

Children and Young People - 'Was Not Brought' Project Engagement Report

8th September 2025 – 31st October 2025



Executive Summary

Introduction

Lincolnshire has been identified as a national outlier in relation to 'Was Not Brought' (WNB) rates for Children and Young People (CYP) attending outpatient appointments. As of August 2025, United Lincolnshire Teaching Hospitals (ULTH) reported a WNB rate of 13.1%, significantly exceeding the national target of 6.5% for Did Not Attend (DNA) and WNB. High WNB rates impact clinic productivity, contribute to growing waiting list backlogs, negatively affect patient experience, and exacerbate health inequalities, while also increasing pressure on urgent and emergency care services.

A targeted engagement approach was undertaken to better understand the barriers and challenges that parents and carers face in bringing children and young people to planned outpatient appointments. The engagement focused on gathering real-life experience from families and communities to inform the co-production of practical solutions aimed at reducing WNB rates across Children and Young People's services at ULTH.

Engagement Approach

To make participation as accessible as possible, we created an online survey and shared it widely through stakeholder networks. Alternative formats were offered, with phone and email support available. Translated posters in **Bulgarian**, **Lithuanian**, and **Romanian** were also produced, including direct contact details to support those who preferred to engage in person. These approaches ensured multiple ways for people to provide feedback.

Our focus was on three PCN sites across Lincolnshire:

- **Boston**
- **Lincoln Healthcare Partnership**
- **IMP PCN**

These PCNs supported the work by arranging for GP practices to send targeted text messages to identified patients, encouraging them to take part in the survey and share their experiences.



NHS
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Integrated Care Board

We want to hear from you

Missed your child's hospital appointment? Struggling to attend? Tell us why - your views will help us improve children's care.

Take part in our survey

Share your views to help shape better care for children in Lincolnshire.

Scan the QR code or visit:
<https://lincolnshire.icb.nhs.uk/hospital-appointment-survey>

The poster features a background image of a child's hand being held by an adult's hand. The text is in a clean, sans-serif font, with key phrases in bold. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner.



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Integrated Care Board

Vrem să aflăm părerea dumneavoastră

Ați ratat programarea la spital a copilului dumneavoastră? Aveți dificultăți în a vă prezenta? Spuneți-ne de ce - opiniile dumneavoastră ne vor ajuta să îmbunătățim îngrijirea copiilor.

Participați la sondajul nostru

Împărtășiți-vă opiniile pentru a contribui la o mai bună îngrijire a copiilor din Lincolnshire.

Pentru a vă împărtăși opiniile, sunați la 07811 701278 sau trimiteți e-mail la licb.involveus@nhs.net

The poster features a background image of a child's hand being held by an adult's hand. The text is in a clean, sans-serif font, with key phrases in bold. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner.

Executive Summary

Engagement Approach

Alongside the online survey, **in-person community visits** were carried out across the targeted areas to community venues, including visits to **Lincoln County Hospital** and **Pilgrim Hospital, Boston**. These visits provided valuable opportunities to engage directly with patients, carers, staff, and members of the public, enabling a deeper understanding of how services are accessed in real time. They also allowed us to hear personal experiences that may not have been fully captured through survey responses alone, and to gain greater insight into the local challenges, barriers, and strengths within each community.

In addition, we worked closely with local partners and trusted community individuals, whose involvement was vital in supporting inclusive engagement. Their relationships and local knowledge helped us to reach people who may not typically engage through digital methods, encouraged open and honest conversations, and ensured that the insights gathered were firmly rooted in real lived experience. This approach also played a key role in building trust and strengthening relationships within local communities.

- A press release was issued to local and regional media
- Circulated to Patient Participation Groups in Lincolnshire
- Featured 'The Contributor', the ICB online engagement bulletin
- Distributed to our extensive stakeholder database that includes groups from the following: LGBT, Minority ethnic groups, Disability, Carers, Young people, Older people, Faith and Religious and various community groups across Lincolnshire
- Circulated in the Primary care bulletin, encouraging GP Practices to take part and promote to patients
- Regular posts across ICB, social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook
- Regularly promoted on the Nextdoor App to residents of Lincolnshire
- Featured on the ICB and ULHT website
- Featured on the Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum website
- Liaised with the Inclusion Team Manager for Specialist Teachers
- Liaised with the Head Teacher from the Hawthorn Tree School, Boston
- Shared across all Children's Centre's & Family Hubs across Lincolnshire
- Shared with Children's 0-19's service across Lincolnshire County Council
- Shared via Lincolnshire County Council to the School News bulletin

Executive Summary

Respondent profiles

- We spoke with 4 administration staff at Pilgrim Hospital, Boston
- 1 consultant at Pilgrim Hospital, Boston
- 1 parent at Pilgrim Hospital, Boston
- 5 clinical and non-clinical staff members at Lincoln County Hospital
- 5 individuals who worked at community venues across Lincoln
- Reception staff at a Primary school in Lincoln
- A Headteacher from a school in Boston
- Some respondents to our online survey did not answer all questions, so the results will fluctuate; the number of respondents is noted under each question
- The highest number of responses to our line survey came from **Lincoln**. Most respondents identified as White (Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish, or British). In addition, **13** respondents identified their ethnicity as Black or Black British: African. The majority of our respondents were Female
- **15** survey respondents indicated that English is not their first language
- **196** people responded to the survey, **163** people responded as a **Parent/Carer**
- **22** people said they **DIDN'T** attend their appointments
- The majority of people who **DIDN'T** attend their appointment received information about their appointment via **letter**.
- **12** people also said they **DID NOT** receive a reminder
- Appointments for **several different types of issues** were the most frequently missed appointments
- **Not being able to get the time off work** was the reason most people didn't attend their appointment, along with **poor communication** and **not receiving an appointment letter on time**
- **111** people who responded, **DID** attend their appointment and **supporting their child's health** was the main reason for this

Cross-cutting themes that have been identified across all areas of engagement in this report

➤ **Poor communication & unreliable information systems**

Late or missing appointment letters, unclear text reminders, language barriers, and NHS App access issues are causing confusion, missed appointments, and frustration for families and professionals.

➤ **Work, school & time pressures on families**

Many parents struggle to get time off work, face rigid employers, and experience clashes with school attendance expectations, especially in key academic years

➤ **Transport, parking & distance barriers**

Poor public transport, long travel distances, and costly or unavailable parking create significant obstacles, particularly for rural families.

➤ **Lack of flexibility in appointment systems**

Rigid booking systems, difficulty rebooking or cancelling, and long phone queues discourage families from engaging with appointments.

➤ **Inequality across specific groups**

Families affected by language barriers, SEND, neurodivergence, adoption, and digital exclusion face compounded challenges accessing services.

➤ **Fragmented systems & poor coordination**

Poor information-sharing across systems leads to duplicated referrals, misplaced records, and avoidable delays in care.

➤ **Strong parental motivation when barriers are removed**

Parents consistently express strong commitment to their child's health and attend appointments when practical barriers are reduced.

➤ **Support for community-based & virtual appointments**

There is shared desire for community clinics and virtual appointments to reduce travel burdens and improve accessibility.

Respondent Demographics



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Age	Count
Age 16 and below	7
17-20	2
21-29	11
30-39	37
40-49	24
50-59	7
60-69	2
70-79	0
80-89	0
90+	0
Prefer not to say	1
<i>Answered</i>	91

Ethnicity	Responses
Asian or Asian British: Indian	2
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	1
Asian or Asian British: Chinese	0
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	0
Any other Asian background (please state)	0
Black or Black British: Caribbean	0
Black or Black British: African	13
Any other Black background (please state)	0
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and black Caribbean	0
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	0
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	1
Any of mixed or multiple ethnic background (please state)	0
White: Welsh / English / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	59
White: Irish	0
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0
White Roma	0
Any other White background (please state)	11
Other ethnic group: Arab	1
Any other (please state)	0
Prefer not to say	4
<i>Answered</i>	92

Religion	Count
Male	8
Female	67
Intersex	0
Non-binary	0
Prefer to self-identify	0
Prefer not to say	6
<i>Answered</i>	81

Sexual orientation	Responses
Bisexual	5
Gay	0
Heterosexual	54
Lesbian	1
Prefer to self -identify	0
Rather not say	6
<i>Answer</i>	66

Respondent Demographics

What is your main language	Count
Bulgarian	4
English	63
Hungarian	0
Latvian	0
Lithuanian	1
Polish	1
Portuguese	1
Romanian	3
Spanish	0
Russian	1
Other	4
<i>Answered</i>	78

If English is not your main language, to what extent can you read English	Count
A lot	27
A little	3
Not very much	0
Not much at all	1
<i>Answered</i>	31

Disability: Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or expected to last, at least 12 months (including any problems related to old age)?	Count
Yes, the health problem/disability limits me a little	10
Yes, the health problem/disability limits me a lot	9
No	39
Prefer not to say	0
<i>Answered</i>	58

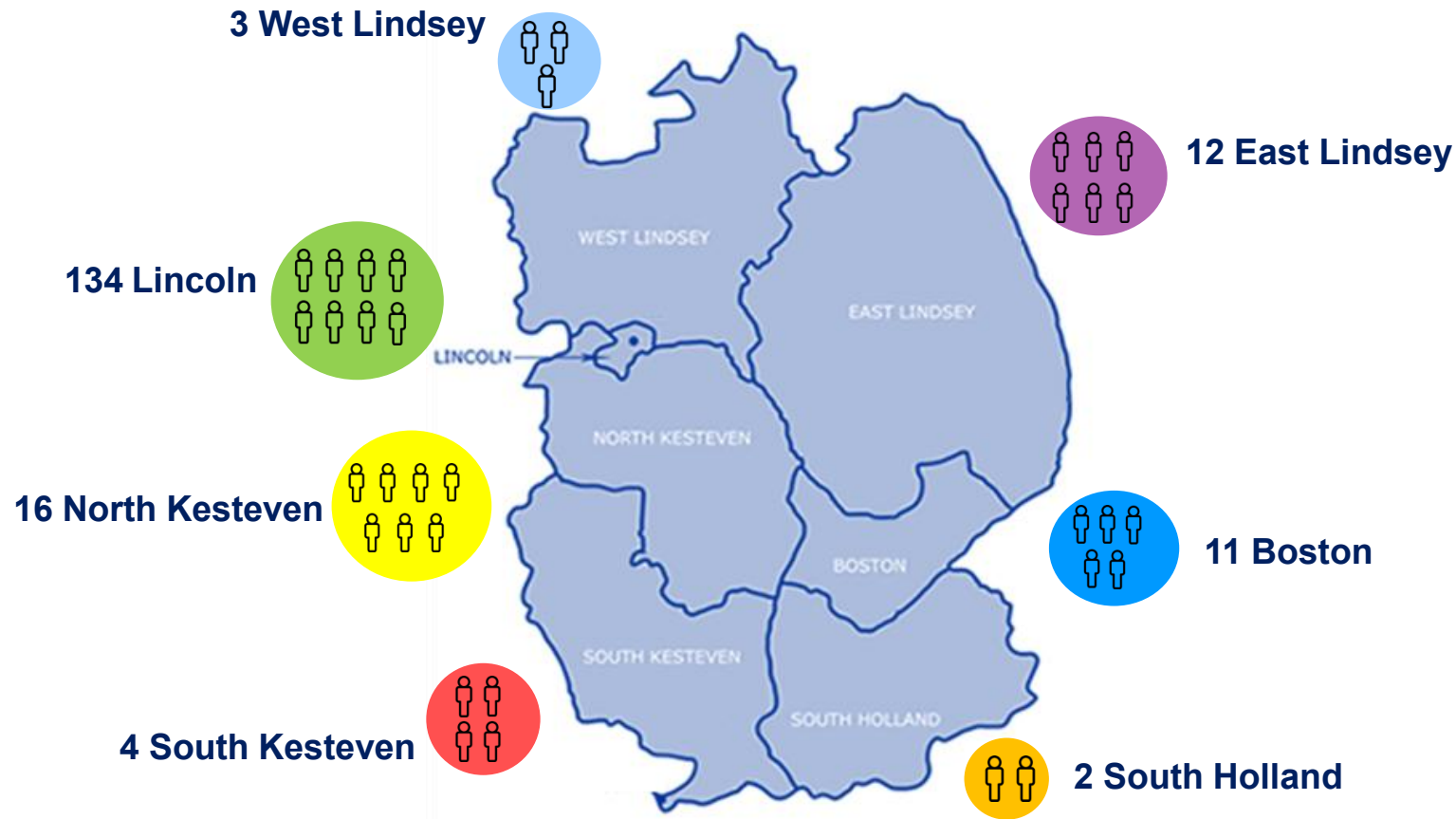
Disability: If you answered 'yes' to the previous question, please indicate your disability - people may experience more than one type of impairment, in which case you may indicate more than one	Count
Physical impairment	7
Sensory impairment	4
Mental health condition	12
Learning Disability/Difficulty	5
Long-standing illness	4
Other	5
<i>Answer</i>	37

Respondent Demographics

Caring responsibilities: Do you look after or give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either long-term physical or mental ill-health/disability?	Count
Primary carer of child/children (under 18)	24
Primary carer of disabled child/children	8
Primary carer of disabled adult (18 and over)	1
Primary carer of older person	4
Secondary carer (another person carries out the main caring role)	1
<i>Answer</i>	38

Please select if you have experience of any of the following:	Count
Currently working in the farming/agricultural industry	1
Have worked in the farming/agricultural industry.	1
Currently homeless.	2
Experience of being homeless.	3
Currently serving in either the UK's regular or reserved armed forces.	4
Have served in the UK's regular or reserved armed forces.	3
I am a refugee, immigrant or asylum seeker.	2
Previous experience of being a refugee, immigrant or asylum seeker.	1
<i>Answer</i>	17

Geographical locations of the respondents are shown below:



Responding as.....

A Parent / Carer – 163 people
Child or Young person – 27 people
Other – 4 people
Prefer not to say – 2 people

1. I am answering this survey as a (Base N = 196)

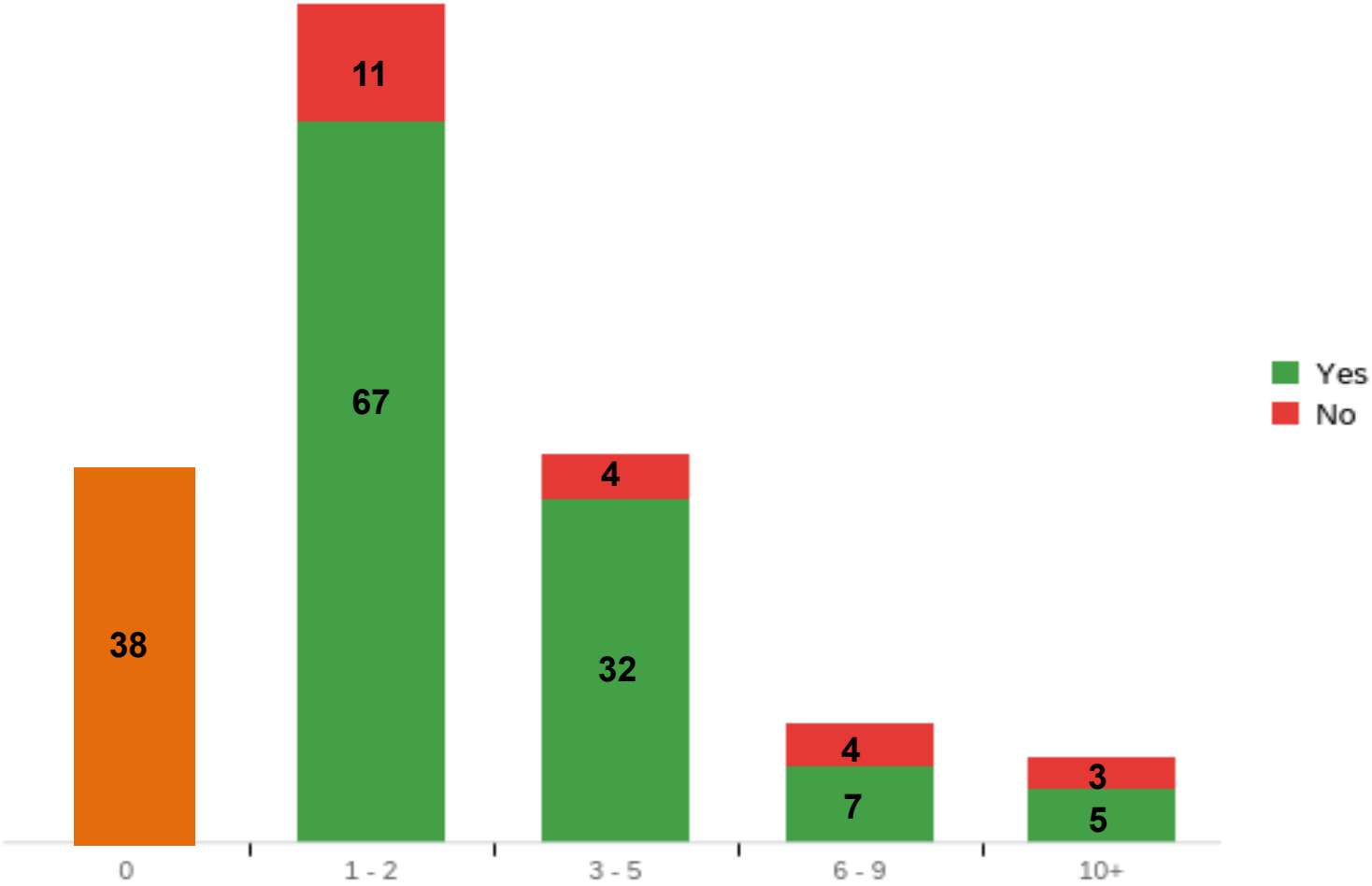
3. Which district do you live in? (Base N = 182)

78 people said they have had 1 – 2 appointments in the last 12 months. 11 People DIDN'T attend these appointments

111 people said they DID attend ALL their appointments

22 people said they DIDN'T attend ALL their appointments

38 people had 0 appointments in the last 12 months



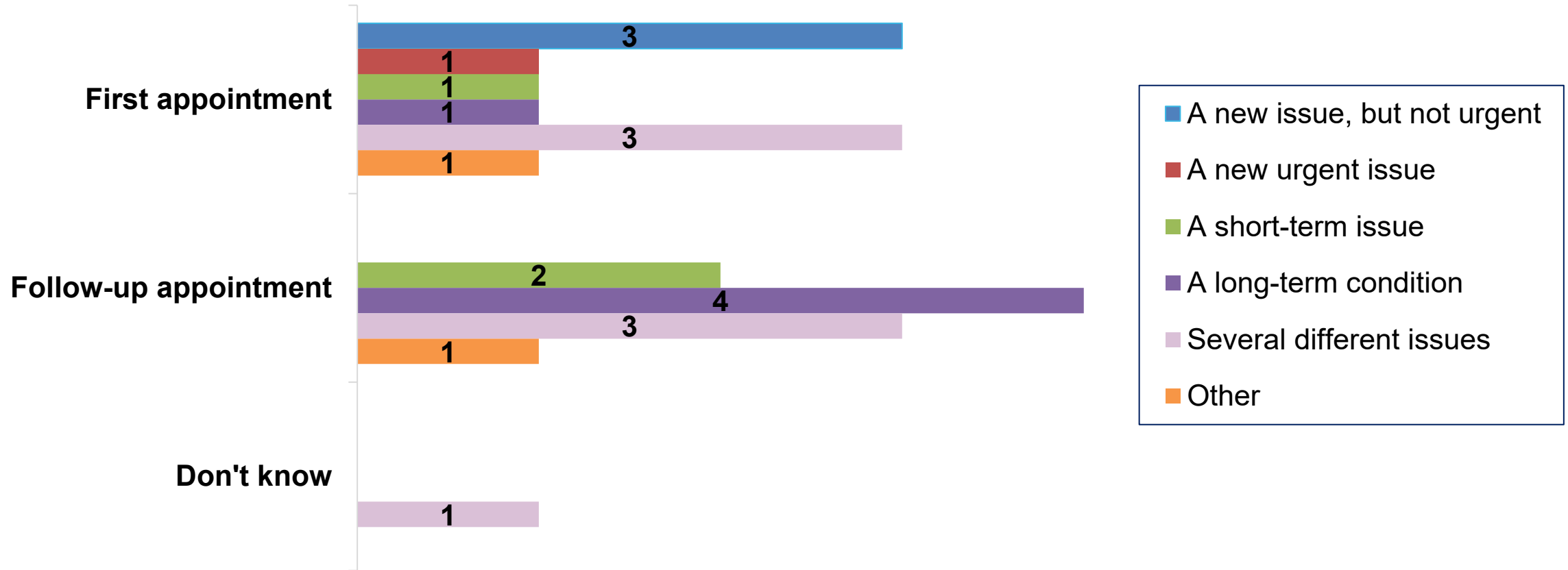
4. How many appointments have you/your child had at the hospital in the last 12 months? (Base N= 171)

5. Did you/your child attend ALL the appointments? (Base N= 133)

**22 People said they
DIDN'T ATTEND.....**



Among those who **did not attend**, the most missed appointments were for **several different issues**



6. Thinking about the LAST appointment you/your child DIDN'T attend, what was the appointment for? (Base N = 21)
 7. Thinking about the LAST appointment you/your child DIDN'T attend, was it a first appointment with the service or a follow-up? (Base N = 21)

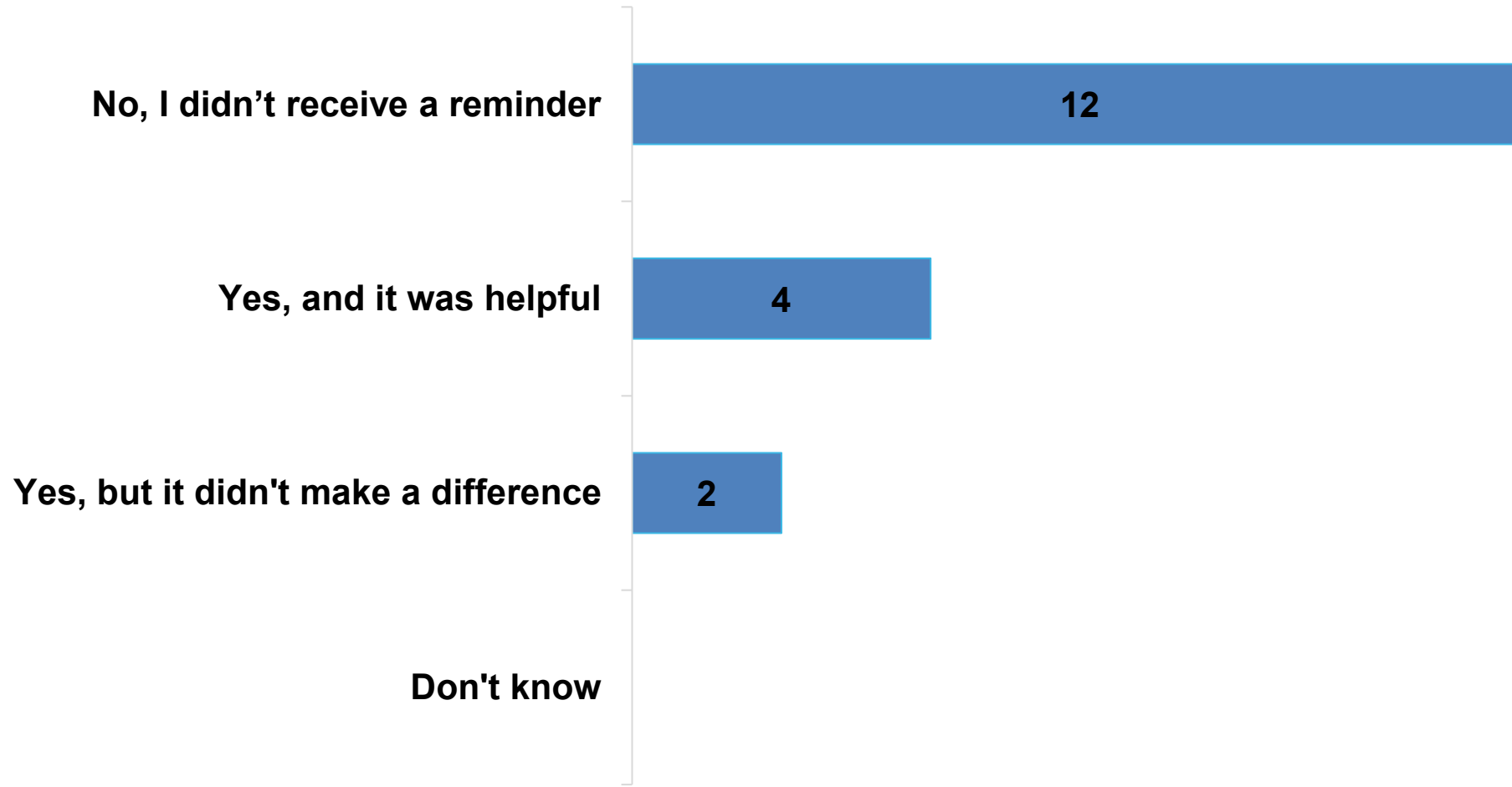
Most people **who didn't attend**, received information about their appointment by **letter**, which ranged between **1 and 3 weeks** before their appointment



8. How did you receive information about your/your child's LAST outpatient appointment? (Base N = 23)

9. How close to your/ your child's appointment did you receive this information? (Base N = 18)

For respondents who **did not attend** their appointment, the majority reported that they had **not** received a reminder



Most people who **did not attend** their hospital appointment were scheduled at **Lincoln County Hospital**

0 People - John Coupland Hospital, Gainsborough



1 Person - County Hospital, Louth

The 1 person who didn't attend their appointments at County Hospital, Louth:-

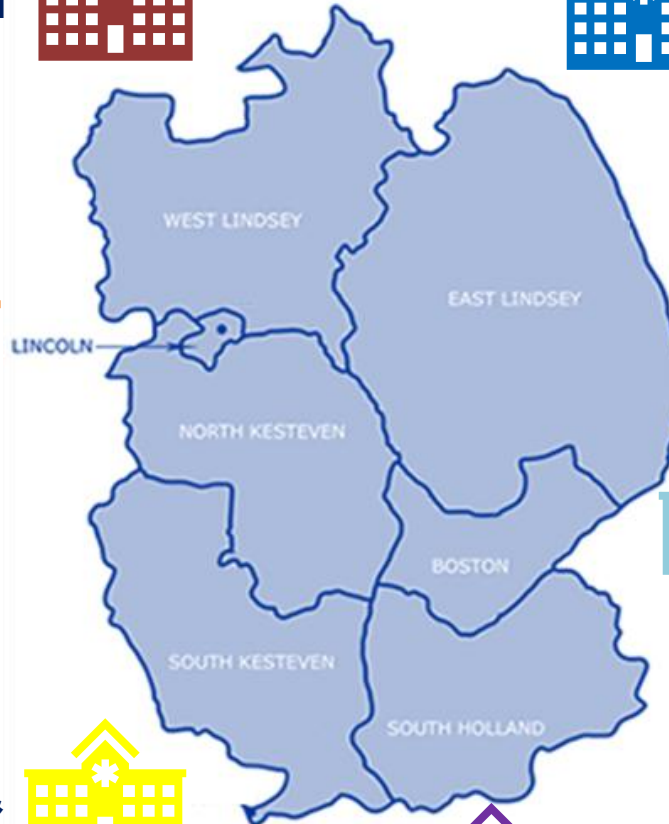
1 person lived in East Lindsey

8 People - Lincoln County Hospital



Of the 8 people who didn't attend their appointments at Lincoln County Hospital:-

*3 people lived in Lincoln
2 people lived in West Lindsey
1 person lived in Boston
1 Person lived in East Lindsey
1 person lived in North Kesteven*



0 People - Skegness Hospital



4 People – Pilgrim Hospital, Boston

Of the 4 people who didn't attend their appointments at Pilgrim Hospital, Boston:-

*2 people lived in Boston
2 people lived in East Lindsey*

0 People - Grantham & District Hospital

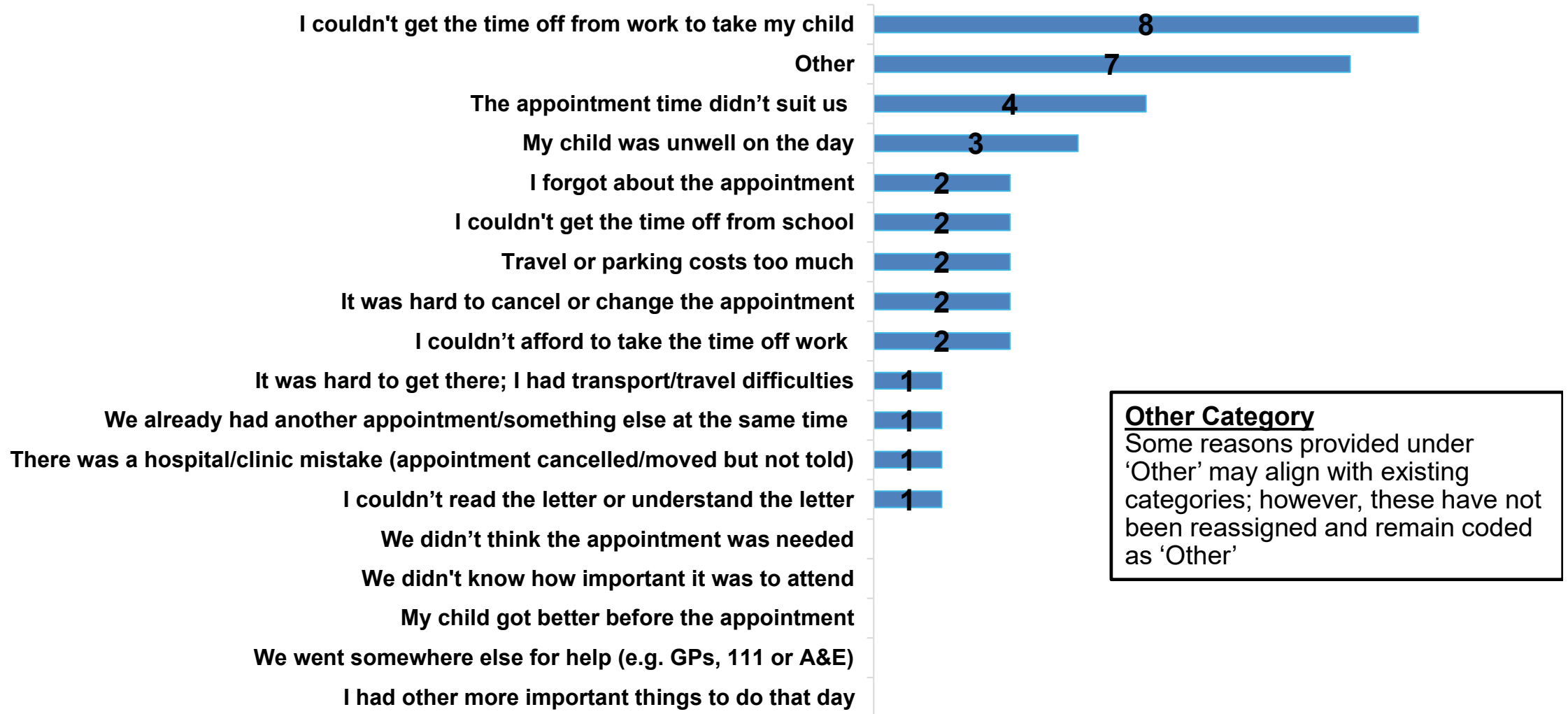


0 People Johnson Community Hospital, Pinchbeck

1 Person - Other Hospital

4 People – None of the above

Not being able to get the time off from work was the reason most people **didn't attend** their appointment



Other reasons why people **didn't attend** their last appointment

The team I work for has a senior manager who doesn't believe staff should have a life

The letter did not arrive until after the appointment date, and no text to remind

I didn't attend due to the careless staff. They didn't provide any information about previous appointments; they said the previous blood sample was missing in the lab. Kindly arrange another appointment. I'm very disappointed about this behaviour.

Didn't receive any information about the appointment

The appointment was supposed to be a telephone appointment, but the hospital failed to contact us on 3 separate occasions that had been arranged. We were then sent a face-to-face appointment, but as nothing had changed with his condition and it clashed with his year 6 leavers assembly and I could not get the time off work to take him.

Admin error. Apparently, it was a duplicate referral, I called to cancel but it was not documented

Reasons why people **didn't attend**, another appointment they had booked

Work is the main reason for missed appointments lack of flexibility from the senior manager and micromanaging to the extreme. Closely followed by school and the pressure for 100% attendance

When working families with more than 1 child with appointments it becomes overwhelming for parents to remember and take time from work especially when wait times are so long, often get confused what to cover in the appt and told that's for 'X' dept or that dept, go back to GP etc. Obstacles!

This reason is careless staff didn't give any information about previous appointments, so that's why I don't want to attend. They are just taking blood again and again, not giving any reports, letters or Dr appointment. Sometimes they said sorry, I apologise, I didn't test previous blood sample due to it being lost in lab kindly arrange again I m very disappoint about this behaviour.

Public transport is too bad

Most of the time the appointment is booked at 9-9.30 in the morning , I have 2 other children in school, and I don't drive so getting public transport after dropping my other children at school would have made us over 1 hour late for the appointment and I will get fined if I keep taking all 3 out of school for an appointment just for 1

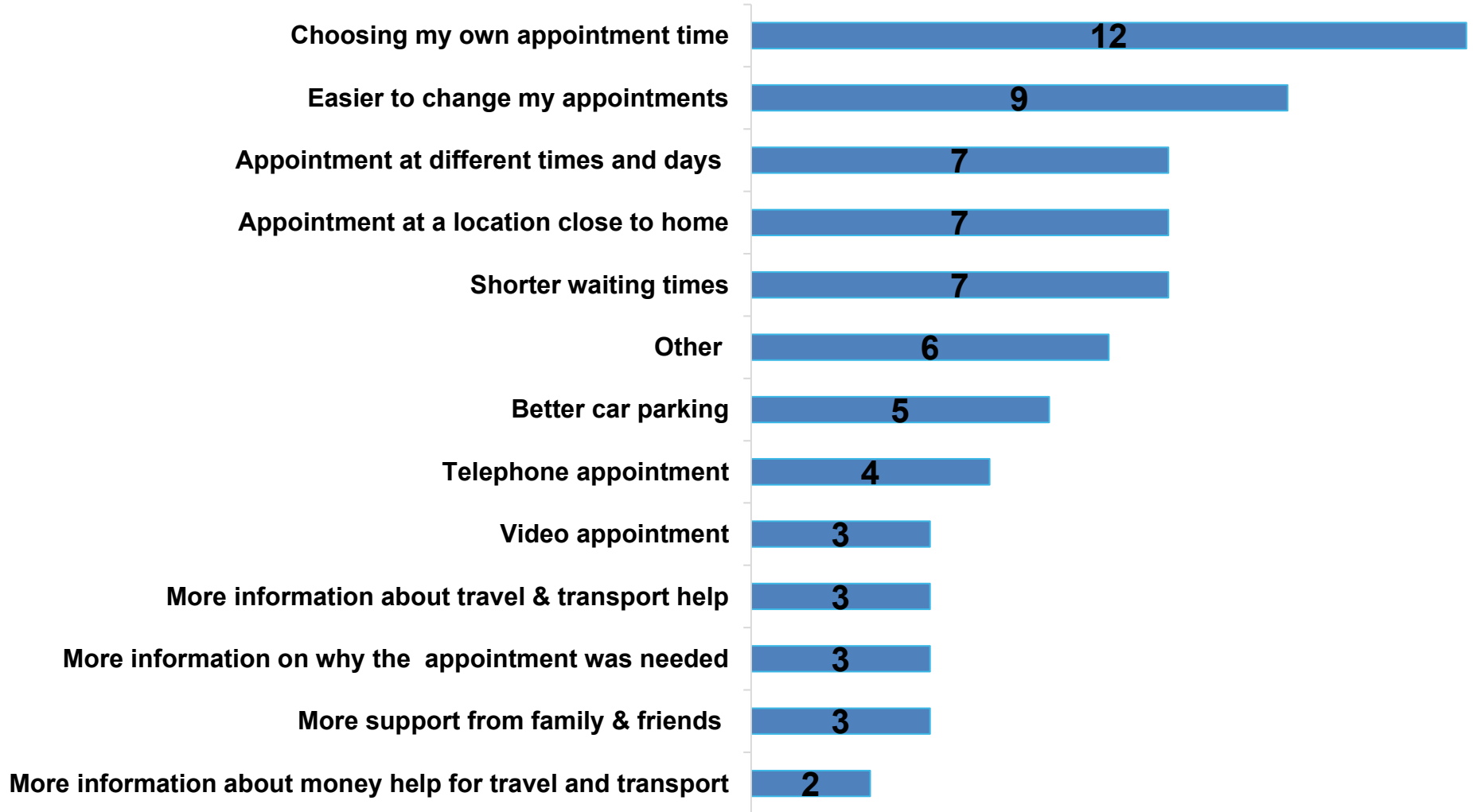
Reasons why people **didn't attend**, another appointment they had booked cont.

Did not receive a letter or reminder

I have 4 children under ophthalmology. They are all 2 appointment and all at different times, different hospital sites. It is impossible to cancel appointments or to rearrange. No one answers. I'm a nurse and work long days so its difficult. I have tried to speak to someone in person during one of the apps to explain logically its impossible, but nothing has been done about it

Not able to get ready in time to travel, park up and get to the appointment on time, we would be late by the time we got there and there is no way of letting anybody know or changing the date or time. It's often one strike and your out, that you can't even change appointment time even if it's months in advance it seems to be a new hospital policy, but it often leads to more missed appointments because people are afraid to change their appointment and risk losing their referral and being sent back to the GP. The child is unwell or struggling with flare-up of symptoms that either cause absence or cause unexpected lateness. Unable to find a parking space which would mean arriving later. Travel delays, road closures, not enough spare time for it to be worth trying to come when travelling a long distance like 45 minutes + to the hospital. No reminders for the appointment until like 1 day before if at all. Double booked when seen the reminder and it's too late to rearrange.

The most common suggestion for improving appointment attendance was **allowing patients to choose their own appointment time**



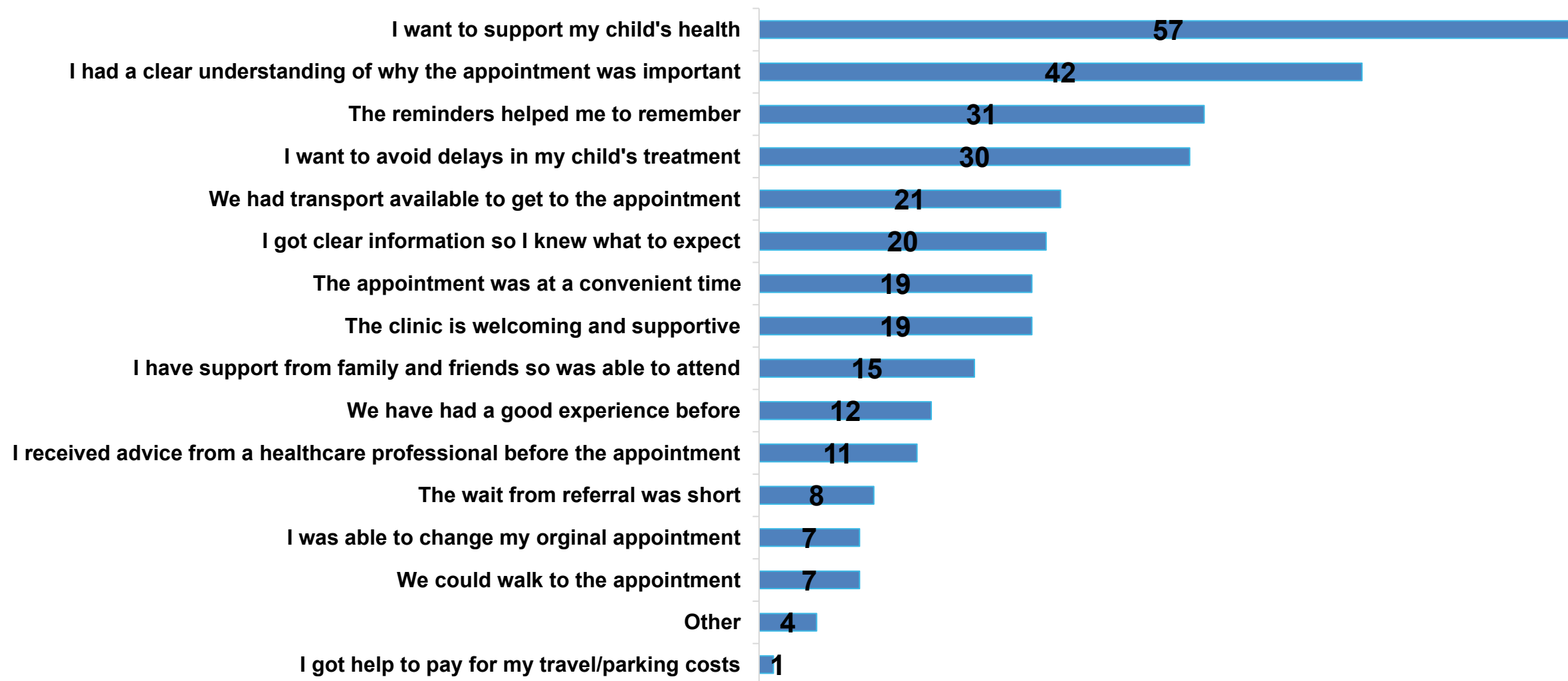
Suggestions on what local support could help people attend their hospital appointments.....

Flexi appointments; appointments with information, specific information for appt.
Public transport e.g. bus from town to the hospital
None
More flexibility. There seems to be no choice of wide options. Weekends will suit some families better than weekdays
More appointments in clinics that are closer to home
Appointments closer to Skegness or phone/video. The appointments are only offered on a Monday morning at Boston, so my son has to miss school, and I have to book time off work. Usually, the appointment is a quick 5 min chat when there have been no changes
It's so hard to speak to someone on the phone at the hospital about any matter. Can't call to change an appointment. Can't book appointments in advance as the Clinic dates haven't been agreed. Phone calls get cut off. Phone calls are on hold for long periods. I often get put through to voicemail to leave a message and never receive any communication back. I spend hours of time trying to communicate to make very little progress. Car parking is too limited. Car parking is also too expensive. It should be free to park for healthcare appointments. A single method of communicating appointments would be helpful. Sometimes I get a text reminder to say don't forget about your appointment on xx date, but I've had no letter about it, nor does it say which apartment it is for. As a carer for a child with many different appointments, I then have to ring around to find out which doctor it is we have an appointment for. Finally, we rely on the doctor notes following an appointment in order to follow up on care with other appointments and instigate treatment in other departments. These take a very long time to come through; 6-9 months in some cases which delays healthcare elsewhere. Further, if a new prescription at the hospital is issued, the paperwork doesn't make it to the GP so that they can continue to prescribe that medicine. I have had to chase it from the doctors Secretary every single time, 2-3 months later

**111 People DID
ATTEND their
appointments, and
they were directed to
provide feedback on
what made it easier
for them to attend
their appointment**



Wanting to support their child's health was the main reason why people **did** attend their appointment



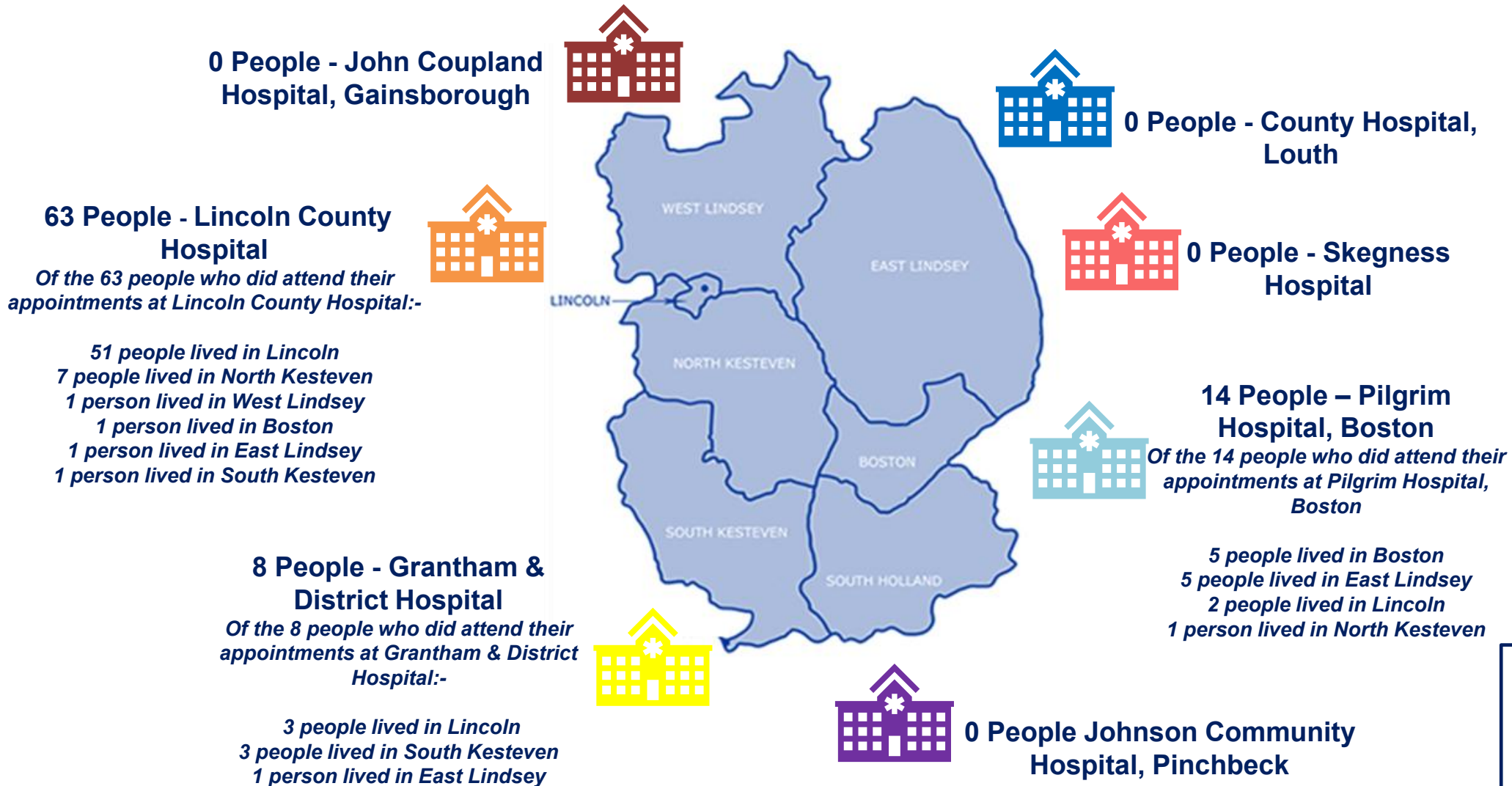
Themes from respondents who attended their appointment but still encountered difficulties

Appointment Timing	Appointments often during school hours.
	Clinics only in the morning or latest at 4pm.
	Difficulties due to work shifts and annual leave.
	Schools not authorising absences.
	Stress for children with autism/ADHD when missing school.
	GCSE years impacted by early appointments in the school day
	Desire for before/after school or evening appointments.
Short Notice & Rescheduling Issues	Appointments sent with very little notice.
	Hard to rearrange; often have to wait for another inconvenient slot.
	Difficulty contacting departments (answer machines, no one available).
	New booking systems making it harder to schedule.
Travel & Location Challenges	Long travel times (e.g., Mablethorpe to Lincoln, Grantham).
	Over 2 hours for a 30-minute appointment.
	Poor public transport options.
	High taxi costs (e.g., £90).
	Preference for local clinics or GP-based appointments.

Themes from respondents who attended their appointment but **still encountered difficulties**

Impact on Family & Work	Parents taking annual leave or rearranging shifts.
	Siblings missing school due to travel.
	Stress for children with additional needs (autism, ADHD).
	Nap schedules disrupted for younger children.
Accessibility & Facilities	Lack of awareness about hospital parking spaces.
	Difficulty finding baby changing facilities.
	Clinic open only a few days a week.
Parking Problems	Limited spaces, especially during peak times.
	No disabled bays available.
	Long waits for parking.
	Parking charges.
	Issues with car park management company.
Positive/Neutral Responses	Some respondents said, “No issues” or “Nothing” (multiple entries).
	A few noted that lunchtime appointments worked well.

Most people who **did attended** their hospital appointment, did so at **Lincoln County Hospital**



9 People - Other Hospital
3 People – None of the above

18. If your/your child's appointment was at a hospital, which site was it? (Base N = 97)

Participants who **did attend** shared different ideas for how local **community support** could make attending appointments easier.

Maybe a bus that solely goes to the hospital that has to be booked like call connect without call connects limits of 'sorry there's a bus in an hour we can't do that' which isn't helpful when you need to be at the hospital for an appointment before the next bus

Running clinics in Sleaford

More local appointments (care closer to home) - virtual appointments via Teams I am lucky that I drive and have access to a vehicle

There is a hospital in Louth, and I find it hard to believe that all children needing ADHD assessments on the East Coast need to travel to Grantham which is miles away

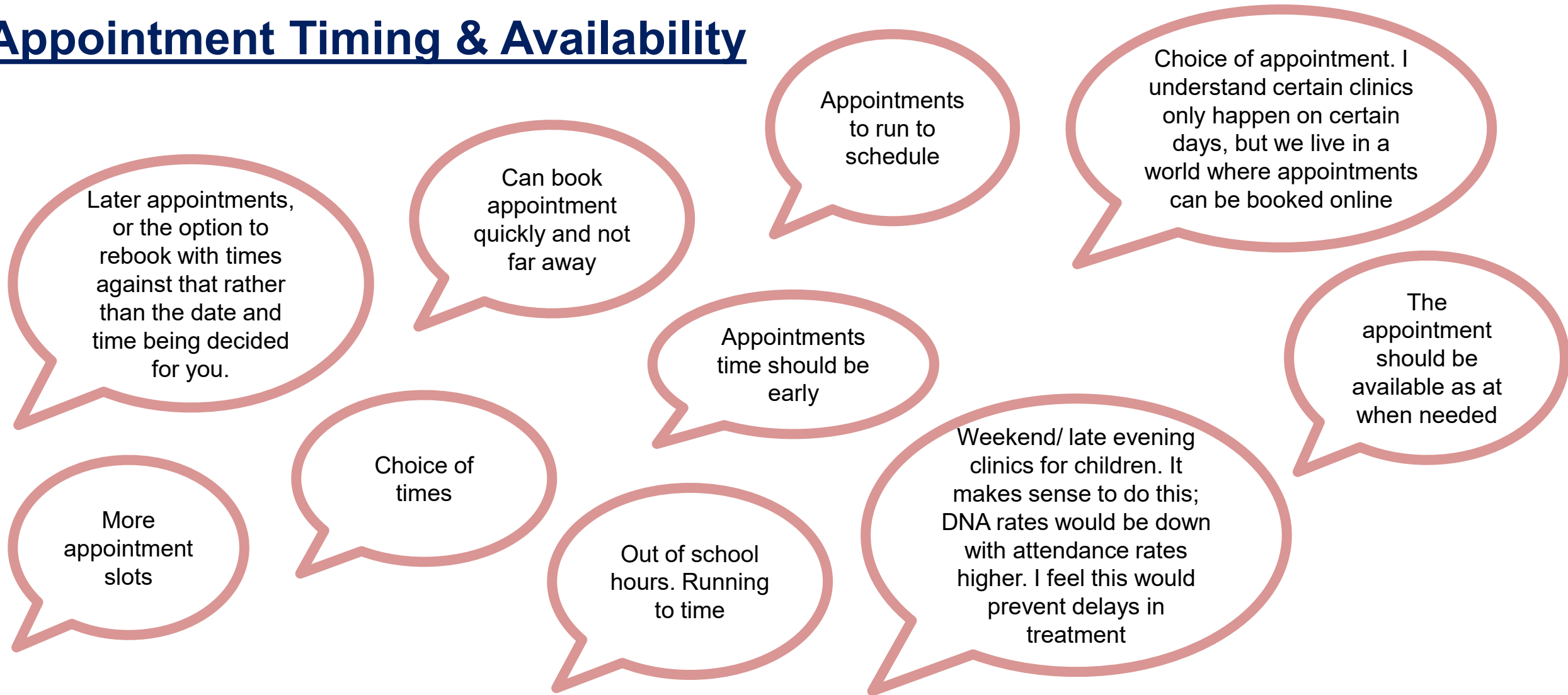
Having a local paediatrics clinic once a month within the town

Not sure why this appointment has to be in hospital (visual processing test). GP practice or community venue would be better environment for a child

More local clinics in Grantham

Clinics available within the local community.

Appointment Timing & Availability



Appointment Timing & Availability

Outside working hours like weekends to support partners attending as well.

Appointments later in the day (after work)

Being able to pick the appointment date ahead

It would be useful to offer priority appointments for school age children in school holidays, and at the beginning or end of the school day. Even more useful would be the ability to attend appointments on a late-night basis, perhaps offering a clinic that runs until 7pm. When your child is in an important year, it is difficult to coordinate time off so it does not impact on their education.

Online booking where you could see options and choose something suitable and evenings and weekends

Convenient time

The appointment should be available as at when needed

If a note was on file for example - appointments are best on Tuesdays

Early notice for appointments

After school times

Ideas to help improve paediatric outpatient attendance....

Location

More local appointments (care closer to home) - virtual appointments via Teams I am lucky that I drive and have access to a vehicle.

Local appointments better times at the start of the day so child misses less school and less work virtual options /telemedicine if appropriate also the text system ignores the REBOOK option. I drive so I am lucky and can afford to get to Pilgrim, but the train station is not close by, and requires a lot of expense and would require a whole day from school

Would prefer Lincoln as it is where we live

Care closer to home

Since it's always closer to the house, always makes it easier

Make them local

Make as many appointments as possible virtual. Why are we no longer using the video calling software that was available during COVID? This is a large county; many appointments could be done remotely and save long travel times and difficult parking.

Ideas to help improve paediatric outpatient attendance....

Parking & Transport

Free parking for
children's
appointment

Easier parking - need to
take out of school much
too early to
guarantee/wait for a
space, missing school
unnecessarily

A better bus service
that runs later

Free parking

Make parking free.
We don't ask to be ill

Better Parking

Maybe a bus that solely goes
to the hospital that has to be
booked like call connect
without call connects limits of
'sorry there's a bus in an hour
we can't do that' which isn't
helpful when you need to be at
the hospital for an appointment
before the next bus

Ideas to help improve paediatric outpatient attendance....

Communication

SMS reminder
would be helpful

Be notified not via post
as our letter turned up
the day before rush to
get other plans for other
child arranged

Being able to get
an appointment
still waiting for a
call back from the
surgery from
weeks ago

If the phonenumber was
answered, rather than
leaving answer machine
messages and hoping
for a call back.

The text reminders
are great. And I
have easy access to
the hospital

They should
work on their
responses to
appointments

Being able to get an
appointment at his official
doctors or for them to ring
when I am able to answer
as that is one of the
questions they ask

Ideas to help improve paediatric outpatient attendance....

Special Needs / Accessibility

A crèche for children to go to so they can go to appointments

It would be nice to have an area for autistic people to wait when they get overwhelmed with wait times

With children they are not patient enough, so I really appreciate minimum time spent at the hospital at the children's appointments

Sometimes when you have a child with SEN needs. Having a longer wait time, over the designated appointment time isn't practical.

I Think priority, half the Children

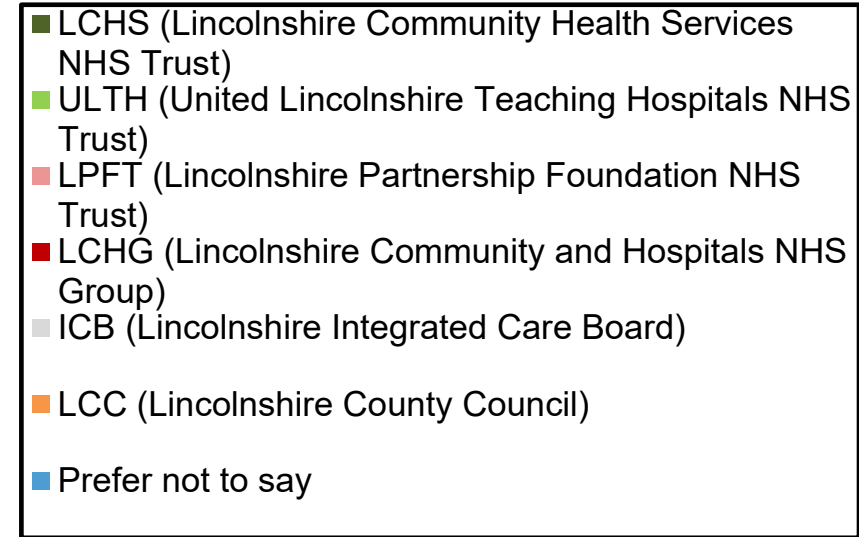
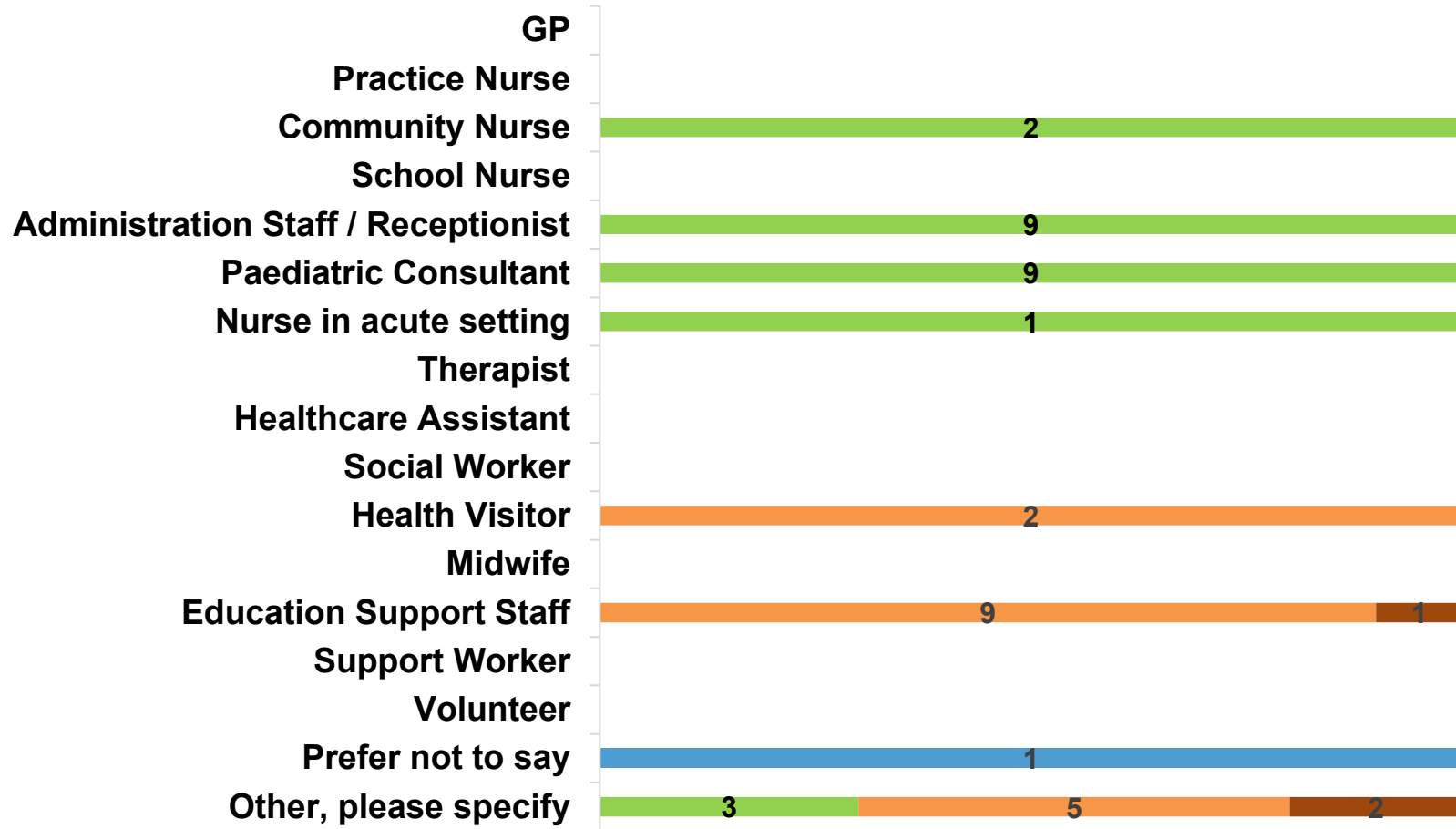
Kids on priority and old people because need to wait so long

Consider the need of the Children

Staff Survey Results



The majority of the respondents work at **ULTH**



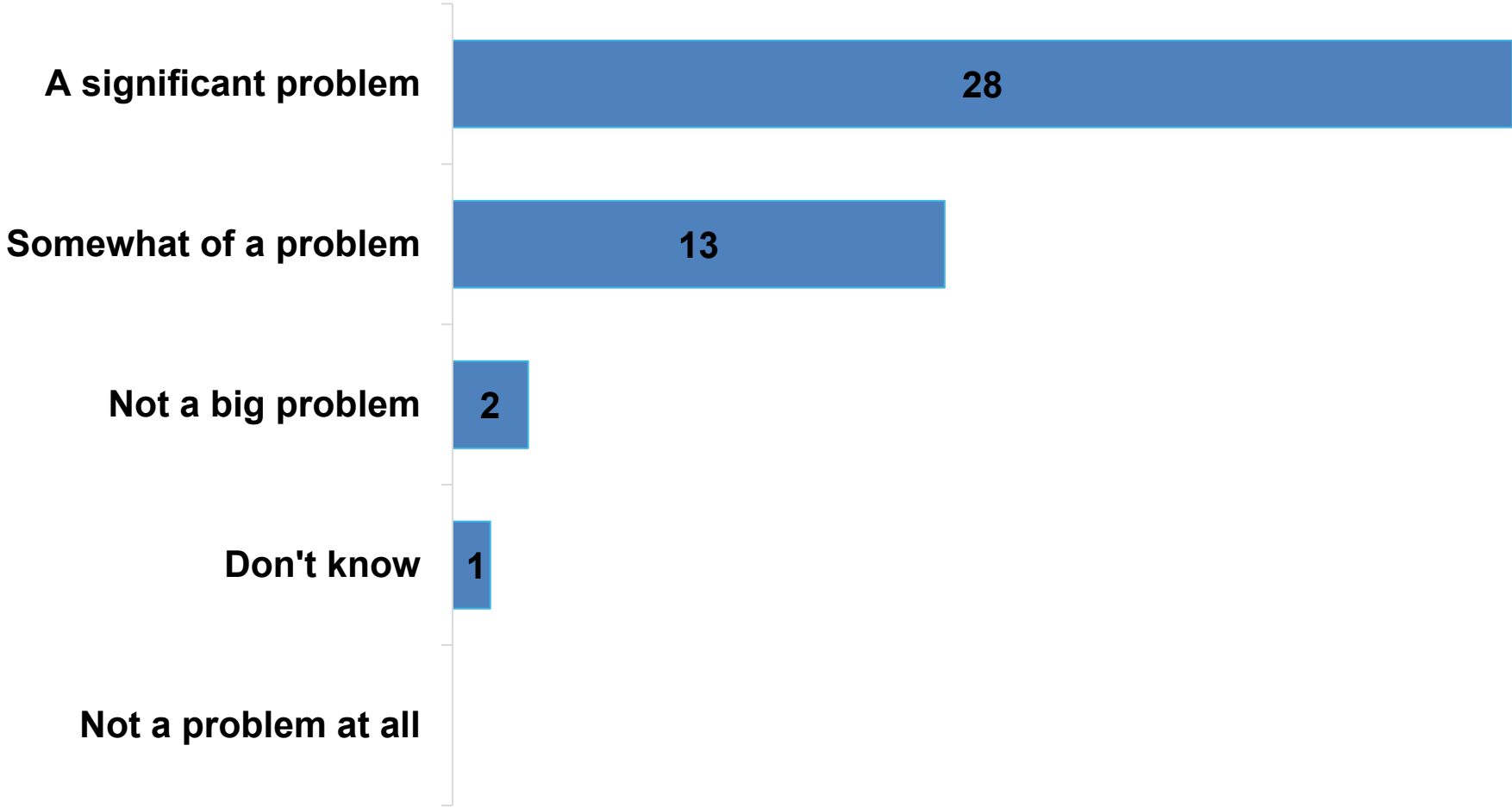
Other Roles Stated:-

- Manger
- Attendance Lead
- School SENCo x 2
- Early Years Support Teacher x 2
- Family Health Worker
- Audiologist x 2
- Inclusion Project Caseworker

1. Which organisation do you work for? (Base N = 44)

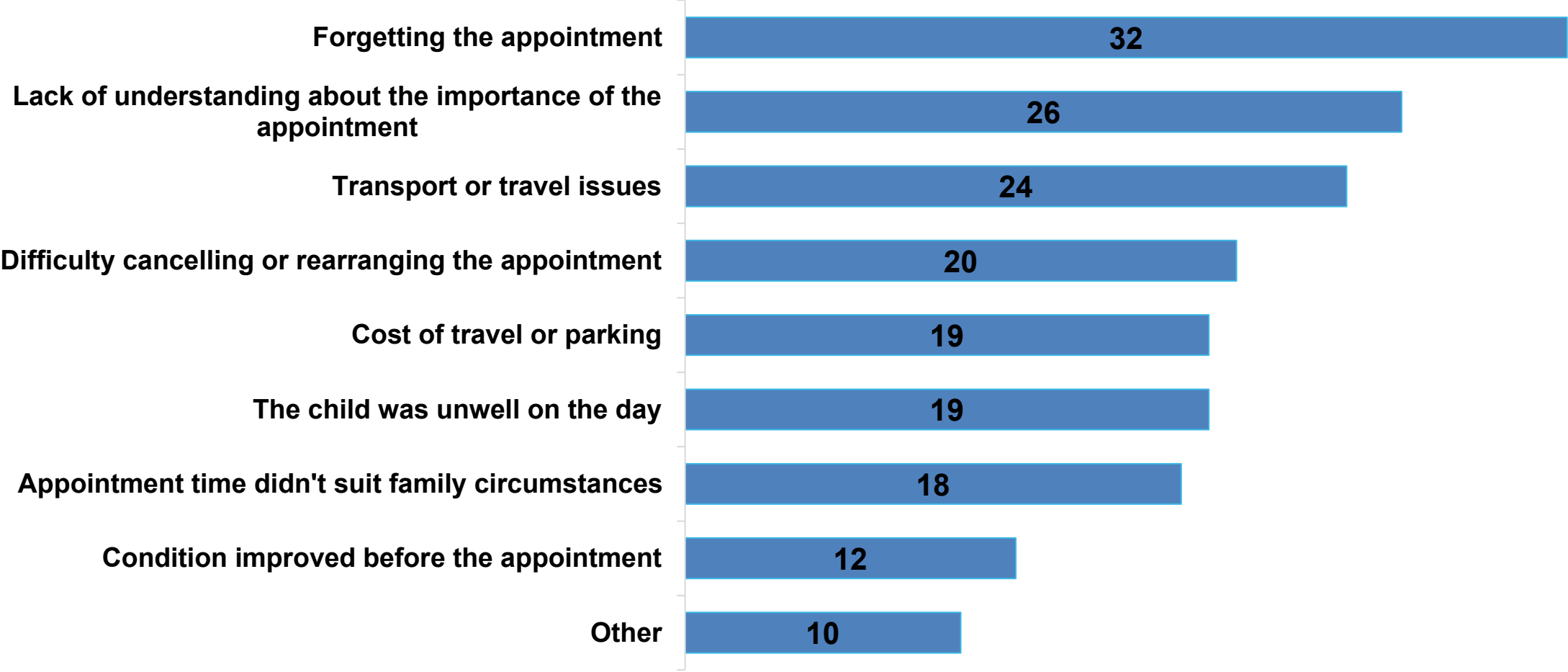
2. What is your role in paediatrics? (Base N = 44)

Staff feel missed paediatric appointments are a **significant problem**



3. How much of a problem do you think missed paediatric appointments are? (Base N = 44)

Staff feel that **forgetting the appointment** is the most common reason why families miss paediatric appointments



4. In your opinion, what are the most common reasons why families miss paediatric appointments? Tick all that apply (Base N = 180)

Other reasons why staff feel people miss their paediatric appointment.....

Change of mobile number and not informing us of change (thinking as informed GP systems speak to each other)

Appointment letters not received

Not receiving the appointment

Parents were working / didn't want to take time off work / said they called but couldn't get through to re-arrange

Text message service doesn't work as the phone number is not inputted in the correct box

Appointment information not communicated effectively.

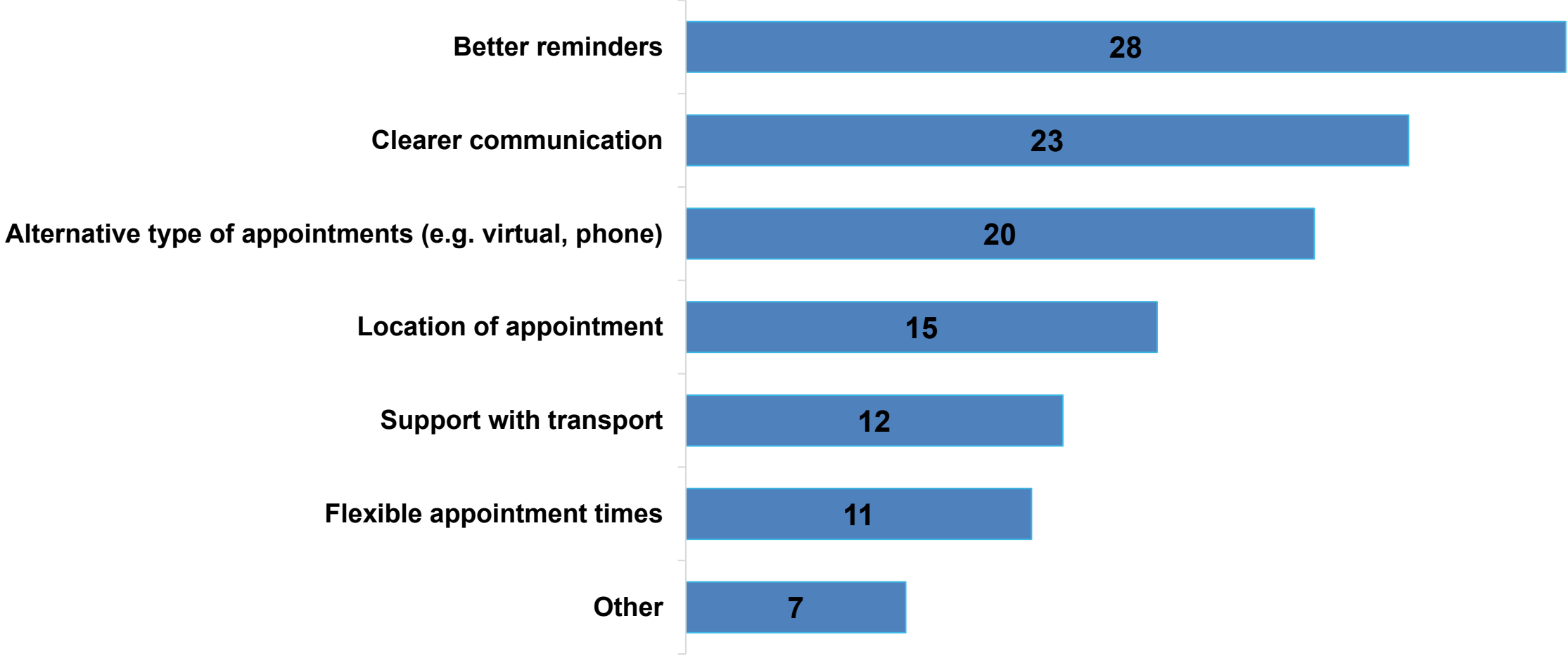
I believe that appointment letter often does not get to patient on time. Reminder text is sent just saying that child has appointment and when with no other info. For a family with several children with different appointments this can be impossible. I had 1 mother phone to try and find who was being seen and by whom and could not

The families that I have come across seem somewhat reluctant to have any professional input that may results in the spotlight being turned to homelife enquiries.

Text message received informing appointment is cancelled but this is not the case.

Language barrier

Staff feel **better reminders** would help families attend appointments more reliably



5. What do you think would help families attend appointments more reliably? Tick all that apply (Base N = 116)

Other suggestions staff feel would help families attend their appointments more reliably are.....

Alternative ways of booking appointments, e.g. online

Text message service to be looked at more and to confirm patients phone numbers are in the correct place

Also informing school of appointments so we can remind parents

Those that can be dealt with by remote appointments to be offered them

Informing the school so that we can remind them of appointments

A charge if they DNA an appointment, as this would mean people would cancel if they didn't want the appointment

I also wonder if a lot of the communication is not fully understood by the parent, we have no idea about their level of understanding and may need assistance with reading/understanding appointment letters.

Staff feel families need timely, reliable communication and sufficient administrative support to ensure appointments are accessible, understood, and easy to attend or rearrange

Timely reminders and stressing the importance of attending the appointment
Reminder of appointment
Reminders to parents and ease of cancellation using text messages,
Other trusts provide both email and text appointment reminders. I believe this would be of great benefit for my families.
Reminders in the run up and also on the day of the appointment. Alternative appt offered, where possible, for examples TEAMS
Reminders, let school know to remind parents, offer virtual appointments - school could also support with these
Reminders of appointments in home language. Information about what will happen at the appointment and how long it will be for etc.
Being aware that an appointment has been made via the hospital
Appointment information needs to be sent out reliably and in good time, with an appropriate reminder close to the appointment.
Time to contact family or a professional working with the family to understand the reason for nonattendance
Calling parents to offer/make aware of appointment booked so they are definitely aware as now we use 2nd class royal mail post this is a big issue, and parents are unaware of any appt booked
Better mail service that is actually able to deliver letters and in a timely fashion.
Capacity to ensure timely arrival of appointment letters - again, feedback via ULTH Together suggests a number of letters arrive after the appointment date and therefore people do not attend the appointment as they were unaware, they had one.
Some families for example living in Sutton Bridge have a long way to travel to Boston Pilgrim hospital and if they do not have transport this can be very challenging with a young child, especially if that child has needs.

Staff feel families need timely, reliable communication and sufficient administrative support to ensure appointments are accessible, understood, and easy to attend or rearrange

Appointment information sent out reliably and in good time
<p>I think this is multifactorial from a staff perspective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to improved letter templates that highlight the importance of the appointment coupled with information on how to cancel the appointment if it is no longer needed (e.g. issue has resolved); 2. Letter templates that include contact details that offer the ability to readily change/amend the appointment if necessary - this must be resourced so that phones are answered as ULTH Together suggests for adult patients that an inability to 'get through on the phone' is an issue when trying to cancel or rearrange appointments;
Getting the right details to arrange appointments - correct mobile numbers/addresses
Better IT system to communicate with parents.
More staff to answer outpatient calls to cancel, rearrange appts
More staff so that we can remind patients of appointments that have been booked a while ago.
Administrative staff to call family up 48hours before appointment, those that cannot attend then allow the slot to be diverted to others waiting that can attend last minute. Some Trust have tried this and have achieved 100% attendance rate
Time given to administrative staff to call parents the day of or day before appointments to remind families and check they are still attending. Consequences given verbally if they do not attend without notice, e.g. 'you will have to make the next appointment with us, we will not be sending you one automatically'.
We get a lot of calls saying they are unable to get through to appointments line to re-arrange apt.
It also needs to be easy to phone and change appointments - many patients are on hold for a long time and so have to give up resulting in a WNB.
DLD and SLCN awareness not only of the young person but also the parents potential issues.

Staff feel families need timely, reliable communication and sufficient administrative support to ensure appointments are accessible, understood, and easy to attend or rearrange

More staff to take the calls to cancel/rebook appointments.
We need more admin staff to support the booking process, so that each family can be spoken to and agreed a convenient time for the family.
More staff in the department to help with reminding patients or filling vacant slots
Better administration please. Possibly return clinic management to consultants` secretaries with extra support of course to avoid recurring problems such as inappropriate patients for that clinic, follow ups being put on wrong clinic etc.
The clinic list should be easily accessible by the consultant up to 4 weeks ahead of the clinic date.
Double booking into consultant clinics need to be identified and eliminated
Better communication around appointments and for consultants to stop arranging clinics at short notice
Communication improved between schools/early years settings and health.
Determination to improve patient care.
Follow-up appointments improve when the value of the appointment is clearly communicated. When no examination is required, converting to telephone follow-up's help
If no examination required can do telephone appointment. but 1st appointment must see f2f
Further knowledge about what support is available for families to attend appointments in children's centres so that we can share this with families
Good environment patient experience in hospital and clinic e.g. parking for families, amenities in waiting area

Ideas to help improve paediatric outpatient attendance....

Appointment Reminders & Communication

Reminder texts/
phone calls- lots of
them to ensure
families don't forget.

Text reminders work
well for health
visitors as well as
families selecting
their own times for
appointments

Use text messaging
to the parent about
appointment and then
a reminder too, with a
number to call if they
have queries.

Ensure mobile
numbers are
correct

Calling parents for
them to confirm and
book in.

More information
on text message
apt, some
messages don't
say which
department the apt
is at.

Timely reminders
and more flexibility to
choose a convenient
date/time

Providing both text
and email reminders.
(Offered in other
trusts).

Patients to be
contacted prior to the
appointment to remind
them/check they are
aware of the
appointment.

Better systems for
reminders, and
easily accessible
links to cancel
appt?

Ideas to help improve paediatric outpatient attendance....

Communication & Information Sharing

Written information within clinic letters to state how families can re-arrange appointments and consequences of non-attendance (not being invited for another until parents arrange it themselves)

Copy letters to the referring person - such as the SENCo every time, so that we can remind the parent/carers when appointments are and support them. Many parents are neurodivergent - hence why their child is being referred for assessment, so they too need adjustments and help in some cases

Written information within clinic letters stating the importance of attendance relating to their condition/disability - plus the impact of not attending - consequences for their academic attainment and social/emotional wellbeing

Appointment letters in different languages

Letters to be sent out in home language

Better communication with consultants, better communication with the parents, keeping them informed what is going to happen, not just leave them for few hours with no communication

Ideas to help improve paediatric outpatient attendance....

Location & Accessibility

Have some clinics/appointments that take place where many families live

Closest hospital must be booked or Tel/video appts offered. Parents call to say it will take many unreliable buses to get to appointments and with the decline in rural bus services this will continue to effect people's ability to get to hospitals.

More community-based appointments, in places where families feel safe

Clinics to be held in more rural areas where transport networks are not great

Offering clinics in satellite centres (Skegness, Spalding, Gainsborough etc) would assist families to attend

Getting the right details and moving Community Paediatrics back into the community rather than a hospital setting

Ideas to help improve paediatric outpatient attendance....

Appointment Management & Flexibility

Do video consultations

Better facilities to cancel and rearrange appointments

A clear mixture of F2F and telephone clinics with some flexibility, timely multiple reminders, ease of changing appointments would help

Easier ways of talking to the hospital, providing direct numbers instead of ones you have to sit on endless queues to get to speak to someone

Reduce waiting times

Managing the waiting list effectively so that we are in a position to offer appointments close to receiving the referral where parents are expecting an appointment. If we leave it too long, then parents may lose interest in attending the appointment

Ideas to help improve paediatric outpatient attendance....

Staff Training & Operational Issues

Problems with new and follow-up patients being booked in wrong locations (e.g., Sleaford patient on Skegness clinic, Skegness patient on Grantham clinic). Also, face-to-face appointments changed to remote consultations and vice versa — perhaps receptionists would benefit from more training or revert to being under OPD management rather than Health Family Directorate

More staff answering the outpatient telephone line

Consultants not to be allowed to cancel a clinic at short notice to attend a study day and then to reinstate the clinic 2 weeks later

Ideas to help improve paediatric outpatient attendance....

Booking System & Double-Booking Issues

Double booking is a major problem, bookings department should have a system to identify such

Parents should have to confirm their attendance. If they don't within a certain time period they are called and then the appointment cancelled if not confirmed

GPs should also be encouraged to cancel appointment requests if patient has already been seen for the same condition in another hospital

Set up a system where you can be charged for missed appointments, as some people don't want the appointment anymore and just can't be bothered to cancel so they just leave it. Especially when the appointments line can be backed up

Additional Support

Implementing a support worker role to conduct telephone or house visits to help eradicate any potential issues with attending

Free parking for patients attending a clinic

Community Insights



Hospitals Visited

We visited Lincoln County Hospital and Pilgrim Hospital, Boston. During our visit, we displayed posters and engaged with staff members and members of the public to hear their feedback. The following slides highlight some of the key feedback they shared with us

Posters were also shared via email and displayed at the following sites

- Grantham Hospital
- Louth Hospital
- Skegness Hospital
- Gainsborough John Coupland



- A parent travelled with their child from Skegness to Pilgrim Hospital for their appointment, 1 whole day off school for an appointment, only to find that the appointment was booked for a telephone appointment. A letter had been sent to the patient, but it was not clear that it was a telephone appointment, as it stated the address of the hospital after the appointment date and time.
- The patient had attended Nottingham Hospital on four separate occasions before being referred to Pilgrim Hospital for further investigation. However, when they arrived at Pilgrim Hospital, no notes or updates had been shared between the hospitals. No blood tests had been carried out in Nottingham, nor was the patient given any documentation to pass on to the consultant. As a result, the consultant at Pilgrim Hospital was unable to discuss the case during the appointment. The consultant shared that the family expressed their disappointment as this appointment had incurred travel costs for them to attend
- A staff member working on the children's ward reception explained that many people arrive at the wrong location for their appointments because their text reminders simply state 'Paeds Department' without specifying where this is. As a result, patients often end up in different parts of the hospital and subsequently arrive late for their appointments
- Following multiple requests from families for 'proof' of appointments to share with schools, the children's ward has created a standard printed template to confirm when a child has attended the hospital. There are two versions; one for ward attenders and another for inpatients. A nurse or doctor completes the appropriate form on the day of discharge, giving families clear documentation to provide to the school as evidence of attendance

- Staff feedback that many patients have not received their letter before the appointment date
- Patients are arriving at the hospital but can't get parked, so they have to telephone while outside and then have to go down as DNA
- During our visit, the Maternity department staff shared that antenatal appointments that are held at the weekends are always well attended, 9/10 people attend these appointments
- The outpatient department receives approximately. 1800 phone calls into the outpatient department a day, sometimes only 3 staff members are answering the telephone, so they are unable to keep up with the demand

As part of our engagement work, we visited **Lincoln** and **Boston** to connect with local communities. We displayed our engagement posters and encouraged everyone to get involved. Along the way, we spoke with parents, carers and members of the public. The following slides highlight some of the key feedback they shared with us

Community Places Visited



- Lincoln City Community Hub
- Bridge Central
- Lincoln Central Children's Centre
- Lincoln
- Abbey Medical Practice
- Lincoln Mosque
- Lincoln College
- Children 1st Nursery
- Community Larder – Monks Road
- Lincoln Abbey Children's Centre
- St Swithin's Community Centre
- Abbey Access Training Centre
- Coop Pharmacy – Monks Road
- Toy Library
- Salvation Army
- Eastern European Supermarket
- Lincoln CDC
- Dunelm
- Bounce
- Co-op (Carlton Centre)
- Costa Coffee
- The Carlton Day Nursery
- St Giles Nursery
- Glebe Park Surgery
- St Giles School
- Children's First Nursery St Giles
- St Giles Methodist church
- Lincoln Castle School
- Yarborough Leisure Centre
- Youth Matters
- The ermine exchange well-being hub
- Children's Centre Ermine
- Princess Royal Sports
- Arena
- Boston Centenary Church
- Boston Library
- Boston Lithuanian School
- 3 Eastern European Supermarkets
- Boots
- Boston PCN
- Swineshead Medical Group
- Parkside Medical Practice



Conversation with an individual who runs a weekly support group for families with adopted children. The individual is an adoptive parent herself with two children who both require regular hospital appointments.

They shared several experiences highlighting the challenges families face in accessing and attending healthcare appointments:

Was Not Brought (WNB) incident:

While on holiday, they received notification of a hospital appointment for one of their children. They phoned the hospital to cancel, as they were unable to attend, but the call was not logged correctly. As a result, the appointment was recorded as WNB. They said this made them feel terrible, knowing how important appointments are and how difficult it can be to secure new ones.

Supporting another parent:

The individual has accompanied a friend to an outpatient appointment for their friend's son. The friend asked them to stay with the child while they spoke privately with the doctor. The individual found this challenging as there was no designated space for them to take the child. The child has a neurodevelopmental condition and struggles with noise; for example, hearing a baby or child cry can trigger distress and cause him to lash out.

Own child's experience:

The individual's child attends the eye clinic due to a squint. The waiting area is shared by people of all ages, which can be overwhelming. Her child, who has ADHD, struggles to cope in this environment.

Another family's experience:

The individual supports a mother with two children who both need hospital appointments in Nottingham. Appointment letters were received for different days, but both were scheduled at 4 pm, meaning the children had to miss two separate school days to attend.

It was also noted that adoptive families sometimes do not receive hospital appointment letters for the children in their care, causing delays and missed appointments.

Lincoln Central Children's Centre

During a visit to Lincoln Central Children's Centre, staff who facilitate groups and engage with families shared information about a Bulgarian family experiencing difficulties accessing health information.

The family are unable to read English and struggles to access their NHS App. They do not know or remember their login details and are unable to understand staff instructions on how to reset their password. As a result, they cannot log into the NHS App or read digital correspondence sent via the platform.

Additionally, the family recently received a letter regarding their child, which they have been unable to read due to the language barrier. Translation support has been provided through PAB Languages; however, this assistance is only available when the family attend the children's Centre in person.

Feedback from staff in Education Departments at Lincolnshire County Council

- We held a Teams meeting with the Head Teacher at Hawthorn Tree School in Boston. The school has 366 pupils on roll, including 18 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and 66 on the SEN register. Attendance is a significant challenge, and over 50% of pupils speak English as an Additional Language (EAL). Hospital appointments are authorised when a letter is provided. The Head Teacher highlighted that, because half of the pupils are EAL, the school must consider whether families can access communication via the school app. Previous experience shows that translated letters are not always accurate, with spelling errors or altered meanings. As a result, many families prefer to receive letters in English and translate them themselves.
- It was also shared that when schools have concerns about a child, they will complete an Early Help assessment, which then triggers a TAC (team around the child)/TAF (team around the family) meeting. This is a joint MDT approach with Education and Health & Social Care. They are aimed at getting parents' support to understand the importance of the needs of a child. On some occasions, once support is in place, a child has been discharged too soon, and things can then spiral again for families.
- Reception staff from a school in Lincoln shared that hospital appointments are a contributing factors to the low attendance figures within the school. The school do authorise hospital appointments as long as evidence of the appointment is provided. It was shared that getting the evidence can sometimes be challenge as not everyone receives a letter or text