



Experiences of urgent medical care in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin

Survey Report

(Updated 14 February 2022 to include NHS 111 service provider response)

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About Healthwatch



Healthwatch is the independent health and social care champion for local people

We work to make your voice count when it comes to shaping and improving services. We use a variety of methods to find out what people like about services, and what could be improved and we share these views with those with the power to make change happen. Our reports go to:

- the organisations who provide services
- the commissioners who pay for services (e.g. Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group, Shropshire Council)
- service regulators (the Care Quality Commission, NHS England)
- our national body Healthwatch England to let them know how local services are working in Shropshire



We are not experts in health and social care and surveys are just one of the methods we use to put a spotlight on services and ask people to share their views with us. Usually our surveys are publicised and promoted through our engagement activities (e.g. talks and stands at events) as well as through online publicity and local press releases. Due to the pandemic we were unable to use face to face engagement for this topic.

Please note

Our survey was time limited but we continue to want to hear from people who are willing to share their experiences with us and we will share them with the providers, commissioners and regulators.

The context

Since July 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) has been piloting an ‘NHS 111 First’ service to encourage patients to call NHS 111¹ for an assessment of how urgent their condition is (triage) before attending accident and emergency (A&E) services. NHS 111 First is aligned to the five-year forward view for NHS Urgent and Emergency Care² and is now being rolled out across the NHS in England and NHS 111 providers.



If anyone has an urgent, but not life-threatening health problem they are encouraged to call NHS 111 to be directed to the correct service, whether that is an Emergency Department (Accident & Emergency), their GP, or self-care. Callers to NHS 111 can now receive time slots at local Emergency Departments (EDs) or other Urgent Treatment Centres (sited at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and Princess Royal Hospital), as well as receive time slots with GPs or out of hours GP services. The new service aims to reduce waiting times at EDs and limit the number of people in waiting rooms to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Initial findings in national research soon after the launch of NHS 111 First showed that many people did not know that NHS 111 First could book them into the different services they may need.

Healthwatch Shropshire (HWS) and Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin (HWTW) wanted to gather the views and experiences of people who have used NHS 111 First to understand how they were helped to access services, their awareness of NHS 111 First and their intentions to use it in future. We carried out an initial survey in spring 2021 and wanted to know how things may have changed since that survey.³

¹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/urgent-emergency-care/nhs-111/>

² <https://www.england.nhs.uk/five-year-forward-view/next-steps-on-the-nhs-five-year-forward-view/urgent-and-emergency-care/>

³ [Experiences of urgent medical care in Shropshire | Healthwatch Shropshire](#)

What we did

HWS and HWTW initially worked with the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care System (STWICS) to create a survey through which we could ask people to describe their experiences of seeking urgent medical care.



We worked to make sure as many people as possible were made aware of the survey. The call for feedback was publicised through:

- our email newsletters
- social media channels
- a press release to the local media, e.g. The Shropshire Star and BBC Radio Shropshire.

We shared details of the survey with our contacts across the local health and care system including:

- GP practices
- Hospitals and local Emergency Departments
- Pharmacies
- local councils
- community groups
- community centres and village halls.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions we were unable to use face to face contact to encourage people to share their experiences.

The people we heard from

We heard from 181 people.

Who are you completing this survey for?	HW Shropshire survey		HW Telford & Wrekin survey		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Myself	63	62%	45	56%	108	60%
Someone else	37	37%	34	43%	71	39%
Blank	1	1%	1	1%	2	1%
Total	101	100%	80	100%	181	100%

A full demographic breakdown is available in Appendix A

Key Findings

First Point of Contact

- 48% of 181 respondents said they contacted NHS 111 first when they had an urgent medical need (46% in Shropshire and 51% in Telford & Wrekin) this compares with 59% in the same survey carried out in Shropshire in Spring 2021. ([Experiences of urgent medical care in Shropshire | Healthwatch Shropshire](#))
- The proportion of people whose first point of contact was NHS 111 First varied across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, for example, it varied from 35% in the TelDoc Primary Care Network (PCN) to 60% in the Wrekin PCN. (A breakdown of respondents by GP practice is included in Appendix A, a list of practices in each of the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin PCNs can be found here; [Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin PCNs - Shropshire CCG](#))

NHS 111

Overall satisfaction with contacting NHS 111

- 43% of patients who contacted NHS 111 rated their experience as 'Very Good' or 'Good'. (This compares to 69% of those who completed the same survey in Shropshire in Spring 2021.) Nearly one third of people rated their experience as 'very poor'.
- Of the 43 people who rated their experience of contacting NHS 111 as 'Poor' or 'Very Poor' 32 provided further details. The two issues most frequently raised were:
 - calls to NHS 111 not being answered in a timely manner, e.g. waiting up to 90 minutes.
 - long waits for a call back from the service, e.g. up to 16 hours.

Experience of Booked Appointments

Twenty-four of the people who contacted NHS 111 First (26%) were booked into appointments with other services

- Of these 58% of people told us that they would rate their experience of booking an appointment through NHS 111 as 'Good' or 'Very Good', 25% described it as 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.
- Only 17% told us they were seen more quickly than they expected to be. Ten people gave further details about their experience of the booking process, most described their frustration that the booking system did not affect the time they spent in the Urgent Treatment Centre or Emergency Department triage and treatment process.
- However, 20 out of 24 patients (83%) told us they would use the system of contacting NHS 111 first again if a booked appointment could be made for them.

The carers experience

Twenty-seven of the 34 people who contacted NHS 111 on behalf of somebody they cared for (79%) reported that they were able to discuss the patient's needs with the NHS 111 health advisor. Of the seven who reported they weren't able to discuss the patient's needs, five reported that it was because the call was not answered in a timely manner.

Awareness of NHS 111 First

Overall, 52% of all people (93) told us they were not aware that NHS 111 First could book appointments with services such as GP, A&E and Urgent Treatment Centres, 38% (68) that they were aware and 10% (17) were not sure. These proportions were very similar to those indicated in the spring 2021 survey, 55% were not aware, 35% were aware and 10% were unsure.

- Awareness varied across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin from 20% of people from the TelDoc GP practices to 71% of people from the South-West Shropshire practices.

Intention to use NHS 111 First in future.

Overall, 95 (53%) of people were 'very likely' or 'somewhat likely' to contact NHS 111 the next time they were seeking urgent medical care, this compares to a figure of 71% in the spring Shropshire survey.

Experience of being treated

Overall, 91 (52%) rated their treatment as 'Good' or 'Very Good', compared to 78% in the spring, 22 (13%) as 'Average', compared to 7% in the spring and 59 (34%) as 'Poor' or 'Very Poor', compared to 12% in the spring. Four people (2%) were 'unsure'.

What is most important when seeking urgent medical care?

People told us that the two most important criteria were:

- 'My issue being solved quickly'
- 'Seeing someone who is well qualified/a specialist'

What people told us

What went well? What could have been improved?

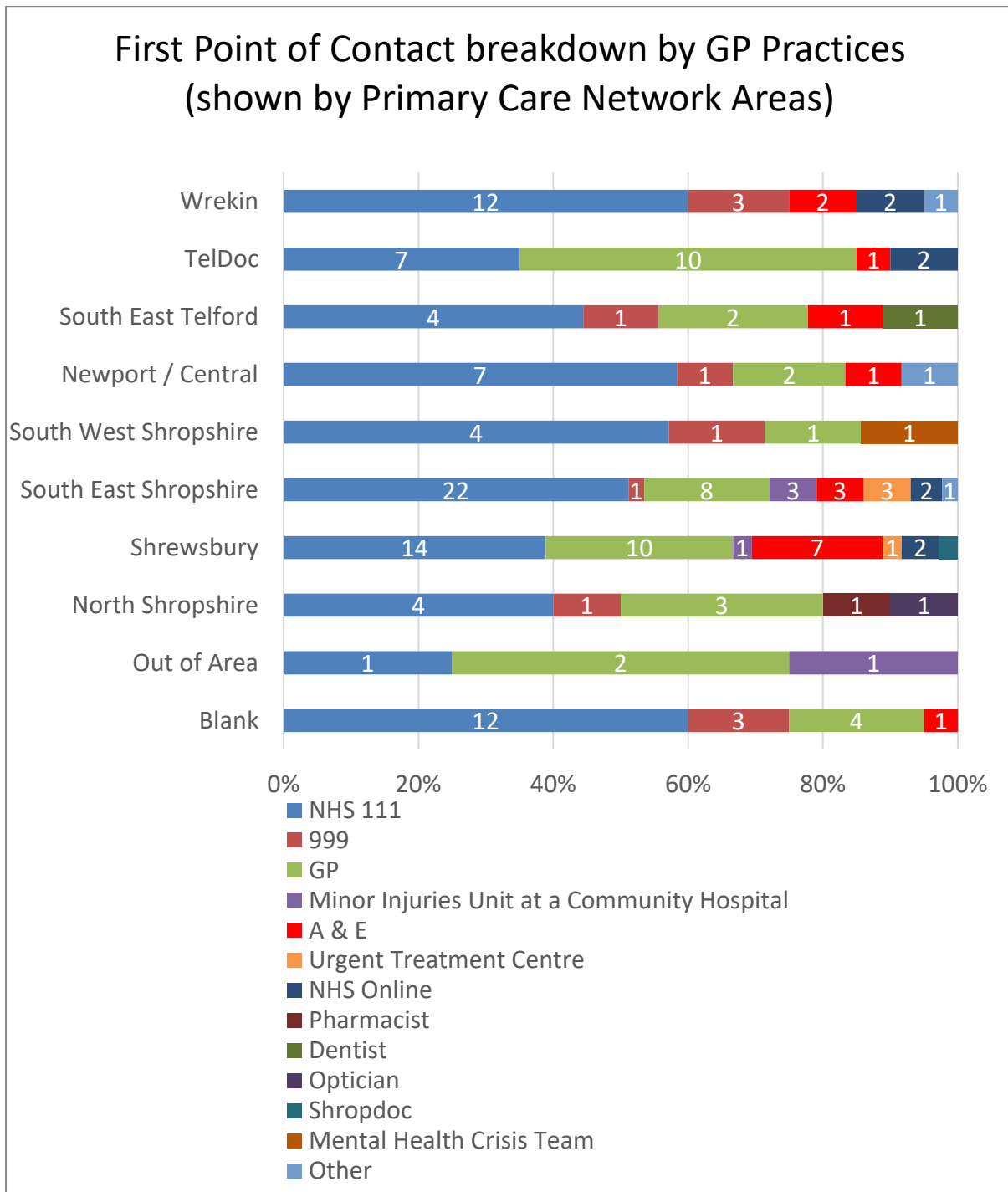
Some of the most useful information we received was shared in answer to this question. Thank you to everybody who shared details of their experiences in answer to this. Illustrative examples have been included in the report. We will share all the experiences directly with the relevant service providers to help improve services.

First Point of contact

What was the first NHS service you/they contacted in relation to this urgent medical problem?	Shropshire		Telford & Wrekin		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
NHS 111	46	46%	41	51%	87	48%
GP	24	24%	18	23%	42	23%
A & E	11	11%	5	6%	16	9%
999	5	5%	6	8%	11	6%
NHS Online	4	4%	4	5%	8	4%
Minor Injuries Unit at a Community Hospital ⁴	4	4%	1	1%	5	3%
Urgent Treatment Centre ⁵	3	3%	1	1%	4	2%
Other			3	4%	3	2%
Pharmacist	1	1%			1	1%
Dentist			1	1%	1	1%
Mental Health Crisis Team	1	1%			1	1%
ShropDoc	1	1%			1	1%
Optician	1	1%			1	1%
Total	101	100%	80	100%	181	100%

⁴ A Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) is a healthcare centre which treats minor injuries. It is managed by a nurse and doesn't require an appointment. Shropshire MIUs [Minor injury units in Shropshire \(shropscommunityhealth.nhs.uk\)](https://shropscommunityhealth.nhs.uk)

⁵ People with injuries or illnesses which don't need emergency treatment can attend an Urgent Treatment Centre. [Urgent and Out of Hours Care at SaTH](#)



The proportion of people whose first point of contact was NHS 111 varied from 35% in the TelDoc Primary Care Network (PCN)⁶ to 60% in the Wrekin PCN.

⁶ A breakdown of respondents by GP practice is included in Appendix A, a list of practices in each of the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin PCNs can be found here; [Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin PCNs - Shropshire CCG](#)

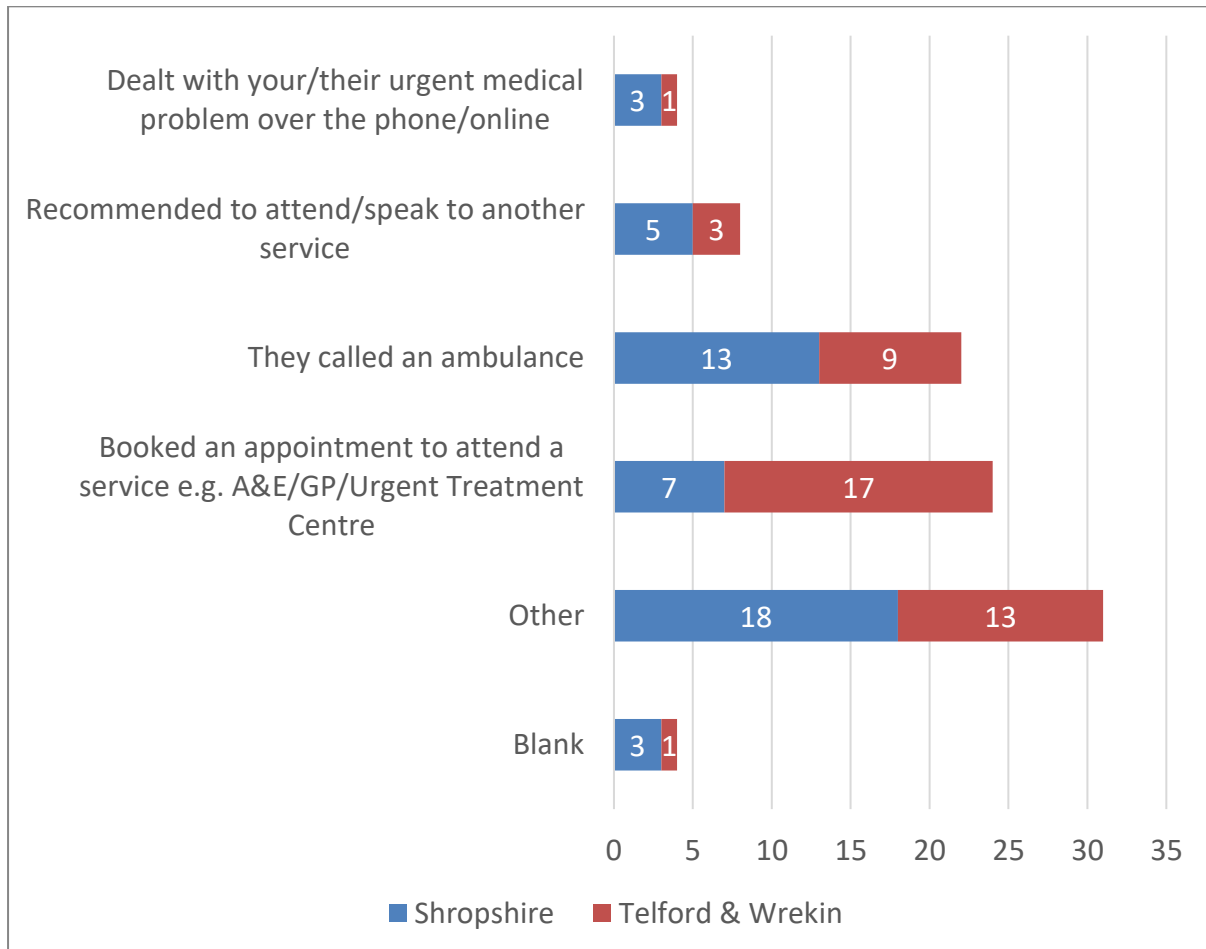
The proportion of people whose first point of contact was their GP varied between 14% in South West Shropshire PCN and 50% in the TelDoc PCN.

Those who contacted NHS 111

Eighty-seven people contacted NHS 111 initially. Six people were told to contact NHS 111 by their GP.



What was the outcome of your/their contact with NHS 111?



‘Other’

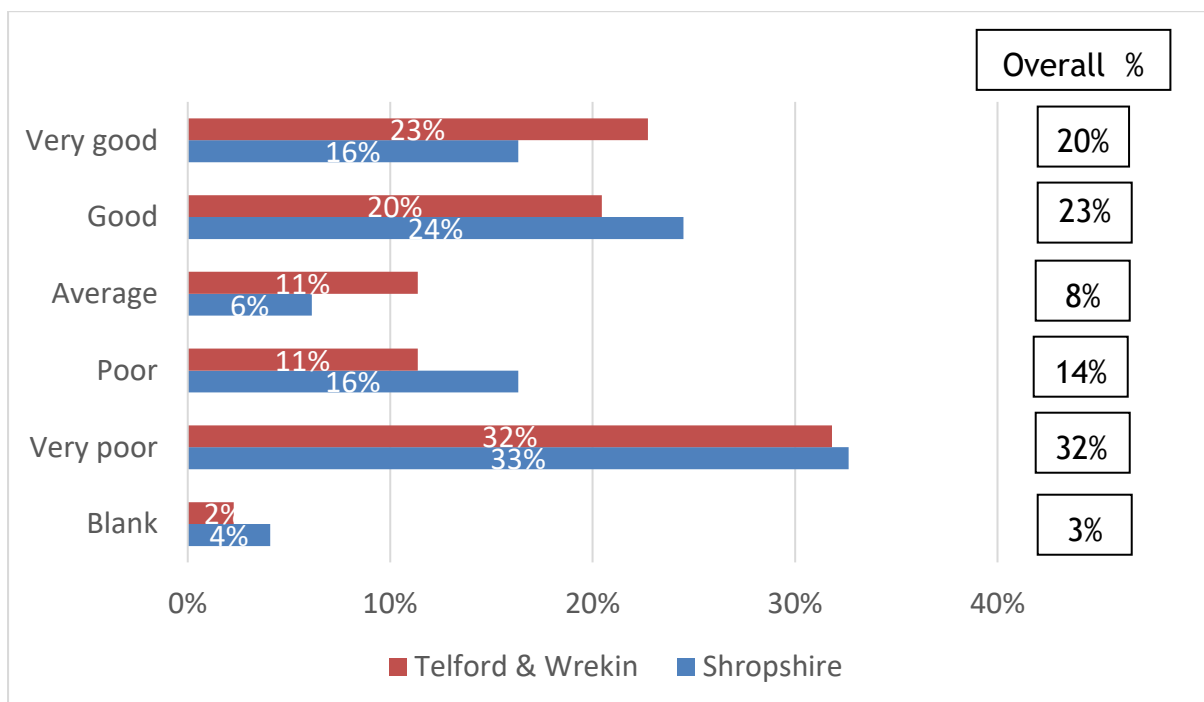
Looking at the details given for these answers the most commonly described outcomes could be grouped as:

- A. Referred to ShropDoc for a call back (8 people)
- B. Referred to another service without an appointment (7 people), A&E - 5, GP - 1, emergency dentist - 1
- C. A call back was arranged with NHS 111 but it did not happen in a timely manner (8 people). Four people reported waiting between 8 and 16 hours.

D. The wait to speak to somebody having called NHS 111 was too long (9 people) and so five people attended A&E and three people called 999 instead.

When analysing the satisfaction rates of patients, the groups A. and B. will be included with those who answered, ‘Recommended to attend/speak to another service’ (see page 15). Groups C. and D. will be analysed under ‘Other’ (see page 17).

Overall satisfaction with contacting NHS 111



43% of patients who contacted NHS 111 rated their experience as ‘Very Good’ or ‘Good’. (This compares to 69% of those who completed the same survey in Shropshire in Spring 2021⁷.) Nearly one third of people rated their experience as ‘very Poor’.

Of the 43 people who rated their experience of contacting NHS 111 as ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’ 32 provided further details. The two issues most frequently raised were:

- calls to NHS 111 not being answered in a timely manner (9 people).

⁷ [Experiences of urgent medical care in Shropshire | Healthwatch Shropshire](#)

- long waits for a call back from the service (8 people).

Examples included:

- ‘I had to end the call without advice as it took too long to be answered’
- ‘Went to A&E when 111 call wasn’t answered after 90 minutes’
- ‘Could not get through to 111, just recorded messages re Covid, no chance to speak to person, eventually gave up and rang 999.’
- ‘After calling 111, we waited two hours for a call back but nothing happened. We called again and was told we were on the system but it might be better to go straight to Princess Royal Telford’.
- ‘My husband needs frequent re-catheterization when his catheter falls out due to bladder stones, (five times in the past two weeks). He is 88 and has dementia. He goes into retention and last week waited four and a half hours for help. Needing to use 111 to get this help is cruel for him and is lengthening their queue. Please I beg you allow us direct access to ShropDoc for re-catheterization.’
- ‘Rang 111 due to a very poorly 3-year-old daughter, temp 39.9, rigors, delirium and vomiting. Was told a doctor would call back within two hours. They didn’t call me back. After two hours I called back and was told they were very busy and couldn’t tell me when a doctor would call me back but they would at some point. I am still waiting for the call back after 16 hours!’

Eleven of the 39 who rated their experience of NHS 111 as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’ provided further details. Four of these remarked on the length of time it took to get through to NHS 111, e.g.

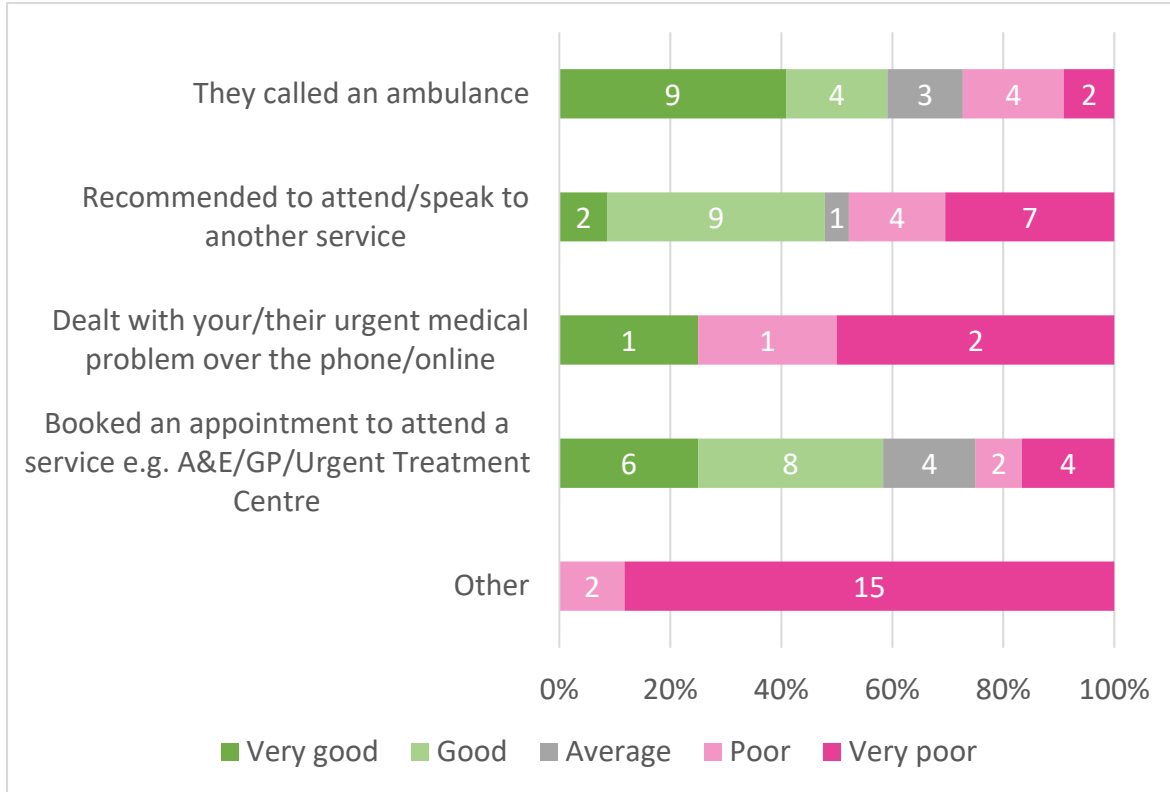
- ‘Length of time 111 took to answer call but perhaps understandable in these times. Once answered things happened very quickly. Ambulance arrived and admitted to PRH.’

Three people commented on the quality of the staff:

- ‘Staff were helpful and informative’
- ‘111 operator was very helpful and very patient. When ShropDoc phoned he arranged for a face-to-face meeting within an hour. I was then admitted to PRH Urgent Treatment Centre then onto a ward. Everything happened quickly and I was well looked after. My wife was kept informed at each stage.’

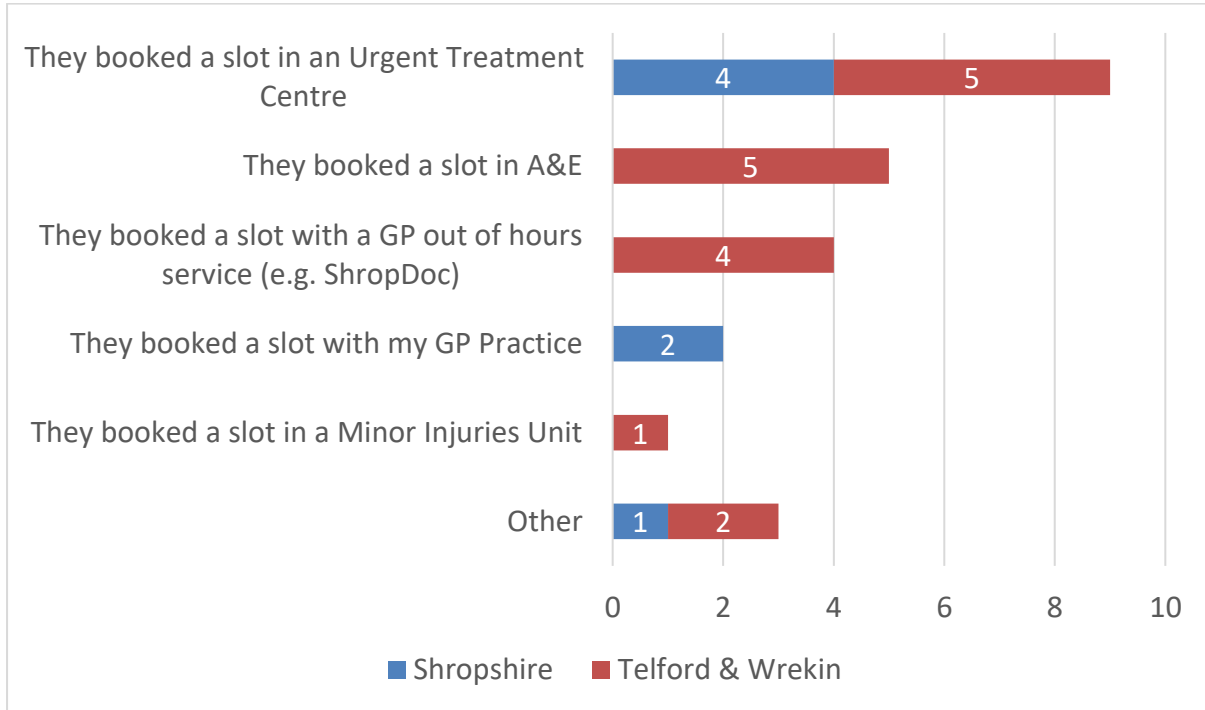
- ‘Took my issue very seriously, 111 passed my query to the pharmacist who called me back quickly and was able to put my mind at rest.’

Satisfaction rates of NHS 111 contact shown by outcome of contact



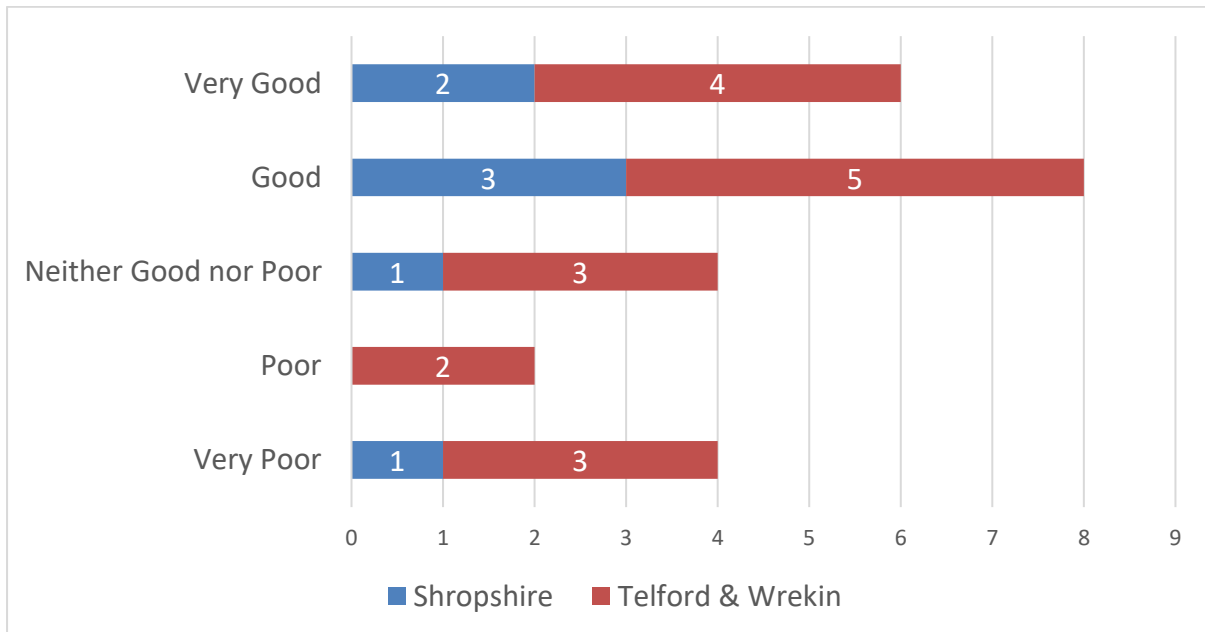
Experience of Booked Appointments

24 patients (26%) were booked into appointments with other services



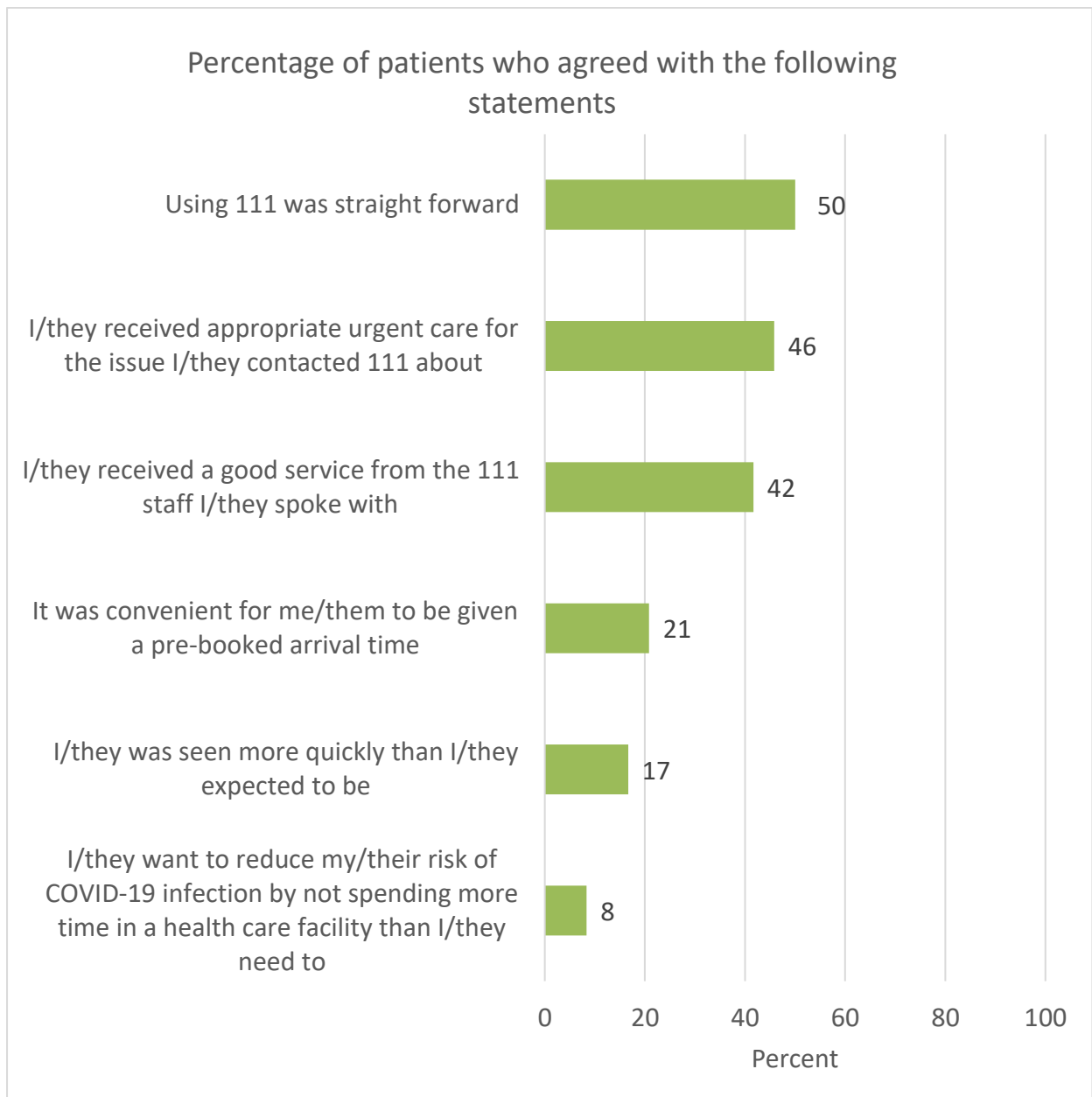
All 24 patients who were booked into an appointment attended and received face to face treatment.

Satisfaction with the booking process



58% of people told us that they would rate their experience of booking an appointment through NHS 111 as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’, 25% described it as ‘Poor’ or ‘very Poor’.

We asked them if they agreed with a number of statements.



Of the 24 patients who were booked into appointments by NHS 111 First 10 gave further details about that process. Nine were negative and one was positive. Seven of the negative experiences were for appointments booked at Princess Royal Hospital:

- ‘On arrival ... they could not find any record of him calling 111 which he had and they gave him a time. He did go for chest pains so really should not of sat in the room for that long. Yes they did apologise [but a] couple of the staff were a bit rude which is nothing new for the PRH.’
- ‘Waiting time when I called 111 was ridiculous. Took over 45 minutes for my call to be answered. Consequently, next time I went straight to A&E. Also, I don’t understand when I had an appointment at the urgent care centre at PRH I still had to go through the A&E triage system. Took up more staff time and a much longer wait for me.’
- ‘Was in ‘Urgent care’ for 3 hours despite having an ‘appointment’ so in reality I had no appointment just a time slot in the hopes of managing crowd control.’
- ‘111 said booked appointment at UTC, it wasn’t, had to wait three hours to be triaged following speaking with two people at NHS111’
- ‘I took my sick grandmother to Urgent care after being advised by 111 and to be there within the next two hours. So we rushed to get there, we were there for 10 hours! It took 7 hours to be seen by a doctor, the nurse in charge was extremely rude and when we did get seen we were told there was nothing they could do. I am seriously disappointed in this treatment and I just wish things were better handled.’
- ‘Although I contacted 111 they were unable to book an appointment as all the slots had gone,. They advised me to attend and wait but did not give the hospital any notification.’
- ‘Given 1 hr time slot but sat in A&E triage for over 5 hours.’

The positive experience was for an appointment booked at the Minor Injuries Clinic in Bridgnorth:

- ‘We arrived for a pre booked appointment all went smoothly came away with firstly a prescription then a referral to a specialist’

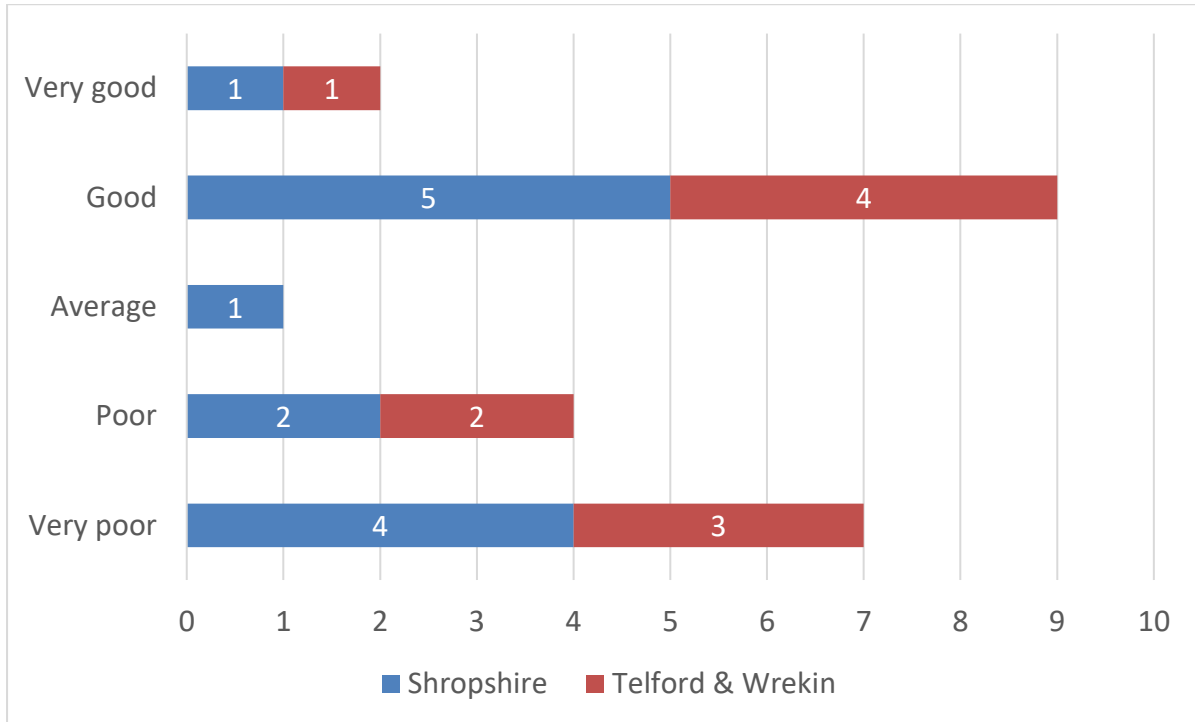
However, 20 out of 24 patients (83%) told us they would use the system of contacting NHS 111 first again if a booked appointment could be made for them.

Experience of NHS 111 from patients who were recommended to attend/speak to another service.

Eight patients were recommended to attend/speak to another service. Two to a pharmacy, five to their GP and one to ShropDoc. A further 15 answered ‘other’,

eight were referred to ShropDoc for a call back, seven were referred to another service without an appointment: A&E - 5, GP - 1, emergency dentist - 1

Rating of NHS 111 by those who were recommended to attend/speak to another service



48% of patients who were recommended to attend/speak to another service rated NHS 111 as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’, similarly 48% rated the NHS 111 service as ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’.

Examples of poor experiences:

- ‘MIU closed. Inappropriate referral made. Waited 27 hours for treatment which eventually was through persistence at GP a day later’
- ‘The person who spoke to me had no local knowledge, advised me to contact a centre that was closed at the weekend’

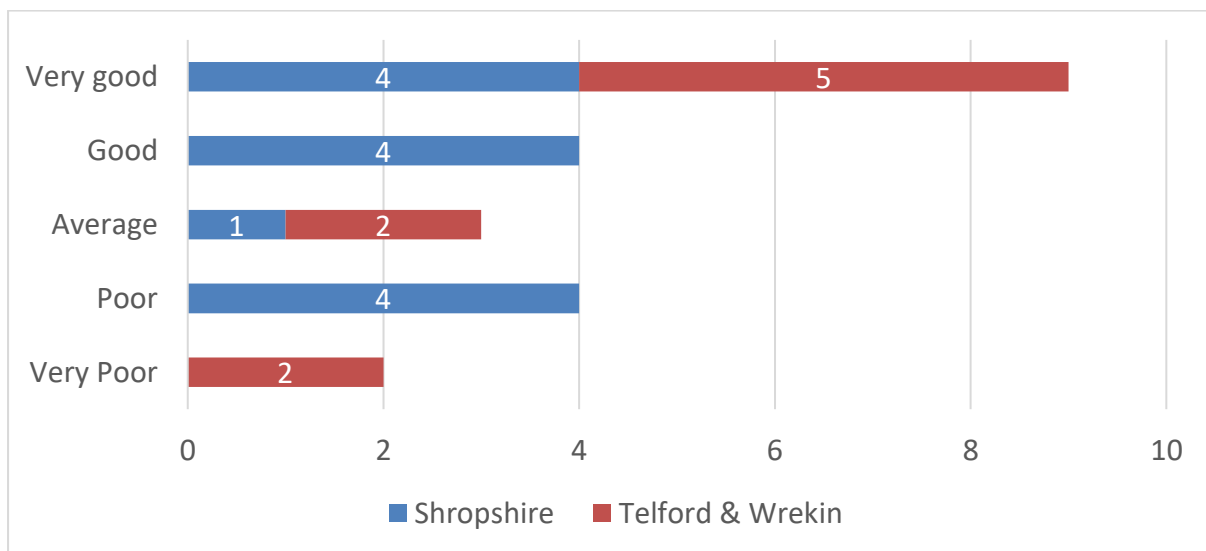
Examples of good experiences:

- ‘Broken ankle in 3 places. Unsurprisingly 111 advised A&E. I was lucky that RSH A&E was quiet and treatment began within 15 mins of my arrival. I was operated on the following day and discharged home after 3 days’

- ‘Outcome was great as my mother was seen at home and admitted straight to a ward. The only downside was that it took 3 phone calls and discussions with 3 different people over about 6 hours’

Experience of NHS 111 from patients where an ambulance was called.

In 22 cases an ambulance was called. These patients were asked about their experience of calling NHS 111:

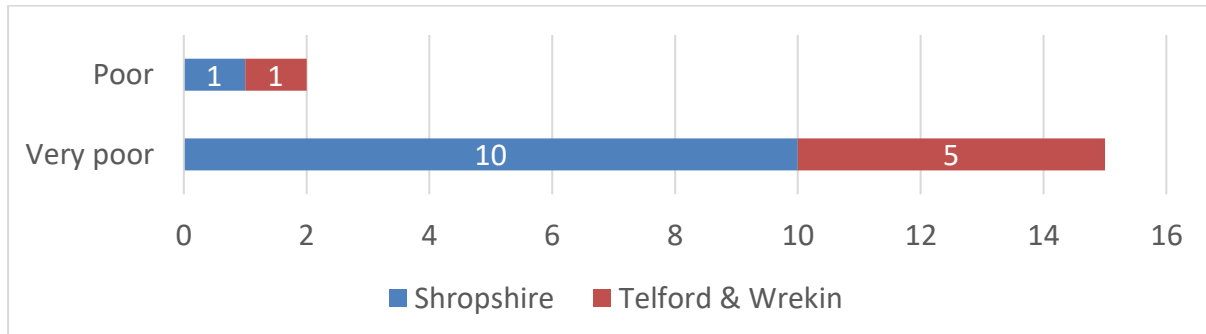


59% of those for whom an ambulance was called described their experience of NHS 111 as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’, 30% described their experience as ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’.

Where people gave us further details about their experience it focused mainly on their experience of the resulting service and treatment however two people did comment on NHS 111:

- ‘Whenever I have used the 111 service they have said I need an ambulance (phoning about elderly mother) I appreciate they are mindful of age, condition, etc but on nearly every occasion the ambulance crew have said need [out of ours doctor] OOH doctor. The 111 service in itself is fine but not if there is limited options in outcome, we really need a better way in Shropshire for OOH care!’
- ‘Ambulance was unnecessary expense for NHS. I just needed to speak to a doctor. The triage system needs refining, it was too ready to send ambulance crew out, I understand they get a lot of this.’

Experience of NHS 111 from patients who described the outcome as ‘Other’
Seventeen people described the outcome of their call with NHS 111 as ‘other’.



All of the people who described their outcome as ‘other’ described their experience of NHS 111 as ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’.

Twelve people gave further details, 11 commented on either calls to NHS 111 not being answered in a timely manner or long waits for a call back from the service. Examples include:

- ‘5-month-old baby. Aspirated feed. Difficulty breathing. Too much recorded messages and information given by automated service when dialled 111. Called 999 Ambulance. People in need of medical advice must speak to a human being immediately.’
- ‘I have used 111 many times from work and for my children but over the last few months there just seems like other services not to be enough people available. Resulting in lots more 999 calls resulting in longer waits and inappropriate call outs’.

One person described their efforts to support their dying partner:

- ‘My partner had spent two weeks in hospital and had been discharged as no more treatment was available (gall bladder cancer) In the end I phoned 111 three times as she had got very ill at home. She didn't want another visit to hospital so I hoped a GP could visit but none were available. After the third call she declined very quickly and died about an hour later.’

The Carers Experience.

We wanted to know if there were any obstacles to carers being able to discuss the issues and needs of the person for whom they were caring with NHS 111. We aimed to find out if there were issues around:



- Being with the patient at the time of the call
- The patient's permission for the carer to speak on their behalf being already recorded on the patient's summary notes
- Having to explain that they had the patient's permission

Thirty-four people told us that had contacted NHS 111 on behalf of somebody they cared for, 27 (79%) of those carers reported that they were able to discuss the patient's needs with the NHS 111 health advisor. Of the seven who reported they weren't able to discuss the patient's needs, five reported that it was because the call was not answered in a timely manner.

Of the 27 carers, 14 reported that the patient's permission for them to discuss the patient's health needs was recorded on the patient's summary notes, three that it wasn't and 10 didn't know.

Only two people were not with the patient at the time of the call, however both felt that their call was not answered in a timely manner and therefore didn't speak to NHS 111.

Those who contacted their GP initially

Forty-two people contacted their GP. Half of those were treated by their GP. Thirteen people (31%) were advised to contact another service or had a hospital admission arranged for them.



Seven people (17%) reported that they were offered an unsuitable appointment. Of these seven people five people then called NHS 111, one waited for a call back and in one case it was unclear what happened. One person attended A&E due to a promised urgent call back not happening.

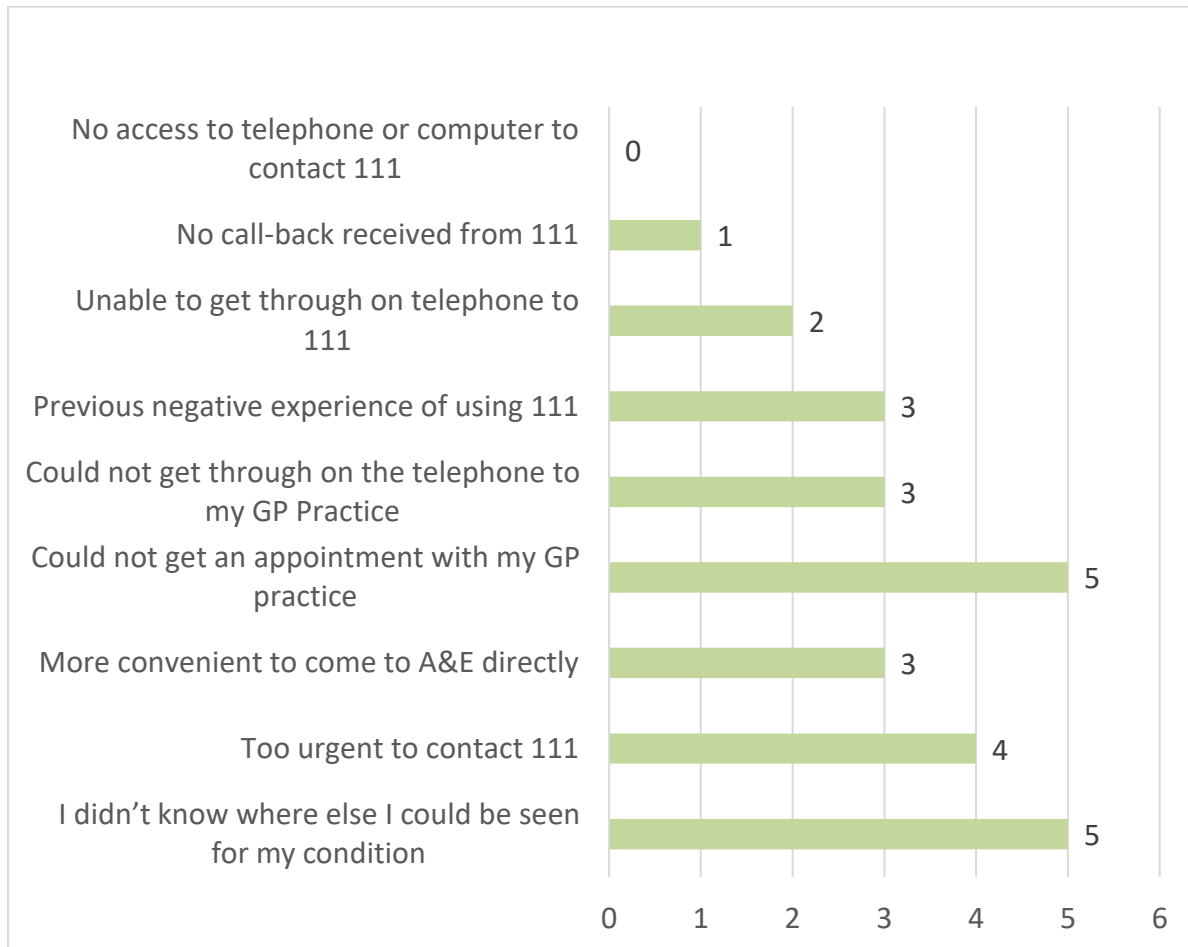
Outcome of GP contact	No.	%
Treated either face to face or remotely	21	50
Offered unsuitable appointment	7	17
Advised to ring NHS 111	6	14
Advised to go to A&E	2	5
Advised to go to UTC	2	5
Advised to ring 999	1	2
Arranged hospital admission	2	5
Attended A&E after lack of call back	1	2
Total	42	100

Those who went straight to A&E

Sixteen people went straight to A&E. The largest proportion of these, seven people (44%) were registered with a GP practice in the Shrewsbury PCN. We asked people to indicate their reasons for going straight to A&E.



What were your/their reasons for going straight to A&E?



Three people explained their reasons for going to straight to A&E:

- 'I thought I had broken a bone, GP would only send me to A&E, and I knew I wouldn't get a same day appointment [at the GP].'
- 'Child with breathing difficulties, 111 have little knowledge of local area and the appropriate referral for the needs of an unwell child. To access a ShropDoc appointment is difficult as the 111 system is long winded and too long and that is if you can get through or have time to wait for a call back.'
- 'The A&E team were so busy with people that didn't need to be there including me but I had no alternative. GP and 111 just shocking. Over 12

hours to get a call back when you get through. Who holds them to account?
Well done A&E you're soooo busy but you were amazing.'

Those who went straight to a minor injuries unit (MIU)

Five patients went straight to a Minor Injuries Clinic, three were treated there and two subsequently decided to go to A&E as they felt it would be quicker to be seen. The three who were treated at the Minor Injury Clinics rated their treatment as 'Good' or 'Very Good'.



Those who called 999 straight away

Eleven people called 999, six of these were taken to hospital, three were treated by paramedics at their home and two people felt the wait for an ambulance to arrive would be too long and took themselves to be treated, one at an MIU and one at A&E. Of those who were treated by paramedics, two rated their experience as 'Very Good' and one as 'Average'.



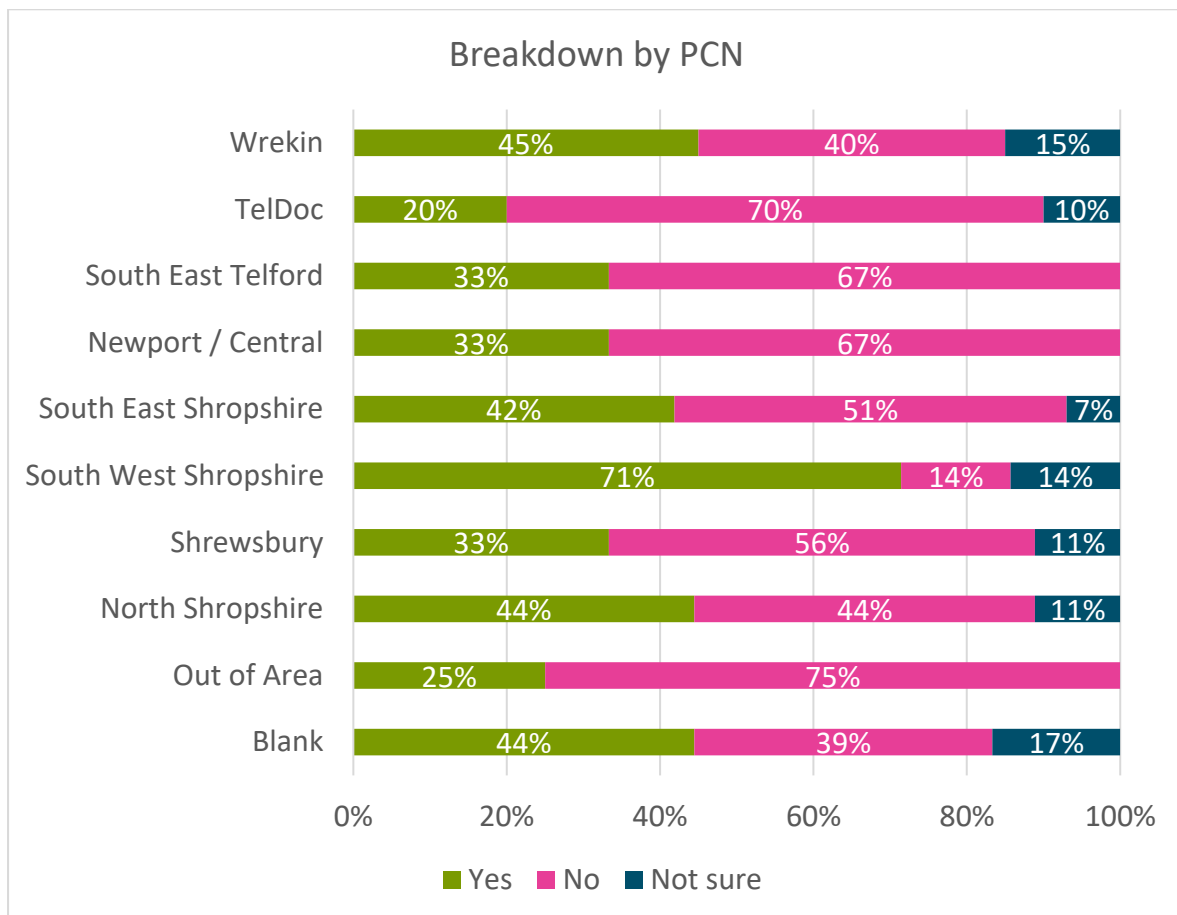
Five people commented that they felt the time they had to wait for an ambulance was unacceptable.

- 'Waiting for an ambulance and been told it could possibly be 6 hours before arrival, is not acceptable!!! When a 93-year-old patient has fallen outside and already been on the ground for 4 hours!! (Incidentally we only waited 2 1/2 hours in the end.)'

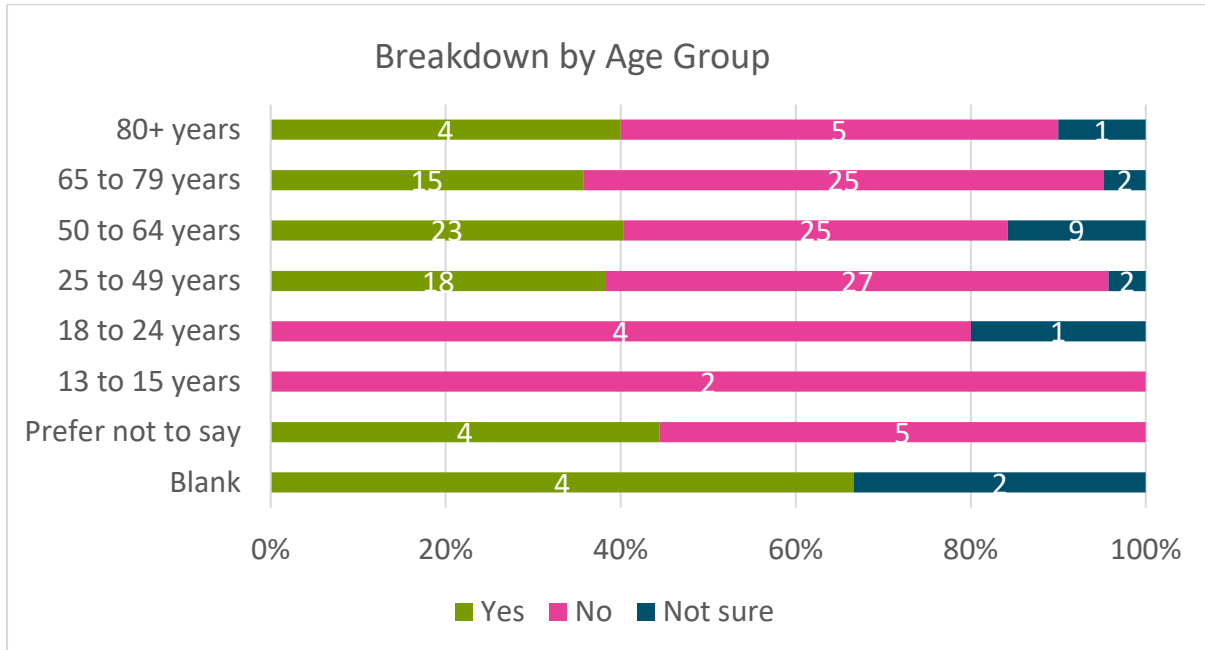
Awareness of NHS 111 First

We asked if people had been aware that NHS 111 First could book appointments with services such as GP, A&E and Urgent Treatment Centres. Overall, 52% of people (93) told us they were not aware, 38% (68) that they were aware and 10% (17) were not sure. (These proportions were very similar to those indicated in the spring 2021 survey, 55% were not aware, 35% were aware and 10% were unsure.)

Did you/they know 111 could book same day appointments with services such as GP, A&E and Urgent Treatment Centres?



Please note 'out of area' relates to people who live in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin but whose general practice is outside the S,T&W area, for example in Wales.

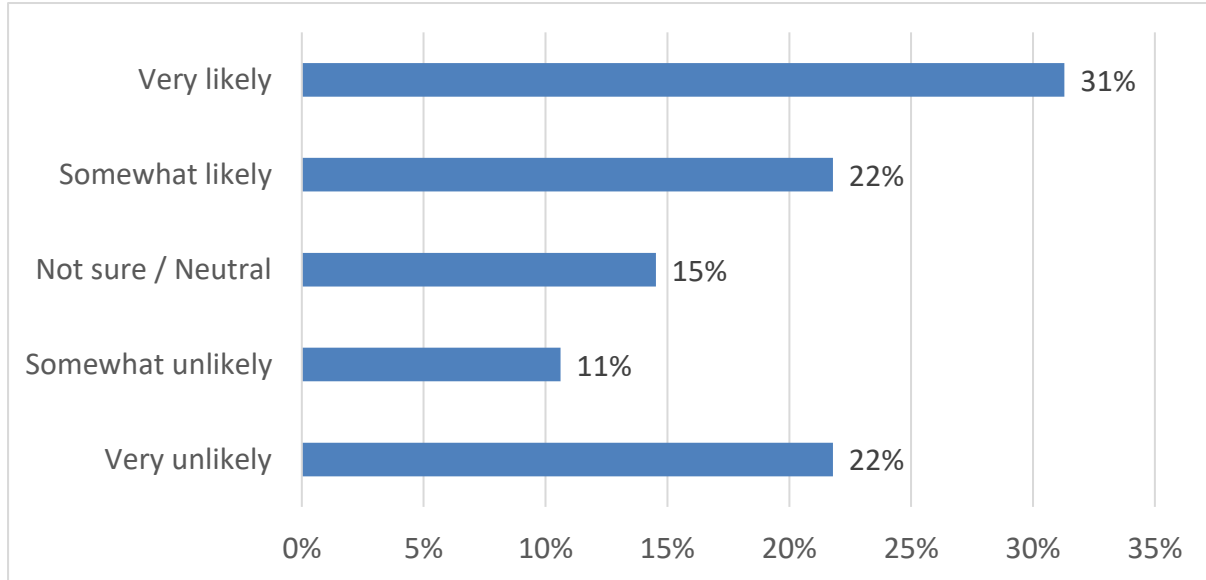


Of the 54 who told us they were aware 52 gave more information:

Please tell us how you knew:	No.	%
Media	14	27%
Previous contact with out of hours service	13	25%
Previous contact with wider NHS	7	13%
Word of mouth (family & friends)	7	13%
I work in the health and social care sector	8	15%
Patient or community group	3	6%
Total	52	100%

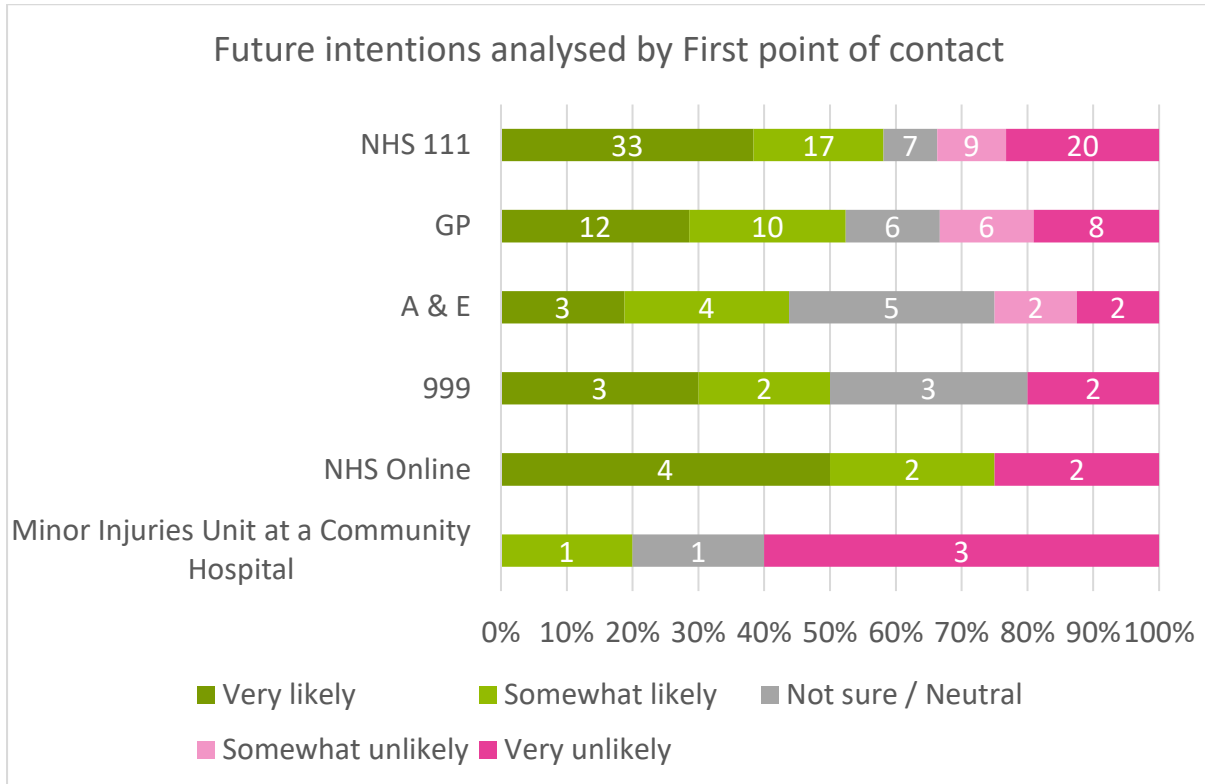
Intention to use NHS 111 First in future.

Knowing that 111 can book you an appointment with a GP or A&E, how likely are you /they to call 111 next time you/they have an urgent medical problem?



Overall, 95 (53%) of people were ‘very likely’ or ‘somewhat likely’ to contact NHS 111 the next time they were seeking urgent medical care. (This compares to a figure of 71% in the spring Shropshire survey⁸.)

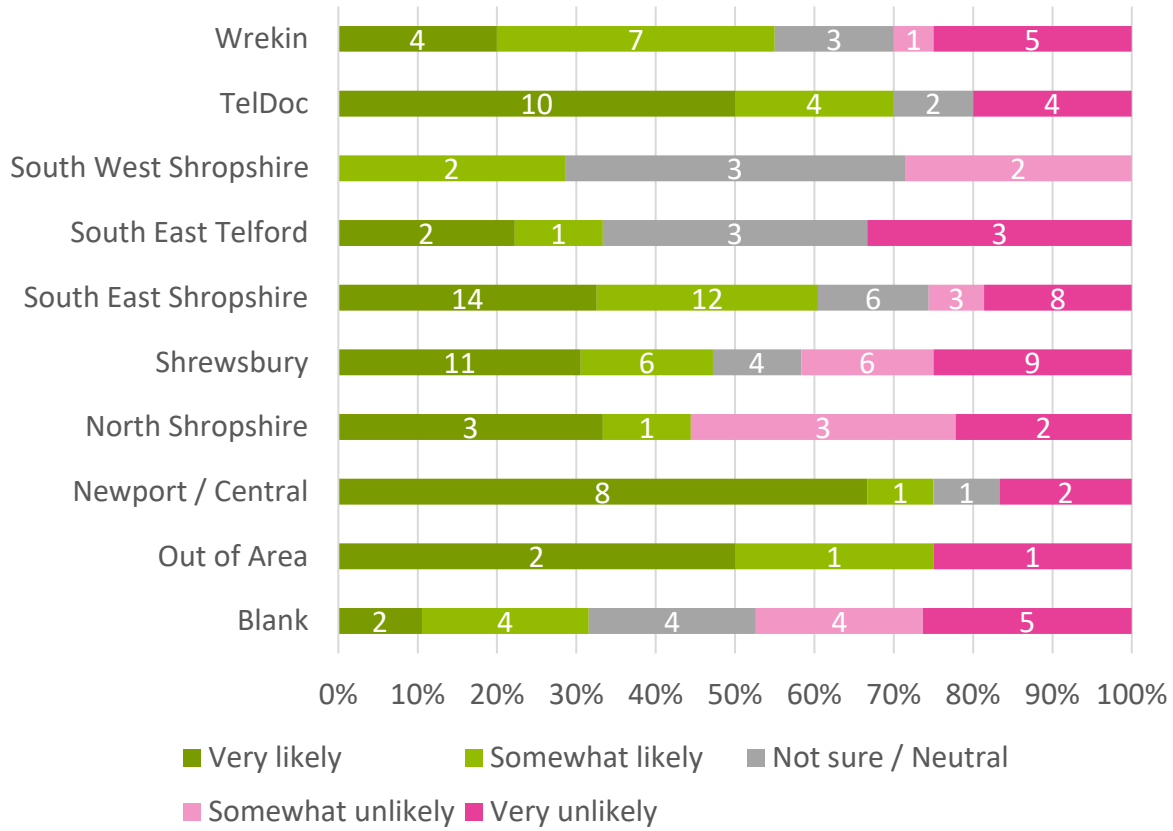
⁸ [Experiences of urgent medical care in Shropshire | Healthwatch Shropshire](#)



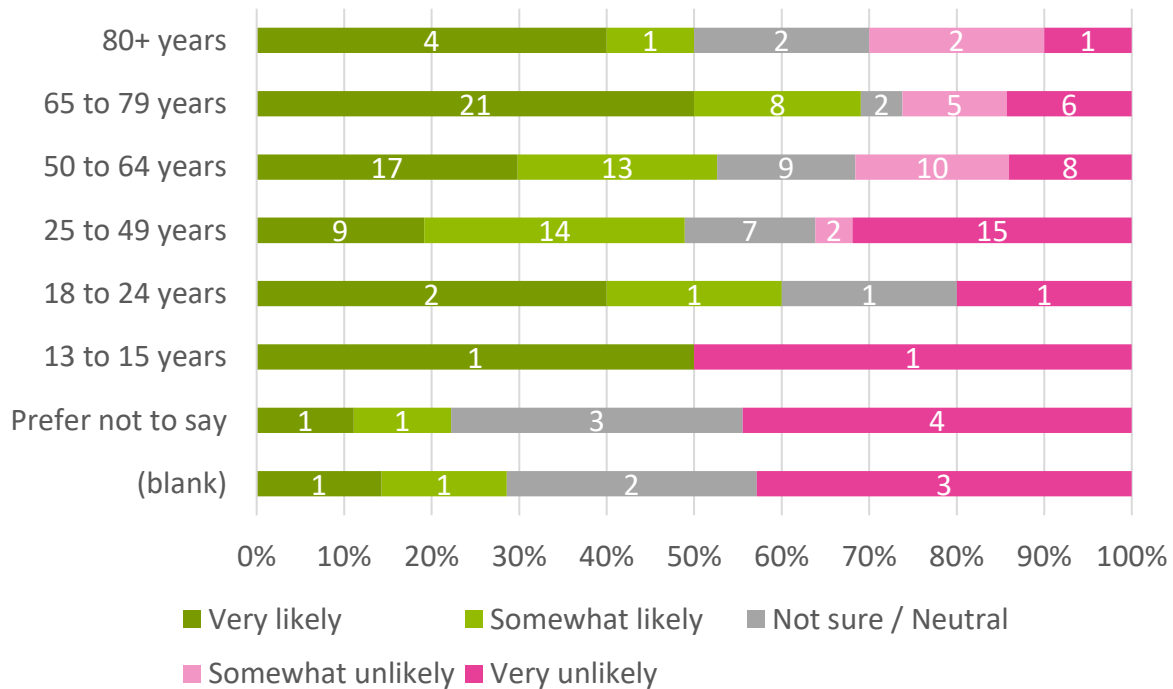
The groups that were least likely to contact NHS 111 when they next had an urgent medical problem were those who went straight to A&E (44% ‘somewhat likely’ or ‘very likely’) and straight to a Minor Injuries unit (20% ‘somewhat likely’ or ‘very likely’). 60% of those whose first point of contact was NHS 111 would be ‘very likely’ or ‘somewhat likely’ to contact NHS 111 next time, (This compares to a figure of 78% in the spring Shropshire survey⁹.)

⁹ [Experiences of urgent medical care in Shropshire | Healthwatch Shropshire](#)

Future intentions analysed by PCN



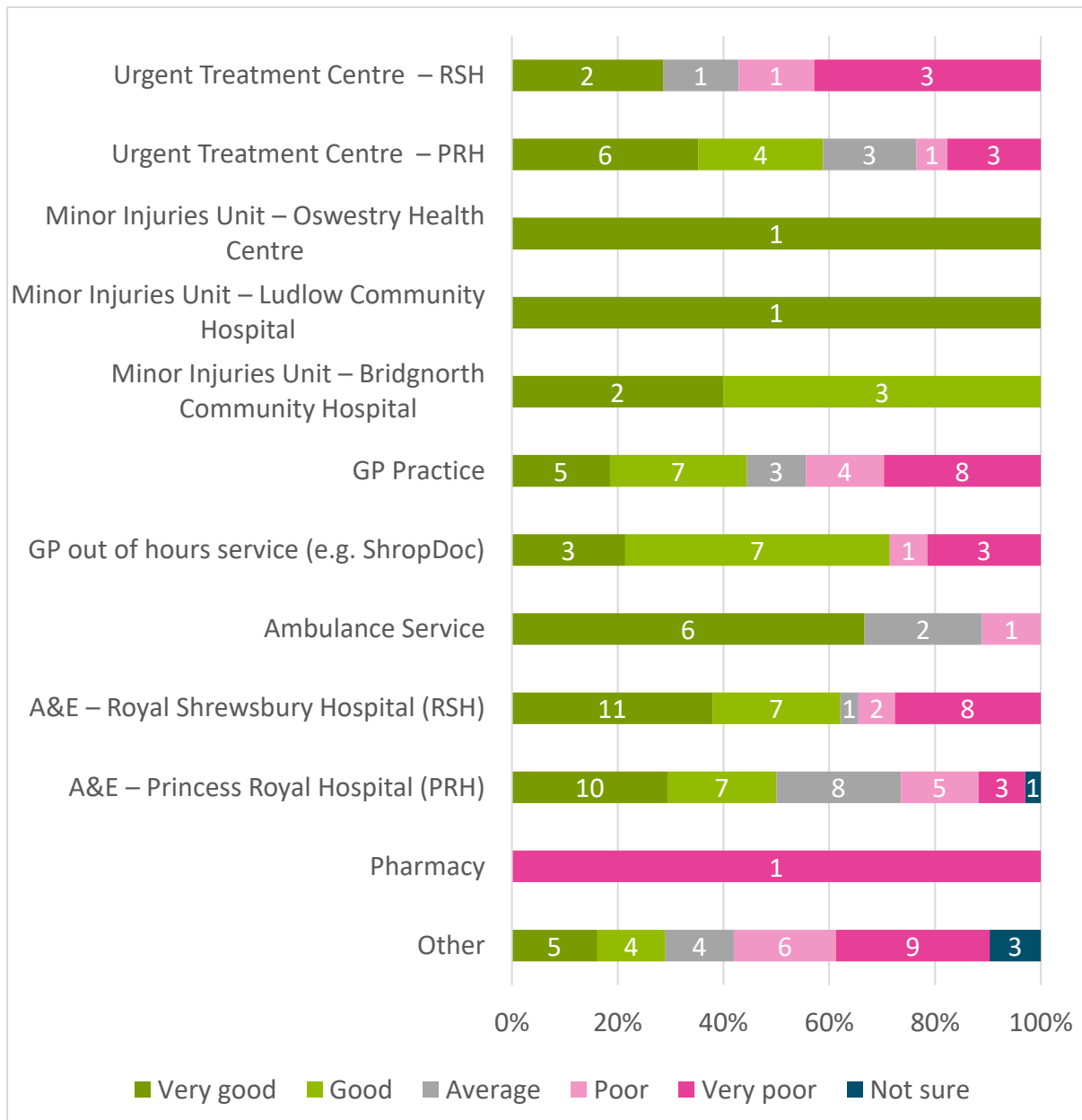
Future intentions analysed by Age Group



Sixty-four (59%) of those 50 years old and over were very likely or somewhat likely to contact NHS 111 the next time they were seeking urgent medical care, this compared to 27 people (50%) of those under 50. These figures compare to 69% of over 50s and 75% of under 50s in the spring Shropshire survey.

Experience of being treated

Overall, how would you/they rate your experience of the service that treated you/them?



Overall:

- 91 (52%) rated their treatment as ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’, (compared to 78% in the spring,
- 22 (13%) as ‘Average’, compared to 7% in the spring
- 59 (34%) as ‘Poor’ or ‘Very Poor’, compared to 12% in the spring
- 4 people (2%) were unsure.

What is most important when seeking urgent medical care?

We asked people to choose two or three criteria from the following list:

Criteria	Shropshire		T & W		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
My issue being solved quickly	73	72%	54	68%	127	70%
Seeing someone who is well qualified/a specialist	57	56%	59	74%	116	64%
Getting access to a specific treatment or test	40	40%	35	44%	75	41%
Being treated with dignity and respect	27	27%	26	33%	53	29%
Not needing to wait for an appointment	31	31%	18	23%	49	27%
Being seen by someone I trust	18	18%	11	18%	29	16%
Being seen somewhere that is easy to get to	18	18%	11	18%	29	16%
Other	1	1%	5	6%	6	3%

Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care System response

Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care System (ICS) welcomes this Healthwatch report as important information and feedback that will be invaluable in assisting us develop and improve urgent medical care in our county. The results of the survey will be presented to the system Urgent and Emergency Care Board in February 2022.

Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin (STW) CCG are committed to working with our partners to improve patient experience and satisfaction in using Urgent and Emergency Care Services such as NHS 111 and 999. The key findings of this invaluable survey will feed into existing work plans to improve the provision of urgent and emergency care for our population ensuring that patients are seen in the right healthcare setting, first time.

We will use your feedback to further develop the existing work including:

- Increasing utilisation of 111 bookable appointments in A&E, Urgent Treatment Centres, Minor Injuries Units and Primary Care.
- Increasing the use of alternatives to A&E including raising awareness across the County of services on offer and options for self-help
- Promoting health and wellbeing with a focus on people with respiratory illness especially those recovered from Covid-19
- Working with 111 to ensure the Directory of Services, which could be compared to the “yellow pages” of available services for patients across the county, is up to date and effectively utilised.
- Local Care Programme is looking at the wider out of hospital care grounded in the community and one of the key principles of the programme is on “individuals” not “patients”
- The system is currently in the process of refreshing our Urgent and Emergency Care System Improvement plan for 2022/23 which will include key workstreams identified above and other focus areas that will support improving patient care and patient experience.

NHS 111 Response

West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) University NHS Foundation Trust provides the NHS 111 service for Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Healthwatch Survey report on the experiences of urgent medical care in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin.

This report highlights the positive aspects of care in this area as well as highlighting those areas where we didn't meet the expectations of the population across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin.

There is no doubt that the last two years have been exceptional in every respect; it has tested to the extreme every bit of the healthcare system and I believe the findings in this report reflect the performance of our services and the wider health services.

WMAS took on the responsibility for the NHS 111 service on 5th November 2019 and rapidly became one of the highest performing services in England. We had strong plans for the development of the service and the delivery of 1.2 million 111 calls across the West Midlands Region (excluding Staffordshire who have a different NHS 111 Provider) every year.

With the arrival of COVID in January 2020, the NHS as a whole and the NHS 111 and 999 services were rapidly put under pressure that was both unexpected and unique; nobody working in the NHS had ever experienced a global pandemic before.

We had a number of unique challenges in the delivery of the NHS 111 service, including a massive increase in demand to nearly 2 million calls per year, staffing pressures due to COVID absences, attrition of staff, many new staff in post and the impact of pressures on our 999 service.

Our staff have done their best and WMAS recognises that on occasion we haven't provided the level of service that our population deserve. We have tried our best, but COVID demand and the difficulty experienced by people trying to access other services has meant that on occasions we have simply been overwhelmed.

We initially had the vision to integrate the 111 and 999 call handling to give us added resilience. Despite the COVID period we still did this, moving most of our call handling into one purpose fitted building. As a result of this we have managed to maintain the best 999 call answering performance in England as we have put every effort into maintaining our response to our most acute and time dependant

patients. 111 call answering has been impacted as a result of this as well as the significant increase in call volume.

The call volume into 111 is highly variable, for example on 18th December 2021 in the early hours of the morning we received 47 calls per hour and this number increased every hour until 10am when we were receiving 840 calls per hour (one call every 15 seconds) into the service. At times of massive demand, we don't always get to answer each call in a timely way and some people decide not to wait.

We are not complacent, and we are working really hard to improve our call answering performance as well as being able to respond to the significant call volumes we are now experiencing (40% higher than we originally planned for). We are currently recruiting and training an additional 450 call handlers who will be operational within the next 3 months.

We welcome the work done by Healthwatch in identifying areas for improvement and I would like to thank the people of Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin who have given their feedback.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Shropshire and Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin would like to thank the organisations who helped to promote this survey. We particularly thank all those people receiving services who have shared their experiences with us.

Get in Touch

Please contact Healthwatch Shropshire or Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin to share your views and experiences of this service or any other health and social care service in Shropshire. We gather comments anonymously and share them with service commissioners and providers to highlight areas of good practice and identify areas for improvement.

Healthwatch Shropshire

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Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin

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- <https://www.healthwatchtelfordandwrekin.co.uk>
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Appendix A

Demographic Information

Please tell us which GP practice you / they are registered with:			
North Shropshire	10	Newport / Central	12
Cambrian Medical Centre	2	Donnington Medical Practice	4
Churchmere Medical Practice	1	Linden Hall Surgery	4
Drayton Medical Practice	3	Shawbirch Medical Centre	4
The Caxton Surgery	2	South East Telford	9
Wem & Prees Medical Practice	2	Court Street MP	4
Shrewsbury	36	Stirchley Medical Practice	5
Belvidere Medical Practice	2	TelDoc	20
Claremont Bank Surgery	5	Shifnal & Priorslee Practice	3
Knockin Medical Centre	2	TelDoc	11
Marden Medical Practice	3	TelDoc - Lawley	2
Marysville Medical Practice	1	TelDoc - Malinslee	3
Mytton Oak Medical Practice	4	TelDoc - Oakengates	1
Pontesbury and Worthen MP	5	Wrekin	20
Prescott Surgery	1	Charlton Medical Centre	6
Radbrook Green Surgery	1	Dawley Medical Practice	8
Riverside Medical Practice	2	Hollinswood	1
Severn Fields Medical Practice	6	Hollinswood and Priorslee	2
Shawbury Medical Practice	1	Wellington Medical Practice	3
The Beeches Medical Practice	2	Out of Area	4
Westbury Medical Centre	1	Chirk Medical Practice	1
South East Shropshire	43	Hanmer Surgery	2
Alveley Medical Practice	3	Montgomery MP	1
Bridgnorth Medical Practice	20	Blank	20
Broseley Medical Centre	3	Blank	18
Cleobury Mortimer MP	1	I do not know	2
Highley Medical Centre	6	Grand Total	181
Ironbridge Medical Practice	8		
Much Wenlock & Cressage MP	2		
South West Shropshire	7		
Church Stretton MP	2		
Craven Arms Medical Practice	1		
Portcullis Surgery	1		
Station Drive Surgery	1		
The Meadows Medical Practice	2		

Please tell us which gender you identify with:	No.	%
Woman	128	70%
Man	38	21%
Non-binary	1	1%
Prefer not to say	7	4%
Blank	7	4%
Total	181	100%

Is your gender different to the sex that you were assigned at birth?	No.	%
Yes	16	9%
No	143	79%
Prefer not to say	8	4%
Blank	14	8%
Total	181	100%

Please tell us which sexual orientation you identify with:	No.	%
Asexual	3	2%
Bisexual	4	2%
Gay	1	1%
Heterosexual/straight	125	69%
Lesbian	1	1%
Prefer not to say	24	13%
Blank	23	13%
Total	181	100%

Age Category:	No.	%
13 to 15 years	2	1%
18 to 24 years	5	3%
25 to 49 years	47	26%
50 to 64 years	57	31%
65 to 79 years	43	24%
80+ years	11	6%
Prefer not to say	9	5%
Blank	7	4%
Total	181	100%

Please select your ethnicity from the list below:	No.	%
White: British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish	130	72%
White: Any other White background	14	8%
Black/Black British: African	3	2%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups: Black African and White	1	1%
Prefer not to say	5	3%
Blank	28	15%
Total	181	100%

What is your religion?	No.	%
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	90	50%
Satanist	1	1%
Pagan	1	1%
No religion	41	23%
Prefer not to say	17	9%
Blank	31	17%
Total	181	100%

Are you a refugee or asylum seeker?	No.	%
No	168	93%
Prefer not to say	6	3%
Blank	7	4%
Total	69	100%

How would you describe your living situation?	No.	%
I live alone	35	19%
I live with friends and/or family	117	65%
I live in a care home	1	1%
Prefer not to say	10	5%
Blank	11	6%
Total	181	100%

Do you consider yourself to be a carer?	No.	%
Yes	30	17%
No	137	76%
Prefer not to say	6	3%
Blank	8	4%
Total	181	100%

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	No.	%
Yes	44	24%
No	123	68%
Prefer not to say	8	4%
Blank	6	3%
Total	181	100%

Do you consider yourself to have a long-term condition?	No.	%
Yes	83	46%
No	81	45%
Prefer not to say	11	6%
Blank	6	3%
Total	181	100%