

NHS Long Term Plan Report

Healthwatch Warrington

what
would you do?
It's your NHS. Have your say.

Warrington

Warrington is situated upon the river Mersey and is the largest town in the county of Cheshire, but has its own unitary authority of Warrington Borough Council. It is made up of small suburbs and villages as well as more densely populated areas around the town centre.

The population has increased over the past 30 years because of new town developments, and now numbers 209,700 residents. It is estimated that by 2025, there will be around 221,000 people living in Warrington.

Quality of life is generally good in Warrington but there are pockets of significant disadvantage, where residents experience poorer health outcomes. There are wide inequalities between people living in areas of high levels of deprivation and those living in areas of low deprivation; more deprived populations generally have poorer outcomes in terms of health and education. Life expectancy is lower than the national average at 78.9 years for men and 81.9 years for women.¹

In Warrington, we received 256 survey responses, consisting of 249 general surveys and 7 specific condition surveys. There were also 40 attendees across two specific focus group events.



¹ Source: Warrington Borough Profile

<https://www.warrington.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/16619/warrington-borough-profile.pdf>

Summary of Findings:

What matters most to people in Warrington?

- Having **access to the help and treatment needed when it is wanted** and having easy access to information needed to help make decisions about health and care were the most important factors people told us were needed in living a healthy life. People told us they wanted more support with healthy eating and lifestyle, and wanted improved access to services and joined-up care.
- To help keep independence and stay healthy whilst getting older, people indicated that **being able to stay in their own home for as long as possible** was most important to them. It was also noted that people want there to be convenient ways to travel to health and care services when needed. **More effective support services** and opportunities to meet other people to combat social isolation were also mentioned.
- Choosing the right treatment being a **joint decision between the person and the relevant health and care professional** is overwhelmingly most important to people in Warrington in managing and choosing support and treatment, alongside receiving timely communications. People discussed the need for **more services to be available locally**, greater levels of information and advice to be available, and greater use of online technology.
- People in Warrington told us that having absolute confidence that their **personal data is managed well** and kept secure, being able to make appointments using phone or computer, and the use of technology to communicate results efficiently were deemed as the most important things when interacting with the NHS.
- Comments regarding the use of technology in health and care were varied. Some people told us that they would like to see **more online or accessible appointments** or be able to easily access records and results, whereas others felt that face to face communication could not be replaced. The ability to access personal records was also considered important.
- General comments overwhelmingly related to the **accessibility of GP appointments**, but also to appointments with other healthcare professionals. Respondents, especially those in work, would like to see **more out of hours GP appointments** and quicker referrals.
- People with Cancer are generally positive about the assessment, treatment and support they have received, and feel the wait at each of these stages was at least 'OK'.
- Focus group attendees with learning disabilities said that they often felt that they were **rushed out of their GP appointment** before they had the time to process the information that was given to them.

Survey results

The following sections now break down the results of the 256 responses across Warrington to the surveys designed by Healthwatch England. The first sections use the 249 responses to the general 'People's general experiences of health and care services' survey, before breaking down the 7 survey responses from people discussing support for specific conditions.

In the responses to the general surveys, people were asked questions around:

- Living a healthy life
- Keeping independence and staying healthy in later life
- Managing and choosing support and treatment
- Interacting and engaging with the NHS.

For each of these, people were asked to choose which of a number of options was most important to them. Following this, people were asked to rate each of the options on a scale of 'very important' to 'not important at all'. Therefore, more than one option could be considered 'very important'. Finally, respondents were then asked to elaborate on what works well and what could be improved in these areas.

What is important to people about health and care services

Living a healthy life

When considering how to live a healthy life, having access to the help and treatment needed when it is wanted was deemed to be most important by people responding to the survey (see **Chart 1**). Having easy access to information needed to help make decisions about health and care was considered the next ‘very important’ aspect. 246 people responded to this question.

Chart 1: What is the most important to you to help you to lead a healthy life?

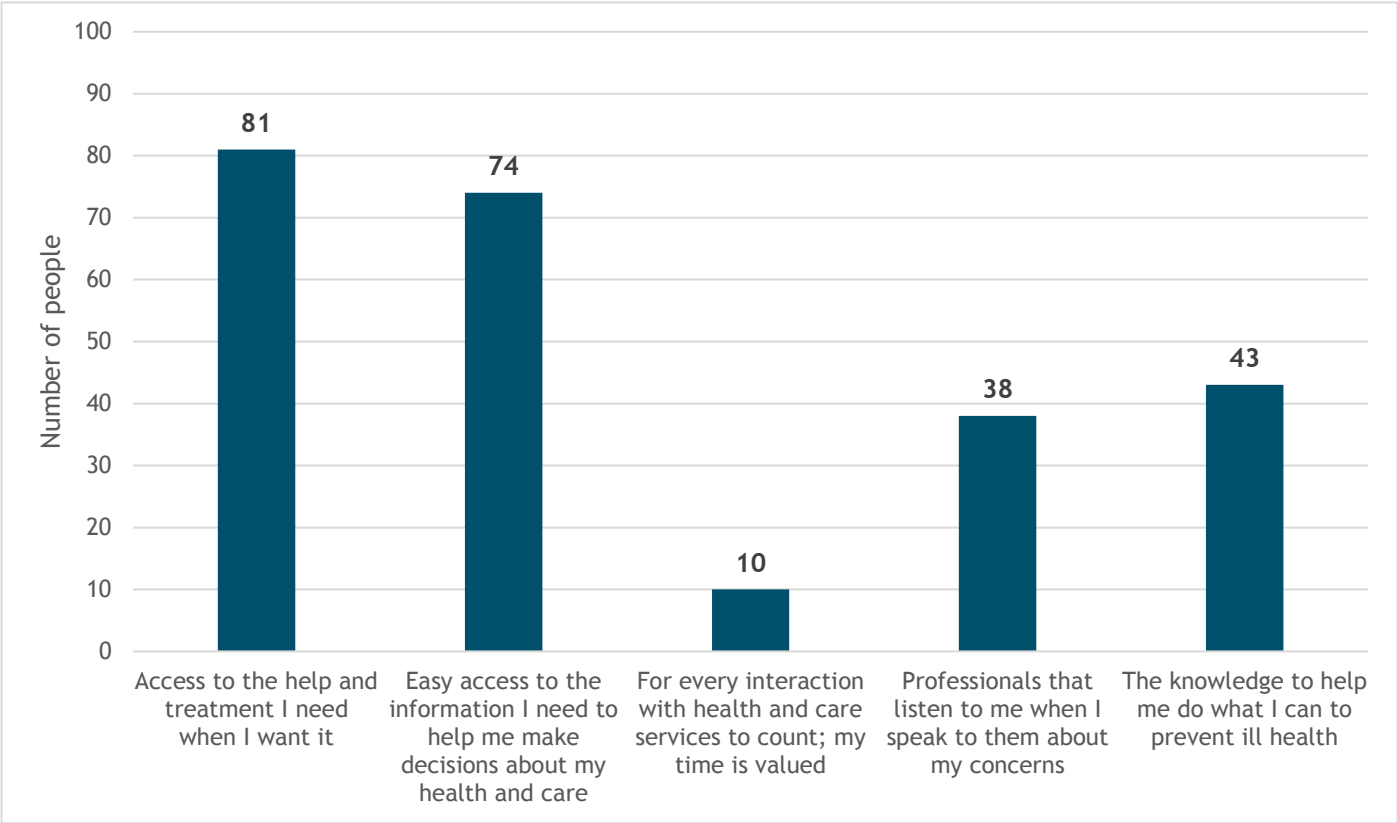


Table 1: When asked to rate on a scale of very important to not important at all respondents to the survey felt that ‘Access to the help and treatment I need when I want it’ was the most important factor, however, the option receiving the second largest ‘most important’ response was ‘Professionals that listen to me when I speak to them about my concerns’. It is also important to note that all five statements were deemed as either ‘very important’ or ‘important’, as the table below shows. 246 people responded to this question, though not everyone responded to each option:

Table 1: Rate how important the following things are to you when it comes to living a healthy life

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not important at all
Access to the help and treatment I need when I want it	169	69	8	0	0
Professionals that listen to me when I speak to them about my concerns	162	75	8	0	0
Easy access to the information I need to help me make decisions about my health and care	154	72	19	1	0
For every interaction with health and care services to count; my time is valued	147	83	14	1	0
Having the knowledge to help me do what I can to prevent ill health	139	91	16	0	0

We also asked respondents to think about one more thing that would help them to lead a healthy life. This was a free text question and so answers were collated into themes and summarised below:

Healthy eating/exercise

Many people commented on the desire to eat more healthily, the importance of having access to reasonably priced nutritional food and the ability to make healthier eating choices. Increasing access to exercise (providing free or subsidised classes or activities, increasing cycle paths) and the importance of social or community activities were mentioned.

- *“I need to exercise more but it is difficult when you have a young family and work full time, free childcare in leisure centres would be great”*
- *“Lots of community classes aimed at older people like me.”*
- *“Healthy food to be more affordable.”*
- *“More healthy, active options at work. We used to have a social club offering keep fit yoga, etc.”*

Access to services

A common theme was the need for easy access to GP appointments and other medical services. There was also a requirement for regular annual checks for those with certain conditions such as a Learning Disability.

- *“Easier access to a GP.”*

- *“Hospital appointments quicker to achieve than GP appointments.”*
- *“Having services easily accessible without taking time out from work and also without having very long waiting lists.”*
- *“To be able to have more health checks at the age I am and not have to wait until I am older, to prevent illness later on in life.”*
- *“Access to the right equipment at the right time is difficult in the time from agreement and referral to a service our children grow and have different needs.”*
- *“Annual Health checks and annual reviews easy read information and for the doctor to take more time in appointments. Give professionals training to understand learning disabilities and autism more.”*

Air Quality

Concerns regarding the amount of traffic and air pollution were mentioned by many people living in this area of Cheshire.

- *“Clean, fresh air - unpolluted.”*
- *“Ensure the air in the vicinity of Runcorn and Widnes was free of toxic air pollution from the chemical works along the Mersey estuary. Not satisfied with companies like INEOS claiming they are not causing air pollution and other pollutions. Lung cancer rates in Runcorn are some of the highest in the country. It's not just down to smoking.”*
- *“Traffic and pollution measures to be urgently prioritised.”*

Integration of Services

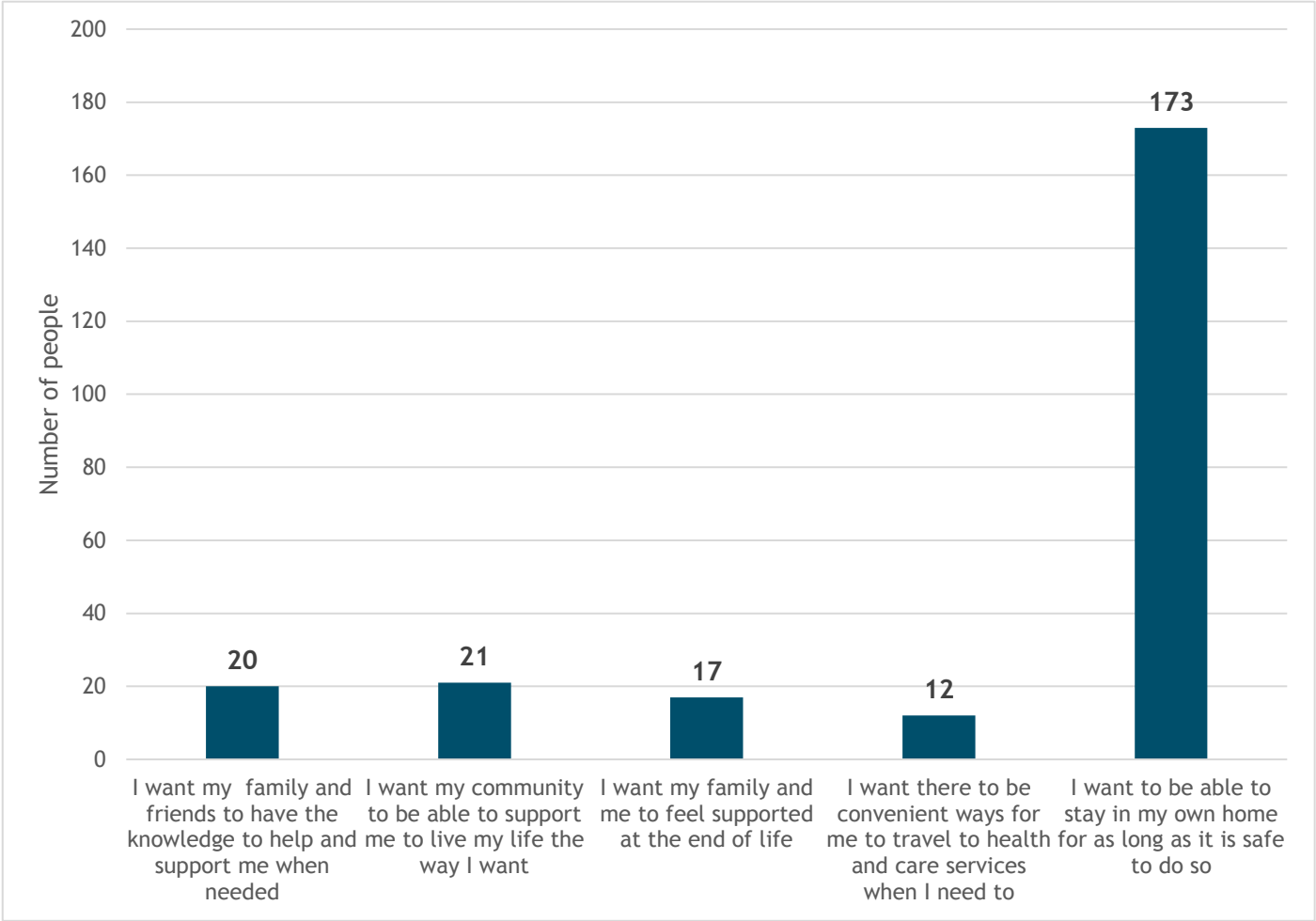
The importance of joined up care was also highlighted by some.

- *“Joined up care pathways which prevent isolated GP/hospital/clinic visits.”*
- *“The specialists that we see all have such different knowledge and work that we accept that there will be travel to see experts and duplication in some areas. However, where appointments are linked to such areas as education, health and social care, there is much to do to ensure we have less repetition as services are working better together, i.e. joined up administration, single records and access for all of the agencies involved.”*
- *“Services must work together to achieve better outcomes.”*

Keeping independence and staying healthy in later life

We asked people to tell us what they feel is important about keeping independence and staying healthy in later life. Being able to stay in their own home for as long as possible was by far the most important factor (see Chart 2). 243 people responded to this question.

Chart 2: What’s most important to you to help you to keep your independence and stay healthy as you get older?



In Table 2 when asked to rate this however, although being able to live independently in their own home is rated as the most important, all of the other statements identified were also rated as very important or important. Up to 246 people responded to this question, though not everyone responded to each option.

Table 2: Rate how important the following things are to you when it comes to keeping your independence and ageing healthily:

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not important at all
I want to be able to stay in my own home for as long as it is safe to do so	186	42	12	0	0

I want there to be convenient ways for me to travel to health and care services when I need to	168	66	9	2	0
I want my family and me to feel supported at the end of life	166	64	14	0	0
I want my family and friends to have the knowledge, to help and support me when needed	159	72	15	0	0
I want my community to be able to support me to live my life the way I want	144	85	13	3	0

We also asked respondents to think about one more thing that would help to retain their independence and live healthily for as long as possible. Again, this was a free text question so answers were collated into themes and summarised below:

Effective Support Services and Carers

One of the most common themes with regards to what people feel would help them to live independently was related to the value of carers and support workers:

- *“Support for/consideration of people ageing without children.”*
- *“Proper and sustained care in my home from a dedicated team suited to my specific needs.”*
- *“If I require healthcare in my own home, it is provided by staff that are suitably trained, and provided in a timely manner.”*
- *“For social workers to ensure that I have enough one to one hours so that my support workers can help.”*
- *“Good quality carers who do not have to rush constantly. It would be useful if it was the same carers wherever possible.”*

Social Interaction

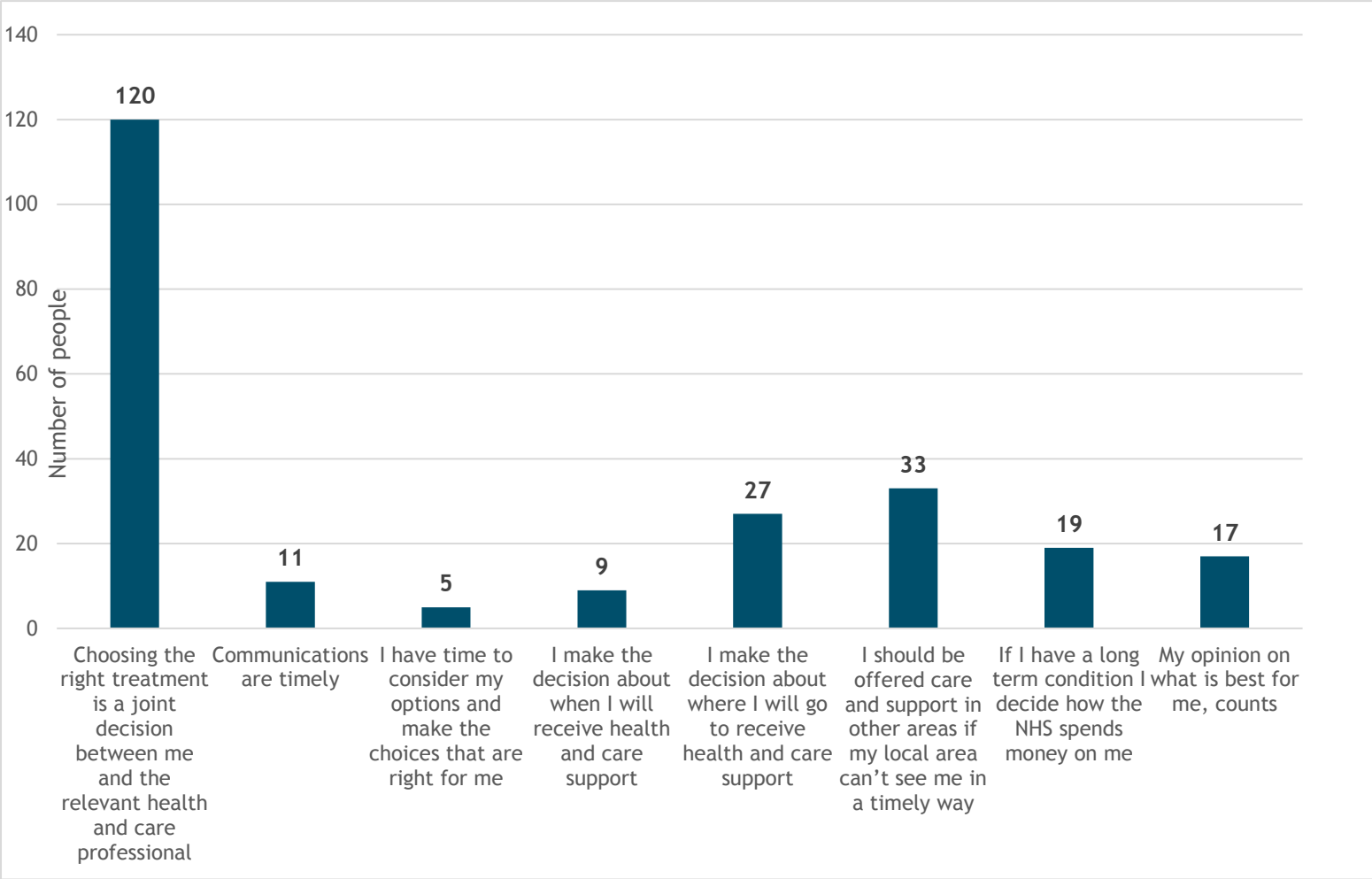
Some respondents also commented that feeling connected with others was or would be important to them.

- *“More opportunities for people to get together just to chat and maybe take part in an activity. Would reduce social isolation and improve people's mental wellbeing.”*
- *“Good support and the Learning Disabilities team have good activities to take part in and going out in the community.”*
- *“Social prescribing is hugely effective at reducing demands on primary provision. However, the element of transport seems to be forgotten within such programmes. Given the purchasing power of the NHS and related bodies cannot a comprehensive plan be developed to provide transportation options to increase participation in social prescribed activities. Maybe the inclusion of some evening opportunities could allow joint provision of transport with entertainment providers (domino and bingo nights etc.) to share costs of acquisition, operation and maintenance. I experience at least five clients per week who cannot be socially active due to the lack of transport availability. I'm sure we could have a huge increase in take up of social prescribing where a transport solution is offered.”*
- *“Important to support each other- social interaction.”*

Managing and choosing support and treatment

Chart 3 shows that people we spoke to in Warrington told us that choosing the right treatment being a joint decision between them and the relevant health and care professional was overwhelmingly most important to them in managing and choosing support and treatment. Being offered care and support in other areas if people cannot be seen in a timely way locally was deemed as the second most important option. 241 people responded to this question.

Chart 3: What’s most important to you to be able to manage and choose the support you need?



As Table 3 shows, when asked to select how important different factors were on a scale of very important to not important at all, people deemed choosing the right treatment as a joint decision between themselves and a relevant health and care professional as the most important factor when managing and choosing the support they need, followed by a desire to receive timely communications. Up to 243 people responded to this question, though not everyone responded to each option.

Table 3: Rate how important the following things are to you when it comes to managing and choosing the support you need

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not important at all
Choosing the right treatment is a joint decision between me and the relevant health and care professional	143	89	11	0	0
Communications are timely	139	82	17	0	0
My opinion on what is best for me, counts	116	95	31	1	0
I should be offered care and support in other areas if my local area can't see me in a timely way	115	99	20	9	0
I have time to consider my options and make the choices that are right for me	114	106	13	1	0
I make the decision about where I will go to receive health and care support	107	101	30	4	0
I make the decision about when I will receive health and care support	101	110	30	1	0
If I have a long-term condition, I decide how the NHS spends money on me	73	103	53	7	0

General comments received from respondents regarding managing and choosing support are summarised below.

Information, Communication and Choice

Many respondents stated that they needed quality information and guidance to enable them to make choices. Knowledge of the available services and their locations was also a key theme. Comments included:

- *“Better information about available services and how to access them.”*
- *“Good quality, timely information that provides me with everything that I need to make an informed choice.”*

- *“Better communication - more timely correspondence, linked up with primary and secondary services. Make use of holistic therapies for example acupuncture and pain management - much more cost effective than medication.”*
- *“Health care support directory.”*
- *“Take more time with me and my learning disability, training for NHS staff.”*
- *“Clear communication about options available and the benefits of each option.”*

Funding for, and accessibility of services locally

People told us that they would like to see more financial investment in both infrastructure and staffing. Comments showed that respondents felt that services could also be more accessible either by being closer at hand or that transport means to get to appointments are improved. Comments included:

- *“Modern local hospital that is adequately resourced.”*
- *“More investment in people/nurses.”*
- *“Accountability by those who hold the budgets - too much power for the CCGs and Local Medical Councils. The balance of power needs to return to the patient and be less about the GP budget.”*
- *“More support workers and advocates.”*
- *“More money for healthcare.”*
- *“Once EHCP plans are agreed there is never the right funding or organisations to fulfil needs and agencies argue over who has responsibility to fund. Despite this all being statutory funding and ultimately from the same taxes we pay to the government.”*
- *“No long delays and a bed when I need it, then proper support.”*
- *“Easier access to services - there are too many hoops to jump through.”*
- *“Public transport access could be better.”*
- *“Access to hospitals and clinics. I can’t get the bus.”*
- *“I live in Lymm. Most convenient hospital is Wythenshawe, 15 minutes by car. Have to go to Warrington, no buses within reasonable distance, or to Halton about 1 hour in a car if motorway is not blocked. Refuse to go to Halton. Thought we had a choice?”*

Use of Online Technology

Respondents also felt that better use could be made of technology for appointments and signposting:

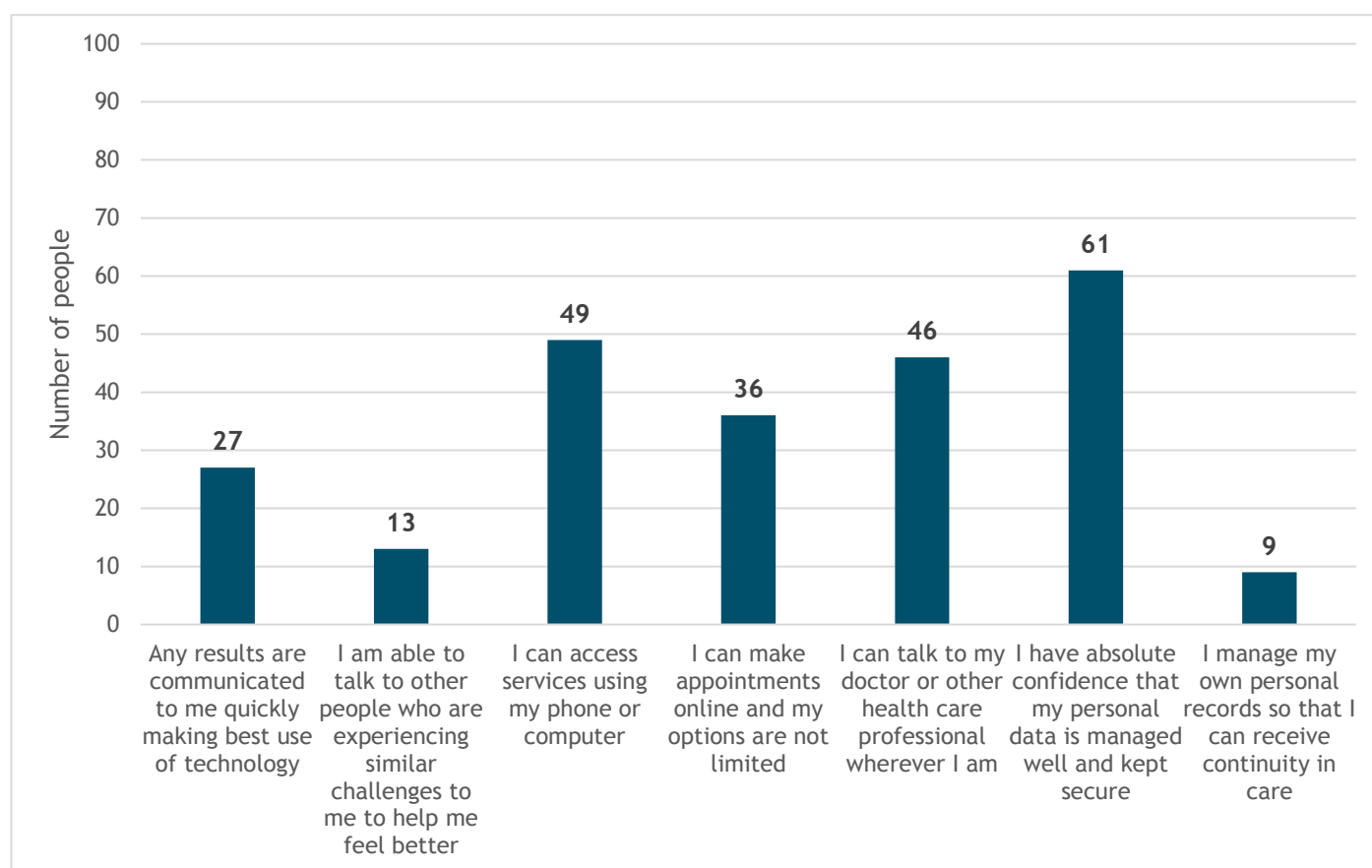
- *“Online chat doctor service.”*
- *“Make use of online technology.”*
- *“Booking appointments online, not having to ring up.”*
- *“More online services/online booking.”*
- *“Clear point of access from which we can be signposted/navigate the system so that we aren’t lost in the system... the NHS app has great potential to be this for the majority of people. Those unable to use the app should be able to access someone who can use the app for them.”*

Engaging people in health service delivery

Engaging people is considered to be an enabler of service change and improvement within the Long-Term Plan. This section of the report provided an opportunity for people to make suggestions about what effective engagement can look like.

As **Chart 4** shows below, people in the Warrington area told us that having absolute confidence that personal data is managed well and kept secure was considered most important by people who answered the survey, this was followed by a desire to access services using a phone or computer. Also considered important was the ability to talk to a healthcare professional from any location. 241 people responded to this question.

Chart 4: What is most important to people when interacting with the NHS



When asked to select how important different factors were on a scale of very important to not important at all, people deemed that having absolute confidence that their personal data is managed well and kept secure was very important and on a par with making good use of technology to receive test results. Other options such as people talking to a healthcare professional wherever they are, people talking to other people who are experiencing similar challenges to feel better and people managing their own personal records so that they can receive continuity in care, were shown to be important rather than very important as can be seen in **Table 4** below. Up to 243 people responded to this question, though not everyone responded to each option.

Table 4: Rate what is most important to you when interacting with the NHS

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not important at all
I have absolute confidence that my personal data is managed well and kept secure	126	85	26	3	0
Any results are communicated to me quickly making best use of technology	126	88	25	2	1
I can talk to my doctor or other health care professional wherever I am	82	122	34	5	1
I can make appointments online and my options are not limited	77	112	34	15	6
I can access services using my phone or computer	75	111	40	12	5
I manage my own personal records so that I can receive continuity in care	62	100	63	15	3
I am able to talk to other people who are experiencing similar challenges to me to help me feel better	60	90	65	24	3

Access to appointments

General comments overwhelmingly related to the accessibility of GP appointments, but also to appointments with other healthcare professionals. Respondents, especially those in work, would like to see more out of hours GP appointments and quicker referrals. Comments included:

- “Quicker access to Physiotherapist services, when referred.”
- “It is difficult for working people to make appointments to see medical professionals, particularly if it is not an urgent matter but you do need to see someone. There are limited appointments and everyone, no matter who you speak to or where they live, is having problems getting an appointment. You are told to ring 8-8.30 am for an appointment, but this is when a lot of people are travelling to work. The system does not work very well for the working population. In my experience, I received a letter for a health check. There was a limited number of places available. I phoned when I got in from work only to be informed that I was too late and all the places had been taken. I am a widowed, working single parent and am trying to be responsible about my health. I don't want to be ill or go into hospital but the system doesn't help people like me.”
- “It is important that I am given appointments at a time of the day that suits me.”

- *“GPs having the time to listen - quite often appointments feel rushed - I try and avoid going to the GP if possible.”*

Technology and access to personal records

Comments regarding the use of technology in health and care were varied. Some people told us that they would like to see more online or accessible appointments or being able to easily access records and results, whereas others felt that face to face communication could not be replaced. The ability to access personal records was also considered important. Comments included:

- *“People to have full access to their own records if they choose. Person-centred care should mean the person is the centre of information.”*
- *“Easier online access to past treatments/prescriptions.”*
- *“Whilst access to services and support in a timely manner is important, this should not be at the expense, or instead of, face to face consultations.”*
- *“Easy to transfer my health records between hospitals/GPs.”*
- *“Knowledge for confident use of NHS website.”*

Further Comments

- *“Quite positive about the services offered, things are much better than elsewhere in the world.”*
- *“I am very thankful for the NHS - far better than elsewhere in Europe.”*
- *“NHS care is the foundation of the country - regardless of vulnerability, age or location. Everyone has a right to high quality, equitable care at the point of access.”*
- *“Commissioned services regulate without notification of inspection or visit, i.e. CQC at hospitals.”*
- *“I would like the services to be able to communicate better so I don't have to tell my history multiple times.”*
- *“Knowledge is the key.”*
- *“Listen to me.”*
- *“Keep cancer services in Halton for the people of Halton/Warrington and surrounding areas.”*
- *“NHS is a broken system in many areas. Some of it is world class but at times the NHS seems third world. Some staff are lovely - others should not be in the profession. Lack of funding and staff is an issue - but sometimes funds are mismanaged. Spending money on art work for chief executive's offices should not be allowed. Funds are for patient care and staff costs - not massaging manager's egos. End of life care is a disgrace. Don't hide behind patient confidentiality- family need to be included in care plans for the terminally ill and palliative care should be available. Not enough GPs, hence why people turn up in A&E - easier access to GP appointments for working people - employers to allow staff time off for medical appointments.”*

People's experiences of NHS support for specific conditions

People with specific conditions were asked to complete a separate survey on their experiences of the NHS support they had received in relation to that condition. This included discussion on the three stages of the care journey; assessment, diagnosis and treatment; the provision of ongoing care and support; and prevention and/or early intervention. We received seven responses in total to this survey. This section breaks down the responses we received in terms of number of people by specific condition:

Table 5: Respondents with specific conditions

Conditions	Number of people
Cancer	3
Dementia	1
Heart and lung diseases	1
Learning disability	1
Mental health	1

Table 6: Who are you responding on behalf of?

Conditions	Myself	Someone else
Cancer	2	1
Dementia	1	0
Heart and lung diseases	1	0
Learning disability	0	1
Mental health	1	0

Table 7: Has the condition you are telling us about started within the last three years?

Conditions	Yes	No
Cancer	3	0
Dementia	1	0
Heart and lung diseases	1	0
Learning disability	1	0
Mental health	1	0

Experience of getting help and support

Table 8: When you first tried to access help, did the support you received meet your needs?

Condition	Yes	No	Somewhat	Not applicable
Cancer	3	0	0	0
Dementia	1	0	0	0
Heart and lung diseases	0	0	1	0
Learning disability	0	0	1	0
Mental health	0	1	0	0

Cancer:

- *“I felt supported straight from my diagnosis.”*
- *“It was excellent.”*

Heart and lung diseases:

- *“Incompetent system, with information being lost by the hospital.”*

Mental Health:

- *“Not able to get a GP appointment very easily.”*

Table 9: How would you describe your overall experience of getting help?

Conditions	Very positive	Positive	Average	Negative	Very negative	Don't know
Cancer	2	1	0	0	0	0
Dementia	0	1	0	0	0	0
Heart and lung diseases	0	0	0	0	1	0
Learning disability	0	0	0	1	0	0
Mental health	0	0	0	1	0	0

Table 10: Do you have any other/additional conditions including long term conditions or disabilities?

Conditions	Yes	No
Cancer	2	1
Dementia	0	1
Heart and lung diseases	0	1
Learning disability	0	1
Mental health	0	1

Table 11: If so, how would you describe the experience of seeking support for more than one condition at a time?

Conditions	It made getting support easier	It made getting support harder	No difference	I don't know	Not applicable
Cancer	0	0	2	0	0
Dementia	0	0	0	0	0
Heart and lung diseases	0	0	0	0	0
Learning disability	0	0	0	0	0
Mental health	0	0	0	0	0

The health and care support received after initially seeking help

Table 12: How would you describe the time you had to wait to receive your initial assessment or diagnosis?

Conditions	Very slow	Slow	Ok	Fast	Very fast	Don't know
Cancer	0	0	3	0	0	0
Dementia	0	0	1	0	0	0
Heart and lung diseases	1	0	0	0	0	0
Learning disability	0	1	0	0	0	0
Mental health	0	1	0	0	0	0

Tell us more about the time you had to wait:

Cancer

- “Four weeks”

Heart and lung diseases

- “Two months”

Table 13: How would you describe the time you had to wait between your initial assessment /diagnosis and receiving treatment?

Conditions	Very slow	Slow	Ok	Fast	Very fast	Don't know
Cancer	0	0	1	1	1	0
Dementia	0	0	1	0	0	0
Heart and lung diseases	1	0	0	0	0	0
Learning disability	1	0	0	0	0	0
Mental health	0	1	0	0	0	0

Table 14: After being diagnosed or assessed, were you offered access to further health and care support?

Conditions	Yes	No
Cancer	2	1
Dementia	1	0
Heart and lung diseases	1	0
Learning disability	0	1
Mental health	0	1

Cancer

- *“Having a named nurse to talk to [worked well].”*

Heart and lung diseases:

- *‘Urgent’ results of tests information were not arranged.”*

Table 15: Were you referred to a specialist? For example, a hospital consultant, psychiatrist or physiotherapist

Conditions	Yes	No
Cancer	3	0
Dementia	1	0
Heart and lung diseases	1	0
Learning disability	1	0
Mental health	0	1

Table 16: How would you describe the time you had to wait between initial appointment and seeing the specialist?

Conditions	Very slow	Slow	OK	Fast	Very fast
Cancer	0	0	1	1	1
Dementia	0	0	1	0	0
Heart and lung diseases	1	0	0	0	0
Learning disability	0	1	0	0	0

Please tell us more about the length of time you waited

Heart and lung diseases

- “Over 2 months and still not arranged, even though progress meetings were organised by the hospital”

Learning disability

- “Too long”

Table 17: How easy did you find it to access ongoing support after you were diagnosed or assessed?

Conditions	Very easy	Easy	OK	Difficult	Very difficult	Don't know	Not applicable
Cancer	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Dementia	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Heart and lung diseases	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Learning disability	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Mental health	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Table 18: Did the support options you were offered meet your expectations?

Conditions	Yes	No	Somewhat
Cancer	2	0	1
Dementia	1	0	0
Heart and lung diseases	0	1	0
Learning disability	0	1	0
Mental health	0	0	1

Please explain how the care did or did not meet your expectations and how it could have been improved.

Cancer

- “All treatment seemed organised.”
- “I expected to have surgery or radiotherapy but I am on chemotherapy tablets which is marvellous.”

Mental Health:

- “I was given medication but not offered counselling.”

Table 19: During your whole experience of getting support did you receive timely and consistent communication from all of the services that you came into contact with?

Conditions	Yes	No	Somewhat
Cancer	2	0	1
Dementia	1	0	0
Heart and lung diseases	0	1	0
Learning disability	0	1	0
Mental health	0	1	0

Please explain how the care did or did not meet your expectations and how it could have been improved.

Mental Health

- “Hard to get seen.”

Heart and lung diseases

- “Exceedingly long delays in receiving urgent test results which have still not been arranged.”

Time spent travelling to access support and care

Table 20: What is your main means of transport?

Condition	Own car	Another person's car	Bus	Train	Bicycle	Taxi	Other
Cancer	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dementia	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Heart and lung diseases	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Learning disability	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mental health	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 21: How much time would you be willing to travel for to receive a quick and accurate diagnosis?

Conditions	Less than 30 minutes	30 minutes to 1 hour	1 - 2 hours	Over 2 hours
Cancer	0	1	2	0
Dementia	1	0	0	0
Heart and lung diseases	1	0	0	0
Learning disability	0	1	0	0
Mental health	0	0	1	0

Table 22: How much time would you be willing to travel to receive specialist treatment or support?

Conditions	Less than 30 minutes	30 minutes to 1 hour	1-2 hours	More than 2 hours
Cancer	0	1	1	1
Dementia	0	1	0	0
Heart and lung diseases	0	1	0	0
Learning disability	0	1	0	0
Mental health	0	0	1	0

What is most important to you?

Table 23: When first seeking help

Conditions	Seeing a health professional, you normally see but you may have to wait	Seeing any medically appropriate health professional who is free immediately
Cancer	0	2
Dementia	0	1
Heart and lung diseases	1	1
Learning disability	0	0
Mental health	0	1

Table 24: When you received a diagnosis and explanation of treatment or support options

Conditions	Seeing a health professional, you normally see but you may have to wait	Seeing any medically appropriate health professional who is free immediately
Cancer	0	2
Dementia	1	0
Heart and lung diseases	1	0
Learning disability	0	1
Mental health	0	1

Table 25: During your initial treatment or support

Conditions	Seeing a health professional, you normally see but you may have to wait	Seeing any medically appropriate health professional who is free immediately
Cancer	0	2
Dementia	0	1
Heart and lung diseases	1	0
Learning disability	0	0
Mental health	0	1

Table 26: During your long-term support

Conditions	Seeing a health professional, you normally see but you may have to wait	Seeing any medically appropriate health professional who is free immediately
Cancer	0	2
Dementia	0	1
Heart and lung diseases	1	0
Learning disability	0	0
Mental health	0	1

Supporting you to have more control over your own care

Table 27: What level of support do you want the NHS to provide to help you stay healthy?

Conditions	A lot of support	Some support	I don't need support	Don't know
Cancer	1	0	2	0
Dementia	0	1	0	0
Heart and lung diseases	0	1	0	0
Learning disability	1	0	0	0
Mental health	0	0	1	0

What could the NHS do to help you stay healthy or manage any condition you have?

Heart and lung diseases:

- *“Get the managers to sort out a proper and efficient service.”*
- *“Get them to follow patients through the assessment & treatment stage.”*
- *“Keep promises to triage patients at A&E quickly, not just leave everyone waiting.”*

Further comments

Heart and lung diseases

- *“Basically, the hospital managers are failing their staff and patients.”*

In focus: what is important to families of seriously ill and disabled children about health and care services?

As part of our research activity, Healthwatch Warrington conducted a focus group in collaboration with local charity *Tree of Hope* with families of seriously ill and disabled children in order to gain specific insight into the views of people accessing services. This focus group took place on 25th April 2019, and was attended by 10 people.

The key issues were perceived to be services not linking up and working well together, access to provision once a need is identified, and funding processes not taking all factors into account. Below is a selection of views and experiences from attendees:

- *“Services must work better together to achieve outcomes.”*
- *“Once EHCP plans are agreed there is never the right funding or organisations to fulfil needs and agencies argue over who has responsibility to fund. Despite this all being statutory funding and ultimately from the same taxes we pay to the government.”*
- *“Everything is focused on the here and now, the current year’s budget and what they can/cannot spend. Never mind the fact that slightly more spent on one child in a financial year may actually save the same services a lot more money over the coming few years. Very short sighted and no long-term vision.”*
- *“Serious and complex disabilities are often very similar or have the same ‘label’, though rarely do they have the exact same needs. Clinicians and services want to put everyone into pigeon holes and treat them exactly the same. In reality, every child and situation is very different and the greater the level of need, the greater the flexibility their needs to be.”*
- *“Access to the right equipment at the right time is difficult. In the time from assessment and referral to a service, our children grow and/or their needs change, implementing the whole process has to start again and this is costly and time consuming.”*
- *“The specialists we have to see all have such different knowledge and work that we accept that there will be travel to see experts and duplication in some areas. However, where appointments are linked to areas such as education, health and social care, there is much to do to really ensure we have less repetition as services are working better together, i.e. joined up administration, single records and access for all agencies involved.”*
- *“Our child was just out of the criteria for the SDR operation being funded, despite our consultant saying that it would benefit him. We have had to fundraise for this ourselves as well as the physiotherapy afterwards to make sure the operation was as successful as it could be. The support we receive from the health and social care sector is minimal as we are means tested. We do own our house and have one of us working full time, however, once the mortgage and bills are paid, living costs associated with a disabled child as well as an older sibling to care for; we are far worse off than families we see at school and clinics where neither work and they live in social housing. If we didn’t have our personal pride, and my husband’s hard work to build his career, we would be better off if we acknowledged the stress we were under, ceased work and claimed benefits. The system doesn’t inspire confidence or encourage us to support ourselves.”*

In focus: what is important to adults with learning disabilities about health and care services?

As part of our research activity, Healthwatch Warrington conducted a focus group in collaboration with local advocacy service *Speak Up Warrington* for adults with learning disabilities in order to gain specific insight into the views of people accessing services. This focus group took place on 16th April 2019, and was attended by 30 people. The main issues raised by people included:

- Access to services - numerous people with physical disabilities talked about access to services out of area being difficult.
- Listening to people.
- Training for NHS staff to better understand issues for adults with learning disabilities - people said that at times they felt misunderstood by staff or that they didn't understand what the healthcare professional was talking about as they were using "big words".
- A lot of service users said that they often felt that they were rushed out of their GP appointment before they had the time to process the information that was given to them; *"I would like my doctor to take more time with me as sometimes, because of my LD, it takes me longer to process information."*