

# What are people in Bolton telling us about Hospital Waiting Times?

**Report: June 2022**



## About this Report

This report is in addition to the Healthwatch England briefing report: What are People Telling us about Delays to Hospital Treatment. It focuses on the experiences of people in Bolton. It provides an update for national health and social care stakeholders about those who have been or are still waiting for NHS hospital care and treatment, in Bolton, including:

- How long people are waiting to receive treatment
- What type of treatment people are waiting to receive
- What communications people are receiving during their waiting time
- The quality of communication and support people are receiving
- How delays have impacted people's quality of life

## Methodology

This report is informed by the views of 19 people either waiting or had received treatment within the last 18 months. Data was collected between January 2022 to March 2022. Data was collected via an online survey tool for analytical purposes. The survey was shared across Healthwatch Bolton website, social media channels and monthly newsletter as well as community engagement.

## Key Messages

The majority of respondents are waiting to have a consultation/investigation

The majority of respondents were given no information whilst waiting for their treatment

Delays to receiving hospital treatment impacted on people's mental health, pain experience and ability to work and carry out daily household tasks. However people got good support with pain relief.

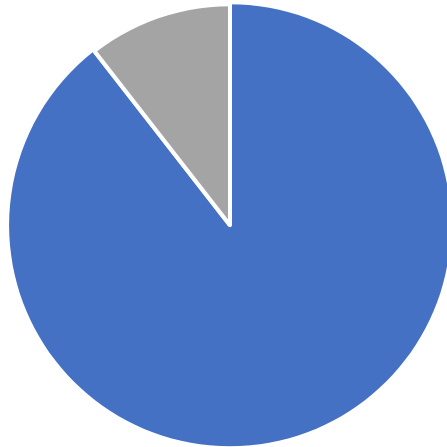
Communication was also mentioned as being problematic for people: Not knowing when they would receive an appointment for their treatment.

Only a minority of people had had their appointment/treatment cancelled

The majority of respondents would be happy to receive their treatment at any hospital in England

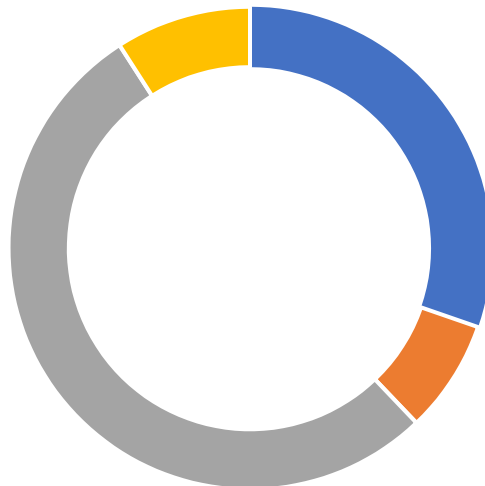
## Findings

Which statement applies to you?



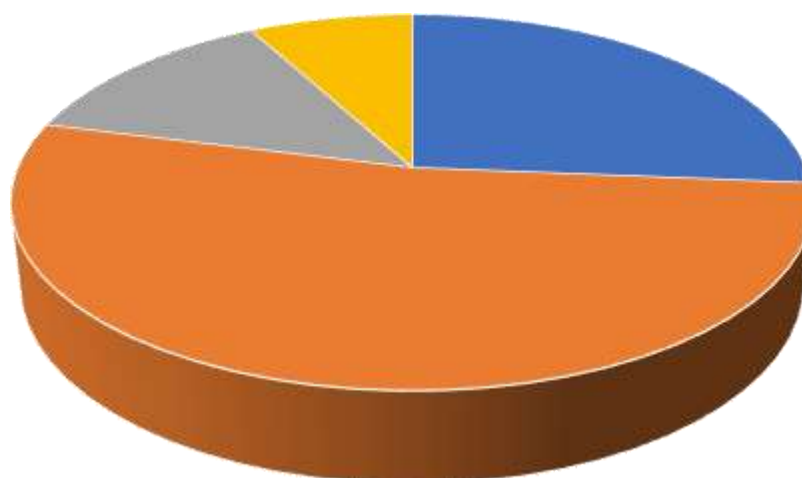
■ Currently waiting to have hospital treatment ■ Had treatment in last 18 months  
■ Not had or needed hospital treatment

2.How long have you been waiting for hospital treatment?



■ 3-4 months ■ 5-6 months ■ 7-12 months ■ over a year

### 3. What type of treatment are you waiting to receive?



■ Operation ■ Consultation ■ Ongoing treatment ■ Other

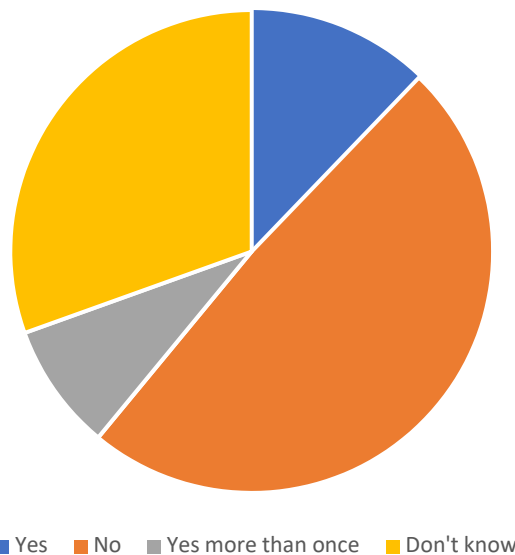
### 3. For those who chose other, we received the following comments:

- Appointment at memory clinic
- Outpatient appointment with breast cancer surgeon and a 24 hour ECG cardiology appointment
- Investigation, keep being fobbed off and delayed, telephone appointment before face to face. How can you diagnose it when you can't even see it? Then telephone appointment with consultant before face to face - absolutely appalling

#### 4. What condition/problem did you need treatment for?

Hip	Possible Dementia	Glaucoma	Heart Condition	Diabetes type 2
Endometriosis	Migraine	Breast cancer/heart condition	Ovarian Tumour	Minor op
Salivary gland removal	Urology/ incontinence	Issues with PSA blood test results	Knee Joints issues	Neurologist

#### 5. Was your treatment cancelled at any point?



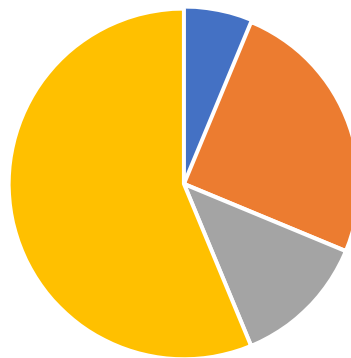
#### 5. Comments:

- Postponed
- Cancelled twice, also confusion as to whether it should be telephone or face to face. I was told I needed face to face this time around but when it got cancelled I was told another face to face would be a lot longer to wait for

## 6. How much notice were you given before the most recent time your treatment was either delayed or cancelled?

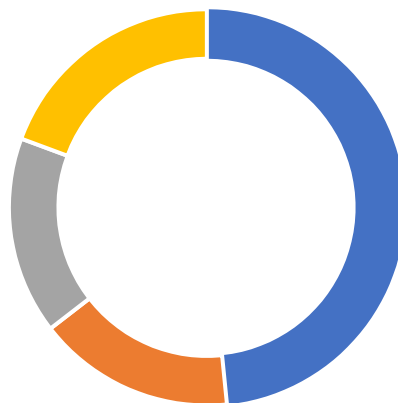
All respondents answered that they were given a week's notice

## 7. Were you kept informed by the NHS while you were waiting for treatment, including treatment details, timelines and any delays?



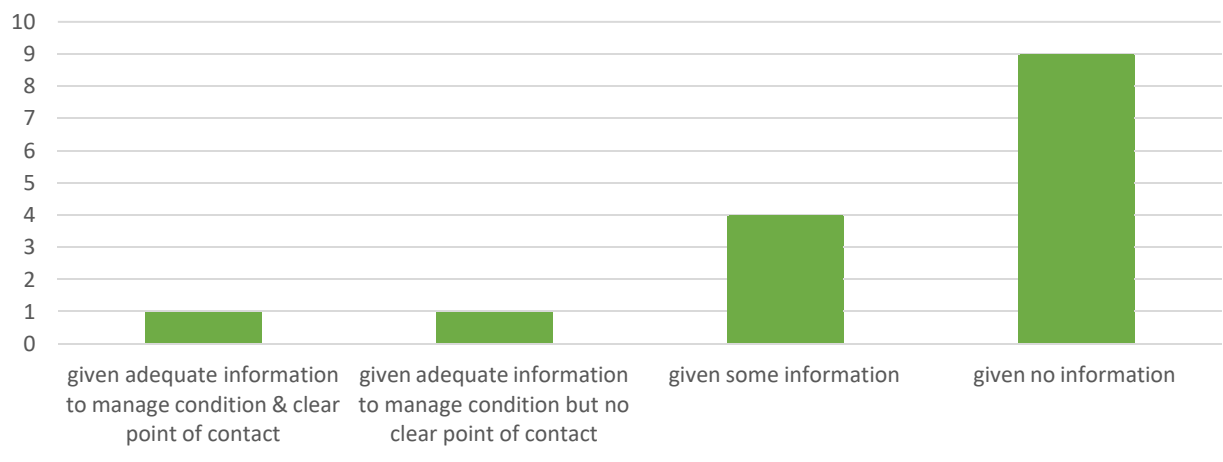
■ given good amount of information      ■ given adequate amount of information  
■ not given enough information      ■ was given no information

## 8. What support have you received which you found helpful during your waiting time?

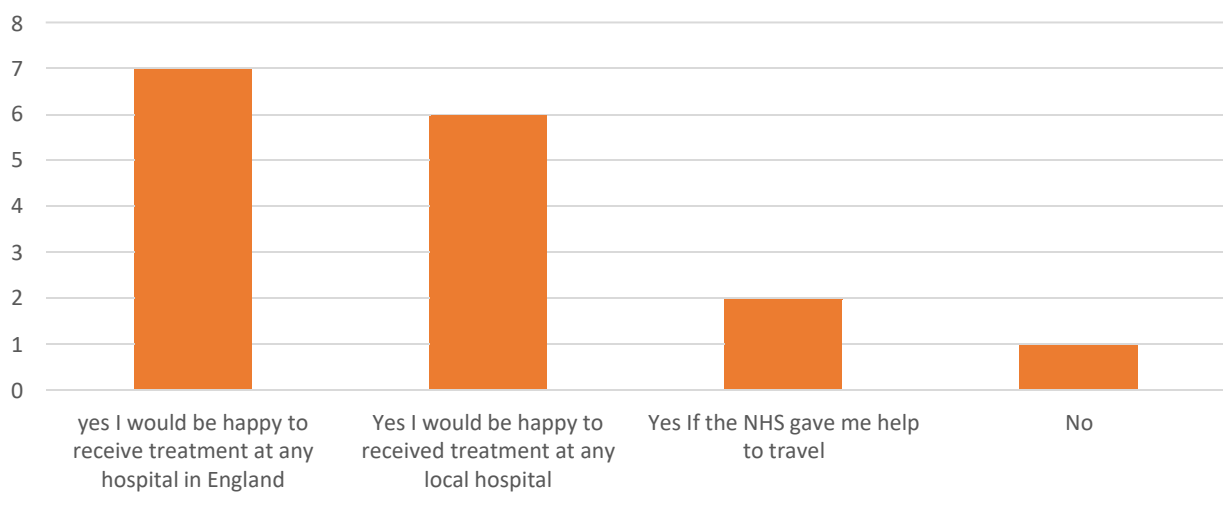


■ support with pain relief      ■ information about my condition  
■ Information about delays      ■ GP intervention

9. If your treatment was subject to delay, were you given supporting information on how to manage your condition whilst waiting for care?

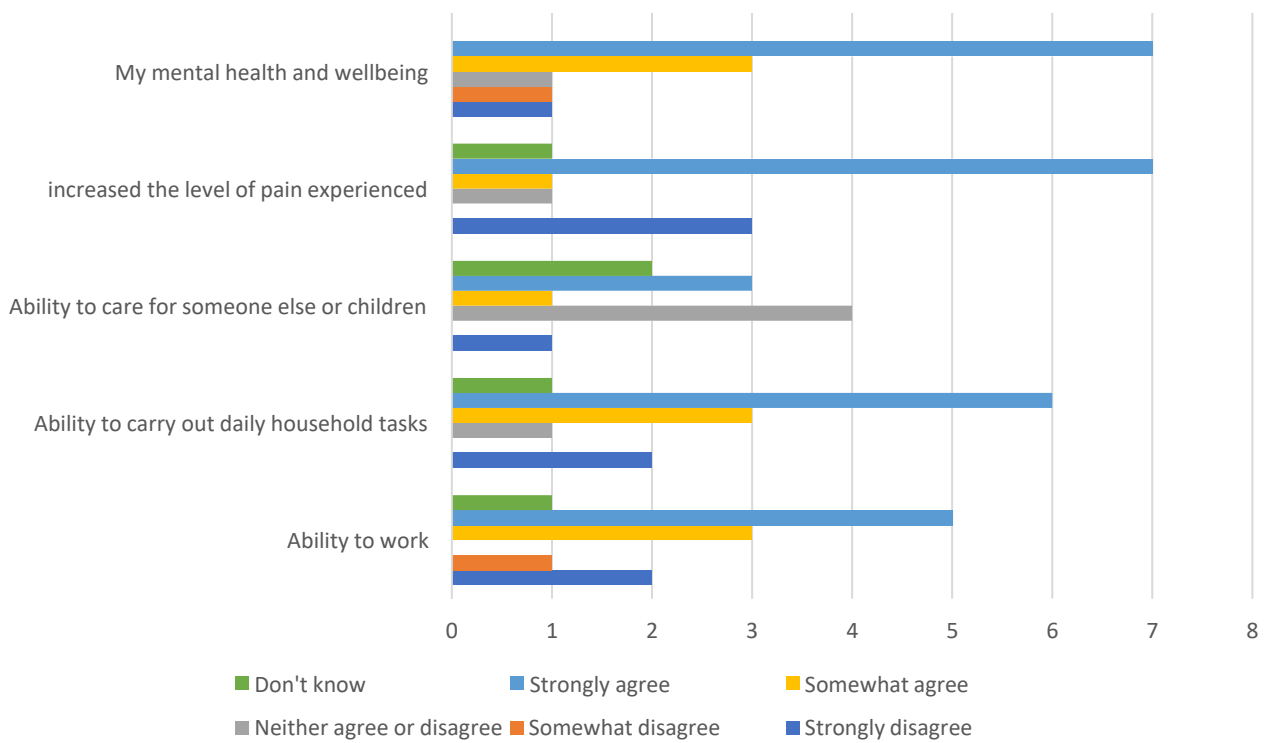


10. Would you be willing to travel to receive treatment at another hospital to reduce your waiting time?





11. To what extent do you agree a delay to your treatment has impacted on the following aspects of your life?



12. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience of waiting for hospital treatment?

No contact for nearly 12 months I find scandalous! At what stage my diabetes is now who knows?

The waiting time should have been 6 weeks but it was 48 weeks

Big impact on my mental health

I found out I had a new appointment by chance as the appointment details are on the NHS app. I think this is very worrying as not everyone has access to the app and people may be discharged back to their GP

Information on any delay is not forthcoming. Was told I would have my treatment in 2021 and I am still waiting for an urgent procedure

I would feel better about waiting for appointments if I received communication from the hospital and was able to access support from my GP surgery

I have been forced to wait for 10 months for a telephone assessment

I don't know whether I have a problem or not??  
We need clearer communication

Keep being fobbed off, how can you diagnose when you can't even see it? It's been over 12 months since this started

Information on any delay is not forthcoming. Was told I would have my treatment in 2021 and I am still waiting for an urgent procedure

## Recommendations

Provide timely updates and keep in regular contact with patients who are waiting for treatment.

Provide sources of support to help people manage their mental health whilst waiting for treatment.

Provide information that helps people to manage their conditions whilst waiting for treatment.

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## Demographics

### Age

The majority of respondents were aged from 45-74 years

### Postcode

All respondents were Bolton residents apart from one

### Gender identity

The majority of respondents were women

### Ethnicity

Of those that chose to answer, there were 11 White British and 1 mixed ethnic background

### Carers/long term conditions

Of those that chose to answer - 8 had long term conditions, 6 had a disability and 3 were carers

## Response from Bolton NHS Foundation Trust

First of all, I want to thank everyone who took the time to respond about their experiences of waiting for treatment.

Throughout the pandemic we have faced challenges that have impacted on the people who are waiting for treatment and for that we are truly sorry.

We have made every effort to keep as much surgery as possible going and have continued to perform our cancer, emergency and urgent operations throughout, despite the pressures we have faced.

We have also worked with the independent sector as much as possible, to maximise the amount of patients we could see, which enabled us to continue to carry out as many procedures as we could away from the hospital site.

Unfortunately, our waiting lists are not where we want them to be. Around 1 in 10 people in our population are waiting for treatment, and we already know that our communities are some of the most deprived and vulnerable in the whole country.

We have contacted every patient who is waiting for treatment to discuss their condition, and the next steps for them, however, we know that many of our patients may be experiencing anxiety, stress and discomfort as a result of their wait.

Some dedicated resources have been developed to support people to stay as well as possible [while they're waiting](#) and work is ongoing to increase the support available via ORCHA apps for people who are waiting for treatment.

Some of the feedback people have shared is within our gift to address, especially effective communication with our patients. We will make sure that we continue to communicate with every patient that is waiting longer than expected. We have recently introduced digital letters and a text reminder service to improve the way we communicate with our patients and all patients on our waiting list have been contacted with an update about their surgery.

We know there is always more we can do, and the feedback we have received will help us to build on what we know our patients need during this time.

We know this is not a position our patients, or us, want to be in, but please be assured that we are doing all we can to see and treat as many patients as quickly as possible.

**Fiona Noden**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Bolton NHS Foundation Trust**



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