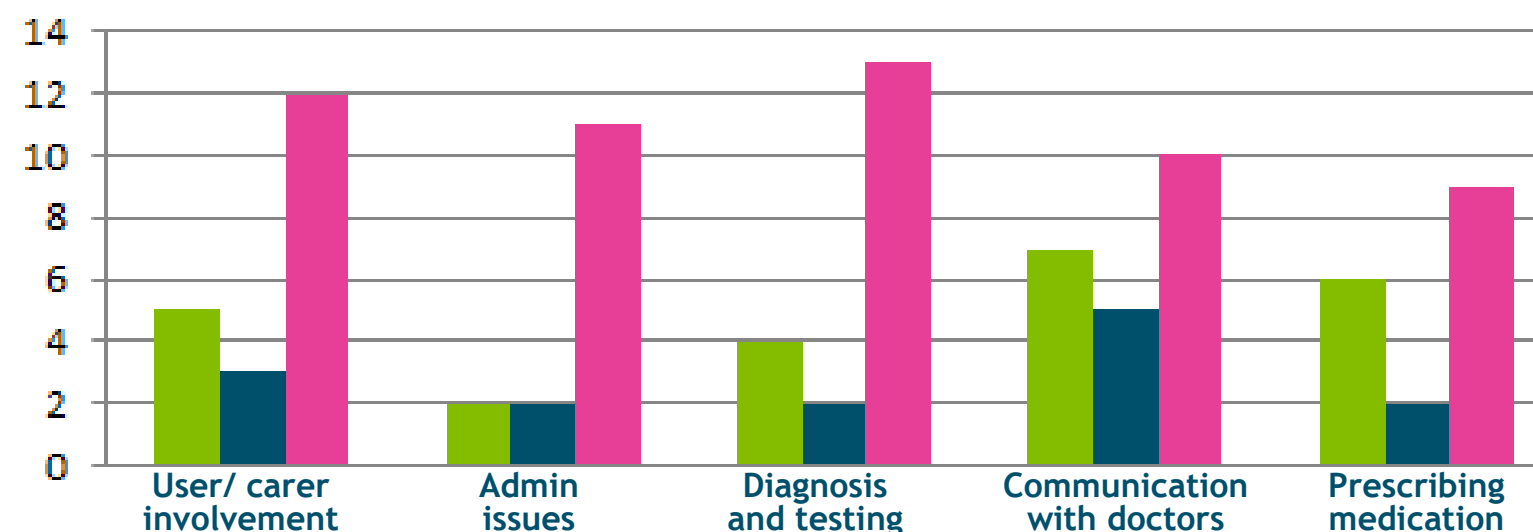
# Using NHS services during the pandemic

## GP surgeries

### What works well



### What needs improvement



8%

of survey respondents said they needed a GP appointment and could only be seen remotely.

8%

of survey respondents said they needed a GP appointment and could not get one at all.



Most people who need to see a GP are able to do so promptly.



Patients seek reassurance for doctors both about COVID-19 and about accessing care remotely; the extent to which doctors are able to offer clarity varies.



Those who had telephone or online consultations tended to be happy with them. Overall, patients are happy with the quality of their treatment and the attitude of all staff members.



Diagnosing illness and prescribing new medicine is a challenge to do remotely. Patients who are not used to telemedicine feel disconnected from their own care.



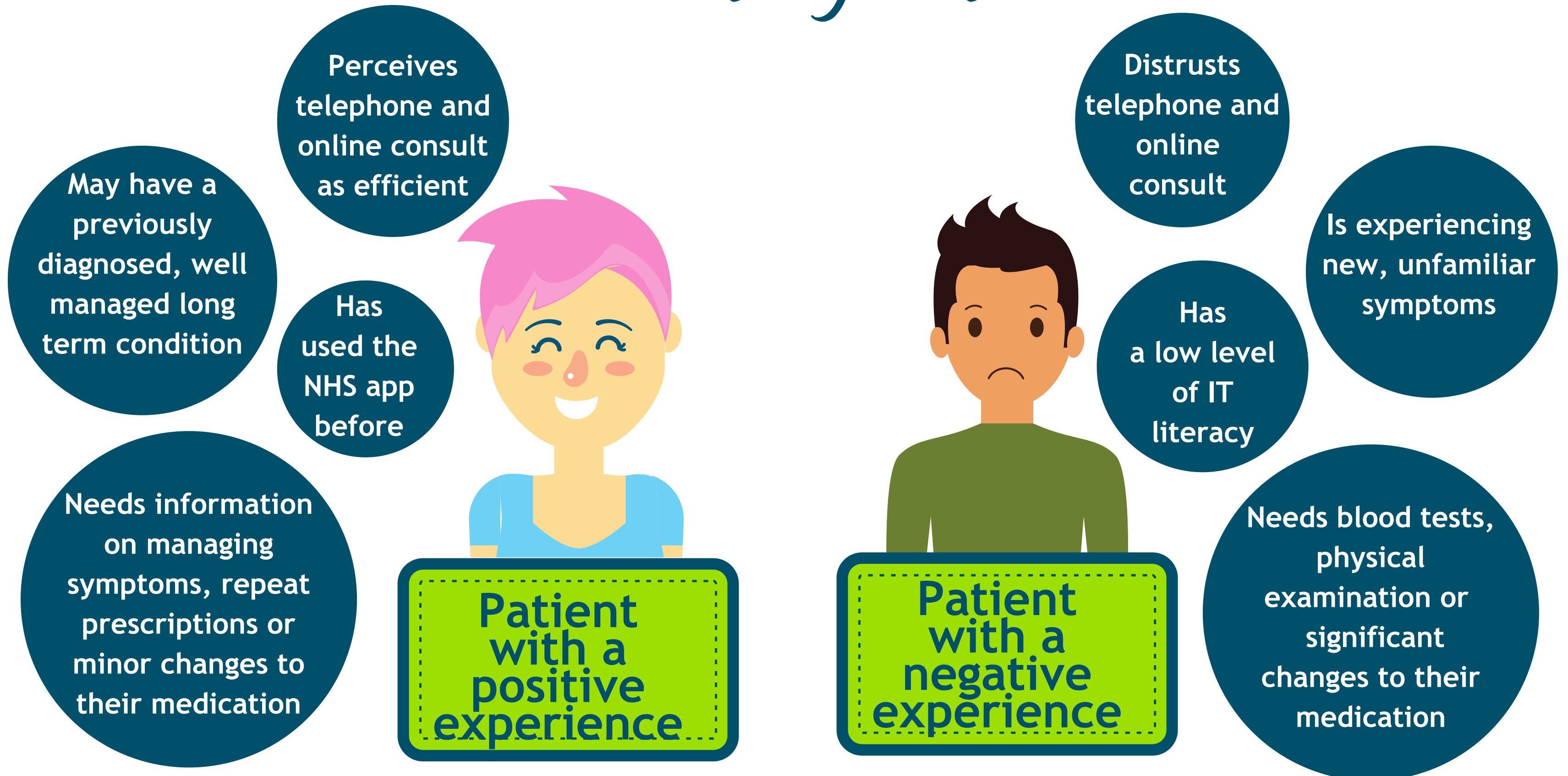
Despite some admin and technical issues, receptionists deal well with online repeat prescription orders.



Some patients feel reluctant to attempt accessing GP services, which they perceive as overstretched.

# Using NHS services during the pandemic

## GP surgeries



# Using NHS services during the pandemic

## GP surgeries- what patients are saying



### Telephone consultations



### Online consultations and services

Routine appointments and urgent appointments of less complexity can often be done by telephone, working out as well as in person.

*A phone appointment was suitable. It was a quick review of my year for my prescription. I also had blood tests done at the time and it was quick and easy.*

*The Doctor rang me back quite quickly and gave me advice about what to do, as I thought I might have Covid-19.*

*My telephone consultation with the GP was good; I was not responding to painkillers properly so I got prescribed new ones. GP listened, and I was given extra resources for ordering meds online, but had problems accessing them, so the issue was sorted by telephone; my GP sent the new prescription to the pharmacy, and a family member picked them up for me.*

Telephone consultations can also work as triage to identify patients that absolutely have to be seen in person.

*Speedy, excellent phone contact with St Stephen's Health Centre receptionist and RLH Gynae Cancer consultant's nurse, ensuring speedy first appointment cleared me of cancer symptoms.*

*It was time for my B12 injection which I get every 3 months. I called the GP to see if I could book an appointment as I start to feel very tired and exhausted without the injection. I had a telephone appointment with a doctor and, after I explained the situation to the GP, they gave me an in-person appointment with a nurse at my GP for the B12 injection. It was an easy process to book the appointment as they were understanding of my situation.*

Patients who used e-consult or other forms of online consultations found it easy and efficient.

*I used an e-consult form. Very efficient - completed the e-consult form and had a call back within 2 hours. Had to provide a sample to the practice and had initial results within another 2 hours. Would be happy with this service in normal life as well!*

*I had a very good experience with an online consultation with my GP (Docklands); I sent them an email at 5 pm and they got back to me by email at 9 am the next day.*

*I filled in an e-consult form and got a telephone consultation. Received phone call and information from my GP and nurse.*

Online automated systems are prone to technical and admin errors; reception and medical staff are working to mitigate this.

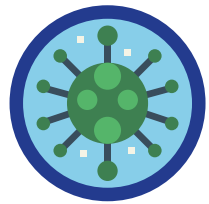
*Used the e-consult feature through my GP's website. Found it hard to find the right e consult and had to phone the surgery in the end. Repeat prescription- did online no problems.*

*GP automated service is awful. But sent them an email and managed to get appointment over the phone within a few hours. Best I have ever received a response and appointment.*

*I think more information about how to contact my GP would've been useful. I didn't realise they could write prescriptions for me without seeing me in person. All I did was fill out a form online and got my prescription the same day. It was very useful.*

# Using NHS services during the pandemic

## GP surgeries- what patients are saying



### Possible COVID-19 diagnoses

GPs try to provide advice and reassurance; however, because of the lack of available testing and scientific knowledge on the virus, their scope is limited.

*I found out that my sister has had coronavirus symptoms. My baby then got sick with a temperature and cough, I called our GP as I was hoping he might get tested but the GP just said to look after him at home and they weren't testing anymore.*

*I experienced loss of smell and taste with possible COVID19 symptoms- my GP reassured me that because of my lupus I will take longer to recover, but it will eventually be fine.*

*The GP was very understanding but there is not much known about pregnancy and Covid-19; the same was with a midwife.*

*I had moderate symptoms- tightness in the chest and panic attacks with breathlessness. Since recovering from most symptoms, I cannot sleep and still have tightness in the chest. My GP is making assumptions on it being Covid-19 again. I feel anxious because I don't know if I am still infected or re infected.*



### Diagnosis and testing

Running examination and tests to diagnose illness can pose challenges.

*After self-isolating with possible COVID-19 symptoms, I started getting gastro pain. GP said I should take paracetamol and see if it got worse. As it did, phoned the GP again and she said I should try and bring in a urine sample. Took quite some time to convince a neighbour to take in a urine sample as he had Covid 19.*

*I can't see my GP on face to face consultation to be able to check on me properly.*

*I had an appointment with the GP and she was asking me weird stuff like whether I have a blood pressure machine at home to take my own BP and send her the results. I get that everyones doing social distancing but I don't understand why until yesterday she was saying it's okay for m to come into the GP Practice to only end up doing a telephone consultation that lasted seconds.*



### Communication about changes

Some GPs have been proactive in sharing information about the COVID-19 pandemic.

*I was able to find information about how to keep myself safe during the pandemic through my own GP .*

**In other cases, patients felt they were poorly informed on how the surgery now operates.**

*I don't know if I will be getting a phone call for the appointment. It's like being left in limbo.*

*I tried to order a repeat prescription online. Getting a repeat prescription was very challenging and my doctor actually rejected my initial request with no reason given creating an heightened state of anxiety*

*Can't seem to find information on my GP practice's website about how to order a repeat prescription.*

**Some avoided seeing a GP even if needed, to avoid over-burdening practices.**

*I tried calling them once- they said they were out of telephone consultations for the day and they could only help people with respiratory or COVID-19 related issues. They told me to ring back the next morning; but I didn't ; and haven't bothered trying since. They are overburdened, I don't want to impose on them .*