

Somerset NHS Citizens' Panel

Choice in Elective Care – Results Analysis

Aim

Elective care is care that is planned, in advance, as opposed to emergency treatment. Elective care entails planned specialist medical care or surgery, generally following a referral from a primary or community health professional such as a GP.

We are currently looking at ways to ensure the number of patients awaiting treatment because of Covid-19 is brought down as quickly as possible. One way to do this is to try and encourage patients to be seen at the provider with the shortest waiting time.

We want to know what is important to our patients when choosing where to be seen for treatment and understand what matters most when choosing where to have elective care. This will inform decision making by the elective care board and future communications with the public.

Overview of Choice in Elective Care Survey

The Somerset NHS Citizens' Panel were given the opportunity to complete the Choices in Elective Care Survey, which went live for just over two weeks. During this time, 35 Citizens' Panel members completed the survey, which comprised of four closed questions and four open-ended questions. The analysis of the survey results involved using our 'Bang the Table' website functions to carry out a Text Analysis of all responses.

As well as all individual Panel members' responses being recorded and shared for consideration, important key themes emerged in the initial stages of feedback analysis.

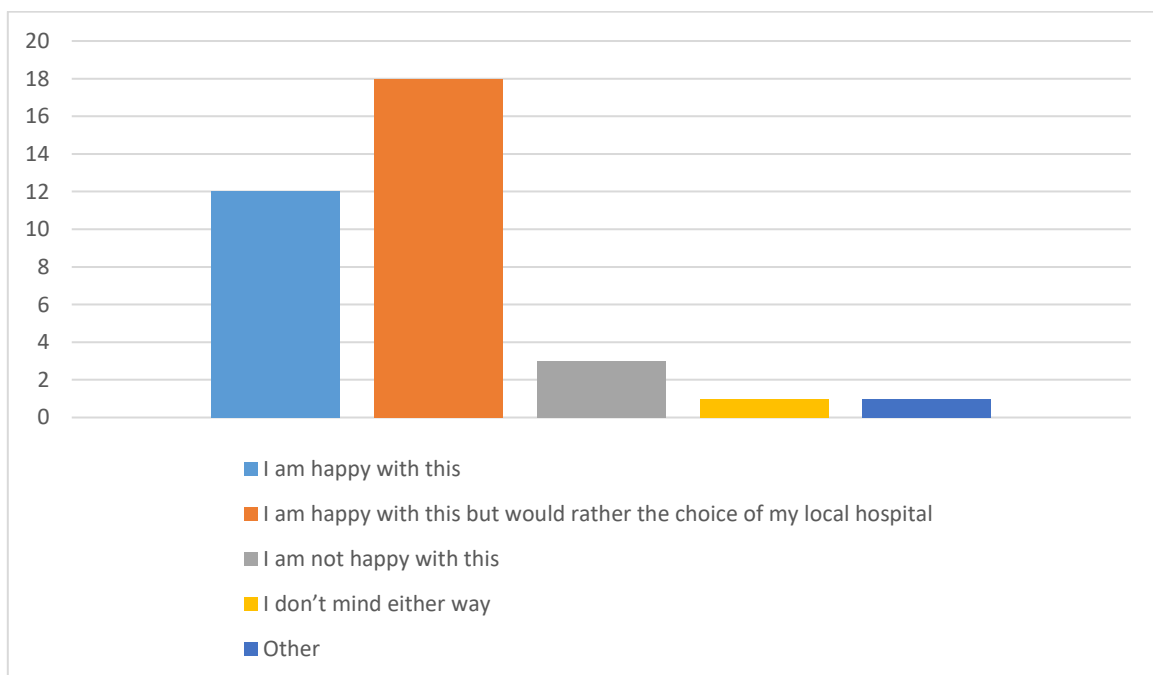
Key themes:

- 34% of respondents were happy with the concept of being offered treatment at a choice of hospitals.
- 51% of respondents were happy with the concept of being offered treatment at a choice of hospitals but would rather the choice of their local hospital.
- However, 71% of the respondents would have concerns about the hospital being offered not being their local hospital. Eleven out of the twenty-five respondents provided the reasons for these concerns. All the concerns related to transport, specific issues included cost, time, or distance for patients or visitors. This point was raised on several of the questions and seemed important to respondents.
- Overall, most of the respondents agreed with the approach being taken to reduce waiting times for patients across Somerset. Only 3% of respondents disagree with the approach.
- Respondents were most interested in clinical outcomes, followed by the quickest way to get treated. Recommended by friends and ease of access by public transport were the least important factors to our respondents.
- Respondents stressed the importance of being able to get to the hospital by themselves, whether by car or public transport, and the site is accessible for those with mobility issues.
- When being offered a choice of hospitals, respondents want to know why they are being referred to a different hospital. Regardless of the wait, they would like to be offered the choice of their local hospital along with the wait time so they can make an informed choice.
- When asked if there were any further comments, respondents wanted a reduction in wait times but still wanted a choice in hospitals.
- Respondents wanted feedback following the survey.

Main Report

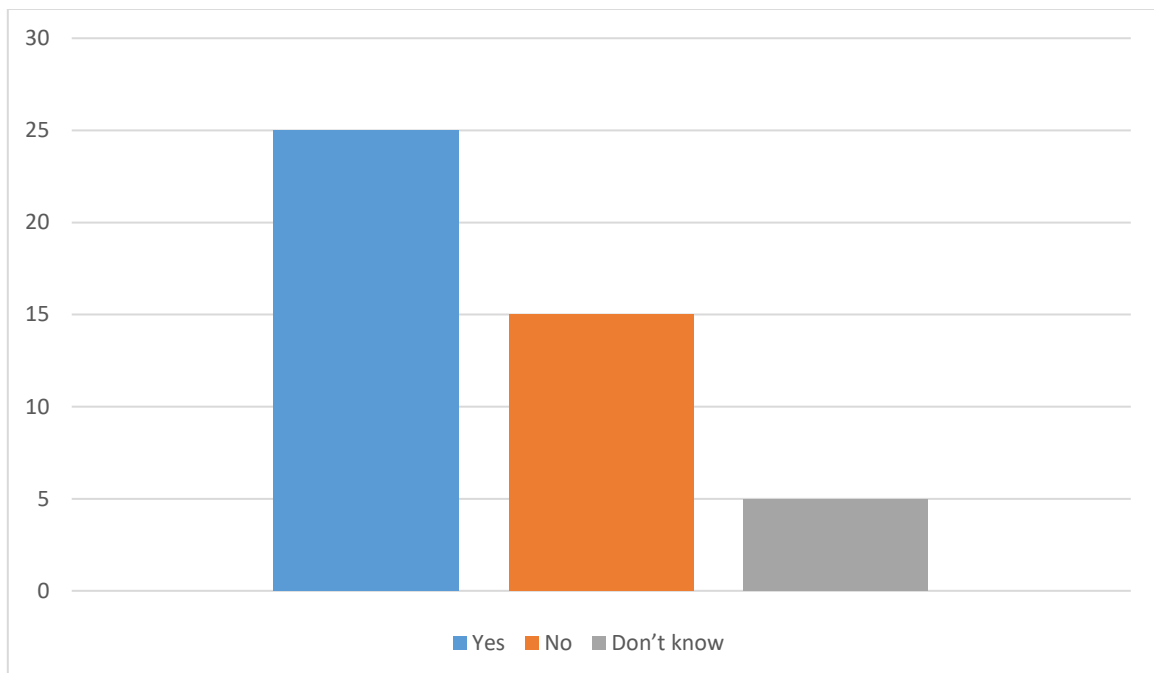
Q1 - If you are referred to a hospital in Somerset for treatment, you will be offered treatment at a small choice of Somerset hospitals (this is likely to be two). These will be the hospitals with the shortest waiting times rather than those closest to you. How do you feel about this? (35 responses)

- Eighteen respondents were happy with this but would rather have the choice of their local hospital
- Twelve of the respondents were happy with this
- Three respondents were not happy with this
- One of the respondents did not mind either way
- One respondent chose other and provided a comment explaining they selected this because they are worried about the range of choice and length of time travelling.



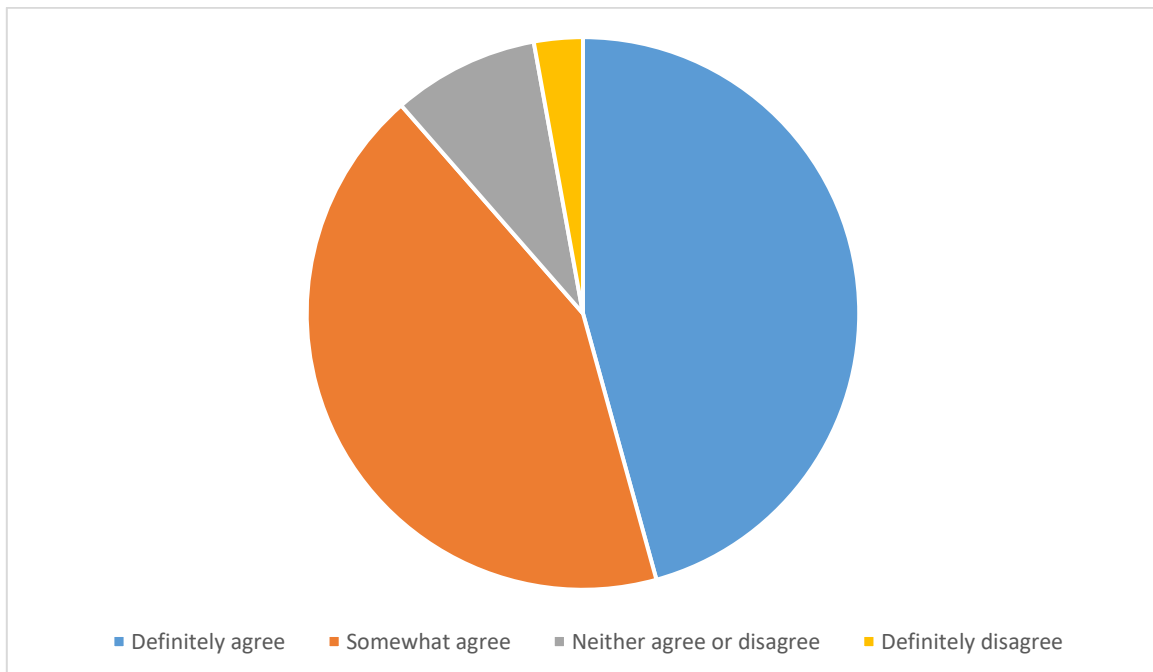
**Q2 - Would you have any concerns about this not being your closest hospital?
(35 responses)**

- Most respondents said they would have concerns about this not being their closest hospital
- Out of the 25 that said they were concerned, 11 provided their concerns
- All these are related to transport, cost, time or distance for patients or visitors.



Q3 - This action is being taken to reduce waiting times for patients across the whole of Somerset because some hospitals have more patients needing treatment than can be treated. To what extent do you agree with this approach? (35 responses)

- Sixteen respondents definitely agree
- Fifteen respondents somewhat agree
- Three respondents neither agree nor disagree
- One respondent definitely disagreed



Q4 - Please tell us why you chose this answer. (35 responses)

- Eighteen of the respondents stated that waiting time was why they agreed with the approach. Several said it would be better to be seen sooner so the patient's condition does not deteriorate, and the patient would not have to wait in pain.
- The clear themes that came from respondents answering something agree in Question 3 were concerned about transport or access issues.
- Four respondents agreed with the approach provided they still have a choice.
- Four respondents cited the difficulty visitors may face when coming to the hospital as the reason they would not be able to choose definitely agree
- One respondent said travel would be the most important factor

Q5 - To help us make decisions that will aim to reduce the waiting times for elective care in Somerset, please tell us what factors are most important to you when being referred for planned treatment. Please rank your choices with 1 being most important and 12 being least important. (34 responses)

Respondents were asked to rank their choices from 1 being most important to 12 being least important.

- Respondents were most interested in clinical outcomes followed by the quickest way to get treated. Recommended by friends and I can get there easily by public transport were the least important factors to our respondents.

Factor	Average Rating
Recommended by friends	9.13
I can easily access public transport	8.66
I have been there before	8.20
Car parking is reasonably priced	8.10
It is easy for someone to accompany me	7.71
Car parking is available	6.94
I can access easily by car	6.32
Is my local hospital	5.44
Recommended by my GP	5.39
Has doctors that I trust	4.19
Is the quickest way to get treated	3.79
Delivers the best clinical outcomes	3.24

Q6 - Have we missed anything from this list that would be important to you when choosing where to access planned care? (12 responses)

- Most respondents thought we had not missed anything and skipped the question or answered saying no.
- Seven respondents stressed the importance of being able to travel to the hospital by themselves and the accessibility of the site.
- Several respondents said it was important for their carers or patient transport to be able to drop them at the hospital.
- One respondent stated that time of day was important when choosing where to access planned care.

Q7 - Based on the above information, is there any information would you want the NHS to provide you with to explain why you have been referred for treatment to a place other than your local hospital? (20 responses)

- Nine respondents asked to be informed of the wait times other hospitals in the local area so they could make an informed choice.
- Four respondents asked for further details of the hospital's expertise, with more information on the success rates and clinicians.
- Several respondents stated that they would want to know why they were being referred for treatment to a place other than their local hospital. They also asked for information about the advantages of choosing a different hospital.

Q8 - Do you have any further comments? (12 responses)

When respondents were asked if they wished to tell us anything else about 'choice in elective care', the most popular responses were:

- No – no further feedback to share on this topic
- Respondents wanted a reduction in waiting times but still wanted choice
- Respondents wanted feedback following the survey
- Two respondents asked for a cross-county border survey to cut waiting times.
- One respondent wanted a last-minute cancellation list

Recommendations

- Respondents asked to be informed of the wait times other hospitals in the local area so they could make an informed choice. They explained they still wanted to be able to choose their local hospital. We should provide patients with a choice of two hospitals plus their local hospital giving a wait time for each hospital. This will allow patients to have a reduction in wait times but will allow them to still have a choice.
- Respondents asked for further details of the hospital's expertise, with more information on the success rates and clinicians. We should provide patients with information on success rates and clinicians.
- Respondents stated that they would want to know why they were being referred for treatment to a place other than their local hospital. We should explain in plain English why patients have been referred to a hospital other than their local hospital and explain the advantages of choosing a different hospital.
- Patients should be kept informed about the transport options and we should consider putting transport information into any referral letters.
- We should explore the possibility of a last-minute cancellation list
- We will provide respondents with feedback following the survey

Next Steps

The above report was taken to the Somerset Elective Care Board on 04th November 2021 for consideration. The Board is made up of system partners, including Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, Yeovil and District NHS Foundation Trust, Somerset County Council and NHS England South West.

The report was considered by the Board, who gave the following response:

The Elective Care Board are hugely grateful for the feedback received from Citizens' Panel members. They would like to pass on their thanks to everyone who completed the survey.

The Board feels that the information provided is incredibly useful to them as they continue to plan for the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

They acknowledge that people would like both more information and timely information about elective care wait times and have developed a workgroup to look at this.

They also acknowledge the need to consider the importance of local services to people alongside the wait times for treatment.

The Board would like to use this as a starting point to continue discussions with Citizens' Panel members about Elective Care in Somerset.

Demographic Overview

Age

- 66% of respondents were aged 65 and over
- 17% of respondents were aged 55-64
- 14% of respondents were aged 45-54
- 3% of respondents were aged 25-34

Gender

- 66% of respondents were female
- 34% of respondents were male

Sexual orientation

- 89% of respondents were heterosexual/straight
- 3% of respondents were homosexual/gay/lesbian
- 3% of respondents were bisexual
- 5% of respondents preferred not to say

Ethnicity

- 94% of respondents were White-British/Other European/Gypsy/Traveller/Other
- 3% of respondents were Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi/Chinese/Indian/Pakistani/Other
- 3% of respondents preferred not to say

Disability

- 77% of respondents did not consider themselves to have a disability
- 20% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability
- 3% of respondents preferred not to say

Carers

- 77% of respondents had no primary care responsibilities
- 23% of respondents had primary care responsibilities, someone over the 18 years old