



Report Title	Young People's views on waiting times -
Organisation	Bolton Engagement Alliance
Dates:	April 2017 (report July 2017)

Acknowledgements

The Engagement Alliance would like to thank service users and staff at The Parallel for sharing their views and experiences.

Disclaimer

This report relates to verbatim comments gathered during the time of our visit. All comments recorded have been added to Healthwatch Bolton's databank of patient comment.

Strategic drivers

- To see how receptive the users of The Parallel are to development of neighbourhood based primary care services.
- Assess what is working well and what could be improved.
- The work adds specific information from Younger People to wider work on the question of acceptable waiting times.

Background

The Parallel was chosen as a site where we could engage Young People who are active and independent users of Health Services. The Parallel is a free drop-in sexual health service for young people living in Bolton. Young people can attend from age 11 up to the age of 19. The aim of The Parallel is to offer a safe and confidential service to discuss health concerns or worries.

Topics/Themes

Appointments; Waiting Times; Young People; Primary Care; Sexual Health Services;

Who we spoke to

A total of 21 Semi structured interviews were gathered from 2 drop in sessions and one appointment session.

- Age - majority of participants were 16/17 (85%).
- Gender - a third of respondents were male and two thirds female.
- Ethnicity - most of those taking part identified themselves as white (92%).

Method

Experienced Field researchers used a set of 18 semi-structured questions in interviews with those accessing The Parallel.

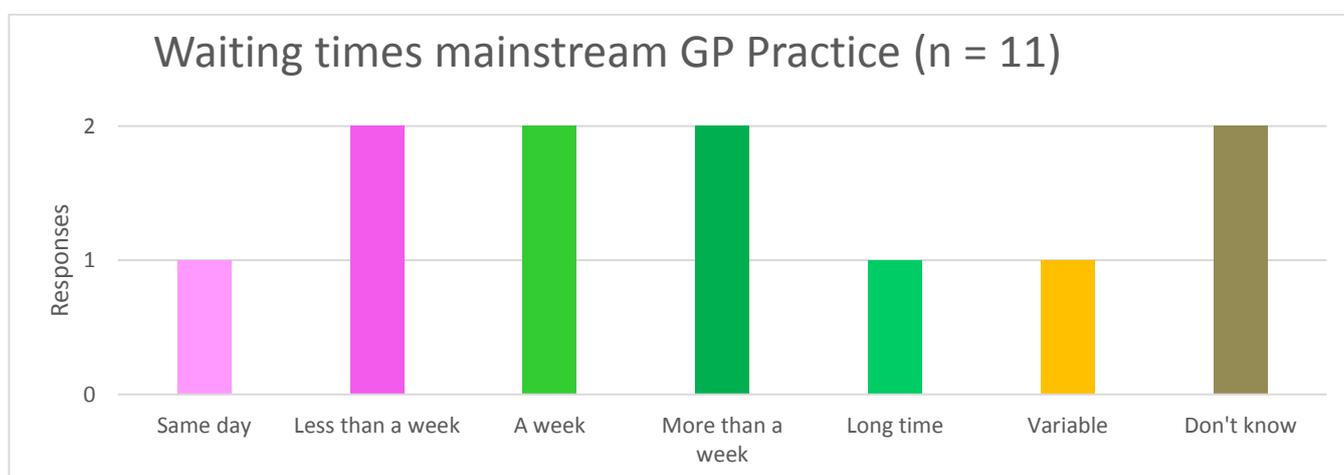
Respondents asked to give their views about the services offered to young people, at both The Parallel and within the local area. Three general areas were covered by the questions:

- Preferred practitioners.
- Views on location/timing of services.
- Thoughts on the acceptability of technology in healthcare.

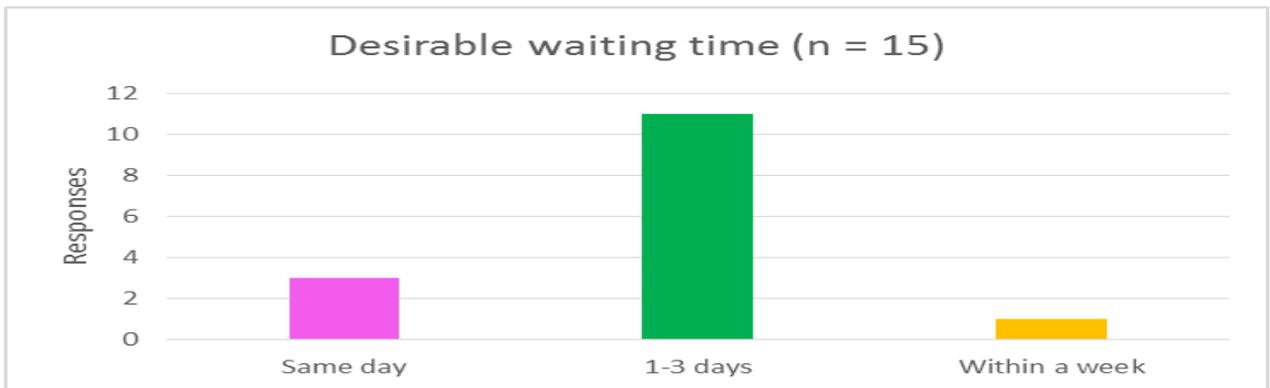
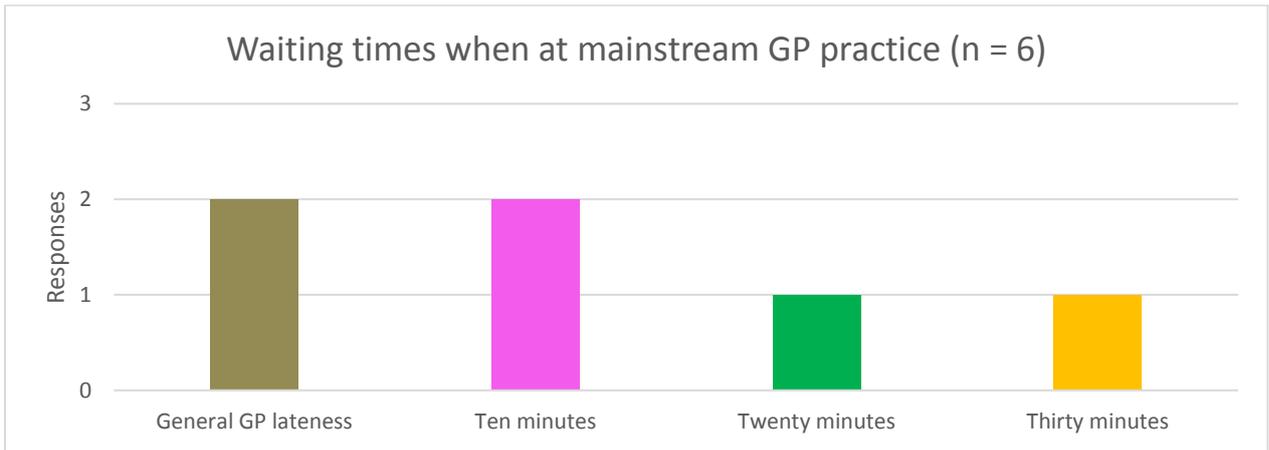
Responses were recorded verbatim alongside the questions asked.

This snapshot will look at young people's views on waiting times. The topics covered are views on appointment times to see specialists, and suggestions for improvements.

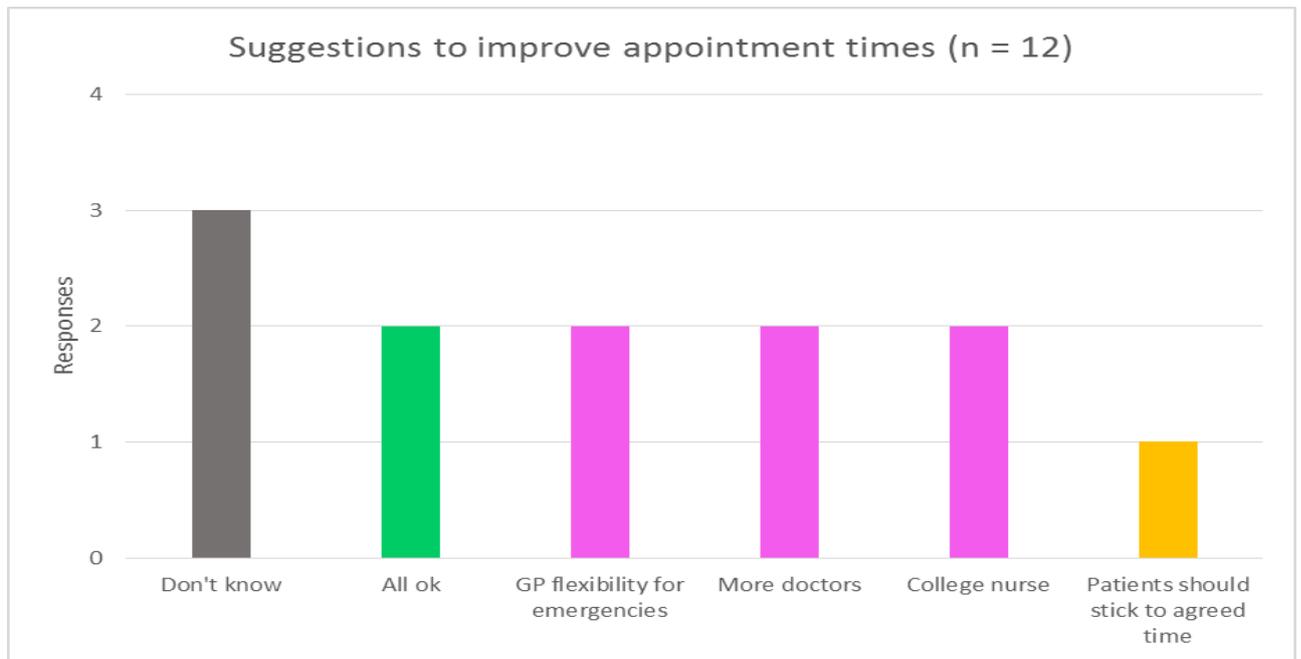
The Comments and Analysis



- We were interested to find out how long people are currently waiting to access services.
- Experiences varied. Some were able to get an appointment same day and others within the week, others did face a wait of a week or more.
- General comment was also gathered which suggested waiting times could be 'long' or 'variable'.
- Others simply did not know the times they would be expected to wait suggesting that they either do not access mainstream GP services or do not make the appointments themselves.



- We also asked respondents about the times they waited in the surgery when accessing services. Most of the respondents took this to mean visits to their GP.
- Whilst respondents did get seen within ten minutes wait, others mentioned general lateness, and waits of twenty or thirty minutes.
- A follow up question was used to elucidate what would be ideal in terms of appointment waiting times. All response expected an appointment within the week with the most common response being within the 1-3 day period.



- Young people also offered their own suggestions on what could be done to achieve shorter wait times; see the accompanying graph (above).
- Whilst some did not know, or thought the services were already ok, possible remedies centred on greater flexibility and provision of more health professionals.
- There was also one response stating patients themselves should stick to the appointment given - not waste time.

'It depends on what it is. It could be that afternoon or up to a week to see my GP; it depends on the scenario.'

'About a week to see the GP. That's too long if you aren't well but it's not an emergency.'

'I never go anywhere else (apart from The Parallel so I don't know.'

'We wait a long time at the GP to be seen; it's better here.'

'Paramedics could be used in GP surgeries either as a base between call outs and they could see patients or just doing a clinical day there every so often seeing patients who say it's an emergency.'

'GPs should have separate clinics for emergencies or another session for the next day.'

'More doctors would get more people seen.'

'The college nurse could do more; they won't let you take a tablet in college; a friend had a headache and they wouldn't let them take a painkiller in college.'

'If people stuck to their appointment times and the time allocated to them things would run better.'

Conclusions

In this engagement young people were experiencing variable waiting times when seeing mainstream medical practitioners. 'Mainstream' was most often taken to mean a GP.

While some were able to see a specialist at short notice, many were waiting for one week or more. Some were unsure how long they would need to wait.

When at appointments waiting times could be between 10 minutes and half an hour. In addition general lateness at GPs was mentioned.

When suggesting improvements many said things were ok already. However, greater GP flexibility, increased numbers of doctors, and improved college nursing, were mentioned as solutions to current problems.

Young people wished appointments to be available within 1-3 days.