



**Woodgrange
Medical
Practice**

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Patient Participation Group

Patient Survey and Extended Hours Consultation

2013/2014

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Introduction

Background

The Extended Hours and Patient Participation Local Enhanced Service (PP-LES) aims to increase patient access to GP and healthcare professionals outside of core hours, increase patient choice and improve patient experience. It also seeks to encourage more patient engagement and involvement in the planning and provision of local healthcare services.

Staff and patients at Woodgrange Medical Practice have been working together to ensure that patients' views are heard and acted upon. This report shows how the PPG and the practice, together with a wider consultation period with patients, have proactively made a difference to the way in which information is shared.

Patient Participation

Patient participation (PP) aims to ensure that patients are involved in decisions about the range and quality of services provided and over time, commissioned by their practice. This includes patients being involved in decisions that lead to changes to the services that their practice provides or commissions, either directly or in its capacity as gatekeeper to other services.

The PP-LES aims to encourage and reward practices for routinely asking for and acting on the views of their patients, to promote the proactive engagement through effective Patient Participation Groups (PPGs), and use of local practice survey that promote improvement in services. An important aspect of PP is to achieve 'excellent access' to Practice Healthcare and Practice facilitated access to other health and social care providers.

Woodgrange Medical Practice Patient Group

Woodgrange Medical Practice has an active PPG which has been running since July 2011; the representation has not changed since then and this is our third PPG survey report.

This year we concentrated on the patients' use of the text messaging service, which is currently being used within the practice to provide appointment reminders and a cancellation service to patients. We hope that by providing this service we will reduce the number of missed appointments, as well as providing a helpful reminder of appointments to patients. Our contract

with iPLATO, the company who run the service, is due for renewal. We discussed this matter at our PPG meeting on 24th October 2013 and it was agreed that conducting a survey on the continuation of the iPLATO service would be a good indicator on patients' dependence on the text messaging service.

The aim was to find out whether patients found the text messaging service useful as this would help in any bid for additional funds to allow for continuation of the service.

The questionnaire was devised and discussed at the following PPG meeting at the practice on 12th December 2012. Given the success of the previous year's survey, we decided to keep the same format with 7 questions requiring only a YES/NO/NOT APPLICABLE answers and a final open-ended question for patients to voice any further comments. We agreed that keeping the questions simple would help ensure that patients would complete questionnaires fully giving the Practice a good indication of how patients felt about a the text messaging service.

The questionnaire was finalised and ready to be circulated on 12th December 2013 at our PPG meeting.

As the survey was being conducted in the Practice the results were put on a spreadsheet for analysis. All 202 surveys results were collated and information inputted on the spreadsheet. This was emailed to the PPG members for their information requesting any input for the report ready for our next PPG meeting on 27th February 2014.

On 27th February 2014 the PPG met up at the Practice and the results discussed and analysed.

WMP confirmed that 202 completed surveys had been received and inputted on to a spreadsheet. It was agreed that the shorter questionnaire with simple yes/no answers had been easier for patients to complete and resulted in fewer incomplete surveys being submitted.

Quantitative Survey Results

A patient survey was conducted from December 2013 to January 2014 to see whether patients found the mobile text messaging service useful or not. The mobile text message service reminded patients of their appointment and also allowed them to cancel their appointment via the text messaging service. The survey consisted of seven closed-end questions with regards to the mobile text messaging service and one open-ended question allowing patients to include any further comments. Finally, there were additional questions about patients' age, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, thus allowing us to observe the diversity of the respondents. The survey was successfully completed by 202 patients.

Information on Mobiles¹

- Number of mobile users in the UK: 82.7 million
- 94% of adults either own or use a mobile phone
- Average number of text messages sent by a user per month: 200
- Mobile phones users are constantly changing their phones with technology updates, leading to users even changing their phone numbers

Information on iPLATO²

- Service used by **ALL** Newham CCGs.
- Saves the NHS and tax payers of costs of more than £750 million per year
- Non-attendance at booked GP appointments has reduced by 26% from 66% to 40%.

Profile of respondents

The survey drew responses from 202 patients from a population size of 11,964 patients (as of 22nd January 2014), which is approximately 2% of the whole population. This is a very small sample of patient opinion, thus we should be careful in drawing too many conclusions from the data and extrapolating them to the patient population as a whole. The survey drew more responses from females compared to males (56% (female) vs. 41% (male), and 3% not stated),

¹ <http://media.ofcom.org.uk/facts/>

² <http://www.iplato.net/news-appointment-reminders-and-mobile-health-promotion/press-releases/remember-ur-gp-appt-gp-text-messaging-service.html>

which begs the question are female patients more frequent users of primary care services or are female patients more likely to complete surveys?

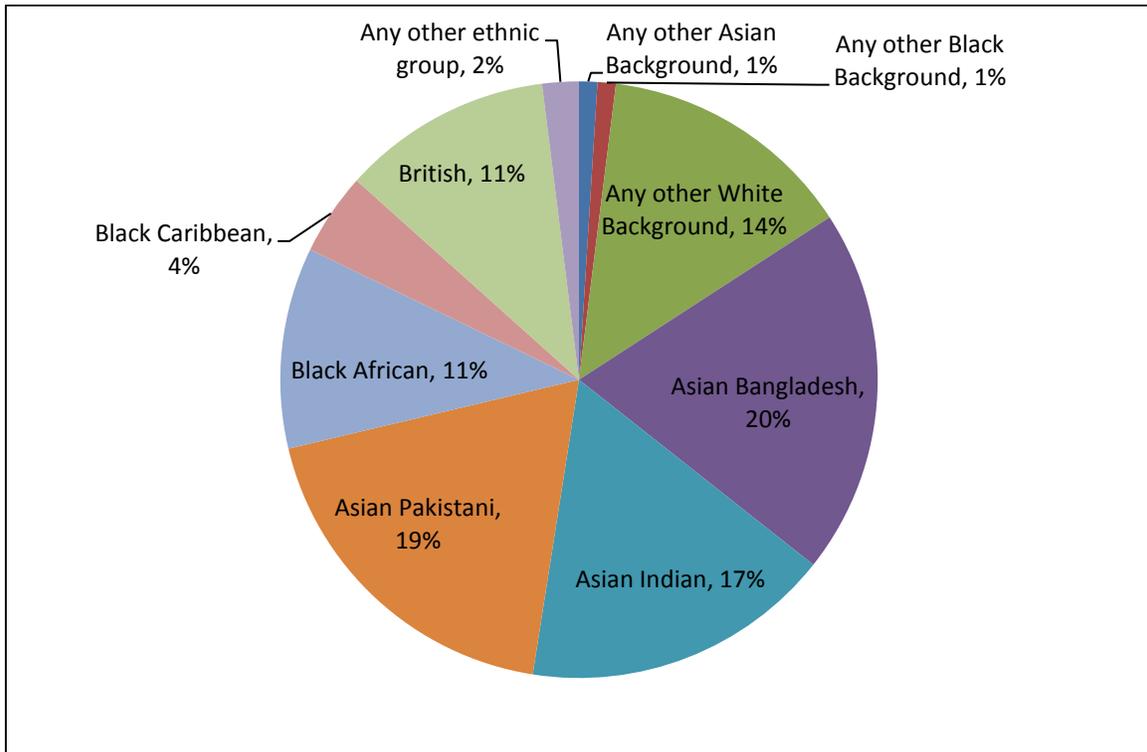
It is important to know whether the respondents to the patient survey are representative of the practice population so we can be sure that any conclusions drawn from the data reflect the wishes of the practice population as a whole. In order to do so, we will consider the age, ethnicity, religious beliefs and sexual orientation responses to help provide indication of the practice population.

Table 1: Age profile (Survey Population vs. Actual Population)

	Survey Population	Actual Practice Population
Age Groups		
Under 25	19%	18%
25-34	35%	38%
35-44	24%	22%
45-54	11%	13%
55+	11%	9%
Total	100%	100%

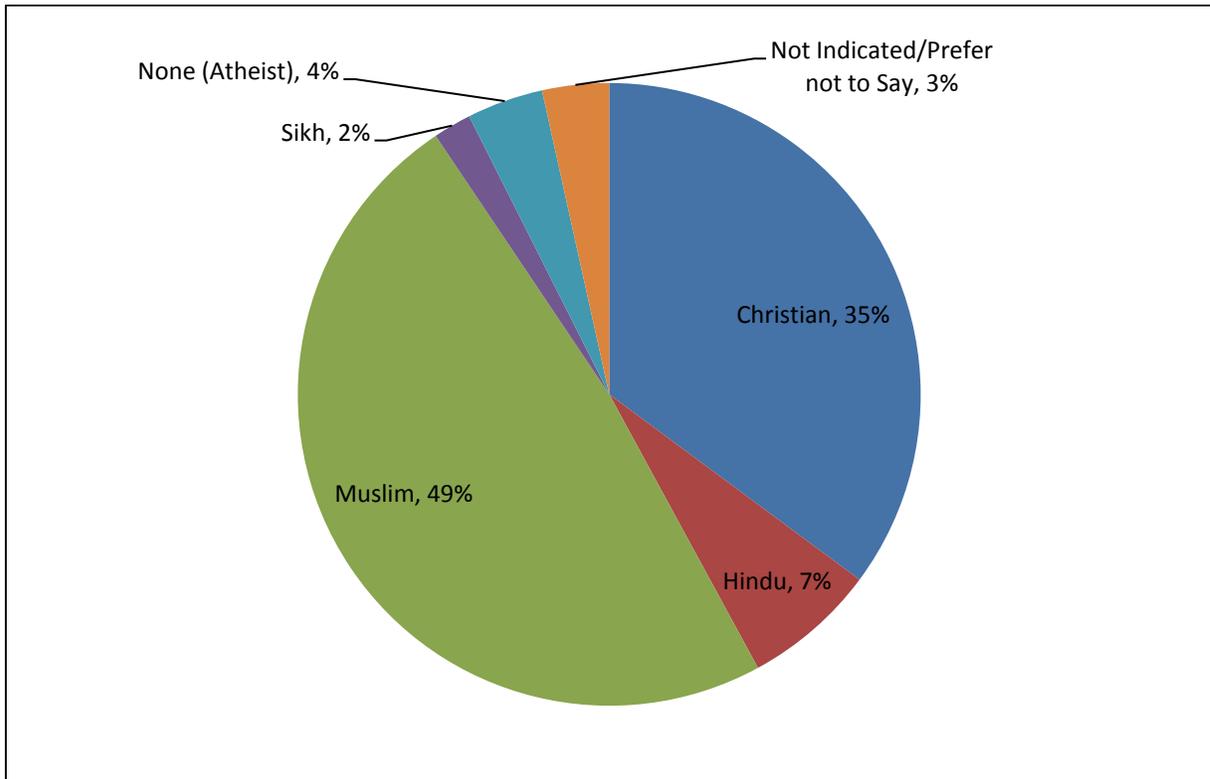
The patient responses from the survey reflects the age profile of the practice population, also noting that the under 25 age group in the practice includes a large number of patients under the age of 16 who would not have been asked to complete the survey. In order to reflect this in the actual population we had not considered those patients under the age of 16, hence the percentages drawn from the practice population is from a total of 9,289 patients for the results obtained in Table 1.

Figure 1: Pie Chart representing the ethnic diversity of the respondents



The respondents of the survey were from a large number of ethnic backgrounds with the majority (over 50%) categorising themselves as Asian, which reflects the practice population.

Figure 2: Pie Chart representing the religious beliefs of the respondents



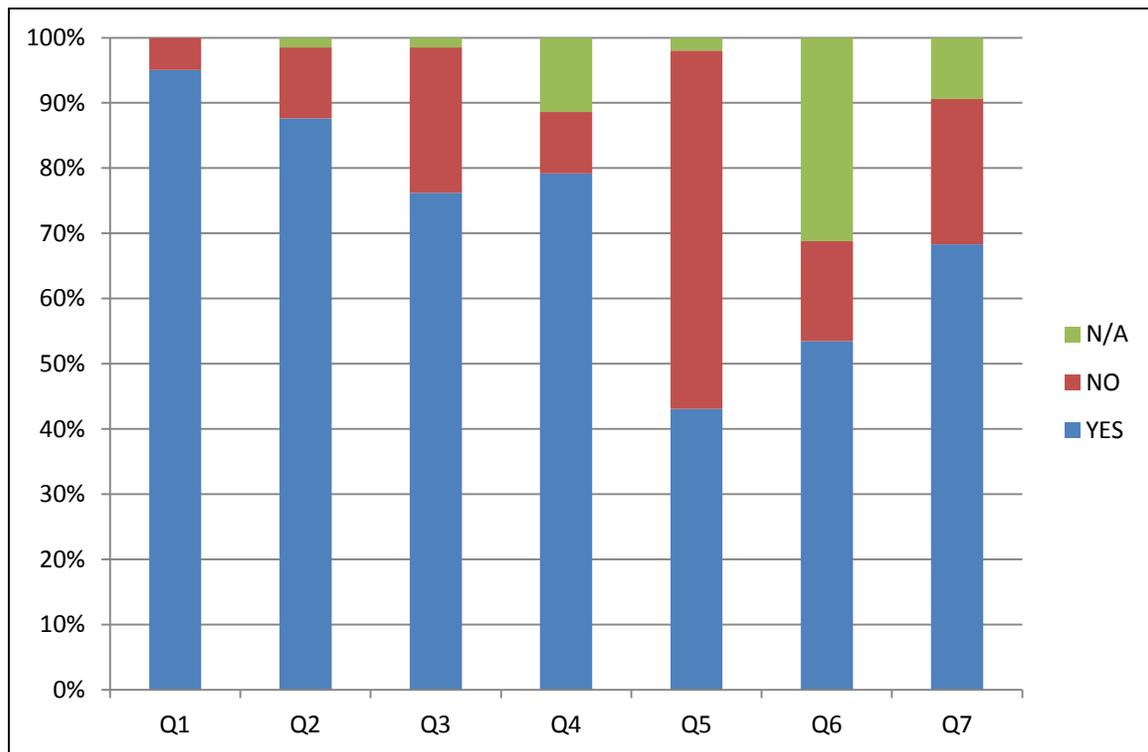
Again, the results from Figure 2 show that the survey was completed by patients from a range of different religious beliefs, hence reflecting that the sample was drawn from a diverse population with the responses not being dominated by individuals who are from one religious group as opposed to the other.

A question with regards to sexual orientation was also answered by the respondents, however with the majority falling into the 'heterosexual' or 'prefer not to say' categories we cannot comment on the profile of the patients in that regard. Also, given that there is no record of these figures for the practice population, there is little we can conclude with respect to whether the survey population is representative of the practice population in terms of sexual preferences.

The respondents had the option to reply yes/no or not applicable to the following questions:

- Q1) Do you have a mobile phone?
- Q2) Does the Practice have your current mobile number?
- Q3) Have you ever received a text message from us?
- Q4) Was the text message reminder useful?
- Q5) Have you ever used the text message cancellation service?
- Q6) Was the text cancellation service useful?
- Q7) Would you miss the text message service if it were no longer available?

Figure 3: Bar Chart showing the results of the patient survey conducted in the practice



Note: Q1-Q7 corresponds to the questions stated above.

The results from Figure 3 show that about 95% of the respondents have a mobile phone that is not surprising given that in the UK there are 82.7 million phone users, which is more than the UK population of approximately 63.7³ million. Despite the vast majority of respondents having a mobile phone, only around 88% of the respondents have informed the practice of their most up

³ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Population>

to date mobile number. Also, with 11% of the respondents not providing the practice with the most up to date number reflects in the responses with regards to the respondents ever receiving text messages, with 76% suggesting they have. This suggests that the respondents may have only recently updated the practice with their mobile number thus not receiving a text message. Surprisingly, 79% of the respondents have stated that they have found the text messaging service useful, which is 3% more than the responses with regards to respondents ever receiving text messages in the past. This suggests that the respondents may have misinterpreted the question and thus not correctly reflecting the answers to 'ever receiving a text message' and 'whether the service was useful'. Similarly, the responses to the cancellation service have been answered in the same manner whereby only 43% of the respondents stating they have previously used the cancellation service, which is followed by 53% of survey population stating they have found the service useful. Finally, with 68% of the people suggesting they would miss the text messaging service, it may be reasonable to say that the service should continue.

Comparison of results between different age groups

The results were broken down further to see whether there was any age bias towards the survey results. The results from Figure 3 were based purely on different age groups, thus hope that the breadth of the respondents provide a fair reflection of the patient population at the practice. We have produced separate charts for each question reflecting the responses of the patients under different age bands to help provide further information.

Figure 4: Bar Chart showing whether respondents have a mobile phone or not

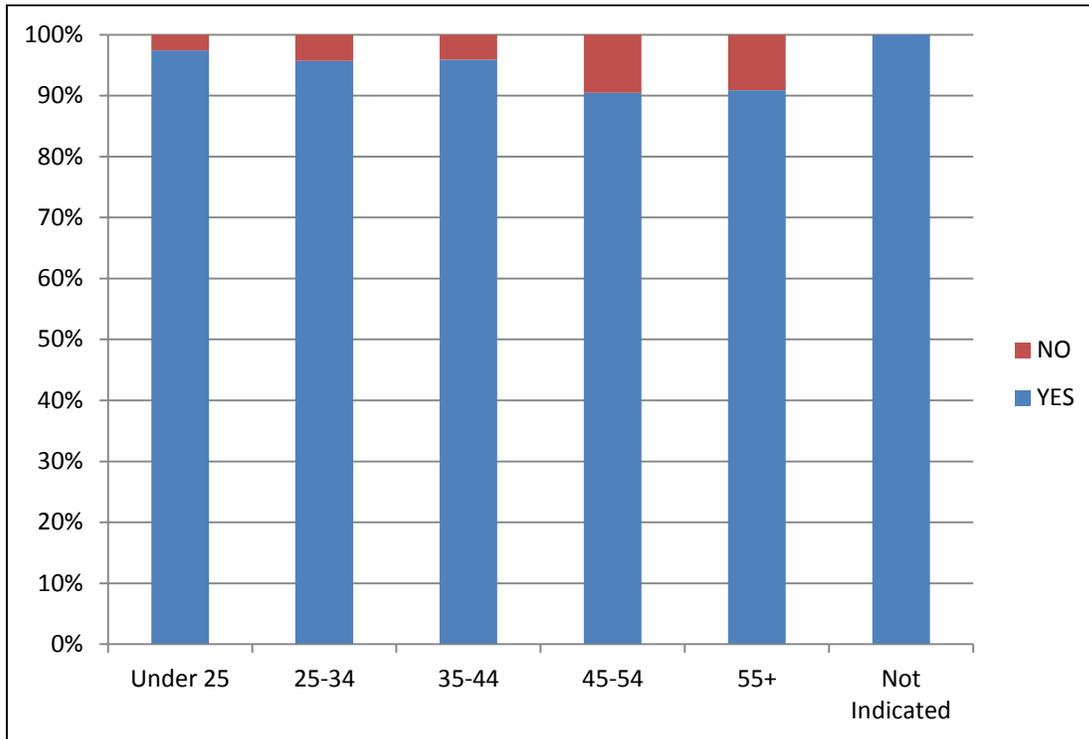


Figure 5: Bar Chart showing whether respondents have given the practice their current mobile number

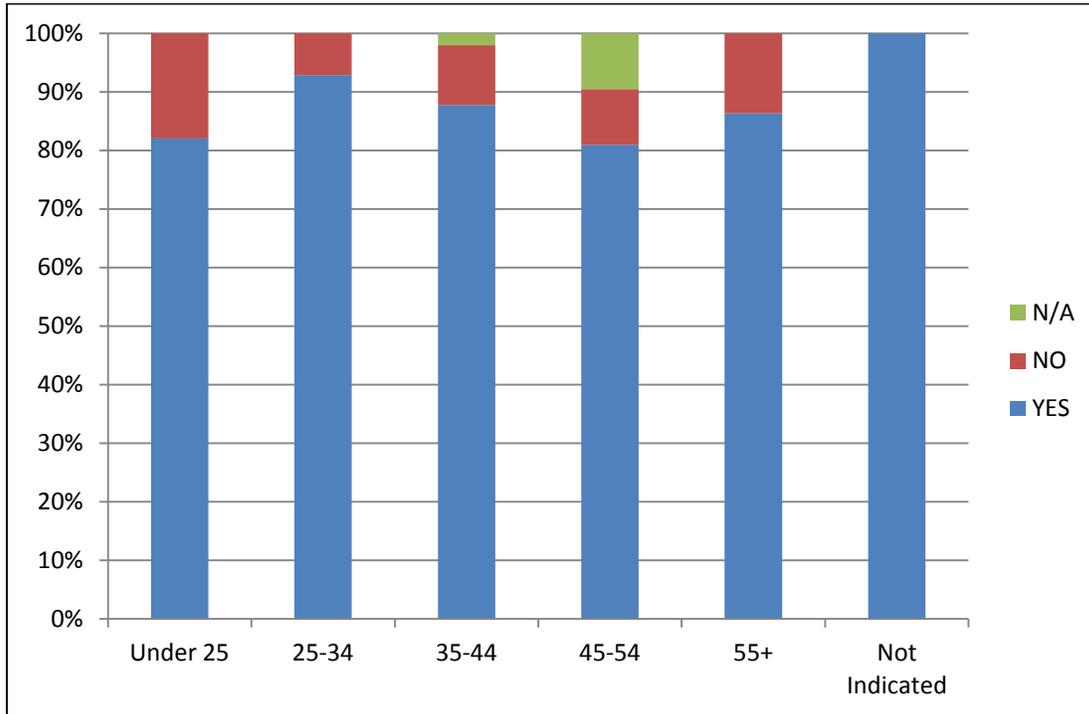


Figure 6: Bar Chart showing whether respondents have ever received a text messaging from the practice

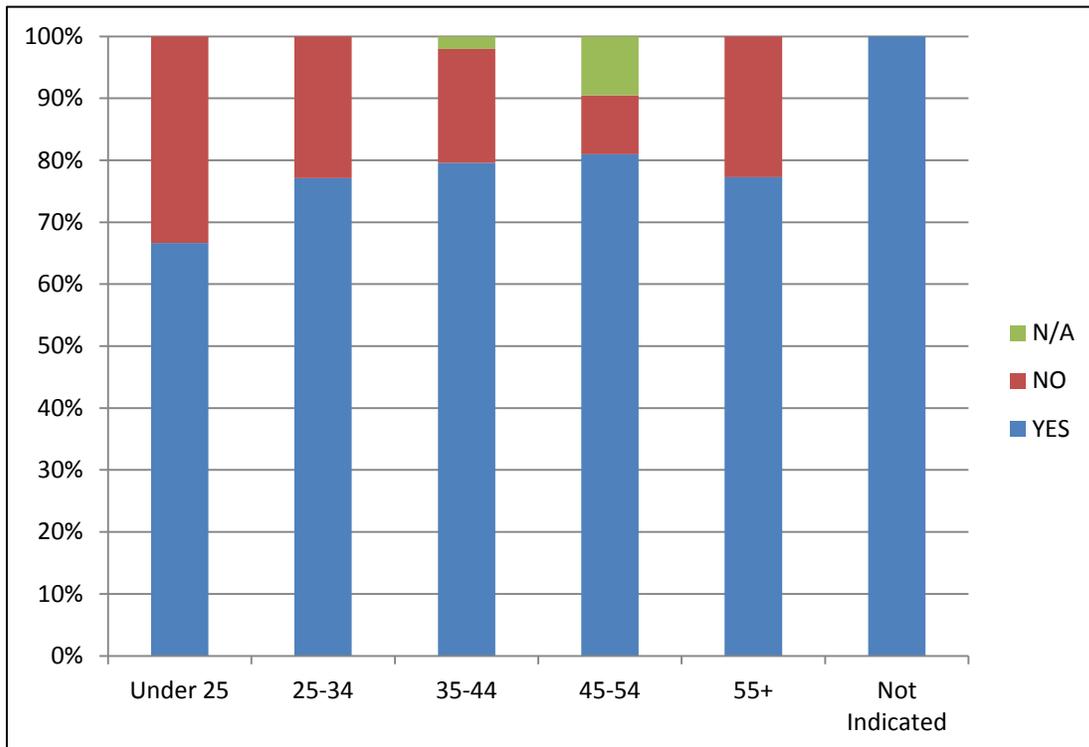


Figure 7: Bar Chart showing whether respondents have text message reminder useful

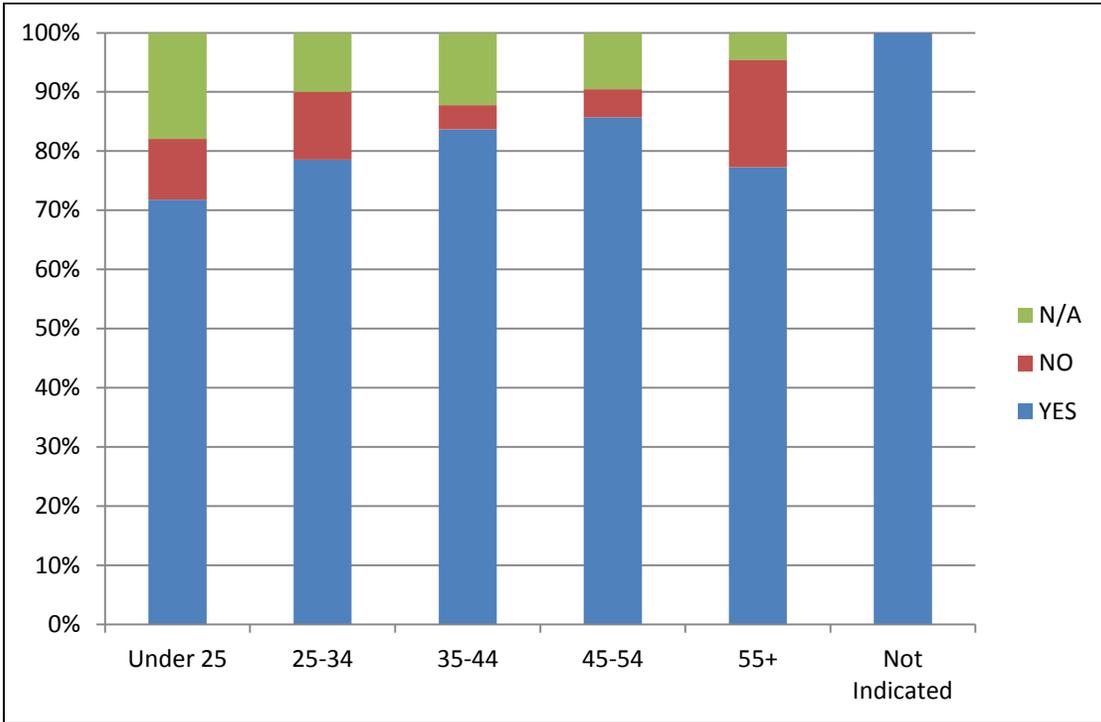


Figure 8: Bar Chart showing whether the respondents ever used the text cancellation service

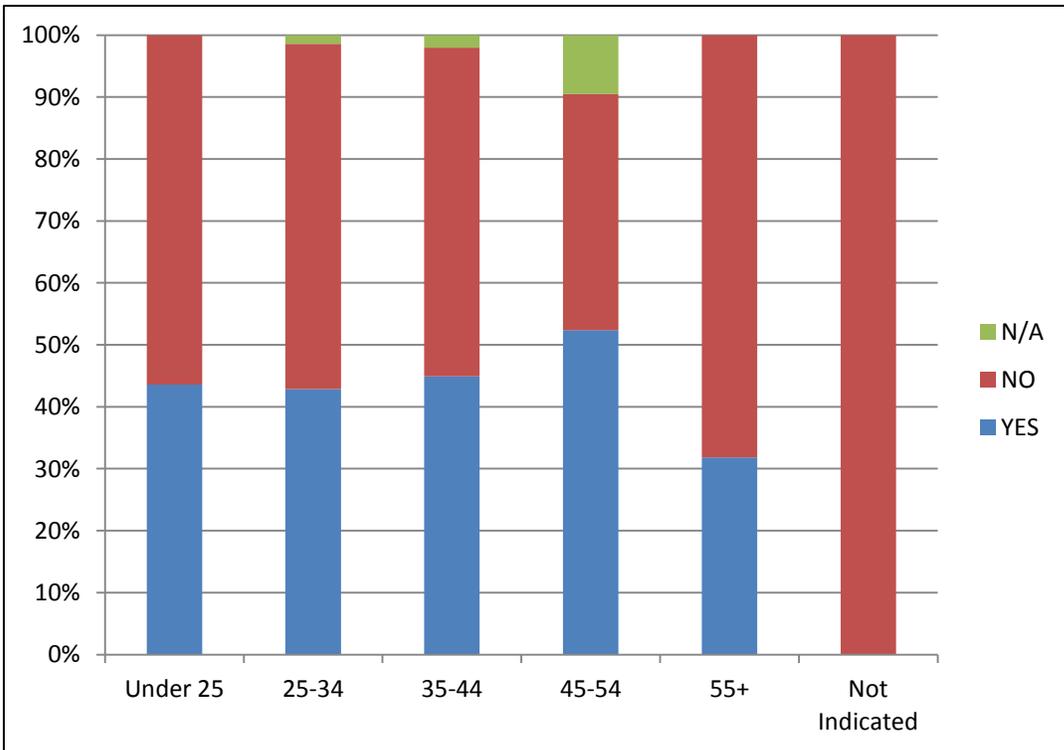


Figure 9: Bar Chart showing whether the respondents found the text cancellation service useful

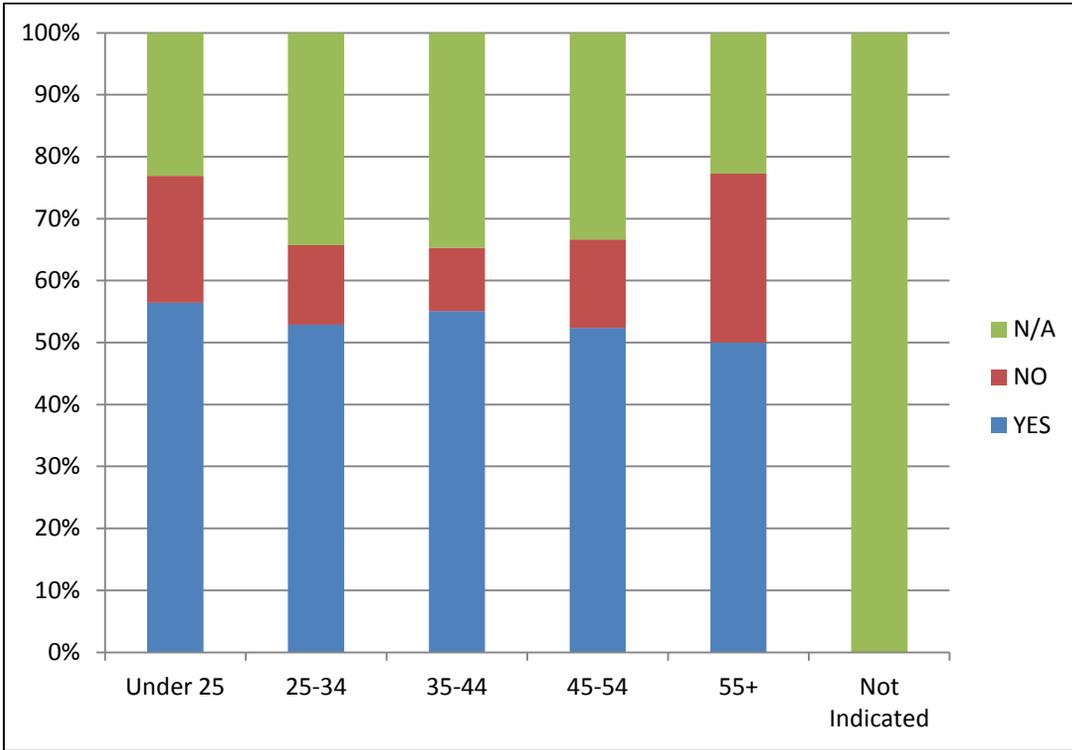
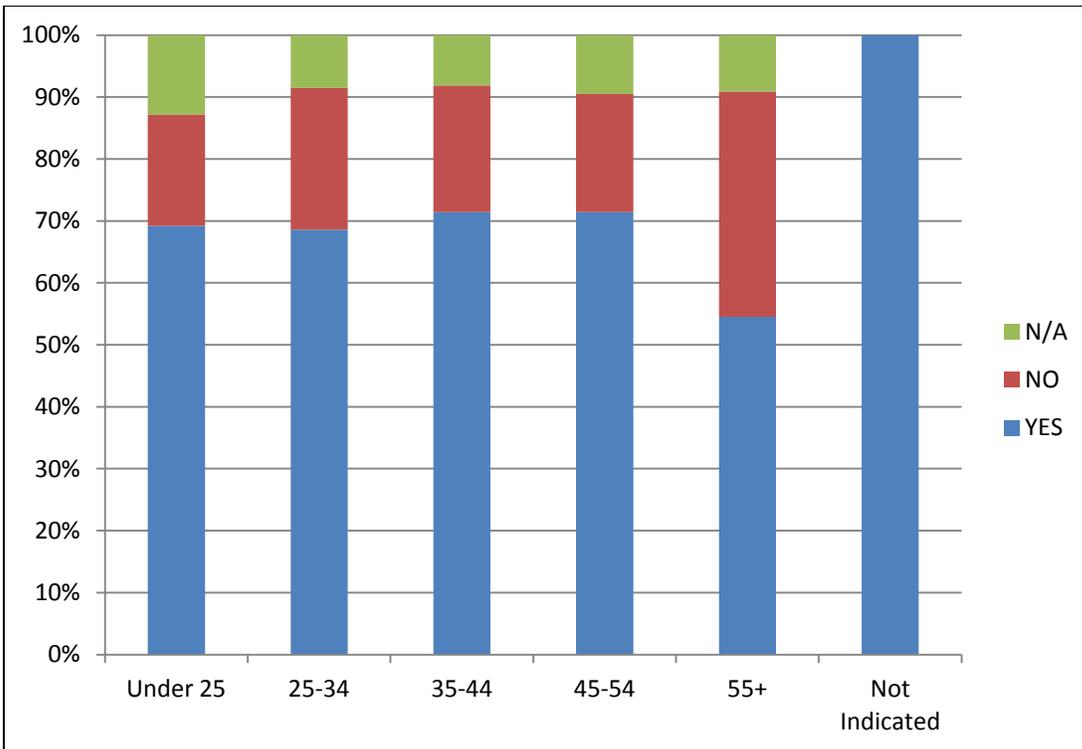


Figure 10: Bar Chart showing whether text messaging service would be missed



We can see from Figure 4 that more than 90% of each age group currently have a mobile phone, suggesting that the majority of the patients within the practice are able to receive text messages. This finding is not at all surprising given that there are more mobile phone owners than people within the UK.

The response from the survey shows that more than 70% of each age group find the text messaging service useful, more interestingly more than 80% of respondents who fall into 35-44 and 45-54 age groups stated they find the service useful. This is further reflected in Figure 10 with more than 70% of respondents in the age 35-44 and 45-54 groups stating they would miss the text messaging service.

On the contrary, we can see from Figure 8 that the cancellation service has hardly been used in comparison to the appointment reminder with less than 50% of each age group stating they have used the cancellation service. The service has been popular amongst the 45-54 age group in comparison to the other age groups with more than 50% stating they have used the cancellation service and less popular for those over 55 with less than 40% stating they have used the cancellation service. Additionally, for those who have used the cancellation service, more than 50% have stated they found the service useful.

Generally, the text messaging service will be missed by most as suggested by Figure 10. This probably reflects the populations' dependence on the use of their mobile phones, given the growing developments of the mobile industry with phones being used more than just for making and receiving calls.

Further Comments

The questionnaire also contained a section for the respondents to add any additional comments, which was completed by only 11% of the survey population. Those who left comments were all in favour of the text messaging service to continue. The comments included were as follows:

- *“Very useful service, please don't stop it”*
- *“The text message service is very useful”*

- *“Reminder message is very useful to many of us”*
- *“It’s very easy to cancel appointment with text message”*

Out of Hours

Woodgrange Medical Practice is open Monday to Friday from 8.00am-6.30pm. Extended hours includes opening on a Saturday from 8.30am – 12.30pm providing a doctor and a nurse clinic.

The Out of Hours provision from Woodgrange Medical Practice was discussed at length during a PPG meeting and the following observations were made with regard to patient awareness and actions.

- When the surgery is shut there is a message on the surgery answerphone explaining that the surgery is closed and where to get assistance, the message then states if the patients holds they will be transferred to the out of hours service.
- NHS Direct was seen as an alternative and had been used but in general members of the group felt that the advice was too general and from a set list of ailments/symptoms which didn’t always fit and that too often the outcome was to call your doctor or visit A&E, rather than practical help or advice
- Vicarage Lane Walk-in centre had also been used but there was a general lack of understanding of what could be treated where and where was the best place for someone to go to in an emergency or if they needed medical treatment or attention when their GP surgery was closed or they could not get an appointment. For example what could be treated at the walk-in centre i.e. do they have an X-ray machine or would you need to go to A&E for a suspected fracture.
- NHS 111 service is available to all, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Simply dial 111 if urgent medical help or advice is needed, remembering it is not a service to be used if conditions are life-threatening.
- Newham Urgent Care Centre is a new service offered at Newham University Hospital. On arrival patients are assessed by a local GP and through patients consent the local GP carrying out the assessment can look up some medical history that is held by the patients’ GP. This will help the local GP understand the patients issue and concern. Based on the assessment patient is directed to an appropriate service i.e. further care at

the Urgent Care Centre, A&E Department, the local GP surgery or at the local pharmacy. Essentially, this service is in place so that urgent cases receive more attention and are able to receive the specialist critical care straightway.

- Streamer Appointments is a recent service used by the practice in conjunction with Newham Urgent Care Centre. These appointments are available to those patients who have initially visited the Urgent Care Centre and are then directed back to their local GP following initial assessment, thus allowing these patients to receive immediate care. The Practice has 2 morning and 2 afternoon appointments specifically for this every day.

Conclusion & Action Plan

In conclusion the survey results suggest that patients wish for the continuation of the iPLATO text messaging service with 68% of the survey population stating they would miss the service if it stopped.

Action Plan:

- Renew the iPLATO contract and continue offering text message reminders of appointments
- Encourage patients to provide up to date mobile numbers, thus they can benefit from text service
- Use paper slips at reception to allow patients to record their up to date mobile numbers
- Promote the cancellation service to patients, which will help reduce the number of patients that do not attend their appointments and forget to call in to cancel their appointments
- Monitor the number of patients using the cancellation text service

The action plan will be reviewed after 3 months at which point we will discuss the progress of the iPLATO messaging service at our PPG meeting.