

Hollies Patient Forum

Patient Survey 2025

Background

Gathering information about the patient experience is vital in primary care to ensure services are fit for purpose and fully accessible to patients. Most GP practices in the Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), comprising around 75 surgeries, informally collect data through open surveys to gain ongoing feedback from patients about their experiences. This is typically done via a link on the practice's website or through reviews on other platforms, such as the National GP Patient Survey. Hollies results are [currently available here](#).

In addition, Hollies and other surgeries with active patient participation groups (PPGs) and patient forums regularly conduct patient-led, structured, and proactive surveys to collect data from a large cohort of patients within a defined timeframe. This data is then analysed and reported, providing the practice with a deeper insight into how patients experience primary care services – highlighting what is working well and identifying what areas may require improvement.

The last full patient survey conducted by Hollies Patient Forum took place in 2022, when the UK health sector was still recovering from the impact of COVID-19. Although that time of crisis has now passed, its 'long tail effect' persists – particularly in the ongoing need for GP surgeries to provide regular COVID-19 vaccine clinics. Primary care therefore remains a crucial part of many public health initiatives, acting as gatekeeper to specialist services, promoting self-care where appropriate, and addressing health issues that require careful treatment and ongoing support for patients in the community.

This survey was developed by the patient forum in partnership with Hollies Medical Practice. We appreciate their willingness to work alongside the forum as partners in our joint efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of the practice. We hope that you find this survey report informative, recognising that this is the *patient's perspective* of what is working well at Hollies (with many positive comments) and what could be improved.

Further acknowledgements and the survey's limitations are presented in the final section.

Survey methodology

Data for this survey were collected in April and May of 2025. The questionnaire was designed by the patient forum, with input and feedback from the practice, and covered five core areas: access and appointment booking; aspects of Hollies that are most valued; areas for improvement at Hollies; and the use of services across the Porter Valley Primary Care Network (PVPCN), including out-of-hours access. The questionnaire was piloted internally and by a small number of e-group members.

All patients attending the practice between 14 April and 28 May 2025 were invited by text to complete the survey questionnaire via a link. Paper copies of the questionnaire were also available at the practice.

Numerical data were analysed using tools within Microsoft Forms, and open text responses were analysed using a 'systematic qualitative' approach that uses several sources of the same information to reach a conclusion that is applicable across the dataset.

All information was anonymised, with no responses attributable to any respondent.

Summary of key findings

- The **overall response from patients who completed the survey was positive**. Based on these data, the practice is viewed by many patients as efficient, friendly, responsive, and capable of meeting the health needs of people accessing its services.
- For **patients requesting an appointment**, 61% received a consultation on the same day, with only 8% waiting longer than 2 weeks.
- When **patients requested a specific staff member**, this was arranged in 75% of cases.
- Satisfaction with **consultations** was high, with 91% reporting that they were satisfactory, very satisfactory, or excellent.
- Patients **appreciated many features of the services offered by Hollies**, in particular its friendliness, helpfulness, continuity of care, getting an appointment, and the use of triage. It was also noted that widening the window for accessing the practice has improved the system for making appointments and other services.
- **Online access** is also appreciated, as patients view it as a rapid and efficient way to contact the practice and make requests.
- **Reception staff** – as the first point of contact at the practice – are widely appreciated. However, a small number of respondents commented that there can be barriers or a lack of friendliness. Patients are also wary about sharing personal details, though this may be due to a misunderstanding of care navigation and triage.
- The convenience of **Lo's pharmacy** is seen as a key benefit, though some prescription issues were flagged. These included regular repeat prescriptions being out of sync, or text messages not being received to confirm a medication is available for collection.
- Where **continuity of care is not available**, this is perceived negatively by patients, especially the elderly who prefer to see the same member of staff (so as not to have to repeat their medical history each time).
- Patients commented that **some logistical issues** should be addressed. These include:
 - A clearer indication of when a phone consultation will be (so the patient can ensure they are in a private location).
 - Ensuring that test results are provided to patients as soon as they are available.
 - Long wait times on the telephone, and a perception that staff absences were not being addressed sufficiently.
 - Whilst online access (including AccuRx) is generally appreciated, a small number of patients still find this challenging.
- The **ambience and environment of the practice building** are another area flagged for attention by patients. This includes:
 - Signage, which is unclear ('Upper floor', 'Basement').
 - The choice of background music.
 - Difficulties reaching clinical rooms not on the ground floor.

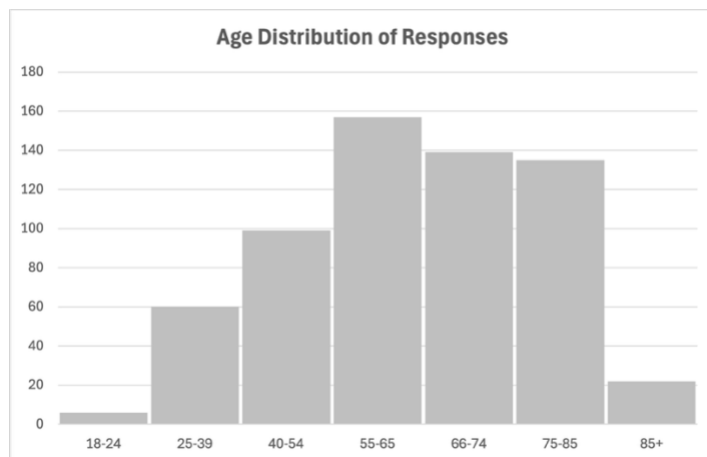
In conclusion, the patient experience at Hollies is generally positive or very positive. Patients particularly appreciate the welcoming atmosphere of the practice, and the professionalism of the service provided. There is growing appreciation of improvements since the introduction of triage, and online access is seen as an efficient and rapid way to engage with the practice. Areas for improvement include logistical issues, navigation within the practice building, and ongoing difficulties with telephone access, which remains the primary method of contact for patients who are unable to use online facilities.

A. Descriptive results

Data collection and respondents

The Survey took place between 14 April and 28 May 2025. During those five weeks, everyone who had contact with the practice was invited by text to complete the survey online. A total of 619 responses were received (Female = 63%; Male = 35%; Over 65s = 48%). Regarding ethnicity, 85% of respondents described themselves as White English, 3.4% as Other White Background, and all other ethnicities accounted for 1% or less, or were not recorded.

Figure: Age distribution

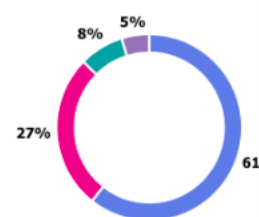


Results

1. For your most recent appointment, how did you contact the practice?

- Online 61%
- Telephone 27%
- In person 8%
- Other 5%

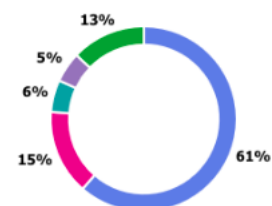
Online Form	377
Phone Call to Reception	167
In Person at Reception	48
Other	30



2. How soon after you contacted the Practice was your appointment?

- Same day 61%
- One to three days 15%
- Within a week 5%
- Within 1-2 weeks 5%
- Longer than 2 weeks 8%

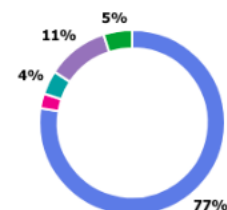
Same Day	382
Within 3 Working Days	92
Within 1 Week	35
1-2 Weeks	33
Longer than 2 weeks	80



3. Which professional did you see?

- GP 77%
- Practice Nurse 11%
- Healthcare Asst. 5%
- Physician Ass. 4%
- Pharmacist 1%

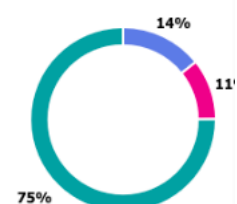
GP	482
Pharmacist	16
Physician Associate	26
Practice Nurse	67
Healthcare Assistant	31



4. If you requested a specific member of staff, was this arranged for you?

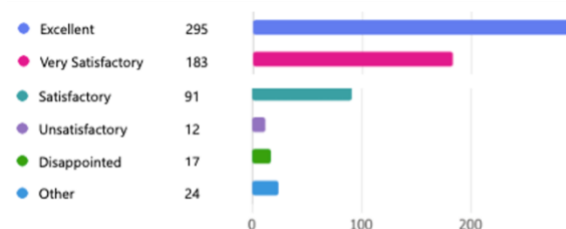
- Yes 75%
- No 11%
- Not applicable 14%

Yes	89
No	66
Not Applicable	467



5. How did you feel about your consultation?

- **Excellent** 47%
- **Very Satisfactory** 29%
- **Satisfactory** 15%
- Unsatisfactory 2%
- Disappointed 2%
- Other 4%



B. Patients' comments and reflections

Several questions in the survey provided patients with an opportunity to share their thoughts and comments. The findings fall into **five main themes**: [Access](#); [Consultations](#); [Prescriptions and the pharmacy](#); [What's appreciated at Hollies](#); and [What could be improved at Hollies](#).

Theme 1: Access

Key findings

Making appointments: This was, in many cases, straightforward and rapid. Some patients highlighted the long wait for a routine/non urgent appointment (including annual review).

Contacting the practice: Online access was highly valued by many patients. However, there were mixed experiences using the telephone. The extended window for making appointments is appreciated, though long wait times are still reported by some.

The practice building – reception and ambience: This has several features that patients believe should be addressed to improve ambience and mobility.

1.1 Making appointments

1. **Accessibility and ease of booking:** Many patients were positive about how simple and efficient the online booking system was. However, for those unfamiliar with digital platforms, this proved more difficult. There were also concerns about the distinction between 'urgent' and 'routine' appointments and around how these terms are defined. Patients valued the extended access window throughout the whole morning and expressed strong appreciation for being able to secure same-day appointments when needed. Many highlighted the speed of being seen and the availability of appointments at the PVPCN hub.
2. **Communication and follow-ups:** Experiences with text messaging were mixed. While many found it efficient, others felt it was impersonal.
3. **Quality of care and patient experience:** Some comments focused on the lack of appointment availability and questioned why only a telephone appointment was possible. A small number of patients reported negative interactions with reception staff, although it was unclear whether these referred to recent experiences (i.e., during the survey period) or to past events. However, many comments highlighted positive interactions with staff.

Patient story

"It is good that the form is now open for longer, especially for those with children, etc., who are very busy first thing in the morning. A huge improvement that we don't have to sit on hold at 8:30am anymore.

However, I was surprised that the earliest appointment I was offered was about 7 weeks away. I was experiencing an allergic reaction to my medication so needed to speak to someone much quicker than that (a few years ago it would have been a same day appointment or phone call from the doctor).

In the end I had to also put in a request asking for a different medication whilst I waited to speak to the specialist. I had to do my own research online and then guess at what the best course of action/alternative might be whilst I waited, which didn't feel right."

Positive comments related to the ease of making an appointment, and the helpful reception staff. Patients especially appreciated receiving a rapid appointment for a face-to-face meeting and the efficiency of the triage process. Here are specific examples:

- “[I was] very impressed with the service. Easy to use online form, and was contacted by GP very quickly.”
- “I always find it super easy to get an appointment at The Hollies (if I ring first thing in the morning). Staff are always super respectful and friendly. I’m slowly gaining more trust in approaching my GP practice after a negative few years at my old practice, and it’s all thanks to The Hollies.”
- “I’ve been surprised by how promptly I’ve been contacted for something I deemed routine. I was surprised by the speed of response and the appointment offered.”
- “Always feel like I can get an appointment for myself or a member of my family. It’s honestly the best practice we’ve been at.”

However, some patients noted the long waiting times and difficulties using the online form. There was concern about delays in annual reviews and the unavailability of routine appointments for several weeks, which in some cases led to problems accessing medication. For example, “I had to wait weeks for a routine appointment, which was frustrating.”

An important issue to highlight was around interactions with reception staff. One patient commented: “I did not like being asked by a member of the reception why I wanted to see a doctor. It was a person problem, and they are not health professionals. I was standing in reception and had people waiting behind me.”¹

1.2 Contacting the practice

Challenges with phone contact were frequently mentioned, with multiple comments highlighting difficulties in reaching the practice by phone and dissatisfaction with how calls are handled.

- “I was on hold for an hour before I could speak to someone.”
- “It took 58 minutes on hold to talk to a receptionist—I was number 8 in the queue. This is not acceptable.”

1.3 The practice building – reception and ambience

1. **Environmental issues:** The ambience of the waiting areas is commented upon, especially the music, which can be distracting for patients with autism (one patient commented). Additionally, there is difficulty reaching the downstairs rooms with prams.
2. **Signage:** The need for better signage and unsuitable background music.
3. The **impact of administrative staff absences** was noted by some patients, who expressed concerns about reduced responsiveness and delays in service when administrative staff are absent.

Patient stories

- “I’ve been impressed by all the team members at the Hollies. This was the first time I’ve seen a doctor; my other contact has been the people on reception and the phlebotomist. Everyone has been extremely helpful, friendly, and efficient.”
- “I am not sure whether I saw a GP or a Physician Associate. It was not one of the GPs I have seen before.”
- One patient encountered challenges when trying to book appointments during peak periods, often facing longer wait times. Despite this, he consistently praised the administrative staff, who always greeted him warmly and worked diligently to find suitable times, making him feel valued and respected during each interaction.

¹ See comments elsewhere about the need to ensure patients are aware of triage and care navigation.

Theme 2: Consultations

Key findings

Consultations: There was a general appreciation for the longer consultation times currently available, as well as the discussions with clinicians who did not appear rushed.

Interactions with staff: Generally, clinicians and other staff – including reception – were generally seen as friendly, supportive, and helpful.

The clinical consultation: Patients expressed a desire for clarity as to whom they are seeing (GP, or other staff, e.g., physician associates).

Choice: Some patients felt limited in their ability to choose a named GP and emphasised the importance of seeing the same doctor consistently.

2.1 Telephone versus face-to-face and use of text

Fewer face-to-face meetings: For patients contacted via text message, the lack of face-to-face consultation was perceived as a negative factor.

Patient story

“I don’t make appointments unless I must, and the text message seemed very impersonal especially when it did not inform me what the appointment was about to give me an option to choose a GP that I know. The GP who phoned me did not know me and basically messed up my prescription system as he only prescribed one item and not my usual 2 items of 2 different medications.”

Some patients expressed negative perceptions about the use of text messaging, especially concerning prescriptions for ‘serious’ medications. For some, this is seen as concerning shift towards more online, automated ways of accessing treatment. Additionally, there were general comments about the ambience of the waiting areas and navigating the practice, including the upper floor and basement.

2.2 Interactions with staff

Most comments were positive, with many acknowledging the professional approach taken by all staff. This included the use of text messaging and telephone appointments. For one patient: *“I can imagine a GP surgery is always busy and stretched, but I never feel rushed and have not struggled to get an appointment.”* Patients also noted satisfaction with extended access at Carterknowle or the University hub. Additionally, some patients are happy to see any clinician if they are appropriately trained in the relevant area of expertise.

However, some had difficulty accessing named/requested GPs, and when this was possible, it was highly appreciated. For one patient: *“I was pleased to liaise with the doctor whom I had requested to see. This is because I don’t like repeating myself. At times I get overwhelmed and forget to give all the details.”* Some patients commented that face-to-face appointments could feel rushed.

2.3 The clinical consultation and choice

The professionalism and care demonstrated by medical staff are highly appreciated by patients, especially when they are friendly and understanding of a patient’s situation.

Positive comments highlighted the perceived efficiency of the services and quality of patient interactions. The availability of alternative locations, such as hubs or other areas within the PVPCN, was appreciated. Patients valued the efficiency of prescriptions being sent directly to the pharmacy and the speed of processing. Here are examples:

- *“The doctor listened to my concerns, took on my understanding of them, welcomed my questions, suggested a course of action, and checked that I felt ok. I felt respected and listened to: we worked together for a way forward and that I was well cared for.”*

- *“I was treated with courtesy and respect. I was thoroughly examined for a suspected chest infection. I felt my health care needs were met.”*

Patients often prefer to see the same member of staff, especially older individuals who value having one person support their ongoing care. Some patients noted a lack of continuity, which was linked with not being able to see the same GP or the convoluted process involved.

Comments included:

- *“Following the Covid years, difficulty seeing doctors and getting myself (there). There is a lot to discuss. I would like to see the same practitioner at each appointment. Time is insufficient for complex needs and being shown to the door abruptly is just awful.”*
- *“My confidence in the Hollies is at a low ebb despite my having been with the practice since 1969. I am 79 years old, and I do have [medical] issues. The healthcare assistant I saw [for my medical review] was efficient. I have no complaints about her handling of the review. However, [it] was little more than a precursor to it being decided whether I needed to be seen in person by either a practice nurse or an actual GP.*

Patient story

The experience of one patient illustrates the importance of continuity of care. After moving to the area, she initially struggled with booking appointments at short notice. However, once she was assigned to a designated doctor who became familiar with her history, she felt more secure and confident in her ongoing treatment, particularly as an older patient with several chronic conditions.

Theme 3: Prescriptions and pharmacy

- The **convenience** of Lo’s pharmacy, and prescriptions being sent straight there, was appreciated by many patients.
- Many patients noted the **efficiency of pharmacists** and the convenience of receiving their prescribed medications.
- However, **some commented on not receiving a text message** to confirm medication is available for collection.
- Other issues include **repeat prescriptions being ‘locked’** and requiring a review before medications are dispensed, prescriptions going missing, or waiting several days for medication to be available.
- **A small number of patients noted that their repeat prescriptions were ‘out of sync’.**

Theme 4: What’s appreciated at Hollies

Key findings

Staff: Over 120 comments praised all staff, describing them as helpful, kind, friendly, professional, welcoming and approachable. An additional 35 singled out the reception team as being excellent, much improved, lovely, kind and patient.

Health professionals: All the health professionals were commended for being kind, thoughtful, competent, knowledgeable, and helpful. GPs were described as helpful, caring, professional, thorough, good listeners who involve patients in their treatment, hardworking, respectful, and much more.

Appointments: There was strong appreciation of being able to get same-day appointments when needed, with many mentioning the speed of being seen when needed and the availability of appointments at the hub.

Online access: Online requests and an improved phone system were well received. Online messaging and triage were very popular. Patients appreciated the fact that the triaging GP would

quickly be in touch by text or phone. Overall, this system was viewed as a significant improvement.

Positive comments included:

- *"The practice and the staff are very much appreciated."*
- *"Always good (especially as an older patient) to have continuity of care with a designated doctor."*
- *"A big thank you for all that you do."*
- *"Very much appreciate the high quality of your work as GPs."*
- *"[This is a] great surgery that we are lucky to have. Never had problems getting an appointment or medication when needed."*
- *"The team of nurses and doctors are always very thorough and diligent. The best practice I have ever used. Thank you."*
- *"Efficient, professional, friendly and helpful staff. Quick to see GPs when urgent. Always explain any treatment and follow up when required."*
- *"I've always been listened to at reception and had the appropriate appointment made promptly. The GPs I have seen have all been excellent at understanding my condition and needs."*
- *I mostly feel in very safe hands at The Hollies. Advice from the pharmacist is excellent. It seems more accessible than it used to be. Communication has improved."*
- *"[Online access is] such a good and efficient way to cover all my medical health in one conversation."*

Patient stories

- *"Exceptionally helpful admin team, caring and knowledgeable doctor. I am autistic and struggling mentally and physically. I fully trust my doctor to make important decisions about my health."*
- *"[The] Doctors and nurses I have seen/spoken to were very helpful and supportive - as are the receptionists. I also like being able to order my repeat prescriptions online. From adverts seen in the surgery and from flu/covid vaccines seem very proactive in developing and supporting preventive healthcare approaches. I appreciate being able to access my own medical records - this is important in helping me understand and manage my own health issues where possible."*

Theme 5: What could be improved at Hollies?

Key findings

- **General access via telephone:** Long wait times and a lack of responsiveness should be addressed where appropriate, and clarity ensured around test results and follow-ups.
 - *"Following a complaint I submitted about poor phone contact handling...I was told this was due to admin staff absences."*
 - *"Please consider coordinating admin support from other [Porter Valley] practices to cover absence periods to provide a responsive first point of contact."*
- **Appointments:** Issues were noted regarding making appointments, telephone access, and wait times. Patients acknowledge the challenges faced by the practice (and the excellent care received during the appointment) but noted that availability can be limited. They requested longer time slots during the day when an appointment can be made.
 - *"Follow-up could be improved. For instance, when I tried to book a cervical screening, I couldn't attend any of the appointments available."*
 - *"The appointment time. Although understandable with the excellent care each patient receives and therefore probably cannot be improved."*

- **Care delivery:** Continuity of care and the advantages of receiving care from a person who ‘knows’ you were especially noted by elderly patients, who may feel more affected by fragmented care.
 - *“It would be good to be able to get more continuity of care, i.e., from the same GP for a particular issue.”*
 - *“As an older person, continuity of seeing the same doctor who knows and understands problems would be helpful.”*
- **Patient experience at reception:** For many patients, reception staff are key to their treatment journey – the first point of contact and ‘setting the tone’. Some patients commented that they could be unwelcoming and recommended additional training on how to deal with patients.²
 - *“Good listening, respect and empathy are essential to good care.”*
 - *“Some reception staff need training on dealing with patients.”*
- **Prescriptions:** Some patients recommended addressing logistical issues, especially those related to multiple medications requiring repeat prescriptions being out of sync and suggested providing longer prescription durations for long-term medications.
 - *“Sometimes medication changes between the hospitals and GP practice take too long to get sorted.”*
 - *“Having to organise repeat prescriptions for medications that run out at different times can be challenging.”*
 - *“Being able to get two months’ worth of medication would ease the burden for those on multiple prescriptions.”*
- **Accessibility and facilities:** There is a need to address issues related to navigating the practice (including stairs and signage), as well as improve the waiting room experience (temperature and background music).
 - *“Weekend access [to the practice is better] than a walk-in centre or A&E.”*
 - *“The music in the waiting room is very loud. Personally, I’m glad it’s Classic FM rather than any other music, but it is uncomfortably loud sometimes.”*
- **Online access:** Although many patients shared positive comments, some still find the online experience confusing and the use of AccuRx challenging, expressing a preference for face-to-face consultations whenever possible.
 - *“[It would be useful to have the] ability to reply directly to GP when in conversation rather than seemingly one way and having to reply through Accurx.”*

Concluding comments

We hope that this survey report provides helpful insights into the experiences of patients using Hollies Medical Practice in early 2025, highlighting both the many positive interactions and areas for improvement. We see specific recommendations as:

For Hollies Medical Practice

- Continue to address issues related to telephone access, particularly for individuals who are unable to use online access.
- Address issues with the practice building.
- Ensure that appropriate information is shared with patients about their prescriptions and explore better synchronisation of multiple repeat medications.
- Continue working with reception and administration staff so that patients’ first interaction is positive (this includes ensuring that patients clearly understand care navigation and triage).
- Continue to promote continuity, especially for patients regularly accessing the practice.

² It’s important to note many patients also found reception staff welcoming and helpful.

- Enhance communication with all practice patients through website news and text updates.

For Hollies Patient Forum

- Communicate effectively with patients, ensuring that developments at the practice are shared in a timely manner. This includes managing expectations regarding what primary care can (and cannot) deliver.
- Continue to promote a clear understanding of care navigation and triage in newsletters and PVPCN patient events.
- Collaborate with the practice as they strive to address areas for improvement, offering regular and constructive feedback.

As always, **this survey has limitations**. Hollies Medical Practice is one of the largest in Sheffield, with nearly 12,000 patients. Our survey therefore represents only around 6% of the total patient population. However, gathering information from all patients attending the practice within a 5-week period provided some degree of randomness in the sample. That said, the age and gender distribution of survey respondents – while likely capturing the profile of patients that most frequently use the practice – does not match the overall patient profile.

An additional limitation is that, although the open-text comments provide highly relevant and rich information, these may at times reflect *historical* experiences rather than those specifically relating to 2025. We have aimed to reflect this in our analysis.

We would like to **thank all the patients** who completed the questionnaire – your input is greatly valued. A special thanks also to steering group members (including from the e-group) who piloted the questionnaire for us. Thanks also to forum steering group members assisting with the data collection and analysis:

- Linda Campbell
- Rory Freeman
- Sally Freeman
- Harry Frost
- Howard Fry
- Jeet Khosa
- Jean Newell-Eyre
- Michael Warboys

Finally, we would like to thank Hollies Medical Practice for their support and input, and especially Andy Smith (Practice Manager) and the reception staff for help with logistics, which included sharing the survey questionnaire with patients attending the practice during April and May 2025.

Teamwork is a valuable commodity, and we look forward to working together with the practice to continue delivering high-quality care and addressing areas that could improve the patient experience.

Hollies Patient Forum
29 July 2025 [FINAL]