

**‘Making the Right Choices  
for your Healthcare Needs’**

**Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2018  
The Totally Wicked Stadium, St Helens**

Report produced by the  
Healthwatch St Helens Support Team



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## Background

Over the previous year, Healthwatch St Helens have done a lot of work around the choices that people make when they need treatment or advice for a health need.

In our 'Where would you choose?' questionnaire we found that most people choose an appropriate service to meet their need. However when we visited A&E, many of the people we spoke to could have been treated more quickly and more appropriately elsewhere.

We concluded that, when faced with a choice of which service to attend, people react differently when the question is hypothetical to when their illness or injury is real.

We decided to hold our event, 'Making the Right Choices for your Healthcare Needs', so that local people could be fully informed about which services are available them, what those services can offer and when it's appropriate to use them.

## The Listening Event

Over 100 people attended the listening event, with 16 organisations holding information stands in the market place and presentations delivered by healthcare professionals.

We began by giving a brief overview of why we were holding the event. We followed this by providing attendees with a list of scenarios and asking them to state where they would seek treatment in a range of situations.

(The scenarios can be found in Appendix A.)

The presentations focused on:

- A&E
- GP Services/primary care
- Northwest Ambulance Service
- Pharmacies and medication
- Rota GP out-of-hours service
- St Helens Walk-in Centre



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Due to illness, the A&E representative was unable to give his presentation so our Manager, Jayne Parkinson-Loftus gave a very brief overview of what kind of things people should attend A&E for. We intended to play a video about our local A&E department at Whiston Hospital, however technical issues made this impossible. The video can be viewed by visiting: <https://tinyurl.com/y9dvtwgh>.

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, the local GP who had kindly agreed to give a presentation was unable to attend. We are very grateful to Paul Steele, (Engagement, Involvement & Communication Lead for St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group) for stepping in with less than 24 hours' notice to speak about primary care.

At the end of the event we asked attendees to think about how they responded to the scenarios at the beginning. The answers given indicate that the presentations had changed some people's minds about where they would seek treatment. 58% of people said they were *very confident* that they would make different choices in the future, 40% of people being *confident* that they would. (Results can be found in Appendix D.)

## Comments

- GP practices - people are not aware of their skills and what their remit is.
- GP practices - people are not turning up for their appointment. At our local surgery there were 103 people who did not attend last month and the figures for DNA in April was 150. They get 2 text reminders in that week and they still don't turn up. Why - and what is the answer?
- Communication between GPs and patients need addressing.
- Was sent a message by landline that an ambulance was coming to pick me up as I had had an MRI scan for bowel cancer at Aintree Hospital but one did not turn up. I got another message and panicked as I thought my condition was serious. No ambulance came and when I enquired I was told it was a computer error.
- I want to say that I think you are marvellous (Paramedics). I had stomach pains and they sent a paramedic to assist me in Billinge. They were marvellous.
- Ambulance service was totally, totally brilliant.
- My Grandson needed medication on a Sunday but couldn't find a pharmacy open on a Sunday at 8pm.



## Questions and Answers

- Q. If a resident falls in a care home, does the paramedic still go to the home if the care assistant isn't trained to deal with a fall?  
A. Persons who fall in a care home setting would be triaged over the telephone using, firstly the 999 system. They may then be transferred over to the Urgent Care Desk if no injuries or minor injuries were found. The Urgent Care Paramedics would then undertake further clinical triage to determine whether an NWS response was appropriate.
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If it is determined that the person falling has no injuries and is not medically unwell, we would ask the care staff to consider assisting the person from the floor. If the staff were unable to do this, then we would send a response. But given that the medical priority for such patients is low, the delay to our resource arriving at scene may be prolonged.

In some areas, we have access to 'lifting services', which are local council or private providers who provide that very bespoke service. I understand that St Helens Council do operate a lifting service to subscribers to their home alert pendant service, but we do not currently have direct access to this team.

Within St Helens, NWAS in conjunction with St Helens CCG and St Helens Council operates a hospital avoidance car, with a Paramedic and an Occupational Therapist available, Monday to Friday. This resource can be sent to deal with uncomplicated falls and provides direct referral to the OT at scene who can prescribe mobility aids to prevent recurrence.

- Q. We have talked a lot about physical health - do paramedics come out if there is a mental health issue leading to a crisis?
  - A. Persons suffering an acute mental health crisis accounts form a good deal of the 999 workload encountered by NWAS across the North West and St Helens is no exception. We regularly attend such patients and have access to North West Boroughs mental health specialists for direct referral of appropriate patients.
  
- Q. Can you have an appointment telephone conversation with a GP instead of an appointment visit?
  - A. Yes. Every GP works differently but in St Helens most GPs are likely to offer this.



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## Special Guest Appearance

We closed the event with a guest appearance from Saints Rugby League player, Louie McCarthy-Scarsbrook, who is sponsored by Healthwatch St Helens for the 2018 season.

Louie is very supportive of what the event was aiming to achieve, in encouraging people to use services appropriately so that emergency services are there when people really need them.

Our attendees were excited to have their picture taken with Louie and he presented the raffle prize of two Saints tickets to the lucky winner.



## General Conclusion

From the feedback we received on the day and since the event, we believe that the people who attended now have greater awareness of where they can get the most efficient and appropriate treatment. Certainly, the results of the scenarios activity that we did at the beginning and end of the day indicates that people feel more confident to make better choices in the future.

We will continue to support the Clinical Commissioning Group in getting the message across about using the right service at the right time and, in turn, helping local people to get the best and most efficient treatment for their healthcare needs.

**Healthwatch St Helens Support Team would like to thank everyone who came along to the event, and for your contribution to making the event a success.**

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## Appendix A

### Making the Right Choices for your Healthcare Needs

Please take a few minutes to look at the questions below and think about which services you would choose. Please circle your choice.

- If you woke up with a sore throat and ear ache.....where would you choose?
    - a) GP
    - b) Pharmacy
    - c) Walk-In Centre
    - d) Not sure
  
  - If you tripped and hurt your ankle and found it painful to walk....where would you choose?
    - a) GP
    - b) A&E
    - c) Walk-In Centre
    - d) Not sure
  
  - If you notice a mole on your arm has changed shape and you are concerned about it...where would you choose?
    - a) GP
    - b) A&E
    - c) Walk-In Centre
    - d) Not sure
  
  - If you have chest pains and feel faint and unwell....where would you choose?
    - a) GP
    - b) A&E
    - c) Walk-In Centre
    - d) Not sure
  
  - If you have stomach pains, sickness and diarrhoea...where would you choose?
    - a) GP
    - b) Pharmacy
    - c) Walk-In Centre
    - d) Not sure
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## Appendix B

**Thank you for attending our event**

**Before leaving could you please complete the following questions? Please circle your answers below:**

- After listening to the presentations, how confident are you about the choices you made at the beginning of today's event?

Very confident

Confident

Not confident at all

- After listening to the presentations, how confident are you that you know about the services available to you?

Very confident

Confident

Not confident at all

- After listening to the presentations, how confident are you that you will make different choices in the future?

Very confident

Confident

Not confident at all

**Thank you for completing this sheet  
Have a safe journey home**

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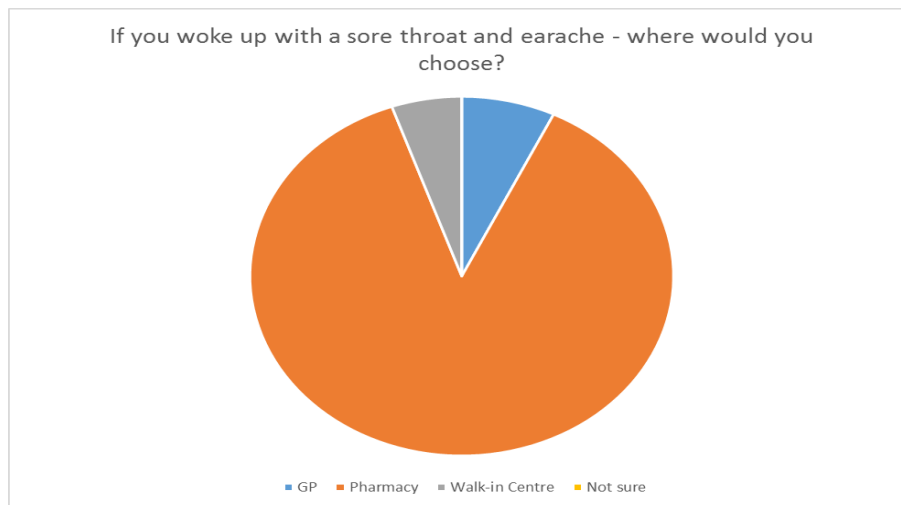
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## Appendix C

### Results from the questionnaire pre-event

- If you woke up with a sore throat and ear ache....where would you choose?

- a) GP - 7%
- b) Pharmacy - 88%
- c) Walk-In Centre - 5%
- d) Not sure - 0%



- If you tripped and hurt your ankle and found it painful to walk....where would you choose?

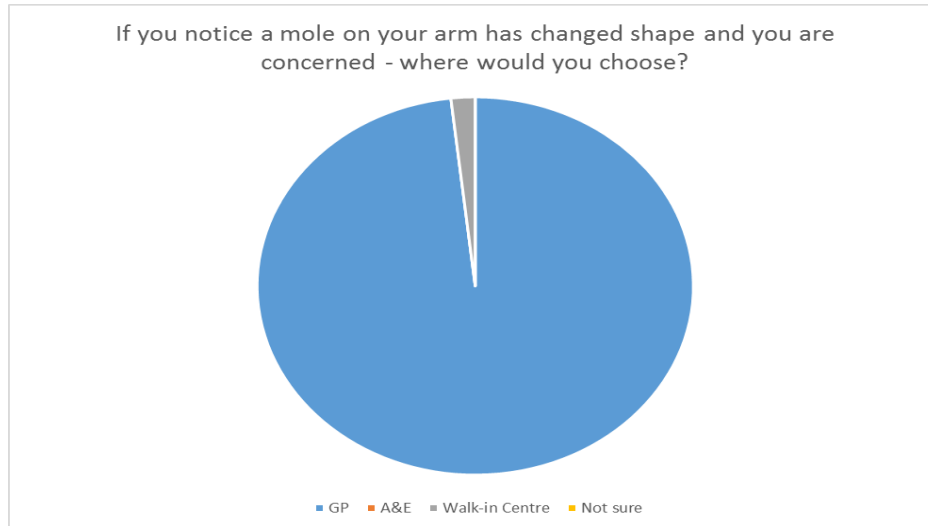
- a) GP - 3%
- b) A&E - 9%
- c) Walk-In Centre - 86%
- d) Not sure - 2%





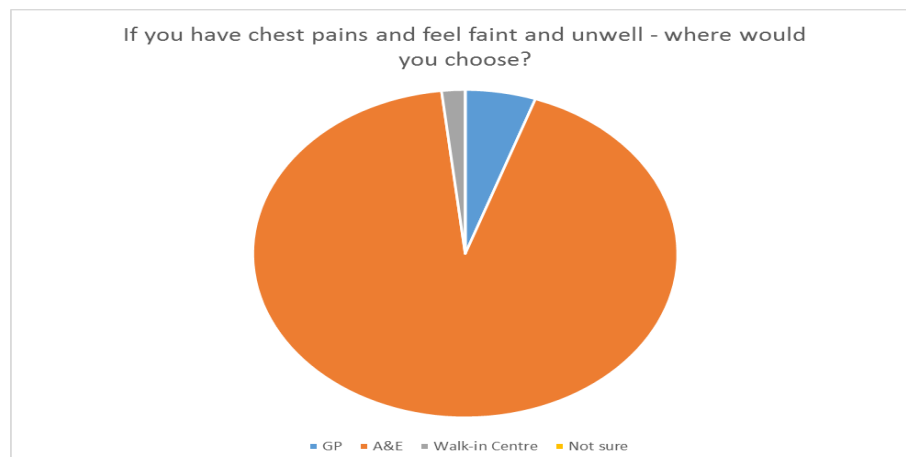
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- If you notice a mole on your arm has changed shape and you are concerned about it...where would you choose?

- a) GP - 98%
- b) A&E - 0%
- c) Walk-In Centre - 2%
- d) Not sure - 0%



- If you have chest pains and feel faint and unwell....where would you choose?

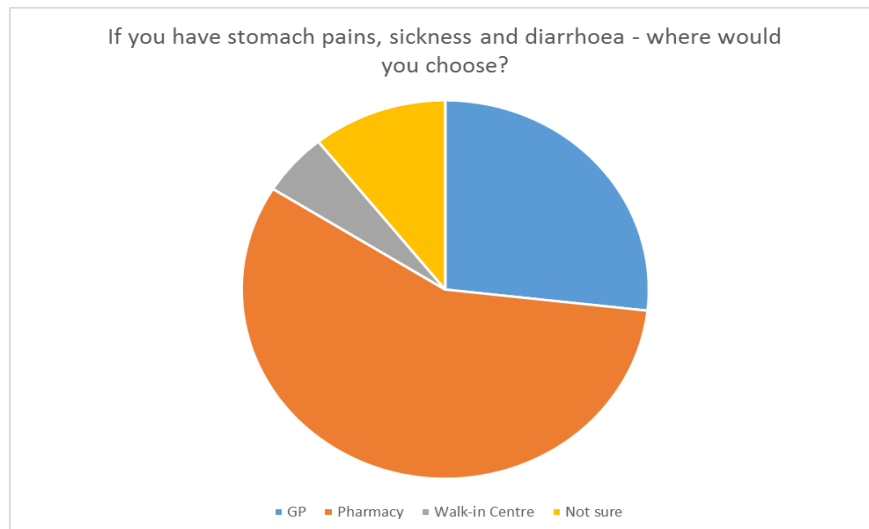
- a) GP - 5%
- b) A&E - 93%
- c) Walk-In Centre - 2%
- d) Not sure - 0%



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If you have stomach pains, sickness and diarrhoea...where would you choose?

- a) GP - 27%
- b) Pharmacy - 57%
- c) Walk-In Centre - 5%
- d) Not sure - 11%



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## Appendix D

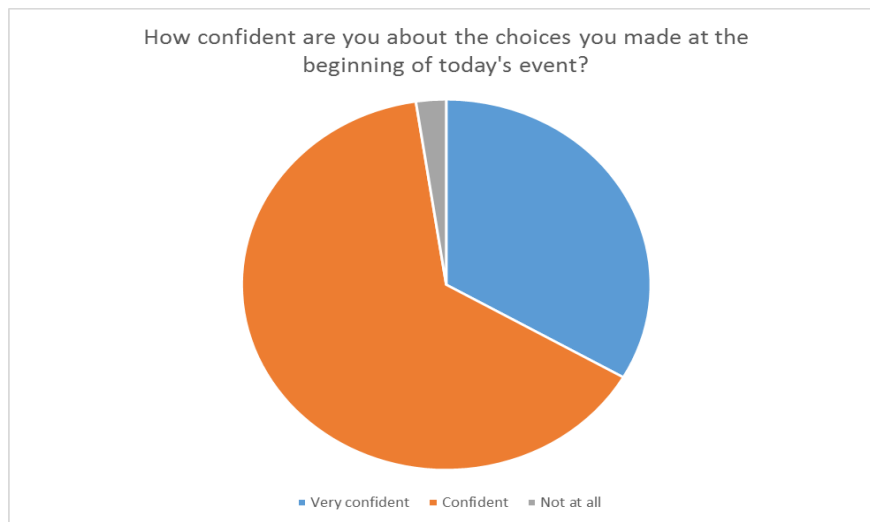
### Results from the questionnaire post-event

- After listening to the presentations, how confident are you about the choices you made at the beginning of today's event?

Very confident - 33%

Confident - 65%

Not confident at all - 2%

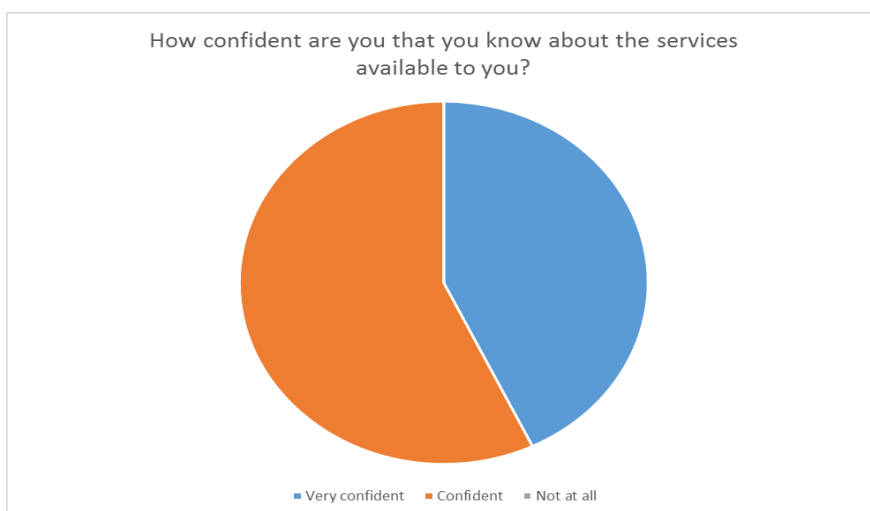


- After listening to the presentations, how confident are you that you know about the services available to you?

Very confident - 43%

Confident - 57%

Not confident at all - 0%

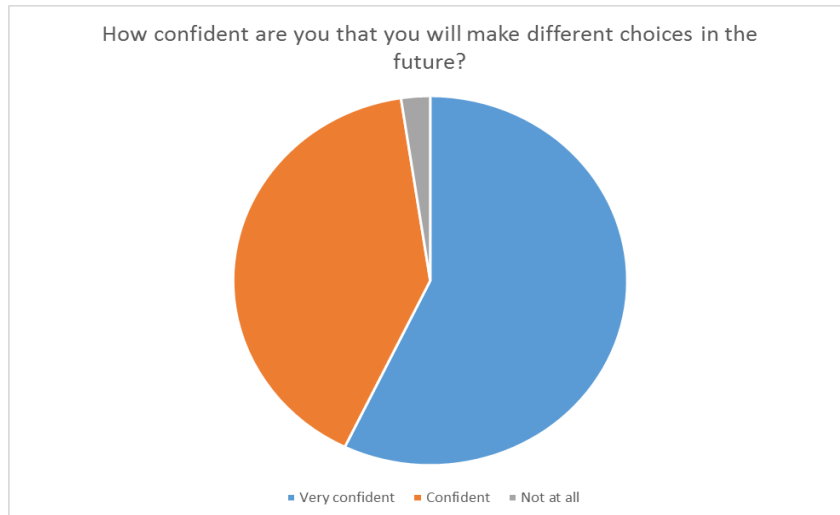


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- After listening to the presentations, how confident are you that you will make different choices in the future?

Very confident - 58%

Confident - 40%

Not confident at all - 2%



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## **Guest speakers** (In alphabetical order)

### **Salman Desai**

Director of Strategy and Planning, Northwest Ambulance Service

### **Helen Murphy**

Chief Officer, Halton, St Helens & Knowsley Local Pharmaceutical Committee

### **Paul Steele**

Engagement, Involvement & Communication Lead, St Helens CCG

### **Lynn Swift**

Nurse Clinician/Acting Clinical Services Manager, St Helens Walk-in Centre

### **Cheryl Whittaker**

Programme Manager, Rota GP out-of-hours service

## **Marketplace** (In alphabetical order)

ABL Health

Alzheimer's Society

CGL (Change, Grow, Live)

Chrysalis Centre for Change

Damibu

Footsteps

Healthy Heart Support Group

Healthy Living Team

Newton Family Community Centre

Red Cross

Smokefree St Helens

Staying Home

Stroke Association

St Helens Carers Centre

St Helens Clinical Commissioning Group

St Helens Falls Service

## **Healthwatch St Helens Support Team** (In alphabetical order)

### **Debbie East**

Healthwatch St Helens Support Team Admin & Volunteer Support Officer

### **Gail Hughes**

Healthwatch St Helens Support Team Communication & Engagement Officer

### **Jayne Parkinson-Loftus**

Healthwatch St Helens Support Team Manager

### **Janet Roberts**

Healthwatch St Helens Support Team Outreach & Intelligence Officer

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