Engagement Report: Public Perceptions and Experiences of GP Surgeries in Haverhill
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1.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1.1 Healthwatch Suffolk would like to acknowledge the support that was provided by local organisations in and around Haverhill. Over fifty local organisations helped us to complete this very important piece of work, by displaying hard copies of our survey, disseminating our survey and actively encouraging members of the public to fill in our survey.

1.2 We received 627 responses to our survey about patient experiences of using GP Surgeries in Haverhill. This is the highest number of responses that Healthwatch Suffolk have ever received in response to a targeted engagement project.

1.3 Finally, we would like to thank every person who took the time to respond to our survey about GP Surgeries in Haverhill. We value your feedback and appreciate you sharing your views and experiences with us.
2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 We have been working to find out about patient experience of using GP Surgeries in Haverhill, in response to the public feedback that we received via the town council and in response to an invitation to work with GP Practices in Haverhill.

2.2 GP practices already carry out local satisfaction surveys. It was recognised that additional research insight and perception of quality from other independent sources would support local service improvement.

2.3 The aim of this project was to analyse experience of GP access in Haverhill and find out if the quality of service and responsiveness in Haverhill is of an acceptable standard.

2.4 The outcome of this report will be used to underpin service improvement activities in Haverhill and other relevant service development in Suffolk, such as the Health and Care Review. Findings from this report will be fed into the consultation that is currently running to inform the review of Health and Care Services in Suffolk. They will have implications for both the Urgent Care and Health and Independence work streams. Particularly as the proposed new model places a greater emphasis on the role of the GP.
3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 GP Surgeries have recently received significant press attention related to the publication of national GP satisfaction results.

3.2 Healthwatch Suffolk attended the Haverhill Town Council meeting in December 2013, and concerns about GP access time were raised by local Councillors. In January 2014 GP Practices in Haverhill contacted Healthwatch Suffolk and invited us to work with them to gather ‘evidence’ and assess the patient experience of GP services in Haverhill.

3.3 Healthwatch Suffolk’s Researcher met with the Practice Managers at GP Surgeries in Haverhill. As a result of this meeting, Healthwatch developed a proposal for a project that aimed to explore patient experience of using GP Surgeries in Haverhill.

3.4 Healthwatch and the Practice Manager designed a survey that aimed to assess patient experience of using GP Surgeries in Haverhill.

3.5 Healthwatch and the Practice Manager agreed that they should aim to receive responses from members of the public who used one of the three GP Surgeries in Haverhill;

- Dr Selby’s and Partner’s at Christmas Maltings Surgery
- Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery
- Stourview Medical Centre

3.6 In May 2014 a decision was made by NHS England (the service commissioners) to merge two GP Surgeries in Haverhill, Stourview Medical Centre and Dr Selby’s and Partner’s at Christmas Maltings Surgery. This led to an extension of Healthwatch’s original survey, so that Healthwatch could find out what people thought about the merger.

GP Services in Haverhill

3.7 The figures used to calculate the population of Haverhill were taken from the 2011 Census. These figures indicate that the total population of Haverhill in 2011 was 27,041, with an almost even split between males and females (13,474 males and 13,567 females).
3.8 The majority of people in Haverhill (53%) are in the working age group, 25-64 years. 27% are aged under 16, and 13% are aged over 65 years. Compared to the district, county and country, this is a younger population.

3.9 The vast majority of the population are of white ethnicity (96%), while the next largest ethnic groups are Asian (2%) and Mixed (1%). This is quite similar to the district and county, but a more predominantly white community than for England as a whole.

3.10 The main religion in Haverhill is Christianity, with 57% declaring this as their faith, while less than 1% follow each of the other major religions. The second largest proportion (35%) has no religion. This is similar to the district and county, but with a noticeably lower proportion of Muslim and Hindu followers than for England.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Population</th>
<th>Practice Population Number</th>
<th>Practice Population Percentage</th>
<th>Respondents Number</th>
<th>Respondents Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Christmas Maltings and Clements Practice</td>
<td>17,223</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>310 (50%)</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Maltings Surgery (Dr Selby’s)</td>
<td>10,106</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>209 (33%)</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stourview Medical Centre</td>
<td>3,408</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>94 (15%)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>21 (3%)</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30,737</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. GP Surgeries in Haverhill
4.0 METHODOLOGY

Preparation

4.1 The approach was developed jointly by Healthwatch Suffolk and GP surgeries in Haverhill.

4.2 It consists of three components:
   - Questionnaire survey
   - A follow-up survey
   - A Focus Group

4.3 The survey (see appendix 1) was designed by Healthwatch Suffolk in collaboration with Practice Managers from the GP Surgeries in Haverhill. It sought to obtain both qualitative (comments on the service) and quantitative (numerical) data.

4.4 The survey was created and uploaded to www.surveymonkey.com, which is an online survey creation service. It allows Healthwatch Suffolk to gather responses with one URL by including a link on emails, websites, Twitter and Facebook. Hard copies of the questionnaire were also made available on request from Healthwatch Suffolk.

4.5 3,000 surveys were printed by Healthwatch Suffolk. These were distributed by the Healthwatch Suffolk Community Development team to local organisations, volunteers and members of the public. (Please see appendix 4 for the full dissemination record).

4.6 The survey was also circulated by the Healthwatch Suffolk Information Team. More detail can be found in the Dissemination section.

4.7 This research project adopted a mixed methodology approach. Phase 1 was a survey; which consisted of 21 closed questions (quantitative) and 4 open-ended (qualitative) questions, see Appendix 1.

4.8 Phase 1 also included a follow-up survey that asked members of the public to share their views about the Merge between Dr Selby’s GP Surgery and Stourview Medical Practice.

4.9 Phase 2 consisted of a Focus Group, which aimed collect qualitative (in-depth experiences) data.
4.10 The questions within the survey aimed to explore the following themes;

- Satisfaction
- Waiting times (in surgery)
- Availability of appointments
- Appointment booking process
- Confidence in service
- Improvements (Time and Quality)
- Surgery merge

4.11 The focus group aimed to explore people's experiences of accessing GP appointments at different GP Surgeries (Dr Selby’s & Partners at Christmas Maltings Surgery, Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery and Stourview Medical Centre), in more depth.

Dissemination

4.12 165 surveys were disseminated (by post or by email) to Healthwatch Suffolk’s members and friends. The survey was only sent to Members and Friends that self-identified as living in Haverhill (provided a CB9 postcode on their registration form).

4.13 150 surveys were disseminated via the Researcher and the Community Development Team at the Healthwatch Suffolk stand at Haverhill Town Market.

4.14 The remaining surveys were (2635) were disseminated with the help of local organisations in Haverhill. The full dissemination list can be found in Appendix 2. The organisations included;

- Schools
- Health Services
  - The Health Centre
  - Children’s Centre
  - Dentists
- Local businesses
  - Retail
  - Local businesses
  - Hospitality
  - Manufacturing
- Local leisure facilities (e.g. the leisure centre)
4.15 The survey was also circulated by the Healthwatch Suffolk Information Team in the following ways:

- A launch press release issued to Haverhill Weekly
- A launch press release issues to the West Suffolk Hospital’s staff greensheet
- An article in the Healthwatch Suffolk quarterly newsletter issued to Friends and Members.
- Repeated articles in Healthwatch Suffolk electronic fortnightly updates.
- Regular social media updates on Facebook and Twitter.
- Front page feature on the Healthwatch Suffolk website including a banner animation with supporting updates on the news, consultation and surveys page.
4.0 RESPONDENTS

5.1 627 people responded to the survey, 2.3% of the population of Haverhill.

5.2 As 3000 surveys were disseminated, Healthwatch calculated a response rate of 21%. Often researchers predict an expected response rate of 10%, which can be very difficult to achieve. Considering the response rate for this project doubled the expected 10%, Healthwatch would like to acknowledge and thank all local organisations and members of the public who helped to disseminate Healthwatch’s questionnaire, and encouraged members of the public to take part.

5.3 Healthwatch Suffolk’s Researcher used a Sample Size Calculator called ‘The Raosoft Calculator’ ([http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html](http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html)) which recommended a minimum sample size of 379 responses. This means that Healthwatch needed to receive at least 379 questionnaire responses in order to confidently claim that the sample is likely to be representative of the population of Haverhill. As Healthwatch received 248 responses more than the minimum amount, Healthwatch are confident that responses are likely to provide an accurate picture of the population of Haverhill’s experience of using GP Surgeries in Haverhill.

5.4 When you sample a survey of the population, you do not know that the views expressed by your sample, are an accurate representation of the views that belong to the entire population. However Healthwatch have calculated that we can be 95% sure that the responses are representative of the entire population of Haverhill.

5.5 As Haverhill has a population of approximately 27,000, Healthwatch adopted a resourceful methodology which welded representative findings. The findings from the sample (627) are likely to be a representative reflection of the views experiences of the population of Haverhill, however, Healthwatch do acknowledge that experiences and opinions are often a result of personal experience. Therefore one should consider this when reading the findings of this report.

5.6 It should be acknowledged that respondents self-identified as being willing to take part in the survey. Therefore, respondents may present with a self-selection bias.
Demographics

5.7 613 (98%) respondents provided the name of their GP Surgery, and 14 (2%) respondents skipped this question. Therefore it is unknown which GP Surgery 2% of respondents are registered with.

5.8 Out of all 627 respondents, the majority (51%) were registered with The Christmas Maltings and Clements Practice. Over a third (34%) of respondents were registered with Christmas Maltings Surgery, and less than a quarter (15%) of respondents were registered at Stourview Medical Centre, see Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Pie Chart - Name of GP Surgery](image)

5.9 The number of respondents from each GP Surgery proportionately represents the practice population of each GP Surgery. Christmas Maltings and Clements Practice have the largest population (17,223) and Stourview Medical Centres have the smaller practice population (3,408), see Figure 2. Healthwatch have calculated figures using data from the 2011 Census.
Gender

5.10 446 (71%) respondents provided their gender and 181 (29%) respondents skipped this question.

5.11 Of the 446 respondents who provided their gender, 335 (75%) respondents self-identified as female, 108 (24%) respondents self-identified as male, 1 (0.2%) respondent self-identified as Transgender and 2 respondents (0.5%) stated that they would rather not say, see Figure 3.

5.12 Respondents represented 2.5% of all females in Haverhill and 0.8% of males in Haverhill.
Age

5.13 444 (71%) respondents provided their age group but 183 (29%) respondents skipped this question, therefore 29% of respondents’ age group is unknown.

5.14 22 (5%) respondents reported that they were aged under 20, 80 (18%) respondents stated that they were aged between 21-40. The majority of respondents (73%) indicated that they were aged between 41 and 80 years of age. 158 (36%) stated that they were aged between 41-60 and 163 (37%) respondents stated that they were aged between 61-80. 21 respondents (5%) stated that they were over 80 years of age, see Figure 4.

![Age Graph](image)

Figure 4. Age of respondents

5.15 The majority of people living in Haverhill (53%) are classed as being part of the ‘working age group’ (25-64 years). Importantly, the majority of people that replied to our survey stated that they belonged to this age group.

Sexual Orientation

5.16 346 (55%) provided their sexual orientation and 281 (45%) skipped this question, therefore 45% of respondent’s sexual orientation is unknown.
5.17 320 (92%) respondents reported that they were heterosexual, 5 (1%) respondents reported that they were LGB, 6 (1%) respondents stated ‘other’, and 15 (4%) respondents stated that they would rather not say, see Figure 5.

Figure 5. Sexual Orientation of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would rather not say</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.18 447 (71%) respondents answered this question and 180 (29%) respondents skipped this question, therefore 29% of respondent’s ethnicity is unknown.

5.19 The majority of respondents (432, 97%) stated their ethnicity as White, which represents the population of Haverhill (96% are of White ethnicity). 408 (94%) respondents stated that they were White British, 9 (2%) respondents stated that they were White Irish, 3 (1%) respondents stated that they were Gypsy or Irish Traveller, 3 (1%) respondents stated that they were Polish, and 8 (2%) respondents stated that they were of other white background.

5.20 The next largest group of respondents were of Asian ethnicity, which is representative of the population of Haverhill as the second largest ethnic group in Haverhill is people who identify as Asian. (8 (1%) respondents stated their ethnicity as Asian or Asian Bangladeshi; 2 Indian, 1 Pakistani, 5 ‘Other Asian background’.

5.21 2 (<1%) respondents stated their ethnicity as other mixed background. And 7 (1%) respondents stated their ethnicity as other ethnic group.
Chinese and 1 ‘other’. 5 (1%) respondents stated that they would rather not say, see Figure 6.

![Figure 6. Ethnicity](image)

**Time registered at GP Surgery (Q1)**

618 (99%) respondents indicated how long they had been registered at their GP Surgery. The majority (73%) of respondents had been registered with their GP Surgery for longer than 10 years, see Figure 7.

![Figure 7. Time Registered at GP Surgery](image)
5.23 The majority of respondents have been registered at their surgery for longer than 10 years. Stourview has a higher number of patients who have registered within the last 0-3 years (33%), compared to Christmas Maltings (5%) and Clements (7%).

![Time Registered at GP Surgery](image)

**Figure 8. Time Registered at each different GP Surgery**

**Recent use of services - Booking a routine appointment**

5.24 Respondents were asked to record when they had last tried to book a routine appointment at their GP Surgery. Responses are analysed as a sum of responses, and then they are categorised by GP Surgery.

**All respondents**

5.25 The majority (69%) of all respondents had tried to book an appointment within the last 4 months, therefore it is important to acknowledge that respondents’ experiences are likely to represent GP surgeries as they are currently operating.

5.26 234 respondents (40%) stated that they had tried to book a routine appointment within the last 1 month, 168 (29%) stated between 1-4 months ago, 65 (11%) respondents stated 5-8 months ago, 45 (8%) respondents stated 9-12 months ago and 55 (10%) respondents stated longer than 12
months ago. Only 2 (<1%) respondents stated that they had never tried to book a routine appointment.

**Stourview Medical Centre**

5.27 Of the 94 respondents who stated that they were registered at Stourview Medical Centre, 89 answered this question, 5 skipped it. The majority of respondents (68%) stated that they had tried to book a routine appointment at Stourview Medical Centre within the last 4 months.

5.28 34 respondents (38%) stated that they had tried to book a routine appointment less than 1 month ago, 27 respondents (30%) stated between 1-4 months ago, 12 respondents (14%) stated between 5-8 months ago, 8 respondents (9%) stated between 9-12 months ago, 6 respondents (7%) stated more than 12 months ago. Two respondents (2%) stated ‘other’.

**Christmas Maltings (Dr Selby’s)**

5.29 Of the 209 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings, 188 answered this question, 21 skipped it. The majority of respondents (65%) stated that they had tried to book a routine appointment at Christmas Maltings within the last 4 months.

5.30 67 respondents (36%) stated that they had tried to book a routine appointment less than 1 month ago, 54 respondents (29%) stated between 1-4 months ago, 27 respondents (14%) stated 5-8 months ago, 13 respondents (7%) stated 9-12 months ago, 20 respondents (11%) stated more than 12 months ago. One respondent (<1%) stated that they had never tried to book a routine appointment and six respondents (3%) stated ‘other’.

**Christmas Maltings and Clements**

5.31 Of the 310 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements, 294 answered this question, 16 skipped it. The majority of respondents (74%) stated that they had tried to book a routine appointment at Christmas Maltings and Clements within the last 4 months.

5.32 131 respondents (44%) stated that they had tried to book a routine appointment within the last month, 85 respondents (29%) stated that they had tried to book a routine appointment between 1-4 months ago, 25 (9%) stated 5-8 months ago, 22 (7%) stated 9-12 months ago, 27 (9%) stated over
12 months ago. One respondent (<1%) reported that they had never tried to make a routine appointment and four (1%) recorded ‘other’.

![Bar chart showing when respondents last booked a routine appointment](chart.png)

**Figure 9: Routine appointment**

**Recent use of services - Booking an urgent appointment**

5.33 Respondents were asked to state when they had last tried to book an urgent appointment at their GP Surgery.

**All respondents**

5.34 Out of all 627 respondents, 577 respondents answered this question, 50 skipped it. The majority (63%) of all respondents had tried to book an urgent appointment within the last 4 months. Therefore it is important to acknowledge that unless respondents’ experiences are likely to represent GP surgeries as they are currently operating.

5.35 194 respondents (34%) stated that they had tried to book an urgent appointment within the last month, 164 (29%) respondents stated 1-4 months ago, 56 (10%) respondents stated 5-8 months ago, 40 (7%) respondents stated 9-12 months ago and 103 (18%) stated longer than 12 months ago. 9 (2%) respondents stated that they had never tried to book an urgent appointment.

**Stourview Medical Centre**

5.36 Of the 94 respondents who stated that they were registered at Stourview Medical Centre, 90 answered this question, 4 skipped it. The majority (62%)
stated that they tried to book an urgent appointment within the past 4 months.

5.37 28 (31%) respondents stated within the past month, 28 (31%) respondents stated 1-4 months ago, 10 (11%) respondents stated 5-8 months ago, 5 (6%) respondents stated 9-12 months ago and 12 (13%) respondents stated more than 12 months ago. 5 (6%) respondents stated that they never had tried to book an urgent appointment at Stourview Medical Centre. Two respondents (2%) stated ‘other’.

**Christmas Maltings (Dr Selby’s)**

5.38 Of the 209 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings Surgery, 192 answered this question, 17 skipped it. The majority of these respondents (60%) stated that they had tried to book an urgent appointment within the past 4 months.

5.39 Sixty one respondents (31%) stated that they had tried to book an urgent appointment at Christmas Maltings Surgery within the past month, 53 respondents (28%) stated within 1-4 months ago, 24 respondents (13%) stated 5-8 months ago, 13 respondents (7%) stated 9-12 months ago and 34 respondents (18%) stated more than 12 months ago. Two respondents (1%) stated that they had never tried to book an urgent appointment, 5 respondents (2%) stated ‘other’.

![Figure 10: Urgent appointment](image-url)
Christmas Maltings and Clements

5.40 Of the 310 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements, 284 answered this question, 26 skipped it. The majority of respondents (65%) registered at this surgery stated that they had tried to book an urgent appointment within the last 4 months.

5.41 102 respondents (36%) stated that they had tried to book an urgent appointment within the last month, 81 (28%) respondents stated within the last 1-4 months, 20 (7%) stated 5-8 months ago, 21 (7%) stated 9-12 months ago and 55 (19%) stated longer than 12 months ago. Two respondents (<1%) stated that they had never tried to book an urgent appointment. Three respondents (1%) stated ‘other’.
6.0 SURVEY FINDINGS

6.1 Respondents were asked to provide their views and experiences of using their GP Surgery in regards to the following areas;

- Satisfaction with service
- Availability of appointments
- Confidence in service
- Waiting times (in surgery)
- Appointment booking process
- Cancelling appointments
- Using GP Surgeries
- Alternatives
- Improvements

Satisfaction with service (Q23)

6.2 Respondents were asked how happy they were with the service that was provided by their GP Practice (Q23). 572 respondents provided an answer to this question, 55 respondents skipped this question.

All respondents

6.3 333 (58%) respondents stated that they were happy with the service, but 244 (43%) stated that they weren’t happy with the service provided by their GP practice, see Figure 11.

![Figure 11: Satisfaction with Service](image)
6.4 Responses were categorised by GP Surgery.

**Stourview Medical Centre**

6.5 Out of 94 respondents who stated that they were registered at Stourview Medical Centre, 90 answered this question, 4 skipped it.

6.6 71 respondents (79%) stated that they were happy with the level of service provided by Stourview Medical Centre and 20 respondents (21%) stated that they were not happy with the service.

6.7 It should be acknowledged that in comparison to Christmas Maltings Surgery and Christmas Maltings and Clements, respondents registered at Stourview Medical Centre seemed to be more satisfied with the service that their surgery provides.

**Christmas Maltings Surgery (Dr Selby’s)**

6.8 Out of 209 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings Surgery, 191 answered this question, 18 skipped it.

6.9 114 respondents (60%) stated that they are happy with the level of service provided by their GP Practice. 81 respondents (40%) stated that they are not happy with the service.

**Christmas Maltings and Clements**

6.10 Out of 310 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery, 281 answered this question, 29 skipped it. There was almost an even split between the number of people that stated that they were happy with the service that Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery provided, and the number of people that stated that they weren’t happy.

6.11 In comparison to the other two GP Surgeries in Haverhill, respondents reported the lowest satisfaction level with the service that Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery provide, and the highest level of dissatisfaction. 143 respondents (51%) stated that they were happy with the service, whereas 138 respondents (49%) stated that they were not happy with the service.

6.12 Figure 12 illustrates the level of satisfaction stated by all respondents and respondents by GP Surgery.
Availability of appointments (Q7, Q11, Q21)

Respondents were asked three questions that aimed to explore their views about and experiences of availability of appointments at their GP Surgery. Respondents were asked whether they were able to see a Doctor as quickly as they would like to (Q7), whether they could book an appointment at a suitable time (Q11), and whether they felt confident that they could get an appointment (Q21).

Length of time to see a Doctor (Q7)

All respondents

6.14 609 respondents answered this question, 18 respondents skipped this question. Only 37% agreed that they could get a GP appointment as quickly as they would like, whereas 63% of respondents disagreed, see Figure 13.
6.15 Responses to this question were categorised by GP Surgery.

**Stourview Medical Centre**

6.16 Out of 94 respondents who stated that they were registered at Stourview 91 answered this question, 3 skipped it. Respondents registered at Stourview Medical Centre indicated the highest satisfaction level in regards to being able to see a Doctor as quickly as they would like to.

6.17 14 respondents (15%) reported that they ‘strongly agreed’ that they could see a Doctor as quickly as they would like to. 28 respondents (31%) reported that they ‘agreed’ and 29 respondents (32%) stated that they thought the wait was ‘satisfactory’. 13 respondents (14%) disagreed that they could see a Doctor as quickly as they would like to, and 7 respondents (8%) stated that they ‘strongly disagreed’.

**Dr Selby’s Christmas Maltings Surgery**

6.18 Out of 209 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings Surgery 205 answered this question, 5 skipped it. Only 10 respondents (5%) selected ‘strongly agree’ with reference to the fact that they could be seen as quickly as they would like to. 26 respondents (13%) selected ‘agree’, 34 respondents (17%) selected ‘satisfactory’, 54 respondents (26%) selected ‘disagree’ and 83 respondents (41%) selected ‘strongly disagree’.

![Figure 14: Availability of appointments](image-url)

Response distribution for the question: "When booking an appointment to see a GP, I feel like I am able to see a Doctor as quickly as I would like to."
Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery

6.19 Out of 310 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements, 303 answered this question, 7 skipped it. Respondents who were registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements indicated the lowest level of satisfaction with regard to being able to see a Doctor as quickly as they would like to, see Figure 14.

6.20 Only 43 respondents (14%) agreed that they could get to see a Doctor as quickly as they would like to. 41 respondents (14%) stated ‘satisfactory’, whereas 220 respondents (72%) disagreed that they could see a Doctor as quickly as they would like to.

Getting an appointment at a suitable time (Q11)

6.21 Respondents were asked whether they could normally get a GP appointment at a time that suited them.

All respondents

6.22 604 respondents provided an answer to this question, 23 skipped. 280 (46%) said they could get an appointment at a time that suits them, 331 (54%) said they could not get an appointment at a time that suits them.

Stourview Medical Centre

6.23 Out of 94 respondents who stated that they were registered at Stourview Surgery, 92 answered this question, 2 skipped it. Generally, respondents stated that they could get an appointment at a time that suited them.

6.24 73 (79%) respondents who stated that they were registered at Stourview Surgery reported that they could normally get an appointment at a time that suited them, whereas only 22 (24%) respondents said that they could not normally get an appointment at a time that suited them.

6.25 In comparison to the other GP Surgeries in Haverhill, patients registered at Stourview were most likely to state that they could get an appointment.
Dr Selby’s Christmas Maltings

6.26 Out of 209 respondents who stated that they were registered at Clements Surgery, 201 answered this question, 8 skipped it. Generally, respondents stated that they could not get an appointment at a time that suited them.

6.27 75 respondents (37%) stated that they could normally get an appointment at a time that suited time, whereas 128 respondents (64%) stated that they could not get an appointment at a time that suited them.

6.28 In comparison to the other GP Surgeries in Haverhill, patients registered at Christmas Maltings Surgery were more likely to state that they could not get an appointment.

![Graph: Can you normally get an appointment at a time that suits you?](image)

**Figure 15: Suitability of a GP appointment**

Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery

6.29 Out of 310 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery, 301 answered this question, 9 skipped it. Most respondents stated that they could not get an appointment at a time that suited them.

6.30 177 respondents (59%) stated that they could not normally get an appointment at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery at a time that suited them. Only 126 respondents (42%) stated that they could normally get an appointment at a time that suited them.

Confidence of getting an appointment (Q21)
6.31 Respondents were asked to state whether they felt confident that they could get an appointment when they needed one (Q21).

All respondents

6.32 Out of all 627 respondents, 609 respondents answered this question, 18 skipped it.

6.33 Only 154 respondents (25%) felt confident that they could not get an appointment when they needed one, whereas 419 (69%) of respondents did not feel confident that they could get an appointment when they needed one. 42 respondents (7%) stated that they didn’t know, see Figure 16.

![Confidence of getting an appointment](image)

Figure 16: Confidence of getting an appointment

Stourview Medical Centre

6.34 Out of 94 respondents who stated that they were registered at Stourview Medical Centre, 92 answered this question, 2 skipped it.

6.35 In comparison to the other two GP Surgeries in Haverhill, respondents who were registered at Stourview Medical Centre felt the most confident about being able to get an appointment when they needed one. 46 (50%) felt confident that they could
37 (40%) stated that they were not confident that they could get an appointment when they needed one. 46 (50%) stated that they were confident that they could get an appointment when they needed one, and 11 (10%) stated ‘I don’t know’.

**Dr Selby’s Christmas Maltings Surgery**

Out of 209 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings, 203 answered this question, 6 skipped it. Generally, respondents were not confident that they could get an appointment.

143 (70%) stated that they were not confident that they could get an appointment when they needed one. 46 (23%) stated that they were confident that they could get an appointment when they needed one, and 18 (9%) stated ‘I don’t know’.

**Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery**

Out of 310 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas and Clements, 304 answered this question, 6 skipped it.

Generally, respondents were not confident that they could get an appointment at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery, and in comparison to the other two GP surgeries in Haverhill, respondents who were registered at Christmas and Clements felt the least confident about being able to get an appointment when they needed one.

Only 58 (19%) stated that they felt confident about getting an appointment when they needed one, 234 (77%) stated that they did not feel confident about getting an appointment when they needed one, and 12 (4%) stated ‘I don’t know’.

**Waiting times (Q10)**

Respondents were asked to state whether they experienced a delay because they wanted to see a specific doctor (Q10).

All respondents

592 answered this question and 35 skipped this question. 510 (86%) indicated that it had caused them a delay, whereas 84 (14%) indicated that it had not caused them a delay, see Figure 17.
Stourview Medical Centre

6.44 Out of 94 respondents who stated that they were registered at Stourview Medical Practice, 91 answered this question, 3 people skipped it. 50 (55%) stated that it did cause a delay. 41 (45%) stated that it did not cause a delay.

Christmas Maltings

6.45 Out of 209 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings, 194 answered, 16 skipped. 148 (92%) yes it caused a delay, 16 (8%) no it did not cause a delay.

[Figure 17: Delay caused by seeing a specific Doctor]

Christmas Maltings and Clements

6.46 Out of 310 registered at Christmas and Clements, 296 answered, 14 skipped. 272 respondents (92%) stated that wanting to see a specific doctor caused a delay in getting an appointment. 26 respondents (9%) stated that it did not cause a delay.

Booking appointments (Q8, Q9)
Respondents were asked which method of booking an appointment was easier out of calling the surgery or walking in to the surgery in person (Q8), and they were asked for why they thought they might have difficulty booking appointments (Q9).

**Method of Booking an appointment**

Respondents were asked whether it was easier to get an appointment by calling the surgery, walking in to the surgery or whether there was no difference (Q8).

All Respondents

Out of 627 respondents 610 answered this question, 17 skipped it. 78 respondents (13%) reported that they thought it was easier to call their surgery and book an appointment, 131 respondents (21%) reported that they thought it was easier to walk in in person and book an appointment, whereas 410 respondents (67%) stated that they thought there was no difference, see Figure 18.

![Figure 18: Ease of making a GP Appointment](image)

Out of 94 respondents who stated that they were registered at Stourview Medical Practice, 92 answered this question, 2 people skipped it.
6.51 14 respondents (15%) registered at Stourview stated that it was easier to get an appointment by walking in to the surgery, 19 respondents (21%) registered at Stourview stated that it was easier to get an appointment by calling the surgery and 60 respondents (65%) registered at Stourview stated that there was no difference.

Christmas Maltings Surgery

6.52 Out of 209 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings, 202 answered this question, 7 people skipped it.

6.53 50 respondents (25%) registered at Christmas Maltings Surgery stated that it was easier to get an appointment by walking in to the surgery. 19 respondents (9%) registered at Christmas Maltings Surgery stated that it was easier to get an appointment by calling the surgery. 137 respondents (68%) registered at Christmas Maltings Surgery stated that there was no difference.

Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery

6.54 Out of 310 respondents who stated that they were registered at Clements, 307 answered this question, 3 people skipped it.

6.55 64 respondents (21%) registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery stated that it was easier to get an appointment by walking in to the surgery, 38 respondents (12%) stated that it was easier to get an appointment by calling the surgery. The majority of respondents (68%) stated that there was no difference between calling or walking in to the surgery. 209 respondents stated this.

Reasons for difficulty of booking an appointment

6.56 Respondents were asked for the reasons why they thought it was difficult to book an appointment (Q9). Themes were generally consistent between respondents registered at each GP Surgery. The top themes that arose from the comments that respondents provided;

- Lack of Doctors, particularly a lack of full-time Doctors
- Too many patients
- Issues with the booking process
- Not enough appointments
• Receptionists
• Inadequate GP Services in Haverhill

Cancelling appointments

6.57 Respondents were asked about how easy they thought it was to cancel an unwanted GP appointment.

All Respondents

6.58 Overall, the majority of respondents (54%) thought it was easy to cancel an appointment, whereas 32% did not think it was easy to cancel an appointment, 3% weren’t sure and the rest of respondents (11%) skipped this question, see Figure 19.

![Figure 19: Ease of cancelling a GP Appointment](image)

Stourview Medical Centre

6.59 Out of 94 respondents registered at Stourview Medical Centre, 79 answered this question, 15 skipped it. In comparison to Christmas Maltings Surgery and Christmas Maltings and Clements a higher percentage of respondents who were registered at Stourview (72%) stated that it was easy to cancel a GP appointment. 57 respondents selected this option.
**Christmas Maltings Surgery (Dr Selby and Partners)**

6.60 Out of 209 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings Surgery, 181 answered this question, 28 skipped it.

6.61 109 respondents (60%) stated that it was easy to cancel an appointment at Christmas Maltings Surgery, whereas only 5 respondents (3%) stated that it was not easy to cancel an unwanted appointment. 69 respondents (38%) stated that they didn’t know.

**Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery**

6.62 Out of 310 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery, 279 answered this question, 31 skipped it.

6.63 168 respondents (60%) stated that it was easy to cancel an appointment at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery, whereas only 12 respondents (4%) stated that it was not easy to cancel an unwanted appointment. 101 respondents (36%) stated that they didn’t know.

**Using GP Surgeries**

6.64 Respondents were asked how long they wait before they book an appointment (Q12) and whether they considered a GP appointment the preferable solution when feeling unwell (Q20).

**Waiting before booking an appointment**

**All respondents**

6.65 Only 61 respondents (10%) indicated that they wait 0-1 days before booking a GP appointment whereas the majority of respondents indicated that they wait between 1-7 days. 285 (48%) of respondents indicated that they waited 1-3 days and 169 respondents (28%) indicated that they wait 3-7 days. A small proportion, 88 (15%) of respondents indicated that they wait longer than 7 days before they make a GP appointment, see Figure 20.

6.67 Responses were categorised by GP Surgery.
6.68 Out of 94 respondents who stated that they were registered at Stourview Medical Practice, 91 answered this question, 3 people skipped it.

6.69 18 respondents (20%) indicated that they wait 0-1 days, 44 respondents (48%) indicated that they wait 1-3 days, 24 (26%) indicated that they wait 3-7 days, 6 respondents (7%) indicated that they wait longer than 7 days before making a GP appointments. The majority of respondents registered at Stourview Medical Centre indicated that they wait between 1-3 days before booking a GP appointment.

![Figure 20: Length of time before booking a GP appointment](image)

6.70 Out of 209 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery, 197 answered this question, 12 people skipped it. 21 respondents (11%) indicated that they wait 0-1 days, 94 respondents (48%) indicated that they wait 1-3 days, 53 (27%) indicated that they wait 3-7 days, 31 respondents (16%) indicated that they wait longer than 7 days before making a GP appointments. The majority of respondents
registered at Christmas Maltings Surgery indicated that they wait between 1-3 days before booking a GP appointment.

Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery

6.71 Out of 310 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery, 302 answered this question, 8 people skipped it.

6.72 22 respondents (7%) indicated that they wait 0-1 days, 143 respondents (47%) indicated that they wait 1-3 days, 88 (29%) indicated that they wait 3-7 days, 50 respondents (17%) indicated that they wait longer than 7 days before making a GP appointments. The majority of respondents registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery indicated that they wait between 1-3 days before booking a GP appointment.

![Figure 21: Length of time before booking a GP appointment](image)

Preferable solution when feeling unwell

6.73 Respondents were asked to indicate whether a GP appointment was their preferred option when they felt unwell.

All respondents

6.74 607 indicated whether a GP appointment was their preferable solution when feeling unwell, whereas 20 skipped this question.
477 (79%) indicated that a GP appointment was the preferred option, whereas 77 (13%) indicated that it was not their preferred option, and 58 (10%) indicated that they didn’t know.

**Stourview Medical Centre**

Out of 94 respondents who stated that they were registered at Stourview Medical Practice, 90 answered this question, 4 people skipped it. 63 respondents (70%) stated that it was their preferred option, 18 respondents (20%) stated that it wasn’t their preferred option, and 10 respondents (11%) stated that they didn’t know.

**Dr Selby’s Christmas Maltings Surgery**

Out of 209 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery, 204 answered this question, 5 skipped it. 163 respondents (80%) stated that it was their preferred option, 22 respondents (11%) stated that it wasn’t, and 21 respondents (10%) stated that they didn’t know.

**Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery**

Out of 310 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery, 302 answered this question, 8 skipped it. 244 respondents (81%) stated that it was their preferred option, 35 respondents (12%) stated that it wasn’t, and 25 respondents (8%) stated that they didn’t know.

**Alternative services**

Respondents were asked whether they used alternatives before booking a GP Appointment (Q17), and were asked to tick the alternatives that they used (Q18) and whether they thought Pharmacists were qualified to provide medical advice (Q19).

All respondents

580 responded to Q17, 47 respondents skipped this question. The majority of respondents (84%) said they did use alternative services before booking a GP appointment, whereas 16% said that they did not use alternatives, see Figure 22.
Although only 488 people indicated that they do use alternative services, 494 listed alternative services that they use (Q17). There was only 1% difference between the number of respondents from each GP Surgery who indicated that they used alternatives, Clements (83-85%).

Responses were categorised by GP Surgery.

![Bar Chart]

**Figure 22: Do you use alternatives before booking to see a GP?**

**Stourview Medical Practice**

Out of 94 respondents who stated that they were registered at Stourview Medical Practice, 87 answered this question, 7 skipped it. 74 respondents (85%) stated that they used alternative services before booking a GP appointment, whereas only 13 respondents (15%) indicated that they do not use alternatives services.

**Dr Selby’s Christmas Maltings Surgery**

Out of 209 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings Surgery, 196 answered this question, 13 skipped it. 164 respondents (84%) stated that they do use alternatives services, 34 respondents (17%) stated that they do not use alternatives services.
Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery

6.85 Out of 310 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery, 288 answered this question, 22 skipped it. 243 respondents (84%) stated that they do use alternatives services said yes and 46 respondents (16%) stated that they do not use alternatives services before booking a GP appointment.

Alternative Services

All respondents

6.86 494 provided the alternative services that they use, whereas 133 skipped this question. Pharmacists (75%), and across the counter products from the chemist (59%) were used most regularly. Half (50%) of respondents used medical information from the internet, whereas 34% used advice from friends and family, see Figure 23.

![Image](image.png)

Figure 23: What alternatives do you use? [Q18]

6.87 Responses were categorised by GP Surgery.

Stourview Medical Centre

6.88 Out of 94 respondents who stated that they were registered at Stourview Medical Practice, 71 answered this question, 23 people skipped it.
6.89 The majority, 53 respondents (75%) indicated that they seek advice from their pharmacist. 45 respondents (63%) indicated that they use across the counter products from chemist. 33 respondents (46%) indicated that they use medical information/ advice on internet and 18 respondents (25%) indicated that they use advice from friends and relatives.

Dr Selby’s Christmas Maltings Surgery

6.90 Out of 209 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings Surgery, 168 answered this question, 41 skipped it.

6.91 The majority, 126 respondents (75%) indicated that they seek advice from their pharmacist. 94 respondents (56%) indicated that they use across the counter products from chemist. 77 respondents (46%) indicated that they use medical information/ advice on internet and 51 respondents (30%) indicated that they use advice from friends and relatives.

Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery

6.92 Out of 310 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery, 248 answered this question, 62 skipped it. The majority, 188 respondents (76%) indicated that they seek advice from their pharmacist. 146 respondents (59%) indicated that they use across the counter products from chemist. 133 respondents (54%) indicated that they use medical information/ advice on internet and 94 respondents (38%) indicated that they use advice from friends and relatives.

Pharmacists

6.93 Respondents were asked to record whether they felt that Pharmacists were qualified to offer medical advice.

All respondents

6.94 Out of all 627 respondents, 607 respondents provided a response to this question, 20 respondents skipped it. Just less than half of respondents (49%) thought that pharmacists were qualified to offer medical advice, although almost a third of respondents (29%) reported that they did not think pharmacists were qualified to offer medical advice. Nearly a quarter (24%) of respondents reported that they did not know, see Figure 24. Percentages
may equal more than 100% as the computer software package used (Survey Monkey) has rounded up the percentages.

6.95 Responses were categorised by GP Surgery

![Bar chart](image)

**Figure 24: Pharmacies qualified to provide health advice**

**Stourview Medical Centre**

6.96 Out of 94 respondents who stated that they were registered at Stourview Medical Practice, 90 answered this question, 4 skipped it. 49 respondents (54%) stated that they thought Pharmacists were adequately qualified to advise on illness, 25 respondents (28%) stated that they thought Pharmacists were not adequately qualified to advise on illness, and 17 respondents (19%) stated ‘I don’t know’.

**Dr Selby’s Christmas Maltings Surgery**

6.97 Out of 209 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings Surgery, 203 answered this question, 6 skipped it. 95 respondents (47%) stated that they thought Pharmacists were adequately qualified to advise on illness, 60 respondents (30%) stated that they thought Pharmacists were not adequately qualified to advise on illness, 52 respondents (26%) stated ‘I don’t know’.
Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery

6.98 Out of 310 respondents who stated that they were registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery, 303 answered this question, 7 skipped it. 149 respondents (49%) stated that they thought Pharmacists were adequately qualified to advise on illness, 86 respondents (28%) stated that they thought Pharmacists were not adequately qualified to advise on illness, 72 respondents (24%) stated ‘I don’t know’.

Improvements

6.99 Respondents were asked how they thought GP Surgeries could provide appointments more quickly (Q22), and were invited to provide any other comments about their experiences of using GP Practices in Haverhill (Q24). Themes are summarised in the table below. 164 respondents (38%) reported comments that more Doctors should be employed at the GP Surgeries in Haverhill. 134 respondents (31%) stated that they felt more appointments should be made available at the GP Surgeries in Haverhill. 51 respondents (12%) felt that there were too many patients, and it was commented that this could contribute to the difficulty of trying to obtain a GP appointment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Number of comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Appointments</td>
<td>134 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients</td>
<td>51 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer</td>
<td>50 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>35 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booking</td>
<td>24 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptionists</td>
<td>13 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk-in centre</td>
<td>13 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drs</td>
<td>11 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 days a week</td>
<td>6 (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.0 SURVEY FINDINGS - MERGING GP SURGERIES

7.1 Whilst Healthwatch Suffolk were disseminating surveys that aimed to explore patient experience of using GP Surgeries in Haverhill, NHS England published plans to merge Stourview Medical Centre and Dr Selby’s Christmas Maltings Doctors Surgery.

7.2 Healthwatch acknowledged that the merger was a very important local development. Healthwatch also acknowledged that the merger has the potential to affect patient experience of using GP Surgeries, therefore Healthwatch extended the survey to include questions about the merger.

7.3 The follow-up survey consisted of three open ended questions, inviting respondents to share their views about the merger. The fourth question was a closed question, which asked respondents to indicate whether they would prefer the merged GP Practice to run out of one or two surgeries.

7.4 All respondents to the survey, who provided their email address, were sent the merger questions and invited to provide their views. Additionally, Healthwatch Suffolk’s Community Development Team asked these questions when engaging with people at Haverhill’s event called ‘Picnic in the Park’ in August 2014.

7.5 Overall Healthwatch received 52 responses to the follow-on survey about the merger between Stourview Medical Centre and Dr Selby’s GP Practice.

Demographics

7.6 Of the 52 respondents who replied to the questions about the merging GP practices in Haverhill, 50 indicated which GP Surgery they were registered with. 2 respondents skipped this question.

7.7 The majority of respondents (34, 68%) were registered with Dr Selby’s Christmas Maltings Practice. 14 respondents (28%) GP reported that they were registered with Stourview Medical Practice. Only 3 (6%) respondents indicated that they were registered with the Christmas Maltings and Clements GP Surgery, see Figure 25.
Survey Findings

7.8 Respondents were asked to share their views on the merger. 44 respondents answered this question, and 8 skipped it. There was only a small difference in the number of positive and negative views expressed regarding the merger.

7.9 18 (41%) respondents recorded negative views, whereas 16 (36%) respondents recorded positive views about the merger. 4 (10%) respondents recorded neutral comments and 6 (13%) respondents reported that they were unaware of the merger.

7.10 Of the positive views, respondents expressed thoughts that a merger would mean increased resources, which could mean reduced waiting times. A small number of respondents commented that the merger may be beneficial to all patients, and that it needs to happen.

7.11 Of the negative views, respondents expressed thoughts that the merger was not a good idea as GP Surgeries were already overloaded. Respondents suggested that the merger may lead to longer waiting times for appointments, and the merger may affect the high level of service that the GP services currently offer.

7.12 Respondents were asked to share their concerns about the merger. 46 respondents answered this question and 6 skipped it. 15 (33%) respondents
reported that they had no concerns about the merger, whereas 31 (67%) recorded some concerns.

7.13 One concern that was highlighted a number of times was that the merger may mean less appointments would be available, which might increase waiting times even more than they currently are.

7.14 Another concern was that more patients would increase the demand for appointments, and as a result the merger may make it more difficult to see one’s own Doctor.

7.15 An additional concern was that a larger practice may result in the GP’s and staff losing their ‘personal’ approach to providing care.

7.16 Respondents were asked whether they would prefer the merged practice to run from one site or two sites. 45 respondents provided an answer to this question, 7 respondents skipped this question.

7.17 The majority of respondents (29, 65%) reported that they would prefer the merged practice to run from two sites, whereas a smaller number of respondents (6, 13%) reported that they would prefer the merged practice to run from one site. 10 respondents (22%) indicated that they had no preference, see Figure 26.

![Figure 26: Operation of the merged practice](image-url)
7.18 In summary, respondents provided very mixed views about the merger and there were comments that highlighted lack of awareness and confusion about what the merger would mean for patients, in term of availability of appointments and how it would affect resources.

7.19 Healthwatch acknowledge that comments are based on a small number of people (52), therefore views are unlikely to be representative of the entire populations of each practice.

7.20 Although 52 respondents is a relatively small sample in relation to the entire practice population of each surgery, Healthwatch would like to highlight the importance of the views that have been collected. All views, both support and concerns, are valid and should be considered when reading this report.
8.0 FOCUS GROUP

8.1 Healthwatch’s Researcher facilitated a focus group in July 2014. A focus group refers to a group of people who are invited to meet together to discuss a particular topic.

8.2 All respondents who had completed a survey about GP Surgeries in Haverhill and who had provided further contact details, had the potential to take part in a focus group. As a result, 50 respondents were invited to the focus group at random, via email or telephone call.

8.3 The researcher called or emailed all potential participants, and invited them to take part in a focus group. The researcher explained that the aim of the focus group was to explore their experience of using GP Surgeries in Haverhill, in greater depth.

8.4 10 respondents expressed interest in attending the focus groups, and 6 people attended the focus group.

8.2 The focus group was conducted at the Leisure Centre in Haverhill and lasted for roughly 1.5 hours. Healthwatch’s Researcher obtained relevant permission from all focus group participants and recorded the discussion.

8.3 The focus group followed a semi-structured format. The researcher used prompts to guide the discussion, this guide can be found in Appendix 3.

Summary of discussion

8.4 The audio recording of the focus group discussion was transcribed verbatim, and was analysed by researcher to identify relevant themes.

8.5 Service users reported mixed experiences of using GP Surgeries in Haverhill. The main themes that arose from the discussion were as follows;

- Booking process
- Level of service from staff (GP’s and receptionists)
- Staffing levels (number of GP’s)
- Improvements
- Waiting times for appointments
Summary of comments

8.6 Overall, respondents shared very mixed experiences of using GP Surgeries in Haverhill.

8.7 Whilst one participant reported a very high level of service from the receptionists and GP’s at Stourview Medical Centre, another participant shared experiences of poor service from the receptionists and GP’s at Stourview.

8.8 Overall, all respondents shared experiences of waiting longer than 1-2 weeks for an appointment, and all respondents except 1 expressed views that something should be done to improve the patient experience that GP Surgeries in Haverhill were currently offering.

8.9 Respondents shared their experiences in-depth, and all respondents felt that more could be done to improve current waiting times for appointments.

8.10 All respondents agreed that the process of booking appointments could be simplified. There were mixed views about the benefit of telephone triage systems. Two respondents felt that patients benefited from having their GP call them, whereas others felt that this was just an additional barrier to getting a GP appointment.
9.0 KEY MESSAGES AND FINDINGS

Key statistics

9.1 333 respondents (59%) stated that they were happy with the service provided by their GP Surgery.

9.2 244 (43%) stated that they were not happy with the service that was provided by their GP Surgery.

9.3 477 respondents (79%) consider a GP appointment to be the preferable option when they are feeling unwell.

9.4 331 respondents (55%) could not normally get an appointment at a time that suited them.

9.5 419 respondents (69%) lacked confidence that they could get a GP appointment when they needed one.

9.6 340 respondents (62%) felt it was easy to cancel an unwanted GP appointment at their GP Practice.

9.7 488 respondents (84%) used alternative services before they tried to book a GP appointment.

Key findings

9.8 Respondents called for an investment in Primary Care Services in Haverhill.

9.9 Respondents called for more appointments to be available.

9.10 Respondents called for an easier booking system to use when trying to book a GP appointment.

9.11 Respondents called for extended opening hours (7 day week).

9.12 Respondents called for more Doctors and for more GP Surgeries to be available when trying to book a GP appointment.
10.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 It is important to acknowledge that findings from this project reflect findings from the National GP Patient Surveys into patient experience of using GP Surgeries across the country.

10.2 In light of findings from the survey, follow-up survey about the merger between Dr Selby’s Christmas Maltings Surgery and Stourview Medical Centre, and the findings from the focus group, respondents have called for a bigger investment in Primary Care Services in Haverhill. In light of the current review of GP Contracts in Suffolk, it will be important to ensure positive patient experiences and that resources available are not reduced as a result.

10.3 Findings from this piece of work complement the work that is currently being conducted within the Health and Care Review in Suffolk. If members of the public are to be supported to remain healthy and independent and avoid unnecessary use of emergency care services, it is important for them to be able to access appropriate services within the community such as GP’s.

10.4 Considering that the majority of respondents usually seek advice from alternative services before they book a GP appointment, it is important to make sure that there are a variety of high quality alternative services available in the community for people to access.

10.5 One of the priorities of the Health and Care Review is to help people to maintain their independence within the community. It is evident from the findings that many patients who tried to book a GP appointment had felt unwell for a few days and had already tried to access alternative services. This highlights the importance of ensuring that GP services are available and accessible.

10.6 Healthwatch Suffolk recommend that the GP Surgeries in Haverhill review their current systems so that patients are not waiting for unacceptable amounts of time before they can book a GP appointment. 62% of respondents reported that they were not satisfied with the length of time it took to get an appointment, 331 (54%) said they could not get an appointment at a time that suits them, and 69% of respondents did not feel confident that they could get an appointment when they needed one. Healthwatch Suffolk would recommend that GP Surgeries take appropriate
action to try and improve patients’ confidence in being able to get an appointment when they need one.

10.7 Healthwatch Suffolk call for GP Surgeries in Haverhill to review their processes of booking appointments. Respondents felt that they should be able to book an appointment when they needed one, and expressed frustration with the current booking system.

10.8 Healthwatch Suffolk acknowledge that GP Surgeries provide services to a high volume of patients, however we have received numerous comments about levels of poor service provided from receptionists whereas some patients reported very positive experiences. 243 respondents (43%) stated that they weren’t happy with the service provided by their GP practice. It will be important for GP Practices to review the current support and/or training programmes for receptionists and adapt/improve as necessary.

10.9 Although the majority of respondents who use GP Surgeries in Haverhill stated that they felt it was easy to cancel a GP appointment, it is important to acknowledge that some respondents felt it was difficult to cancel a GP appointment. High rates of Did Not Attends (DNAs) are often flagged up by local GP Practices as a waste of resources. By improving the cancellation process for all patients, this has the potential to reduce the number of DNAs that each practice experiences which in turn could increase the number of appointments that are available for those who need it.

10.10 Healthwatch Suffolk recommend that the Dr Selby and Partners Christmas Maltings Surgery and Stourview Medical Practice ensure that the merger of the two surgeries is well communicated to all patients registered at the surgeries. Although respondents seemed to support the merger, many respondents assumed that a merger between Stourview Medical Centre and Christmas Maltings Surgery would increase resources for patients. Healthwatch Suffolk recommend that the GP Surgeries in Haverhill clarify this with patients.

10.11 The findings suggest that patients registered at Stourview Medical Centre are more satisfied than patients registered at Christmas Maltings Surgery and patients registered at Christmas Maltings and Clements Surgery. Although this was a targeted engagement event, it must be acknowledged that further consultation will be required to explore why there is such a difference of satisfaction between different GP Surgeries. A more in depth and detailed analysis will enable all surgeries to share and adopt the best practices.
10.12 Healthwatch Suffolk look forward to working with GP Surgeries in Haverhill and the service commissioner to consider the findings and implement the proposed changes as appropriate.
11.0 APPENDICES

| APPENDIX 1 | Cover Letter + Surveys | APPENDIX 1 - GP HAVENHILL SURVEY.docx |
| APPENDIX 2 | Merger Survey | APPENDIX 2 - MERGER QUESTIONS.docx |
| APPENDIX 3 | Focus Group Guide | APPENDIX 3 - FOCUS GROUP GUIDE.docx |
| APPENDIX 4 | Dissemination List | APPENDIX 4 - DISSEMINATION LIST.docx |