

Proposed Closure of the Portland Branch Site at Newland Health Centre

Public Consultation Results

Undertaken 11 March – 5 May 2025



Executive Summary

Purpose of this report

This report outlines the results of the consultation exercise on the Proposed Closure of the Portland Branch Site at Newland Health Centre and identifies any emerging issues for consideration by NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board and Heart of Lincoln Medical Group.

Response Rate

Despite direct communications to affected patients and two text message reminders, the survey received a low response rate, with 48 responses. Although a low response, a key strength of the data is the consistency of recurring themes, which can improve services and support decision-making.

Respondent profiles

- The majority of respondents were female, accounting for 34 out of 41 participants who answered this question. Of the 31 individuals who provided their age, the largest group was aged 60–69 (11 respondents), closely followed by those aged 70–79 (8 respondents). In addition, 22 out of 33 respondents who answered the question reported that a health condition or disability limited their daily activities, either a little (13) or a lot (9).

Summary of Results

- **Location of Appointments:** The majority of respondents (75%, 36/48) used the other HLMG sites when accessing face to face appointments with only 12/48 (25%) of respondents indicating they used this site the most frequently.
- **Usage:** Just under half of respondents (44%, 21/48) had visited the Portland Branch Site at Newland in the last month, with over a third (35%,17/48) not having used it in the past 3 months or ever.
- **Usage of the 12 patients who usually use the site:** Of the 12 patients who indicated they usually use the Portland Branch site at Newland, just over half (58%,7/12) visited in the last month, however, the small number of total users suggests that the site is not heavily utilised overall.
- **Method of transport:** The majority of the 48 respondents accessed face-to-face appointments on foot (44%) or by car (38%) (N=48).
- **Visit Frequency:** Nearly half of respondents (48%,23/48) visited the Portland Branch Site at Newland only once or twice in the past year, while 19% (9/48) didn't visit at all. Very few (just 4%, 2/48) visited more than 7 times, indicating low overall usage.
- **Visit Frequency of the 12 patients who usually use the site:** Half (50%,6/12) visited 1–2 times, while just over a third (33%,4/12) visited 3–6 times, and only one person visited more frequently or not at all, indicating generally low and infrequent usage.
- **Patient Plans if Branch Site Closes:** 64% (30/47) of respondents would travel to one of the other HLMG sites if the branch site closes, 15%(7/47) would register elsewhere and 21% (10/47) were unsure.
- **Impact:** When asked “How would the closure of the Portland Branch Site at Newland Health Centre impact you?” Most respondents (64%, 28/44) felt the branch closure would have a negative impact, while 29% (13/44) reported no impact and 7% (3/44) said it would have a positive impact on them. 2 of the 3 respondents who said it would impact them positively then expressed concerns of negative impacts, likewise 2 respondents who indicated no impacts described negative reasons for their answer. The key reasoning for how the proposal would impact was given by respondents as follows:
 - **Positive Impact** A respondent felt that non-medical staff at the branch lacked professionalism & clarity in roles, & the environment is poorly managed.
 - **Negative Impact** Concerns over reduced accessibility and convenience due to the site being close to home, easier for people that don't drive, have mobility and affordability issues for transport. There was also a fear that the closure would reduce access to appointments generally, with concerns about fewer face-to-face and GP appointments, an already oversubscribed practice, and increased A&E use.
- **No impact** reasoning included that respondents already used other sites

Background Information

The Proposal

The Heart of Lincoln Heart Medical Group (HLMG) has submitted a proposal to NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board, requesting the closure of their Portland Branch site located on the first floor of Newland Health Centre, 34 Newland, Lincoln LN1 1XP. This request was reviewed during the ICB Business Management Group meeting on Wednesday, 5 March 2025. The group approved the recommendation to allow GP Partners to proceed to 'Stage 3 – Involvement of Patients and Key Stakeholders,' as outlined in the Branch Closure Guidance. Following this decision, the practice and the ICB launched a consultation exercise that ran from 11 March to 5 May 2025. During this time, patients registered at the practice were invited to share their views before a final decision is made by the ICB.

Key reasons for the proposed change

- Limited services available at the Portland Branch Site create inequalities compared to other practices.
- Nearby sites offer a wider range of services, better facilities, and improved accessibility.
- Most HLMG patients already use alternative sites for their appointments.
- Rising service and utility costs have made the site financially unsustainable.

Alternative Arrangements

Patients currently registered at HLMG who use services at the Portland Branch Site will continue to have access to care at nearby locations, including Portland Medical Practice and the University of Lincoln Health Services, both within half a mile, and Newark Road Surgery, approximately 3 miles away. Those affected by the proposed closure will still be able to access GP services at these alternative sites, all of which are well connected by public transport. Additional support will be provided for patients with accessibility concerns.

Methodology and Promotion

Methodology

The practice identified 463 patients registered at the Newland Site and contacted them directly to participate in the consultation. Of these, 382 received a text message and 81 were sent a letter inviting them to take part. The letter and survey included a translated message advising people to contact the practice if they required translation or communications in an alternative format. Respondents were also provided with a list of Frequently Asked Questions to help inform their responses. Other patients registered at the HLMG were encouraged to take part via a wider promotional campaign. Participants were invited to share their views via an online survey, with alternative options to complete paper copies, respond by telephone, or attend one of three consultation events.

The practice reviewed their patient list to ensure that all patients with additional needs were contacted according to the preferences recorded in their health records. As a result, some patients with learning disabilities were contacted by phone to inform them about the consultation in addition to the patient letter.

Promotion

The ICB Communications and Engagement Team created a poster featuring a QR code linking to the online survey and additional information. This was displayed across all practice sites, and the Patient Participation Group (PPG) was encouraged to help share it within the community. To maximise reach, the consultation was promoted through various digital channels, including the ICB website, social media platforms, and the practice's Facebook page and via Healthwatch Lincolnshire. It was also featured as a Contributor item in the ICB's fortnightly Engagement Bulletin newsletter. The practice further supported the promotion by displaying a prominent banner and consultation details across all of its websites, providing clear instructions on how to take part. Additionally, key stakeholders were informed of the consultation to help spread awareness more widely.

Section 1

**Feedback on the Proposal
to close Portland Branch
Site at Newland**



Consultation Events

The practice hosted three drop-in consultation events to gather additional feedback. Two sessions were held at the Newland Site on Monday, 17 March 2025 (6:30–8:30 pm) and Tuesday, 18 March 2025 (12:00–2:00 pm). A third event took place on Saturday, 3 May 2025 (10:00 am–12:00 pm) at Portland Medical Practice, 60 Portland Street, LN5 7LB. The gap between the March and May events was due to the pre-election period, during which the practice was advised to avoid holding public events. Participants were able to drop in at any time during these sessions. Despite direct communication with patients, attendance was low. Only two patients attended the first event, with no attendees at the subsequent two sessions. The events were supported by the practice management team, representatives from the ICB and the PPG.

Consultation Event Feedback

Two long-standing patients attended the first event and shared their concerns about the proposed changes at the practice. While they expressed overall satisfaction with the care they currently receive, they voiced worries that these changes might reduce access to services, particularly around appointment availability, which they already find challenging at times.

The patients were also fearful of change, having been registered at the practice for many years. Practice staff reassured them that if the proposal is approved, they would still be able to access services at the practice's other sites. Additionally, patients would have the choice to register at Brayford Medical Practice, located in the same building.

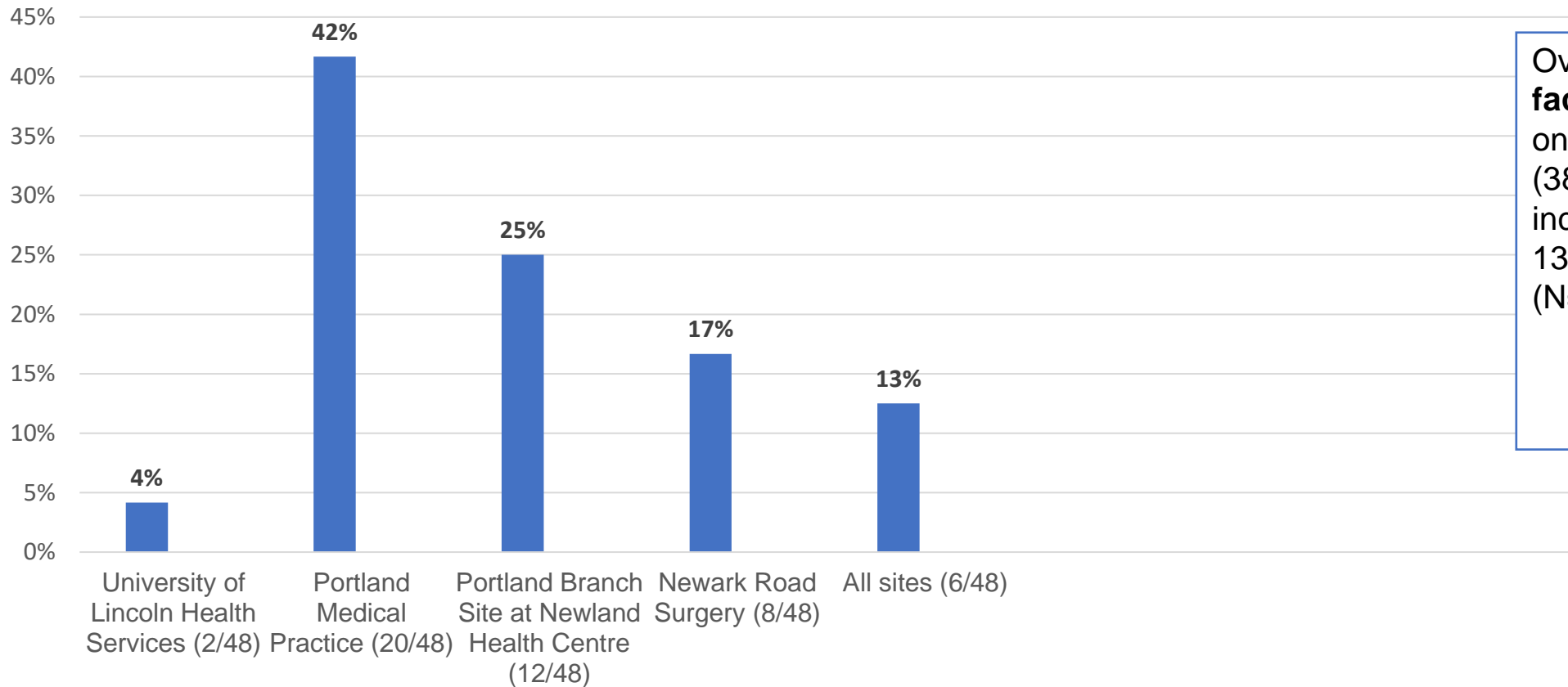
Practice staff took the opportunity to explain that the site in question was no longer financially viable and that the proposed changes aim to improve access to services in the long term, ensuring the practice can continue to meet patient needs more effectively and sustainably.

The patients also raised a concern that the closure of the site would impact the pharmacy within the building. The practice agreed to write to the pharmacy to communicate information about the consultation and to invite them to share their views if they have any concerns.



Location of appointments: Overall, the majority of respondents (75%) used the other HLMG sites

Graph to show where respondents normally go for face to face appointments?

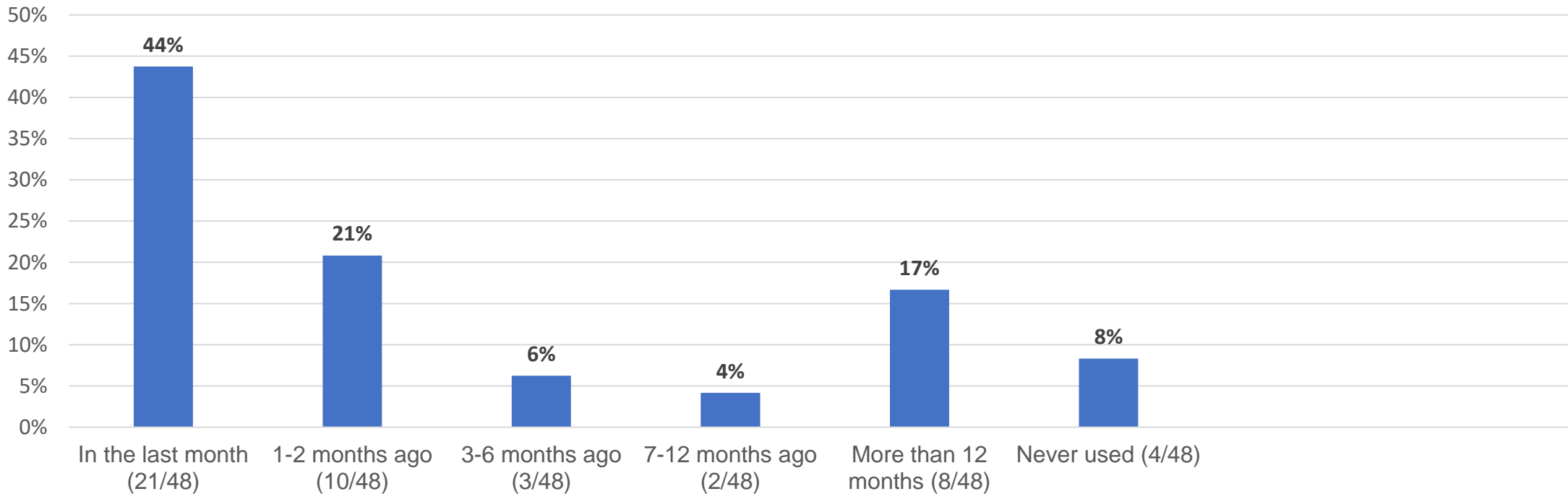


Overall, the majority **access face-to-face appointments** on foot (44%) or by car (38%) Other methods include: Public transport: 13% Taxi: 5% Cycling: 2% (N=48)

Question - Where do you normally go for face to face appointments? (tick one only) (N = 48 responses)

Usage: Just under half of respondents (44%) visited the Portland Branch Site at Newland in the last month, with over a third (35%) not having used it in the past 3 months or ever

Last Visit to the Portland Branch Site at Newland

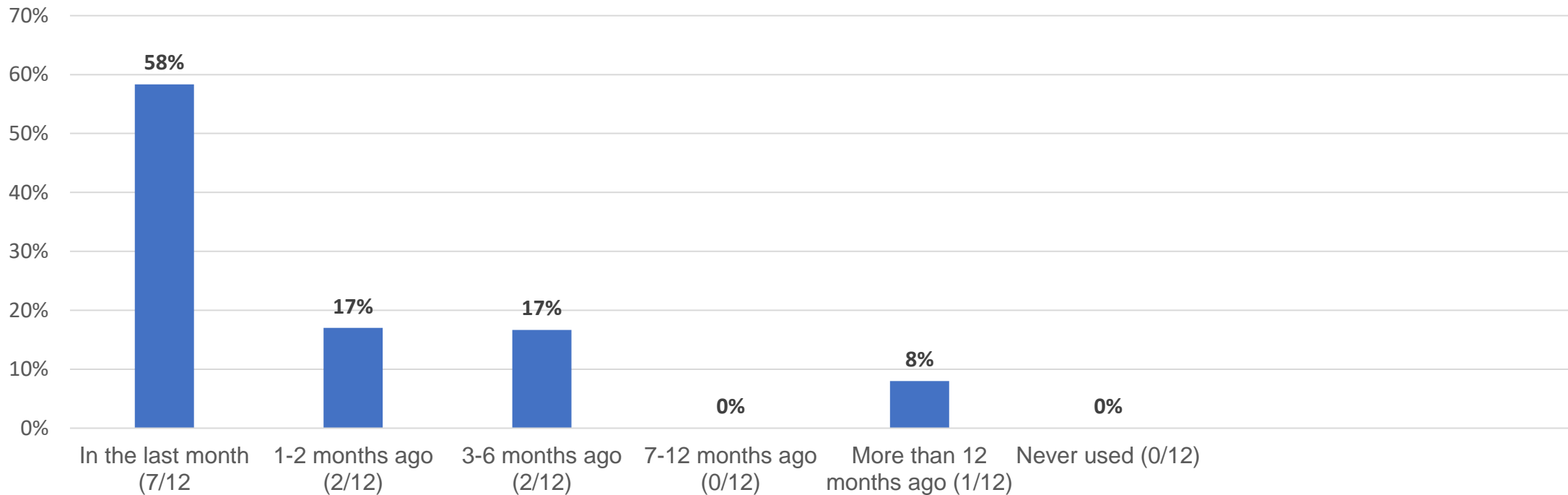


Question - When did you last visit the Portland Branch Site at Newland Health Centre? (tick one only) (N = 48 responses)

Usage of the 12 patients who usually use the site:

Of the 12 patients who indicated they usually use the Portland Branch site at Newland, just over half (58%,7/12) visited in the last month. However, the small number of total users suggests that the site is not heavily utilised overall.

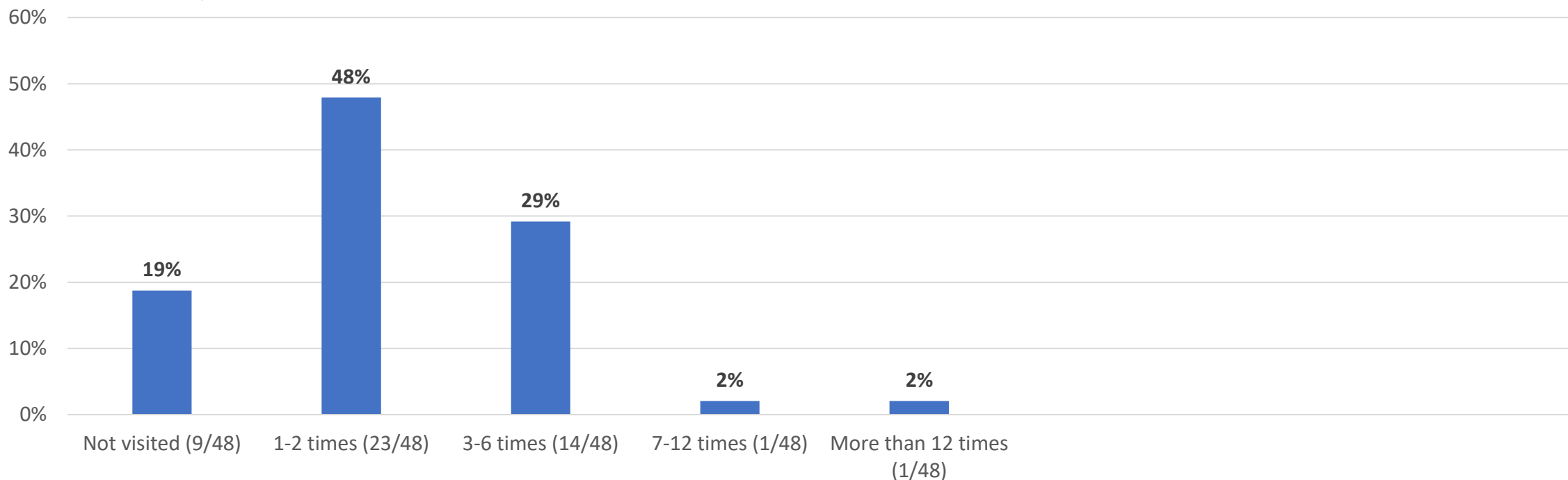
Last Visit to the Portland Branch Site at Newland by those who usually use this site



Question - When did you last visit the Portland Branch Site at Newland Health Centre? (tick one only) (N = 12 filtered responses of those who stated they usually used the Portland Branch site at Newland)

Visit Frequency: Nearly half of respondents (48%) visited the Portland Branch Site at Newland only once or twice in the past year, while 19% didn't visit at all. Very few (just 4%) visited more than 7 times, indicating low overall usage

Frequency of Visits

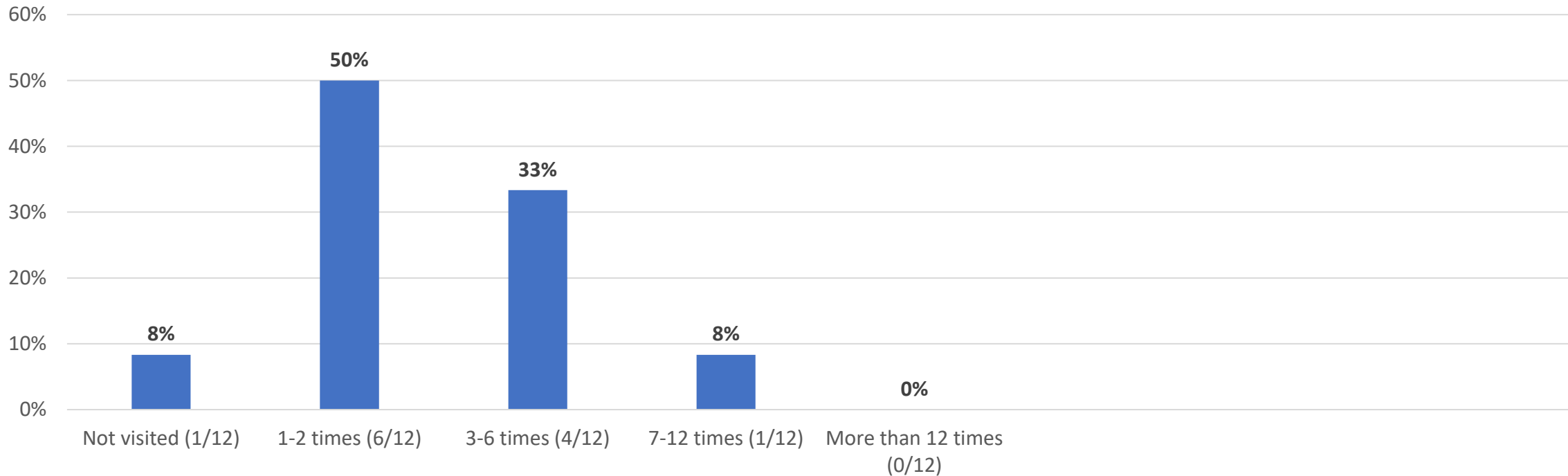


Question - Thinking about the last 12 months, how often have you visited the Portland Branch Site at Newland Health Centre? (tick one only) (N = 48 responses)

Visit Frequency of the 12 Patients who usually use the site:

Of the 12 patients who indicated they usually use the Portland Branch site at Newland, half of the 12 respondents (50%,6/12) visited the Portland Branch site 1–2 times, while just over a third (33%,4/12) visited 3–6 times, and only one person visited more frequently or not at all, indicating generally low and infrequent usage

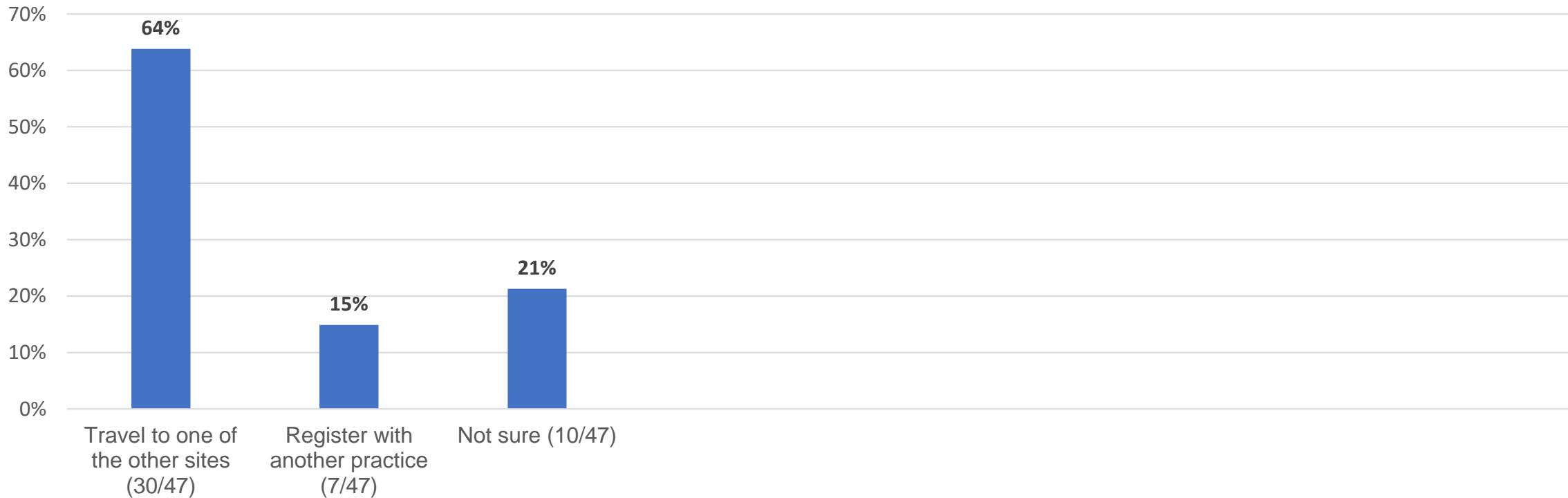
Frequency of Visits Newland by those who usually use this site



Question - Thinking about the last 12 months, how often have you visited the Portland Branch Site at Newland Health Centre? (tick one only) (N = 12 filtered responses of those who stated they usually used the Portland Branch site at Newland)

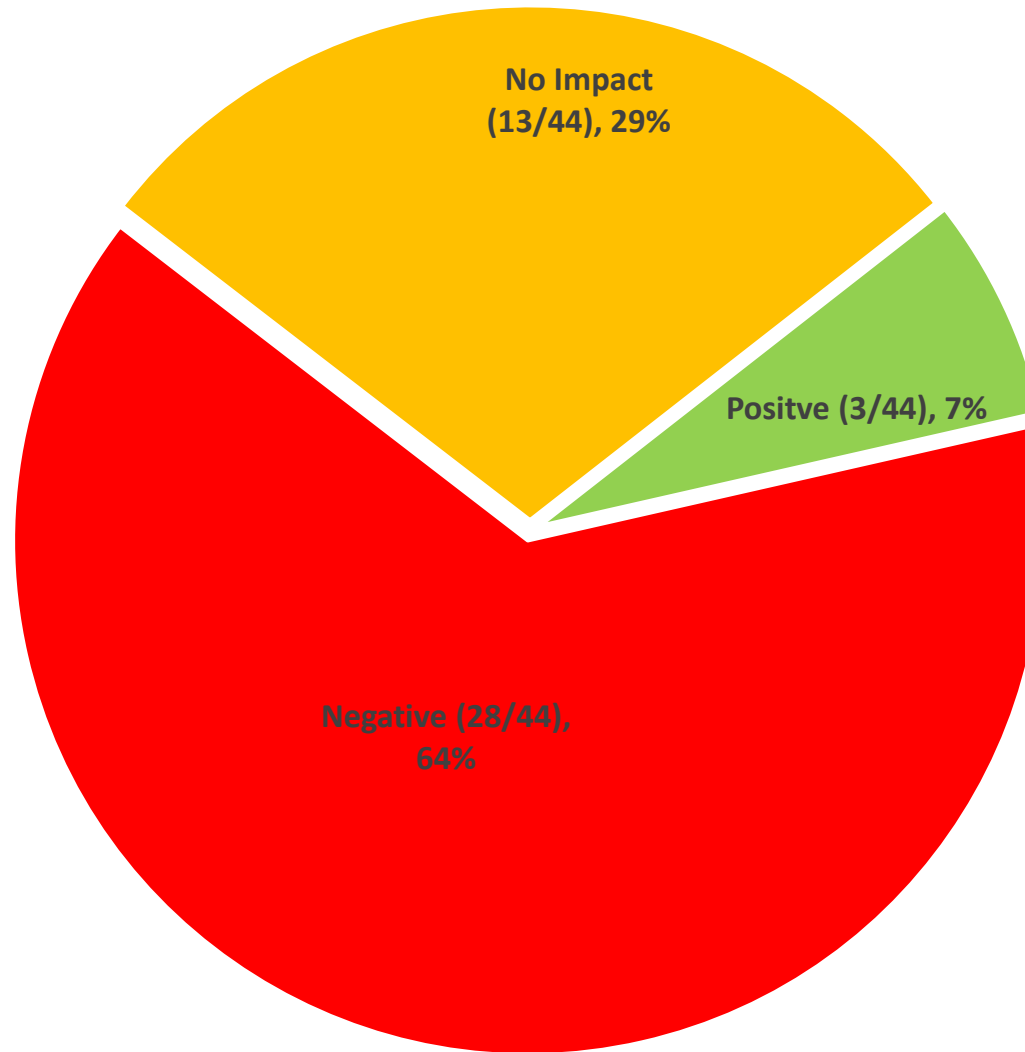
Patient Plans if Branch Site Closes: 64% of respondents would travel to one of the other HLMG sites if the branch site closes, 15% would register elsewhere and 21% were unsure

Patient Preferences for Accessing GP Services if Portland Branch Site at Newland Closes



Question - In the event of the Portland Branch Site at Newland Health Centre closing, how do you think you would access GP services? (tick one only)
(N = 47 responses)

Impact: Most respondents (64%) felt the branch closure would have a **negative** impact, while 29% reported **no impact** and 7% said it would have a **positive** impact



Question How would the closure of the Portland Branch Site at Newland Health Centre impact you? (N = 44 responses)

Proposal Impact: Key reasons for how the proposal would impact (Summary of comments)

Please tell us the reason for your answer N= 35 Responses

Negative Impact (25 responses)

The top mentioned concerns related to:

Reduced Accessibility and Convenience (28 mentions) including:

- Newland close to home/in walking distance (13 mentions)
- Doesn't drive/ doesn't have a car (2 mentions)
- Newland closer to home - getting to another site would require 2 buses (1)
- Closer to my workplace (1 mention)
- Newland is easier for elderly to get to (1 mention)
- Newland is easier for people with mobility issues (3 mentions)
- Doesn't drive/ doesn't have a car (2 mentions)
- Newland is easier for elderly to get to (1 mention)
- Can't afford regular public transport & is pregnant (1 mention)
- Newland is easier for people with mobility issues as is closer to home (3 mentions)

Closure would reduce access to appointments (4 mentions) including:

- Further reduce access to appointments face to face appointments (1)
- Further reduce access to GP appointments (1)
- Practice is oversubscribed (1)
- Thinks it will cause more people to use A&E (1)

Other (8 mentions)

Prefer Newland as its quiet and calmer (particularly for people who suffer with anxiety or autism- (1) - (2 mentions)

Practice not routinely offered appointments at Newland otherwise would have used it more and no/ GPs work there (1) (3 mentions)

Been at the practice over 40 years and since its expanded has reduced confidence in it (1 mention)

Has only just joined, has communication problems so would affect them a lot (1)

Concerned that the consultation outcome decision has already been made (1)

Positive Impact (3 responses)

- A respondent felt that non-medical staff at the branch lacked professionalism & clarity in roles, & the environment is poorly managed.

2 respondents indicated a positive impact but then expressed **concerns** about:

- The Newland location being more accessible for those with mobility issues.
- A respondent felt larger practices lose the personal touch, stressing the need for inclusive communication, traditional contact methods, and more respectful phone interactions to better support vulnerable patients

No Impact (7 responses)

2 respondents indicated no impact but then expressed **concerns** about a closure due to:

- The convenience of the Newland location being very close to home
- The patient wasn't routinely offered appointments at Newland and was moved to Portland Street without choice. Since Dr. Caruana retired, Newland appears to be winding down. While the patient can now drive to Portland Street, they are concerned about elderly patients who can't. They also question why Newland lacks the same services as other HLMG sites.

5 respondents indicated that the proposal would have no impact as follows:

- *"The Portland St branch is nearer to me than Newland."*
- *"Last visited Newland Clinic 33 years ago"*
- *"I have used all other sites and there is a varied choice well within my reach of walking distance, taxi and bus."*
- *"Only use Portland Street"*
- *"I wouldn't ever go here due to location and parking - have always used the other sites"*

If the Portland Branch Site at Newland Health Centre was to close, how could we make things easier for you?

31 respondents left applicable additional comments which are summarised in the following table



Lincolnshire
Integrated Care Board

Theme	Number of mentions
Improve overall access (16 mentions) including:	
➤ Make the other sites more accessible (increased appointment availability, including pre-bookable, weekend slots & face-to-face options)	8
➤ Suggestions to increase access & appointment slots at the other HLMG sites	5
➤ Improve phone access	1
➤ Match the amount of lot appointments from Newland at other sites	1
➤ Car parking facility at the Uni branch	1
Choice (3 mentions)	
➤ Practice to give an option of which site patients can attend	3
Nothing could make is easier (3 mentions)	
Newland is the preferred site	3
Keep it open/ open new city centre site (5 mentions)	
➤ Direct appeals to retain the Newland site due to convenience, proximity and community reliance	2
➤ Suggestion to open another site in the town centre	3
Provide Home Visits -, especially for patients with disabilities or special needs (2 mentions)	2
Provide transport for patients get to the other sites (1 mention)	1
Not sure (2 mentions)	2

Is there anything else you would like us to know or consider?

25 respondents left applicable additional comments which are summarised in the following table

Theme	Number of mentions
Concerns relating to Access to appointments (5 mentions)	
Access- Too high demand to close the practice	2
Access- Would like more appointments across HLMG if site closes	1
Access- Would like more face-to-face appointments again	1
Access- Would like weekend appointments	1
Concerns relating to Access to location, parking and transport and concerns for the elderly (10 mentions)	
Access- Concerned about parking issues at the University site	1
Access- Newland is more accessible to people living in the West End of Lincoln	1
Access- Newland Location better as has a pharmacy	2
Access- Concerned that people might not have transport	1
Access- Newland is easier as its in the town centre	1
Access- Wants Newland to be kept open as no bus service	1
Access- Will have a negative impact on the elderly	2
Access- Will have a negative impact on those that cant travel to the other sites	1
Other Negative Feedback (6)	
Feel let down- long standing Newland pt - told nothing would change after Portland merger - not been offered anything at Newland	1
More thought needs to be given to the patient experience	1
Would be a poorer experience for anxious, neurodiverse and unwell people in the waiting rooms	1
Review the roles and effectiveness of non-medical staff	1
Preference - Prefers Newland nice staff and calmer	2
Newland site has been slowly wound down over time (4 mentions)	1
Newland site has been slowly wound down and not proactively offered	1
Newland site has been slowly wound down - site not offered for nurse appointments	1
No GP appointments have been available at Newland which might account for less demand	1
Positive Feedback Support for closure if practice not viable (2 mentions)	
Positive Feedback - Always had a good service at Portland	1

Mitigations

The practice have advised the following mitigation for the top themes of patient feedback received

Theme	Mitigation
Concerns about appointments access	<p>The newly implemented triage platform (implemented on 24 April) is showing early signs of success with more patients using the system compared to online previously. Additionally, Patients who don't read or speak English may make requests in their own language. The system has allowed clinical teams to clinically assess all patient requests. This ensures that each request is evaluated on the same day by a group of clinicians, guaranteeing that the appropriate action or appointment is provided based on clinical necessity rather than on a first-come, first-served basis. Comparative snapshot data from one week prior to the implementation of the new system to one week following it indicates a 56% reduction in inbound calls between 8-9 am and more online requesting being submitted. Furthermore, over 99.5% of patient requests are resolved and acted upon on the day they are submitted. There have also been several days where the system appointments was not utilised, demonstrating the effectiveness of clinical triage, for example there were 700+ requests last week and only 363 appointments- and not every appointment was used.</p> <p>Another benefit to appropriate appointments is that people are being appropriately sign posted to other resources such as Pharmacy First meaning that appointments are available that otherwise may have been used inappropriately, which is demonstrated in the on the day resolution stats and the appointments used. It means that patients get the treatment they need without necessarily needing to come into the surgery.</p>
Concerns due to the town centre location and for those that will struggle to travel to the other sites	<p>The branch site at Newland is located on the first floor of Newland Health Centre. For those patients with additional accessibility requirements there is a lift but there are several heavy manual doors to navigate into the practice waiting room, these can cause these patients difficulties. All other HLMG sites are on the ground floor with electric doors, making accessibility easier for those patients. Any patient who may be in a vulnerable or frail cohort and may struggle to travel to one of the HLMG other sites, has the option to move to Brayford Medical Practice which is located on the ground floor of the same building with electric door access - offering better accessibility and, in a location, they are familiar with.</p>

Section 2

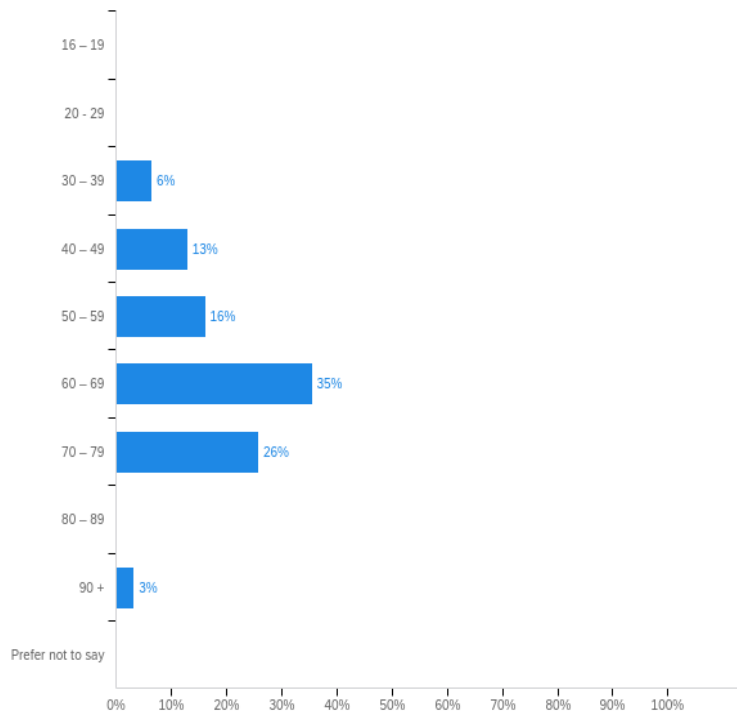
Equalities Monitoring



Respondent Demographics

Gender	%	Count
Male	10%	4
Female	83%	34
Intersex	0%	0
Non-binary	0%	0
Prefer not to say	7%	3
Prefer to self-identify (please state)	0%	0
Total	100%	41

Age: What age group do you belong to? (31 responses)



Ethnicity	%	Count
Asian or Asian British: Indian	0%	0
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	0%	0
Asian or Asian British: Chinese	0%	0
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	0%	0
Any other Asian background (please state)	2%	1
Black or Black British: Caribbean	0%	0
Black or Black British: African	0%	0
Any other Black background (please state)	0%	0
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	0%	0
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	0%	0
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	0%	0
Any of mixed or multiple ethnic background (please state)	0%	0
White: Welsh / English / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	90%	38
White: Irish	0%	0
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0%	0
Any other White background (please state)	2%	1
Other ethnic group: Arab	0%	0
Any other (please state)	0%	0
Prefer not to say	5%	2
White Roma	0%	0
Total	100%	42

Respondent Demographics

Gender reassignment	%	Count
Yes	0%	0
No	100%	15
Prefer not to say	0%	2
Total	100%	15

Pregnancy and maternity: Pregnant or given birth in the last 26 weeks?	%	Count
Yes	3%	1
No	97%	28
Prefer not to say	0%	0
Total	100%	29

Main language	%	Count
Bulgarian	0%	0
English	97%	39
Hungarian	0%	0
Latvian	0%	0
Lithuanian	0%	0
Polish	0%	0
Portuguese	0%	0
Romanian	0%	0
Spanish	0%	0
Other (please specify)	3%	1
Russian	0%	0
Total	100%	40

Sexual orientation	%	Count
Heterosexual	67%	22
Gay	3%	1
Lesbian	0%	0
Bisexual	9%	3
Prefer not to say	12%	4
Prefer to self-identify	9%	3
Total	100%	33

Religion and/or belief:	%	Count
No religion	22%	8
Atheist	6%	2
Buddhist	0%	0
Christian	50%	18
Hindu	0%	0
Any other religion (please specify)	8%	3
Jain	0%	0
Jewish	0%	0
Muslim	0%	0
Sikh	0%	0
Prefer not to say	14%	5
Total	100%	36

Any other religion (please specify) - Text
Vietnamese

Respondent Demographics

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	39%	13
Yes, the health problem/disability limits me a lot	27%	9
No	18%	6
Prefer not to say	15%	5
Total	100%	33

Do you have any specific needs or requirements	%	Count
No	71%	24
Yes (please state)	29%	10
Total	100%	34

Specific needs or requirements (8 comments)

1. To not have to ring up or talk in public..... I ring when my sons with disabilities or I need urgent help. Going to Newland is often better and faster. Access to lift or lower level appointment rooms
2. Can't climb stairs and have trouble opening wooden doors. Other stuff but they don't really relate to seeing a nurse for an appt
3. Access to suitable toilets
4. Stairs can be an issue
5. Need to ensure I carry clotting medication along with dressings and plasters and bleeding disorder card.
6. For my son a quiet environment
7. I have steroid injections in my hip and knees at Newland

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	31%	13
Sensory impairment	0%	0
Mental health condition	21%	9
Learning Disability/Difficulty	9%	4
Long-standing illness	24%	10
Other (please state)	14%	6
Total	100%	42

Other (please state) -

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)	27%	4
Primary carer of disabled child/children	13%	2
Primary carer of disabled adult (18 and over)	27%	4
Primary carer of older person	13%	2
Secondary carer (another person carries out the main caring role)	20%	3
Total	100%	15

Amount of time spent in relations to caring duties

	%	Count
Yes, 1-19 hours a week	50%	4
Yes, 20-49 hours a week	12.5%	1
Yes, 50 or more hours a week	12.5%	1
Prefer not to say	25%	2
Total	100%	8

Permanent or temporary resident

	%	Count
Permanent (someone who lives permanently at their main home address)	100%	53
Temporary (someone who lives temporarily away from their main home address)	0%	0
Total	100%	53

Employment Status

	%	Count
Employed full time	20%	7
Employed part time	11%	4
Homemaker	0%	0
Not employed and looking for work	0%	0
Not employed and not looking for work	14%	5
Retired	31%	11
Self employed	9%	3
Student	0%	0
Prefer not to say	0%	0
Other (please specify)	14%	5
Total	100%	35

Health Inequalities Information: Please select if you have experience of any of the following:- (please provide any further information in the boxes below)

	%	Count
Currently working in the farming/agricultural industry	0%	0
Have worked in the farming/agricultural industry	0%	0
Currently homeless	25%	1
Experience of being homeless	50%	2
Currently serving in either the UK's regular or reserved armed forces	0%	0
Have served in the UK's regular or reserved armed forces	25%	1
I am a refugee, immigrant or asylum seeker	0%	0
Previous experience of being a refugee, immigrant or asylum seeker	0%	0
Total	100%	4