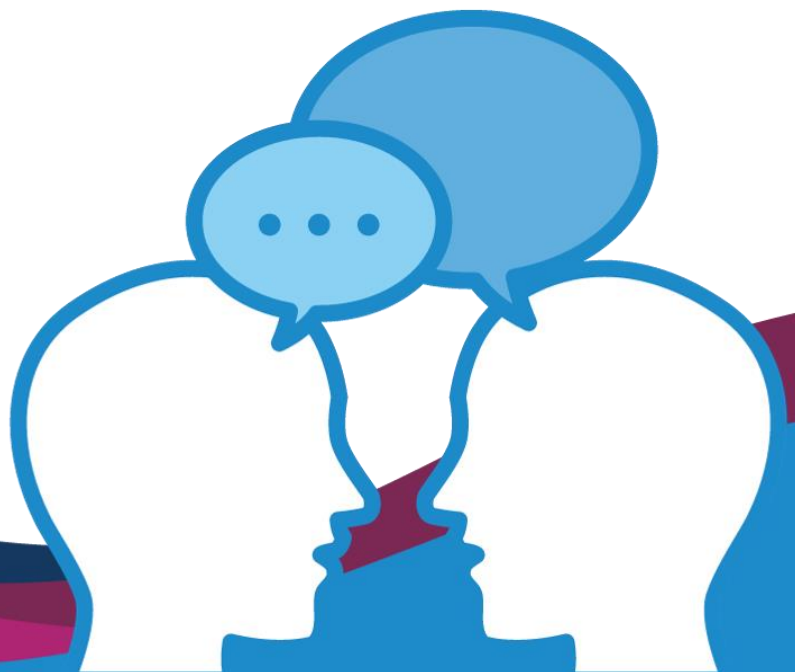




**Lancashire and
South Cumbria**
Integrated Care Board

PWE Accrington
Victoria relocation
Listening to communities report
October 2024

NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB
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Introduction

It has been identified by East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust that Accrington Victoria Hospital is no longer fit for purpose and presents a safety risk to patients. For that reason all services need to be relocated.

One of the services based within the Hospital is a GP practice, called PWE Accrington Victoria.

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

Almost 200 people (around five per cent of the total number of patients registered at the practice) provided feedback. Engagement included an online survey and face-to-face drop-in session at the practice, taking place from Friday 11 to Tuesday 22 October 2024.

The over-riding feedback from patients is a concern regarding the distance from the current site to the proposed new building, which is 1.3 miles away. Fifty-two per cent of respondents to the survey said they access the current practice on foot, so would be significantly disadvantaged by the move.

During the face-to-face drop-in session at the GP practice, which was attended by 23 people, it was suggested that public transport links and/or patient transport services be looked into to see if there were any ways the provider could support patients who need to travel further.

Patients are very happy with the service provided by PWE Accrington Victoria and the staff and outlined concerns about the potential for this to be affected by the move, with concerns including longer waiting times and the loss of current friendly staff.

A number of questions were asked, particularly during the drop-in session, regarding the permanence of the move and whether the plan was to return to Accrington Victoria. Patients feel strongly that when the time is right the practice needs to be returned to its current location as it is the only GP practice in that part of the town, which is close to the northern border of Accrington with a number of patients living in some of the rural villages nearby.



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.

PWE Accrington Victoria is a GP Practice based in Accrington Victoria Hospital, close to Accrington town centre. The registered patient population, often referred to as list size, is 3,724. PWE also manages two other GP practices – Fairmore and Pendle Valley, which have three sites in Nelson and Rawtenstall.

It has been identified by East Lancashire Hospital Trust (ELHT) that the Accrington Victoria Hospital is no longer fit for purpose or maintainable accommodation for healthcare teams or patients.

PWE Accrington Victoria is one of four services set to be relocated, along with the minor injuries unit, x-ray and outpatients.

Space has been identified within Acorn Primary Health Care Centre in Blackburn Road, which is 1.3 miles away from the Accrington Victoria Hospital site on the other side of Accrington town centre.

Wider communications and engagement activity has been led by East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, which manages the other services based within the building.

Who have we heard from?



How many people got involved?

It was initially hoped to achieve a response rate of around 10 per cent of the patient population of PWE Accrington Victoria. That would have seen around 380 people taking part in the engagement exercise.

However, in part due to the time constraints of this exercise being carried out over a very short period of time, that target was revised down to five per cent.

23 people attended a drop-in session at the practice on 22 October 2024.

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

With a list size of **3,782**, this means around **5%** of patients took part in the engagement exercise.

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

East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, with support from the ICB, ran a public drop-in session at the practice on Tuesday 22 October 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 including a piece on BBC Radio Lancashire.

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.

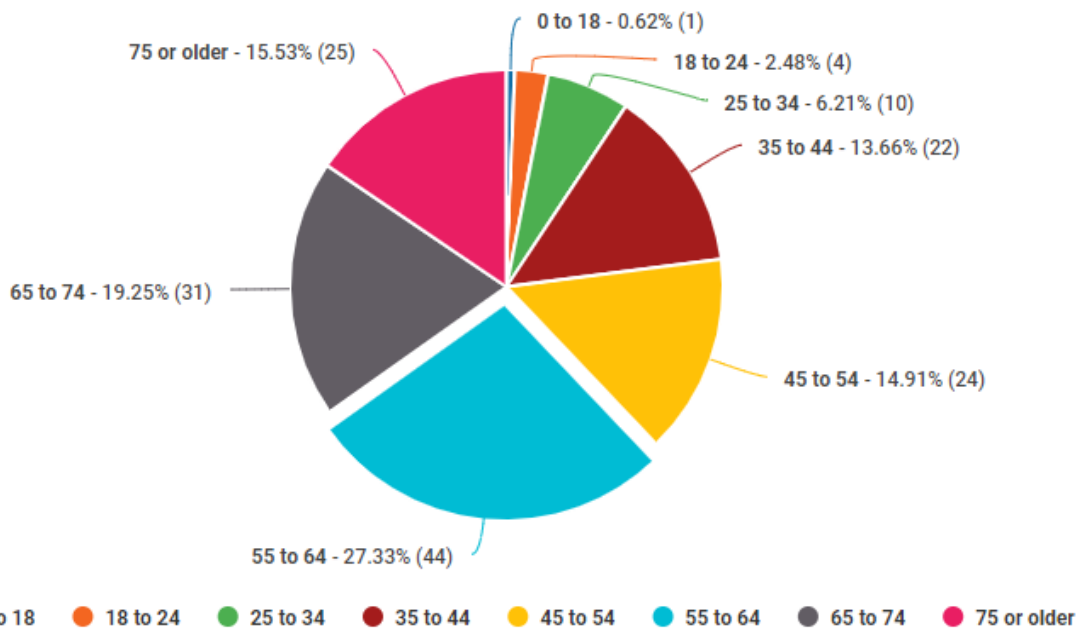
Survey

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

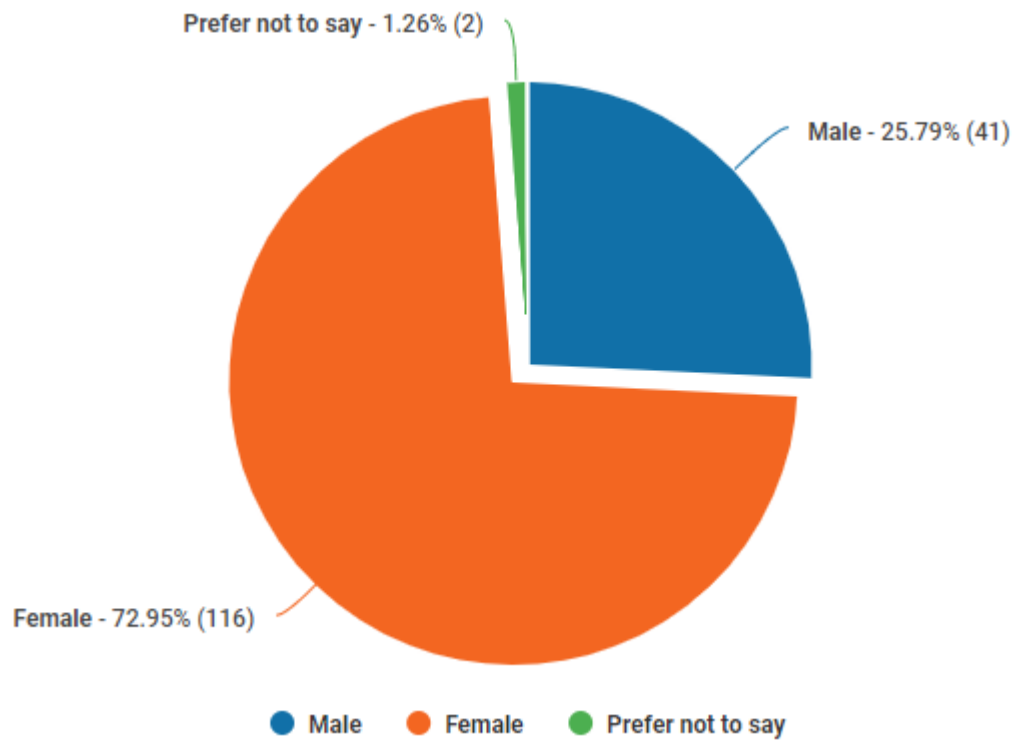
This was also promoted via websites and social media, as well as via direct communication to patients and local media. The survey was live from Friday 11 October to Tuesday 22 October 2024.

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

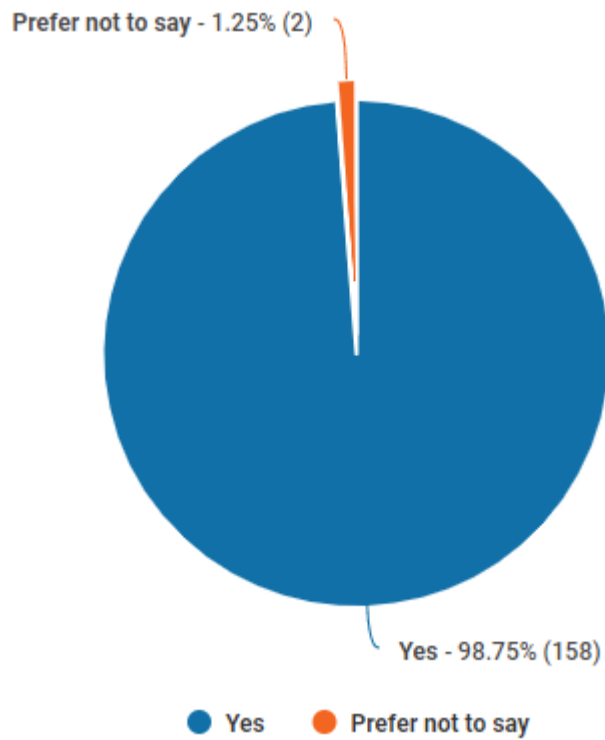
Age



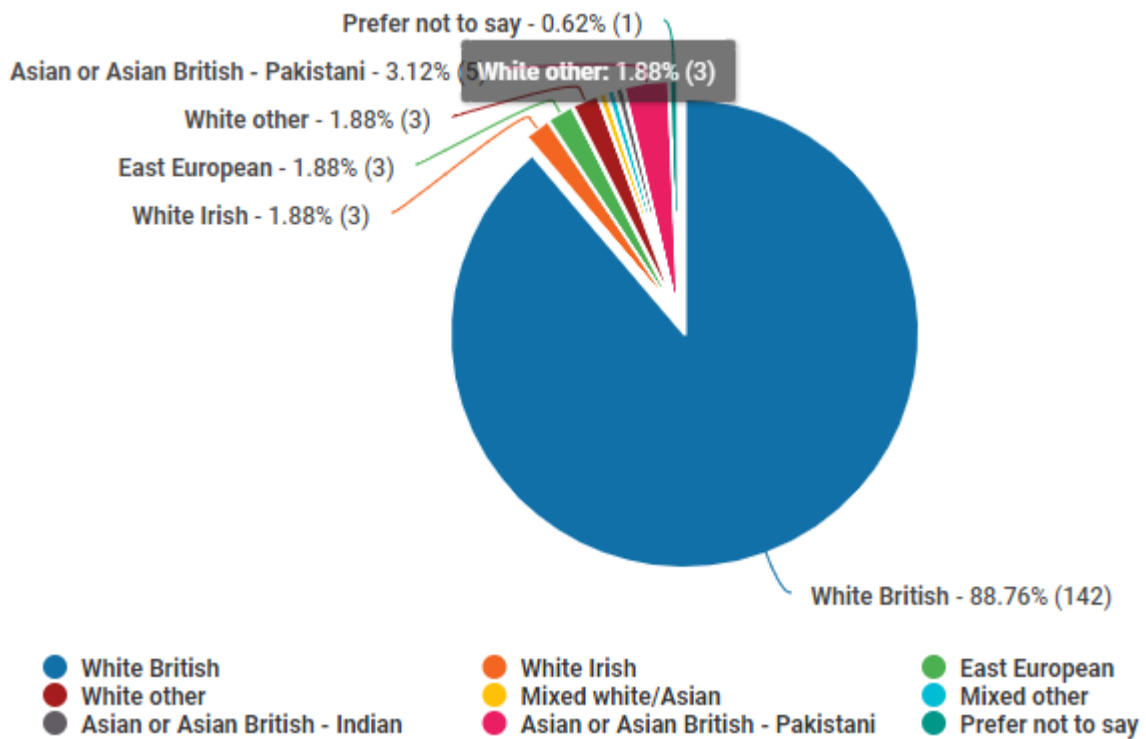
Gender



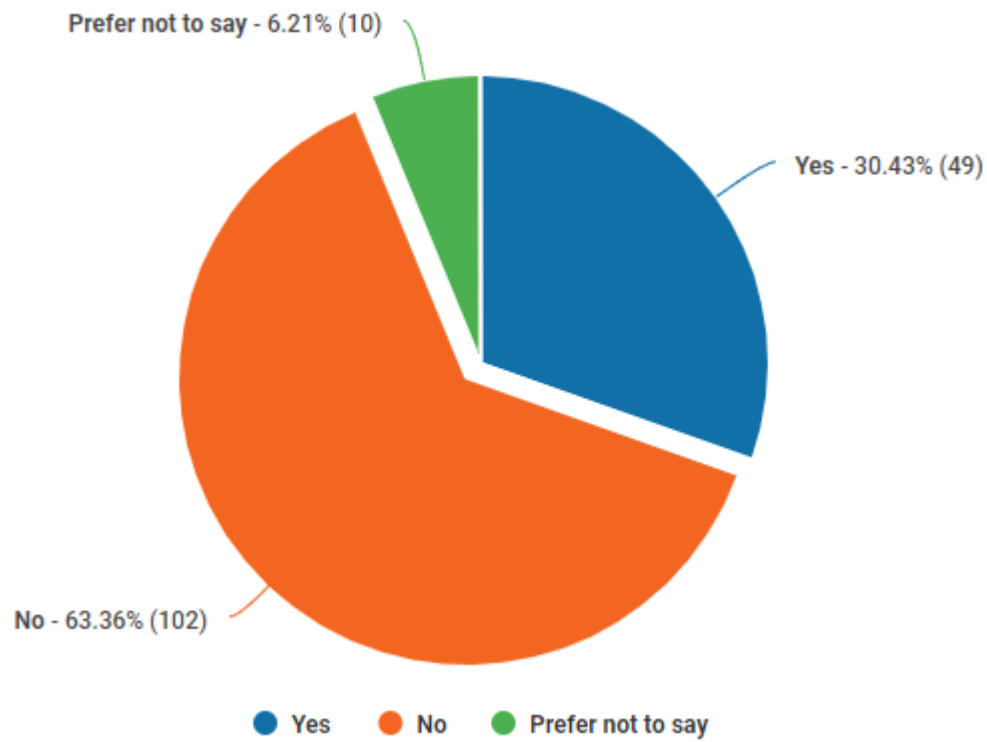
Gender identity matches sex as registered at birth:



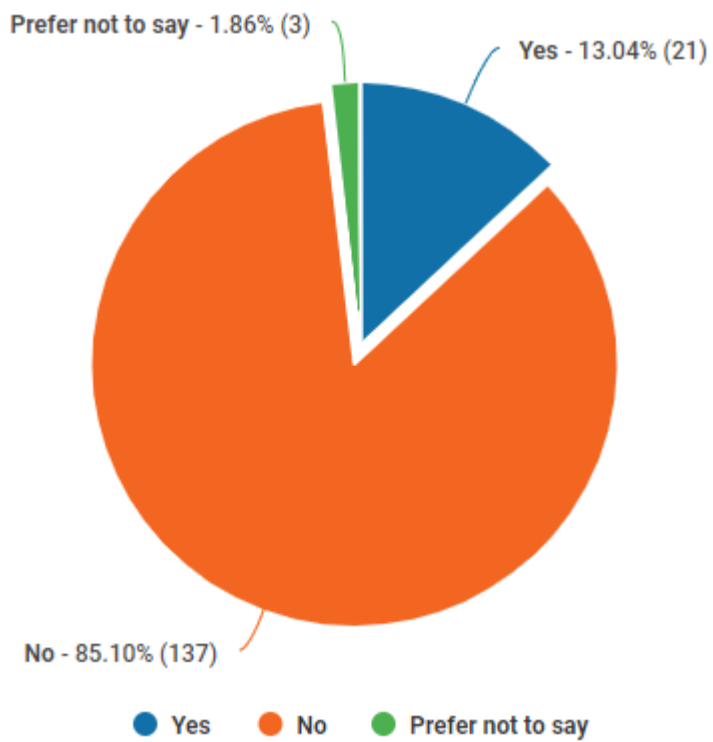
Ethnicity



Disability



Carer



What did we hear?



Public drop-in session

A drop-in session took place at the practice on Tuesday 22 October 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. However, a large number of people arrived at 10am and the practice had set aside a room and so the session was more of a town hall-style event with a group discussion and questions and answers. In total, 23 patients attended the session.

Neil Berry, divisional director of operations at East Lancashire Hospitals Trust, led the session, with support from communications managers from the Trust and ICB, along with GP Dr Kathryn Atkinson.

Discussions were varied and questions and comments included wider developments and infrastructure spending in Accrington, such as the bus station and town centre, the wider Accrington Victoria Hospital closure issue and the state of the building. Those in attendance made it abundantly clear that the hospital is of great importance to the community and the threat of closure and/or loss of the building is of concern to many.

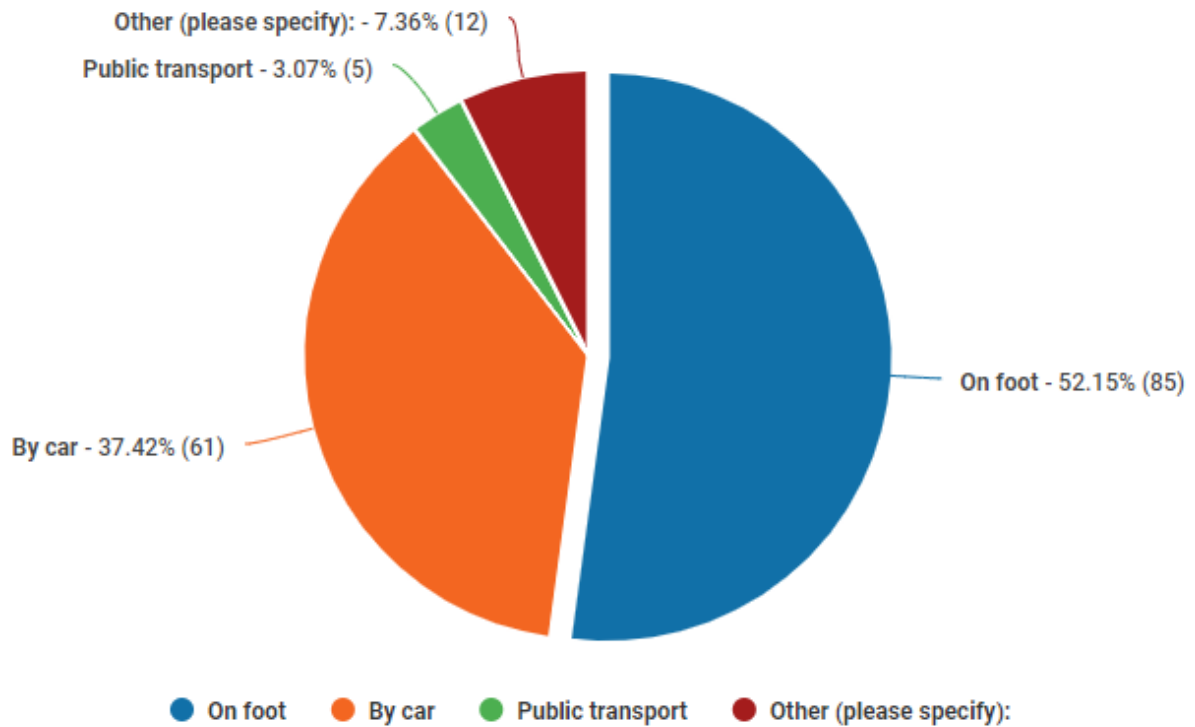
Regarding the practice specifically, the key concern raised was around the distance from the current site to Acorn Primary Health Care Centre, the proposed new site for the practice. A number of patients already have to use multiple buses and travel to the new site could be problematic, especially for elderly patients. It was noted however that for some patients the new site will be more convenient.

A suggestion was made regarding public transport and whether the Trust could lobby transport providers and/or the local authority to amend routes to support the new building, or if alternative patient transport could be provided for those most in need.

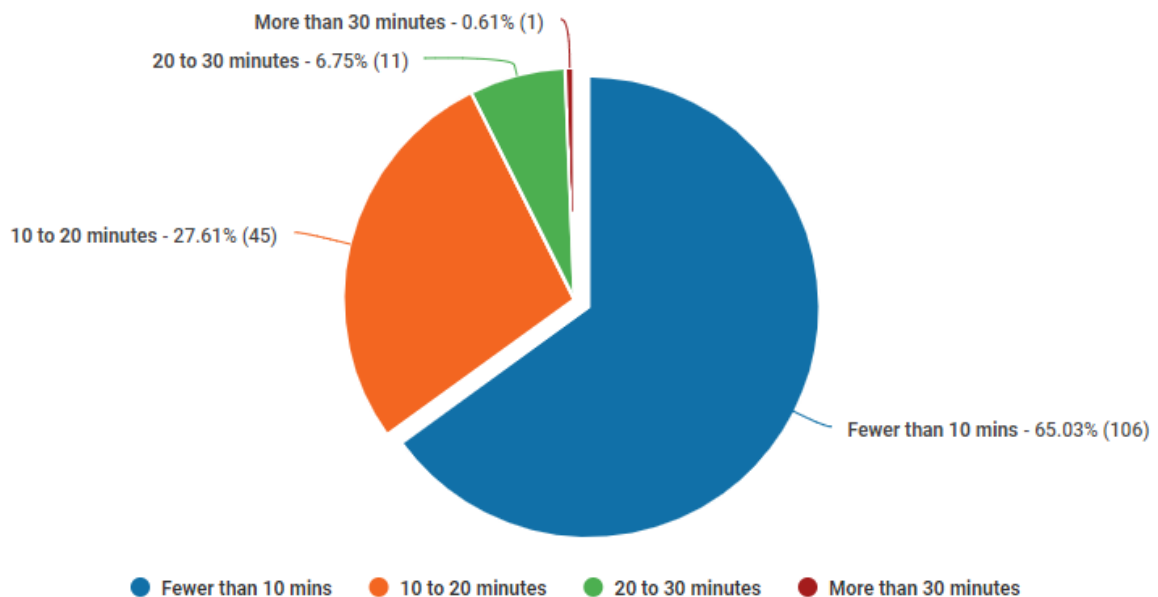
A number of concerns were raised about the standard of service at the new practice, as patients are very pleased with the care they currently receive and are fearful that the new location could impact this. They were reassured that the service will relocate with all staff and processes remaining the same, so there should be no impact on the standard of service received.

Questions were also asked about the permanence of the move and whether there were plans to relocate back to Accrington Victoria once renovation works have been completed. Patients were assured this was the plan at the moment. It was suggested that the level of interest evident by the number of attendees at the meeting suggested there were the potential beginnings of a PPG which could help to promote the interests of patients.

How would you normally travel to your GP practice?



Approximately how long does it take you to get to PWE Accrington Victoria?



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	1524
2	Having a face-to-face appointment	1210
3	Seeing an appropriate health professional for my needs	1179
4	Helpful reception staff	1131
5	Booking appointments online	932
6	Car parking	719
7	Having a virtual appointment	676
8	Accessibility of the building	653
9	Availability of home visits	524
10	On-site pharmacy available	362

* 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.

Given option to state other things that are important, comments included:

- Ground-level surgery.
- Location – ability to walk to the surgery.
- Being able to see the same doctor.
- Being able to get through on the phone.

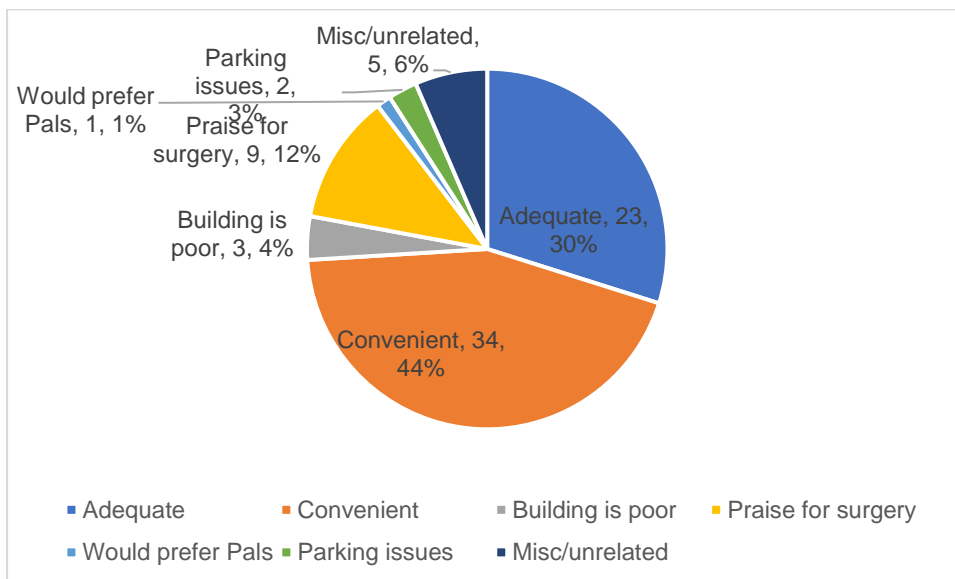
Please give us any comments you have about the current PWE Accrington Victoria premises

Of the 163 survey respondents, 77 provided an answer to this question. The answers received can be broadly themed as below:

- Adequate – those who believe the current premises are fine as they are and should be kept.
 - “Adequate for purpose, although old and tired.”
 - “What the patient sees is absolutely fine. What we don’t see is collapsing ceilings and no heating in the offices.”
 - “I didn’t realise there was a problem with the building.”
 - “The building is fine. Patch it up. That’s what the new occupants will do.”
 - “It’s fine, in a great place right next to my house. I’ve never had any issues with the building and it’s all been perfect.”
- Convenient – the practice is easy to access for people living locally.
 - “It is essential to be close for me, I suffer with my mental health and have major problems leaving the house. I don’t drive either I have to rely on family and friends. I have 4 children too.”
 - “This is so easy to get to, but i would have to get a taxi if it goes to Acorn or Pals.”
 - “Good, easy to get to. Helpful staff.”
- Building is poor – those in agreement the building is in a poor state.
 - “If it needs to move it needs to move.”
 - “It is not a pleasant building to attend any more as it is very old. The location isn’t the easiest to get to any more via car either due to the narrow streets where everyone is double parked.”
- Praise for surgery – unrelated to the building itself, but offering praise to the service and staff.

- “I’m absolutely devastated by the news, since moving to this practice I have been able to all my health needs met. The reception staff are wonderful as are the GPs.”
- “Currently the PWE Accrington Victoria surgery is one of the best doctors surgeries I have ever registered with, the staff, the doctors, the availability of appointments are amazing.”
- Would prefer Pals – ideal new practice location would be the Accrington Pals building, rather than Acorn.
- Parking issues – parking at Accrington Victoria is difficult.
 - “It is convenient however the available parking is not brilliant.”
- Misc/unrelated – Comments made but these are unrelated to the practice relocation.

The number of responses by theme is as follows:

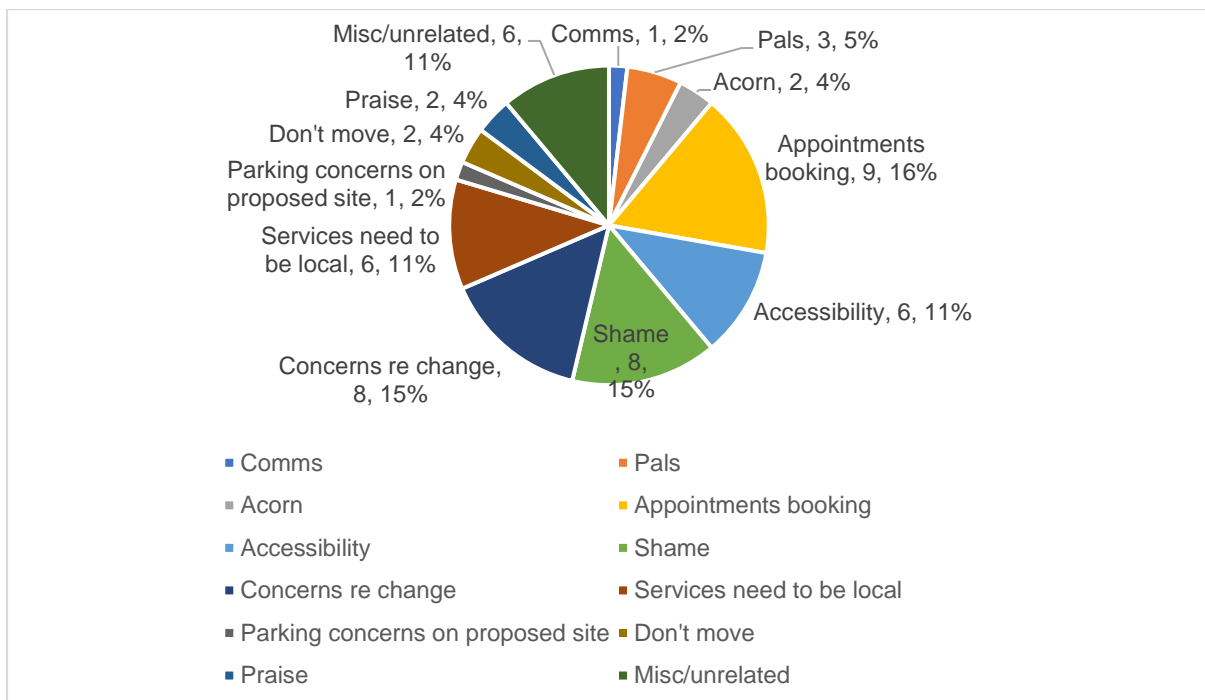


Any other comments

Of the 163 survey respondents, 54 provided an answer to this question. The answers received can be broadly themed as below:

- Comms – Patients need to be better communicated with.
 - “Practice needs to keep their patients informed about important changes like this, instead of finding out through hearsay. Also would prefer the premises to be moved to PALS rather than Acorn as it is more convenient for me transport wise.”
- Pals - Ideal new practice location would be the Accrington Pals building, rather than Acorn.
 - “Please move to pals.”
 - “relocate to pals which is central.”
- Acorn – Ideal new practice location would be Acorn Primary Health Care Centre.
 - “Acorn seems like a good choice, it's on a main public transport route and has a car park, it's also accessible.”
- Appointments booking – comments regarding booking systems.
 - “Please introduce an online booking system.”
 - “improve delays on appointments.”
- Accessibility – comments regarding potential difficulty in accessing the new site.

- “It needs to stay where it is moving it will be more harder to access.”
- “The Acorn Centre is not as easy to get to and is a very big and busy building. Not always easy to find where you need to go and parking is not great.”
- Shame – It’s a shame the building will be closed.
 - “I will feel sad going to a new place I actually like the building itself and such a shame there isn't money there to do all that needs doing to keep in there.”
 - “It would be a shame to lose the surgery after so much money was spent doing it up.”
- Concerns re change – Fears that change could impact service.
 - “I do fear that the service will change this happen to my last practice and the reason we moved I would personally like to see the service move to a smaller area that doesn't share with anyone else.”
 - “I’m very sad to hear about the relocation, the acorn healthcare centre is very far and there are a lot of elderly in the area too. I do not drive so will be very hard work to walk to the practice with my children.”
- Services need to be local
 - “Local GP and other services must be available to the Accrington area. More walk in GP surgery should be maid available to this area. The lack of these services put pressure on the Royal Blackburn hospital which is already unable to cope.”
 - “I am very likely to move GP services to a closer surgery after the proposed move. This would include myself and two children.”
- Parking concerns at new site
 - “I’ve used the acorn centre for other services and the parking is not great. There are often no spaces available as there would be at other potential sites.”
- Don’t move – respondents who simply want the practice to stay where it is.
 - “Don't move the GP is in a perfect position.”
- Misc/unrelated
- Praise for current service
 - “Always helpful staff, friendly and knowledgeable.”



Insights we have gained from this process



Time constraints

In order to ensure a full and robust engagement exercise ahead of changes to GP practices such as relocations, more time is required to adequately promote and gather the views of the maximum number of people possible.

The exercise in this case was contained to slightly more than a week, which presented challenges in making sure as many patients as possible were aware of the opportunity to have a say and to actively take part in the engagement.

It is recommended to have six to eight weeks in which to carry out this exercise. However, in this instance it is understood that the practice had to move quickly for reasons of patients' safety.

Next steps

This report will be presented to the primary care commissioning committee to aid the decision-making regarding the relocation of PWE Accrington Victoria. 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.