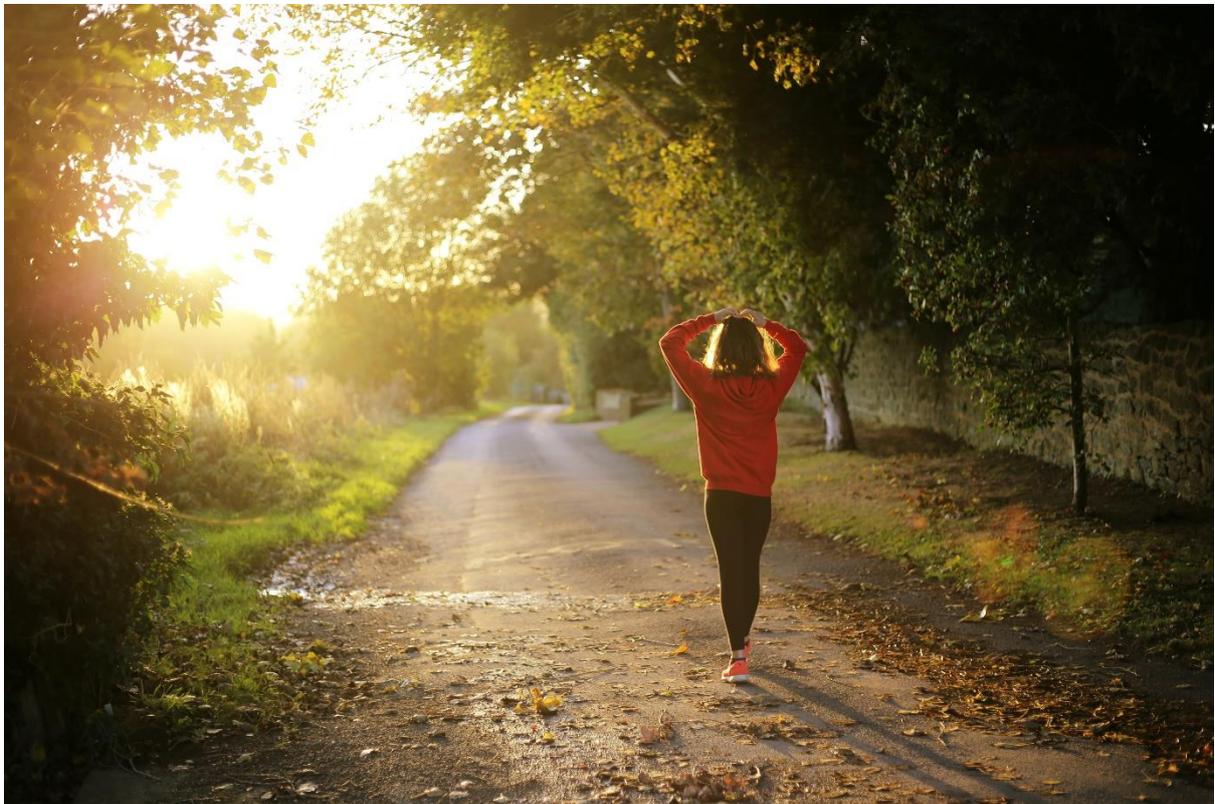


# What Matters Most?

## May 2021



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Healthwatch Wokingham are here to find out what matters to people in Wokingham Borough and to help make sure their views shape the support they need. Now that we have a road map out of the pandemic, and the vaccine roll-out is well under way, we wanted to know what matters most to people when it comes to health and social care services across the Borough.

Covid-19 has taken up so much focus over the past year, but we know that other health issues have not stopped and there are many challenges still facing the NHS and social care as they recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We launched a survey to find out more and over 100 residents gave their views. We asked;

- What are your big health priorities looking beyond Covid-19?
- What areas do you think we - as the independent champions for health and social care locally - should be focused on for the rest of this year?
- What views do you have on the way services are being run, now and for the future?

We plan to use this information to help set our priorities for the coming year and produce information for the public. We are sharing this report with service providers, interested stakeholders and the public.

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## Key Findings

The overarching theme from our findings was access to information. People found it difficult to find the services that would be helpful to them. This was due to several factors including website content that was not easy to find or was not updated, lack of public awareness of the support available and inability to contact services due to long waiting times by telephone or not being able to use technology.

The primary concern shared in the survey was difficulty in accessing GP surgeries, this is echoed by calls to our helpdesk and information shared by voluntary groups supporting vulnerable people in Wokingham Borough. There are a number of patients finding it difficult to access their GP's because they struggle to get an appointment or because only digital appointments were offered. GP surgeries continue to be very busy as they manage their existing responsibilities alongside the vaccine roll out. Intelligence gathered from the public throughout the year shows there are differences in the access to, and availability of, GP appointments in the local area.

Health and fitness are important to people in Wokingham Borough and there was a desire to improve fitness or lose weight following deterioration of health during lockdown. The support needed to achieve their goals ranged from medical help with existing health conditions to free or good value resources and information about what form of exercise would be most beneficial.

Mental health services were the area that most people wanted to see Healthwatch involvement. People were concerned about the difficulties they or their loved ones are facing as they transition out of lockdown. One person said, *'Some people will be anxious about returning to normal, others will not have a 'normal' to return to'*. This is a national

and international issue as the [World Health Organisation](#) stated that Covid-19 has disrupted or halted mental health services in 93% countries worldwide. [Young Minds](#) reports a ‘devastating impact’ on young people’s mental health following the January lockdown. Meanwhile [ONS](#) data suggests that while more people are becoming depressed, less are coming forward to seek support from a GP.

Carers told us about challenges that they are facing such as getting support from adult social care during the pandemic and co-ordinating ongoing medical care for loved ones. Healthwatch Wokingham will be publishing our ‘Caring During Covid’ report shortly which will help us to understand the experience of unpaid carers in more detail.

Dental services were well rated by survey respondents and most of the comments received were positive. This is interesting because calls to our helpline suggest that many people have had difficulty getting a dental appointment or finding an NHS dentist during the pandemic. The design of our survey would have been a factor here as we asked people about services they had had experience of this year and those who have not been able to have a dental appointment may have felt the question was not applicable to them. We also did not differentiate between NHS and private services. This is a learning point for us.

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## Analysis of findings

### GP Access and provision of face-to-face appointments

While half of all GP appointments during the pandemic have been face-to-face, many practices have turned to telephone or video appointments to help people access healthcare advice safely from home, where appropriate.

Unfortunately, this change has seen some patients struggling to access their doctors, particularly those without easy access to technology or the confidence to use virtual services.

### Wellbeing support

The responses indicated that the types of support people were looking for from their GP could sometimes be better served by others. [Community Navigators](#) provide an essential link between people and voluntary and community services. They are able to help with finding suitable exercise, social groups or wellbeing services to suit the individual. Wokingham Borough residents can self-refer via [Involve](#).

There are other local services that can support people to meet their wellbeing goals. The public needs greater awareness of how they could be helped by existing services.

Wellbeing need identified by Healthwatch survey	Support service	What do they offer?
<p>“Access to information i.e. what sports or activities would be good for me and what I want to achieve”</p>	<p><a href="#">Community Navigators</a></p>	<p>Social prescribing can make a huge contribution to an individual's health and wellbeing. The scheme is for anyone of any age from the Wokingham Borough, from a young parent looking for peer support and different activities in the area, to an elderly person looking to find support with managing a health condition or looking for new social networks to join.</p>
<p>“Free mindfulness of decent quality or tips and apps”</p>	<p><a href="#">Wokingham Recovery College</a></p>	<p>Wokingham Recovery College gives people with mental health problems the chance to access education, workshops and training programmes, designed to help them on their road to recovery. The college aims to help people become experts in their own self-care and enable family, friends and staff to better understand mental health.</p>
<p>“Access to fitness for seniors”</p>	<p><a href="#">Places for Leisure</a></p>	<p>‘SHINE’ classes for over 60’s including Tai Chi, Pilates, Aquafit, Zumba and more. Places for Leisure also offer GP referral sessions for people who have been unwell or injured.</p>
<p>“Better access to support services. Affordable counselling for families with limited funds.”</p>	<p><a href="#">Talking Therapies</a></p>	<p>Talking Therapies is our friendly and approachable NHS service that offers support if you’re coping with challenges like depression, stress, anxiety or phobias. If you’re aged 17 and over and living in Berkshire, we can help you overcome the mental health challenges you’re facing.</p>

There were other needs identified that were related to infrastructure such as lack of disabled access to country parks during the winter, traffic pollution and the need for more green spaces. We will be feeding these comments back to Wokingham Borough Council for consideration in future plans.

## Mental health services

Healthwatch Wokingham will further review the findings of this survey and consider other sources of intelligence such as calls to our helpline and research findings from previous projects before deciding on a plan of work for the coming year. Mental health services for adults and children are an area of interest and we have seen increasing public concern about provision during the pandemic.

## How will this report be used?

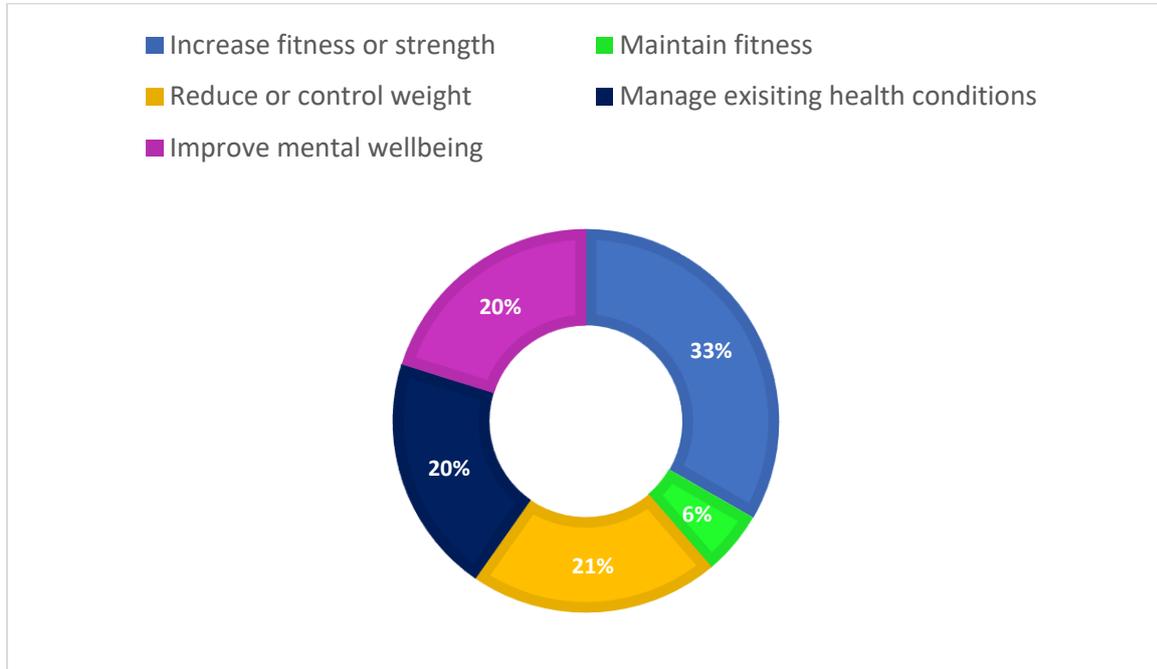
This report collates the responses from the What Matters Most survey and summarises these to highlight common themes, findings and opinions. Along with other insight we have received from Wokingham Borough residents in 2020-2021, the purpose of the report is to provide Healthwatch Wokingham Borough with additional intelligence and insight to support its priority setting for the coming year.

The report will be shared with relevant service providers and other external stakeholders, to support local health and social care services in providing improved care to service users.

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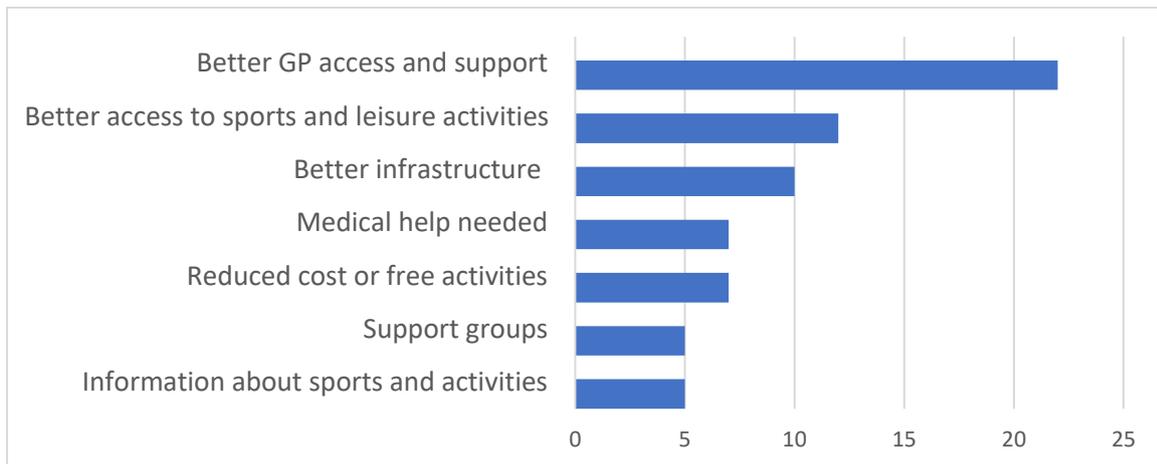
## Survey Results

What goals would you like to achieve in relation to your health and wellbeing this year?



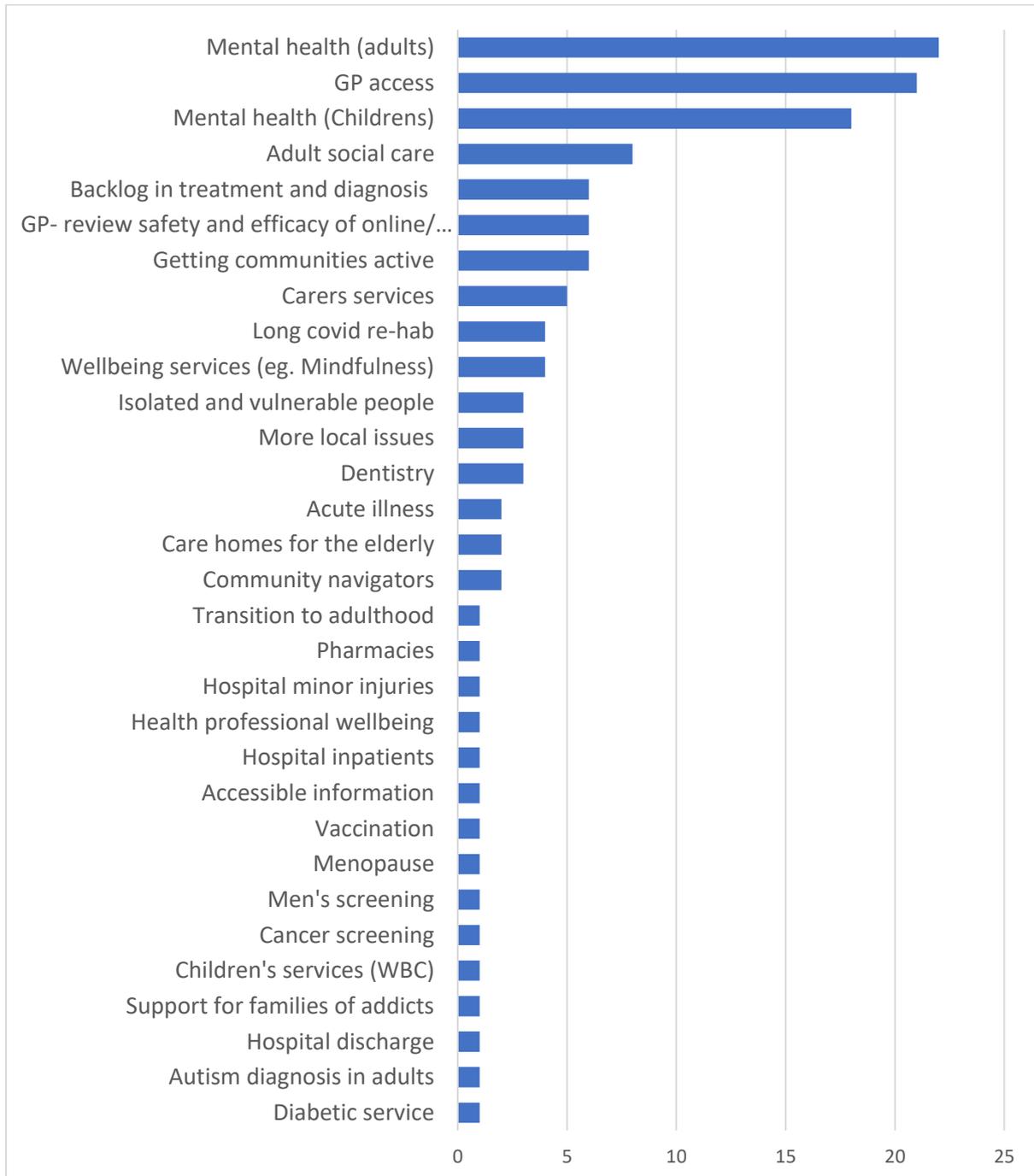
Also mentioned were: finding more/better medical help, socialising more, improving work/life balance and getting help with caring responsibilities.

What help or support do you need to achieve these goals?

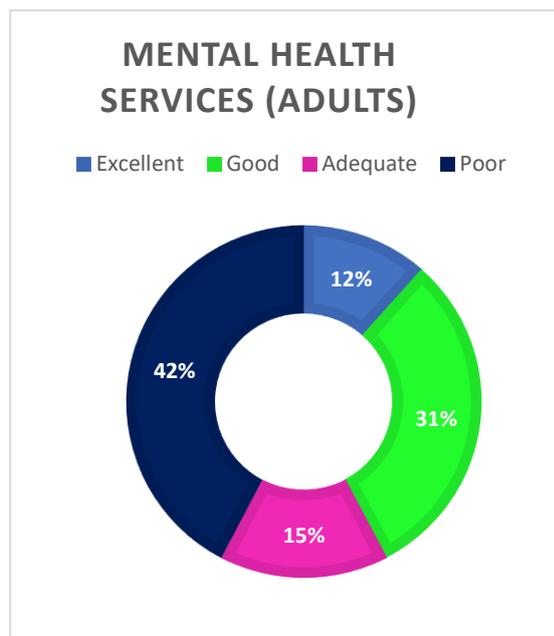
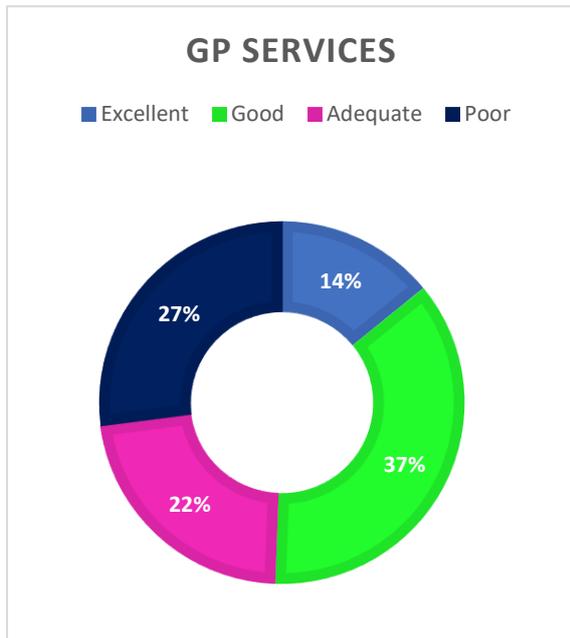
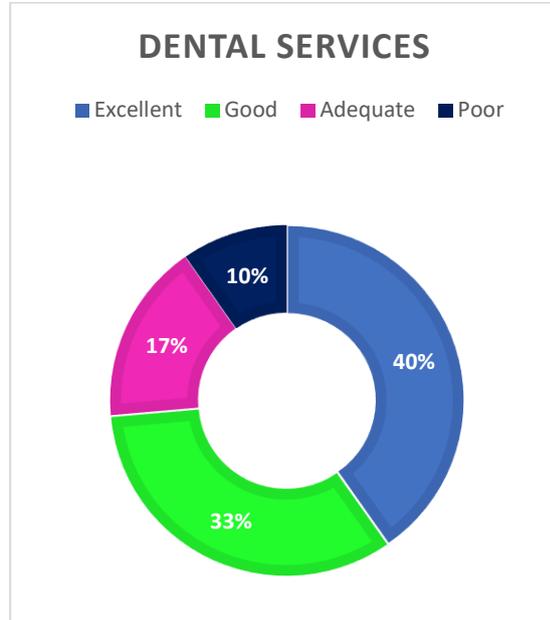
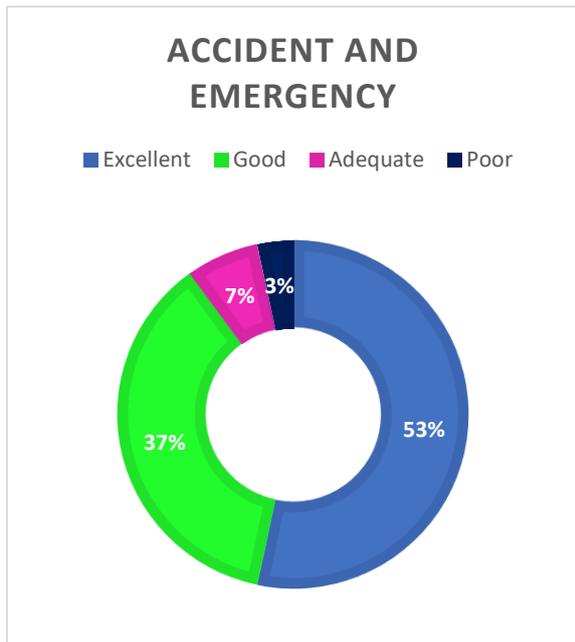


- A general MOT via GP would be helpful to understand what I can do to improve my ability to age well.
- Some more local groups. I am not sure what sort of help I need, but my existing health conditions are working against each other at the moment.

What service(s) do you think Healthwatch Wokingham should focus on over the coming year?

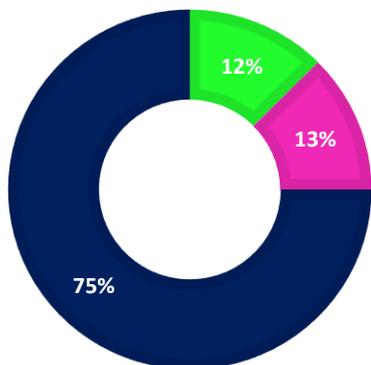


What services have you had experience of in the last year and what did you think of them?



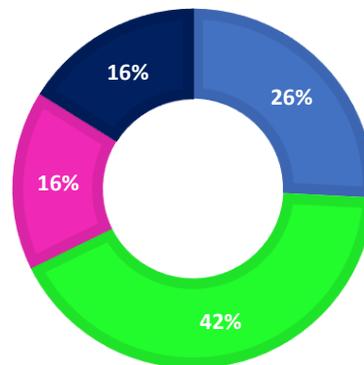
### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CHILDREN)

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



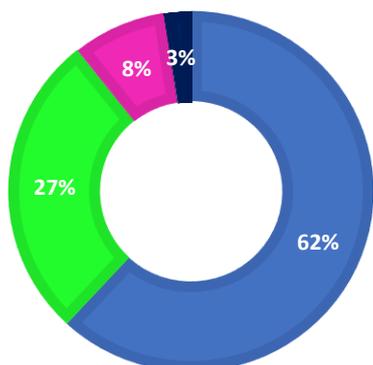
### NHS 111

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



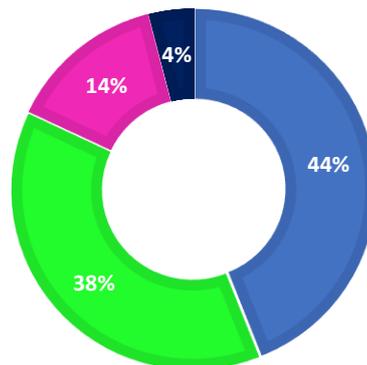
### VACCINATION SERVICES (COVID)

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



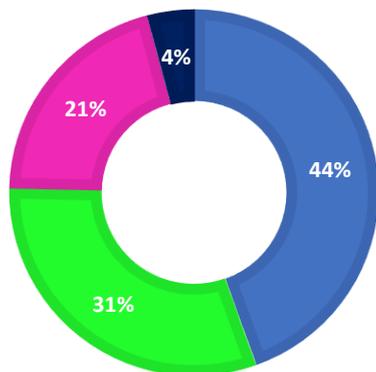
### VACCINATION SERVICES (NON-COVID)

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



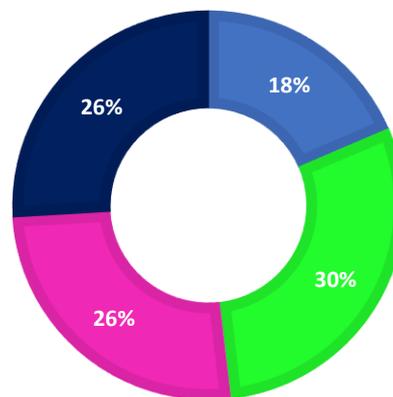
### NHS 119 (TRACK AND TRACE)

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



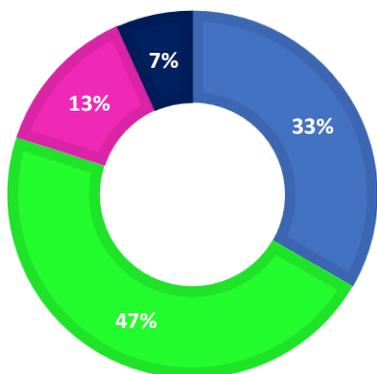
### ADULT SOCIAL CARE

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



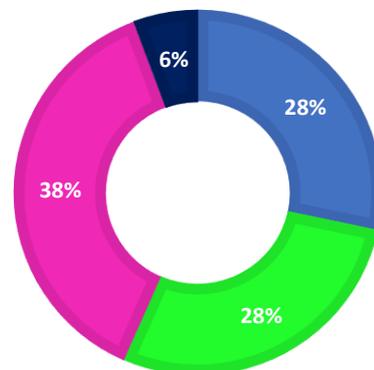
### AMBULANCE

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



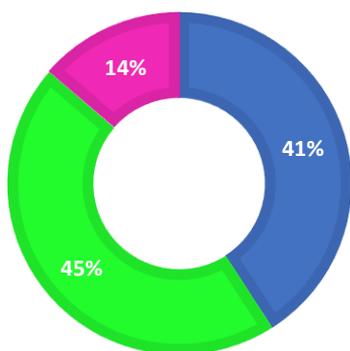
### AUDIOLOGY

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



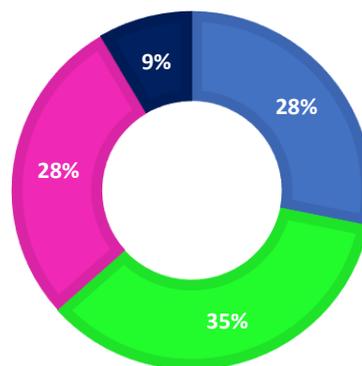
### BLOOD TESTS

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



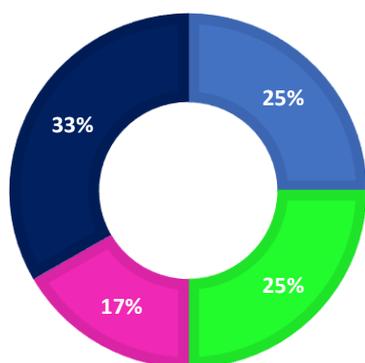
### CANCER CARE

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



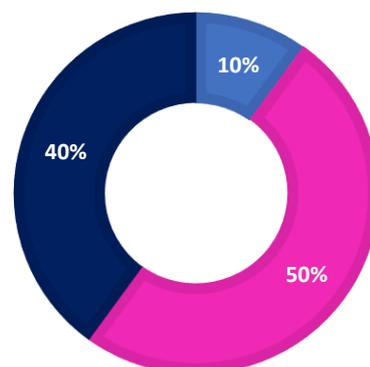
### CARE AT HOME

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



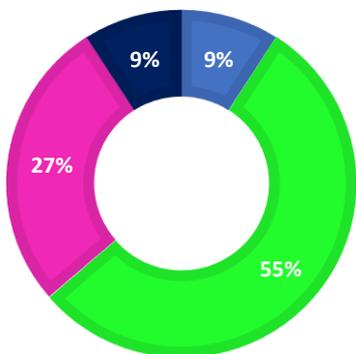
### DAY CENTRES FOR PEOPLE WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



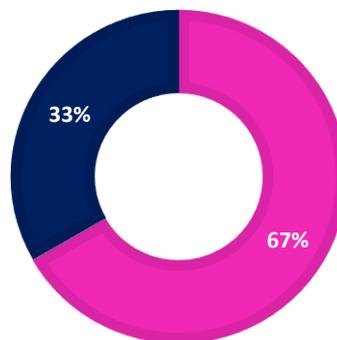
### INPATIENT CARE (HOSPITALS)

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



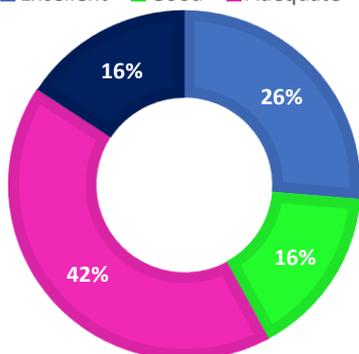
### MATERNITY CARE

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



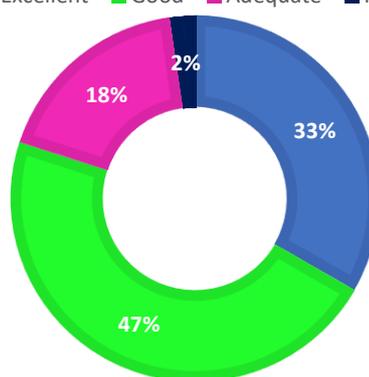
### OPHTHALMOLOGY

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



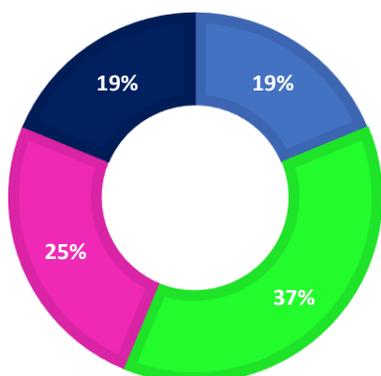
### OPTICIANS

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



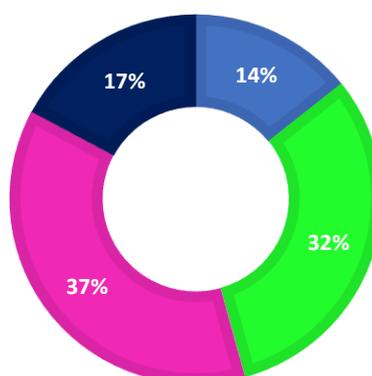
### ORTHOPAEDICS

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



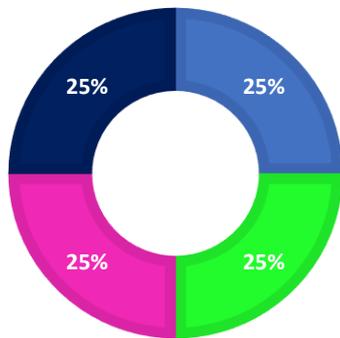
### OUTPATIENTS CARE

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



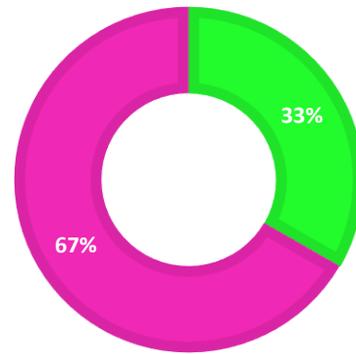
### PAEDIATRICS

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



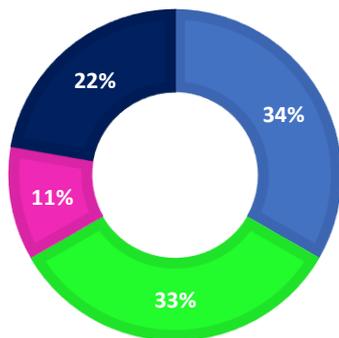
### SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



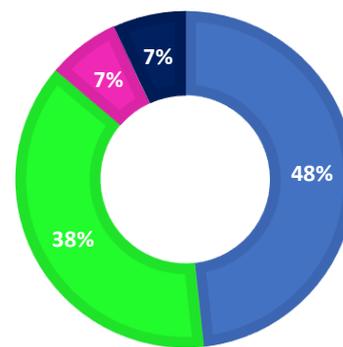
### RESIDENTIAL CARE AND NURSING HOMES

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



### VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AND CHARITIES

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Adequate ■ Poor



78 people told us about the positive experiences they had when using health and social care services.

Many people wanted to thank their health heroes for their support during a challenging time. A full list of those mentioned can be found in appendix 1.

"I received letters and calls from Adult Social Care around my shielding from Matt Pope and other staff"

"I experienced A & E and fracture clinic in the first Covid wave , the staff and the hospitals amber and red flow were excellen"t

59 people told us about negative experiences in the past year.

The most common issues were regarding access to GP surgeries (22 people told us about this) and lack of choice for people who need face to face appointments.

Other issues identified included, slow follow up of covid test results. Lack of access to children and young people's mental health service (CAMHS). Cancelled appointments during lockdown causing deterioration of health conditions. NHS dental services being unavailable.

 Whilst the news indicates GP's have been operating normally, you are now required to get an appointment via their online website and if you need to speak to someone the process online is not helpful. GP's need to see patients and have more capacity for evening and weekends.

 My GP is very difficult to contact. You have to be very fit and determined to get through on the phone to access anything. HAVE to ring at 8am and get in long queue or get cut off immediately as "they are not taking any more calls."

 Over 200 calls to GP and not been able to get through. The GP service does not cater for me as a full-time worker. It is not practical to take chunks of time to call GP to make an appointment. The service is not fit for purpose.



**We are here to help, advise, give information,  
and listen to your experiences**

Healthwatch are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to find out what matters to people and help make sure their views shape the support they need.

We also help people find the information they need about health and social care services or support in Wokingham Borough.

Here to help you on the next step of your health and social care journey.

We have the power to make sure that the government and those in charge of services hear people's voices. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them.

## Contact us

**0118 418 1418** between the hours of 09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday.

Healthwatch Wokingham  
Town Hall, Market Place  
Wokingham, RG40 1AS

[enquiries@healthwatchwokingham.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchwokingham.co.uk)

## Appendix 1

Services mentioned by people having positive experiences.

Thank you to-

Oaklands Practice Yateley	Dingley Children's centre
minor A&E (town lands) and out-patients orthopaedics (RBH)	Winnersh Dentist
Brants bridge clinic - Bracknell	John Radcliffe inpatients
A and E and fracture clinic	Asda pharmacy
Covid vaccination clinics	Opticians, Leighton's.
Burma hills surgery	Janine Oakley - Berkshire Carers.
Adult Social Care- WBC	Healthwatch Wokingham. Nick Durman.
Minor Injuries clinic	Wokingham Physiotherapist- Susie and Occupational Therapist - Cara.
Orthopaedics clinic RBH	Ambulance - Paramedics.
Audiology	A & E AT ROYAL BERKSHIRE HOSPITAL
111	Woosehill medical centre
ophthalmic appt at RBH	Specsavers
Twyford surgery	Wokingham dental clinic
Binfield Surgery	Clozapine team at Prospect Park Hospital
Breast clinic in Reading.	Audiology RBH
Wargrave GP	Shinfield dental practice
OPTALIS Employment Service.	Loddon Vale Practice
Support Horizons	Mencap Reading Branch
CLASP	Rose Street pharmacy
Rose Buddies Social Activities	Berkshire Cancer Centre Breast Care Nurses.
Dunedin Reading on NHS	Royal Berkshire Hospital,
Earley help hub	Wokingham Medical Centre.
Paediatric A&E and minor injuries unit	MRI service mobile unit at Bracknell
Beanoak Dental Practice	Brants bridge
Brookside GP	rheumatology care
Consulting Pharmacist at Rose Street	
Community Mental Health Services	

Finchampstead Surgery

Finchampstead Pharmacy

The Eye People, Wokingham

Dentist Hems. Henley

Vitrectomy operation at Moorfields, City  
Road, London

Perfect Smile dental service

HPV vaccine given at school

Ambulance service

Homestart

## Appendix 2

### Demographic data

**Age.** The majority of our completed surveys came from those over 60. (54%) 50-59 year olds- 16%, 40-49 year olds- 20%, 30-39 year olds- 16%, 20-29 year olds- 1% and 17 or younger 3%

**Gender.** Male- 27%, Female- 67%, prefer not to say 6%

**Ethnic origin.** 90% of respondents were white British with 4% being from other white backgrounds. 1% were black Caribbean while 5% chose not to disclose their ethnic origin.

**Disability.** 20% considered themselves disabled, 69% not disabled and 11% unsure.

**Sexual orientation.** Heterosexual- 82%, Gay or Lesbian- 1%, Bisexual- 1%, Don't know- 2%, Prefer not to say- 14%