

healthwatch

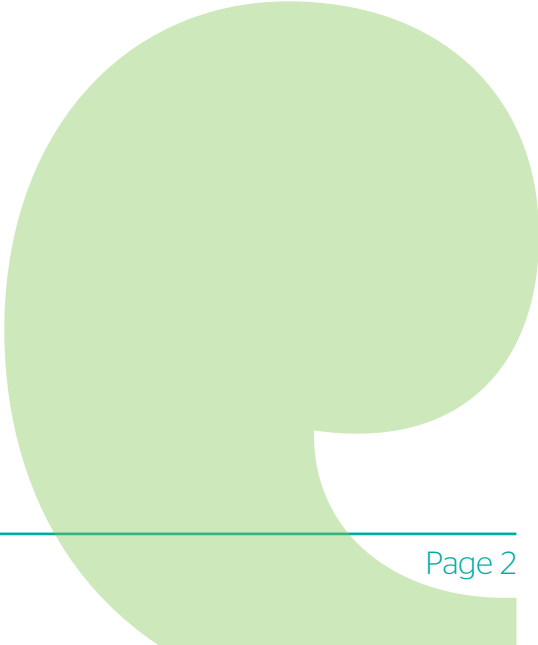
Liverpool

Care at the Chemist Report August 2019



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Background and Methodology

Background to the Care at the Chemist service

Care at the Chemist is a service provided by pharmacies in Liverpool for the treatment of some minor ailments. Pharmacists are able to provide treatments for an agreed range of conditions. This means that the patient does not need to visit their GP for a prescription. The service is free for those people who don't pay for their prescriptions. The service covers a range of minor ailments including cold sores, constipation, haemorrhoids and others. The service is available for patients aged 2 years and over.

The service is commissioned by NHS England. Pharmacies are paid a fee of £2.04 for each consultation undertaken, 97p for each item dispensed as part of the service and they are reimbursed for any medications supplied using an agreed 'drugs cost' list plus VAT.

Background to this review

Healthwatch Liverpool has involvement in the overview and scrutiny of pharmacy and medication issues locally. As part of this work a member of our staff regularly attends the Medicines Optimisation Committee meetings run by Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group.

We receive some pharmacy-related feedback each year from members of the public but these are small in number compared to feedback about other services such as GPs and hospitals. As such, we were interested to carry out some specific engagement about local pharmacy services to find out what local people think about these.

Methodology of this review

Engagement planning

As part of the planning process we did some desktop research into pharmacy-related engagement carried out by other Healthwatch. We read the relevant reports and used these to help inform our own engagement.

We realised that it would be difficult for us to have face to face contact with patients who use the Care at the Chemist service. This is because the service is delivered in over 100 pharmacies in Liverpool and, with limited staff and volunteer resources, it would not be practicable for us to carry out large numbers of visits. We noted that other Healthwatch who had taken this approach had relatively small numbers of respondents.

In addition, Care at the Chemist consultations do not need to be booked by the patient and generally take place spontaneously, therefore it would not be possible to predict how many consultations may or may not take place during a visit.

It would be difficult for us to determine whether a patient was having a Care at the Chemist consultation, as opposed to visiting the pharmacy for another reason.

We also felt that asking patients questions in the often narrow confines of a pharmacy would not be appropriate for confidentiality reasons.

In order to protect confidentiality and reach the widest number of people possible it was decided that a survey being handed out by pharmacy teams would be the best method of engagement. The Pharmacist would know each time they carried out a Care at the Chemist consultation and could offer the patient one of our surveys to complete, if they wished to do so.

In order for this approach to work, we spoke to the Chief Officer of the Liverpool Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC), an organisation which represents the interests of community pharmacies. The LPC has direct communication with all community pharmacies in Liverpool, therefore could provide a useful means of getting pharmacy teams “on board” with the engagement and distributing the surveys.

It should be noted that the LPC is an organisation which represents the interests of its members, not patients, therefore we were careful to avoid any conflict of interest and we took steps to ensure that any feedback received was not influenced by the LPC or its members.

The LPC were happy to assist us with disseminating the survey and getting pharmacy teams to distribute these to patients who used the Care at the Chemist service.

The next stage in the engagement planning was to design the surveys. We had some questions in mind that we wanted to ask and we also consulted key stakeholders in the design of the survey. We liaised with the LPC, NHS England and Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group to gain feedback about the proposed survey and the final design was agreed.

It was decided to run the engagement for a full month, from 1st June to 30th June 2019, to provide time to gather as much feedback as possible.

Engagement

We produced both paper and online versions of the survey. For the paper surveys, with the assistance of the LPC these were distributed to the top 20 pharmacies in Liverpool based on the number of Care at the Chemist consultations they carried out. These figures were provided to us by the LPC. All of the paper surveys were accompanied with a freepost envelope for people to return the surveys to us. The online version of the survey was promoted to all of the remaining pharmacies in Liverpool by email.

At Healthwatch Liverpool we are committed to ensuring that everyone is given the opportunity to share their views and experiences. As such, we recognise that people may need or prefer to engage with us in different ways. We therefore offered the following ways in which people could share their views:

- By completing the paper survey and returning in a prepaid envelope
- By completing the online version of the survey
- By completing the survey over the telephone with one of our staff
- By completing the survey in person with one of our staff

We gave explanations of these options on the front page of each of the paper surveys.

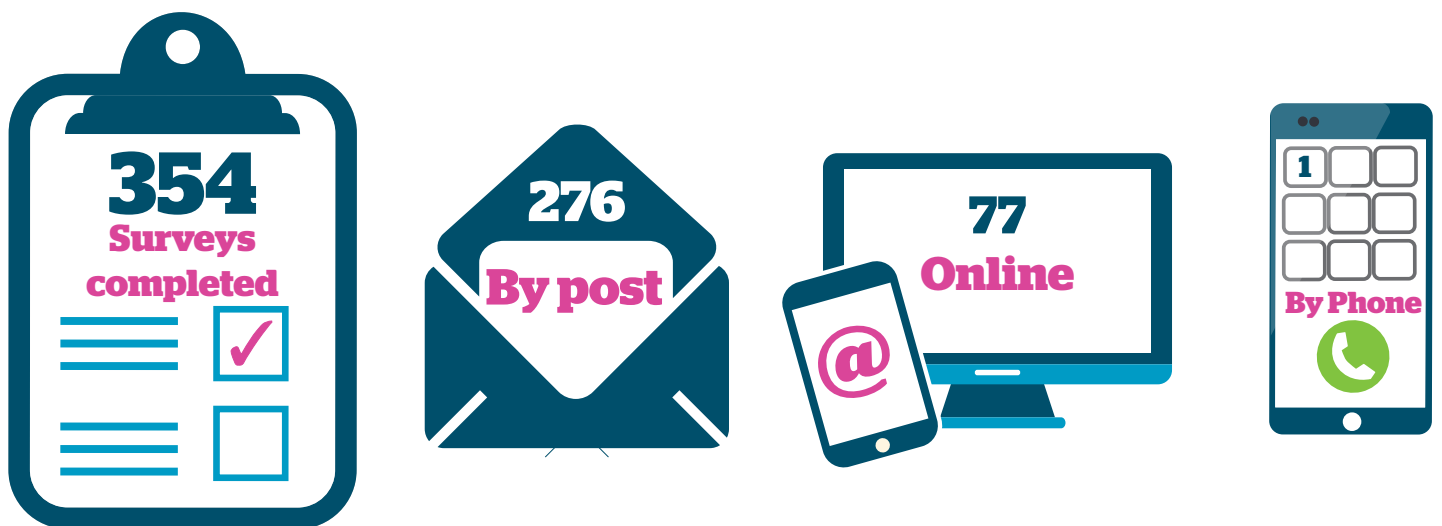
Limitations

As with any public engagement, there are limitations to this research as follows:

- The response rate represents only a small percentage of the total number of patients who had a Care at the Chemist consultation during the engagement period. The findings should therefore be viewed as a snapshot of some people's experiences and it's possible that findings would be different with a higher number of participants.
- The survey and methodology were carefully designed to minimise the risk of any undue influence, however this cannot be ruled out. The survey was distributed by the Liverpool Pharmaceutical Committee, which represents the interests of community pharmacies, and the survey was promoted to patients by pharmacy staff who may have a financial interest in the service.

Responses

The response rate is measured by the number of surveys completed. The response rate for the engagement is as follows:



Analysis of responses

During the engagement period there were a total of 6436 patients who used the Care at the Chemist service in Liverpool, according to figures provided to us by the LPC.

The number of surveys returned therefore represents 5% of the total number of patients who used the service during the period.

Key findings

Based upon the responses of those who completed the surveys, the key findings are as follows:

65% of people found out about the service from the pharmacy team.



People like the fact that they can get treatment without the need to see their GP



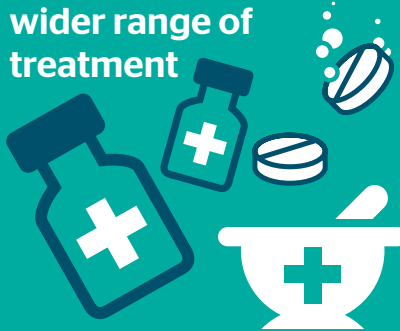
People, particularly those on a low income, like the fact that the service is free



The service was also described by some people as quick and easy



Some people would like to see the service extended to include a wider range of treatment



Some would also like to see more advertising of the service

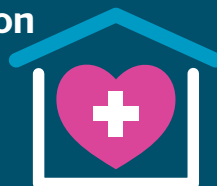


55% of people have never seen any advertising about the service.

69% of people would have visited their GP if they hadn't used the service. Others would have visited a walk-in centre or A&E



85% would be either happy or very happy to see a Pharmacist for something which currently requires a GP prescription



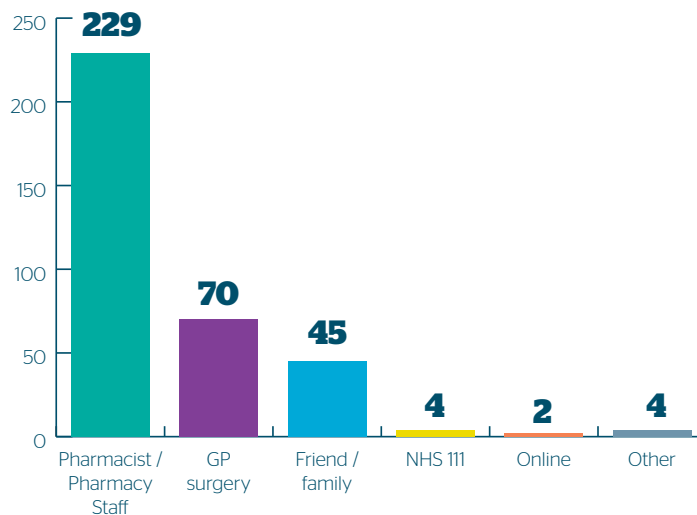
90% would be likely or very likely to recommend the service to friends and family for similar treatment.



Survey Results

Where did you find out about the Care at the Chemist service?

We asked people where they had found out about the Care at the Chemist service and we captured their feedback using options for people to select. This question was answered by all respondents.



As illustrated above, the majority of respondents (65%) found out about the service through the Pharmacist or pharmacy staff.

What do you think is good about the Care at the Chemist service?

We asked people to describe what they thought was good about the service and we captured their feedback in a free text box on the survey. This question was answered by 333 out of 354 respondents.

This feedback has been analysed and the following themes identified:

Treatment without needing to see a GP

129 people stated that they like the scheme because it means they can get treatment for minor ailments without needing to visit their GP. Some of their comments are as follows:

“Don’t need an appointment with doctor which can be hard to get.”

“Saves time on visiting GP. Saves wasting GP time.”

“It avoids using up GP appointments for minor problems.”

“Not having to go to a GP for a minor ailment.”

Free

129 people highlighted the importance of the service being free to use. Some of their comments are as follows:

"It's fantastic for patients who don't have a lot of money."

"If you haven't any money you can always get medicine."

"It is handy when you're skint."

"Help I wouldn't normally be able to afford."

Quick

36 people stated that the service is quick to use. Some of their comments are as follows:

"Prompt medication for minor ailments."

"They don't take very long."

"Immediate care whenever we require assistance."

"Made up with this service. So easy and quick."

Easy

28 people stated that the service is easy to use. Some of their comments are as follows:

"Ease of obtaining basic medicines."

"It is very easy to get meds."

"Ease of obtaining advice and the necessary treatment."

"It's very good, easy to do!"

Is there anything you think could be improved?

We asked people if anything could be improved about the service and we captured their feedback in a free text box on the survey. This question was answered by 289 out of 354 respondents.

This feedback has been analysed and the following themes identified:

Nothing

187 people stated that nothing needs to change about the service. Some of their comments are as follows:

"No, I always receive excellent care from my local chemist."

"No, it is a really good service."

"No, I think the service is good. Whenever I have been worried I have gone to Pharmacist to ask for advice."

"No, I always go to the Pharmacist for advice."

Expanded service

61 people stated that the service should be expanded to include a wider range of conditions and treatments. Some of their comments are as follows:

"Include more minor ailments."

"Bigger selection of minor ailments to treat."

"Have more treatments / services in it."

"Pharmacist bring able to treat some infections i.e. UTI with antibiotics, if needed."

More publicity

21 people felt that the service needs more advertising and publicity. Some of their comments are as follows:

"More advertising."

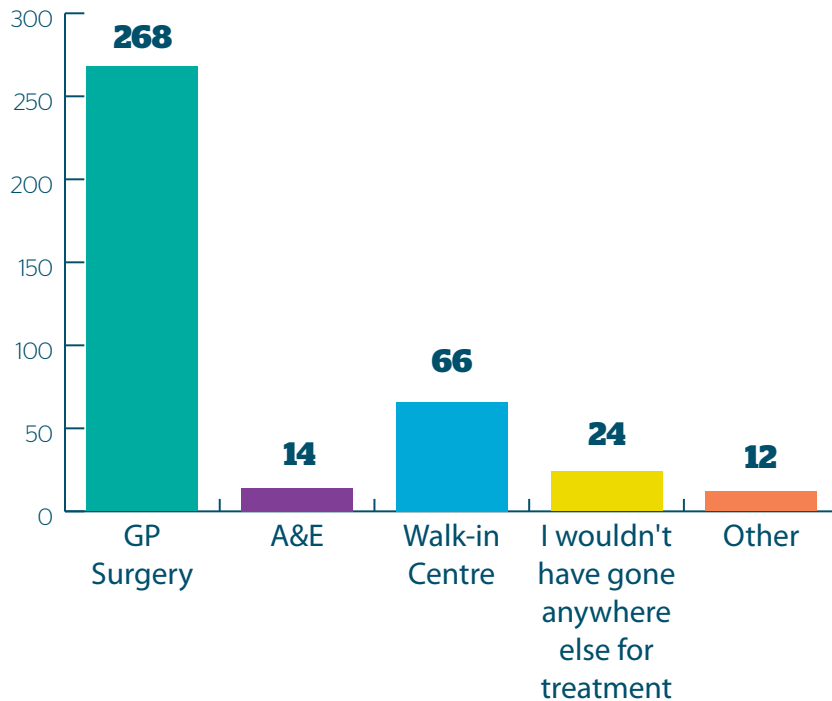
"Probably the awareness of the scheme."

"Advertising of it as a valuable service especially as so many people who could use the service are unaware of it..."

"Make more patients aware of it."

If you hadn't used the Care at the Chemist service, where would you have gone for treatment?

We asked people where they would have gone for treatment if they hadn't used the Care at the Chemist service and we captured their feedback using options for people to select. This question was answered by 350 out of 354 respondents.



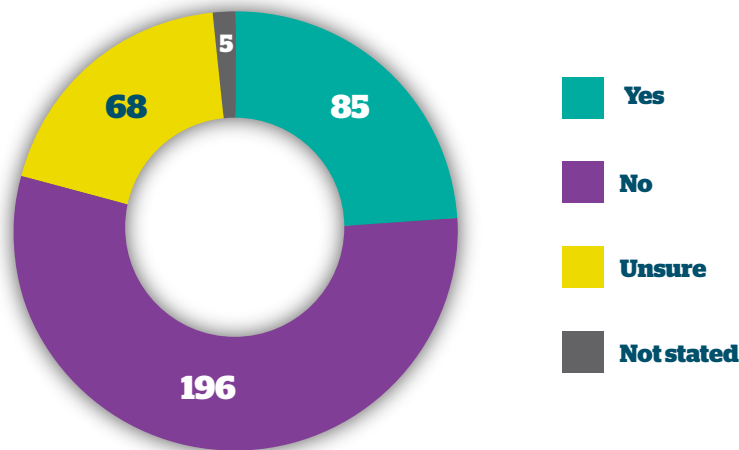
Most people chose only one option but 27 people chose two or more options, therefore the total number of options selected is more than the total number of respondents.

As illustrated above, the majority of respondents (69%) indicated that they would have visited their GP if they hadn't used the Care at the Chemist service.

According to NHS England, the average cost of a GP appointment to the NHS is £30, therefore if these respondents had visited their GP instead, it would have cost the NHS over £8000, as opposed to the cost of the Care at the Chemist service which is significantly lower. In addition, we know from national evidence and feedback we receive locally that GP services are under increasing pressure and any additional demand for appointments is likely to add to this pressure.

Have you ever seen any advertising or publicity about the Care at the Chemist service?

We asked people whether they had seen any advertising about the Care at the Chemist service and we captured their feedback using options for yes, no and not sure. This question was answered by 349 out of 354 respondents. Those who did not provide a response are recorded as “Not stated”.



As illustrated above, the majority of people (55%) haven't seen any advertising about the service. This links with the fact that the majority of respondents found out about the service from the Pharmacist or pharmacy staff.

The responses to this question reflect some of those from question 3 (what could be improved?) where 21 people felt that the service needed more advertising and publicity.

If yes, what have you seen and where was this? (e.g. information online, poster in the pharmacy, etc)

We asked people, if they had seen any advertising, what and where this was. We captured their feedback in a free text box on the survey. This question was answered by 80 out of the 85 people who had seen advertising for the service.

This feedback has been analysed and the following themes identified:

Pharmacy

50 people, the majority of respondents, had seen advertising in the pharmacy, either in the form of a poster, leaflet, or information displayed on TV screens.

GP surgery

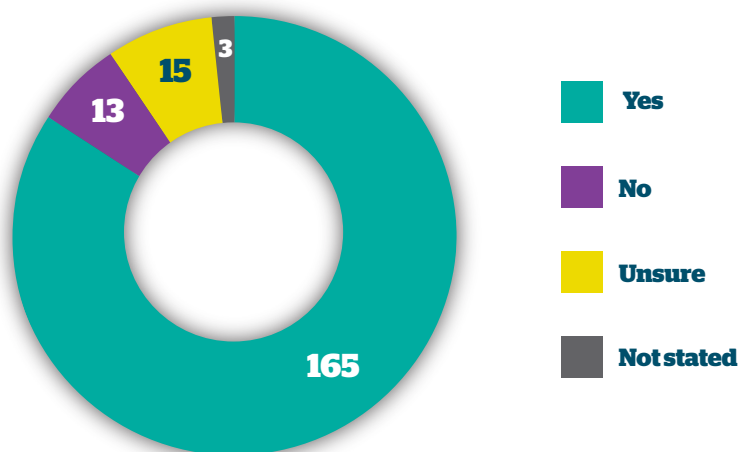
16 people had seen advertising of the Care at the Chemist service in their GP surgery.

Other locations

A small minority of people had seen advertising in other locations including online (five people), in newspapers (two people) and posters at bus stops (one person).

If no, do you think there should be more advertising or publicity for the Care at the Chemist service?

We asked those people who hadn't seen any advertising whether they felt that the Care at the Chemist service should have more advertising. We captured their feedback using options for yes, no and not sure. This question was answered by 193 out of 196 respondents who hadn't seen any advertising. Those who did not provide a response are recorded as "Not stated".

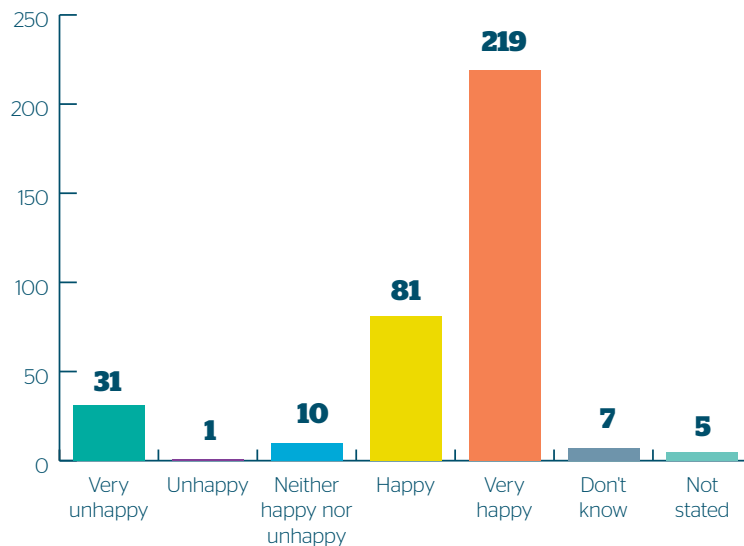


As illustrated above, the majority of people (84%) feel that the Care at the Chemist service should have more advertising or publicity.

Although this question was specifically aimed at those people who hadn't seen any advertising, it was also answered by another 76 people who either had seen advertising, weren't sure or hadn't answered that question. This indicates that some people feel the service should have more advertising, even if they themselves had seen existing advertising.

How happy would you be to see a Pharmacist to be treated for minor ailments that currently need to be treated by a GP with a prescription?

We asked people whether they would be happy to see a Pharmacist for treatment that currently requires a prescription from a GP and we captured their feedback using options for people to select. This question was answered by 349 out of 354 respondents. Those who did not provide a response are recorded as “Not stated”.



As illustrated above, the majority of people (85%) would be either happy or very happy to see a Pharmacist for something which currently requires a GP prescription.

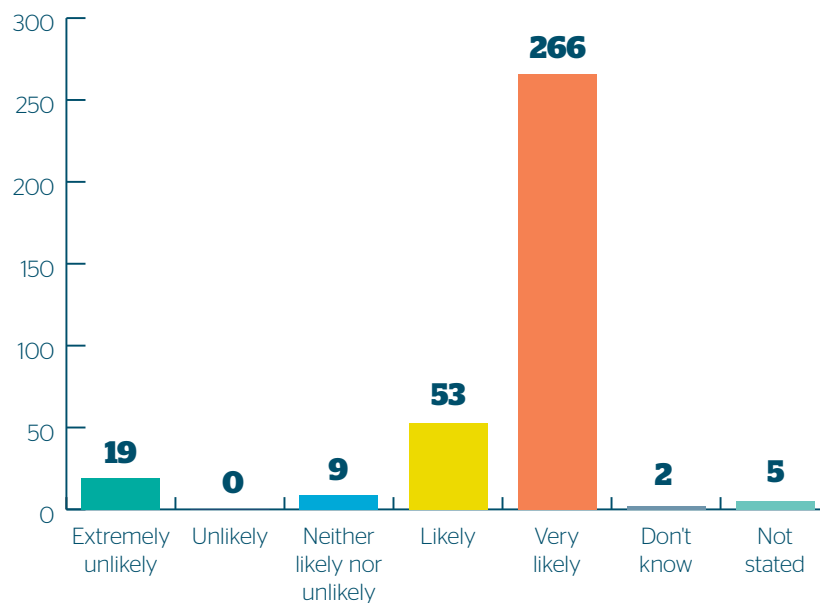
However, 31 people (9%) ticked that they would be very unhappy to do this. A further analysis of these responses provides a confusing picture. Everyone who ticked this option had provided positive feedback about the Care at the Chemist service in their other answers, including two people who specifically stated that the service should be extended in their answer to question 3 (what could be improved?). Due to the layout of the survey, with the option for very unhappy appearing first on the scale, it is possible that some people ticked this option in error.

It should be noted that we are not aware of any plans to extend the Care at the Chemist service but, if this were to be considered in the future, then these results suggest that the public would be generally supportive, although further consultation would be required.

How likely are you to recommend the Care at the Chemist service to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment?

We asked people whether they would recommend the service to friends and family if they needed similar treatment and we captured their feedback using options for people to select. The wording of this question was chosen as it matched with the NHS Friends and Family Test (FFT) which is a method used across the NHS to capture patient satisfaction with services.

This question was answered by 349 out of 354 respondents. Those who did not provide a response are recorded as "Not stated".



As illustrated above, the majority of people (90%) would be likely or very likely to recommend the service to friends and family for similar treatment.

However, 19 people (5%) stated that they would be extremely unlikely to recommend the service. A further analysis of these responses again provides a confusing picture. As with the previous question, all of the people who ticked this option had provided positive feedback about the service in their answers to other questions, including many people who stated that nothing needs to change about the service. It seems unlikely that someone would comment positively about the service but then be extremely unlikely to recommend it to friends and family. It is therefore possible that some of these answers are erroneous, again due to the option for extremely unlikely appearing first on the scale.

About Healthwatch Liverpool

Healthwatch Liverpool is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Liverpool. We're here to make sure that those running services put people at the heart of care.

One of our main purposes is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf.

As part of a national network made up of local Healthwatch organisations in every local authority area of England and Healthwatch England, the national body, our work contributes to a nationwide perspective of health and social care services.

We also work with neighbouring local Healthwatch to gather patient experiences from a wider local footprint when it is useful to do so.

At Healthwatch Liverpool we also provide a dedicated information and signposting service which helps to put people in touch with services and activities that can help maintain and improve their health and wellbeing.



Appendix A - Survey Questionnaire



1. Where did you find out about the Care at the Chemist service?

- Pharmacist / Pharmacy staff
 GP surgery
 Friend / family
 NHS 111
- Online (if so, which website)
- Other (please state)

2. What do you think is good about the Care at the Chemist service?

3. Is there anything you think could be improved?

4. If you hadn't used the Care at the Chemist service, where would you have gone for treatment?

- GP surgery
 A&E
 Walk-in Centre
 I wouldn't have gone for treatment anywhere else
- Other (please state)

5. Have you ever seen any advertising or publicity about the Care at the Chemist service?

- Yes
 No
 Not sure

6. If yes, what have you seen and where was this? (e.g. information online, poster in the pharmacy, etc)

7. If no, do you think there should be more advertising or publicity for the Care at the Chemist service?

- Yes
 No
 Not sure

Please turn over

Page 2

8. How happy would you be to see a Pharmacist to be treated for minor ailments that currently need to be treated by a GP with a prescription?

Very Unhappy
 Unhappy
 Neither happy nor unhappy
 Happy
 Very Happy
 Don't know

9. How likely are you to recommend the Care at the Chemist service to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment?

Extremely Unlikely
 Unlikely
 Neither likely nor unlikely
 Likely
 Very Likely
 Don't know

Some details about you. We are asking these questions to make sure we are engaging with a wide variety of people. We don't ask for your name, so any information you give is anonymous. If there are any questions you would prefer not to answer then just tick "Prefer not to say".

Age Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Yes No Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to have a religion or belief? Yes No Prefer not to say

If yes, which religion or belief?

Which best describes your situation?

Full-time work
 Part-time work
 Retired
 Full-time education
 Unemployed
 Carer

Self employed
 Unable to work
 Part-time education
 Other
 Prefer not to say

How would you describe your race or ethnicity? Prefer not to say

How would you describe your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual
 Lesbian
 Gay
 Bisexual
 Other
 Prefer not to say

Which of the following describes how you think of yourself?

Woman
 Man
 In another way (please state)
 Prefer not to say

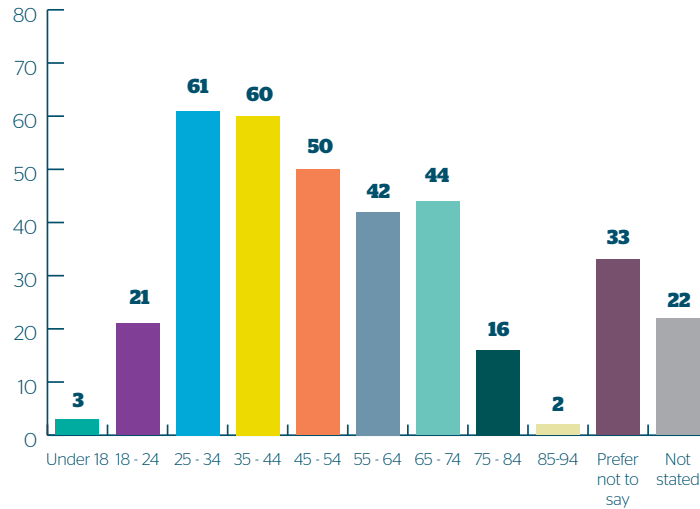
Is your gender identity the same as that you were given at birth? Yes No Prefer not to say

**Thank you for taking part in this survey!
Please return via the FREEPOST envelope provided**

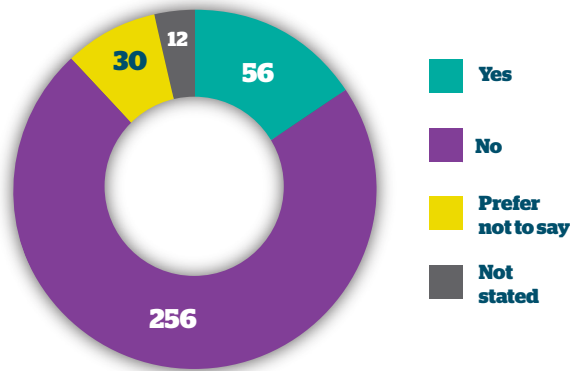
Appendix B - Equality and Diversity Data

In the final section of the survey we asked for basic demographic details. This is to ensure that we have received responses from a wide variety of those who make use of the Care at the Chemist service. We can also use this data in conjunction with similar data gathered through our other work to help us make sure we are hearing from all communities in Liverpool, identify any gaps and plan our future engagement.

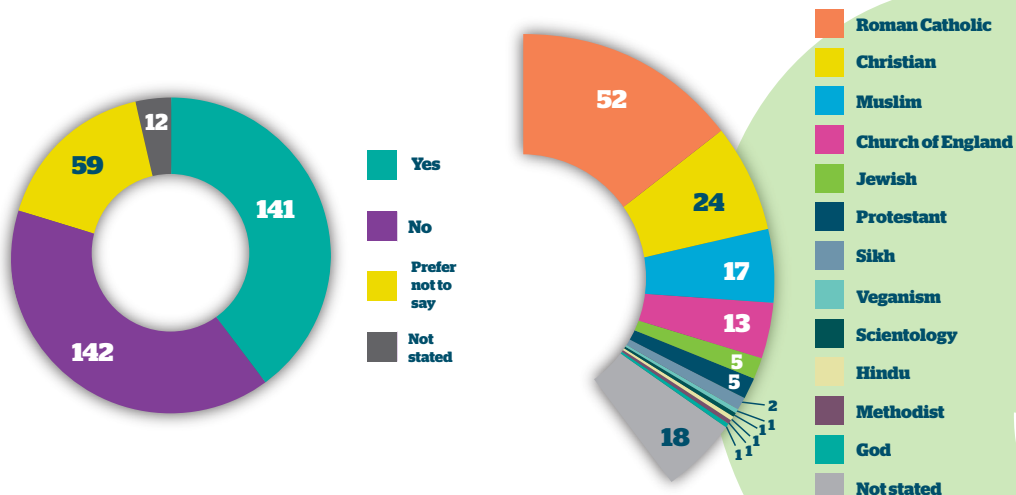
Age



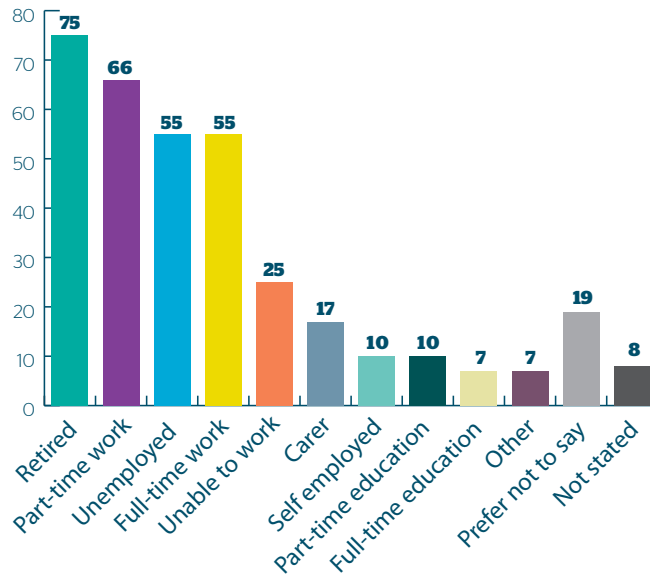
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?



Do you consider yourself to have a religion or belief?



Which best describes your situation?



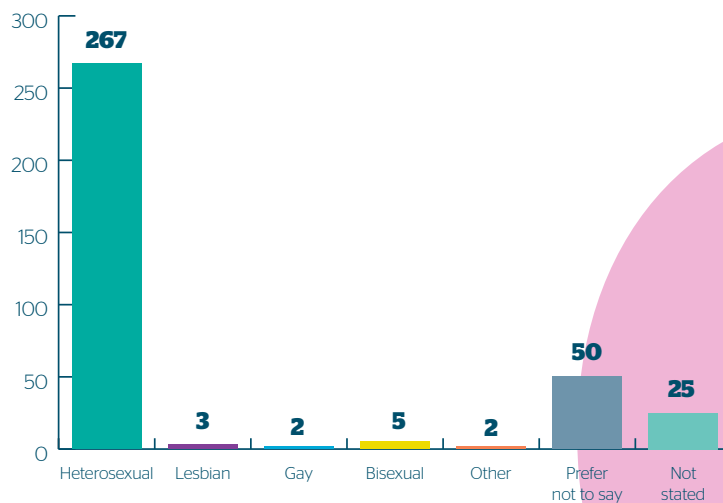
How would you describe your race or ethnicity?

We allowed people to self-define using a free text box and we have grouped the answers below.

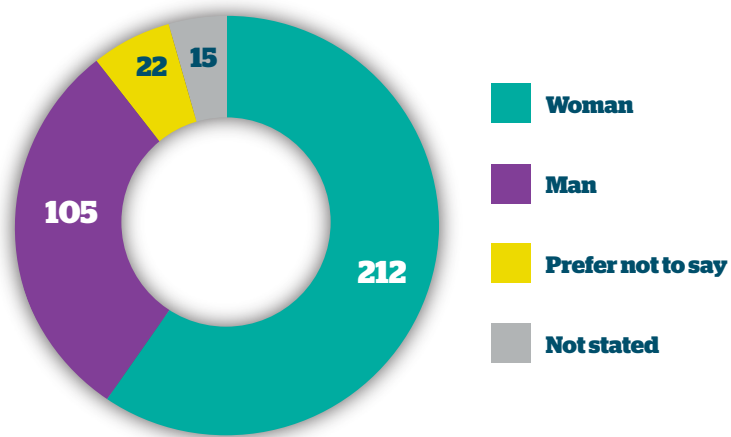
White British / White English	113
British / English / British Scouse / Scouse	58
White / White Caucasian / White Czech / White Other	23
Black British / Black Irish / Black Other / Black African	6
British Indian / Indian / Bangladeshi / Asian	6
Mixed Race / Mixed British / Mixed / Mixed White and Black Caribbean / Mixed Race British	6

African	3
Arab	3
Egyptian	1
Romanian	1
Irish	1
Iranian	1
Czech	1
Turkish	1
Prefer not to say	76
Not stated	54

How would you describe your sexual orientation?



Which of the following describes how you think of yourself?



We also had an option for "In another way" but nobody chose this.

Is your gender identity the same as that you were given at birth?

