

Getting to outpatient appointments

Report of public survey about factors influencing choices and access

March 2018



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1. Introduction

1.1 Our role

Healthwatch is the champion for users of health and social care in Coventry. We give local people a voice - making sure that patients, service users, carers and public views and experiences are heard.

We are independent of NHS and care services and decide our own programme of work. We have a statutory role and legal powers including the right to request information and to get a response to our reports and recommendations.

We work to influence the planning and delivery of NHS and social care services based on what local people tell us.

1.2 Why we undertook this piece of work

Each year our Steering Group agrees work priorities, which are based on intelligence we have gathered about local services. We also look at the context of developments and plans for NHS and care services. For this year the development of the System Transformation Plan produced by local NHS planners to cover Coventry and Warwickshire was important.

We were aware that a potential solution to issues regarding quality of care, finances and safety of provision is to potentially locate specialist services in fewer locations, impatient on both inpatient and outpatient care.

We therefore set out to begin to understand the implications for local people of needing to travel outside of Coventry to access outpatient appointments and tests and the impact of this.

What is an outpatient appointment?

Going to a hospital for tests, treatment or follow up after treatment but not staying overnight. This includes tests such as scans.

2. Aims

The aims of this piece of work were to:

1. To gather public views and experiences of getting to outpatient appointments and what choices and decisions people make

2. To gather information about how easy it is for people to travel longer distances for appointments
3. To begin to understand the implications for the population of travelling to outpatient appointments

3. Methodology

We held initial discussion at our annual meeting in July 2017 and used the findings to devise an online and paper survey aimed at residents of Coventry.

We promoted this survey through our Healthwatch membership of local people and voluntary sector organisations. We distributed the survey and completed surveys with people through our contact points at the City of Coventry Health Centre and UHCW outpatient waiting area.

The questionnaire we used can be found at appendix 1.

4. Findings

4.1 About the respondents

We received a total of 205 responses with 174 being residents of Coventry. We collected the first part of postcodes to determine where respondents lived in Coventry:

CV1	12	CV4	22
CV2	29	CV5	40
CV3	39	CV6	32

Of respondents living in Coventry 117 (67%) said they had access to transport by car.

73% of respondents were female. 55 people indicated that they had a physical disability affecting their mobility

We were interested in the caring responsibilities that people had. 57 respondents out of 205 (28%) said that they cared for a relative or friend regularly or sometimes.

28 respondents cared for children during the day regularly or sometimes and 42 respondents dropped children off at school regularly or sometimes.

Ethnicity of respondents	Count	%
White British	158	77
White: Eastern European	1	0.5
Asian or Asian British: Indian	11	5
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	3	1.5
Black or Black British: Caribbean	3	1.5
White: Irish	11	5
Other	5	2.5
Not given	13	6
TOTAL	205	100*

Age of respondents	Count	%
16-24	6	3
25-34	11	5
35-44	28	14
45-54	31	15
55-64	43	21
65+	75	37
Did not answer	11	5
Total	205	100

Work status	Count	%
Full time	66	32
Part time	29	14
Retired	76	37
Student/education	3	1.5
Unemployed	10	5
Not working	9	4
Did not answer	4	2
Other	8	4
TOTAL	205	100*

* % figures are rounded

4.2 What is most important?

We asked people to rate 7 factors on a scale of 'very important' to 'not important' for if/when they have a first NHS outpatient appointment or need to go for a test at a hospital.

When we look at the strong preference (very important) category the four factors which are ranked as most important by respondents are:

- Car parking is available

- The hospital is in Coventry
- There is a choice of day/time of appointment
- You can see a specific Dr/consultant team

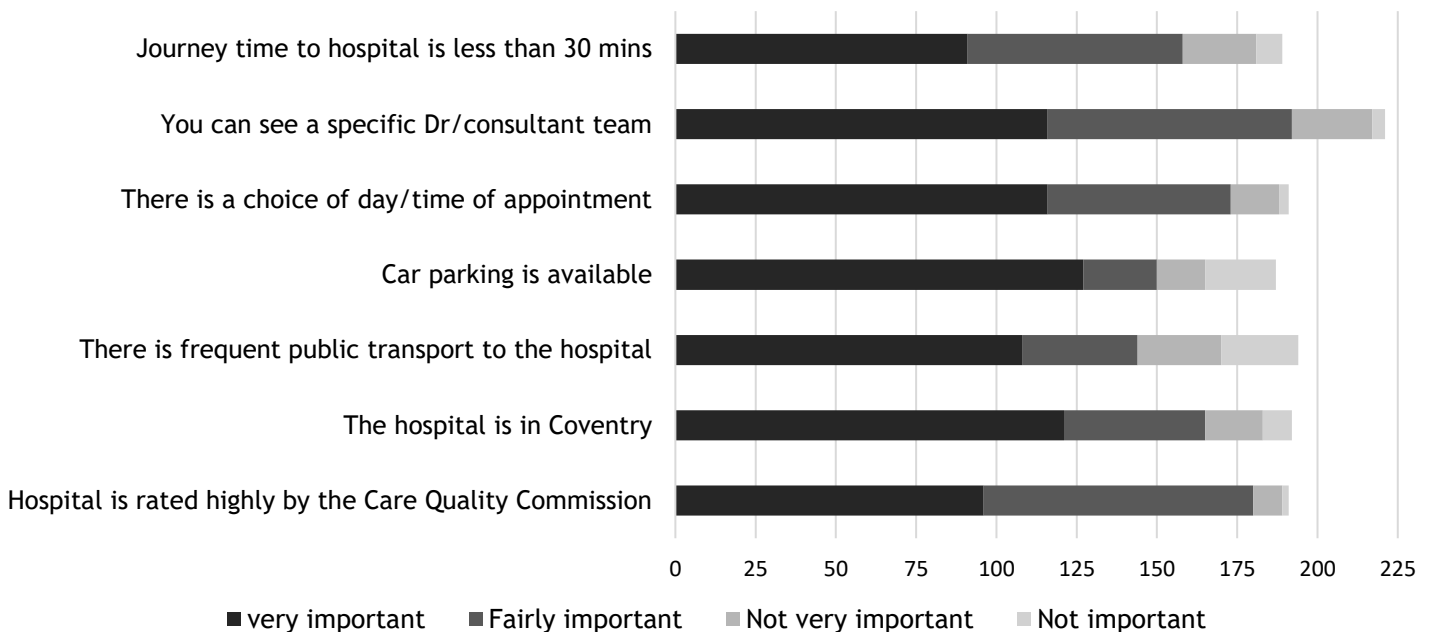
However, if we use all of the positive responses by adding the ‘fairly important’ category is added to the ‘very important’ Responses then:

- Seeing a particular consultant/team is ranked first,
- The CQC rating of the Hospital is ranked second
- Choice of day/time of appointment is third.

Factor	Ranking based on ‘very important’	Ranking based on ‘fairly important’	Ranking based on both
Car parking is available	1	7	5
The hospital is in Coventry	2	5	4
There is a choice of day/time of appointment	3	4	3
You can see a specific Dr/consultant team	3	2	1
There is frequent public transport to get to the hospital	5	6	7
Hospital is rated highly by the Care Quality Commission	6	1	2
Journey time to the hospital is less than 30 minutes	7	3	6

The table below shows all of the responses received and the factors people rated as most and least important:

What is most important



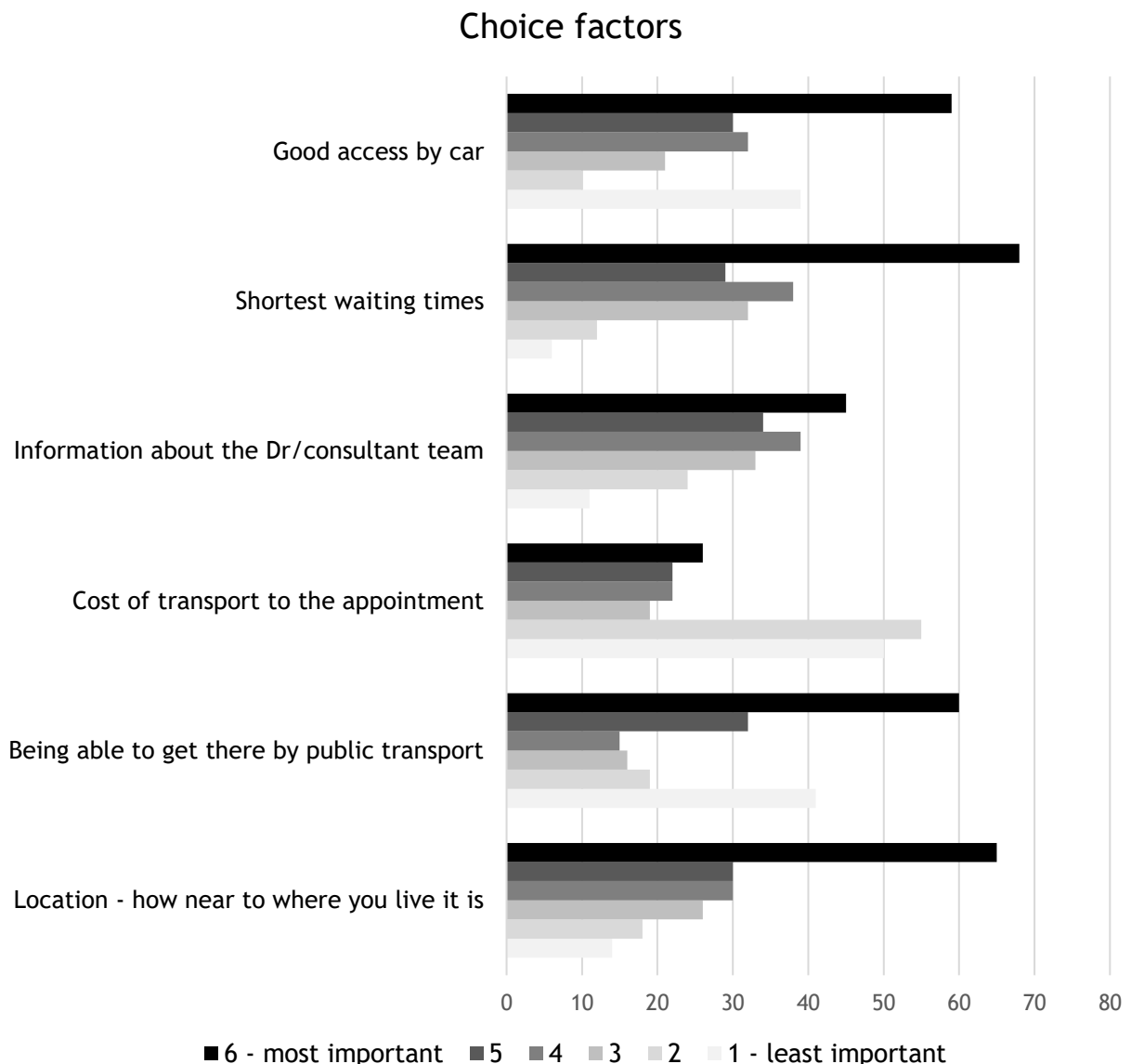
Other factors identified by respondents included:

- walking distance
- cost of transport
- car parking cost and availability
- evening or weekend appointments
- information about buses

4.3 Choice factors

We asked respondents if they could choose a hospital to go to for outpatient appointment, what were the most important things they would think about when deciding which hospital to go to. We provided 6 options and asked respondents to rank them with 6 being the most important and 1 the least. Some respondents did not follow this scoring system.

The graph below shows the responses we received and how respondents ranked the different options:



The table below looks at the strongest positive preferences given ie those ranked 6 and 5 by respondents. This gives the count of the number scoring each option 6 or 5 and the ranking based on this.

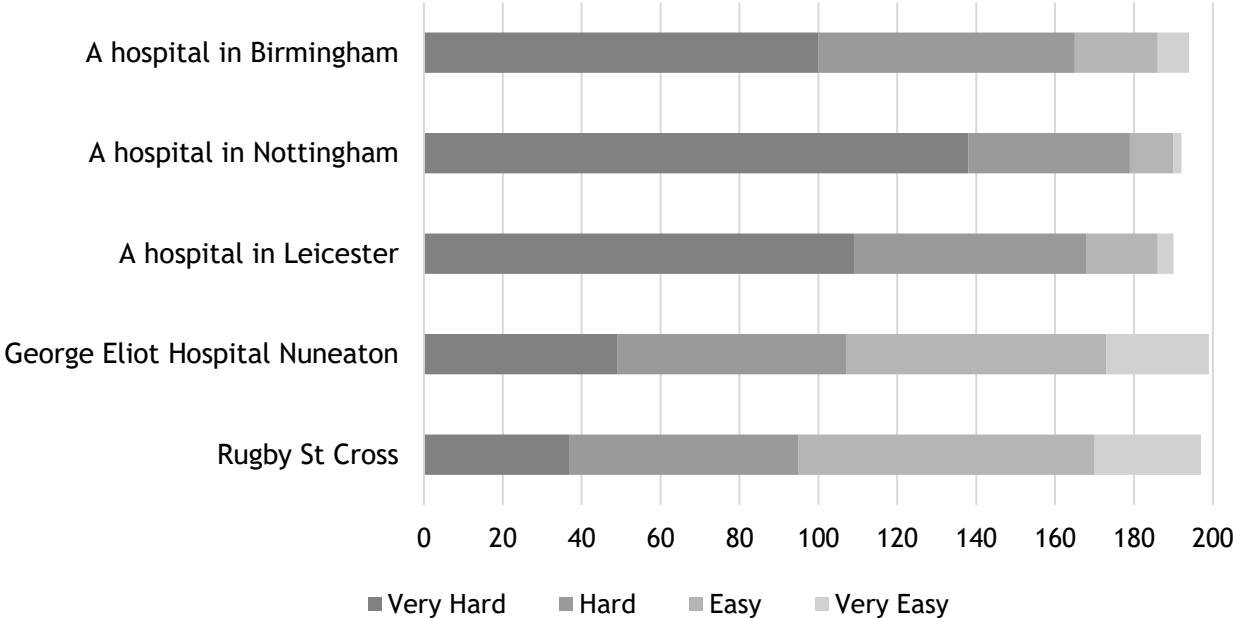
This shows that waiting times were the most important factor closely followed by location, access by public transport and good access by car.

	Count of scores 6 and 5	Rank (1 most important)
Location - how near to where you live it is	95	2
Being able to get there by public transport	92	3
Cost of transport to the appointment	48	6
Information about the Dr/consultant team	79	5
Shortest waiting times	97	1
Good access by car	89	4

4.4 Getting to appointments outside of Coventry

We asked respondents to consider how easy they would find it to travel to an outpatient appointment at 5 hospital locations outside of Coventry.

Views on ease of getting to different hospital locations



The table below shows how the responses for those thinking it would be ‘very hard’ to get to a hospital location were ranked. Rugby St Cross hospital and Nuneaton based George Eliot Hospital were considered the least ‘hard’ to get to.

Hospital location	Count of ‘very hard’	Ranking (1 hardest)
Rugby St Cross	95	5
George Eliot Hospital Nuneaton	107	4
A hospital in Leicester	168	2
A hospital in Nottingham	179	1
A hospital in Birmingham	165	3

The factors people identified to explain their ranking were:

Issues with getting to Rugby St. Cross

• Time taken/impact on working day (amount of time need to take off/family commitments)	21
• Bus/public transport frequency/timing/access issues	15
• Unfamiliar with how to get there	5
• Cost	5
• Distance	3
• Not wanting to rely on family /friend (independence)	3
• Timing of appointments issues	2
• Stress of journey	2

In addition there were 16 positive comments about the accessibility of this hospital including parking, proximity and ease.

Issues with getting to George Eliot

• Time taken/impact on working day (amount of time need to take off/family commitments)	13
• Bus/public transport frequency/timing/access issues	19
• Unfamiliar with how to get there/the hospital	8
• Cost	3
• Distance	7
• Disability/mobility	4
• Timing of appointments/traffic	3
• Cost	3
• Concerns about driving	2

There were 16 positive comments about the accessibility of this hospital for some including shorter journeys for those who live in the north of Coventry.

For the three locations further away (Birmingham, Leicester and Nottingham) the comments provided indicated more willingness to consider travelling to Birmingham than to Leicester or Nottingham.

20 people commented that Nottingham was too far away and a further 8 that this was not a journey which was possible for them.

17 people were concerned about the distance to Leicester and a further 5 about the time the journey would take them. 12 indicated they were unfamiliar with the hospitals/city and 10 said they would have issues getting public transport.

For travelling to a hospital in Birmingham we received more positive comments about the potential to access via public transport:

- *The two trains needed to get from Coventry to Birmingham Q.E. or the Epilepsy Centre are more frequent than those to other city hospitals and since Birmingham is within the Centro travel zone people holding a disabled person's travel pass can travel for free on the train. The hospital is very close to these hospitals and a reliable shuttle bus is available*
- *Good rail connections*
- *I am currently receiving specialist eye treatment at Birmingham Midland Eye Centre. I was referred by UHCW in December 2015 for which I have been very grateful.*
- *I can travel by train or bus with no cost to myself, and the services are quite frequent.*
- *Easy to get to on public transport although it could also necessitate time off from work*
- *Easier as on regular train route*

We asked if there was anything that would help respondents to make a journey to a hospital outside of Coventry for an outpatient appointment or test. The most popular suggestions were around choice and avoiding peak traffic periods. The information we gathered at our annual meeting also touched on this related to concerns about getting to St Cross from Coventry or back during 'rush hour' times.

The table below shows the answers given:

Option	Count	Rank (most popular answer)
Choice of time of day for appointment to fit around commitments	121	1
Avoiding peak traffic such as early morning	110	2
More direct public transport	92	3
More frequent public transport	73	5
Having someone to take me	87	4
Access to non-emergency patient transport service	56	6
Support with movement around the hospital (eg wheelchairs available)	31	7

4.5 Recent outpatient appointments

161 respondents had attended an outpatient appointment within the previous 12 months, 50 for a first appointment and 99 for a follow up appointment. The others did not know or did not answer.

59 respondents said they had a choice of hospital for their first appointment and respondents explained how many choices they had as follows:

If YES how many choices did you have?	Count
one	9
two	14
three	21
More than 3	2
don't recall	10
did not answer	3
TOTAL	59

Reasons people gave about whether they were happy with the choice they had:

- *QE not available to those outside Birmingham*
- *Because it was local*
- *I have a long-term health condition and have been receiving treatment at Coventry since 1967. The offer of going to BMEC was very encouraging as at the time there was not a suitable consultant in Coventry.*
- *I was able to choose my local hospital ... and did so.*
- *I would have to wait much longer for a hospital nearby so had to take the first available appointment in Solihull*
- *As it was in Coventry*
- *UHCW was included and I could choose it*
- *As it was Coventry*
- *I was not aware of or given the choices until after I had attended the test.*
- *UHCW has a good rating for cancer care.*

We asked how easy people had found it to get to their appointment:

How easy was it for you to attend the appointment?	Count
Very easy	39
Easy	59
Very hard	2
Hard	19
Did not answer	41
TOTAL	160

Reasons for 'hard'

- *I had an eye appointment but the nearest one was Solihull and because I have to have dye put in my eye my husband had to go with me to take me.*
- *A long walk and wait*

Reasons for 'easy'

- *Because of location*
- *Appointment was fine but parking was a nightmare*
- *Once I had been the first time and familiarised myself with public transport it was fairly quick and comfortable*
- *I got a lift both ways*
- *As there are a number of buses that go to the hospital that I am familiar with*
- *I know Coventry well and drive myself, although waiting for car parking spaces is always a pain at UHCW*
- *I was able to take my Mother who has dementia without having to take a whole day off work*
- *The appointments were at a time I could attend easily, I avoided early morning so parking was less of a problem than it usually is (late afternoon)*

4.6 Macular patients

We attended a meeting of the Macular Degeneration Support Group in Coventry in September 2017. Patients from Coventry often received treatment at the macular Unit at Rugby St. Cross hospital as this is the base for this specialty. Five member of the group were receiving treatment at the unit and another was being treated in Birmingham. The following points came from the discussion:

Concerns about time taken to travel to appointments:

- It takes two hours to get to the Macular appointment at Rugby St Cross
- Takes time on the bus - at least an hour
- It can take a whole day especially if you have to wait for your appointment
- Taxi too expensive
- A bus is missed out in the afternoon for the school run, this means you have to wait an extra hour
- Takes 9 minutes on the train but how do you get to the train station; that is another bus ride

Comments about support:

- One person who said they were not able to visit Rugby St. Cross was allowed to have her injections at UHCW
- One person said that lots of people with Macular Degeneration live on their own and don't have anyone to take them to hospital in Rugby
- Need a friend to take you

- The point was made that people want to be independent and don't want to have to rely on people taking them to the hospital

4.7 Discussion at Carers Group

We attended a BME Carers group and held a discussion about access to outpatient appointments on 6 June 2017.

The following comments were made by participants:

- *It's difficult to go Rugby*
- *Sometimes the appointment is very early and is hard to get to if you don't drive*
- *It is very difficult for elderly people who are not mobile*
- *Last bus is at 6.00pm and they are hourly*
- *If people can't go on bus and there is no family to help it is difficult*
- *Get better treatment in Rugby*
- *People who don't drive won't attend their appointments*
- *You can't force people to go to Rugby*
- *Can't additional services be put into City Centre*
- *Are they able to move/have more appointments at City of Coventry Health Centre*
- *When you are not well it is very difficult to travel*
- *If you miss the bus you have to wait an hour*
- *It is not always possible to have everything in Coventry even if we want it.*
- *At Rugby you don't get follow up at home, which you get in Coventry*

5. Conclusions

The majority of our respondents (67%) were car drivers or had access to transport by car and this will account for the strong preference for car parking being a very important factor in access to a hospital. However quite a lot of people did not have access to transport by car and this needs to be considered.

Respondents expressed a preference to attend a hospital within Coventry.

Choice of day/time of appointment and the ability to see a specific Dr/consultant team were also considered very important. CQC ratings featured as a factor when the fairly important rating was added to the very important rating responses.

Our second question about the most important factors when choosing a hospital to attend for an outpatient appointment, found that respondents thought the shortest waiting times were the most important factor but this was very closely followed by close to where you live. This indicates that patients would weigh up the waiting time versus the distance from home if in a position of choice. Access by public transport was also seen as important.

We received many comments about public transport when we asked people to consider different hospitals in Warwickshire, Birmingham, Leicester and Nottingham. Most of these were concerns that there was no quick and direct public transport.

Whilst most respondents drove/had access to a lift, comments provided indicated that some were not confident in driving what they considered to be long distances or to unfamiliar locations such as other hospitals around the midlands. Others did not want to rely on others and wished to be independent in accessing healthcare.

The respondents in our sample considered Rugby St. Cross Hospital to be the more accessible of the five options we gave. More people also seemed to already be familiar with this hospital.

Comments highlighted that lack of information about a location or knowledge of a hospital was perceived to be a barrier for some.

The other responsibilities people had in their lives impacted on the time people were prepared to spend travelling to an outpatient appointment; with comments regarding time off work and other commitments being barriers to travelling further.

The top 3 factors identified as potential mitigations for travelling further to a hospital location were:

- Choice of time of day for appointment to fit around commitments
- Avoiding peak traffic such as early morning
- More direct public transport

There were some limitations in the sample for this survey: Black and Minority Ethnic communities were under represented, as were people living in CV1 and CV4; and men. Therefore there is scope for further more targeted research to gather the input of these groups.

6. Recommendations

Healthwatch Coventry recommends that the following bodies take account of these findings in the planning of service for Coventry residents in order to ensure that residents are not excluded from access to outpatient appointments/tests:

- Coventry and Rugby CCG
- Better Health, Better Care, Better Value (STP)
- Coventry Health and Wellbeing Board and the Coventry and Warwickshire Place Based Forum
- Public Health Coventry

Specifically we recommend those planning NHS service must work to ensure:

1. The frequency, connectivity and timing of public transport is improved to support access to hospital sites for those who live in Coventry and travel by public transport
2. Services are delivered as close as possible to where people live and that there is consideration of the types of clinics which are provided at greater distance and the impact this will have on the specific patient group(s). Impact assessment should be undertaken for the location of services exploring the implications for patient and vulnerable groups who are not eligible for the patient transport service. Some types of outpatient clinic - may cause additional issues of those attending eg pain clinic, macular degeneration - people with poor vision
3. Services are located closer to where people live wherever possible - this has long been a goal but relatively few services have moved from acute hospital settings into community health settings
4. An understanding of what information will help people to be confident in travelling to unfamiliar hospital locations is developed
5. The development of smarter appointment booking systems enabling identification of appointment times to enable people travelling from Coventry to have easier journeys to locations such as St .Cross eg avoiding peak traffic flow periods.

7. Appendices

1. Location of NHS outpatient appointments - impact for people who live in Coventry

What is an outpatient appointment?

It is going to a hospital for tests, treatment or follow up after treatment but not staying overnight. This includes tests such as scans.

We want to find out

- what choices and decisions you might make if you have an outpatient appointment or test in a hospital
- if the location of appointments causes issues for you

About Healthwatch Coventry

Healthwatch is independent from NHS services and argues for the interests of patients in Coventry. We work to give local people a say in NHS services. Find out more at www.healthwatchcoventry.co.uk

Part 1: for everyone

1. Please give the first part of your postcode

CV1

CV4

CV2

CV5

CV3

CV6

Other please say

2. Do you have access to transport by car

Yes

No

3. Caring for others

a) Are you a carer for a relative/friend?

Yes

No

Sometimes

b) Do you look after child(ren) during the day?

c) Do you drop off or collect school age child(ren)?

d) Do you have a physical disability affecting your mobility?

Or do you have any other caring responsibilities (please say):

4. Are you?

Working full time
 Working part time
 Not working
 Student/in education

Full time parent
 Unemployed
 Retired
 Other (please say)

5. What is most important to you if/when you have a first NHS outpatient appointment or need to go for a test at a hospital?

Pick one option for each of the following statements

	Very import ant	Fairly import ant	Not very import tant	Not import tant
<i>Hospital is rated highly by the Care Quality Commission</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>The hospital is in Coventry</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>There is frequent public transport to get to the hospital</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Car parking is available</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>There is a choice of day/time of appointment</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>You can see a specific Dr/consultant team</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Journey time to the hospital is less than 30 minutes</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other please say

6. If you were choosing a hospital for an outpatient appointment how important would the following things be to you - rank using numbers 1-6 only once, with 6 most important and 1 the least important

**Your ranking 1-6
6 is most important and 1 least
use each number once**

- A) *Location - how near to where you live it is*
- B) *Being able to get there by public transport*
- C) *Cost of transport to the appointment*

- D) *Information about the Dr/consultant team*
- E) *Shortest waiting time for appointment*
- F) *Good access by car*

Please give any other factors you think would be important to your decision below

7. If you had to go to any of the following places for an outpatient appointment or test because it was not offered in Coventry, how easy would this be for you?

	Very easy	Easy	Hard	Very Hard	Say why...
Rugby St. Cross Hospital	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
George Eliot Hospital Nuneaton	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
A hospital in Leicester	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
A hospital in Nottingham	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
A hospital in Birmingham	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

8. What (if anything) would help you to make a journey to a hospital outside of Coventry if you needed to go for an appointment or test?

Tick all that will help

- Choice of time of day of appointment to fit around my commitments*
- More direct public transport*
- More frequent public transport*
- Having someone to take me*
- Avoiding peak traffic times such as early morning*
- Access to the non-emergency patient transport service*
- Support with movement around the hospital (eg wheelchairs available)*

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please say)

Part 2: For people who have had an outpatient appointment in last year

9. Have you had a hospital outpatient appointment or test at a hospital within the last 12 months?

Yes Now go to question 10

No Now go to part 3

Don't know Now go to part 3

10. How long ago was your last outpatient appointment (tick one)?

Within the last 1-2 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	Within the last 7 - 12 months	<input type="checkbox"/>
Within the last 3-6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 12 months ago	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Was this a first or follow up appointment (tick one)?

First appointment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow up appointment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know/don't recall	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Choice of hospital

When you are referred for your first outpatient appointment in most cases you have the right to choose which hospital to go to.

12a) Did you have a choice of hospital to pick for your first outpatient appointment? Yes No Don't Know

12b) If YES How many choices did you have?

One	<input type="checkbox"/>	More than three	<input type="checkbox"/>
Two	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know/recall	<input type="checkbox"/>
Three	<input type="checkbox"/>		

12c) Where you happy with the choices you were given

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Please say why

13) How easy was it for you to attend the appointment?

Very easy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Easy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Hard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Why was this

Part 3: for everyone

We collect this information so that we can see how our survey sample represents the population of Coventry.

What ethnic group would you say you are from?

White

British	<input type="checkbox"/>
Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traveller/Romany	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eastern European	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other White (please say)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Mixed

White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>
White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Mixed (please say)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Asian or Asian British

Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Asian (please say)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Black or Black British

Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Black (please say)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Chinese or other ethnic group

Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ethnic group (please say)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your Gender

Male

Female

Transgender

Please indicate you age

Under 16 16-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

Please return to:
 Freepost RSZB-RKRJ-KSKK
 Healthwatch Coventry
 Voluntary Action Coventry
 29 Warwick Road
 Coventry
 CV1 2EZ

Confidentiality

The information we are gathering from this survey will be used by Healthwatch Coventry anonymously and you will not be identified within our report.

Personal contact details will be treated as confidential and will not be passed on to third parties without your consent. In all cases if you choose to share your personal contact details these will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Optional Follow up Contact

We think it would be helpful to speak to some people a bit more about the factors that influence which hospitals you choose for outpatient appointments.

If you are interested in talking to us perhaps on the phone or in a discussion group please provide your contact details below.

I am interested in being contacted to give more information about my views on or experiences of getting to outpatient appointments

I am interested in hearing more about Healthwatch Coventry and the findings from this piece of work

Your name: Title:

Address:	
Postcode	
Email address:	<input type="text"/>
Telephone no.	<input type="text"/>

Healthwatch Coventry

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