



Scale Hall branch site closure Consultation feedback report

1. Consultation Summary

Overview

The Scale Hall branch of Lancaster Medical Practice (LMP) was closed in March 2020 as part of the practice response to the Covid pandemic. Since then, LMP has successfully operated from seven branches across Lancaster, instead of eight.

The way that patient services are provided by LMP has changed since Scale Hall was open and the branch can no longer accommodate modern healthcare provision.

Very few appointments and services can be offered due to the small size of the Scale Hall branch and the nearby large Owen Road site offers facilities that are more suitable for modern healthcare provision just one mile away. Therefore, it was proposed that the Scale Hall branch would close later this year.

Consultation Purpose

Even though patients have not attended appointments at Scale Hall for over three years, it is acknowledged that the permanent closure may be unwelcome news for some patients. Therefore, a consultation process was launched in October 2023 to understand patient concerns and challenges associated with the proposed closure.

The consultation was supported by a robust communications and engagement plan to ensure patients were informed of the proposed closure of Scale Hall, the reasons for it and how to engage with the consultation process.

Consultation Format

The consultation involved an online survey that patients could fill in to express their concerns. Two public drop-in events were also held at Owen Road branch.

Timescales

The consultation ran over a three-week period commencing on Wednesday 20 September and ending on Friday 13 October. Care was taken to ensure no other patient surveys or engagement initiatives were conducted during this period.

2. Communications and Engagement

Communications and Engagement Objectives

A range of communications and engagement activities were delivered as part of the consultation on the permanent closure of Scale Hall branch. These activities intended to:

- Ensure patients were informed of the closure of the Scale Hall branch and the reasons for the closure;
- Reassure patients that the practice has adequate provision in place to provide their care without Scale Hall branch;
- Ensure relevant stakeholders are kept up to date, and
- Capture and understand insights into any issues the closure may raise for patients and to mitigate these where possible.

Communications and Engagement Plan

A number of tactics were used to engage identified audiences in the consultation process. These are summarised in the below plan.

Date	Target audience	Activity	Complete
June 2023	LMP Partners	Verbal briefing	
Tuesday 19 September	LMP Partners	Reminder email to Partners highlighting that the consultation is due to launch	
Wednesday 20 September - am	LMP staff	Email communication to all staff	
Wednesday 20 September - am	Patient Participation Group	Letter delivered via email to the PPG stating that the consultation will launch, how to engage and next steps. (This was planned as a verbal briefing to the PPG at their meeting on Tuesday 19 September, but the meeting was cancelled at short notice due to low attendance. The letter was sent to avoid delaying the consultation).	
Wednesday 20 September - am	Key stakeholders	Letter delivered via email to stakeholders prior to patient letters being delivered. The letter intended to notify key stakeholders of the consultation and how to engage with it, in case of queries from members of the public. Stakeholders included Lancaster Primary Care Network, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board, Lancaster City Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee, local Councillors, local MPs, Lancaster Integrated Care Community, Bay Medical Group and Ash Trees Surgery.	
Wednesday 20 September - pm	Patients	Letter to patients directly affected. Most were delivered via Patches messages, with some being posted in line with patient contact preferences.	
Wednesday 20 September - pm	Patients and stakeholders	Notice on practice website including link to online survey.	

Date	Target audience	Activity	Complete
Thursday 21 September	Patients and stakeholders	Notice on ICB website including link to online survey.	
Thursday 21 September	Patients	Notice in Owen Road waiting rooms.	
Wednesday 4 October	Patients and stakeholders	Public drop-in session 1 at Owen Road branch.	
Friday 6 October	Patients and stakeholders	Public drop-in session 2 at Owen Road branch.	
Friday 13 October	Consultation closes		
w/c 16 October	Patient feedback analysis report produced		

3. Consultation Findings

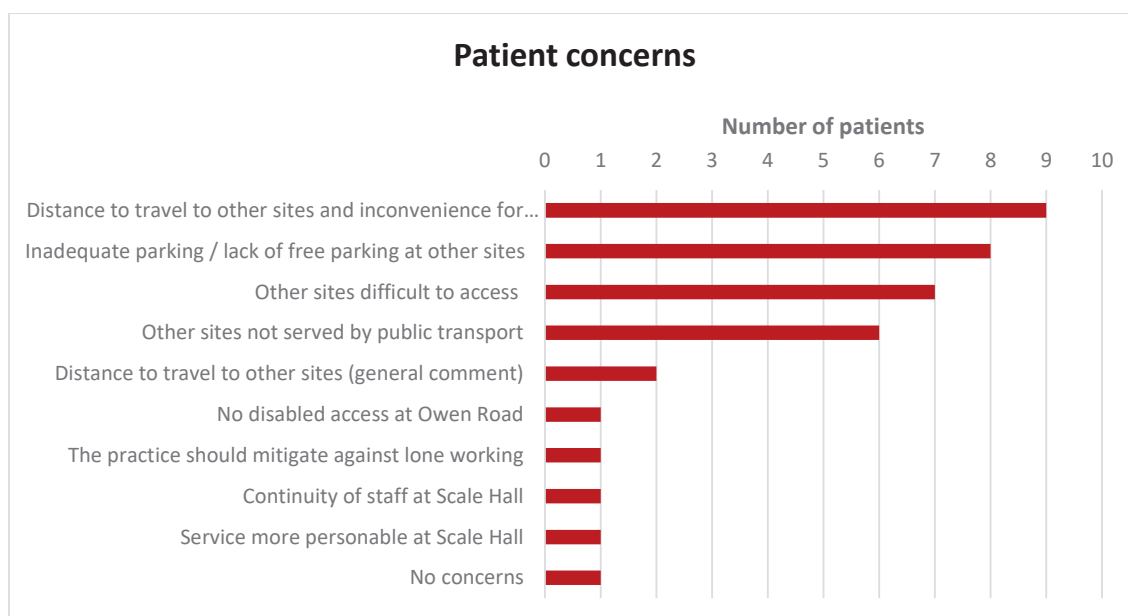
Online survey

Question 1: Are you a registered patient with Lancaster Medical Practice?

A total of 28 people responded to the online survey. All responses were from patients registered with LMP.

Question 2: Please outline any concerns you may have over the permanent closure of Scale Hall

Concerns focused on a number of key topics including accessibility, travel and parking availability. Individual concerns included disabled access at Owen Road and loss of continuity of staff at Scale Hall. One patient commented they had no concerns.



1. Patient concerns over the permanent closure of Scale Hall

Question 3: Please rank what is important to you in terms of your GP practice

The highest ranking priority for patients was ability to access a practice site close to their home address, followed by seeing an appropriate healthcare professional for their needs.

Ability to book appointments online was least important to patients. Car parking also ranked low, despite being a key concern highlighted in question 2.

Most important to patients

- Accessing a practice site close to home address
- Seeing an appropriate healthcare professional for my needs
- Having a face-to-face appointment
- Contacting the practice by telephone
- Helpful reception staff
- Accessibility of the building

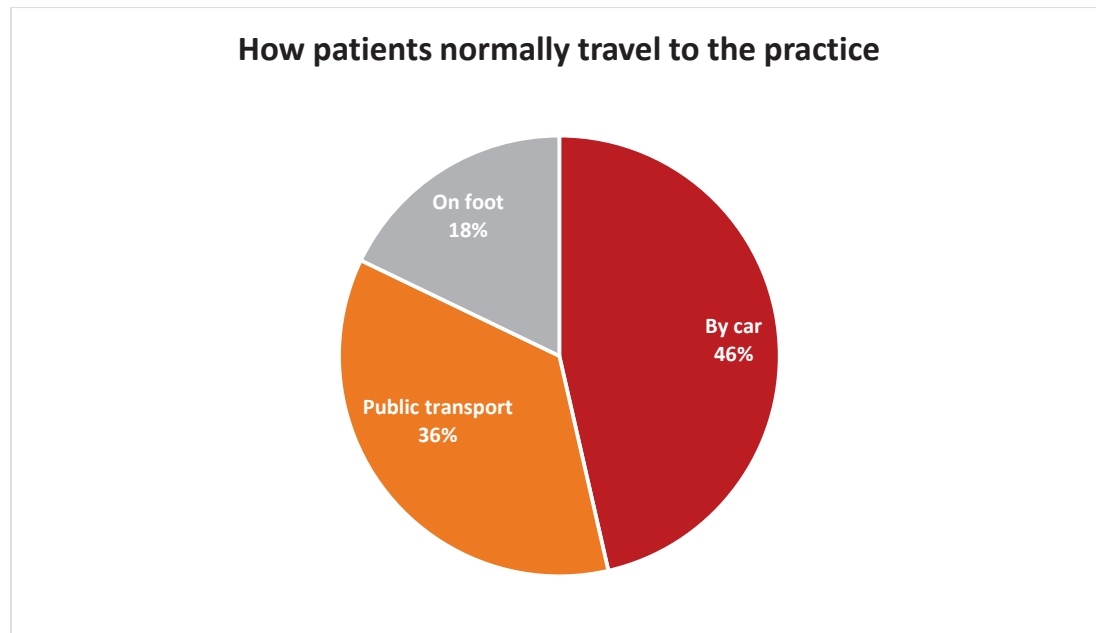
Least important to patients

- Car parking
- Booking appointments online

2. Most important and least important aspects to patients

Question 4: How would you normally travel to your GP practice?

Nearly half of patients normally travel to the practice by car, followed by public transport and then on foot.



3. Patient travel behaviours when visiting the practice

Question 5: Please provide any other comments you wish to make

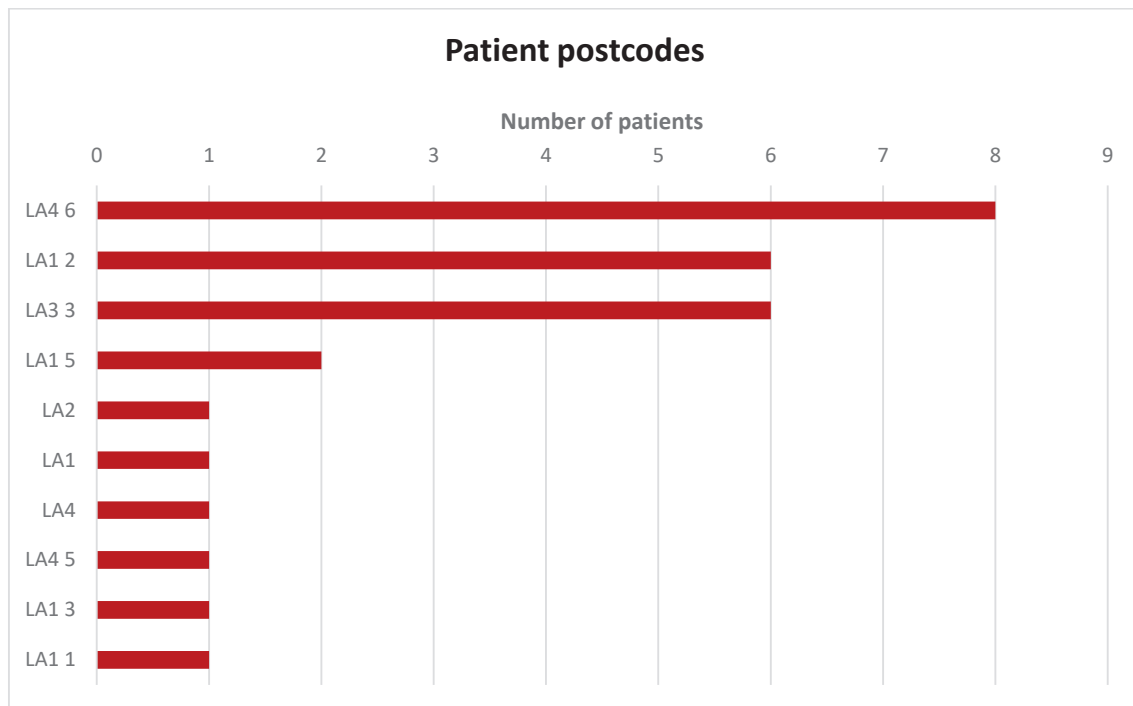
Just under half of the comments provided were related to the Scale Hall closure. The remainder were more general and did not relate to Scale Hall as shown below.

Scale Hall-related comments	Registered at Scale Hall because I will always be able to get there by bus.
	I'm so angry that no consideration has been met with the closings of the surgery, think I will change to Morecambe because all other surgery's are to far.
	Think if you did a survey asking patients about closing scale hall 100 per cent would say PLEASE LEAVE IT OPEN.
	Easier parking at Scale Hall.
	I used to walk to Scale Hall which was beneficial to my health but now I take the bus to Lancaster.
	Will the group look for a new site to operate from in this area?
	Will you look for another building in this area to replace the Scale Hall surgery so as to service patients in the area.
Other comments	Patches is confusing and it's design is inadequate as a patient interface. Only useful as an internal tool. Should be able to book for routine. Appointments etc bloods at least 3 months in advance. Video conferencing should be enabled for NHS patients.
	When trying to obtain a repeat prescription using the GP app sometimes we have to work days before it is issued When I was recently sent to Heysham to see a podiatrist, I was told by the podiatrist that they were not allowed to treat a diabetic patient, unless they had been seen for a diabetic check up within three months. But speaking to all the staff at Dalton Square surgery, they didn't know anything about that.
	Let us not reduce the access to GP services anymore.
	I would like to check that I am in the right team as I was once told I was in the South team but surely north of the river should be the north team.
	Since the so called pandemic health services have become hard to access Receptionists are like gate keepers and often the ring backs either do not happen or happen at times not arranged ,usually later than booked ,as people have commitments these are often missed and never followed up on if this is the case The system of face to face was a far better ,more personnel and I suspect safer option ,you cannot diagnose from the end of a phone line.
	I have not seen my primary gp due to them mainly working in inaccessible buildings.
	Needs to be a more accessible entrance to Owen Road surgery, it is too steep an incline for many.
	Thank you for the outstanding care and support you give your patients. While I have friends who complain about thier own GP practice (not LMP) I feel very lucky to have such a diverse range of skilled and caring clinicians and support staff to support me with me health.

4. Other patient comments

Question 6: Please provide the first four digits of your home postcode

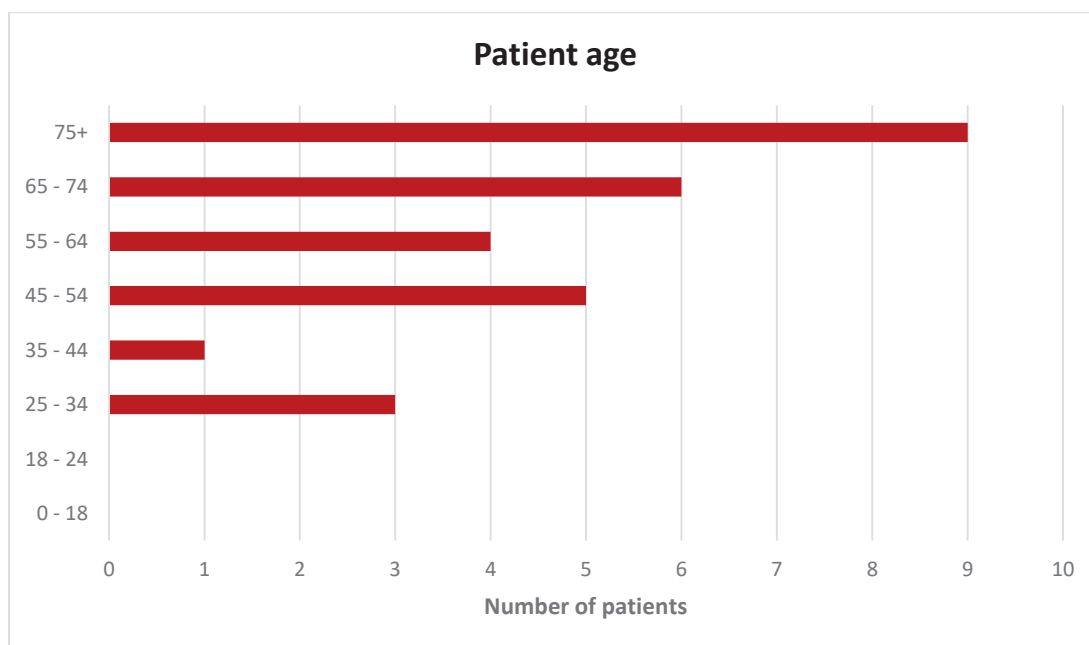
Most responses were received from patients living closest to Scale Hall. These postcodes were LA4 6, LA1 2 and LA3 3.



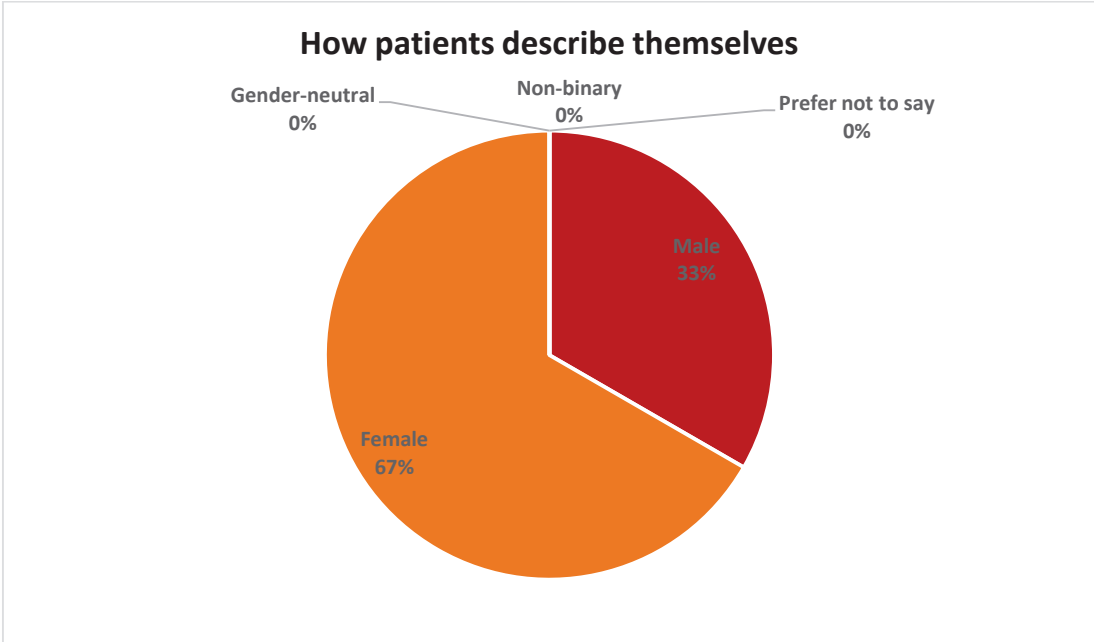
5. Postcodes of patients responding to the survey

Questions 7 – 11: Patient demographics

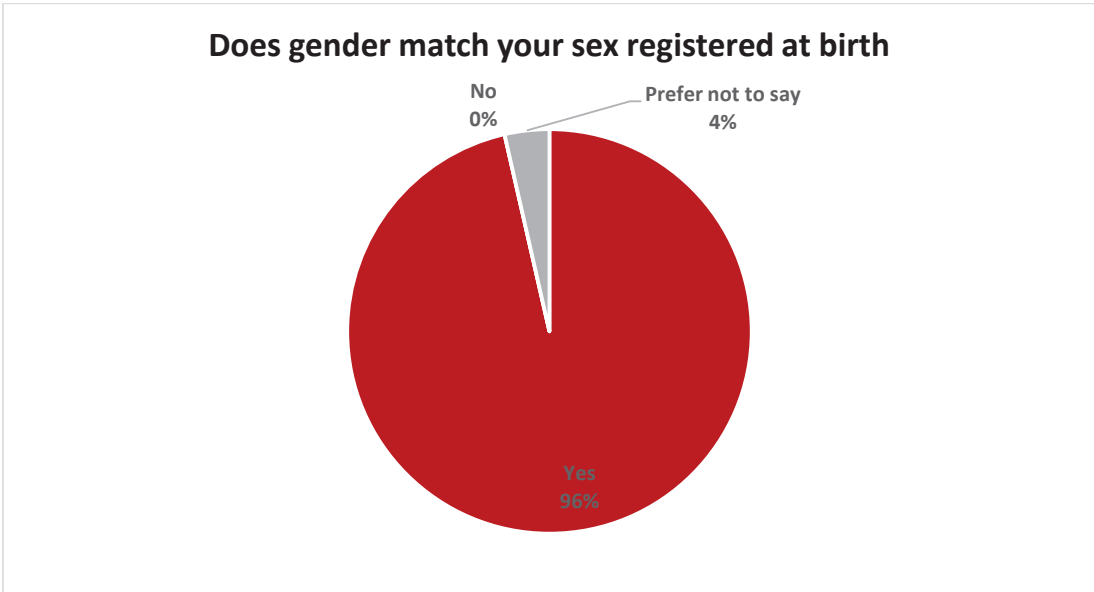
The remaining questions gathered information on the demographics of patients responding to the survey. These results are presented below.



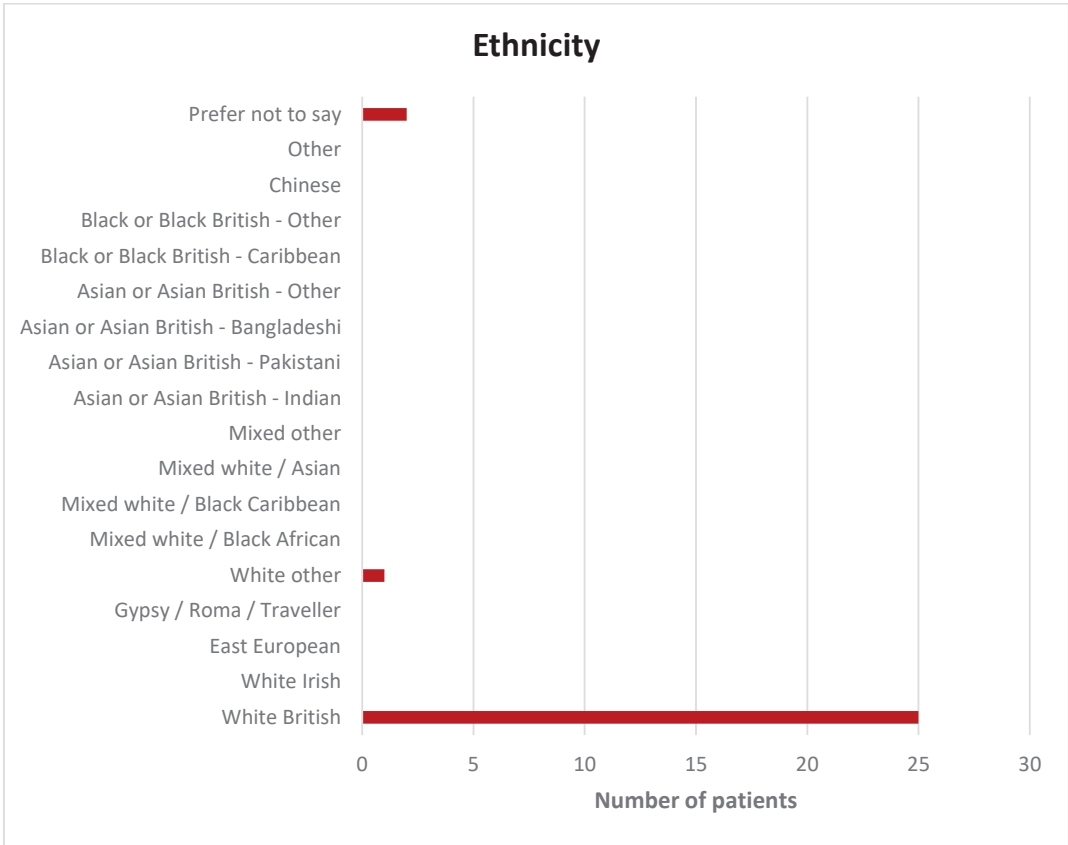
6. Ages of patients responding to the survey



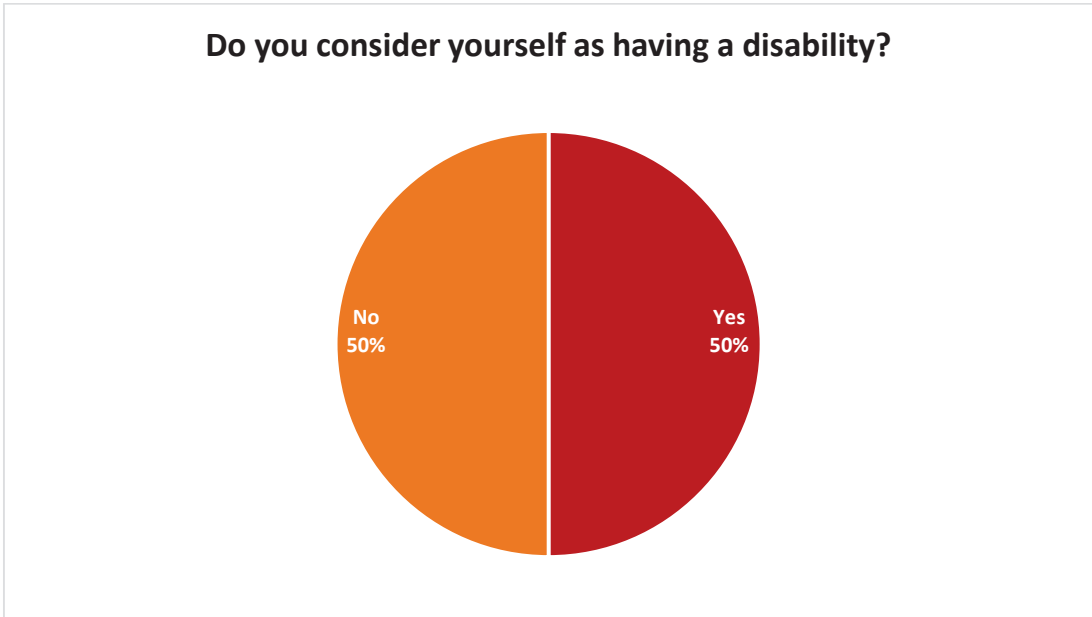
7. How patients responding to the survey describe themselves



8. Gender identity and sex registered at birth



9. Patient ethnicity



10. Disability information

Positive comments

The online survey attracted some positive comments, which are logged below.

"I'm an ex Rosebank patient and formerly a John North patient then transferred on to Emily Mills then laun Smith. It is sad re the closure although LMP is a business and one needs to focus on the business aspects and the possible breaches which has been my concern for many years. It makes perfect sense. Patients should think rationally."

"Thank you for the outstanding care and support you give your patients. While I have friends who complain about thier own GP practice (not LMP) I feel very lucky to have such a diverse range of skilled and caring clinicians and support staff to support me with me health."

Public drop-in events

Public drop-in sessions were held on Wednesday 4 October (am) and Friday 6 October (pm). Both attracted low levels of interest as shown below.

Drop-in event	Number of patients attending the drop-in only	Number of patients attending appointments (passing traffic)
Wednesday 4 October (9:30am – 11:30am)	1	6
Friday 6 October (12:30pm – 2:30pm)	0	1

11. Drop-in event attendance

Stakeholder interest

Two stakeholders corresponded with the practice regarding the Scale Hall consultation. A local Councillor queried if the site was already closed to patients and a member of the PPG wrote in support of the permanent closure of Scale Hall.

4. Next steps

This report will be shared with Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB and NHS England for consideration alongside the closure request.