

# **South Norfolk and Broadland Waiting Well Evaluation**

Evaluation of Orthopaedic waiting list support pilot scheme.

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Please contact Healthwatch Norfolk if you require an easy read; large print or a translated copy of this report.

# Who we are and what we do

Healthwatch Norfolk is the independent voice for patients and service users in the county. We gather people's views of health and social care services in the county and make sure they are heard by the people in charge.

The people who fund and provide services have to listen to you, through us. So, whether you share a good or bad experience with us, your views can help make changes to how services are designed and delivered in Norfolk.

Our work covers all areas of health and social care. This includes GP surgeries, hospitals, dentists, care homes, pharmacies, opticians and more.

We also give out information about the health and care services available in Norfolk and direct people to someone who can help.

1. At Healthwatch Norfolk we have five main objectives:
2. Gather your views and experiences (good and bad)
3. Pay particular attention to underrepresented groups
4. Show how we contribute to making services better
5. Contribute to better signposting of services
6. Work with national organisations to help create better services

We make sure we have lots of ways to collect feedback from people who use Norfolk's health and social care services. This means that everyone has the same chance to be heard.

# Summary

## Why and how we looked at this

South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils have been piloting a scheme, called Waiting Well, aimed at supporting patients in areas who are currently on the waiting list for orthopaedic treatment/ surgery at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals (NNUH). Patients were contacted by the District Councils and offered support based on their level of need, including home adaptations, physiotherapy, and mental wellbeing support.

South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils commissioned Healthwatch Norfolk to evaluate the effectiveness and value of this pilot scheme, by engaging with patients to gather their experiences of receiving support. Baseline questions were asked at initial point of contact to find out how patients' lives have been affected prior to receiving support. A follow up survey was then conducted to gather feedback on patients' experiences of receiving support from the District Councils and whether the support had made things better.

The number of people we aimed to speak with for this project was based on all those on the orthopaedic waiting list, at NNUH, who live within the South Norfolk and Broadland District Council catchment areas. The District Councils reported 797 patients were contacted via phone call or visit. Healthwatch Norfolk received baseline data and contact information for 81 (10%) of these. After a period of time, to allow participants to receive and benefit from support, Healthwatch Norfolk contacted people on this list to offer them the opportunity to take part in the follow up survey. We received 42 (52%) responses either through phone conversations or completed surveys in the post.

From the follow up surveys Healthwatch Norfolk were able to identify where the Waiting Well scheme has worked well and where improvements are needed should South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils continue to offer support through the Waiting Well scheme. Additionally, these findings could be useful for other District Councils should they choose to roll out similar schemes.

## What we found out and what this means

We heard from 42 (52%) of those who we had contact details for, however 13 (31%) told us that they had no recollection of being contacted by South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils or were aware of what the Waiting Well scheme was.

Home adaptations were the most common requested support, with 21 (50%) of the 42 participants wanting to access this kind of support. We also heard that the main reasons for people taking part in the scheme was to improve their quality of life or because they were struggling to cope. Additionally, several respondents told us that they took part because they were encouraged by the Council to do so.

We received a mixed response of both good and bad experiences of the Waiting Well scheme from participants. Whilst some participants received support in a prompt manner, others told us they did not receive any support at all or were rejected/did not qualify for support that they were offered.

Those who had an overall good experience were happy with both the speed in which they received support and the level of communication from the Council during the process. Additionally, those who had a good experience receiving support from the Council felt that the support offered to them at the time was right for their needs and where participants were not sure what they needed assessments were offered to help identify suitable options.

Those who had a negative experience of the Waiting Well scheme included those who did not receive support from the Councils or did not meet eligibility criteria for support. Others found that communication from the Councils was minimal, or non-existent, after the initial contact by a Council representative. Several felt that a better follow up procedure should be in place to check that support has actually been received.

One area that participants felt there needed to be improvements was regarding the information about the Waiting Well scheme. Of those we heard from few knew the scheme was called 'Waiting Well', furthermore participants felt that initial contact was out of the blue and would have preferred to have more information prior to the Council representative reaching out to them.

An area for concern that we identified was that participants were unaware that Healthwatch Norfolk would be contacting them to follow up and gather their feedback on their experiences of receiving support. Some also told us that they were surprised to receive the initial contact from the Council and felt that written information prior to this would have been beneficial to understand how and why their contact information had been shared with the Council.

## Recommendations

From the findings of this piece of work, several recommendations can be made for South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils regarding the Waiting Well scheme and how to improve this going forward.

1. Information – improve the information available about the scheme with materials such as leaflets to detail available support options allowing patients time to review and consider options. If a scheme is being referred to with an internal name (e.g. Waiting Well) ensure that patients taking part are aware of this so they are able to reference this where necessary.
2. Communication – improve the communication with those who agree to receive support to keep them updated on the progress of when support will be given to them. Additionally, provide a contact number of those running the scheme so issues can be addressed in good time and so patients can get in touch should they change their mind regarding receiving support.
3. Follow up – develop a follow up procedure to check in with patients and ensure that support has been received, if the support is suitable/appropriate/fit for purpose, and to determine if support is still needed or further support required.
4. Transparency – ensure patients are aware about where their contact information has come from, and who it is being shared with (if applicable) so that they are not surprised by any future contact regarding the scheme.

The scheme itself would appear to be very beneficial for patients on the waiting list for orthopaedic surgery and would be valuable to continue/take forward. However, issues around communication, information, and transparency would need to be addressed for this to be successful and would help with the uptake of the scheme itself.

# Why we looked at this

Orthopaedic surgery deals with acute injuries, congenital and acquired disorders, and chronic arthritic or overuse conditions of bones, joints, and associated soft tissues such as, ligaments, nerves, and muscles (RCS England, 2022). For patients that are waiting for orthopaedic surgery, such as knee or hip operations/replacements, the wait can be lengthy and can have a negative impact on a patient's quality of life as well as that of their family members, loved ones, or carers.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the NHS had a target waiting time of up to 18 weeks for hip replacement surgery. However, in February 2022, the British Orthopaedic Association (BOA) reported that elective Trauma and Orthopaedic surgery 'topped' the waiting list data released by NHS England and Improvement. The Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals (NNUH) NHS Foundation Trust, at time of writing, reports various wait times with four weeks' average for first outpatient appointments and 35 weeks' average for treatment (My Planned Care, 2022). Additionally, at the beginning of this project, time from GP referral to treatment in the Orthopaedic department was up to 98 weeks for 90% of patients.

A report, published by the Eastern Daily Press, from June 2022 noted that in October 2021 almost 8,000 people had been waiting for more than 104 weeks for procedures at NNUH. Whilst this number had reduced drastically (down to 392 by June), the focus on clearing the backlog of patients, who had waited over 104 weeks, had had a 'knock-on' effect for those who had been waiting for shorter periods (Hannant, 2022).

Whilst on the waiting list for a prolonged time patients can experience significant impacts to their physical and mental health (BOA, 2022) such as reduced motility and physical activity, lack of independence, potential loss of earnings, and a decline in mental health. Impacts can also be seen in family members and loved ones who may need to take time to care for and support individuals.

South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils have been piloting a scheme, called Waiting Well, aimed at supporting patients in their district areas who are currently on the waiting list for orthopaedic treatment/ surgery at the NNUH. Patients would be contacted by the District Councils and offered support based

on their level of need. Such support options could include home adaptations, physiotherapy, and mental wellbeing support. The scheme hoped to provide sufficient support to prevent patients from reaching a point of crisis and ease the pressure on the wider health and care system.

South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils commissioned Healthwatch Norfolk to evaluate the effectiveness and value of the pilot scheme by engaging with patients, taking part in the scheme, to gather their experiences of receiving support.

The feedback we received helped us to identify where the Waiting Well scheme has worked well and where improvements are needed to ensure success, should the scheme be continued by South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils, or adopted by other local Councils.



# How we did this

## Methodology

The project aimed to collect views and feedback to evaluate the South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils Waiting Well scheme and identify where things were going well with the scheme and where improvements are needed.

Feedback was gathered through a survey conducted by Healthwatch Norfolk after a patient agreed with the District Councils, to take part.

The target audience of this project were all those who are currently on the waiting list for orthopaedic treatment/surgery at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust who fall into the District Council areas, as well as their family members/carers.

Healthwatch Norfolk designed a set of initial baseline questions to gather data on how patients' lives have been affected prior to receiving support and provided these to the District Council to ask when approaching participants.

Additionally, a set of follow up questions were designed that formed the basis of a survey to gather feedback on patients experiences of receiving support from the District Councils and how that support had impacted their lives whilst on the waiting list for orthopaedic treatment.

The baseline and follow up feedback is evaluated in section 3 of this report.

## Baseline Data

To obtain patient views on how their condition has affected their lives, both physically and mentally, as well as how it has affected relationships Healthwatch Norfolk developed a small set of questions to ask participants before they received any support from South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils.

In our baseline questions to patients, we wanted to know how their condition had:

- Affected their ability to exercise and stay healthy.
- Affected their mental health.
- Affected their ability to work.
- Affected their independence.
- Affected their relationships with family and friends.

These questions were provided to a representative employed by the District Council who would make the initial contact with patients on the orthopaedic waiting list, by phone call or in-person visit. If the patient wished to take part in the Waiting Well scheme the Council representative would ask these as a part of their assessment.

Should an individual not wish to take part, they were given the option to give feedback as to why.

A copy of these questions can be seen in Appendix 1.

## **Follow up Survey**

To gather views and feedback on participants experiences of receiving support from the Waiting Well scheme and how the support affected their lives, physical and mental health, and relationships, Healthwatch Norfolk developed a follow up survey to be completed by participants who had agreed to take part in the scheme.

In our follow up questions for after patients had received support we wanted to know:

- Why they chose to take part in the scheme and what support they were offered.
- Their experiences of the scheme and receiving support from the District Councils.
- Whether the available support options were right for them.
- How their lives had been impacted by the support they received.
- If there was anything particularly good about the scheme or anything that needed improvement.

The survey was available as both an online and paper based survey which participants could complete independently. Healthwatch Norfolk contacted participants by phone and gave the option to complete the survey over the phone with a member of staff or receive a paper copy with links to the online version. Healthwatch Norfolk discussed with South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils an appropriate amount of time to give before contacting participants for a follow up, to allow participants to receive and benefit from support, this was agreed to be two months from the initial Council contact with patients.

A copy of these questions can be seen in Appendix 2.

## **Sample Size**

The sample size for this project is based on the patients on the orthopaedic waiting list at NNUH who live within the South Norfolk and Broadland District Council catchment areas. The District Councils reported that they contacted 797 patients, via phone call or visit, of which Healthwatch Norfolk received baseline data and contact information for 81 (10%). Healthwatch Norfolk then contacted this list of participants to offer them the opportunity to take part in the follow up survey, a total of 42 (52%) responses were received either through phone conversation or completed survey in the post.

## **Participant Involvement and Consent**

Participation in the survey relied on patients choosing to take part in the Waiting Well scheme and giving their consent when initially contacted by the Council. Healthwatch Norfolk worked with the District Councils to provide initial baseline data collection forms where participants could record contact details to be shared with Healthwatch Norfolk.

At point of contact from Healthwatch Norfolk (2 months after initial Council contact) patients were given the opportunity to provide feedback. Participation in the follow up survey was entirely voluntary, participants had to consent to their answers and feedback being shared in this report and all responses have been anonymised. Should participants have wanted to leave additional, or more in-depth feedback on other areas of health and social care the survey advised contacting Healthwatch Norfolk at: [enquiries@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk), or by telephone.

## Limitations

To give sufficient time for participants to receive and benefit from support offered by the District Councils a period of two months between initial Council contact and Healthwatch Norfolk's follow up was given. However this meant that if the District Councils experienced delays in contacting patients and collecting the initial data this then impacted our timelines for data collection and analysis. For future evaluations of similar schemes/projects this risk will need to be accounted for when planning project timelines.

# What we found out

## Baseline Data Response collected the District Councils

Baseline responses were collected at initial contact from the South Norfolk and Broadland Council representative and upon agreement to take part in the Waiting Well scheme. A total of 81 participants contact details were given to Healthwatch Norfolk, which was 10% of all the patients contacted by the District Councils (797).

Of those that opted to take part in the Waiting Well scheme, 70 (86%) provided the District Councils with their age. As we would expect, we did not hear from anyone aged 45 or under, however, we did hear from three participants aged 46-55. The majority of participants 47 (58%) were aged 66-85, with 25 (31%) aged 76-85 and 22 (27%) aged 66-75. Eleven participants did not provide their age for the baseline data. A full breakdown of the age groups of participants can be seen in Figure 1.

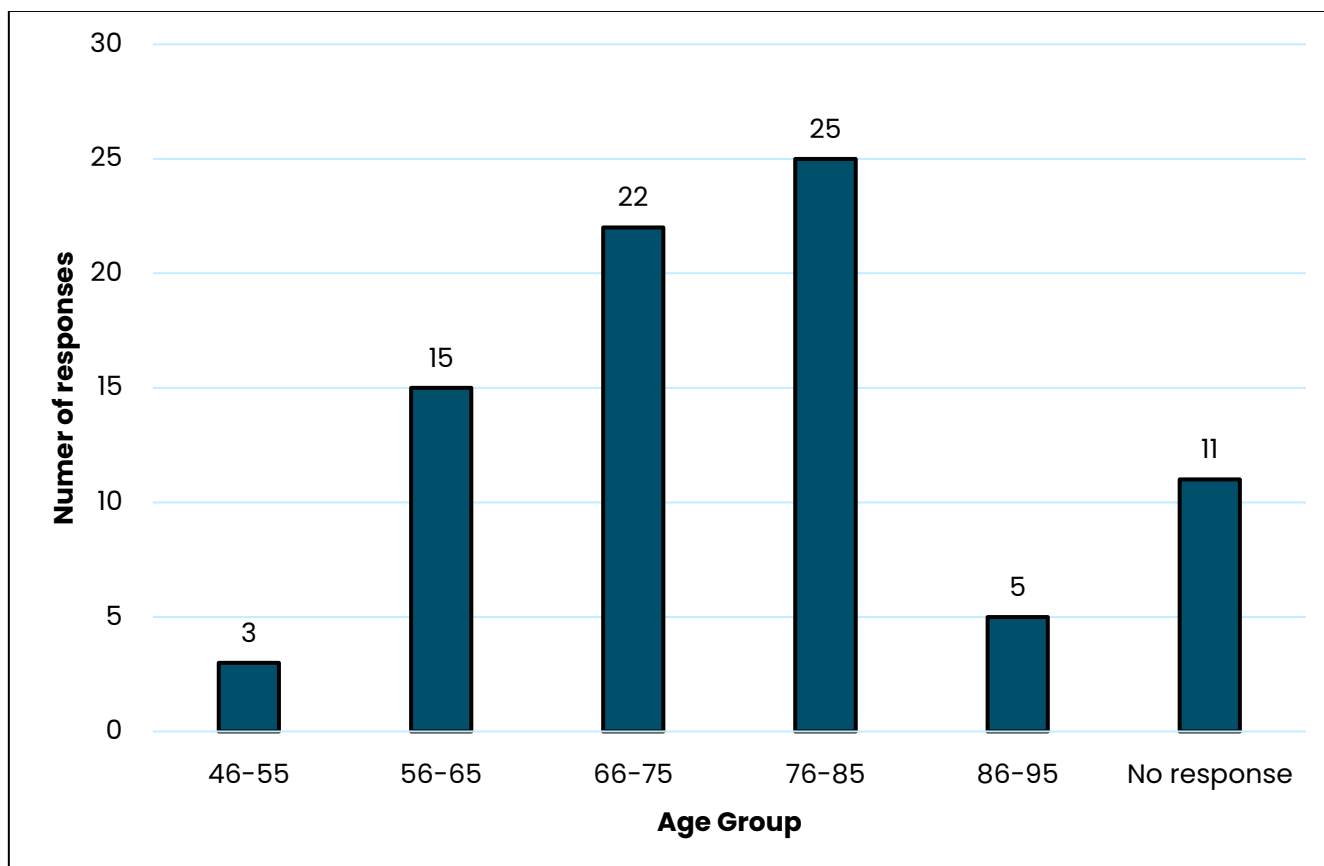


Figure 1. Age groups of participants of the Waiting Well scheme collected by the District Councils.

Of those who took part in the Waiting Well scheme, we asked how various aspects of their life had been impacted by their condition, as shown in Figure 2. Most, 78 (96%), participants told us that their condition had negatively impacted their ability to exercise and stay active. Interestingly two participants said that their ability to exercise and stay active had been positively impacted. One participant did not provide any answer to baseline questions.

When asked how their mental health had been affected 76 (94%) participants told us this had been negatively impacted, and four reported that their mental health had not been impacted. We also asked how their independence had been impacted; 79 (98%) told us this had been negatively impacted, and only one felt this had not been impacted at all.

Most, 54 (67%), participants told us that their ability to work had been negatively impacted by their condition, and 26 (32%) participants said that this had not been impacted or did not apply to them as they were retired.

Finally we asked if their relationships with friends and family had been impacted at all. Seventy-three (90%) participants told us this had been negatively impacted, six (7%) said that there had been no impact, and one told us their relationships had been positively impacted.

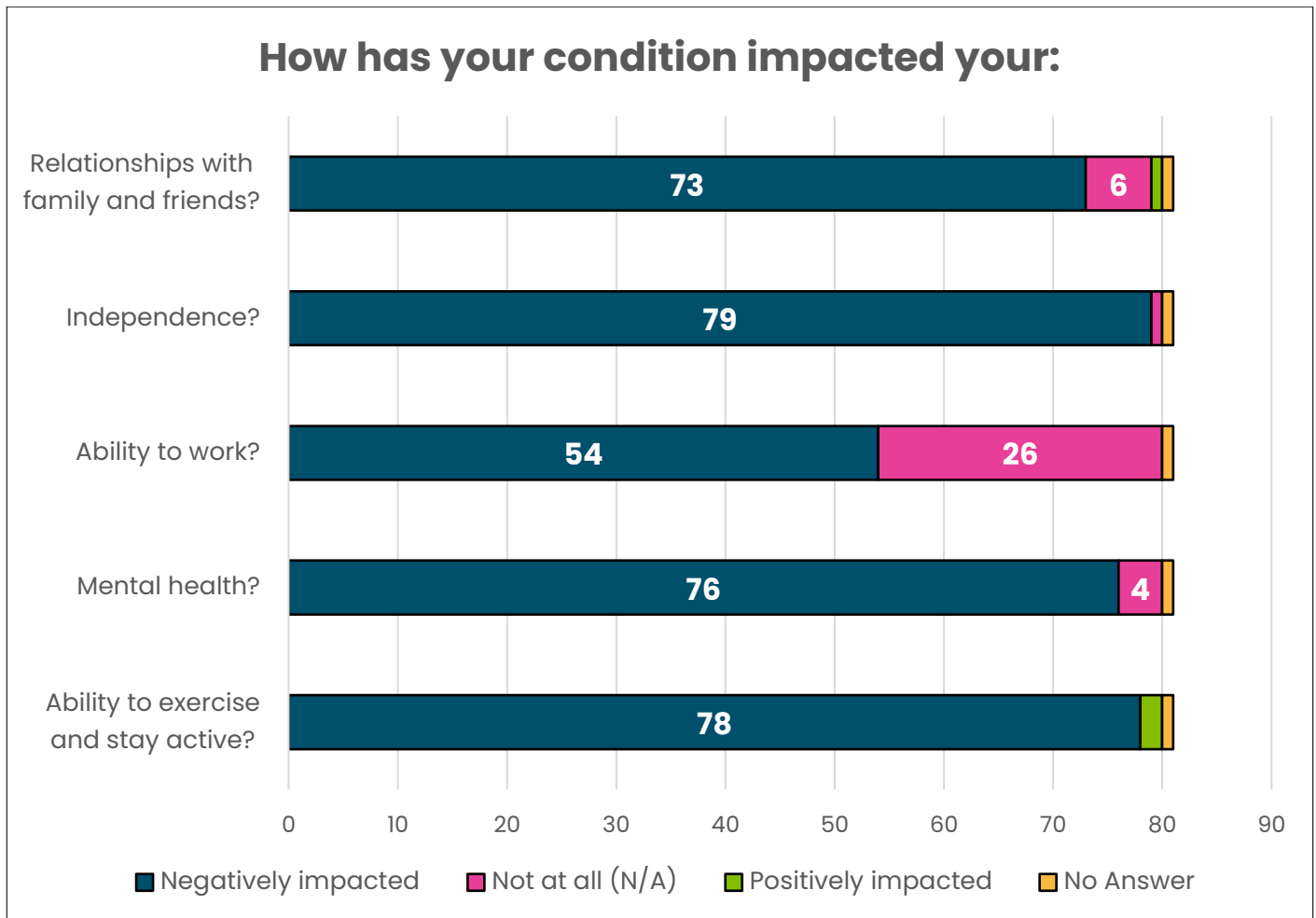


Figure 2. Baseline responses to questions regarding how participants conditions have impacted their lives.

## Follow up Survey Response

For the two-month follow up survey of the 81 participants, that the District Councils provided contact information for, Healthwatch Norfolk heard from 42 (52%) people. The following section presents their responses to the survey, however it should be noted that 13 (31%) participants we heard from had no recollection of being contacted by the District Councils regarding the Waiting Well scheme.

We received one survey after the cut-off date for participants to send us their responses, the feedback for this has not been included as part of the analysis in this section but we have included this in Appendix 4.

Two of the 13 participants who had no recollection believed the Waiting Well scheme was a Healthwatch Norfolk run initiative and that the survey was their first contact regarding support. One of those two participants told us that they had *“been on the waiting list for 3 1/2 years for a knee op”* and at the point of

contact from Healthwatch Norfolk “had already had my [their] operation the previous week”.

Of the 42 who completed the follow up survey most were aged 76-85 (20, 48%). We also heard from one participant aged 46-49. Three participants did not provide their age in either their baseline or follow up response. A breakdown of the age of the 42 respondents can be seen in Figure 3.

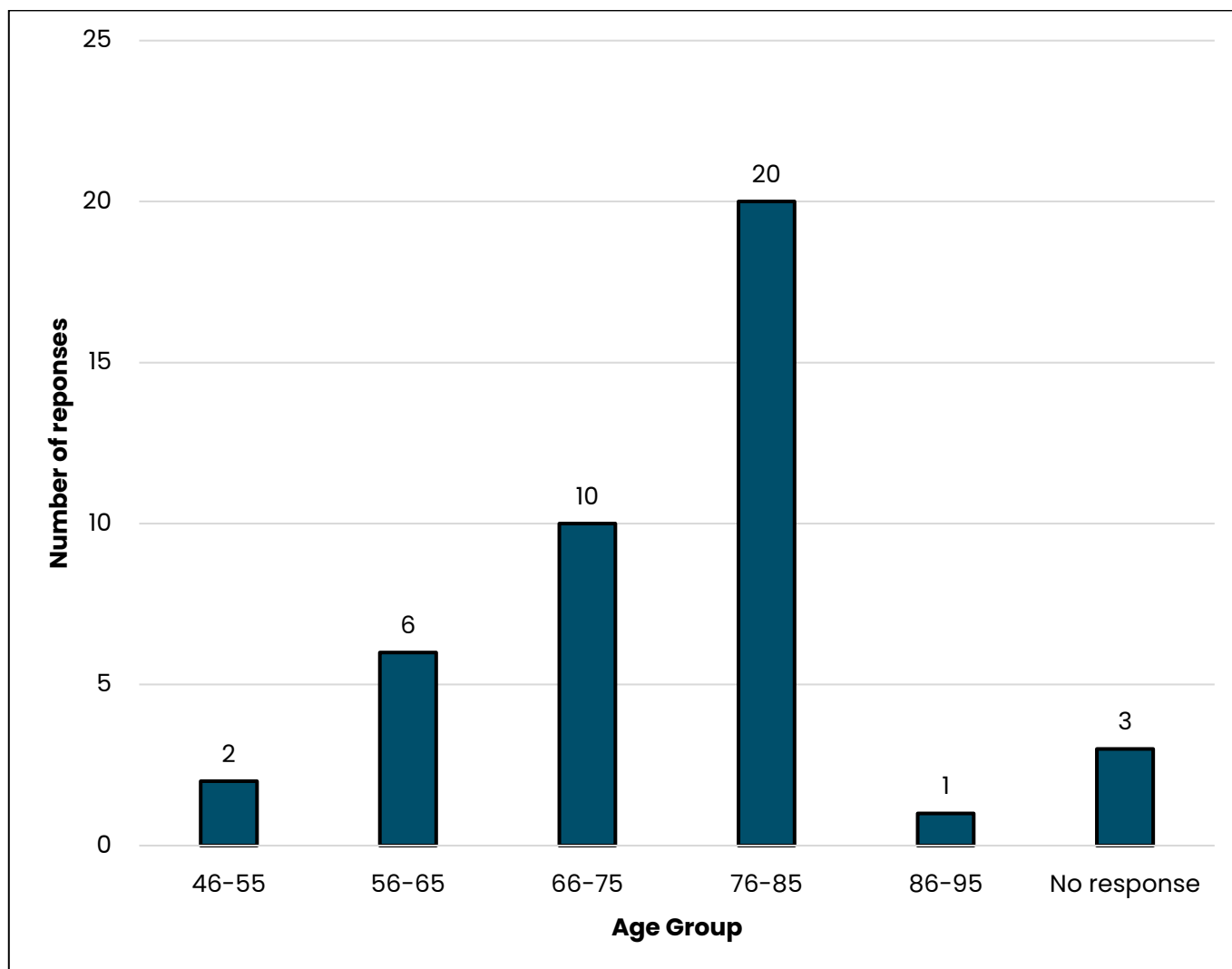


Figure 3. Age groups of 42 participants that answered the follow up survey.

Most respondents to the survey told us they:

- Were aged 76 to 85 (48%, 20)
- Were Female (64%, 27)
- Were White British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh (93%, 39)



For more detailed information regarding the demographics of respondents see Appendix 3.

## Taking part in Waiting Well

We asked participants what support had been offered to them by the District Councils and what support they requested (Figure 4). Half, 21 (50%), of the 42 participants told us that they were offered, or chose to receive, support in the form of home adaptations (e.g. handrails for entrances, stairs, or bathrooms). Four participants (10%) told us that they were not sure/didn't know what support was offered, one told us that they *"Did not know at time of initial contact"* what they would need and asked if it were possible to have an assessment done before choosing.

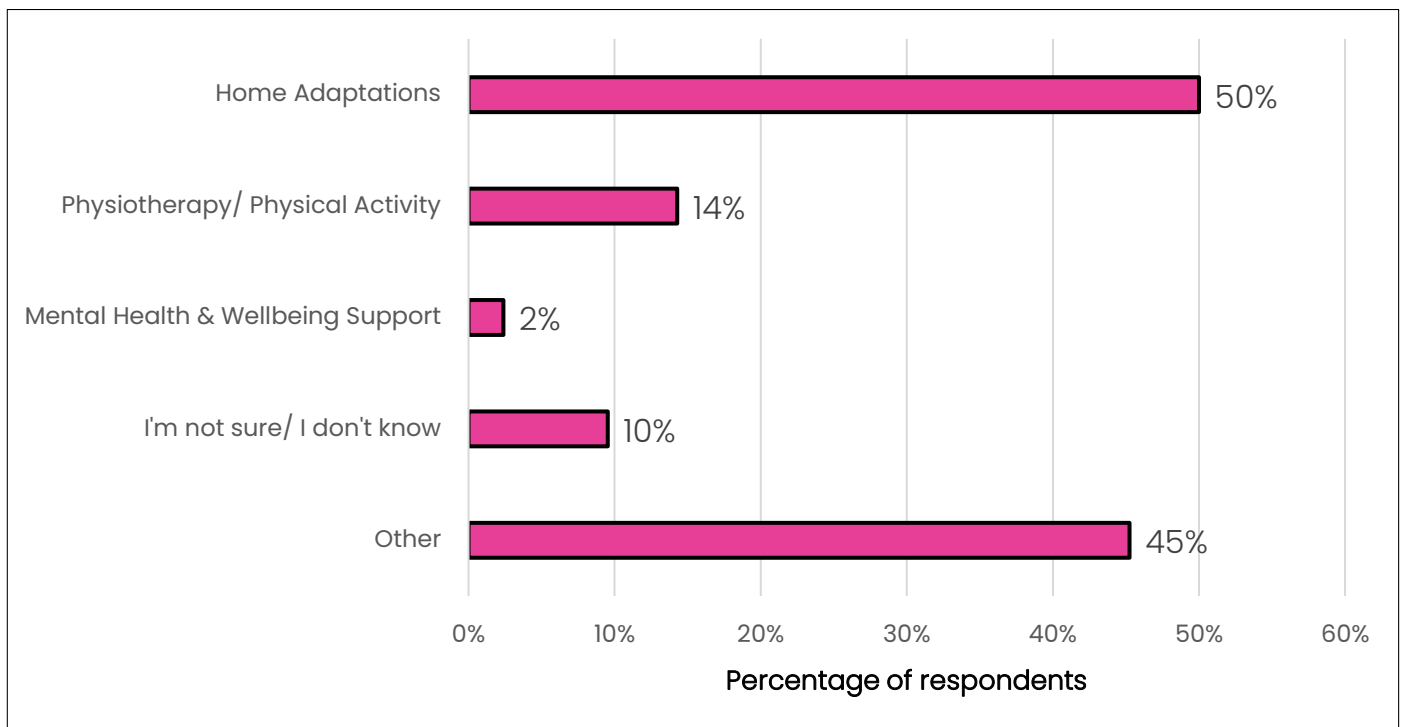


Figure 4. Responses to the question 'What support have you been offered by the scheme?'. Respondents were able to select more than once option.

Respondents who selected the 'Other' option were typically those who had no recollection of being contacted by the Council, or did not request support at point of contact. One participant told us that they had specifically asked for a blue badge and was subsequently sent paperwork to apply for one. Another respondent told us that *"Options were discussed during the call I received but not offered as when I said I live in Norwich (not Broadland or South Norfolk) the man said I didn't qualify"*.

**“I wanted help with access to home but was means tested and did not qualify for help. [...] I talked about problems with access to home but nothing happened. All my hopes for help, not given!”**

We also asked participants why they chose to take part in the Waiting Well scheme (Figure 5). Eleven (26%) told us they chose to take part to improve their quality of life, and 21% (9) that they were struggling to cope.

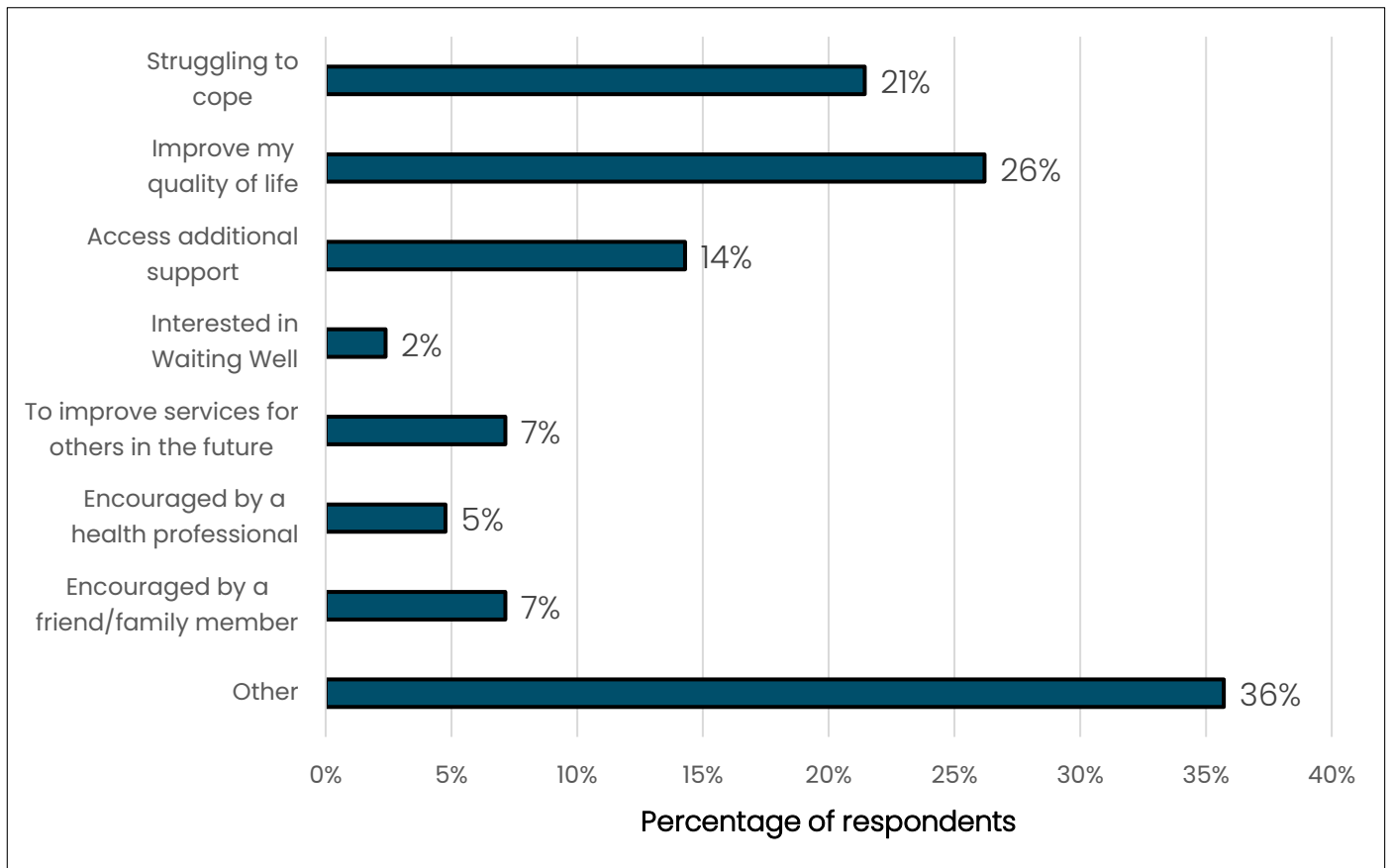


Figure 5. Responses to the question 'Why did you decide to take part in the scheme?'. Respondents could select up to three answers.

Six respondents (14%) told us that they took part as they received a call and were “Encouraged by the Council”. One participant said they were “rang out the blue” and that their “Neighbour had the same.” Another who used the ‘other’ section for this question told us that they were “in pain when contacted” as their reason for taking part.

## Experiences of Waiting Well

We asked participants to rate their experiences of receiving support from the District Councils Waiting Well scheme (Figure 6). Overall 22 (53%) participants

rated their experience as "OK" (24%) or "Good" (29%). Participants told us that their initial contact with the Council representative had been good, *"Telephone call initially friendly and informative"*, with the representative having *"Talked of adaptations to help at home and equipment available"*. Others commented how the staff installing home adaptations were helpful and knowledgeable.

**"The gentleman that came made sure what he was doing was right for me, even putting a small rail at front door, which had been very helpful."**

Of those who rated their experience as "OK" (10, 24%) or "Good" (12, 29%), six had no recollection of being contacted by the District Councils regarding the Waiting Well scheme.

Two of those participants commented that they had previously received support from the District Councils and were rating those experiences and not the Waiting Well scheme. One participant told us they had previously been involved in something called *"broadly active"* some time ago and that they had good experiences of that but that it had *"stopped being suitable due to age, joint pain, and it did not help their problem."* The other respondent with previous support from the Council told us that *"Support received previously has been good"* but recently they *"Contacted Council myself to ask for a ramp but told they [the Council] can't sort it so arranging myself."*

One participant who rated the support as "OK", but also could not recall having been contacted by the Council about Waiting Well, told us that they had recently received mental health support and some home adaptations, which were provided by the Council.

**"Had mental health support a week ago which was lovely. Had steps and a wet room put in. All provided by the Council"**

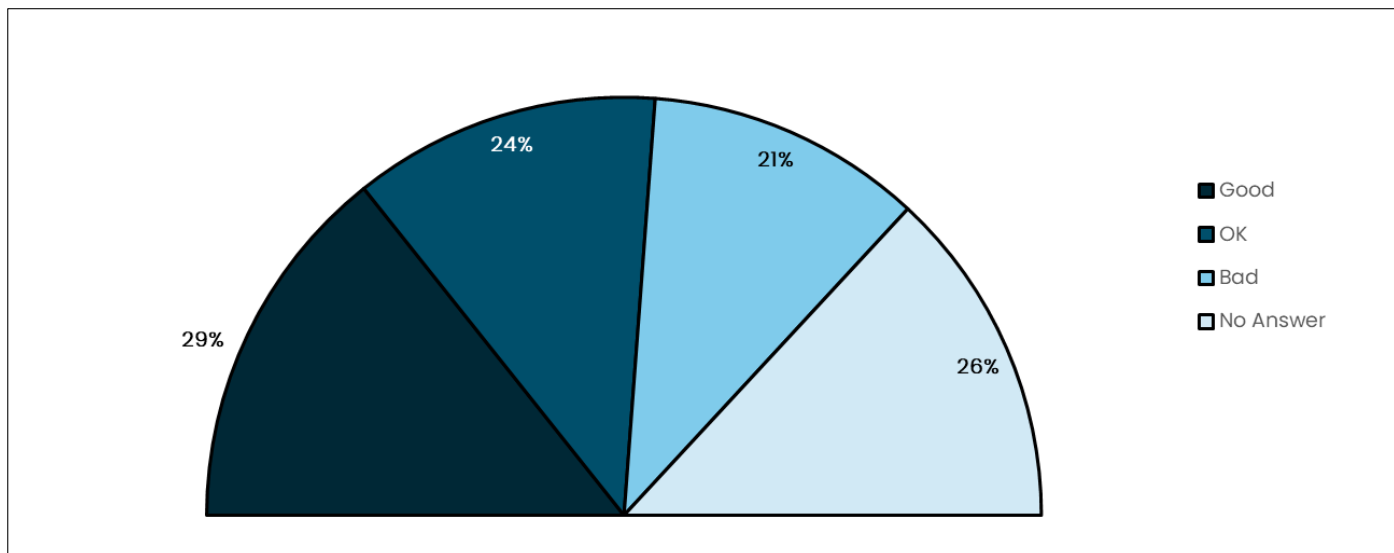


Figure 6. Responses to the question 'How would you rate your overall experience of the scheme?'

Those who told us that their overall experience had been “Bad” (9, 21%) had common issues with their experiences. Some commented that they had not received support due to not meeting eligibility criteria, one told us that because they were not living in their own home, but with family, they were not able to be offered support.

**“Unhappy, really wanted to get help but it would have been better if it was made clear at the start what criteria was necessary to qualify. That earnings & pension mattered.”**

Others who had a negative experience told us that they had issues with communication from the Council after their initial contact, or in one case how, by the time the Council had contacted them, they had already had their operation. One participant told us that they had requested an assessment to help them know what support they would need but had *“heard nothing for a month.”*

Those who did not answer this question (11, 26%) were predominately those who could not recall the initial contact from the Council or receiving any support. One participant, who did not provide a rating, told us that they *“Said they were fine at the time”* of the initial call but feel that *“they [the Council] should have called back to check on them”* at a later stage.

Regarding communication, we also asked participants their views on how good this was when receiving support from the scheme (Figure 7). There were 18 (43%)

participants who felt that the communication was “OK” (8, 19%) or “Good” (10, 24%) however, two of these believed that the Waiting Well scheme was being run by Healthwatch Norfolk, and were rating the communication based on receiving this survey. Additionally, one other rated communication as “OK” despite stating that they had “No Knowledge” of the Waiting Well scheme.

Those who felt that the communication was “OK” or “Good” told us that they had “Lots of contact from the team” and had a good frequency of contact, with one telling us that they heard back after 4/5 days. One who rated the communication as “OK” commented that they had a “Very polite initial call” but that they “haven’t received any further calls.”

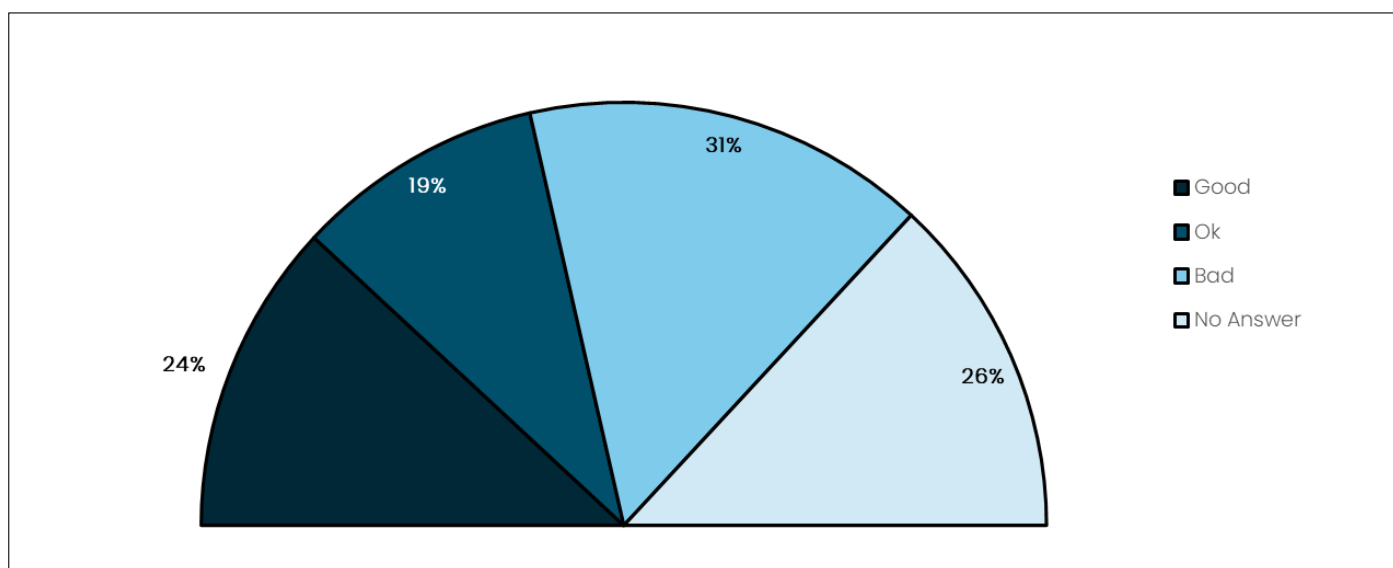


Figure 7. Responses to the question 'How would you rate the communication during the Waiting Well scheme?'

Those who rated the communication as “Bad” typically commented that after the initial contact from the Council offering support there was no follow up. One participant noted that after their initial contact there was no further communication and then a “handy man just turned up a couple days later” without warning. Others who rated the communication as “Bad” included those who had no knowledge or recollection of the scheme. One, who did receive some Council support, said they had not had any communication, and that they “Can’t remember exactly but someone may have been in touch.”

Additionally, two individuals commented that the communication was bad as it wasn’t clear that they did not meet criteria for receiving support, “If I didn’t qualify I don’t see why I was telephoned in the first place.”

“Someone came out of the blue, had a chat, and left a pamphlet then went. No communication after/ Not heard anything since. “What communication!””

We also asked participants to rate the speed in which they received support from the Councils (Figure 8). Those who told us that this was “Good” (11, 26%) commented that they received their support options quickly after their initial contact from the Council, with one participant tell us that, for them, it “*was only a couple of days waiting*”.

“I think I’m correct in saying, first phone call asking if any help needed, we had next call in a week. Rails etc fitted 3 weeks later”

However, 11 (26%) participants told us that the speed in which they received support was “Bad” with several telling us that they had not received any support at all. One participant told us that they were still waiting for a repair to a broken banister as well as supportive equipment for their bathroom. Another participant told us that there was an “*important access problem*” they raised with the Council but had not “*heard anything about this except means testing*”, in the end they “*paid for 2 handles for the backdoor*” themselves, but “*needed much more help than thing to make my [their] life safer.*”

In one case, a participant told us that they called South Norfolk Council only to be diverted to Broadland District Council who then diverted them to Norwich Council. They then attempted to call the Council representative back but no one answered.

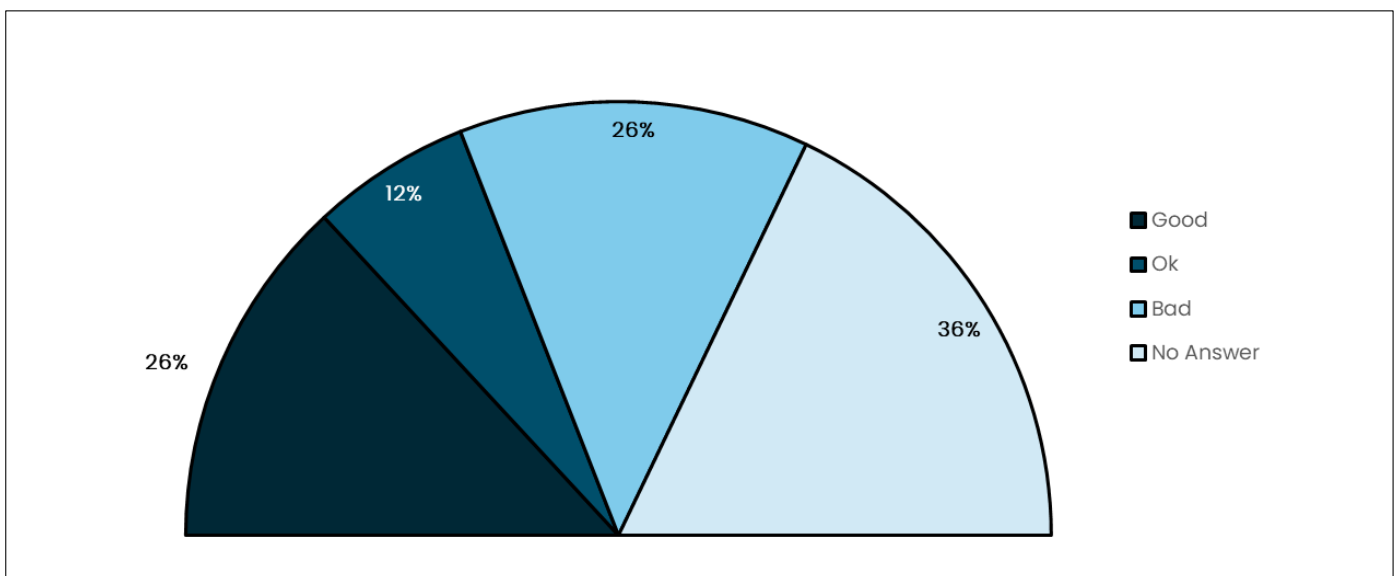


Figure 8. Responses to the question 'How would you rate the speed in which you received support during the Waiting Well scheme?'

We also asked participants if they felt that the support options offered by the waiting well scheme were right for them at the time of contact (Figure 9). Respondents who felt that the right support was offered (12, 29%) told us that the support they received was what they *“needed to help get us [them] by”* and things were *“so much improved”*. One respondent said that they were happy that *“They [the Council] didn’t go through what support was available but asked what was wanted/needed”*.

Those who responded that they were not sure if support was right for them at the time (9, 21%) included some (4) of those who had no recollection of the initial contact or being involved in Waiting Well. Others who were not sure told us that they were asked what they wanted rather than being presented with options, and one participant shared that they weren’t *“sure what was available or what [they] could ask for”*.

**“The physio I got was very helpful but the service is designed for immobile old people. I would have been happy to access a community service at a clinic rather than waste the physios time coming to my house.”**

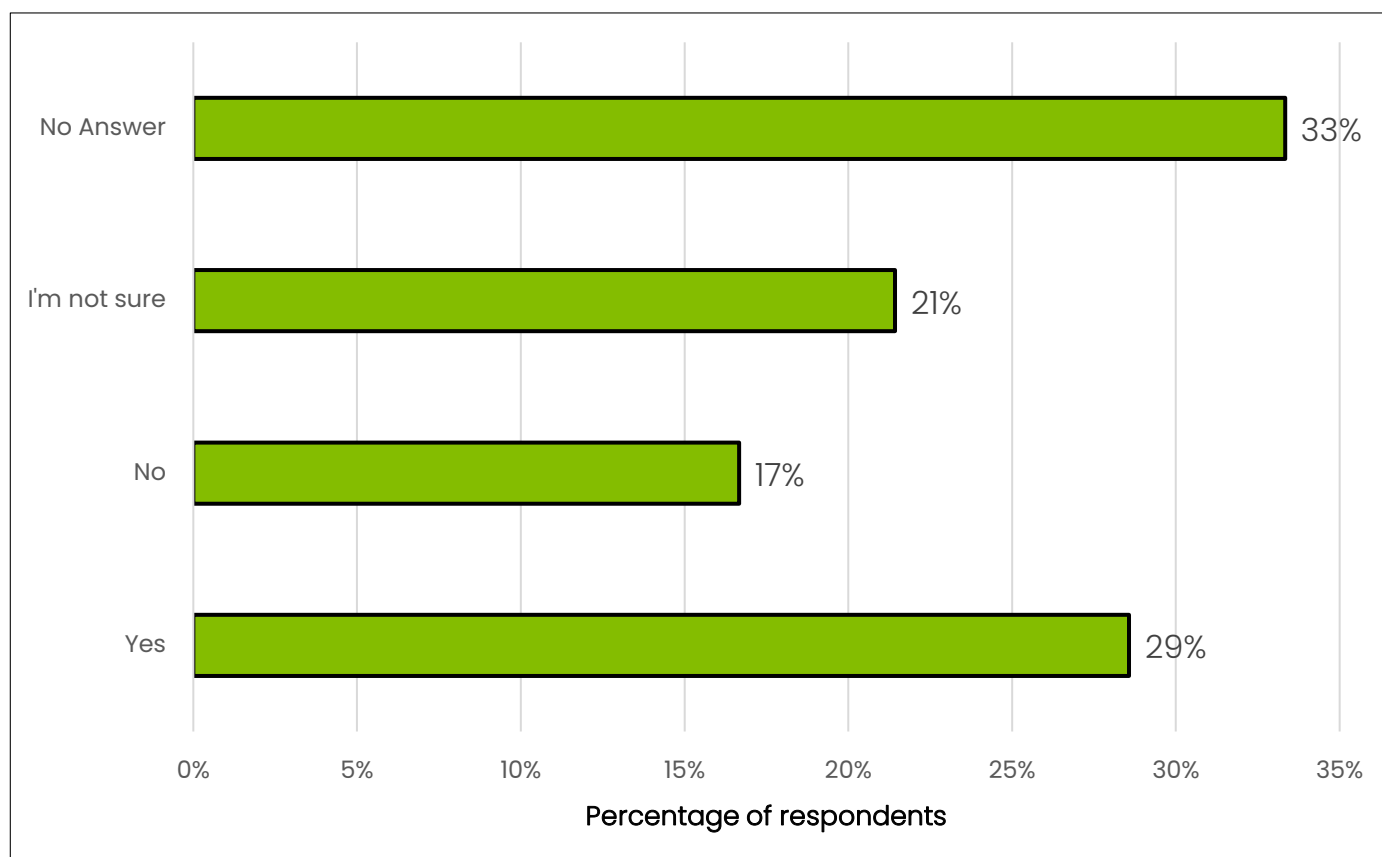


Figure 9. Responses to the question 'From the support options Waiting Well were able to offer, do you feel you were given the right support you needed at the time?'

Respondents who felt that the options available were not right for them, were predominately those who had not received any support from the Council or were rejected the support they requested. One told us that they *“Didn't receive the support requested and had to source on own.”* This was similar for another participant who was informed that the support they wanted was not available, so they found and funded this themselves.

**“My real need was a step outside the backdoor. I was advised this was not available (maybe if six months after operation it was still needed – may be possible) I have since found a supplier & purchases one myself as the need was now. (Waiting well!!)”**

## **Impact of Waiting Well**

As with the baseline questions, we wanted to know how their lives had been impacted by the support that they received from the Council (Figure 10). We wanted to know if there was any improvement on the baseline/impact of their condition so we asked participants the same questions we had asked before.

For each question nearly half of respondents did not answer/complete these questions. This, unsurprisingly, was predominately participants who either had no recollection of taking part in the Waiting Well scheme or did not receive support. Additionally, several of those who responded, ‘Not At All’ or ‘N/A’, were also participants who had no recollection of taking part or did not receive any support.

In total 11 (26%) participants told us that one or more aspects of their life had been positively impacted by the support they received. However, one of the participants who answered that aspects of their life had been positively impacted, believed Waiting Well to be a Healthwatch Norfolk scheme and also commented that they had only just heard of this.

Most of the participants, who did receive support, (8) told us that they felt their ability to exercise and stay active had been positively impacted and of these, one felt that there was a positive impact on their mental health. Two respondents told us that they felt that their mental health had been positively impacted, but no other aspects of their life had been.



Two respondents told us that their ability to work had also been positively impacted by the support they received, as well as their independence. In total six participants told us that they had seen a positive impact to their independence after receiving support through the Waiting Well Scheme. Finally, two respondents also felt that there had been a positive impact to the relationships with family and friends.

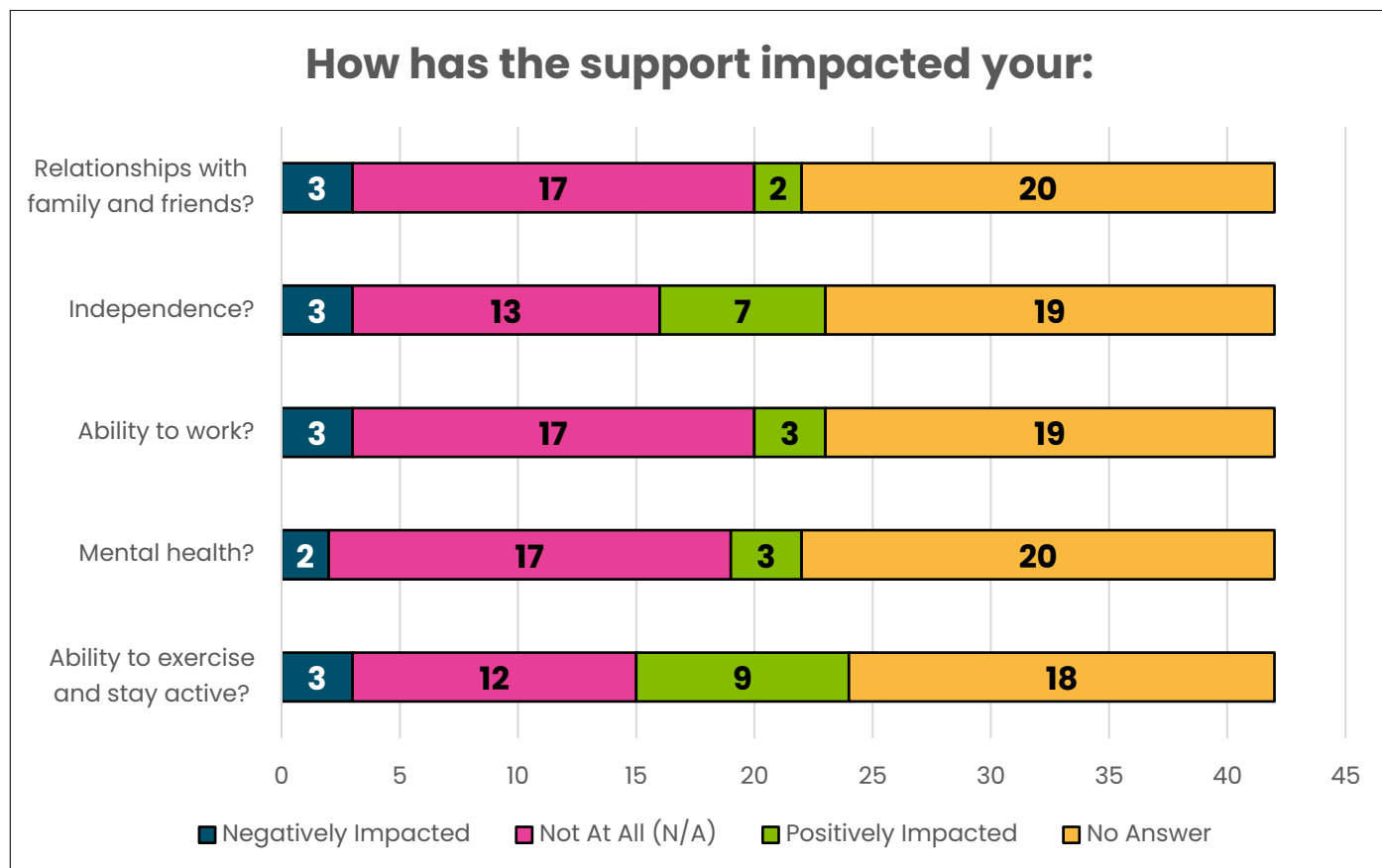


Figure 10. Responses to questions regarding how support received had impacted their lives.

Four respondents told us that they had been negatively impacted by the Waiting Well scheme, these participants were among those who told us that they did not receive any support from the Council and one had no recollection of taking part in the scheme.

## What worked well

We asked participants what they thought was good about the Waiting Well scheme. Two respondents who had no recollection of recent contact from the Council but had previously received support told us that they thought it was good that all support was provided by the Council, and that the Broadly Active programme was a great help until the participant was in too much pain to continue.

Other respondents told us that they felt the service they received from the Council was *"Excellent"*, *"Friendly"*, *"Very Helpful"*, and *"very efficient"*. One respondent told us that they felt *"The speed in which support was received"* was very good, having received this a *"couple days"* after the initial contact from the Council. Another respondent said that the scheme was *"Very good"* and *"seemed to offer everything that was of help"* to them.

**"Support has been a "god send". It was lovely that someone came and offered support, as no one has before. The person fitting support noticed, and offered to get a handrail sorted for stairs too and this was done a week later."**

Two respondents, however, answered this question negatively. One simply answered that there was *"Nothing"* they thought was good about the scheme. Another crossed out the word 'good' and replaced it with 'bad', they told us that *"I [they] feel I'm [they're] just a statistic not a person with real needs."*

## **Improvements**

Finally, we asked respondents if they felt that there were any improvements that could be made to the Waiting Well scheme. One respondent, who had no recollection of taking part in this scheme, commented that the communication could be improved as they had never heard of the support from the Council until they received our survey. Another commented that they felt the scheme could be improved *"By offering help a lot earlier. Not after the operation has been performed"*.

Of those who did take part in the scheme, most responses were from those who had not received the support or were still waiting to receive support. Respondents felt that there could be improvements in the communication for the Waiting Well scheme, one told us that they would have preferred *"Written details of support options"* as they are *"hard of hearing"* and *"phone calls are hit and miss"*. Another told us that a *"Follow up to first contact"* would have been useful as the representative *"Didn't leave a contact number so was unable to enquire of the delay [in receiving support]"*.

**"If you're running a scheme it needs to be more proactive!"**

Other participants felt that there could be improvements in the services offered and not restricting offers of support. One respondent said that the scheme could *"Offer support regardless of living situation"* and another commented that they were rejected support due to their past careers, *"We are both retired - we both have health conditions and thought we would get help, but I was a teacher, he is a scientist, so we don't qualify."*

**"Don't raise peoples hopes of help when it doesn't materialize and cause disappointment!"**

Respondents also felt that there could be better information prior to first contact from the Council, one respondent said *"They [the Council] are the ones who ring up, and the elderly would be confused"*. Another respondent felt that the Council could *"Write to people in advance to let them know the NHS has given their contact details to the service."*

Several of those we heard from commented that they had been waiting for their operations for a long time with one participant telling us they had been on the waiting list for 2 years and another for 3 years. Both told us that support would have been appreciated during this time, and have now since had their operations and were waiting on physio support from the hospital. Others we heard from had also recently had their operations, but during the time they were due to receive support, and were therefore unsure as to why they were receiving the survey at all.

# What this means

The findings of this study were collected from the contacts provided by South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils. The District Councils collected baseline data for 81 (10%) individuals from a list of 797 contacts. From these 81 Healthwatch Norfolk received follow up survey responses from 42 (52%). However, 13 (31%) of those 42 had no recollection of being contacted by the Council or taking part in the Waiting Well scheme.

Better communication, in different formats, with more frequent check in/follow up points from the District Council could address this and keep patients aware of and engaged with the scheme.

Many participants who we contacted were not aware that the scheme was called 'Waiting Well', and even when provided with an explanation of the scheme were confused as to why they were being contacted. Some participants felt that they should have received information or contact prior to the initial call/visit from the Council representative to let them know that their details had been shared to the District Councils for this purpose. Participants were also unaware that Healthwatch Norfolk would be contacting them to follow up on their experiences of receiving support and were surprised to receive a phone call or paper survey in the post.

It was clear from the surveys that better information about the scheme would be beneficial to ensuring its success and improving the information provided by the District Councils would help with the knowledge and awareness of the scheme. Additionally, transparency as to where their information has been obtained and who it is shared with is an important area for improvement. The typical demographic of those on the waiting list for orthopaedic surgery may be more apprehensive to participate/respond when contacted 'out of the blue'.

Of those that did recall taking part in the Waiting Well scheme we received a mixed response of good and bad experiences.

Those who told us that they had overall good experiences receiving support from the Council told us that they were pleased with the speed and communication from the Council. Many told us that they were not waiting long before receiving their support of choice, and were kept in touch throughout the process from

initial Council contact to support installation or visits. Additionally, those with positive experience of the Waiting Well scheme felt that the support that was available was right for them at the time, and where respondents were not sure what support they needed the Council assessed their needs and helped to identify the support that was best for them.

Where participants received their requested support, the Waiting Well scheme worked well and showed a positive impact for patients demonstrating the value of having the scheme available to those on the orthopaedic waiting list.

Unfortunately, there were participants who had a negative experience of the Waiting Well scheme. This was due to poor levels of communication from the Council, not receiving visits or support that was requested, and in some cases not receiving support from the scheme as participants did not meet eligibility criteria that they were unaware of.

Communication for the scheme was an area that was highlighted as needing improvement, many of the participants felt that the communication around support options could be improved through providing written details of all available options. This would allow participants more time to think on what support they may want and then call back at a later time once they have been able to review materials or request needs assessments to help them understand what would be beneficial for them.

Information on eligibility criteria would also mean that participants could check their eligibility to receive support from the scheme before contacting the council to make a request, as some found that they were offered support only to be told that they did not qualify due to financial situations or living arrangements.

Additionally, participants felt that there could have been a better follow up procedure. Some had requested support at the initial point of contact from the Council, but then heard nothing from them afterwards. Where participants told us that they would like support, but had not received or were still waiting, we followed this up with the District Councils on their behalf.

Others felt, at the time of initial contact that they were not in need of support, but then later found that they did. One participant told us how they would have liked to have a follow up call a month on from the initial contact to be able to access the support. Implementing a better follow up procedure would mean the Council would be able to monitor the suitability of the provided support, assess

whether further support was needed, and increase uptake for the scheme by re-contacting those who were initially unsure of taking part.

Whilst Healthwatch Norfolk had requested that the District Councils collect feedback on why patients did not want to take part in the Waiting Well pilot scheme, we did not receive any data for this. It could be speculated that some would not wish to take part in a scheme such as Waiting Well for fear that it would affect their position on the waiting list for orthopaedic treatment/surgery. Improving the available information for the Waiting Well scheme could alleviate some of these concerns, and potentially result in a higher uptake for the scheme.

# Recommendations

From the findings of this piece of work several recommendations can be made for South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils regarding the Waiting Well scheme and how to improve this going forward. Additionally, these findings could be useful for other District Councils should they choose to roll out similar schemes.

1. Information – improve the information available about the scheme with materials such as leaflets to detail available support options allowing patients time to review and consider options. If a scheme is being referred to with an internal name (e.g. Waiting Well) ensure that patients taking part are aware of this so they are able to reference this where necessary.
2. Communication – improve the communication with those who agree to receive support to keep them updated on the progress of when support will be given to them. Additionally, provide a contact number of those running the scheme so issues can be addressed in good time and so patients can get in touch should they change their mind regarding receiving support.
3. Follow up – develop a follow up procedure to check in with patients and ensure that support has been received, if the support is suitable/appropriate/fit for purpose, and to determine if support is still needed or further support required.
4. Transparency – ensure patients are aware about where their contact information has come from, and who it is being shared with (if applicable) so that they are not surprised by any future contact regarding the scheme.

The scheme itself would appear to be very beneficial for patients on the waiting list for orthopaedic surgery and would be valuable to continue/take forward. However, issues around communication, information, and transparency would need to be addressed for this to be successful and would help with the uptake of the scheme itself.

# References

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# Appendix

## Appendix 1: Baseline questions for how condition has affected patients' lives.

**Healthwatch Norfolk Evaluation Questions**

**Date:**

<b>Name:</b>			
<b>Address:</b>			
<b>Postcode:</b>			
<b>Phone Number:</b>		<b>Mobile:</b>	
<b>D.O.B:</b>			

### Those who have accepted support

**Type of Support:**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Negatively impacted</b>	<b>Not at all/ N/A</b>	<b>Positively impacted</b>
How has it impacted your ability to exercise and stay active?			
How has it impacted your mental health?			
How has it impacted your ability to work?			
How has it impacted your independence?			
How has it impacted your relationships with family and friends?			

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### **Those who have declined involvement**

<p>Please could you share with us the reason why you would not like to take part in this scheme?</p>	
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## **Appendix 2: Follow up survey for evaluation of Waiting Well scheme.**

### **Waiting Well – Healthwatch Evaluation**

#### **Broadland and South Norfolk Council – Waiting Well Evaluation**

##### **Who is Healthwatch Norfolk?**

Healthwatch Norfolk is the independent voice for patients and service users in the county. We gather your views of health and social care services to ensure they are heard by the people in charge.

##### **What is this survey about?**

Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils have been piloting a scheme to support patients in their area on the surgical waiting list at Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals. The scheme will include the sharing of data between the NHS and local authority to enable patients to be offered support whilst waiting for surgery. Once contacted, patients will be offered support based on their level of need and could include home adaptations, physiotherapy and mental wellbeing support. It is hoped that such support will prevent patients from reaching a point of crisis and ease the pressure on the wider health and care system.

Healthwatch Norfolk are collecting data to evaluate the effectiveness and value of the Waiting Well scheme by engaging with patients to gather their experiences since taking part in the Waiting Well scheme and receiving support.

##### **How the survey results will be used**

Anonymised survey data will be shared with Broadland and South Norfolk Councils to enable them to review the effectiveness of the Waiting Well scheme. Healthwatch Norfolk will not disclose any confidential information unless there is a genuine and urgent concern for an individual's safety or wellbeing.

The survey results will also be used by Healthwatch Norfolk to make recommendations to service providers as part of our evaluation report. The report will also be publicly available on our website and may be used in other Healthwatch Norfolk

communications.

Survey responses are being collected and analysed by Healthwatch Norfolk. You can read our full privacy policy at:

[www.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk/about-us/privacy-statement](http://www.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk/about-us/privacy-statement)

If you would prefer to do this survey with us over the phone, please call Healthwatch Norfolk on **01953 856029** and we will arrange a time to ring you back to complete the survey. Alternatively, please email: **enquiries@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk** for further support.

**1. Please tick to confirm \***

I have read and understood the above statement

**2. Healthwatch Norfolk produce quarterly newsletters about health and social care in Norfolk. If you'd like to receive this newsletter please leave your email here:**

**3. What support have you been offered by the scheme (select all as apply):**

- Home Adaptations
- Physiotherapy/ Physical Activity
- Mental Health & Wellbeing Support
- I'm not sure/ I don't know
- Other (please specify):

**4. Why did you decide to take part in the scheme? (select top 3 as apply)**

- I was struggling to cope
- I wanted to improve my quality of life
- To access additional support
- I was interested in Waiting Well
- To improve services for others in the future
- I was encouraged by a health professional
- I was encouraged by a friend/family member
- Other (please specify):

**5. How would you rate your overall experience of the scheme?**

- Good
- Ok
- Bad

Please tell us why:

**6. From the support options Waiting Well were able to offer, do you feel you were given the right support you needed at the time?**

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

Please tell us why:

**7. How would you rate communication during the Waiting Well scheme?**

- Good
- Ok
- Bad

Please tell us why:

**8. How would you rate the speed in which you received support during the Waiting Well scheme?**

- Good
- Ok
- Bad

Please tell us why:

**9. How has support from the Waiting Well scheme impacted the following:  
(If N/A please choose Not At All)**

	Negatively Impacted	Not At All	Positively Impacted
How has it impacted your ability to exercise and stay active?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How has it impacted your mental health?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How has it impacted your ability to work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How has it impacted your independence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How has it impacted your relationships with family and friends?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**10. What improvements do you think could be made to the scheme?**

**11. What do you think was good about the scheme?**

**12. Any other comments, Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?**

**13. What is your name? (For tracking responses only. All responses will be anonymised for analysis and reporting)**

**14. What is the first half of your post code? (e.g., NR18)**

**15. What is your age?**

**16. What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Genderfluid
- Genderqueer
- Intersex
- Prefer not to say



Prefer to self-describe:

**17. What is your ethnic group?**

Arab

**Asian / Asian British:**

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Indian

Pakistani

Any other Asian / Asian British background

**Black / Black British:**

African

Caribbean

Any other Black / Black British background

**Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups:**

Asian and White

Black African and White

Black Caribbean and White

Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups background

**White:**

British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh

Irish

Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller

Roma

Any other White background

**Other:**

Any other Ethnic Group

Prefer not to say

**18. Please select any of the following that apply to you:**

- I have a disability
- I have a long term condition
- I am a carer
- None of the above
- I prefer not to say

## Appendix 3: Follow up survey respondent demographics

		Percentage of respondents	Number of respondents
<b>Age</b>	16 to 25	0%	0
	26 to 35	0%	0
	36 to 45	0%	0
	46 to 55	5%	2
	56 to 65	14%	6
	66 to 75	24%	10
	76 to 85	48%	20
	86 to 95	2%	1
	No answer	7%	3
<b>Gender</b>	Female	64%	27
	Male	33%	14
	Other	0%	0
	Non-binary	0%	0
	Genderfluid	0%	0
	Prefer not to say	0%	0
	No Answer	2%	1
<b>Ethnic Group</b>	British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh	93%	39
	Any other White background	0%	0
	Irish	0%	0
	Any other Ethnic Group	0%	0
	Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups background	0%	0
	Any other Asian / Asian British background	0%	0
	Arab	0%	0
	Prefer not to say	0%	0
	No Answer	7%	3
	<b>Other</b>	I have a disability	29%
I have a long term condition		38%	16

I am a carer	14%	6
None of the above	7%	3
I prefer not to say	7%	3

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## Appendix 4: Feedback received after cut-off date.

The below is a response from a participant, this has been unedited and spelling and grammar kept as written to preserve originality. Personal and identifying information has been removed for anonymity.

### 3. What support have you been offered by the scheme (select all as apply):

Home Adaptations, Physiotherapy/ Physical Activity, Mental Health & Wellbeing Support

### 4. Why did you decide to take part in the scheme? (select top 3 as apply)

I was struggling to cope, To access additional support, I was interested in Waiting Well

### 5. How would you rate your overall experience of the scheme?

Good – Very good. A nice gentleman knock on the door explained who he was, we are here to help is there anything we could do to help

### 6. From the support options Waiting Well were able to offer, do you feel you were given the right support you needed at the time?

Yes – My hip was really hurting at this stage an it came at the right time

### 7. How would you rate communication during the Waiting Well scheme?

Good – 1<sup>st</sup> call came to the door ask what I need  
2<sup>nd</sup> was a call (phone) to sort things out  
3<sup>rd</sup> it arrived about a week+ later happy days

### 8. How would you rate the speed in which you received support during the Waiting Well scheme?

Good – from the time of the caller on the door to getting the equipment 2 weeks +

**9. How has support from the Waiting Well scheme impacted the following:  
(If N/A please choose Not At All)**

	Negatively Impacted	Not At All	Positively Impacted
How has it impacted your ability to exercise and stay active?			X
How has it impacted your mental health?			X
How has it impacted your ability to work?		X	
How has it impacted your independence?			X
How has it impacted your relationships with family and friends?			X

**10. What improvements do you think could be made to the scheme?**

Excellent

**11. What do you think was good about the scheme?**

Caller came to the door and explained everything not just a phone call

**12. Any other comments, Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?**

No



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