

Orchard and Maple practice patients' survey report on proposed merger

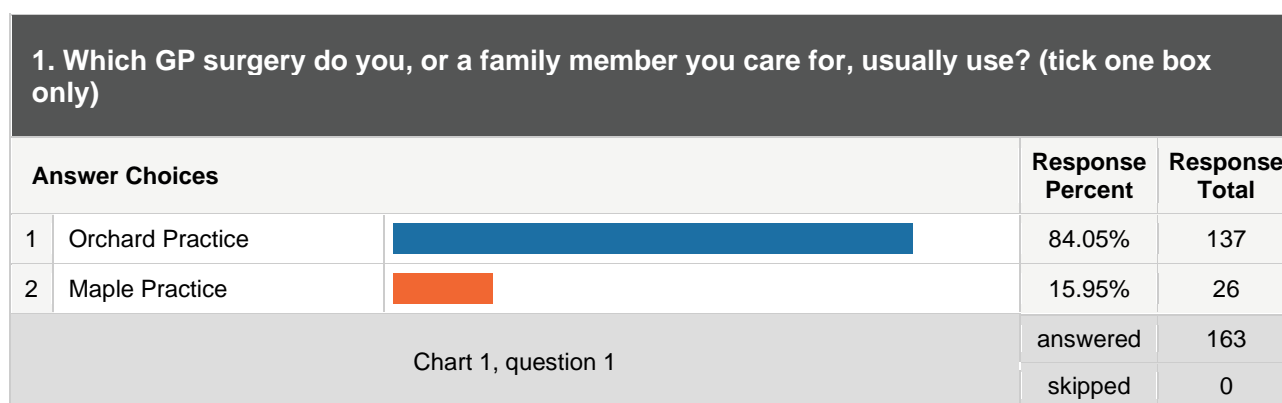
1 Introduction

Orchard Practice and Maple Practice are planning to merge together to form a new GP practice from April 2022. By joining together, the new practice will be able to offer better support to patients with a larger clinical team and hope to offer more services in the future.

Patients were asked for their views on the merger by taking part in an online survey. There will also be opportunities for patients to discuss the proposal and ask questions at a patient drop-in event between 1pm and 3pm on Thursday, 4 November at Orchard and Maple Practice, Dartford West Health Centre and an opportunity to provide feedback about the merger at an open meeting, later in November.







The online survey ran for four weeks and was promoted by the practices to their patients and local stakeholders by direct messaging, email, website and articles in the local free newspaper.

The survey closed on 22 October. 186 responses were received, 24 were partial and 163 were completed, the majority of responses were from Orchard Practice patients.



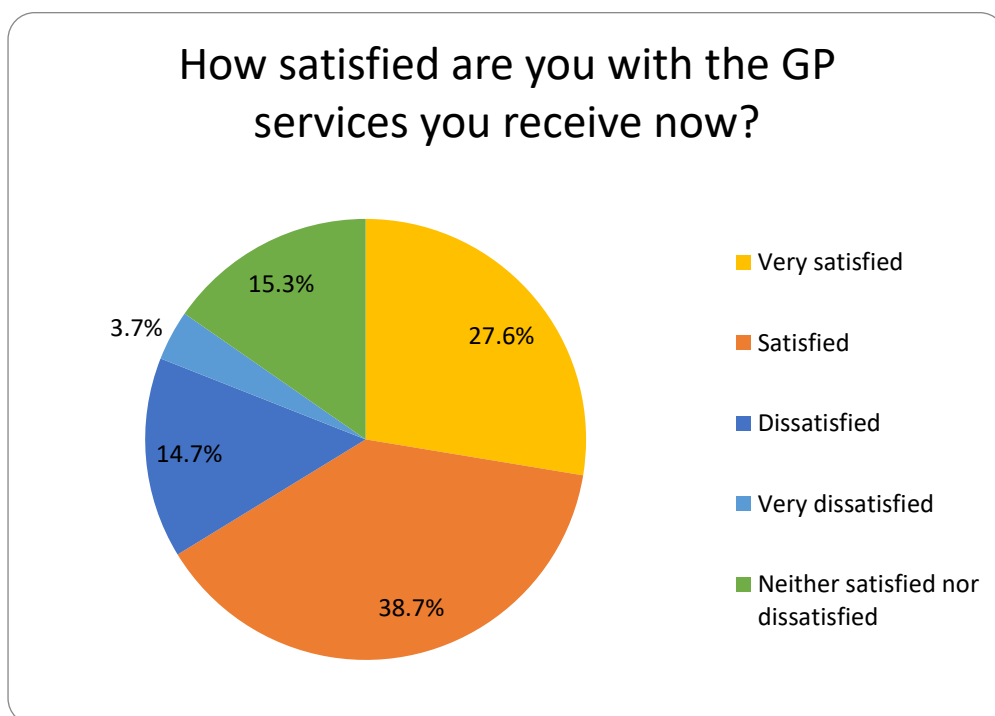
2 Survey responses

The first section of the online survey asked respondents about their current use of their GP practices. In Chart 2 below, you will see that the majority of people who responded use their GP services once or twice a year whilst 19 per cent use it on a monthly basis with only 12 people reporting more frequent use.

2. In the last 12 months how often did you use services at your GP practice (your doctor)? Please tick one answer only.				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	I did not use any GP services		8.59%	14
2	One or two times in the year		65.03%	106
3	Once every month		19.02%	31
4	Two times every month		6.13%	10
5	Once every week		0.61%	1
6	More than once every week		0.61%	1
Chart 2 How often have respondents used the services at their GP practice			answered	163
			skipped	0

When asked about their satisfaction with the current GP services the majority (108) of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied. See Chart 3, below.

Chart 3: Q3 How satisfied are you with the GP services you receive now?



People were then asked to give more detail as to which services they used and which they considered might be most useful to them, see results below in matrix Chart 4. Most people had used: Adult vaccinations (73 used in last year, 32 found helpful, 28 most likely to need) blood tests (67/33/43) and Covid clinics (59/30/10). These stand out as the most frequently used and sited as helpful, with health checks (35/23/32), medicine reviews (45/29/30) and blood pressure checks(34/19/26) all scoring well.

Below is a list of services the GP practices offer, please tell us which ones you have used in the last 12 months, and which ones you found the most useful, or may need to use in the future?

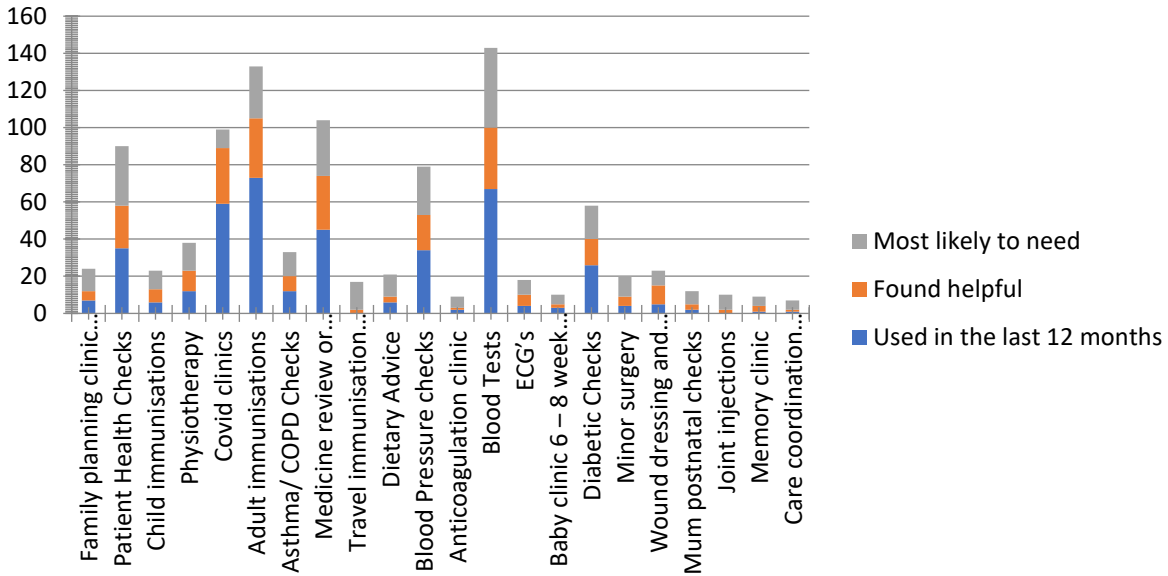


Chart 4, above

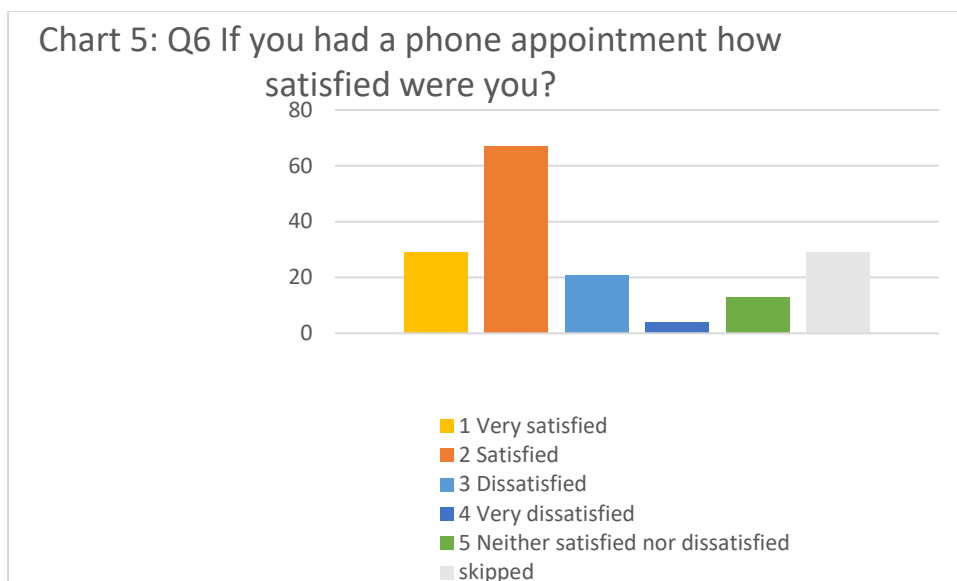
Respondents who commented on this question suggested they had used the practices mainly for: treatment of their children, receiving prescriptions, screening checks, cancer treatment and follow up for various acute treatments as B12 injections.

Whilst a couple of responses commented on the difficulty of getting appointments, others were more positive: *“I have really appreciated the online support from Dr Taylor & Dr Saad, and the receptionists for helping me manage my husband's cancer treatment & pain control. Friends have said we've been lucky that our practice has answered the phone, and that we've been given appointments during the pandemic. Thank you”*

2.1 Technology and Covid safe working

People were asked about whether they had accessed services via phone or video and how satisfied they were with these methods. 119 respondents had received telephone appointments, eight had received both online/phone appointments and 36 had used neither.

The majority of respondents were either: satisfied (50 per cent) or very satisfied (21 per cent), with 15 per cent dissatisfied and three per cent very dissatisfied. The answers to this question are set out in Chart 5, below. .



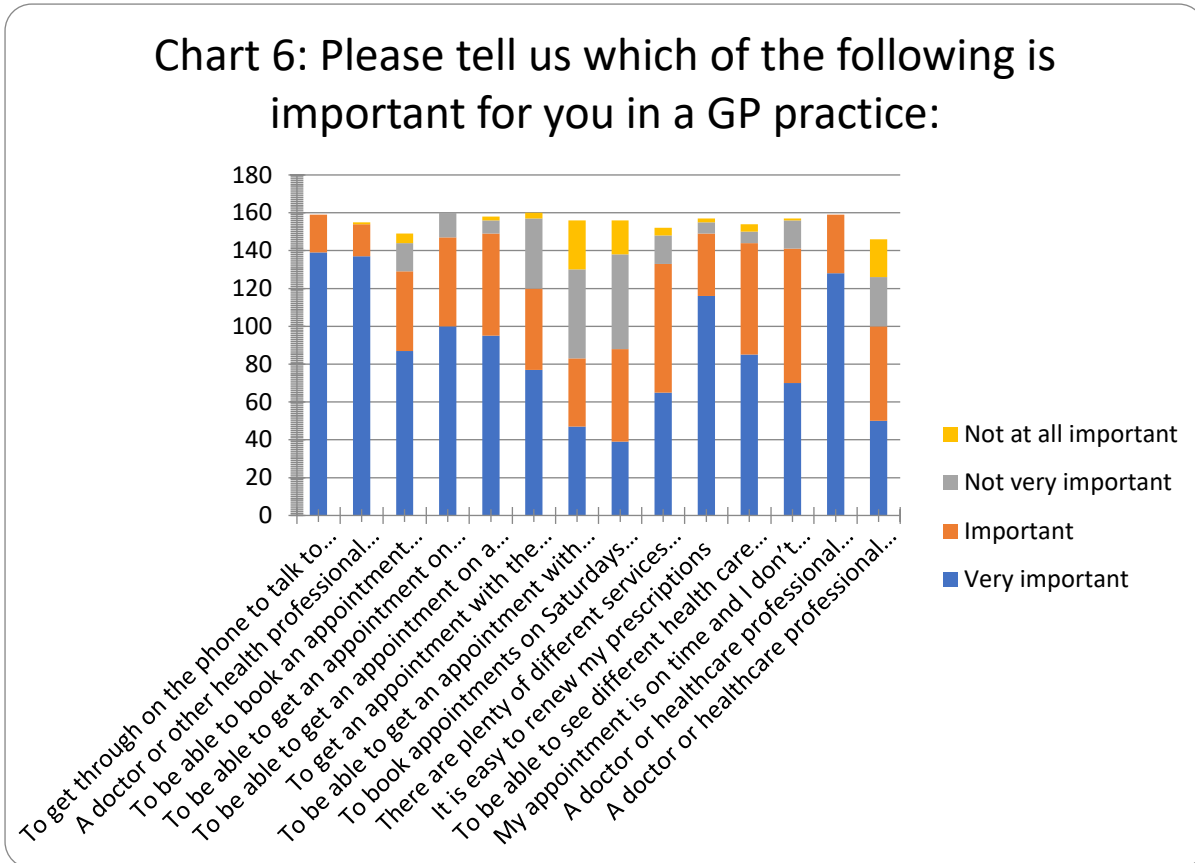
Most people skipped question seven about satisfaction with video/online appointment, with only seven people responding to say they were satisfied or very satisfied and 2 to say they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

2.2 Tell us what is important to you?

The next section of the survey asked people to choose from a list of statements about what was important to them in their GP services. The four most important aspects of services were:

- To get through on the phone to talk to someone (159 respondents saw as important or very important)
- A doctor or healthcare professional takes time to explain things to me and answer my questions (159 respondents saw as important or very important)
- A doctor or other health professional calls me back and talks to me about my health or questions within 24/48 hours (154 respondents saw as important or very important)
- It is easy to renew my prescriptions (149 respondents saw as important or very important).

Please see below Chart 6 showing the full matrix responses to this question



2.3 Considering the proposal to merge Maple and Orchard practices

People were asked if having read the letter do you understand the practices reasons for merging into a single practice? The majority of respondents did (see table 1 below):

Table 1

Having read the letter do you understand the practices reasons for merging into a single practice?			
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	93.2%	151
2	No	6.8%	11
<i>answered</i>			162
<i>skipped</i>			1

92 people went onto comment and explain what the practices need to consider in making their plans. Over a third of responses were about improving access to services:

- Making sure people would be able to get appointments

- Ensuring a larger patient list didn't compromise, or make it harder to access services particularly doctors
- People specified having enough reception staff, increasing access to face to face appointments, improving staff capacity.

“Answer the phone in a timely manner with good manners” “Ensure there will be enough services available for the amount of people within the practise”

A quarter of all responses had suggestions for how the new practice might improve services:

- Bring in an online booking system for appointments
- Good opportunity to centralise services and make them more consistent
- Greater consistency from reception staff, some pleasant and helpful some not
- Increase parking – *“an agreement with the masonic hall to be able to use their car park would make a big difference as at times the parking spaces are full with a tailback onto the road”*
- More time with doctor, having a choice of doctor, keeping my current doctor
- Provide an email address for repeat prescriptions/admin tasks
- Mental health practitioners, menopause clinics.

Whilst 20 per cent of respondents were concerned that the merger shouldn't mean a loss of what they value about their current practice:

“Orchard Practice is very good, I've no issues accessing the service I require. I hope things will be as they are or better. It will be a big shame if patients of Orchard lose services due to the merge.” “Have found Maple Practice to be fairly efficient and hopefully this will continue after the merger.”

“I want to keep my doctor she is terrific” “I prefer to collect my repeat prescriptions through my pharmacy” “Continuity of doctor for individual cases.”

2.4 Naming the proposed practice

People were also asked: what name the new practice should have? 82 people responded the majority of suggestions were either 'tree related' in keeping with current names, a combination of the current names, or place-based suggestions see table 2 below:

Table 2 Names for the proposed new practice

Tree suggestions	Place based	Combination
Sapling Practice	Tower Rd Surgery x5	Fusion practice
The Oak Practice x3	West Hill doctors/surgery x5	The Orchard and Maple Health Centre
Orange Grove	Dartford west health services	Maple Orchard practice x 3

The Willow Tree Practice x2	Tower Practice x2	Mayfield
Hazel Practice,	Tower road clinic	OM Together
The Evergreen Practice	Dartford Health Partnership	West Hill Willow Practice
Green leaves, or Treetops	Thompson Practice as on land where his surgery was	<i>Orchard/Maple practice</i>
Oak/sycamore	<i>West Dartford health clinic</i>	<i>"Mapard (combining the names) pronounced Maypard</i>
Two Trees	<i>West Hill Health centrex2</i>	<i>The Maple Orchard x 3</i>
Woodland Practice x3 or New Forest Practice		<i>West tree surgery</i>
Red Apple		<i>Ople Practice, or Opal Practice</i>
Greenleaf Practice		<i>An anagram of Orchard and Maple</i>
Autumn leaf surgery/practice		
Rowan Practice, Rowan Tree		
Wood surgery		
Apple practice		
Pine practice		
Cherry Practice		

*There were a couple of people who wanted to stick with Orchard practice – as this provides continuity and covers all trees, or those who suggested an inspirational medical name such as: Jenner, Fleming, Saunders, Florence, Mary Ann Wallis and a couple of people who saw inspiration such as Hope or Rainbow as potentially good names.

2.5 Patient participation group

35 people gave a positive response to the question about forming a Patient Participation Group and working with the new practice to help improve health and care for our patients and maintain a happy, healthy population/GP practice.

3 Travelling to your GP practice

The penultimate section of the survey asked people about how they currently travel to their GP practice and the potential for working within a group of practices (also known as a primary care network). Currently most people either drive or walk to their practice, with a few respondents using the bus or taxis. See Chart 7, below.

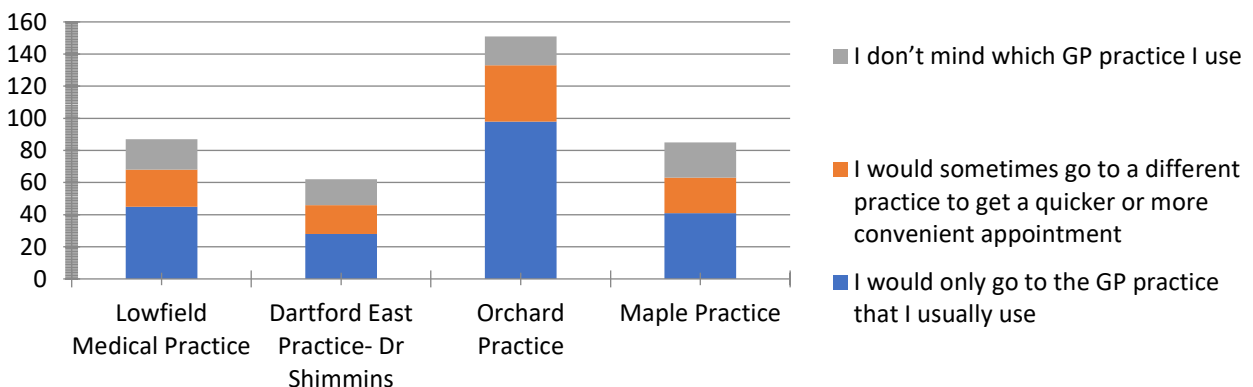
Chart 7: Travelling to your GP surgery before the pandemic

13. Before the Covid-19 pandemic changed services, how would you or a family member that you care for, usually get to your GP surgery?			Response Percent	Response Total
1	I drive myself or someone drives me		52.47%	85
2	I get a taxi		3%	5
3	I use the bus		5%	8
4	I use the train		0%	0
5	I walk		39%	63
6	I cycle		0.62%	1
7	I use community transport (for example, volunteer drivers or a minibus service)		0.00%	0
			answered	162
			skipped	1

The majority of these journeys take approximately 15 minutes (135 people) with 28 people travelling up to 30 minutes to their practice.

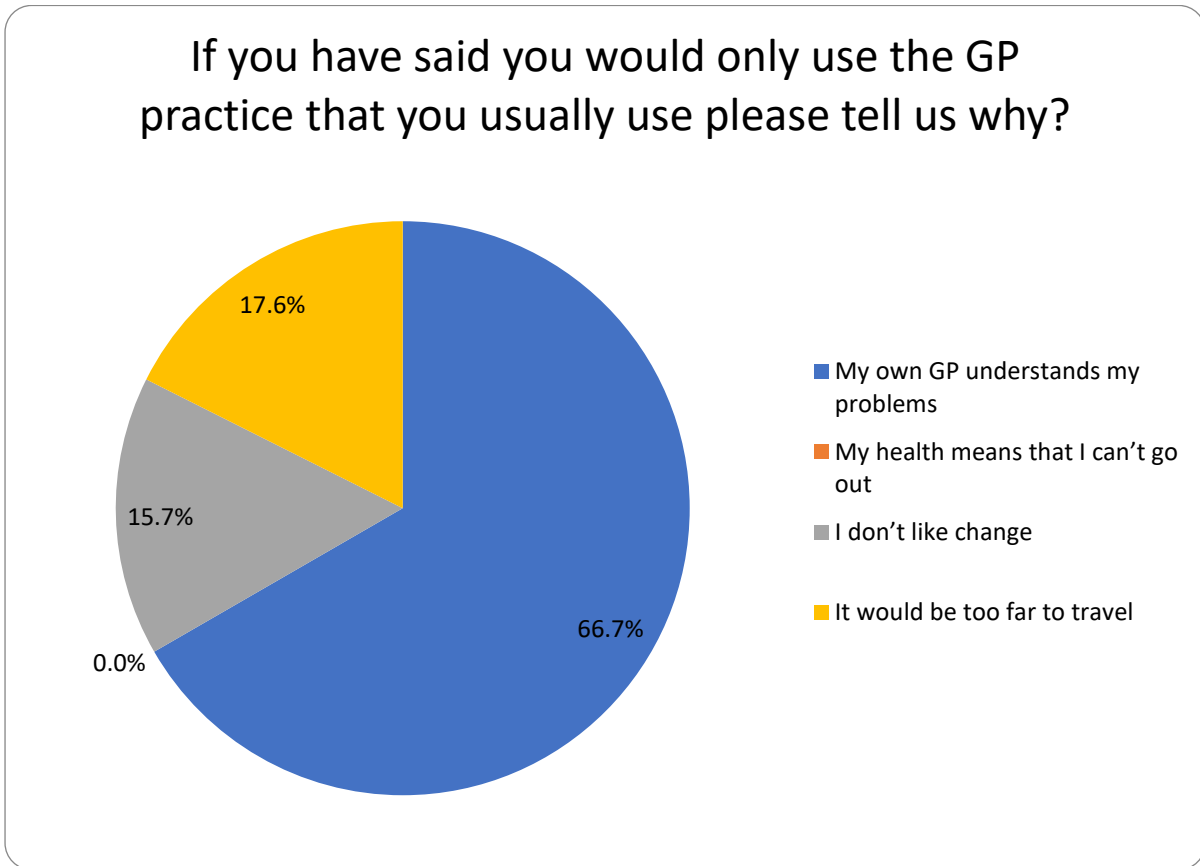
When asked about travelling to other GP practices currently working together to deliver additional services the majority of people said they would prefer to go to their practice, but some would on occasion be willing to travel to another practice within the network, only

Chart 8: Our GP practices are part of a network of practices (Primary Care Network) which work together to provide some services such as Covid-19 vaccinations. Which of these GP sites would you be prepared to travel to for an appointment with a GP or anot



about 20 people didn't mind which practice they used. See the matrix results below in Chart 8:

In **Chart 9** below we set out why patients prefer their own practice:



4 Demographics

In the final section of the survey, we asked people to tell us more about who had responded. Those people who completed the survey were mainly white British and female. There was a good representative range of ages. See below Charts 9 to 11.

Charts 9-11

18. Are you/they?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Male	<div style="width: 30.67%; background-color: #1f77b4;"></div>	30.67%	50
2	Female	<div style="width: 68.10%; background-color: #ff7f0e;"></div>	68.10%	111
3	Prefer not to say	<div style="width: 0.00%; background-color: #cccccc;"></div>	0.00%	0
4	Other (please add):	<div style="width: 1.23%; background-color: #d62728;"></div>	1.23%	2

18. Are you/they?

Chart 9 Gender of respondents




answered 163

17. What age are you/they?




Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Under 18	0.00%	0
2	18-24	3.11%	5
3	25-34	7.45%	12
4	35-44	14.29%	23
5	45-54	15.53%	25
6	55-64	25.47%	41
7	65-74	20.50%	33
8	75+	13.66%	22
Chart 10 Age of respondents		answered	161
		skipped	2

21. Please choose the answer that best describes your/their ethnicity or tick 'prefer not to say'

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
White			
1	British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish	86.03%	117
2	Irish	1.47%	2
3	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.00%	0
4	Any White Other	0.74%	1
Asian or Asian British			
5	Indian	2.21%	3
6	Pakistani	0.00%	0
7	Bangladeshi	0.00%	0
8	Chinese	0.00%	0
9	Any other Asian background	1.47%	2
Mixed			
10	White and Black Caribbean	0.00%	0

21. Please choose the answer that best describes your/their ethnicity or tick 'prefer not to say'				
11	White and Black African		0.00%	0
12	White and Asian		0.74%	1
13	Any other mixed background		0.00%	0
Black or Black British				
14	Caribbean		0.00%	0
15	African		3.68%	5
16	Any other black background		0.00%	0
Other Ethnic Group				
17	Any other Ethnic Group		0.74%	1
18	Prefer not to say		2.94%	4
Chart 11 Ethnicity of respondents			answered	136
			skipped	27

Those responding were also asked if they were carers, 28 responded as parents of children and 18 as carers for adults.

22. Do you care for someone else?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes, a child		17.83%	28
2	Yes, an adult		11.46%	18
3	No, I don't care for anyone else		70.70%	111
Chart 12 Carer responses			answered	157
			skipped	6

There were nine respondents who said they or someone they cared for had a learning disability. Whilst 18 respondents said they or someone they cared for had a disability.

