

Community Phlebotomy Service at Barking Community Hospital

Enter and View Report



Contents

Table of Contents

| | |
|------------------------------------------|----|
| Contents..... | 1 |
| 1. Introduction | 2 |
| 1.1 Details of visit | 2 |
| 1.2 About the service..... | 2 |
| 1.3 Acknowledgements..... | 2 |
| 1.4 Disclaimer | 3 |
| 2. What is Enter and View? | 4 |
| 2.1 Purpose of Visit..... | 4 |
| 2.2 Strategic drivers..... | 5 |
| 2.3 Methodology..... | 5 |
| 3. Summary of findings..... | 7 |
| 4. Findings | 8 |
| 4.1 Booking a blood test..... | 8 |
| 4.2 Waiting for a blood test..... | 11 |
| 4.3 Experience with the procedure | 12 |
| 4.4 Environment..... | 15 |
| 4.5 Feedback from staff | 16 |
| 5. Recommendations..... | 17 |
| DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION | 18 |
| Response from the service provider | 21 |

1. Introduction

1.1 Details of visit

| Details of visit: | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Service address | Upney Lane, Barking IG11 9LX |
| Service provider | North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) |
| Service area | Phlebotomy (blood testing) for residents over 12 years of age |
| Date and time | Monday 14 th of August 2023 |
| Authorized Representatives | Agne Pilkauskiene (Lead Authorized Representative) Ruby Oi Wun Yip (Authorized Representative) Princess-Zaneta Emuchay (Authorized Representative) |
| Announced/Unannounced | Unannounced |
| Contact details | Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham LifeLine House Neville Road Dagenham RM8 3QS 0800 298 5331 info@healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk |

1.2 About the service

Community Phlebotomy (blood testing) at Barking Community Hospital is offered to anyone registered to a GP in Barking and Dagenham, Havering or Redbridge and over 12 years of age. Blood tests are offered by appointment only. All bookings and cancellations can be made online or by phone.

1.3 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham would like to thank the service provider, service users and staff for their contribution during the visit.

1.4 Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all residents and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time of the visit.

2. What is Enter and View?

- The Health and Social Care Act 2012 allows local Healthwatch to carry out Enter and View visits.
- Authorized representatives are recruited and trained to carry out visits to observe specific settings and give feedback.
- During a visit information is gathered through the experiences of service users, their relatives, friends, and staff to collect evidence of the quality and standard of the services being provided.
- Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service, but equally they can occur when services have a good reputation.
- The visits enable us to share examples of best practices and make recommendations where improvements are needed from the perspective of people who experience the service first-hand.
- An opportunity to give authoritative, evidenced-based feedback to organizations responsible for delivering and commissioning services.
- The visits assist local Healthwatch to alert Healthwatch England or the Care Quality Commission to concerns about specific service providers of health and social care.
- If you are interested in finding out more about Enter and View visits or Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham, then please visit:
www.healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk

2.1 Purpose of Visit

Our purpose was to observe and engage with service users and staff. Healthwatch focused on the following aspects during the visit:

- Experience in booking a blood test.
- Experience with the procedure.
- Environment of the blood testing clinic.

2.2 Strategic drivers

Because blood testing is now only done by appointment due to the Covid epidemic, Barking Community Hospital was chosen to gather evidence of service users' experiences. Healthwatch wanted to look into what works well and what could be improved from the resident perspective of using phlebotomy services. Furthermore, Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham conducted research on community phlebotomy services in 2016, therefore it was crucial to examine the new service provision (appointment only) from the perspective of the service users.

2.3 Methodology

Before the visit:

- Authorized representatives attended a pre-visit meeting where the questionnaire was designed. The date and time were also set for the visit.
- This was an unannounced visit carried out by Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham authorized representatives to observe the provision of service offered to residents within Barking Community Hospital and to review the quality of service given to the residents.
- Feedback from the visit is used to let service providers and commissioners know how residents and staff at Barking Community Hospital felt about utilising the phlebotomy service there.

Day of the visit:

- The Healthwatch team arrived at Barking Community Hospital at 10:00 am. Authorised representatives announced their arrival and the reason for the visit to the reception personnel and the workers in both blood testing rooms.
- Phlebotomy nurses communicated with the service manager to let them know about the Healthwatch visit and requested that the lead authorised representative do the same. Due to the manager's inability to be reached by phone, this was completed following the visit.
- Because the service manager wasn't available to talk on the phone that morning, the Lead authorised representative called the manager later that day to explain why the visit was made and to gather contact information for sending the report once it is finished.

- 18 people who underwent blood testing that morning were spoken to by authorised representatives. Before their blood test, respondents were contacted to ask questions about booking a blood test and the environment, and after the blood test, respondents were asked to complete the section about their experience with the procedure.
- During a break, authorised representatives interviewed two phlebotomy nurses to learn more about their experiences giving blood tests to residents.

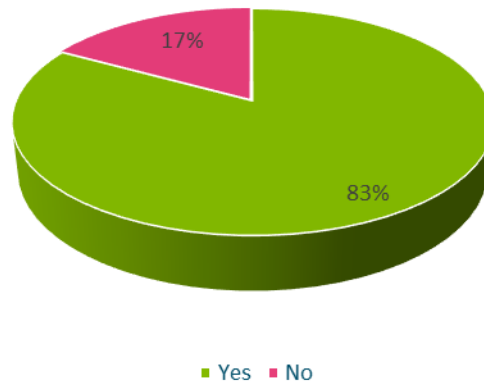
3. Summary of findings

- Majority of respondents were provided with good guidelines on how to prepare for a blood test.
- Most respondents used online appointment booking and complained about problems with phone and online booking systems.
- Most respondents had to wait two to three weeks for their appointment since appointments could only be made two weeks in advance or weren't available at all, necessitating more waiting and checking.
- No one had to wait longer than ten minutes for service, and a large proportion of patients were treated on time or even earlier than their scheduled appointment time.
- The results suggest that specialists need to ensure that any patient who has a fear of blood or needles is effectively supported throughout the treatment.
- Although staff members are doing an excellent job of delivering information and responding to inquiries, some patients who have medical needs or language problems are unable to interpret the information being provided.
- All respondents felt that they were spoken to with professionalism and courtesy.
- Due to the potential for efficiency and time-saving, respondents have good feelings about the appointment-only system.
- Locals, both those who live close and those who travel by public transport, find the place to be easily accessible.

4. Findings

4.1 Booking a blood test

Have you received instructions on how to get ready for your blood test?

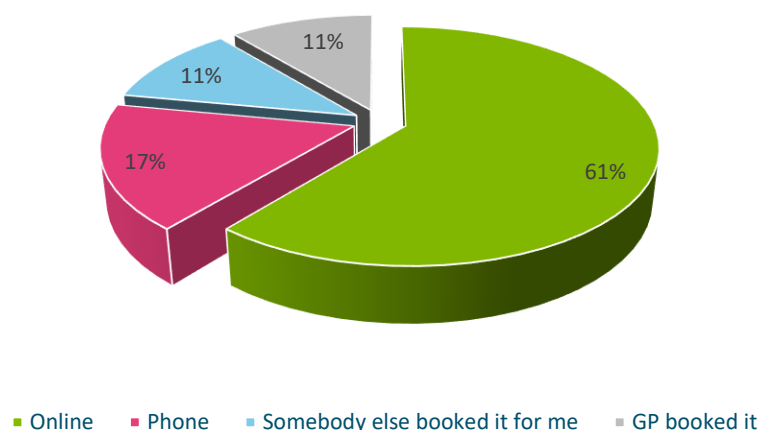


Respondents were asked if they had received instructions on how to get ready for their blood test (for example, fasting). 83% said yes and 17% said no. Out of those, who said no, most of them expressed that they did not need any instructions as they had the knowledge of how to prepare for a blood test, as this comment illustrates:

"I have routine blood tests, so I know what to do."

5% expressed not being aware of how to prepare for a blood test, but they did it anyway. Those, who were informed of how to prepare for the blood test, said they either we given the information by their GP, or read the information on the blood test form. According to research, respondents were well informed about the steps needed to get ready for a blood test.

How did you book your blood test?



The next question focused on how respondents booked their blood tests. The majority (61%) made their booking online, 17% made their booking using a special phone line, 11% stated their GP made their booking, and 11% asked a friend or family member to make their booking. Some respondents told authorised representatives of the difficulties they had when making a booking:

"The booking system has some errors and was a bit buggy".

"Not quick as you have to book for two weeks in advance, so you need to keep looking".

"Easy to book but not easy to find a proper date".

"It wasn't easy, slots were limited. I wanted to come to this hospital, booked Chadwell Heath first then cancelled to book this one".

"You have to wait too long, over 2 weeks".

"We could not find the appointment online so had to ring".

"Difficult. Was on the phone for 45 minutes to wait for the queue. When I went online, there were no dates available, so I ended up phoning and it was a 2-week wait".

The feedback from respondents revealed that they had trouble locating a time that was convenient for their blood test. For some, there were no online slots available, so they had to call and make their blood test reservations over the phone. Most respondents also voiced their dissatisfaction at having to wait for two weeks or more for a blood test.

Those, who found it simple to book a blood test, said:

"Time issues as it had to be booked 2 weeks in advance, but apart from that booking was simple".

"Very easy and simple"

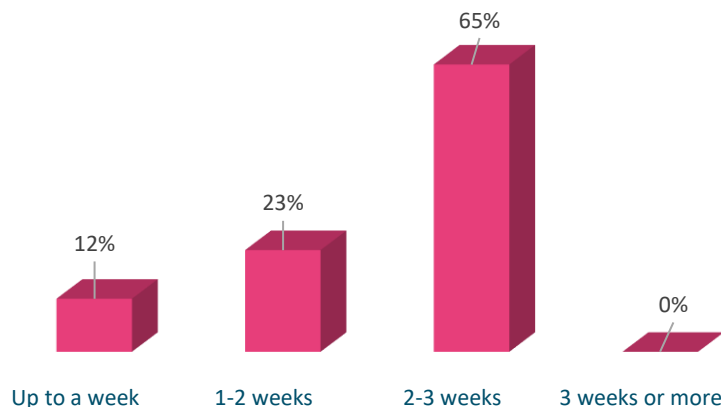
"The booking system is easy. It would be better if it were an app".

Feedback indicates that while the booking process is simple, the previously noted scarcity of slots plus the requirement for booking blood tests two weeks in advance can make for a bad experience.

When asked why they chose to have their blood test done at Barking Community Hospital, the majority of respondents stated that being close to the hospital and having decent transport options was the decisive factor. Some responders claimed that the time slots provided there were more suitable for them. According to feedback, respondents perceive this blood testing facility to be both convenient and accessible.

Respondents were asked to indicate how long they had to wait between being referred to have a blood test done and having a blood test done.

How long did you have to wait between being referred and having a blood test done?



The majority (65%) had to wait 2-3 weeks to have their blood test done, 23% had to wait 1-2 weeks, and 12% had to wait up to a week. According to feedback, most residents are unable to schedule a timely blood test. When asked to comment on the length of the wait respondents said:

"It is too long".

"It is very tiring to wait so long, my thyroid levels are very low, and I wanted to get this blood test as soon as possible".

"I have been told to have a blood test a month ago, but when I tried to book no slots were available, so I had to wait another 2 weeks to get it booked."

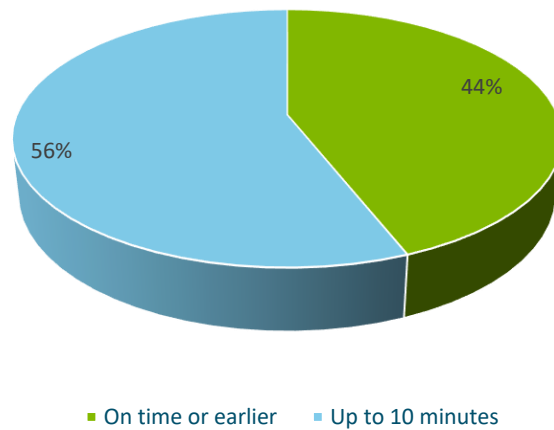
According to other respondents, the appointment time is also very important to them, so even if there is an appointment available soon but the time is inconvenient, they must schedule one that is scheduled for two to three weeks from now but is available at a favourable time. According to feedback, respondents unintentionally delay getting their blood tested since they don't have enough options for availability and appointment times.

4.2 Waiting for a blood test

95% of respondents found it was easy to access Barking Community Hospital to have their blood test done. Good transport links and living in proximity were mentioned as factors helping accessibility. 5% said this location was not accessible as it was "not local for them", explaining they were told to use this location by their GP due to previously lost blood test results.

Next, respondents were asked what time their appointment was and then authorised representatives recorded the time they went in to have the blood test. 56% of respondents had to wait up to 10 minutes while 44% got their blood tests completed on time or even earlier. The results demonstrate that the service keeps to appointment timings, which enhances the respondents' overall satisfaction.

How long have you been waiting to be seen?



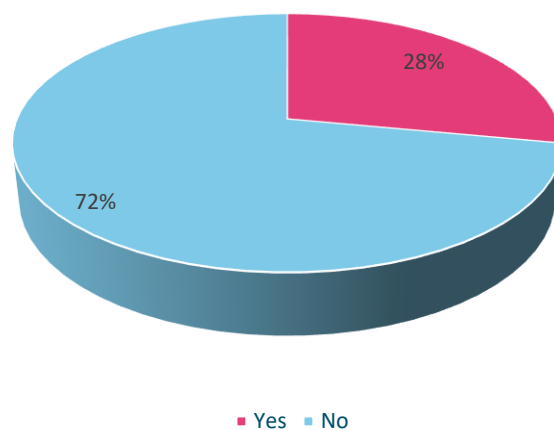
When asked what can be done to improve the experience of waiting for the procedure, respondents shared their feedback:

“Better now when you can book, as it’s not as busy.”

“Nothing, it is good how it is.”

4.3 Experience with the procedure

Are you afraid of needles or sight of blood?



While 28% of respondents stated they feared and might need additional support to have the procedure done, 72% of respondents claimed they were not terrified of needles or the sight of blood.

60% of those who were afraid of needles, or the sight of blood reported feeling reassured and guided through the procedure by the staff. 20% of respondents claimed they received no assurance and direction, while the other 20% said they received some assurance. Findings imply that additional effort is needed on the part of professionals to guarantee that every patient who has a phobia of blood and/or needles is supported adequately throughout the procedure.

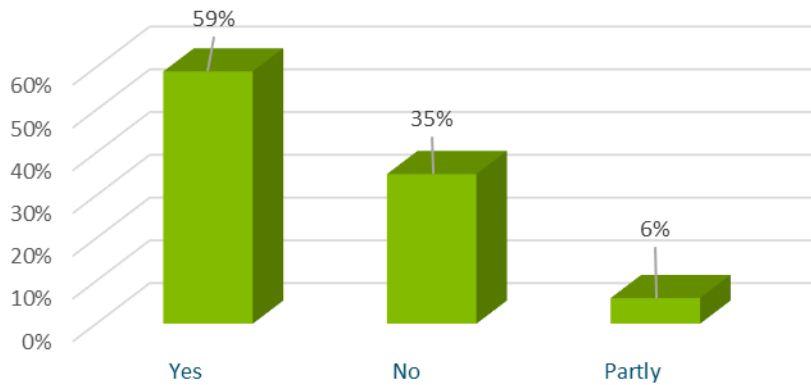


Of those who asked questions, 59% answered yes when asked if their question was answered in a manner that made them fully understand the information, as this comment illustrates:

“Clear cut and to the point so you can understand clearly”.

35% of respondents answered no and 6% answered partly, explaining that she “doesn’t understand English so communication was difficult”. Respondent added that despite the language barrier she still felt comfortable. According to research, there may be some situations in which patients are unable to grasp the responses to their queries. These situations may arise because of a language barrier or specific medical issues. Therefore, it is crucial to consider how the service can meet these groups’ demands.

If you asked any questions were they answered in a manner that made you fully understand the information?



Next, respondents were asked if they agreed that their phlebotomist was highly skilled at drawing blood, based on their own perspective, and 100% answered yes. Respondents made these comments:

"Very quick, professional".

"They were fantastic, no issues at all, he found the vein".

"Did it perfectly".

"Fantastic".

"Didn't feel anything, perfect".

"It was comfortable".

"He found my veins quickly and painless".

All respondents (100%) said that they were treated in a courteous and professional manner with comments like:

"Excellent"

"Very friendly and kind"

Additionally, all respondents agreed that they were made comfortable before pricking. These results imply that the service employs highly qualified personnel with superior communication and practical skills, which enhances the user experience.

Respondents then were asked to describe their overall experience of blood testing service at Barking Community Hospital, and this is the feedback that was provided:

"Not having long to wait for an appointment. No walk-in centres".

"Fantastic. Friendly staff"

"It's fine. Quick service"

"It was good. Quicker appointment and getting the blood at the first go".

"Quick and efficient. Seen before appointment time".

"It's fine. It just takes seconds so in my opinion everything is fine".

"The unfortunate thing is that you must book. I had to travel far (urgent blood test)"

"The actual blood testing is absolutely fine".

"The phlebotomist is good. I can see them on time".

"Good experience. Because it is scheduled, it is not a long waiting time on site".

"I never have problems here. I'm very happy with the service. She is very kind, loving and caring."

Respondents are benefiting from not having to wait in the queue and from having an appointment time, which implies that the local community is embracing appointment-only service due to its effective testing and time-saving advantages. Professional and highly skilled employees enhance the excellent experience for residents.

4.4 Environment

The waiting area and collection room are likely consistently kept to a high standard of cleanliness because 56% of respondents said they were "very clean," and 44% said they were "clean." Respondents then were asked if there was anything that could be done to make the environment more welcoming and relaxing, and these responses were provided:

"It is all right, much better than it was. Fewer people"

"Maybe a cup of tea to be available but nothing major".

"Good as it is".

"It's relaxing already".

Considering how little time they have to wait for their appointment, the results show that patients believe the environment for the operation is pleasant and relaxing enough.

4.5 Feedback from staff

Authorised representatives also spoke to 2 members of staff who were performing blood testing that day, and this was how they described their work:

- Stated they work from 8 am to 4 pm with a 30-minute lunch break at 12 pm
- There is a 10-minute break every hour to allow staff to rest and catch up with the administrative tasks.
- They see around 65 people a day plus an extra 5 or 6 which are usually elderly people who struggle with the booking system.

Here are some comments about the experience and nature of their work:

"Some patients can be abusive but not as much as before and the people waiting in here are nice. Waiting times inside the clinic have decreased and people now must book 2 weeks in advance, but sometimes the doctor will offer urgent appointments but not everyone wants to book it which I find strange sometimes."

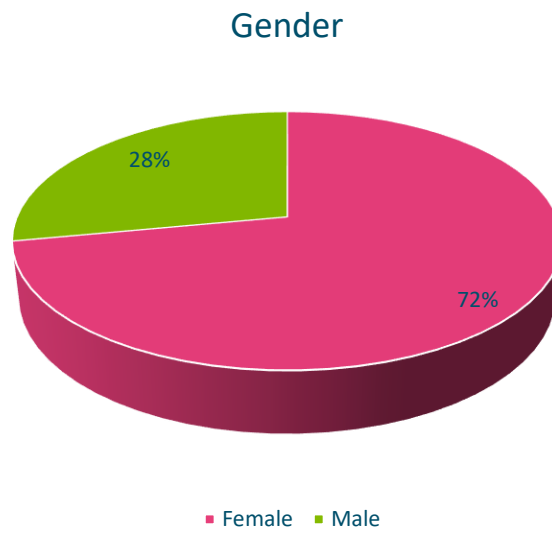
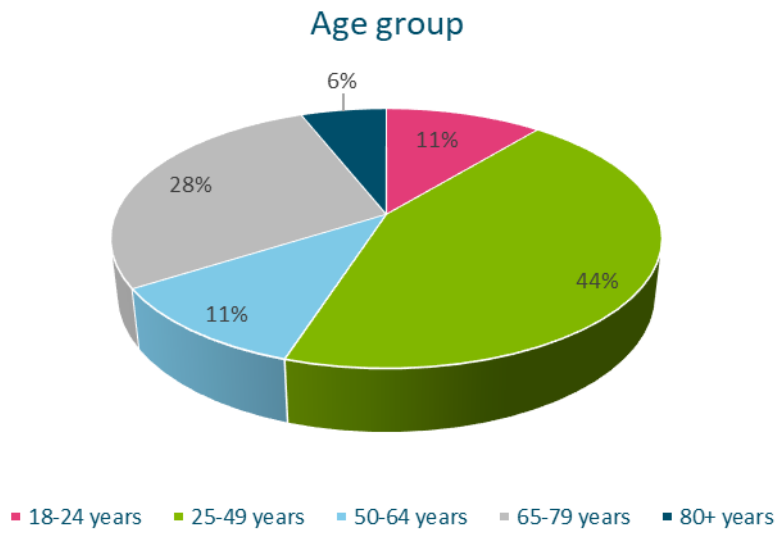
"People used to wait 2+ hours in long queues but now people get seen quicker with the new booking system where you can call someone or use the website. Sometimes we have difficult patients who come in late demanding to be seen despite the messages sent out to remind patients. We still try to fit in these patients when there is space."

5. Recommendations

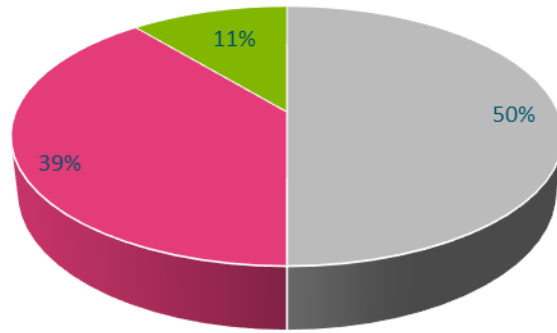
Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham would like to suggest these recommendations to NELFT considering all the data gathered during the Enter and View visit:

1. Continue to provide all residents with the information they require regarding how to get ready for a blood test.
2. Ascertain that the online booking system can accommodate appointments and that clear instructions are posted online notifying residents of the release of appointment slots.
3. Continue keeping to your established appointment times as residents appreciate speedy testing and brief wait times for appointments.
4. Ensure the best possible assistance throughout the procedure for any patient who is afraid of blood or needles.
5. Healthwatch suggests giving patients who have a language barrier a brochure in their native tongue that explains the procedure and what happens next.
6. Maintain your professional and courteous service standards since the community values them.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

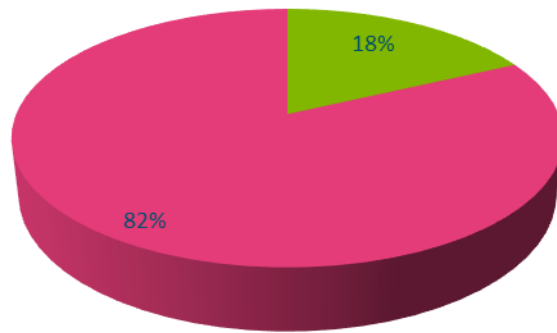


Ethnicity



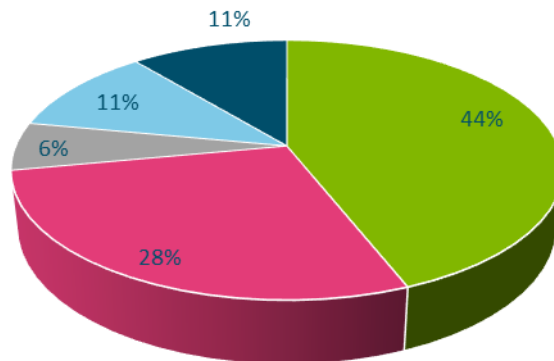
■ White British ■ Asian British ■ Black African/Caribbean British

Do you consider yourself a carer?



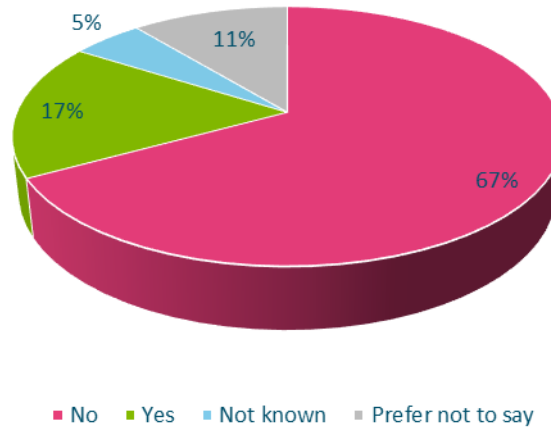
■ Yes ■ No

Religion

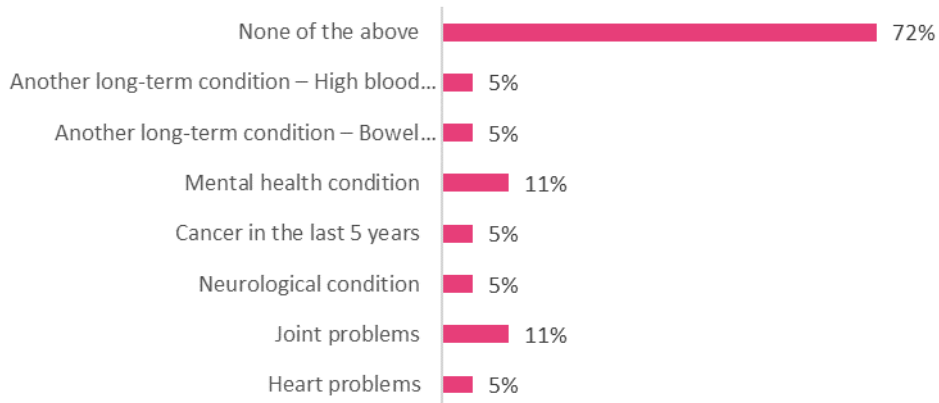


■ Christian ■ Muslim ■ Sikh ■ No religion ■ Not known

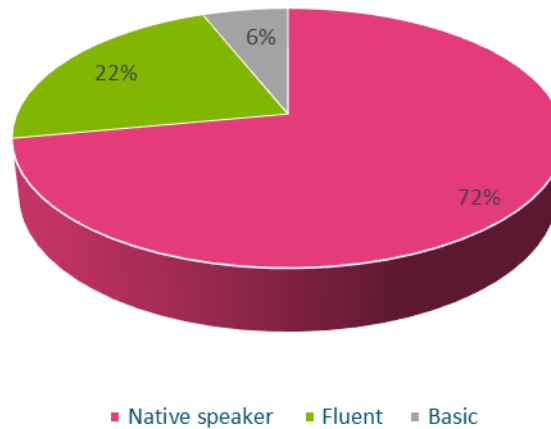
Do you have a disability?



Conditions and disabilities that are expected to last 12 months or more



Level of spoken English



Response from the service provider



Thank you for attending Barking Hospital Phlebotomy Service, I acknowledge recommendations of your detailed report.

Overall, it was a positive result, thank you.

Actions to take forward:

- Service Lead to contact Equality & Diversity team for advice regarding signage in various languages Blood Testing Service.
- All staff to complete Customer Care Training essential to the role.
- We have added the information on booking page informing patients new appointments are added every Monday.

Kind Regards julie.anthony@nelft.nhs.uk



healthwatch
Barking and
Dagenham

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham

www.healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk

t: 0800 298 5331

e: info@healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk

 [@HealthwatchBD](https://twitter.com/HealthwatchBD)

 [Facebook.com/Healthwatch.bd](https://www.facebook.com/Healthwatch.bd)