



Details of visit

Service address:

Health Visiting Service

Service Provider:

Bolton NHS Foundation Trust

Date and Time:

30th March to 16th April 2015

Healthwatch Bolton

Representatives/staff

Sue Desai, Gail Gregory & Karen Wilson

Contact details:

Healthwatch Bolton, St. Georges House, 2 St. Georges Road, Bolton BL1 2DD

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Bolton would like to thank the Service Provider, staff and patients of the health visiting clinics for their contribution to this survey and engagement work.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to verbatim comments gathered during the time of our visits at each clinic session

Patient Experience Survey of Bolton's Health Visiting Service

Healthwatch Bolton has recently worked closely with Bolton NHS Foundation Trust Health Visiting Service. The Health Visiting Teams offer services to every family in Bolton with a child of pre-school age and supports parents with advice and practical guidance on all aspects of a child's development and family health. This includes developmental reviews, advice and guidance, immunisations and screening tests. The health visitors also work with families who have different levels of need including those with problems around domestic violence, mental health problems, alcohol and substance misuse and where there is a need to safeguard children.

Healthwatch Bolton agreed to engage with families using the service during four baby clinics during March and April 2015.

All comments recorded by Healthwatch Bolton are available in verbatim format as an appendix to this report and will be analysed for common local service providers and commissioners.

Purpose of the survey

- Capture the experience of people using the Health Visiting Service.
- Collect information from parents of young children about their experiences of using health and care services.
- Identify examples of good working practice
- Engage with hard to reach communities
- Partnership working with other organisations

Strategic drivers

- Engaging with hard to reach and vulnerable communities
- Monitoring quality in the provision of services
- Services for children

Methodology

Four out of a possible 26 baby clinic sessions were selected as the most favourable. Criteria used in selection included numbers attending, localities where Healthwatch Bolton has had the least reach.

- 30th March 2015 Oxford Grove Team, Oxford Grove Children's Centre
- 31st March 2015 Westhoughton Team, Westhoughton Children's Centre
- 14th April 2015 Bright Meadows Team, Brightmet Health Centre
- 16th April 2015 Harvey Team, Pikes Lane Centre

A short questionnaire was devised. The questionnaire :

- Explained the role of Healthwatch Bolton asking for general experiences of health and care services
- Explained the role of the Health Visiting Service and asking for feedback on the service
- Took into account the Family and Friends Test.

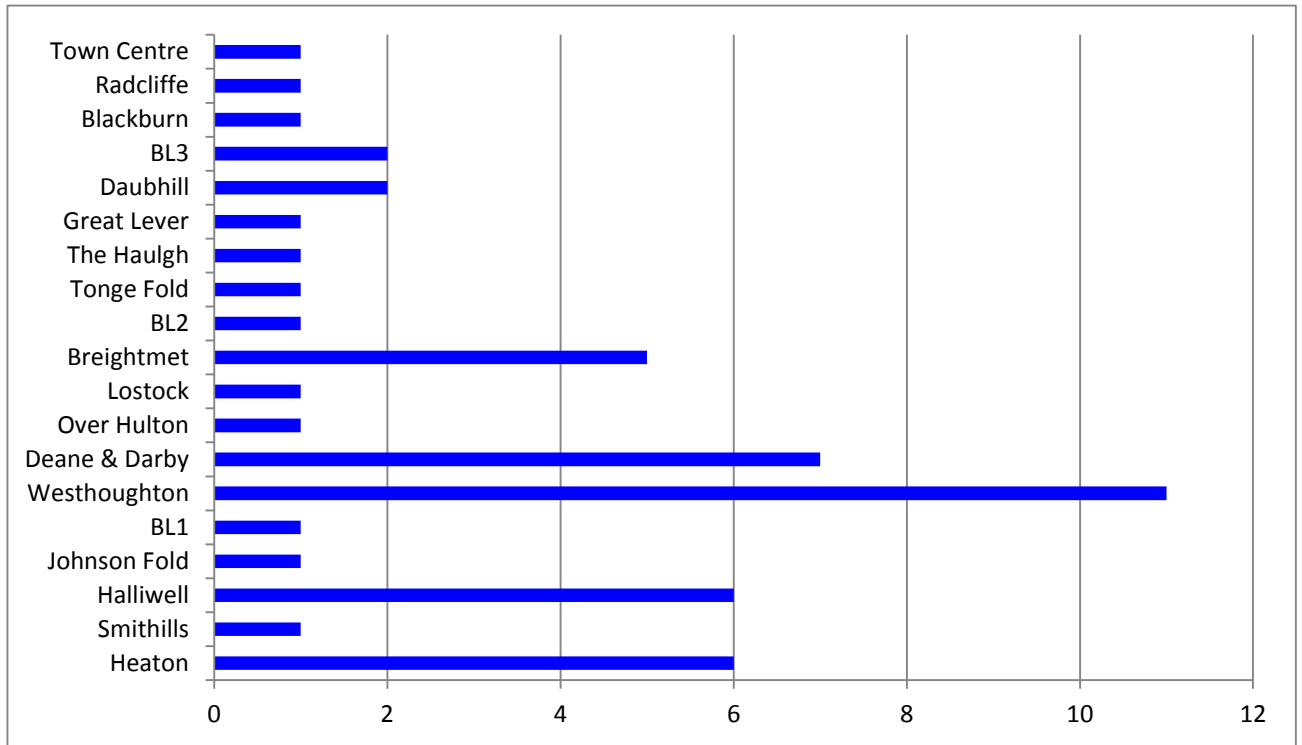
Comments were also collated and are available as an appendix to this report.

Sample Size

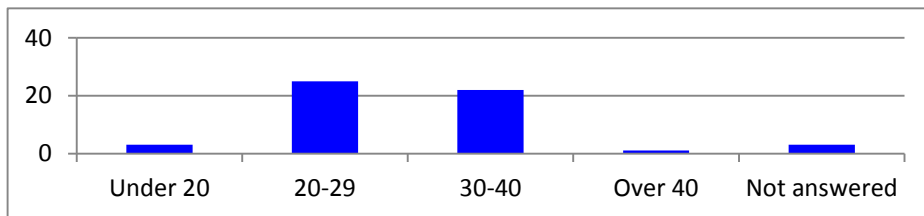
We spoke with 54 families or individuals, mainly mums but some dads and some grandmothers were present and answered the survey questions.

We asked our respondents a number of questions around their personal circumstances to gather some information on who visits the Health Visiting clinics so that the service can understand where there may be gaps and where the service should be promoted or improved.

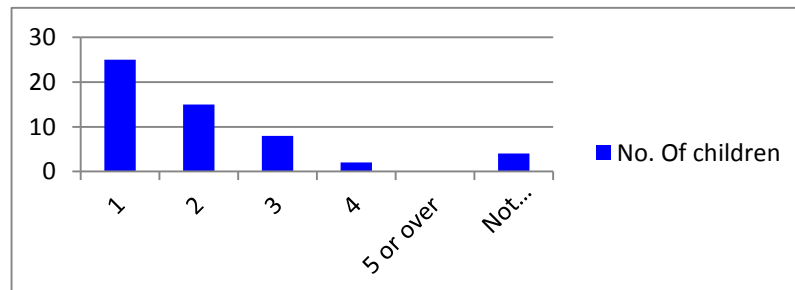
Which area of Bolton do you live?



Your age?



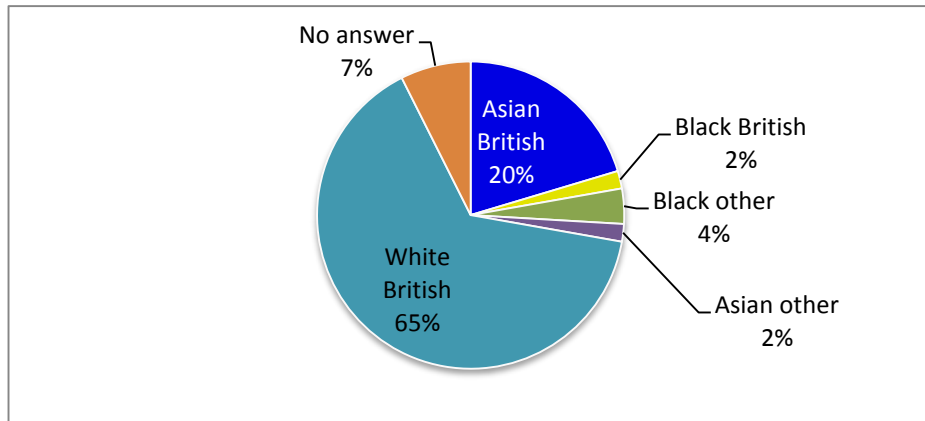
How many children do you have?



What age(s) is your child/children?

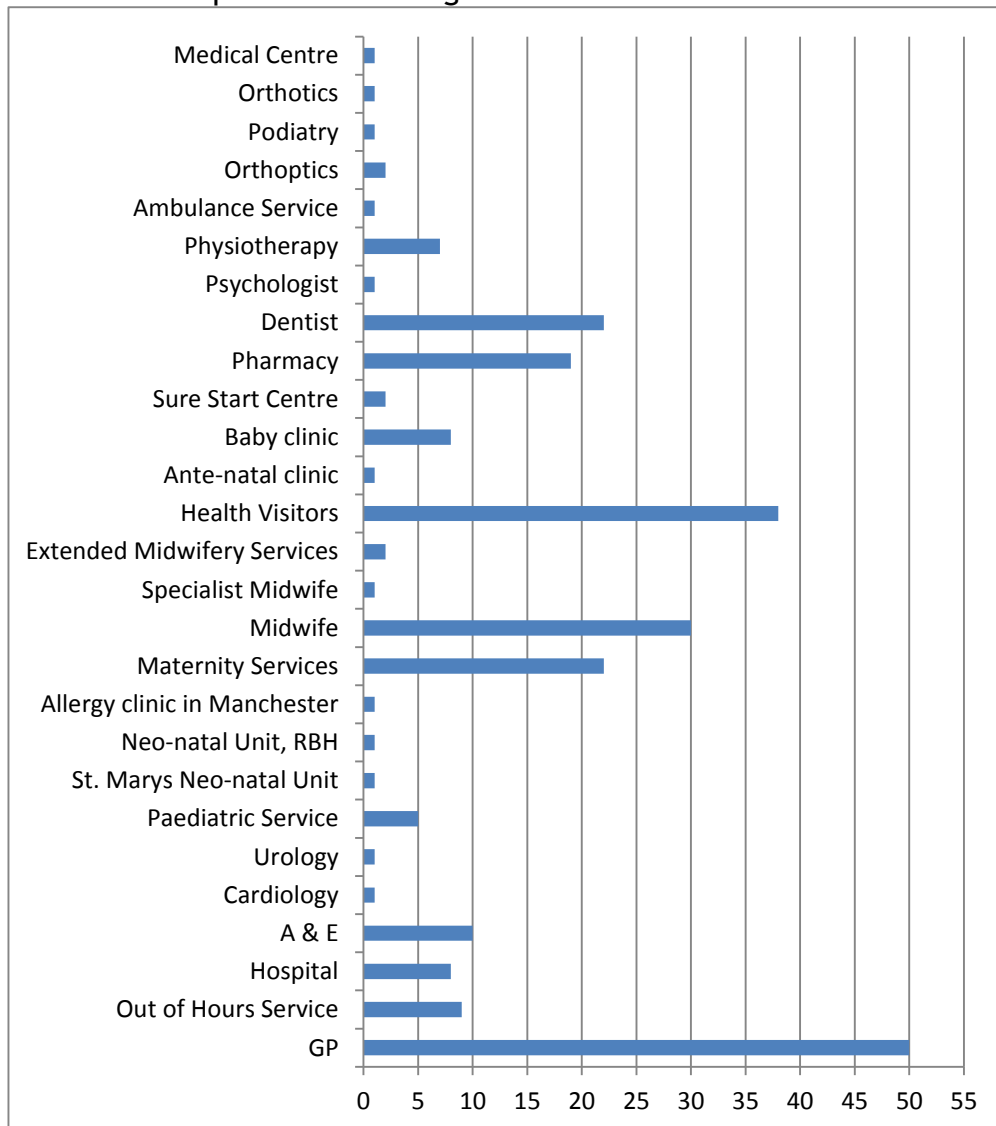
Children's ages ranged from five weeks to 13 years old, including one set of 11 week old twins.

Please let us know your ethnicity



Summary of findings

The first set of questions were designed to ask people visiting the Health Visiting clinics about their experience of using health and social care services.



How easy is it for you to get an appointment with your GP?

Out of 49 responses 65% (32 people) found it easy to get an appointment with their GP and 35% (17 people) found it difficult. Five people did not respond to this question.

“Same day if necessary”

“There is an open clinic on four days of the week which works well. At my previous GP practice it was a three week wait for an appointment”

“Appointments are easy for children but not so mums - it can be a 2/3 week wait. I've been online this morning there are no appointments through April”

“My new GP is good but had to change because previous GP was awful”

“It's quite difficult - the receptionists are the gatekeepers. The answer always appears to be 'no'. Baby and I both had thrush - I was breast feeding. I had to cry down the phone to get an appointment. The GP actually stayed after surgery and was very good in the end”

Have you ever used A & E or BARDOC / Out of Hours service because you have been unable to get a GP appointment?

Out of 51 responses 33% (17 people) said they had used one of these services when they had been unable to access a GP appointment but 67% (34 people) said they had not needed to. Three people did not respond to this question.

“I was unable to get a GP appointment”

“Yes I have used GP Out of Hours as it was a Friday and I couldn't get in to see a GP. My child had tonsillitis but I couldn't contact Out of Hours until my GP practice had closed”

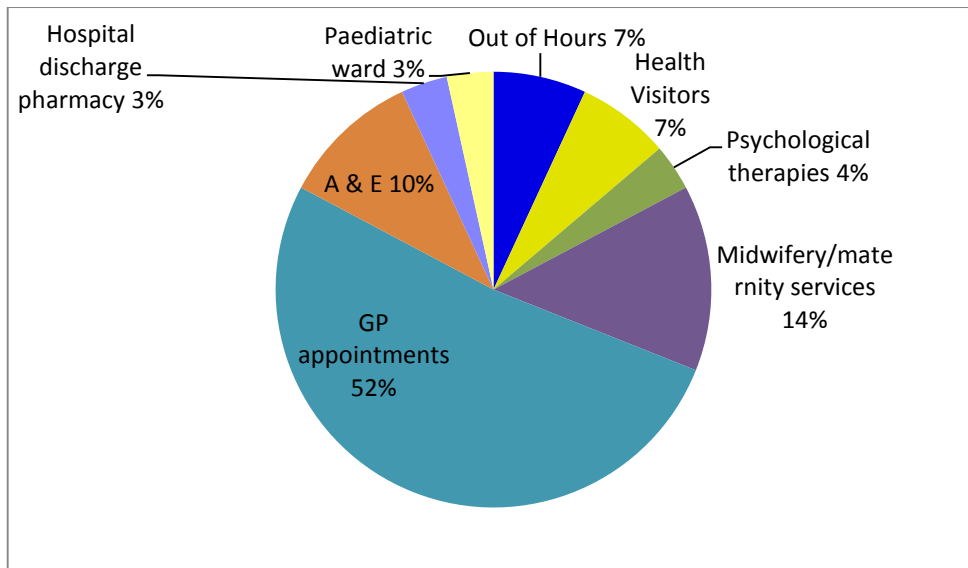
“Hard to get urgent appointments with a GP”

“Yes last week. I had asked the GP at Deane clinic for an appointment 20 times and can't get one”

If you had the chance, what would you change about any of the services you have used and why?

29 people responded suggesting services listed within the attached appendix and 17 people said that they are happy with services and wouldn't change anything.

Of the 29 respondents 52% (15 people) were not happy with GP appointment systems.

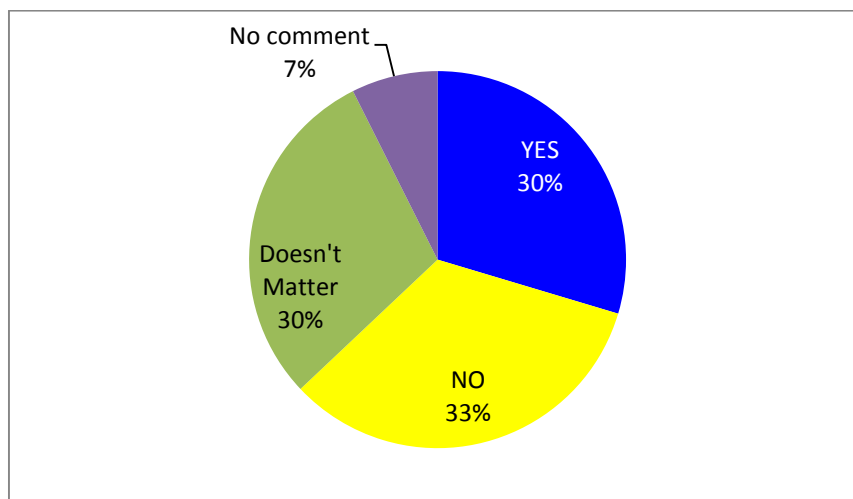


Who do you ask for information on health and social services?

43 people responded to this question with Health Visitors, Internet and GPs (in this particular order) being the main sources of information.

The Health Visiting Service was interested to hear about the public's view of their service.

Uniform or not? What do you think when someone is coming to your house? (Do you recognise Health Visitors as nurses/midwives with additional qualifications in work with children and families?)



50 people responded to this question with no clear preference about uniform, although the comments collected explain the thoughts behind the answers. Surprisingly the majority did not know that health visitors were qualified nurses or midwives.

“As long as they have a badge I'm not bothered. Even without uniform they are doing a good job”

“I guess it depends on the setting. Coming into my home they should wear a uniform otherwise you could be letting anyone in”

“As long as they show their ID they don't need to wear uniform”

“I would like to see them in uniform. Would be able to recognise them as a nurse or midwife and it would give more confidence”

“I feel more comfortable speaking to them because they don't wear a uniform”

“I like no uniform and it is less scary for the children” “In the early days when everything is a fog it might be useful for them to wear uniform”.

What are your expectations of the Health Visiting Service?

89% of respondents stated that they expected advice, information and support and there are some interesting comments illustrating the expectations of some first time parents felt.

11% of respondents felt unclear about the Health Visitors role suggesting that clearer information needs to be given to expectant parents.

“I don't know. I was expecting them to be scary and quite harsh which they haven't been at all”

“We were first time parents and didn't know what to expect”

“Really not thought about the Health Visiting side but more about the Midwife. What is the Health Visitors role? - I've made a lot of phone calls because it's not clear what else the health visitor can provide - I'm not sure. She did arrange a baby massage which I have done with my baby - I'm not sure what else I can access through my Health Visitor”

“Before I gave birth I had no expectation and |I didn't know what a health visitor was going to do. I didn't see a health visitor for the first 4 weeks - it was the midwife who told me about them

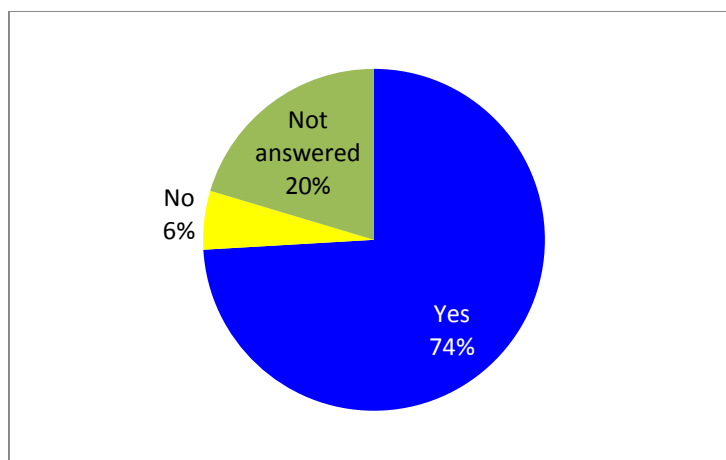
I didn't have any great expectations; I just expected to be told what to do. I understand that they have to go through things and that they have to give you a lot of information, but I didn't feel able to take everything in”

“Advice particularly as it's my first baby and if I had any problems to help”

“Support, be able to answer questions and be made to feel that I'm their only patient”

“Advice, support and guidance”

Does it meet your expectations?



The response to this question was clearly positive. All parents (not just first time parents) questioned value the advice and support offered by their Health Visitor. Often, more experienced parents face different experiences or difficulties than with their first child and welcome the continued support from the team.

There were only a small number of less positive comments.

“It’s been really helpful. As it’s my second child I found it difficult after - it was getting out with both of them with their feeding routines and managing the eldest child’s needs. The Health Visitor saw me more often”

“I have only just moved to Westhoughton and so local information from the Health Visitor has been useful”

“They’re very helpful with advice and suggestions and emotional support for me and that’s been very important”

“It has met my expectations to some extent. It’s just that there is a need for a little bit of extra support and being able to ask the question “have you got an extra 30 minutes to pop round?””

“Not done the eight week check and he is now 11 weeks old. When it’s your first it’s a big thing”

“We haven’t seen a health visitor since the eight month check. I don’t know who my health visitor is since she has left - that’s why I come here. I wish I had a named health visitor contact instead of going to the internet for advice”

Why do you come to clinic? Is it a positive experience?

45 people explained that it is a positive experience attending the clinic sessions (nine did not answer). 55% of the responses stated that they attend clinic sessions to have their baby weighed while at the same time asking advice on infant feeding, dental health and minor health queries. 12% also stated that they attend because they are easily accessible and they like to socialise and compare notes with other new parents.

“To get our baby weighed and ask questions about changes as he grows”

“Weighing. Changed feeding routine so it puts my mind at rest”

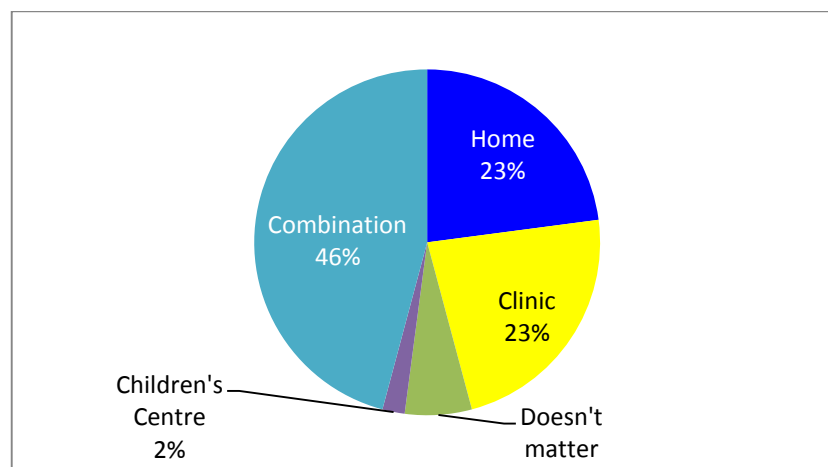
“Weighing, getting to know what’s going on and baby groups etc”

“Daughter weighed and minor health queries and support for breast feeding”

“Mostly to have him weighed and I've been too because he has eczema and they have been able to prescribe some cream which surprised me.”

“Easily accessible and near my home”

Where do you prefer to see your Health Visitor? At home, clinic, children’s centre, at a group or a combination of any of these?



The majority of people like the combination of home visits or clinic appointments, some liked the one-to-one opportunity and privacy of the appointment, whilst those who enjoy attending clinic use the opportunity to meet other parents and socialise.

“I like a mix. If I had anything personal to discuss I prefer privacy of home but I like the clinic and baby groups for weighing and checks etc.”

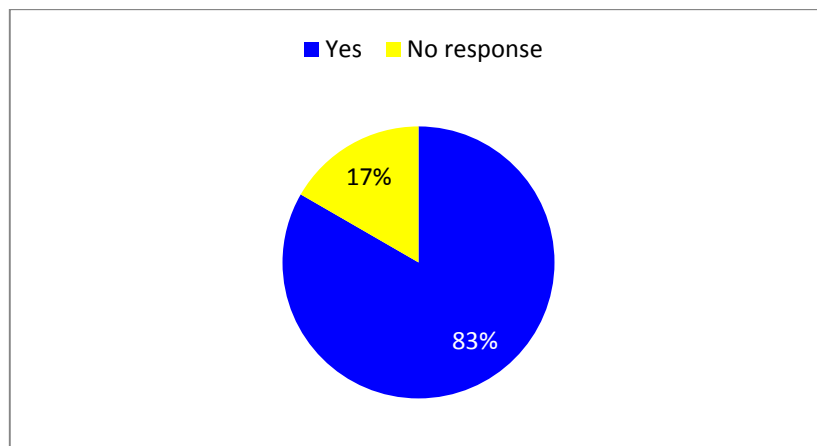
“Prefer coming to clinic as I don’t like waiting in at home. I’m breast feeding and a text or time slot to say what time they are coming would be helpful instead of just 'morning' or 'afternoon'. At clinic I can come at a time to suit me more as I have twins and a toddler at home”

“Contact with other new mums is possible at clinic”

“I like coming to clinic but like the mix. I had heard negative feedback on the health visitors and midwives but I have found them all to be fantastic”

Would you recommend this service to your family and friends?

The NHS Friends and Family test was introduced to the Service in 2014 and is an important opportunity for patients to provide feedback on the services that have provided their care and support. This feedback helps NHS England to improve services for everyone.



The feedback from those people using the Health Visiting Service is overwhelming positive with 83% of people using the service giving a positive response.

Additional Comments

Two ladies, attending different clinics stated that a problem has been identified with their child, one at birth and one with early feeding. Both babies had been referred to a Paediatrician at the Royal Bolton Hospital but both appointments involved an eight week wait which was of concern to the parents. Both parents were unclear also as to who had the responsibility for co-ordinating the care of their child (paediatric service or health visitors?) and did not know who they should contact to try and bring the appointments forward.

Conclusions

People are generally happy with the Health Visiting service in particular appreciating the efforts made by the service to respond to people's choices of home visit or clinic appointments. It seems, however, that people do not have much understanding of the professional standing of Health Visitors and some people have expectations that the service will not be helpful - though these are usually revised once contact with the service is established. There are also some concerns in relation to co-ordination/information, with the connection between health visiting and other services.

With regards to other services, although the majority of people responding to the survey stated that they found it easy to get an appointment with their GP there are still clearly difficulties with appointment systems at some surgeries which need to be address, particularly, where babies and young children are involved. If a parent/carer is to look after their family effectively, their health should be considered or this can impact on the wider family or community.

Recommendations

- Improve the information provided to expectant and new parents about the Health Visiting Service; the role of the health visitor and what parents should expect from the service.
- The Health Visiting Service could explore the possibility of using 'text' to inform families of the nearest approximate time of the Health Visitors visit on any given day to allow families to plan their day.
- There should be more clarity within service information about how long people can expect to be in contact with the service, how often people should expect to be seen and how people can contact the service if their circumstances change or they develop concerns once the initial visiting period is over.
- Clearer arrangements regarding appointment waiting times and contact points during that wait should be made for parents with children identified as needing paediatric service input.

Service Provider response

The report is great really informative, well written and positive and raises some good ideas re the use of text messaging and the lack of awareness amongst some of our clients about the role and training of the HV. I think what comes across is also the need to remain flexible and responsive to the needs of our families as one size doesn't fit all.

Joanne Dorsman, Matron, Health Visiting, Bolton NHS Foundation Trust