



**Lancashire and
South Cumbria**
Integrated Care Board

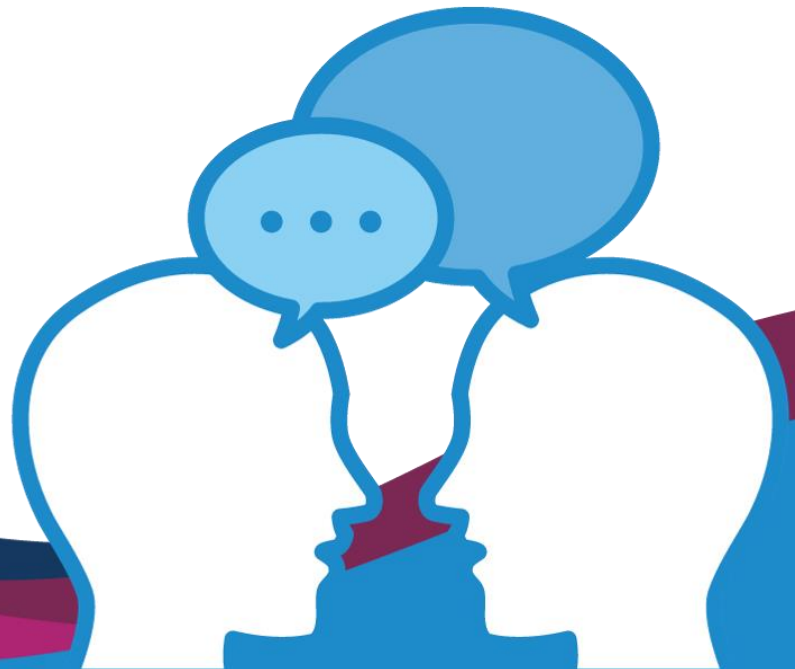
Dr Bello's Surgery relocation

Listening to communities report

November 2024

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Introduction

Dr Bello's Surgery is a GP practice in Church, near Accrington, serving 2,484 registered patients.

The surgery is based in a former public house and previously shared its building with Dill Hall Surgery, however this surgery has since relocated. The practice has not currently got a lease for its current premises which are no longer fit for purpose.

In order to take advantage of purpose-built primary care facilities nearby, which would be both more suitable for the provision of modern general medical services as well as more cost-effective from a building management perspective, the practice has applied to relocate to Acorn Primary Health Care Centre in Blackburn Road.

Space has been identified within the centre, which is 0.3 miles from the current building. The new site has ample parking and sits on a main road and bus route.

In addition, it was felt the relocation of several Accrington GP practices to the building would aid integrated working within the primary care network and also provide patients with access to a suite of services within the same building as their GP.

NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) is the organisation responsible for organising primary care services – including GP practices – across the region.

As a statutory NHS body, we have a legal duty to seek the views of patients. We want to consider how changes to services will affect local people and take measures to minimise these. We want to ensure that patients continue to have access to safe, high quality primary medical services.

The process required to relocate a GP practice involves approval from the ICB's primary care commissioning committee, which needs to see evidence of robust engagement that has helped to shape the decision.

This report provides a summary of how that has been achieved for this relocation.

Executive summary

A total of 114 people (almost five per cent of the total number of patients registered at the practice) provided feedback. Engagement included an online survey, which ran from Tuesday 29 October to Monday 25 November, and a face-to-face drop-in session on Friday 8 November at the practice.

Most respondents were generally unconcerned with the move to Acorn Primary Health Care Centre and recognised the importance of moving from the current outdated premises into a purpose-built and modern facility.

Feedback reflected very positively on the service provided by the practice and the staff, in particular Dr Bello who is clearly very popular among his patients.

No real concerns were raised about the relocation, other than any potential impact on the friendly local service currently experienced.



What have we been talking to people about and why?

We want to make sure local people...



...Are aware and informed about proposals...

... Know how they can get involved...



... Understand why decisions are made...

...Feel enthusiastic about what is possible...



...Have trust in the process.

Dr Bello's Surgery is a GP Practice based in Church, near Accrington. The registered patient population, often referred to as list size, is 2,484.

Due to its current premises – a former public house in Church Street – being less than ideal for modern general medical service provision and the lease on the building coming to an end, the practice has applied to relocate.

Space has been identified within Acorn Primary Health Care Centre in Blackburn Road, which is 0.3 miles away from the current site. The Acorn Primary Health Care Centre is a purpose-built primary care facility which has car parking provision and sits on a main road served by a bus route.

In order to make a decision whether to approve the relocation or not, it is crucial that patients of the service are given an opportunity to hear about the proposal and provide their views, explaining how they could be impacted by the move.

Who have we heard from?



How many people got involved?

Eight people attended a drop-in session at the practice on 8 November 2024.

106 completed responses to the survey were received, including online and paper copies.

With a list size of **2,484**, this means around **4.5%** of patients took part in the engagement exercise.

While this figure is lower than initially hoped (an initial target of 10 per cent of patients had been set, which would have been equivalent to around 250 completed surveys), we are assured that sufficient efforts have been made to promote the survey.

The survey was promoted via direct letters sent to all patients, social media, and paper copies were made available in the surgery. In an effort to improve survey uptake, surveys were being given out by reception staff and clinicians to people coming in for their appointments.

How did we speak to people?



To ensure feedback opportunities were as accessible as possible a range of engagement techniques were adopted.

Public engagement session

A public drop-in session took place at the practice on Friday 8 November from 10am to 11.30am. This was promoted via direct letters and SMS messages to patients, as well as via social media and websites, and the local media.

The session provided an opportunity for people to come into the practice and ask questions about how they would be impacted by the change, and to make any comments. They were also offered support in completing surveys.

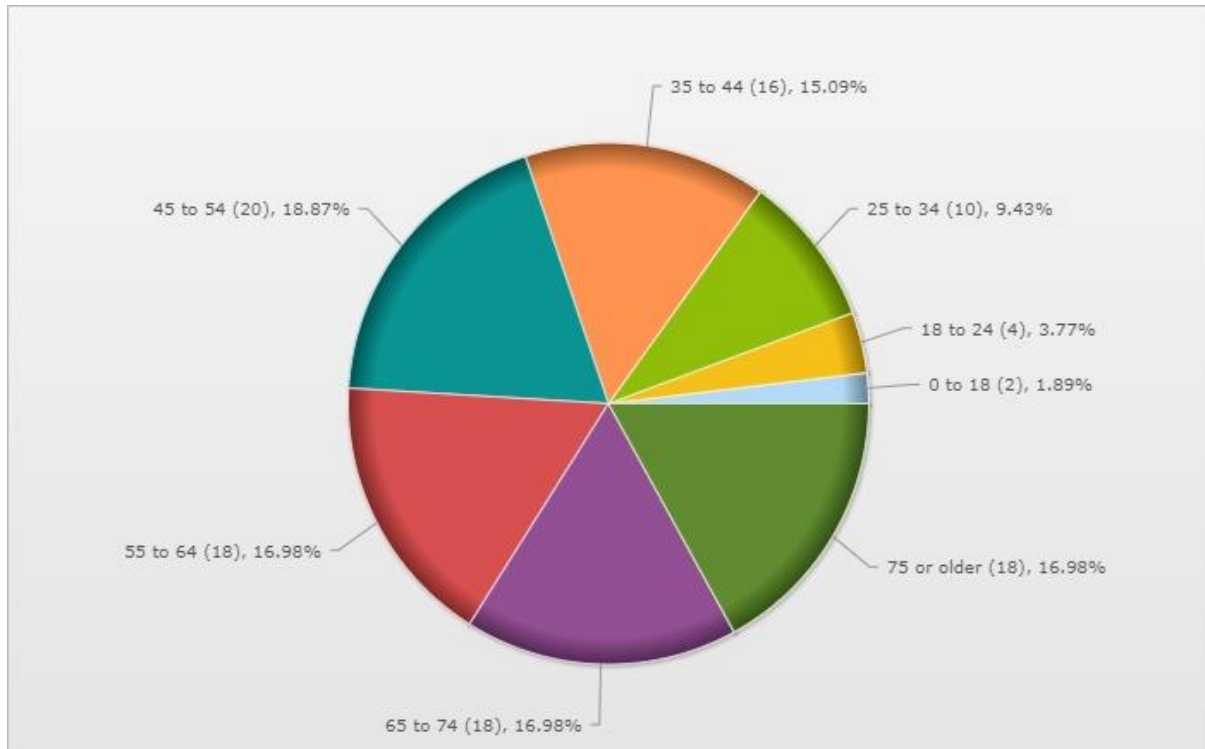
Survey

An online survey was developed with paper questionnaires made available in the practice.

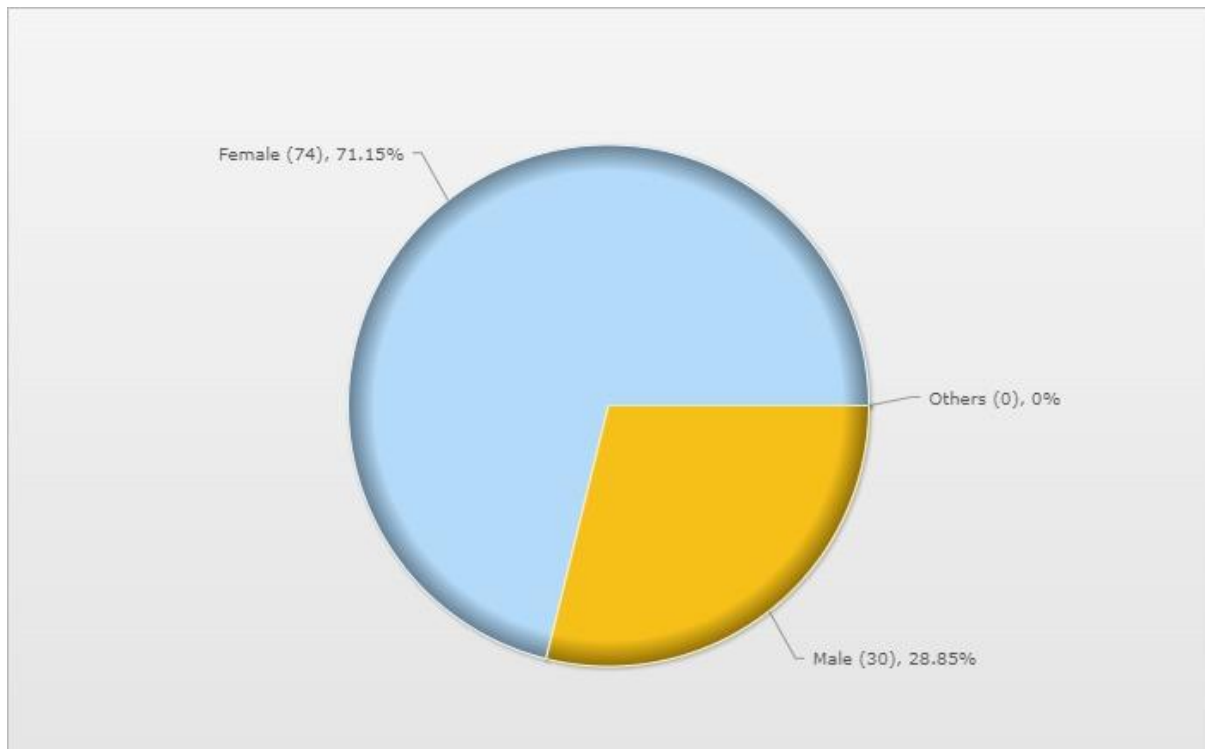
This was also promoted via websites and social media, as well as via direct communication to patients and local media. The survey was live from Tuesday 29 October to Monday 25 November 2024.

As part of the survey, demographic data was captured. The responses, detailing who responded to the survey, are below:

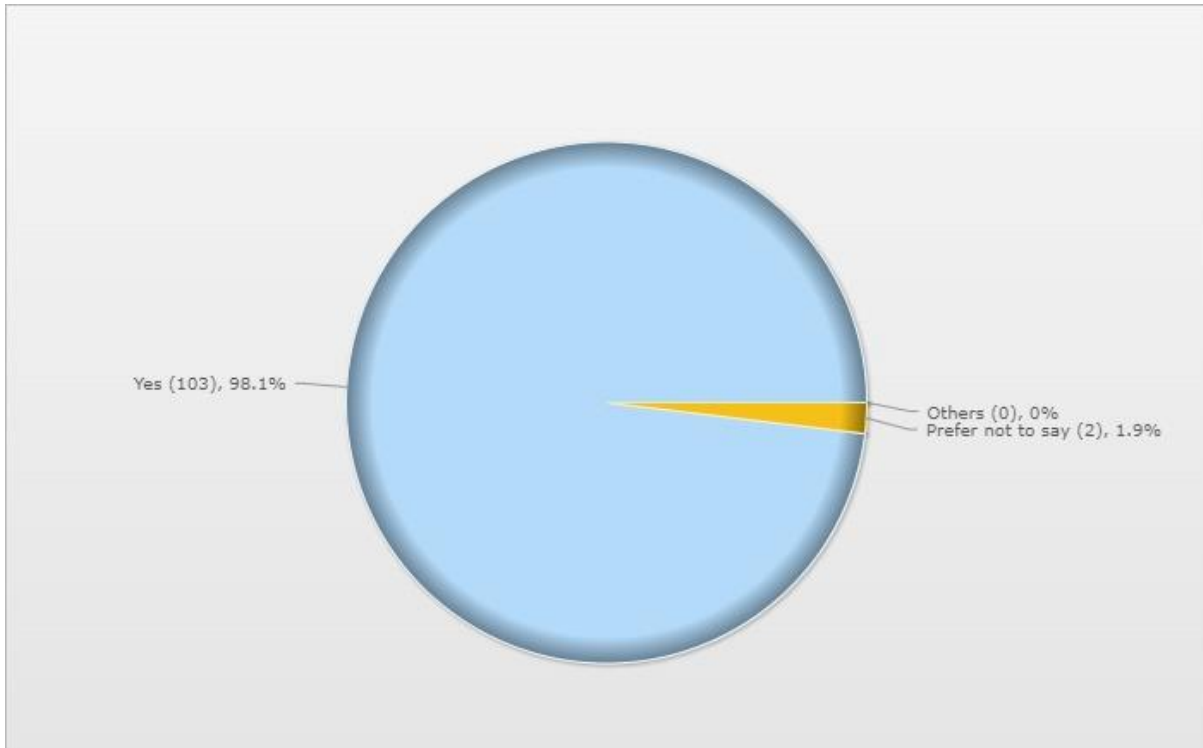
Age



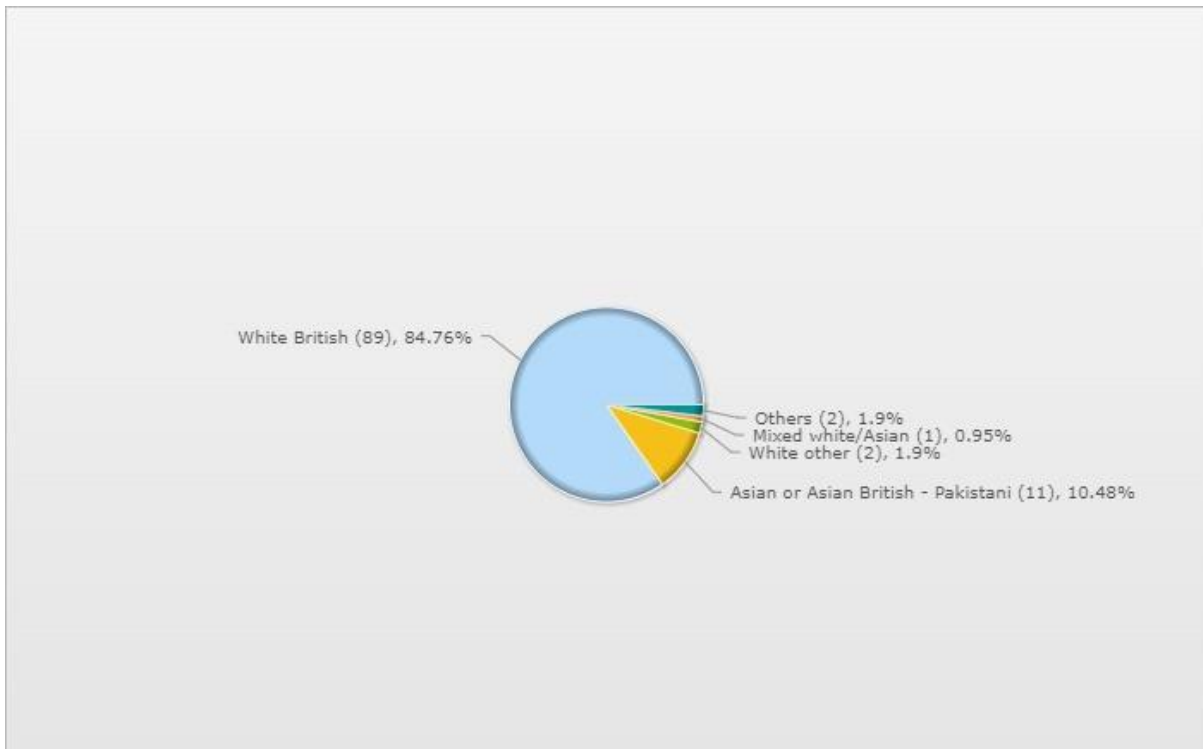
Gender



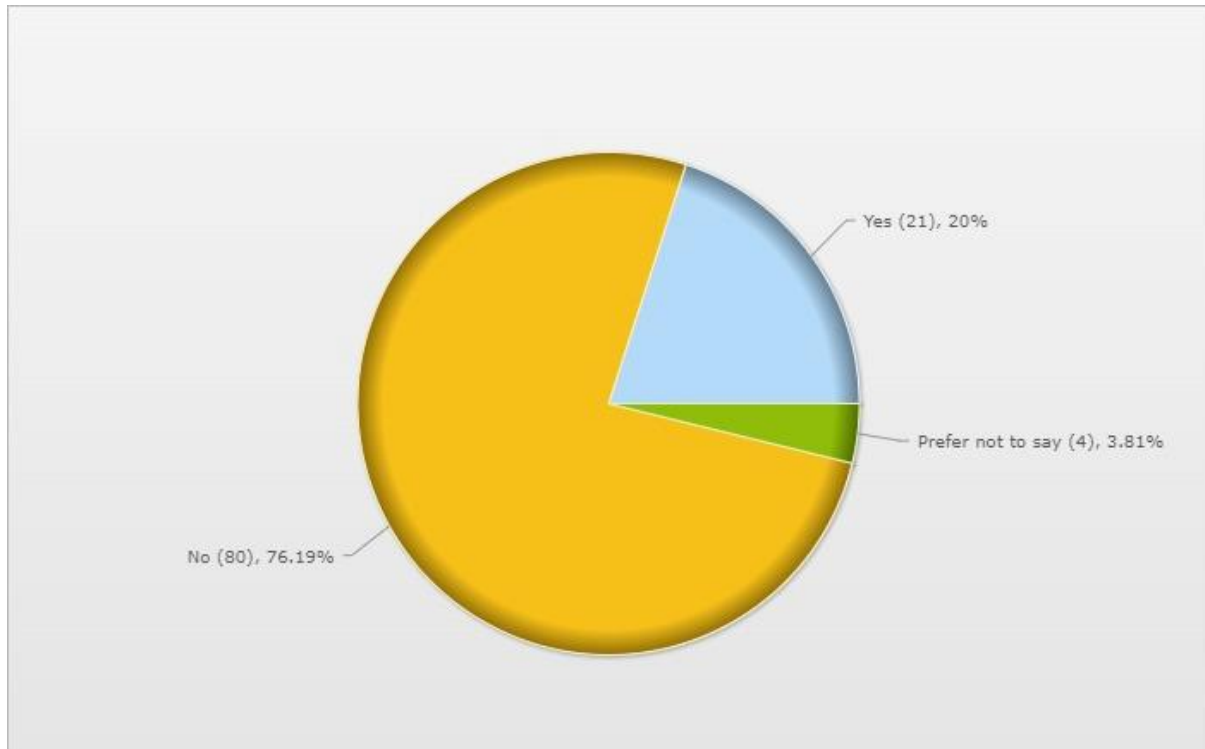
Gender identity matches sex as registered at birth:



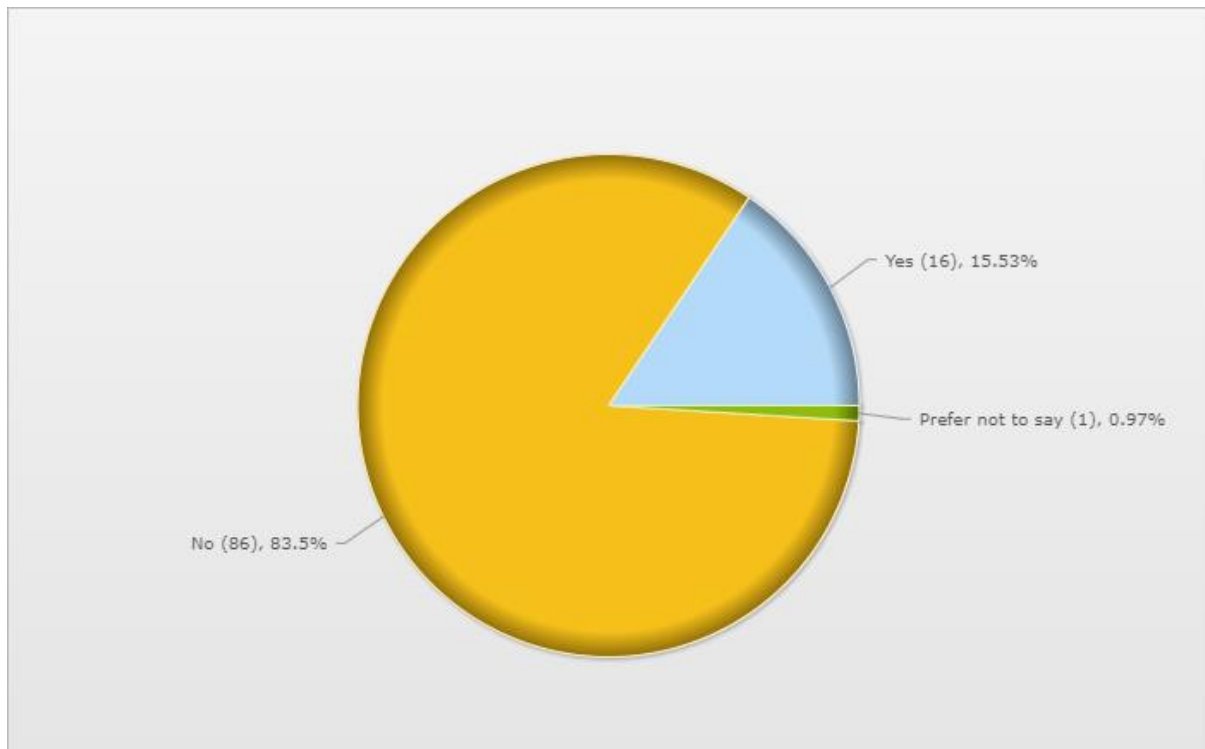
Ethnicity



Disability



Carer



What did we hear?

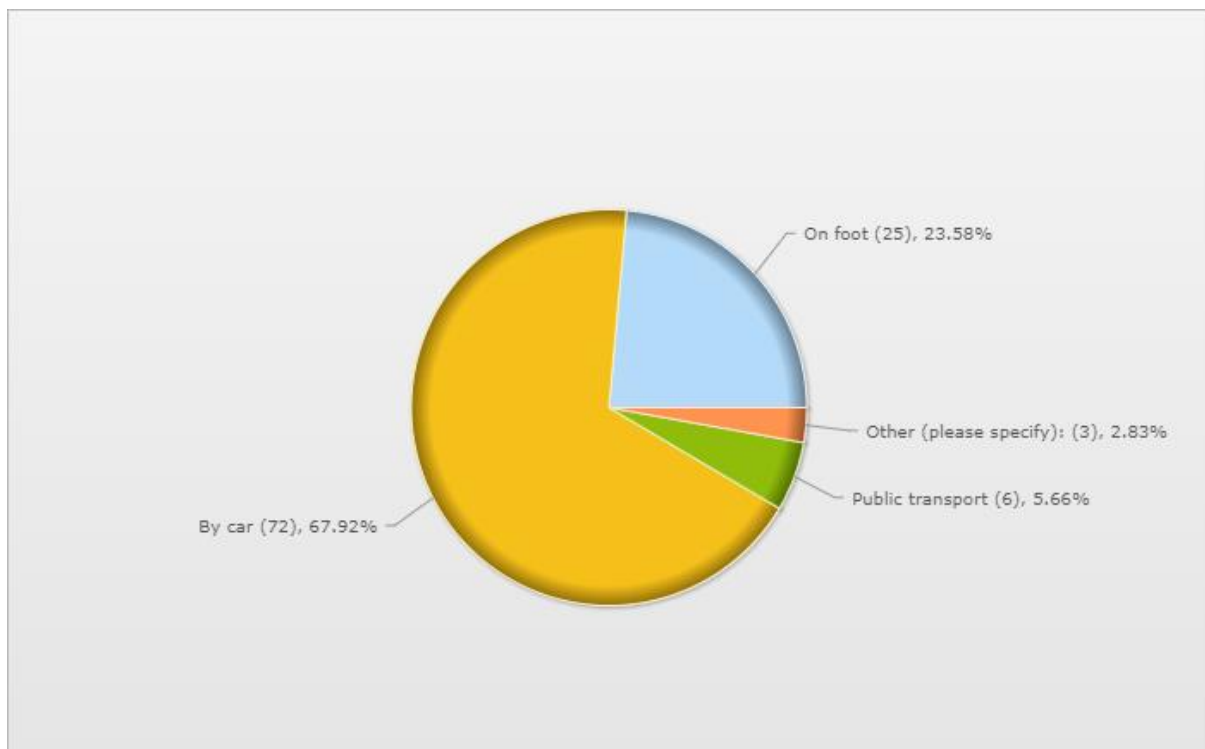


Public drop-in session

A drop-in session took place at the practice on Friday 8 November 2024, from 10am to 11.30am. Patients were invited to attend to raise any concerns or ask questions at any point between those two times.

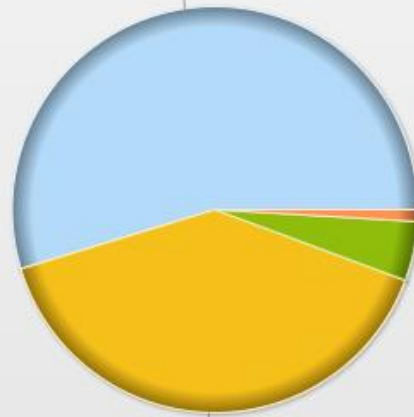
Eight people attended the drop-in and none raised any concerns about the move to Acorn Primary Health Care Centre. Most were quick to praise the practice and its staff. It was mentioned that having the pharmacy next door in the new building would be positive. Attendees also accepted that the current premises were not ideal for a GP practice and several mentioned the waiting area being too cold.

Survey responses: How would you normally travel to your GP practice?



Survey responses: Approximately how long does it take you to get to Dr Bello Surgery?

Fewer than 10 mins (58), 54.72%



More than 30 minutes (1), 0.94%

20 to 30 minutes (5), 4.72%

10 to 20 minutes (42), 39.62%

Survey responses: Please rank the following in order of importance to you in terms of your GP practice (one being most important)

Rank	Item	Total score*
1	Getting an appointment	932
2	Helpful reception staff	734
3	Seeing an appropriate health professional for my needs	718
4	Having a face-to-face appointment	702
5	Car parking	506
6	Booking appointments online	503
7	Having a virtual appointment	410
8	Accessibility of the building	404
9	Availability of home visits	327
10	On-site pharmacy available	209

* Score is a weighted calculation. Items ranked first are valued higher than the following ranks. The score is a sum of all weighted rank counts.

Respondents were also provided with a free text option to provide any additional comments regarding what they considered to be most important to them in terms of their GP practice.

A summary of the responses and themes is below:

Continuity of care

Seeing the same doctor was a recurring theme. Respondents emphasized the importance of continuity of care by their registered GP.

- "Seeing your doctor, not others."
- "Continuity of care by my registered GP."

Accessibility and facilities

Respondents highlighted the need for modern buildings with better facilities and accessibility.

- "A move to a more modern building with better facilities, accessibility for patients, i.e., lifts, and also access to other surgeries under the same roof is a huge benefit."

Appointment availability

The ability to get timely appointments was a significant concern.

- "Not having to wait weeks or being referred to another practice out of town."
- "More doctors' appointments on the day."

Receptionist service

- "Stacey is the best receptionist, I am concerned that I will not be able to phone her and she knows me and my needs."

Opening hours and prescription services

The need for extended timings to ring for prescriptions and consistent opening hours.

- "Extend timings to ring for prescriptions."

Proximity and location

The convenience of the surgery's location was important to some respondents.

- "It was easy to get to for me because I live 2 minutes away from the surgery."

Additional services and training

The need for additional services such as seeing a nurse for blood tests and smear tests, and the need for health professionals to have more training.

- "For the health professionals to have more training on their job as some health professionals failed on information and support for me after my pregnancy."

Survey responses: Please give us any comments you have about the current Dr Bello's Surgery premises

Building condition and facilities

Many respondents mentioned that the building is outdated, with no lift for patients and a cold waiting room, especially in winter. The entrance with steps is also seen as less than ideal. Some comments noted the building appears dark, deserted and unkempt, and is not really adequate for a doctor's surgery anymore. However, a few respondents found the premises suitable for their needs and appreciated the easy access and parking.

Accessibility and parking

Accessibility issues were highlighted, including a tiny step that may affect patients getting in and out. Car parking was another common concern, with some finding it not so good, while others mentioned ample off-road parking. One comment noted that the current premises lack dedicated car parking spaces but are otherwise okay.

Convenience and location

The location of the surgery was convenient for some respondents, with comments mentioning it is close to town and easy to get to. However, others felt the building is too big to keep warm and out of the way. There were also mixed feelings about the proposed move to the Acorn Centre, with some expressing concerns about becoming just another patient and others welcoming the change for better facilities and accessibility.

Patient experience and staff

Some respondents appreciated the personalised service they received from the staff, particularly mentioning Stacey, the receptionist, who knows them and their needs. Others found the surgery welcoming and relaxed, with a wonderful team that points them in the right direction for their health.

Survey responses: Any other comments

They praised Dr Bello and the staff for their helpfulness and efficiency. However, there were concerns about doctors not keeping to appointment times, with some patients noting that doctors often arrive late, causing delays.

There was also anxiety about the potential departure of Dr Bello, with several respondents mentioning rumours and inconsistent information from staff. This uncertainty made it difficult

for some patients to see their doctor. Despite these concerns, some patients appreciated the ease of getting appointments and the polite and welcoming staff.

The proposed move to the Acorn Primary Health Care Centre received mixed reactions. Some patients were disappointed about not being informed of the closure and expressed dislike for the Centre. Others were concerned about the new location's accessibility, especially for elderly patients who found the current location easy to reach on foot. There were also worries about losing the good service they were accustomed to if the surgery moved to a larger building.

However many respondents expressed satisfaction with the move, stating that it would not affect their decision to remain registered with the surgery. Some noted that the Acorn Centre is closer to pharmacies and offers a more modern building. They also highlighted the importance of the surgery's location within the community, where patients are treated as individuals rather than just numbers.

Next steps

This report will be presented to the primary care commissioning committee to aid the decision-making regarding the relocation of Dr Bello's Surgery. It will form part of a larger report prepared by the primary care team, which will take the data provided by those who took part in the engagement exercise into account ahead of its recommendations. The report will be published on the ICB website.