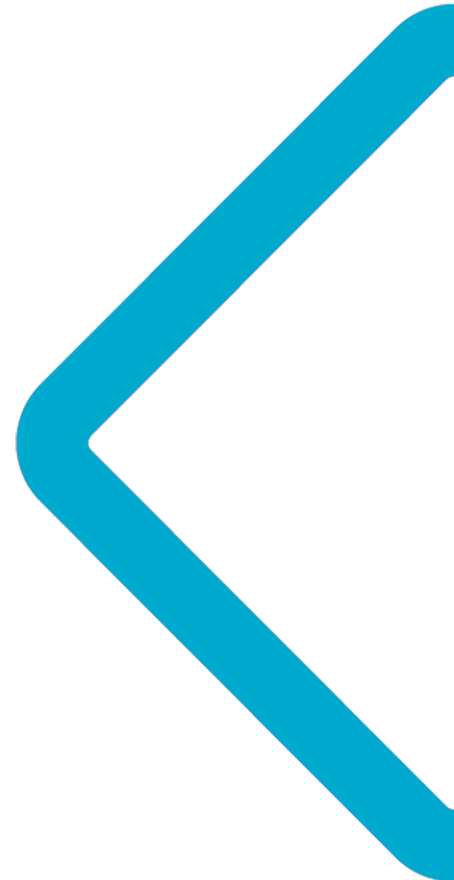


GP General Access Summary of findings



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A long, covered boardwalk stretches into the distance under a vibrant sunset sky. The boardwalk is flanked by a series of repeating arches supported by dark posts. From each arch, a classic-style lantern hangs down, casting a warm glow. The boardwalk itself is paved with light-colored bricks, and a central path of darker bricks leads the eye towards the horizon. In the background, a small pavilion with a white roof and a lighthouse-like structure are visible. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and pink, with the sun low on the horizon. A semi-transparent blue rectangle is overlaid on the lower-left portion of the image, containing the text "Introduction and background".

Introduction and background

Introduction

- This report presents the findings from the **GP General Access engagement** that we carried out to gather feedback from our residents on their GP practice
- We chose to do this local survey aside from the national GP survey, it was not a requirement
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, GP practices remained open but introduced some important changes to keep staff and patients safe:
 - Every patient contacting a practice was firstly ‘triaged’ over the phone
 - Most people were then offered a remote (phone or video) appointment with a clinician in the first instance
 - Where necessary, patients were offered face-to-face appointments throughout this period, or referred to a different service.
- The engagement aimed to understand local people’s experiences of accessing and using GP services during the COVID-19 pandemic
- This report is produced by NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit (MLCSU).

Background to the engagement

Before the pandemic, patients could walk in, phone or go online to access their practice or book an appointment. Most appointments were face-to-face.

During the pandemic, GP practices remained open but introduced some important changes to protect staff and patients from COVID-19. Every patient who contacted their practice was first 'triaged' on the phone. Most were then offered a remote appointment.

The changes are now being reviewed to ensure patients, staff and the public are satisfied with how services are currently delivered. The CCGs would like to understand the impact of the changes to build on what has worked well.

Note: PC24 and Roe Lane surveys also took place and have some of the same questions, which have been included in the analysis to this report.

Communications and engagement summary

- Patients from the practices were contacted and asked to complete the questionnaire
- Patients were sent text messages or letters containing a link to the online survey
- NHS South Sefton CCG and NHS Southport and Formby CCG promoted the survey links on their websites
- Information packs were provided on how to get involved
- Paper copies and an easy read version of the survey were also made available.



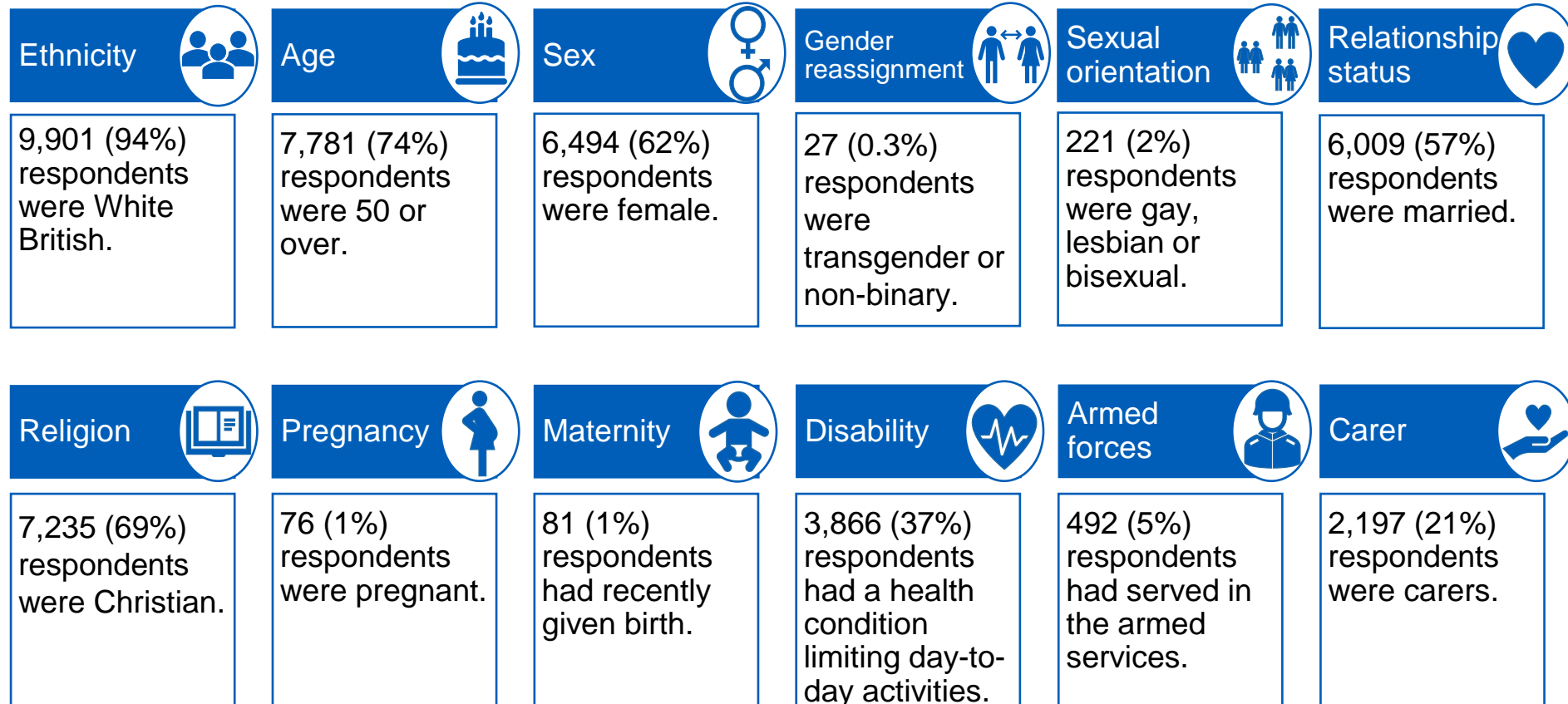
Methodology

- Feedback was gathered using a survey, with one version for south Sefton and another for Southport and Formby
- These surveys had identical questions, apart from the question ‘Which practice would you like to tell us about?’ which only included the relevant practices for that CCG
- Both of the surveys had an easy read version too
- The surveys were hosted online from 18 November 2021 to 28 February 2022
- Paper versions were available on request
- **Overall, 10,664 survey responses were received**
- Not all respondents answered every question. The ‘base’ figure on each slide is the number of respondents answering that question.

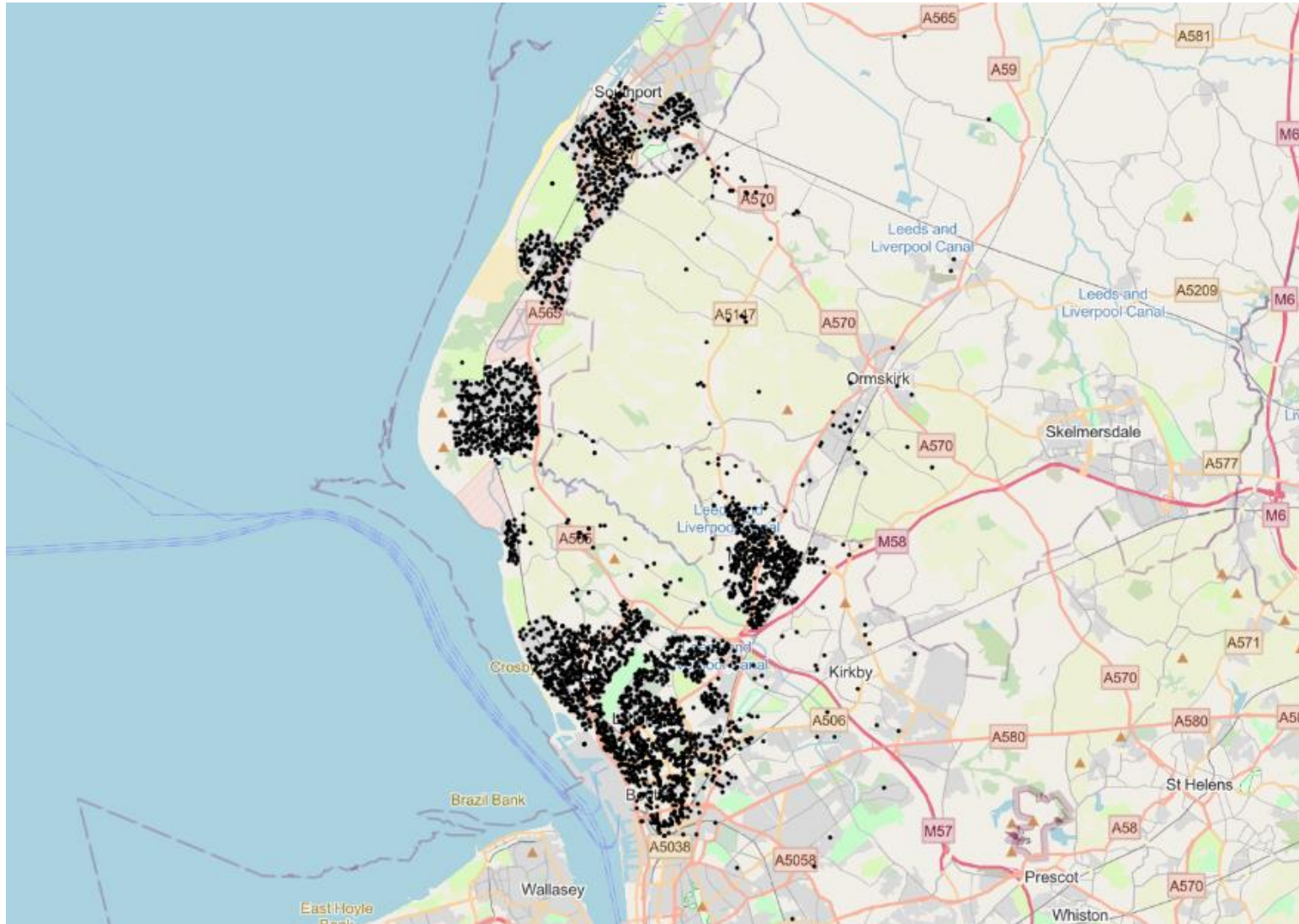
A long wooden boardwalk pier with a series of arches and hanging lanterns, set against a sunset sky. The pier is made of wooden planks and has a central path. The arches are supported by metal poles and have lanterns hanging from them. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, with the sun low on the horizon. The pier extends into the distance, leading towards a small pavilion structure. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic.

Demographic profiling

Demographic profiling: Overall summary



Map of respondents



A long, covered boardwalk stretches into the distance under a vibrant sunset sky. The boardwalk is flanked by a series of repeating arches supported by dark posts. Each arch has a hanging lantern, which is illuminated, casting a warm glow. The boardwalk itself is made of wooden planks and has a central strip of lighter-colored material. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and pink, with the sun low on the horizon. In the background, there are some buildings and a body of water.

Experiences of accessing the GP practice

Contacting GP practice

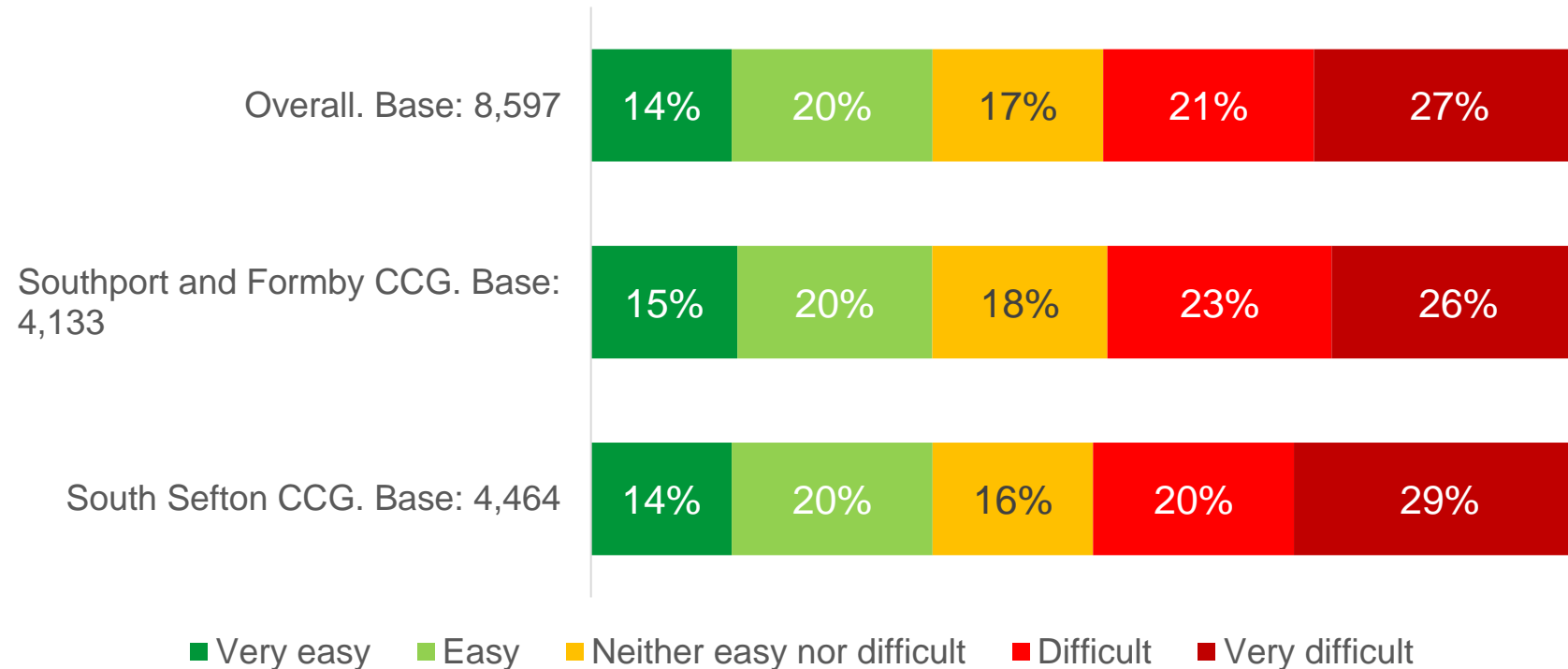
How have you contacted your GP practice during the pandemic?

	Total		South Sefton CCG		Southport and Formby CCG	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Phone	8,614	87%	4,476	85%	4,138	89%
Online request form	3,170	32%	1,908	36%	1,262	27%
Walk-in	884	9%	456	9%	428	9%
Haven't contacted practice	601	6%	323	6%	278	6%
<i>Base</i>	9,936		5,275		4,661	

Accessing practice by phone

How easy was it to access your GP practice by phone during the pandemic?

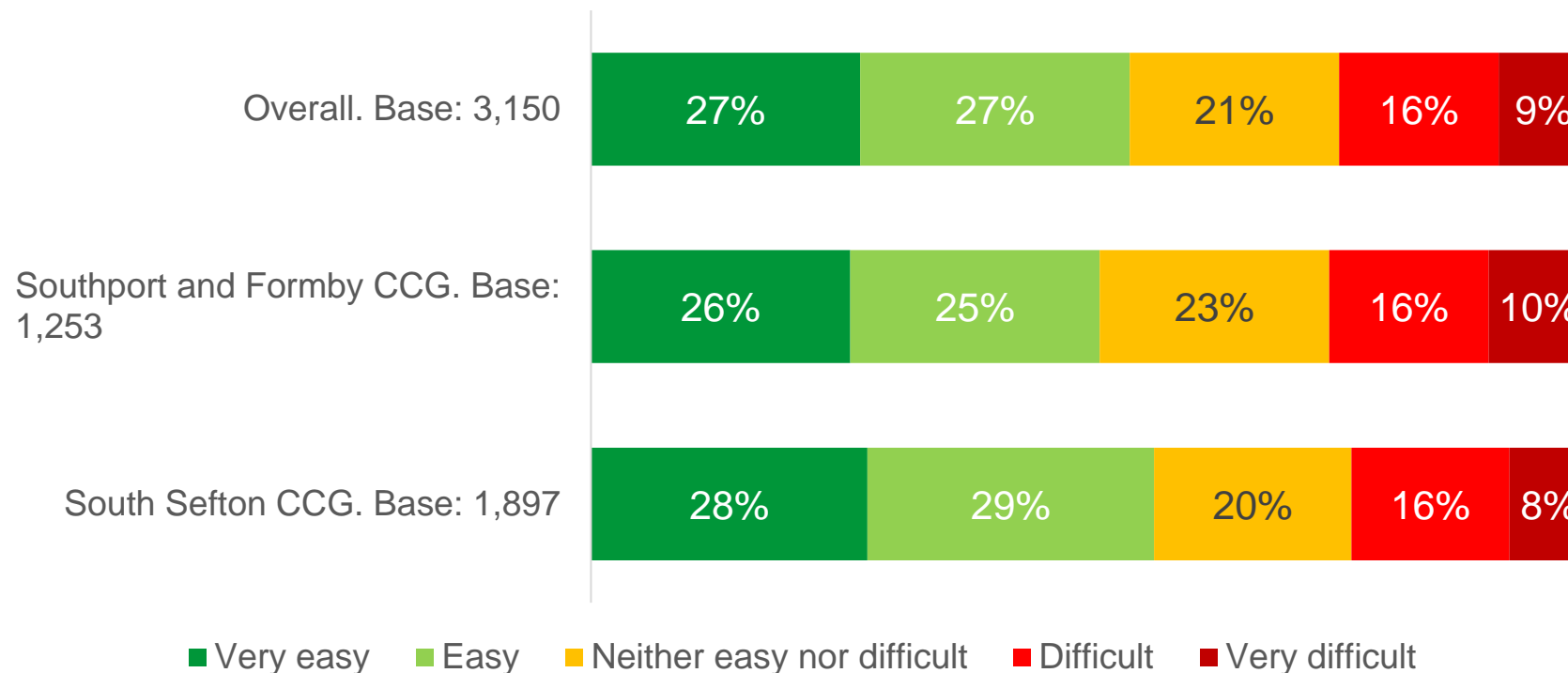
51% Overall total easy/neither easy nor difficult | 49% Overall total difficult



Accessing practice by online request form

How easy was it to access your GP practice by online request form during the pandemic?

75% Overall total easy/neither easy nor difficult | **25%** Overall total difficult



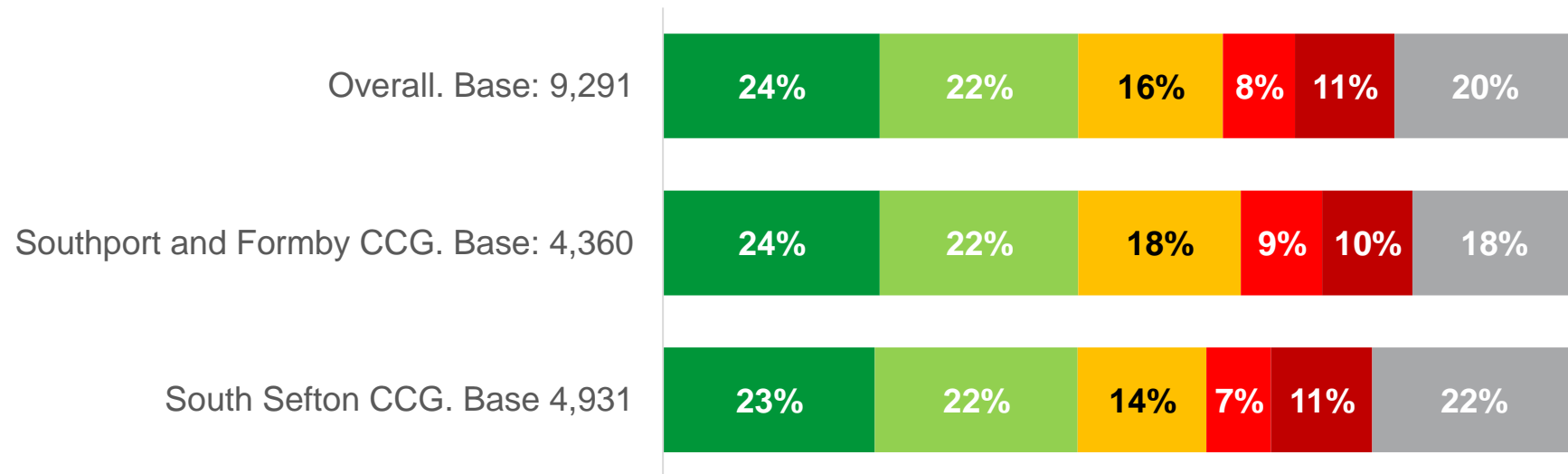
A long, covered boardwalk stretches into the distance under a vibrant sunset sky. The boardwalk is flanked by a series of repeating arches supported by dark posts. Each arch has a hanging lantern, which is illuminated, casting a warm glow. The boardwalk itself is made of wooden planks and has a central strip of lighter-colored material. In the background, a small pavilion with a white roof is visible on the right side of the boardwalk. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and pink, with the sun low on the horizon. The overall atmosphere is serene and peaceful.

Experiences of being triaged

Rating experience of being triaged

How would you rate your last experience of being triaged?

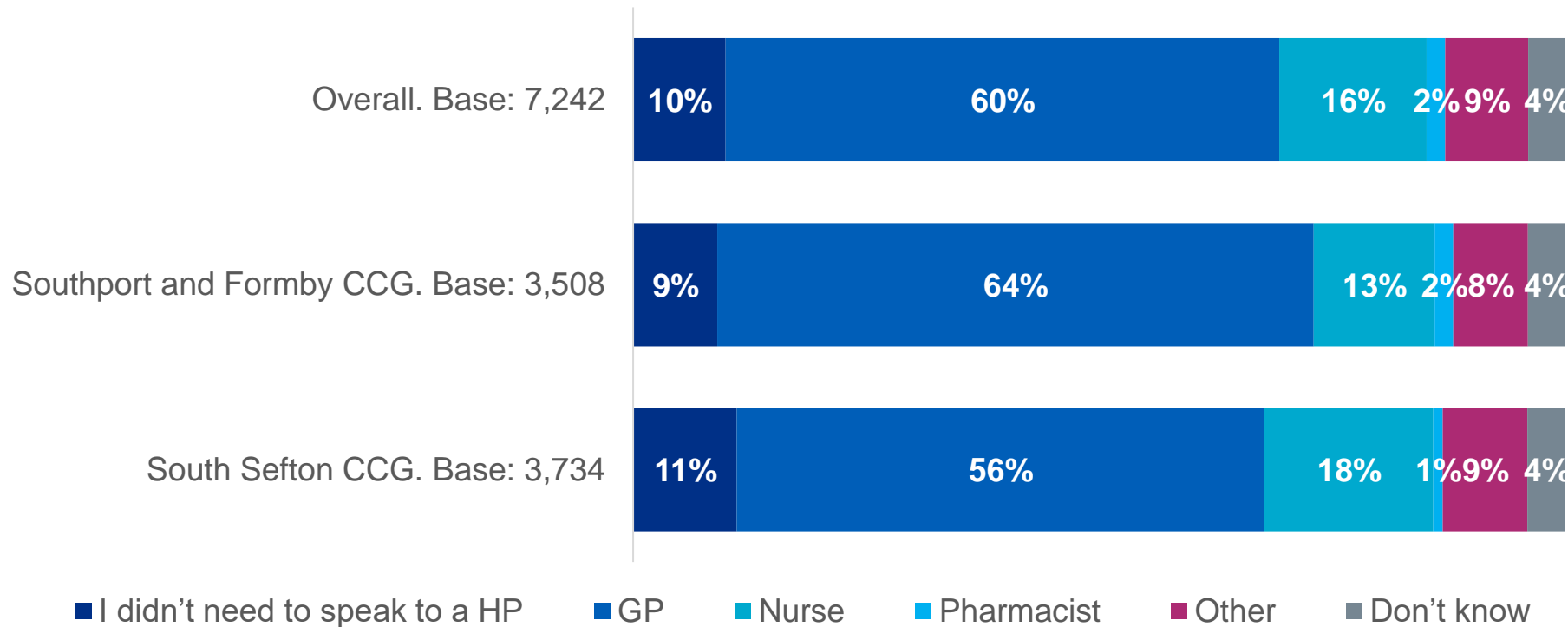
61% Overall total good/neither good nor poor | **19%** Overall total poor



■ Very good
 ■ Good
 ■ Neither good nor poor
 ■ Poor
 ■ Very poor
 ■ Cannot remember being triaged

Experiences after triage: healthcare professionals

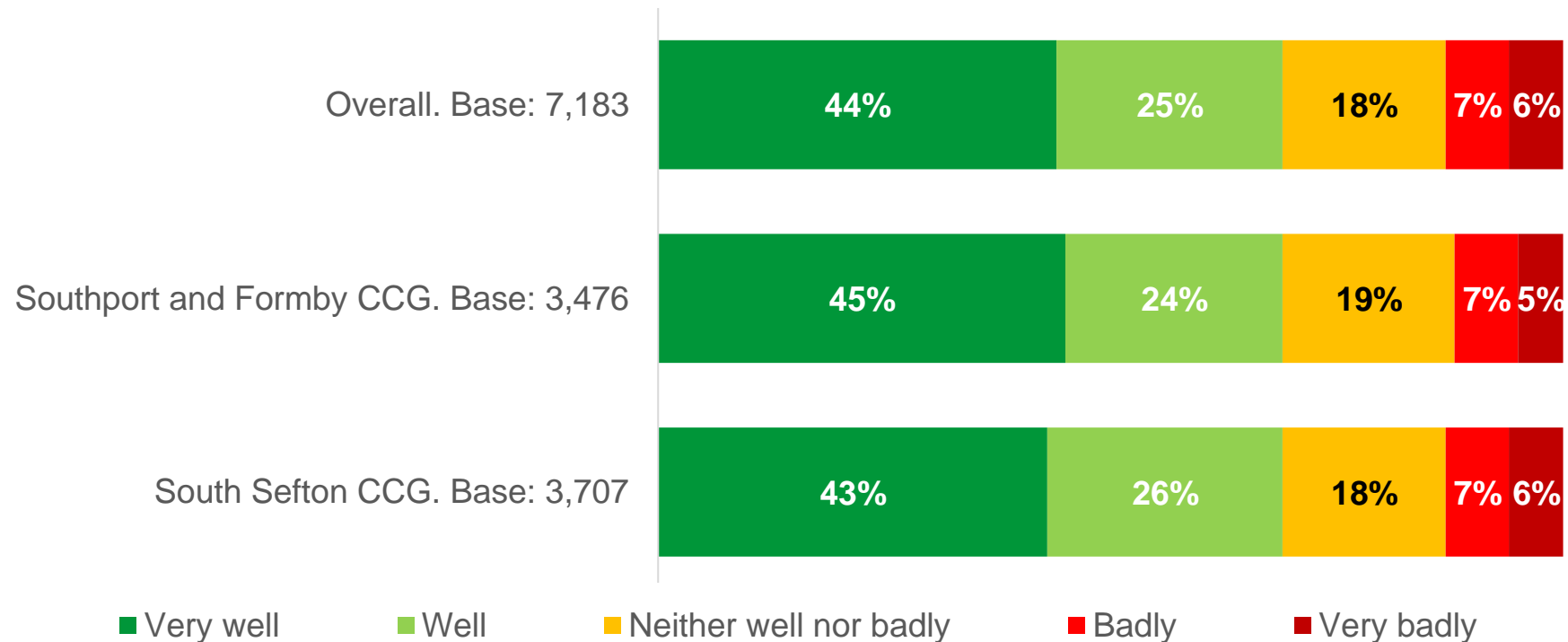
Following triage by your practice, which healthcare professional did you speak to?



Rating consultation after triage

How well do you feel the consultation with the health professional went?

88% Overall total well/neither well nor badly | 12% Overall total badly



Appointment method

Which of the following appointment methods did you use to discuss your healthcare needs during the pandemic (after March 2020)?

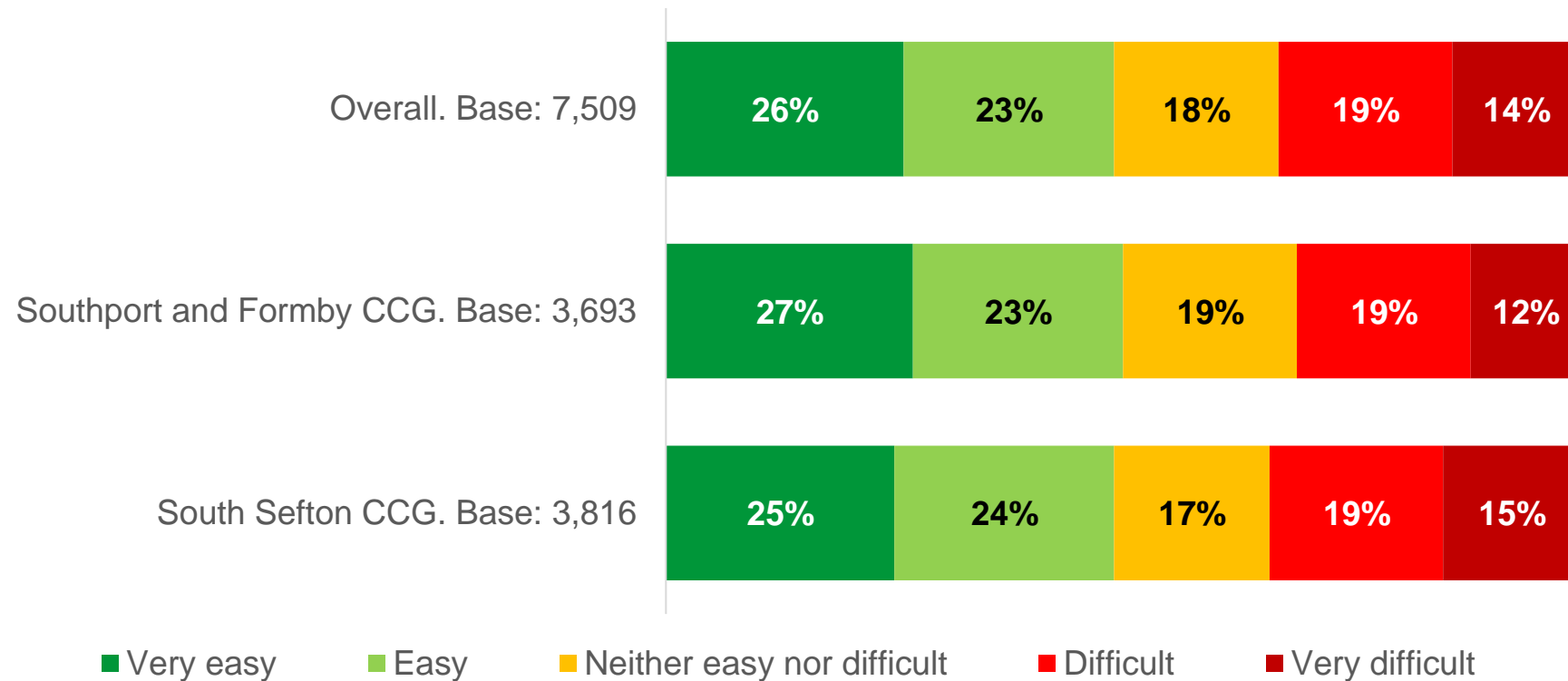
	Total		South Sefton CCG	Southport and Formby CCG
	No	%		
Phone	7,567	84%	3,851	3,716
Face-to-face	3,112	35%	1,492	1,620
Online request form	2,446	27%	1,486	960
Virtual online	381	4%	150	231
<i>Base</i>	8,976		4,757	4,219

Respondents were able to select multiple options for this question

Rating appointments by phone

How easy was it to discuss your needs and have a healthcare appointment by phone?

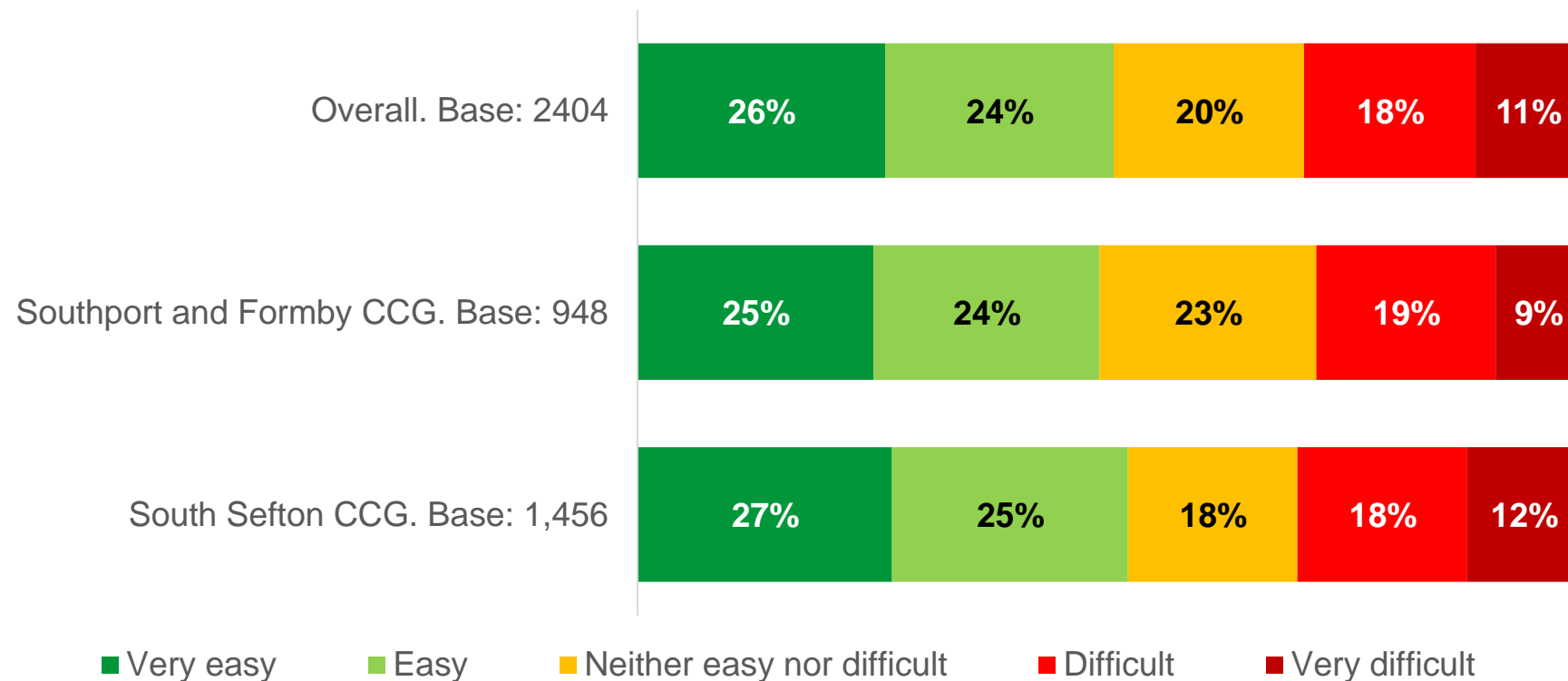
67% Overall total easy/neither easy nor difficult | **33%** Overall total difficult



Rating appointments by online request form

How easy was it to discuss your needs and have a healthcare appointment using the online request form on the practice website (e-consult)?

71% Overall total easy/neither easy nor difficult | 29% Overall total difficult



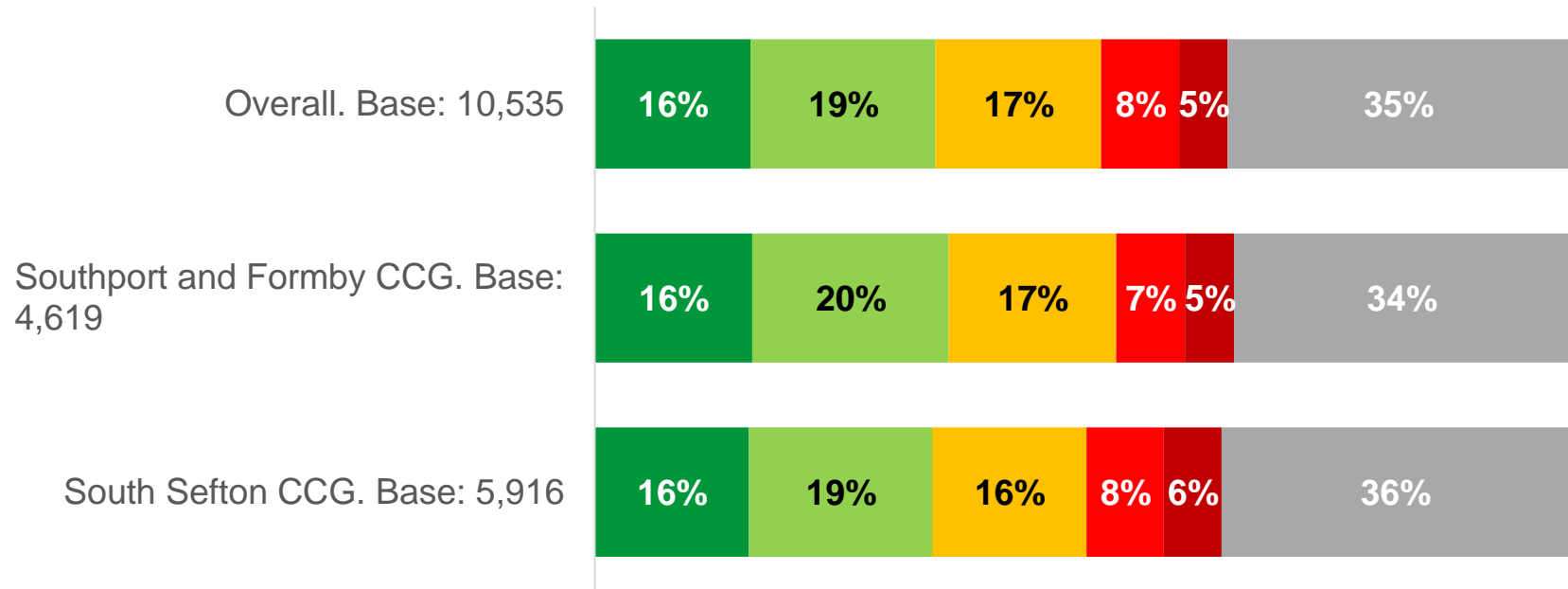
A long, covered walkway with a series of arches and hanging lanterns, leading towards a sunset over the ocean. The walkway is paved with wooden planks and has a central blue-painted path. The arches are supported by metal poles, and the lanterns are hanging from the top of the arches. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, with the sun low on the horizon. The ocean is visible in the distance.

Experiences of using the practice website

Rating using the practice website

How easy is it for you to use and access your GP practice's website?

52% Overall total easy/neither easy nor difficult | 13% Overall total difficult



■ Very easy
 ■ Easy
 ■ Neither easy nor difficult
 ■ Difficult
 ■ Very difficult
 ■ Have not used or accessed it



Summary

Summary of findings: Access



Phoning the practice

- Phone was the top method of contacting GP practices (8,614 / 87%)
- 51% found it easy or neither easy nor difficult to contact their practice by phone during the pandemic (Base: 8,597)
- Respondents highlighted difficulties getting through to practices by phone – but some commented that phone calls were answered promptly
- Concern over lack of appointment availability was highlighted.



Technology

- 75% found it easy or neither easy nor difficult to contact their practice via the online request form (Base: 3,150)
- Respondents commented that the online request form is a good service, but some said the screening questions are inappropriate, and the form is too long
- Key reasons for not using the form were that they were unaware of the service or preferred to speak to someone.



Triage

- 61% rated their experience of being triaged positively or neutrally (Base: 9,291)
- Positive feedback on the triage process included the process being efficient and an appointment being arranged following triage
- Respondents raised concern over the safety and effectiveness of triage by non-medical staff
- 60% spoke to a GP following triage (Base: 7,242)
- 88% rated their appointment following triage positively or neutrally (Base: 7,183).

Summary of findings: Appointments

Telephone appointments



- Phone was the top appointment method (7,567 / 84%)
- 67% found it easy or neither easy nor difficult to have a phone appointment (Base: 7,509)
- Comments were that phone consultations work well; however, respondents also highlighted that waiting times for calls to be answered were long
- Concern over lack of appointment availability was highlighted.

Online request form appointments



- 71% found it easy or neither easy nor difficult to have an online request form (e-consult) appointment (Base: 2,404)
- Comments were that e-consult is an easy way to discuss needs, but also that it is too long and complicated with inappropriate screening questions.

Virtual online appointments



- 73% found it easy or neither easy nor difficult to have a virtual online appointment (Base: 374)
- Comments were that video consultations work well to discuss needs, but also that face-to-face appointments are needed to provide appropriate care and it can be difficult to discuss needs virtually.

Face-to-face appointments



- 84% found it easy or neither easy nor difficult to discuss their needs in a face-to-face appointment (Base: 3,029)
- Comments were that face-to-face appointments were available after triage and that they allow better communication and appropriate care.

Next steps

- GP practices have been sent their individual reports and are currently working up action plans to talk through with their Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) to see what improvements can be made. We will be working with our Primary Care Forum to oversee these plans going forward.
- Building on the work we have done to support residents to understand the pressures to primary care and how to access their GP practice since the pandemic, we are looking to expand on this to highlight the different roles in primary care. This will include the importance of triage to ensure patients are seen by the professional most suited to their needs, as well as raising awareness of some new roles under the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme, such as social prescribers, paramedics, out of hours service, care co-ordinators, physiotherapists, and pharmacists to our public. This will be promoted to residents and partners in Sefton to spread the word about the roles and how they can help.
- We will aim to do more to promote how residents can access their GP online instead of by phone and the use of econsult and the new system, 'patches' set to be put in place by December 2022.
- We will also work with NHS England and the national teams to see what changes are being implemented following the national GP survey and support on this locally.