

## Repeat Prescription Ordering Services – survey analysis

On the **25 February 2016**, a survey was launched via Birmingham CrossCity Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) Survey Monkey account (an online, cloud-based, survey development website) to ascertain how people within our catchment area accessed repeat prescription ordering services.

In order to gather a wide range of opinions, the survey was sent to members of Birmingham CrossCity CCG's Peoples' Health Panel<sup>1</sup>. The Peoples' Health Panel is demographically representative and has been recruited to ensure that individuals from various protected characteristic groups are able to take part in the CCG's public engagement. In addition, equalities data was requested from respondents as part of the survey.

The survey was closed on the **25 March 2016**.

In total **91** people have responded to the survey and a report has been prepared which analyse each question posed in the questionnaire.

Data is both quantitative (with specific questions and answers) and qualitative (where respondents were able to provide further information in free text boxes).

Respondents were able to skip questions if they so desired; as a result the number of respondents to each question can vary, however this has been highlighted in the analysis of each question.

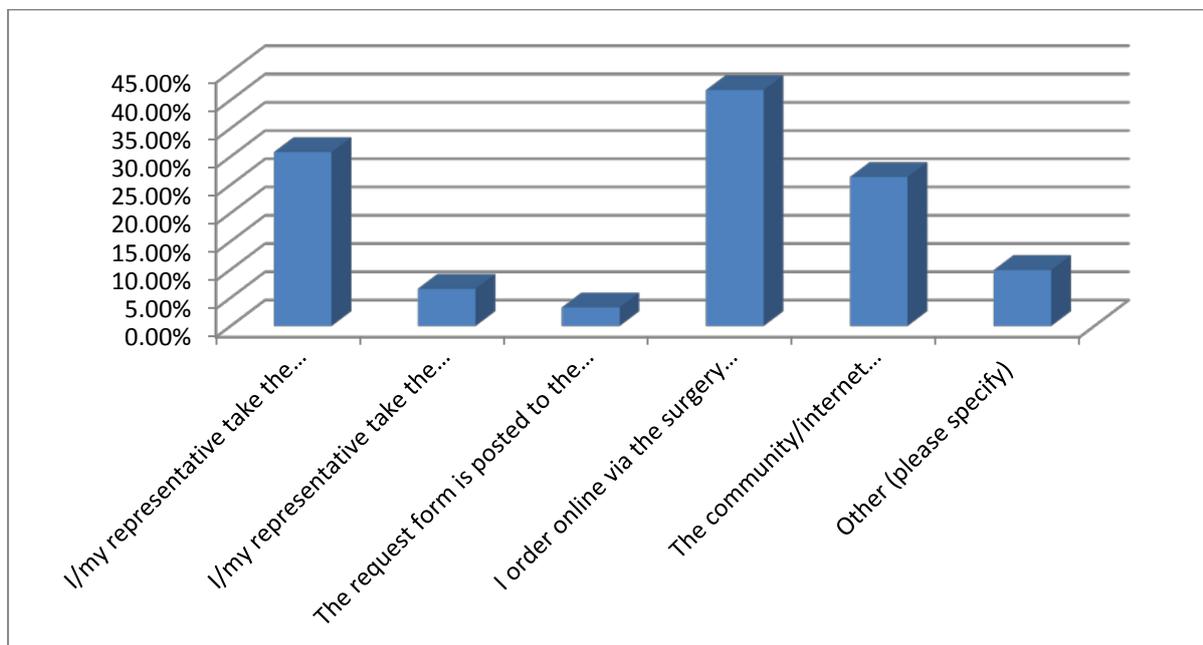
Where qualitative data has been recorded this has been reported in verbatim. Any personal information has been redacted.

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<sup>1</sup> A panel of over 2500 members of the public who have signed up to receive information and updates from Birmingham CrossCity CCG.

## Analysis:

**Q1: How do you order your repeat prescription medicines? (Tick all that apply).**



Response	Percentage
I/my representative take the prescription request form into the GP surgery	30.77%
I/my representative take the prescription request form into the community pharmacy and they send it to my GP surgery	6.59%
The request form is posted to the GP surgery	3.30%
I order online via the surgery website	41.76%
The community/internet pharmacy orders the prescription on my behalf.	26.37%
Other (please specify)	9.89%

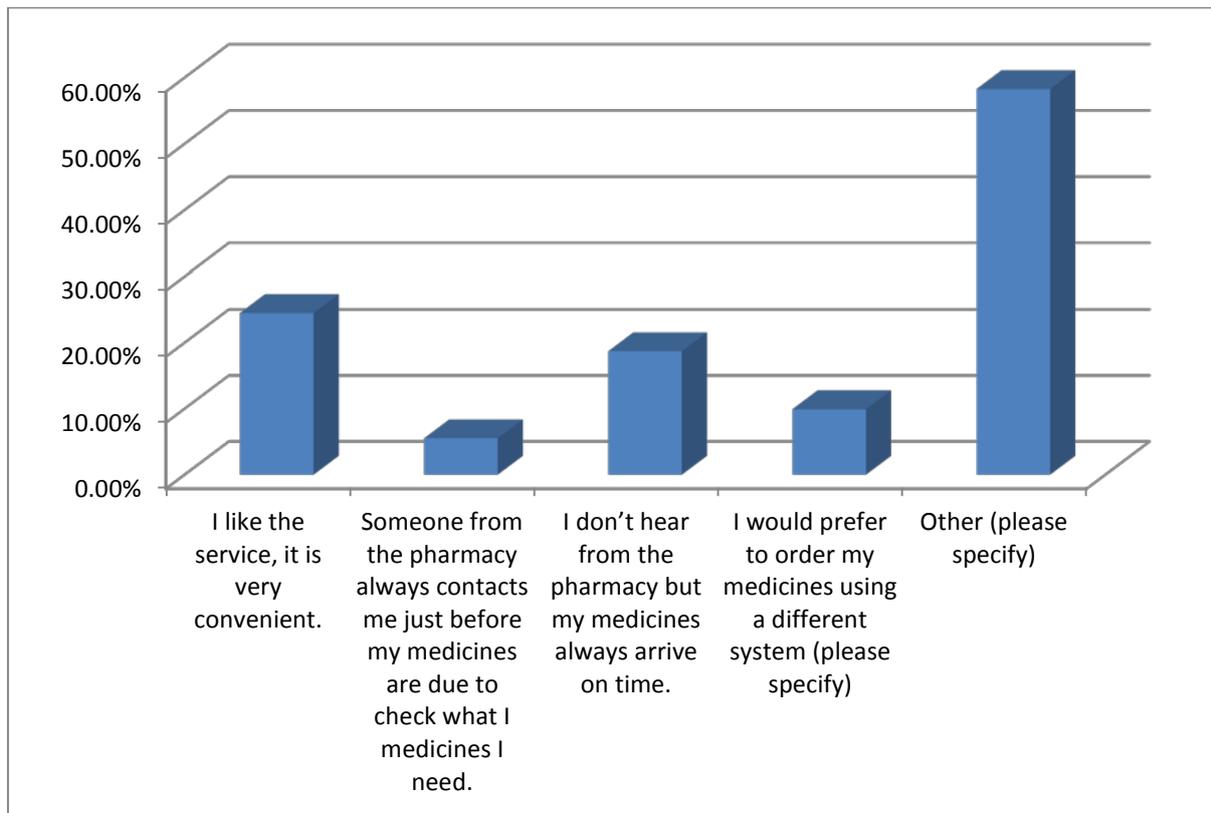
A total of **91** respondents provided an answer to this question.

The largest proportion of respondents (**41.76%**) stated that they would order their prescription online via their surgery website. Significant minorities would also take the prescription request form into the GP surgery (**30.77%**) or noted that their community/internet pharmacy ordered their prescription on their behalf (**26.37%**).

A further **9** respondents (**9.89%**) provided a further, written, response. **2** highlighted that they took their prescription request form into the GP surgery, **2** contacted their local pharmacy by telephone and a further **2** ordered via online companies.

Additional respondents noted they wrote down what medicines they required on a piece of paper and took it into the surgery (1) or faxed in their prescription (1). A final respondent noted they had an appointment with their GP when requiring a prescription.

**Q2: If your pharmacy orders your prescription on your behalf, please answer the following. (Tick all that apply).**



Response	Percentage
I like the service, it is very convenient.	24.47%
Someone from the pharmacy always contacts me just before my medicines are due to check what I medicines I need.	5.49%
I don't hear from the pharmacy but my medicines always arrive on time.	18.68%
I would prefer to order my medicines using a different system (please specify)	9.89%
Other (please specify)	58.24%

**91** respondents provided an answer to this question.

Just under a quarter (**24.47%**) of respondents liked the service and found it convenient. A significant minority (**18.68%**) didn't hear from their pharmacy but found their medications always arrived on time. Only **5.49%** of respondents were contacted by their pharmacists to check their medication.

However, the majority (**58.24%**) of respondents provided additional written responses to this question; additionally a further **9.89%** noted in this section that they would prefer order medicines using a different system and were encouraged to provide an explanation for this within the comment box.

The majority of the **53** respondents either had not used this system (**41.5%**) or ordered the prescription themselves (**1.5%**). One of these respondents noted:

*“My pharmacy does not order the prescriptions because I prefer to take the prescription request into the surgery and collect it. On one occasion my order was sent directly from the surgery to the pharmacy - which I had not asked for and I asked that it should not be done in future. That was the only occasion in six years when there was an item missing from what I collected!”*

Others simply responded that they accessed the prescription through their pharmacy (**7.54%**) or were unaware of the system but would like to use the service in the future (**3.77%**). Of those who used other methods to order their prescription, **15%** of respondents ordered prescriptions online, or through their GP (**5.7%**).

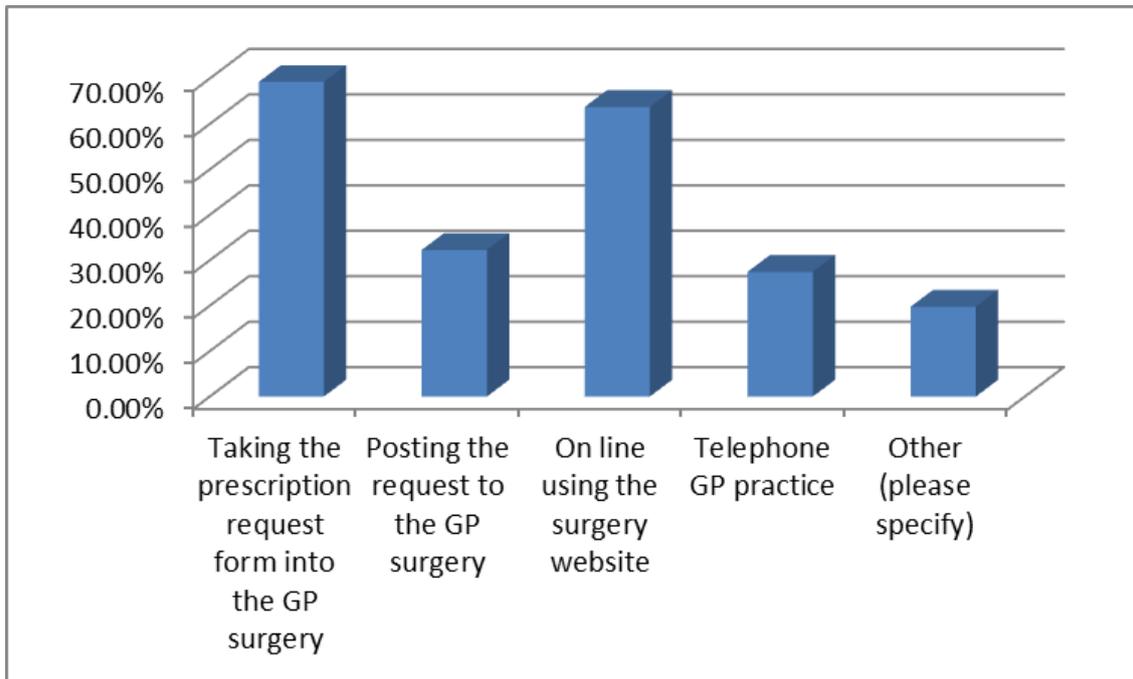
Several respondents highlighted they were dissatisfied with the current system. A **single** respondent noted *“I never allow the Pharmacy to order my repeat prescriptions”*, whilst **another** noted that *“I don't hear from the pharmacy and have to be proactive to order my next prescription. It takes up to a week for my medicine to arrive”*. **One** respondent highlighted they intended to change from their pharmacy to an online system, whilst **another** noted *“The pharmacy at my surgery often does not have all my medicines so I tend to go to [REDACTED] in Birmingham City Centre”*.

**Two** respondents specifically highlighted different systems they would prefer to use instead of the current one. Both highlighted they would prefer to order online but highlighted different places they would prefer to pick up their medications from:

*“I would prefer to order it on-line from my surgery which I do, but for the surgery to deliver it electronically to the pharmacy so that all I need to do is pick up the prescription”*.

*“I would prefer to order online, collect form from the surgery at my convenience and get medicines from near wherever I go shopping”*.

**Q3: Which of the following options could you use to order your repeat prescriptions? (Tick all that apply)**



Response	Percentage
Taking the prescription request form into the GP surgery	69.23%
Posting the request to the GP surgery	32.26%
On line using the surgery website	63.74%
Telephone GP practice	27.47%
Other (please specify)	19.78%

There were **91** respondents provided an answer to this question.

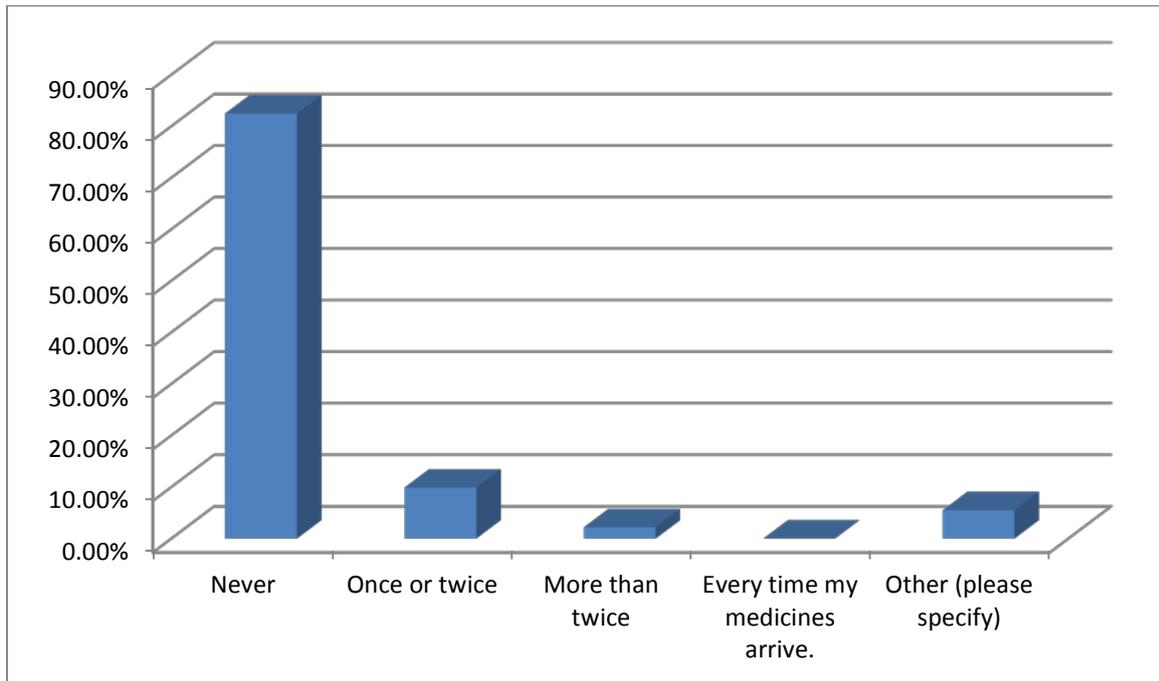
The majority of respondents took their prescription request form into their GP surgery (**69.23%**) and/or via online means utilising the surgery website (**63.74%**). Respondents also used other methods such as posting the request to the GP surgery (**32.26%**) or requesting via telephone (**27.47%**).

Of the **18** respondents who suggested different methods, almost half (**8**) noted they would contact the pharmacist directly. **3** respondents also highlighted how they would take their prescription to their GP directly, whilst another noted that they asked their relative to take in the form on their behalf. **2** others would use alternative methods of contacting their GP surgery, one online and one by fax.

Others highlighted their experience of using the service. 1 respondent noted positively that *“I've used the other methods but the electronic system is fast, efficient and if I'm not well, I can still order it from home and the chemist delivers it. Great system if you have a computer”*. Another noted that their *“GP online service is not working at the moment!! I would use it if it did”*.

One respondent noted they had not had a positive experience, and that they had *“tried posting but they always lose my [REDACTED]”*.

**Q4: Approximately how often have you received medicines in the last year that you did not ask for?**



Response	Percentage
Never	82.47%
Once or twice	9.89%
More than twice	2.20%
Every time my medicines arrive.	0.00%
Other (please specify)	5.49%

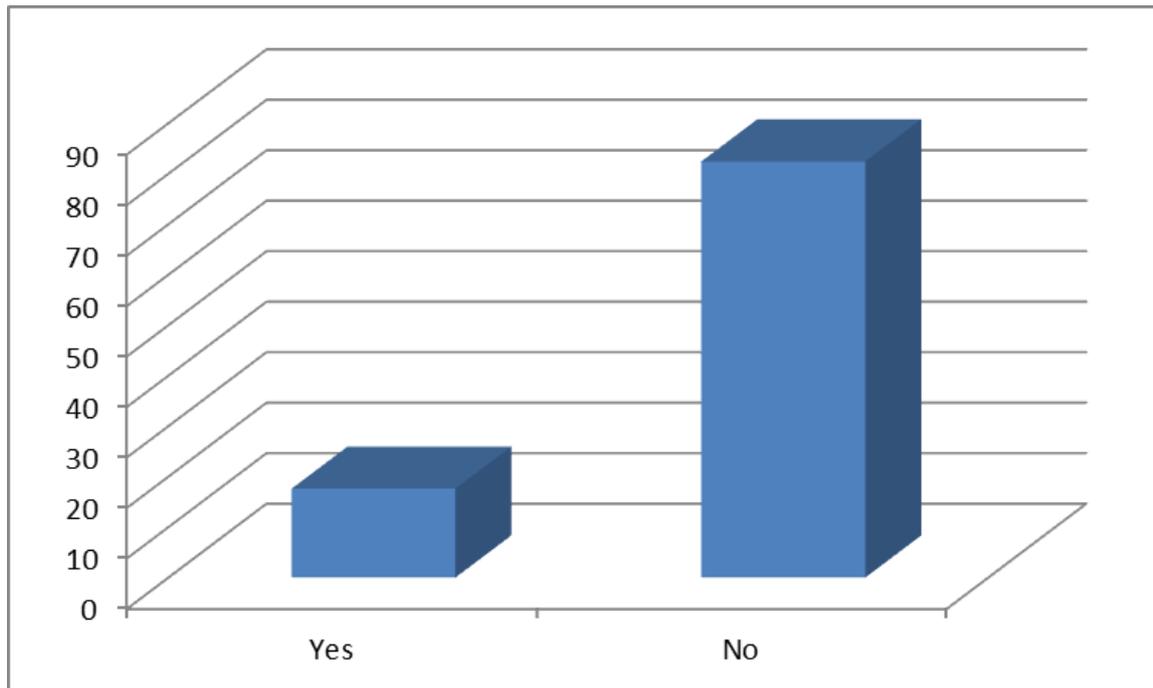
A total of **91** respondents provided an answer to this question.

Of the 91 respondents, **75** (82.42%) had, in the last year, never received medicines they did not ask for. Of those who had received medicines they did not ask for (**11** people in total), **9** had received incorrect medications once or twice with **2** having received incorrect medication more than twice; **none** received incorrect medications on every occasion they ordered.

**5** respondents commented further, highlighting:

- Generally their medications were “*six weeks ahead of schedule*”
- A respondent “*had to alert the pharmacy not to send items at least on 3 separate occasions and also advised GP wastage of NHS costs*”
- That they checked their medications before leaving the pharmacy to ensure they received the correct medication
- That incorrect medications were received “*On a monthly basis*”
- That the correct medication had been provided but of the wrong dosage.

**Q5: Do you have more prescription medicines at home than you need?**

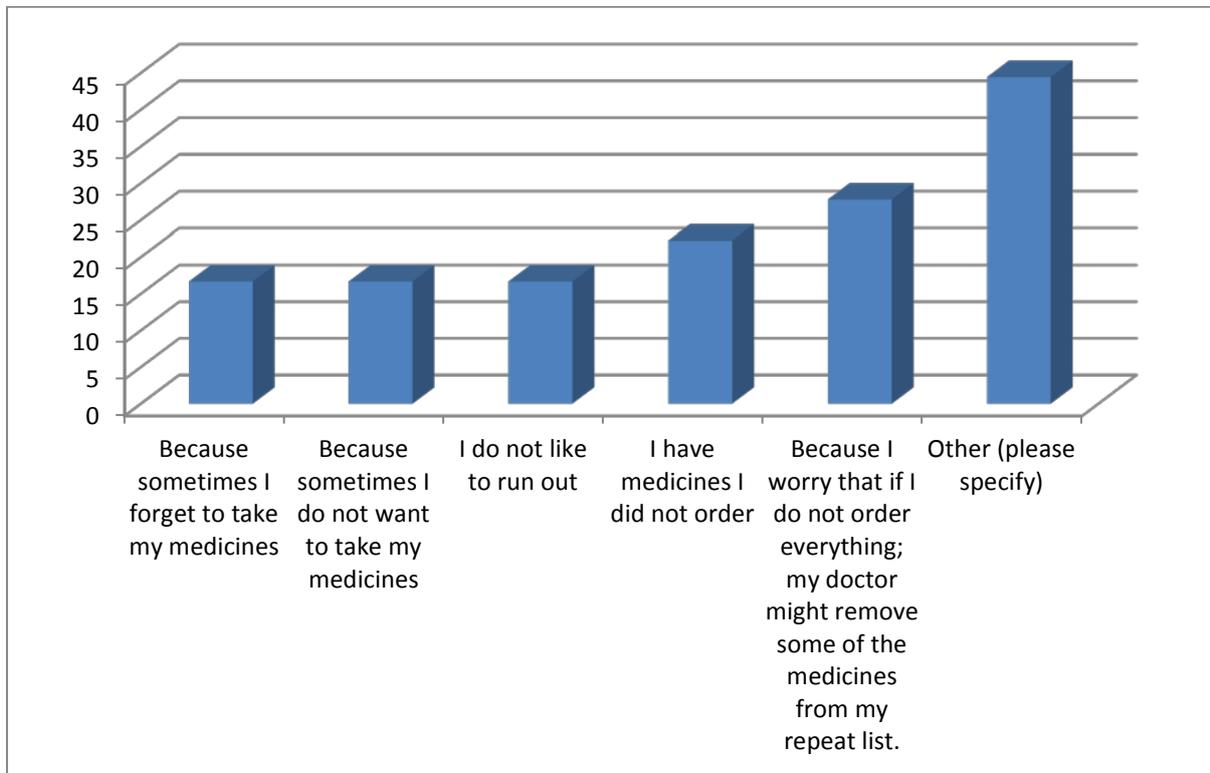


Response	Percentage
Yes	17.58
No	82.42

There were **91** respondents provided an answer to this question.

The vast majority of respondents (**82.4%**) did not feel that they had more prescription medicines at home than were needed, less than a fifth (**17.58%**) felt they had excess medications.

**Q6: If you answered yes to the question above, and you do have more prescription medicines at home than you need, please explain why (Tick all that apply)**



Response	Percentage
Because sometimes I forget to take my medicines	16.67
Because sometimes I do not want to take my medicines	16.67
I do not like to run out	16.67
I have medicines I did not order	22.22
Because I worry that if I do not order everything; my doctor might remove some of the medicines from my repeat list.	27.78
Other (please specify)	44.44

There were **18** respondents to this question.

Of the 18 respondents who stated they had more prescription medicines at home than they needed, the largest proportion (**27.28%**) stated that they were worried that if they did not order everything, their doctor might remove some of the medicines. A further **22.22%** noted they had medications in their possession which they had not ordered.

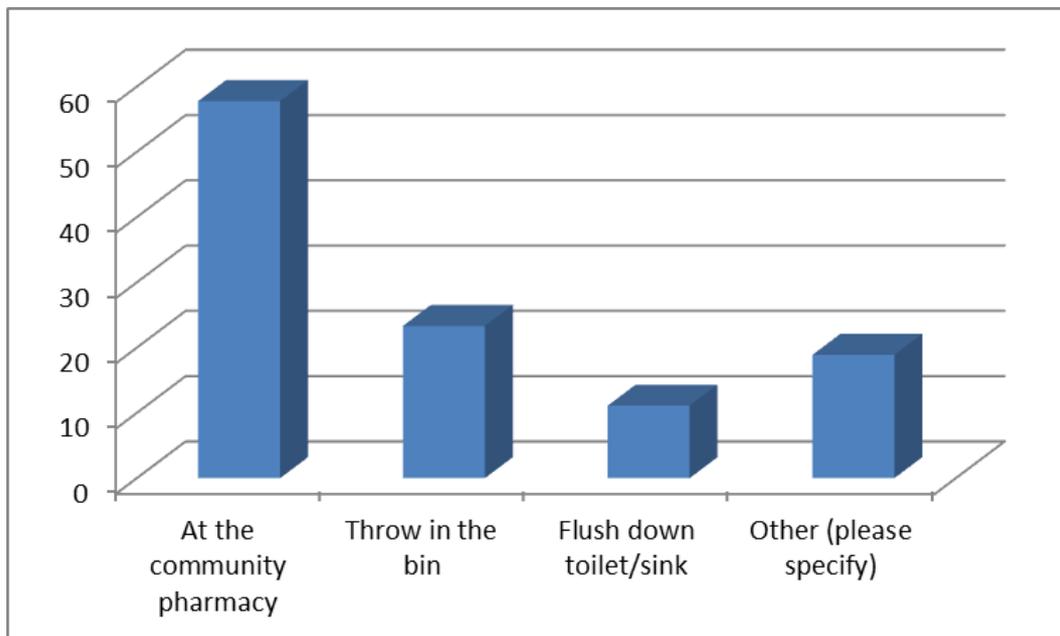
Equal numbers of respondents (3 or 16.67%) stated they had more prescription medicines at home than they needed because:

- Because they sometimes forgot to take some medications;
- Because sometimes they did not wish to take some of their medications; or
- They do not like to run out of medicine.

8 respondents commented further:

- A quarter of these respondents continued to receive medications despite informing a health professional that they were no longer needed.
- Another noted *"I ordered the wrong painkillers in error, and they could not be accepted back even though they were untouched and un-opened. I am keeping them as eventually I hope to use them"*.
- One respondent noted their preference for medication had changed, and therefore they did not need medication in the format it was currently being supplied.
- A respondent noted *"Medicines in cream format are often in larger tubes than is necessary - smaller doses would be more appropriate."*
- Another noted that they did not always need to take all of their medications, therefore some medication went unused.
- Finally, a respondent noted deficiencies in the ordering process, highlighting *"the surgery prescription ordering system is not very flexible i.e. if my repeat prescription says 2 x [REDACTED] I have to order 2 even if I only need 1. I have tried adding notes to change amount ordered but these are ignored"*.

**Q7: How do you dispose of unwanted or out of date medicines?(Tick all that apply)**



Response	Percentage
At the community pharmacy	57.78
Throw in the bin	23.33
Flush down toilet/sink	11.11
Other (please specify)	18.89

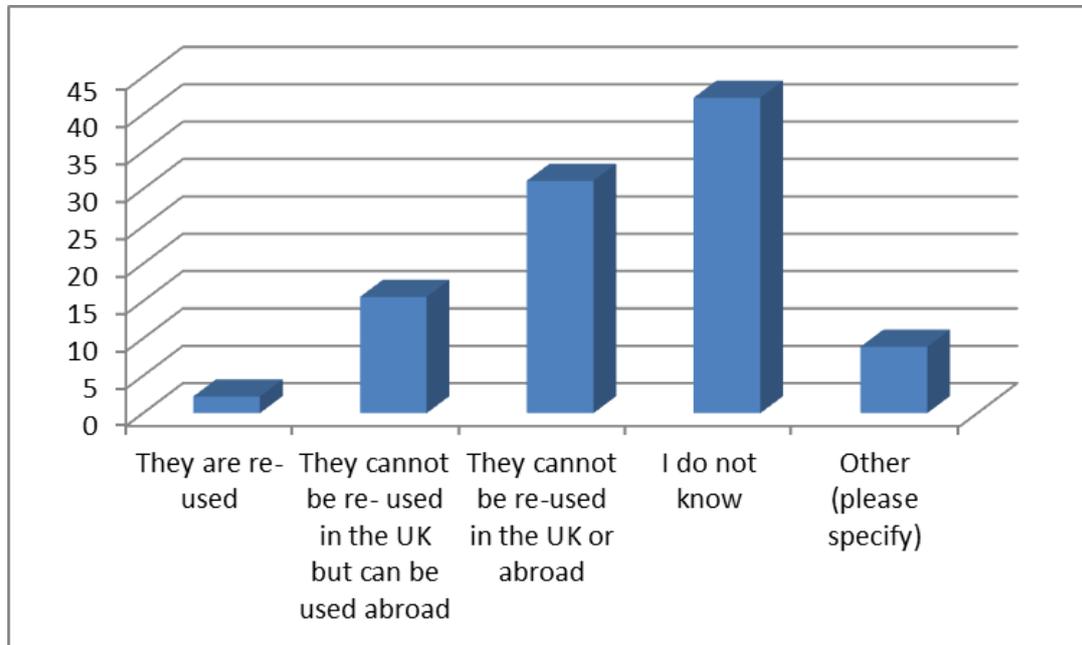
A total of **90** respondents provided an answer to this question.

Over half (**57.78%**) of respondents would dispose of unwanted or out of date medications at their community pharmacy. Just under a quarter (**23.33%**) would throw them in the bin with **11.11%** flushing unwanted medications away.

Of the **17** respondents who commented further (**18.89%** of total sample), over half (**11**) noted they had never had unwanted or out of date medicines. Of these, **3** went on to note that, had they any spare medications, they would either take them to their local pharmacy (**2**) or would throw them in the bin (**1**).

**1** respondent noted that they only order what they require, whilst **2** others noted they would keep the medication as they felt it would get used eventually. **1** respondent had access to an alternative clinical waste facility, whilst **another** previously had donated their medication to a charity that sent unwanted medications abroad.

**Q8: What do you think happens to unopened or unused prescription medicines returned to the pharmacy (Tick all that apply)**



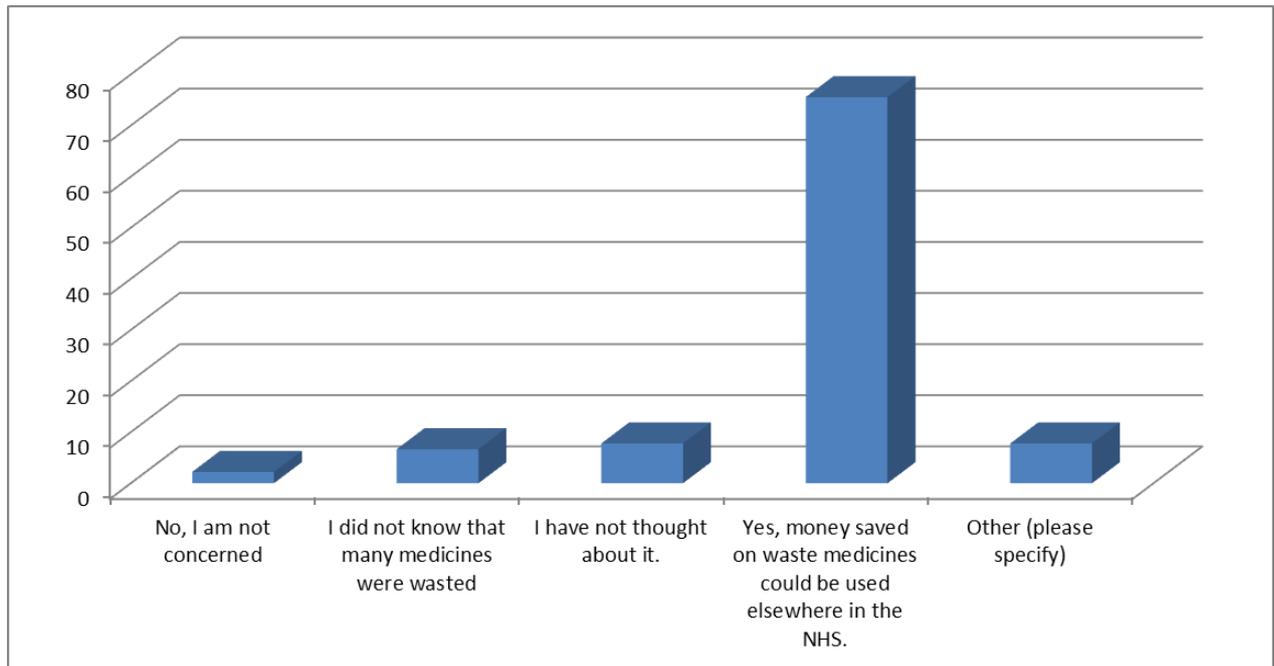
Response	Percentage
They are re-used	2.22
They cannot be re- used in the UK but can be used abroad	15.56
They cannot be re-used in the UK or abroad	31.11
I do not know	42.22
Other (please specify)	8.89

There were **90** respondents provided an answer to this question.

Just under a third (**31.1%**) thought that medications could not be reused in the UK and aboard, with an additional **15.56%** believing they could be reused abroad. **2.22%** thought that unopened or unused medications could be reused in the UK. However, the largest proportion of respondents (**42.2%**) did not know what happened to unopened or unused prescription medicines which are returned to pharmacies.

Of the **8** respondents who commented further (**8.89%** of total sample), three-quarters (**6**) thought they would be disposed of. **1** respondent was unsure how they would be disposed, whilst **another** noted *“I tried to take some morphine back to the chemist some years ago and they refused to accept it so I poured it into the rubbish as I didn't want it around the house”*.

**Q9: Are you concerned with the amount of medicines that are wasted in the NHS?**



Response	Percentage
No, I am not concerned	2.22
I did not know that many medicines were wasted	6.67
I have not thought about it.	7.78
Yes, money saved on waste medicines could be used elsewhere in the NHS.	75.56
Other (please specify)	7.78

A total of **90** respondents provided an answer to this question.

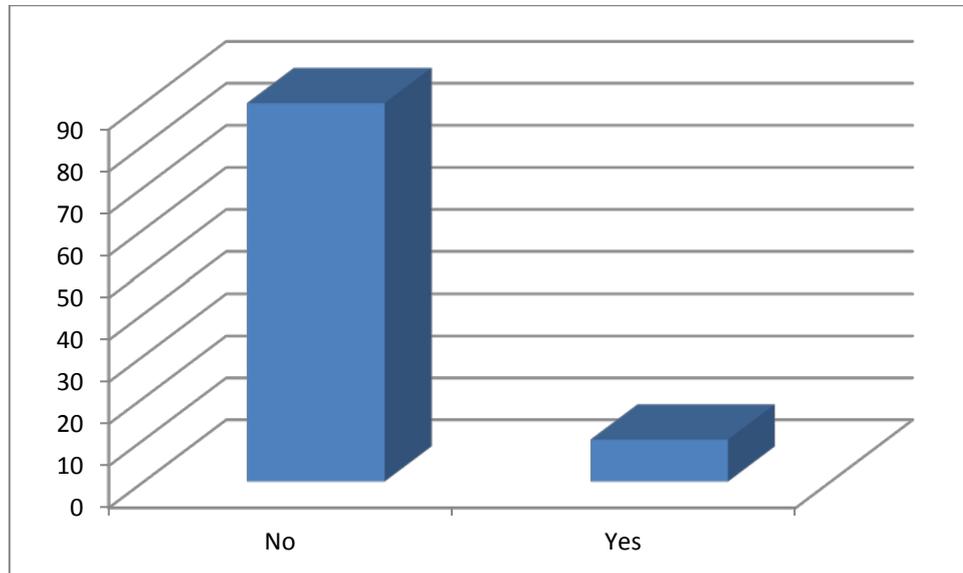
Although some respondents were not concerned about medicine wastage (**2.22%**), has not thought about it (**7.78%**) or did not know medicines were wasted (**6.67%**) over three-quarters of respondents (**75.56%**) expressed concern at the amount of medication that was wasted in the NHS.

**7** respondents commented further,

- One noted – “As a volunteer in the warehouse at [REDACTED] I saw the massive waste. Even they couldn't cope with the volumes of [REDACTED].”
- Another respondent felt it could not be helped.
- Another noted concerns about the amount of medication prescribed needlessly.
- A respondent noted that “It troubles me that unopened boxes of drugs cannot be used”.

- One respondent felt that the elderly were particularly culpable for stockpiling medication.
- *“There is extremely high waste of medicines and many go illegally overseas. It should be easy to bring in computerised controls to monitor patients excessive usage, and also some doctors, who I strongly suspect over-subscribe.”*
- Finally another respondent noted that *“Wasted medicines are probably less costly than poorly medicated chronic conditions.”*

**Q10: Holding a stockpile of unwanted medicines at home can be a safety concern. Has this ever affected you or your family or friends?**



Response	Percentage
No	90
Yes	10

There were **90** respondents to this question. Of these the **90%** had not been affected by holding a stockpile of unwanted medicines at home can be a safety concern.

Of the **10%** who had been affected a range of feedback was provided including:

- An example of a respondent's friend taking an overdose with their excess medication after being diagnosed with a severe medical condition.
- A respondent having their excess medication taken away by their family due to their history of poor mental health and self-harm.
- A respondent who's elderly relative was able to gain access to additional medication via other residents at her care home.
- Three other respondents whose elderly relatives had access to a stockpile of medicines because they kept receiving additional medication without a review.

Another reported:

*“When my Mother had dementia she would hide them around the house as she was scared of running out of them and forgetting to reorder - this was before she died 5 years ago”.*

### **Q11: Is there anything else you would like to tell us?**

A total of **39** respondents provided an answer to this question. A summary of the key themes highlighted is provided below.

Communication was a recurrent theme, particularly between health professionals and patients. One respondent noted:

*“there needs to be better communication between pharmacy and GP practice and the system needs to be tight so that inconvenience isn't caused [sic]. pharmacies should advise us to return medicine which they don't always”.*

Others noted that the time between medication reviews affected the wastage of medication. Many felt reviews were too widely spaced apart:

*“GPs should ensure that medication reviews are carried regularly at least once a year. I don't order anything that I do not need, but if the pharmacy were to do it on my behalf, it would be in their interest to order everything on the list!”*

In a similar vein, a respondent noted that *“Manufacturers should make smaller quantities available as standard and GPs should undertake a closer assessment of the individual patient needs for any particular medicine”.*

Others, however, had concerns regarding the length of time between medications being dispensed, although there was some variation when it came to highlighting what would be more appropriate. One respondent noted:

*“It might be more efficient if I could order some medicines that I know I will continue to need for at least the next six months to a [sic] larger quantities than currently. For example [REDACTED]”.*

Another reported:

*“For prescriptions that are needed on a daily basis, such as my [REDACTED] medication, they must be taken regularly and long prescriptions would be very useful. It is inconvenient to arrange frequent collections and the prescription needs review annually, so a long supply of medication would be very useful.”.*

By comparison another respondent argued:

*“Short prescription intervals are inconvenient when medication is needed for long-term chronic conditions, and increase the likelihood of running out. Particularly problematic with mental health, where*

*deterioration in the condition makes obtaining a new prescription more difficult*".

Many (8) highlighted that improved online resources would be beneficial to patients. One respondent noted:

*"I like to order my prescriptions via the surgery online system but it is not very flexible also the prescription is still printed and posted to the pharmacy - it would be better if this was electronic"*

Another found:

*"I order my and my wife's repeat scripts via [REDACTED] which the forwarded to my local pharmacy electronically [sic]. I then collect them when I do my shopping. The pharmacy is situated at my local **Tesco's** store. This is the most convenient way in my opinion"*.

Other respondents felt community pharmacies needed to take greater responsibility when it came to dispensing medication and managing medication waste. For example one respondent stated:

*"I do not feel receptionists or administration staff in GP surgeries should have the responsibility of printing repeat prescriptions. I believe, from my experience of working in GP surgeries this causes errors in medications and a lack of medication reviews"*

Another supported this viewpoint, stating:

*"I have been involved with helped a CCG to reduce prescription medicines. I strongly believe community pharmacies have a lot they can offer in terms of reducing this, especially around automatically requesting a repeat when I have not, helping those who forget to manage their medication better as well as education around disposal"*.

There were also a number of good practice that were highlighted by respondents. For example one noted, *"The doctor and Pharmacy have combined well to ensure that I only receive sufficient supply"*. Another highlighted:

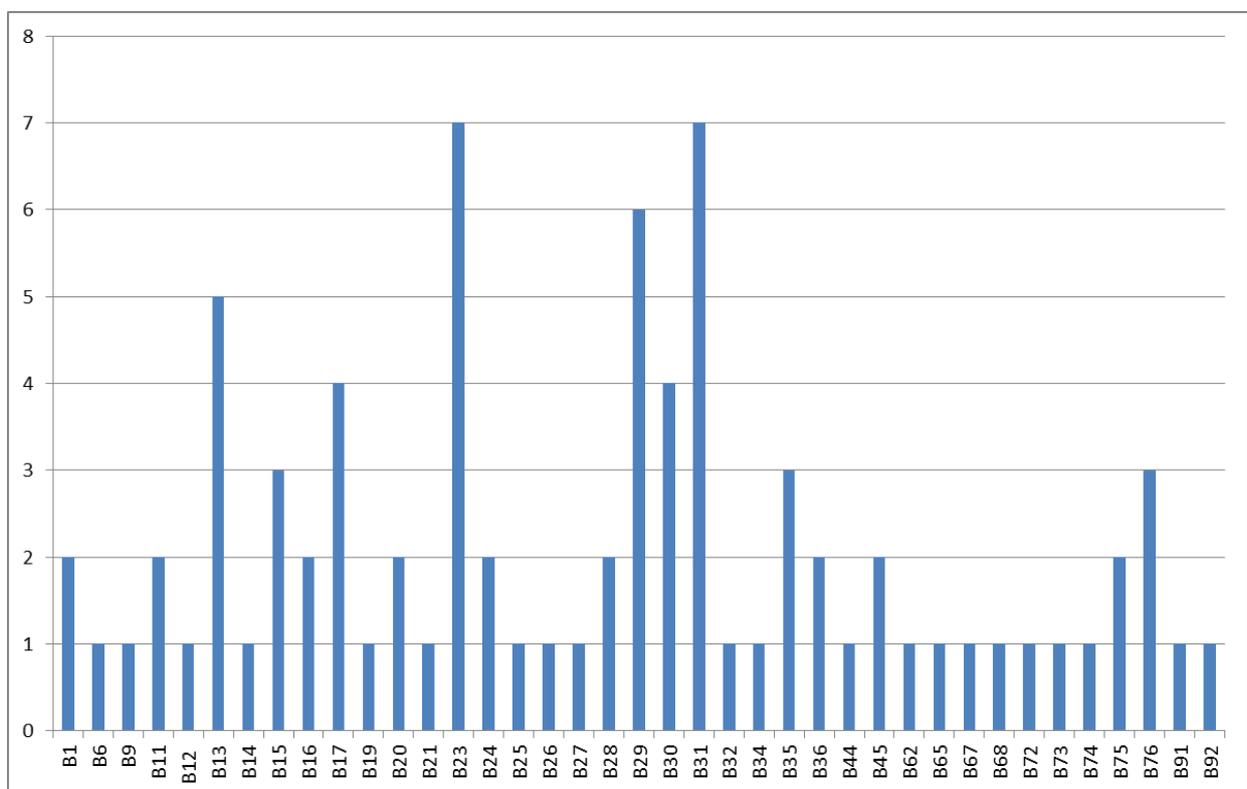
*"I ring the pharmacy and tell them what i need and then they order it and deliver it. This saves waste. It is a good system and should be rolled out. Why ring the surgery and take up time ?"*

## Equality Analysis:

Before completing his section respondents were informed that the following questions were designed to help the CCG understand who had completed the survey.

Respondents were informed they did not have to complete these questions, however by doing so they would help us ensure that we were offering people from all ages, backgrounds and beliefs the opportunity to help shape their healthcare. If respondents did not wish to answer any particular question, they were asked to select the 'Prefer not to say' option.

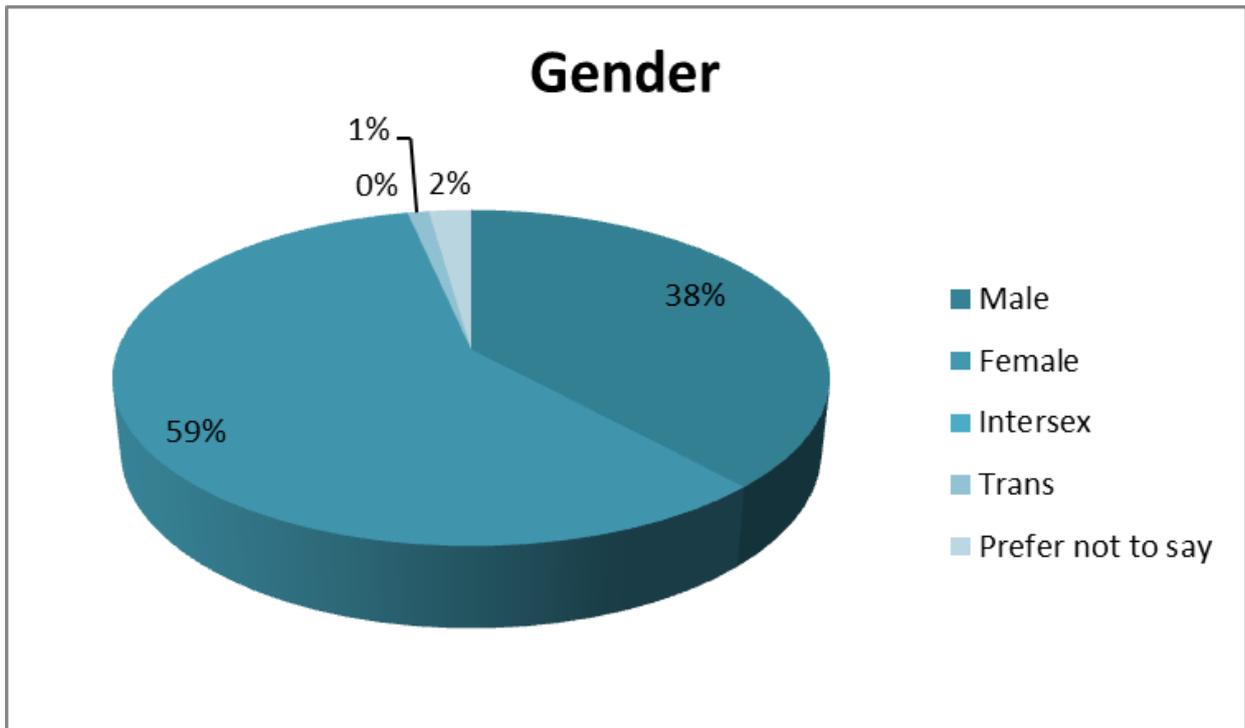
### Q12: Please tell us the first part of your postcode?



There were **81** respondents to this question. Responses were received from across the area covered by Birmingham CrossCity Clinical Commissioning Group, with particularly high numbers of respondents from:

- B31 (Northfield) – **7** respondents.
- B23 (Erdington, Stockland Green, Short Heath, Perry Common) – **7** respondents.
- B29 (Selly Oak) – **6** respondents.
- B13 (Moseley) – **5** respondents.
- B30 (Bournville, Cotteridge, Stirchley) – **4** respondents.
- B17 (Harborne) – **4** respondents.

**Q13: What is your gender?**



Gender	%
Male	39.08%
Female	59.77%
Intersex	0.00%
Trans	1.15%
Prefer not to say	2.30%

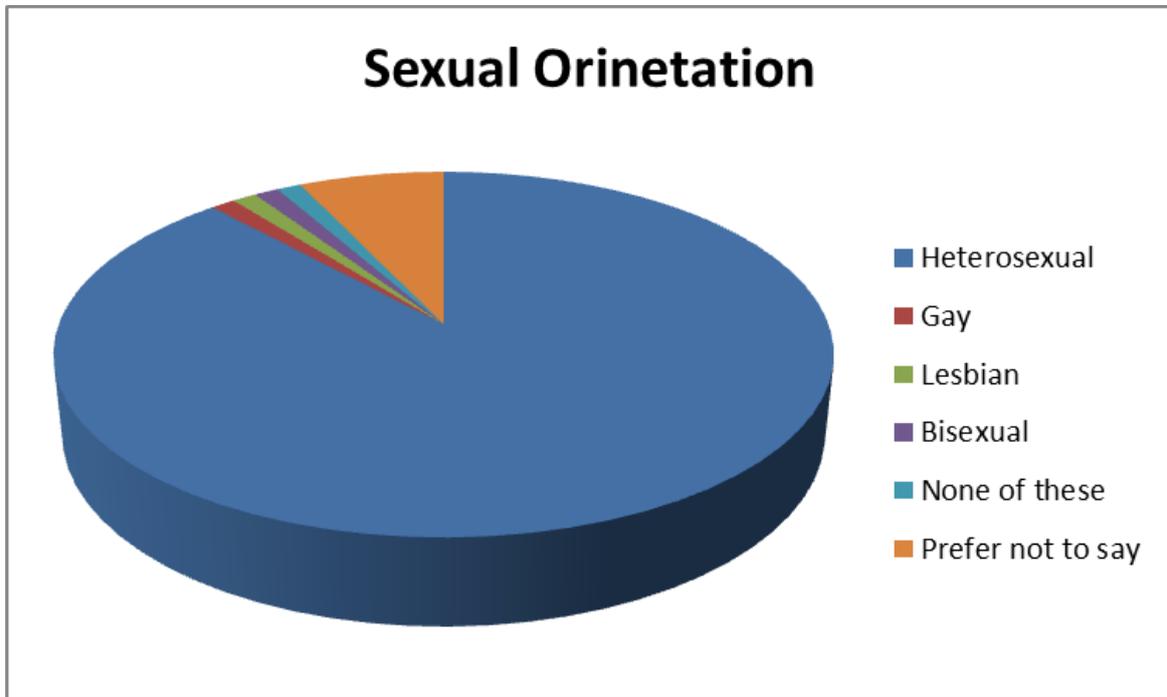
There were **87** respondents to this question.

The majority of respondents (**59.77%**) were female, with **39.08%** of respondents identifying themselves as male. **1.15%** identified themselves as Trans<sup>2</sup> with **2.3%** preferring not to state their gender.

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<sup>2</sup> Any part of a process, including thoughts or actions, to bring your physical sex appearance, and/or your gender role, more in line with your gender identity

**Q14: Please describe your sexual orientation:**



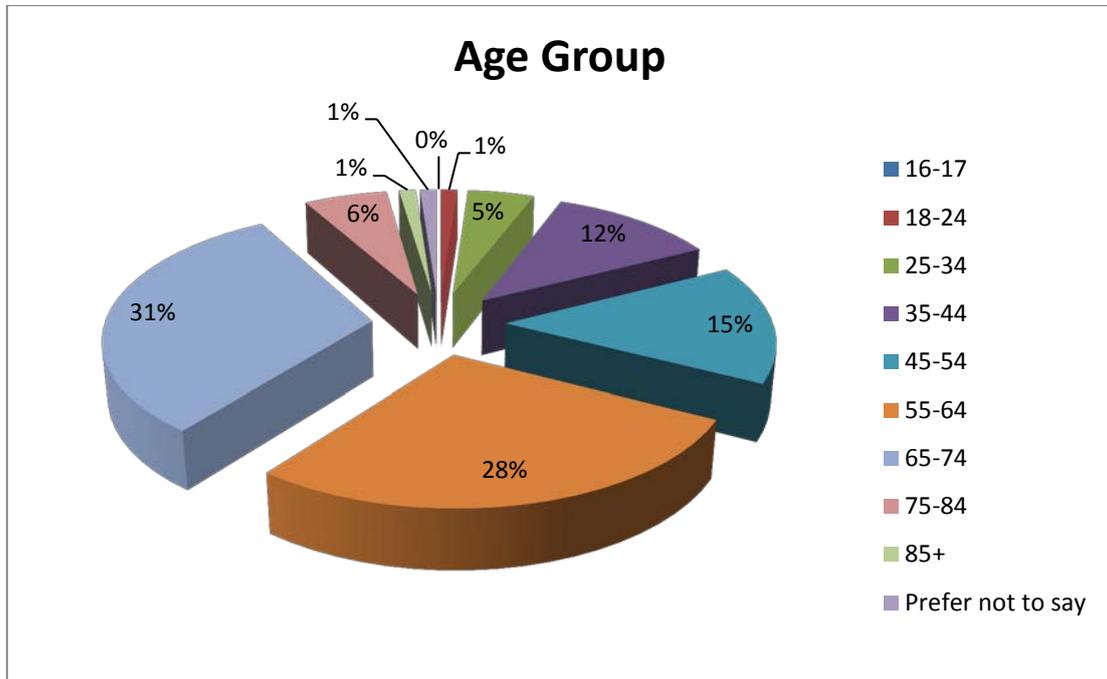
Sexual Orientation	%
Heterosexual	88.24%
Gay	1.18%
Lesbian	1.18%
Bisexual	1.18%
None of these	1.18%
Prefer not to say	7.06%

There were **85** respondents to this question.

The overwhelming majority of respondents identified themselves as being heterosexual (**88.24%**) with equal percentages of respondents (**1.18%**) identifying themselves as being Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual.

Another **1.18%** of respondents stated that they did not identify with any of the stated sexual orientations, with **7.06%** preferring not to say.

**Q14: Age group:**

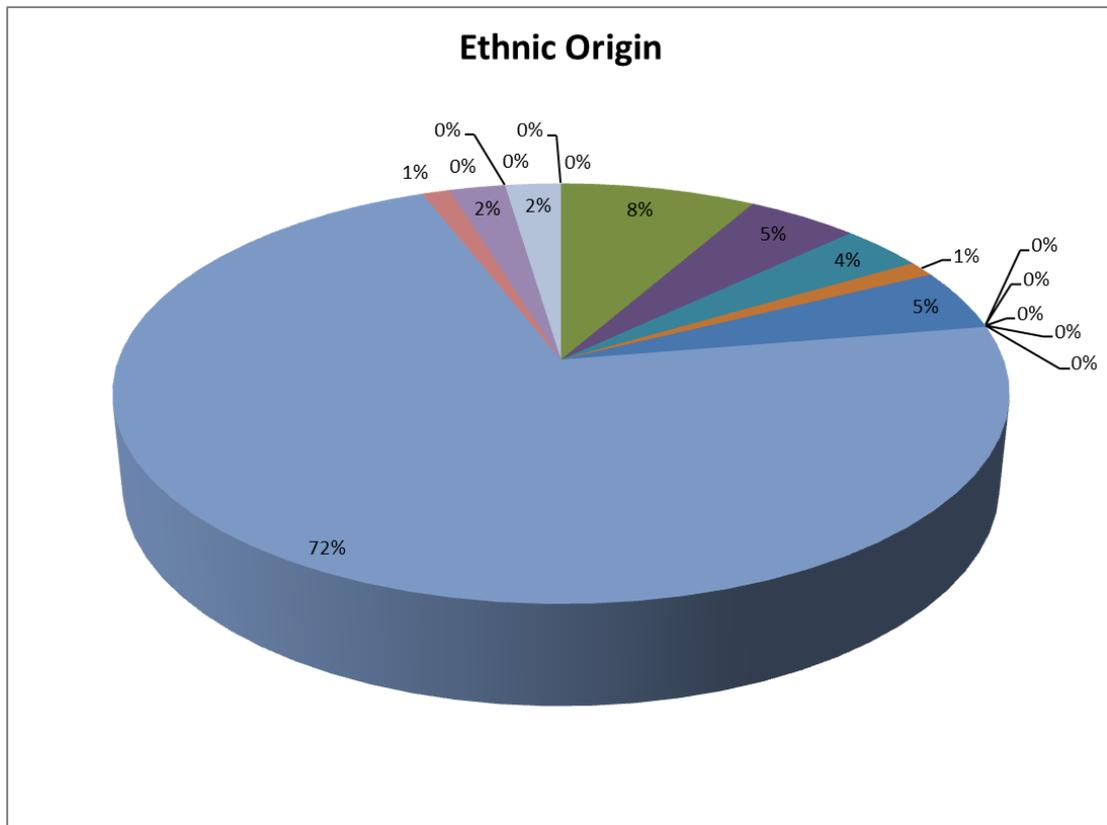


Age Group	%
16-17	0.00%
18-24	1.16%
25-34	4.65%
35-44	11.63%
45-54	15.12%
55-64	27.91%
65-74	31.40%
75-84	5.81%
85+	1.16%
Prefer not to say	1.16%

There were **86** respondents to this question.

The majority of respondents (**59.31%**) were aged between 55 and 74 with **32.56%** being aged under 55 and **6.97%** being aged over 75. **1.16%** preferred not to give a response. There were **no** respondents under the age of 18.

**Q15: How would you describe your ethnic origin?**



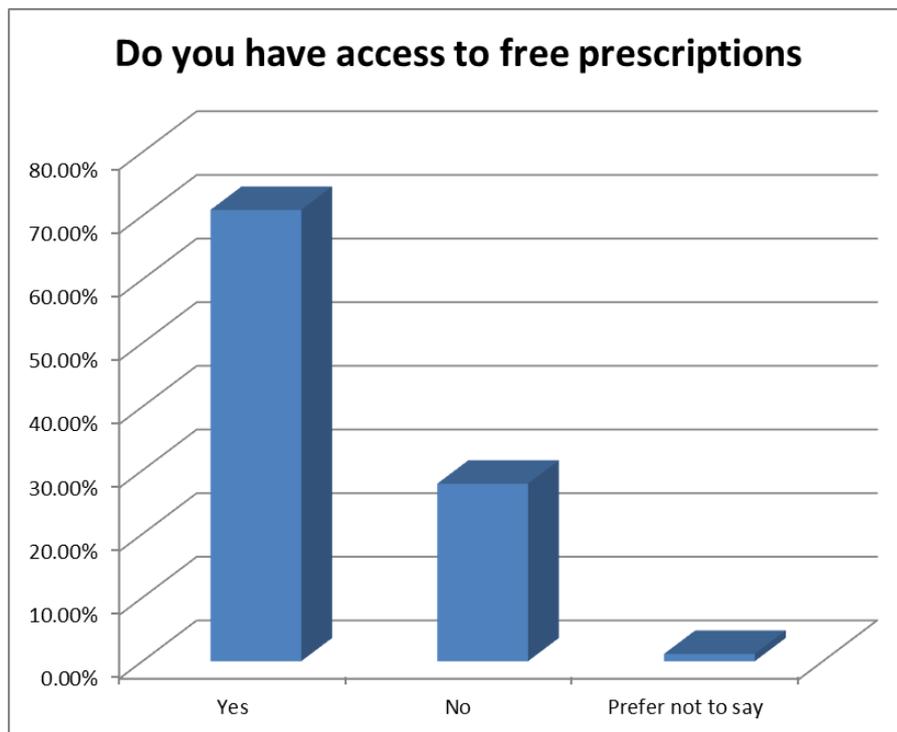
<b>Ethnic Origin</b>	<b>%</b>
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.00%
Asian or Asian British: Chinese	0.00%
Asian or Asian British: Indian	8.24%
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	4.71%
Asian or Asian British: Other	3.53%
Black or Black British: African	1.18%
Black or Black British: Caribbean	4.71%
Black or Black British: Other	0.00%
Mixed: White and Asian	0.00%
Mixed: White and Black African	0.00%
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	0.00%
Mixed: Other	0.00%
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	71.76%
White: Irish	1.18%
White: Gypsy, Roma or Traveller	0.00%
White: Other	2.35%
Other: Arabic	0.00%
Other: Other ethnic background	0.00%
Prefer not to say	2.35%

The overwhelming majority of respondents identified themselves as coming from a 'White British' back ground (71.76%).

Significant minorities included Asian or Asian British respondents (identifying themselves as being from an Indian – 8.24%, Pakistani – 4.71%, or 'Other – 3.53%, background) and those from the Black or Black British: Caribbean (4.71%) community.

2.35% of respondents preferred not to describe their ethnic origin.

**Q16: Do you have access to free prescriptions?**



Do you have access to free prescriptions	%
Yes	70.93%
No	27.91%
Prefer not to say	1.16%

The majority of respondents (70.93%) had access to free prescriptions. 1.16% preferred not to say.

**Mark Jones**  
Engagement Officer  
Birmingham CrossCity CCG