

A&E Online General Patient Survey 2007

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Trust is keen to investigate how we can make better use of the internet as a tool through which to receive patient feedback. In previous survey projects we have asked patients and the public about different survey methods to establish their preferences. Responses to this have shown a lot of positively for the use of the internet. As current survey methodology does not appear to generate any significant online response this project will investigate if it is possible to increase internet submission by changing the methodology used. Thus the intention of this project was that the principle method for participation would be through the internet and that paper questionnaires would then only provided on request.

Objectives

- To establish A & E patient satisfaction with the service provided by the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust.
- To keep aware of the feelings and expectations of patients.
- To involve patients in the care and services they receive and to monitor the quality of care and service provided.
- To encourage patients who have access to the internet to complete the survey online.
- To determine the proportion of patients who will / are able to complete a questionnaire online.

Sample

The sample was 1123 patients attended by the EEAST across all 6 of its localities in August 2007. This type of sample covered a wide variety of ages, and conditions.

Methodology

Contact details for the sample were obtained from Electronic Patient Care Records (EPCRs) and Patient/Clinical Report Forms (PRF, CRF). A copy of the questionnaire and an ethnic origin form were put on the Trust website. A standard covering letter was sent to the patient named on the EPCR / PRF asking them if they would like to complete the questionnaire online. If a patient does not have access to the internet they were still able to take part in the survey, alternative methods of participation were provided for these patients on request. The letters to participants were sent out in September. EPCR/ PRF numbers and a county code reference were placed on the letters and participants were asked to provide these when completing the questionnaire for reference if required. Four weeks were allowed for replies after which time results were analysed and this report written.

Conclusions

Results have shown that not providing a paper questionnaire significantly increased the online survey response rate, thus effectively increasing online participation. However, with a large majority of patients responding that they do not have internet access it is clear that a significant proportion of our patient population would be excluded from giving feedback if the Trust was to stop providing paper questionnaires. Therefore, unless there is a significant increase in patient access to the internet it would currently be unwise to adopt the methodology used in this survey project for future.

The Trust should continue to encourage patients who have access to the internet to complete questionnaires online. This survey has proven it is possible to achieve an online response rate of nearly 25%, which if this could be replicated for every survey project the Trust could make significant savings on the cost of postage. It is clear that our current

method of promoting online completion is not working effectively and needs to be reconsidered to see if the 25% online response rate can be replicated in the future.

The result in response to the questionnaire itself were very positive with a significant 98.9% of patients answering that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received and 95.4% had their expectations met or exceeded. The majority of patients made contact with the ambulance Trust by having someone else call on their behalf and for over half of patients the ambulance Trust is the first health care provider they contacted for the incident. Although a significant proportion of patients were not given an estimation of the length of time ambulance service staff would take to arrive, the Trust is arriving on scene in a timely manner with 88.6% of respondents finding the length of time it took acceptable or very acceptable.

Questions regarding pain relief show that 89.5% of patients believe they were assessed for pain by the ambulance crew. Overall, just over a quarter of patients reported that they were given pain relief across the Trust except in Norfolk where the percentage is significantly higher at 56.3%.

Ambulance service staff continue to perform well with 97.7% of patients describing staff attitude as very professional and 88.5% stating that the staff introduced themselves. Furthermore, 89.8% of patients felt the ambulance staff described their care in a way that was easy to understand, 91.0% of patients answered that the advice they received was satisfactory or very satisfactory and 86.4% of patients felt they were involved in decisions made regarding their care. These are all very positive results that reflect well on the performance of Trust staff.

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Introduction

Historically, patient surveys conducted by the Trust have taken the form of postal questionnaires sent out to patients who are requested to return the questionnaire in a free post envelope provided by the Trust. The cost of this postage is then charged to the Trust. Over the past year the Trust has had the facility to put questionnaires on the Trust website and have been directing patients with access to the internet to complete the survey online. Letters sent to patients introducing the survey have included information as to where to find the questionnaire online and it has been suggested that it will help the Trust save money for them to take part online. The Trust has continued to send paper copies of the questionnaire and free post return envelopes to all patients in survey samples to prevent excluding patients without internet access from giving the Trust their feedback. Internet submission response rates have remained very low with only a handful of patients in any sample opting to complete a questionnaire online despite alerting patients to the benefits of completing the survey online.

The Trust is keen to investigate how we can make better use of the internet as a tool through which to receive patient feedback. In previous survey projects we have asked patients and the public about different survey methods to establish their preferences. Responses to this have shown a lot of positivity for the use of the internet. As current survey methodology does not appear to generate any significant online response this project will investigate if it is possible to increase internet submission by changing the methodology used. Thus the intention of this project was that the principle method for participation would be through the internet and that paper questionnaires would then only be provided on request.

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Ethical Considerations

This survey was conducted in line with the EEAST Policy for Obtaining Patient Feedback. All patient's names and addresses were held on computer file only accessible by Clinical Audit Team and IT administrator. Patient details and questionnaires will be removed and destroyed one month after the closing date of the survey. While the survey could not be anonymous because of survey identification by corresponding reference number they will be kept confidential. EEAST identifiable marks were removed from postal franking to patients. While the primary purpose of this survey was to encourage patients to complete questionnaires online, no patient was excluded from giving their feedback because they do not have access to the internet. Alternative ways of giving feedback were provided on request. Exclusions to the survey sample were those patients whose address it was not possible to read, or was not completed on the patient record, and any patient known to have died.

Section 1 - Survey Response

Response Rate

County	Survey invitation letters sent out	Responses Received	Response Rate
Norfolk	272	83	30.5%
Suffolk	190	69	36.3%
Cambridgeshire	137	39	28.5%
Bedfordshire	149	26	17.4%
Hertfordshire	152	36	23.7%
Essex	222	61	27.5%
County Unknown	0	29	-
Total	1122	343	30.6%

The response rate to this survey was slightly lower than usually received from a Trust patient survey, however not significantly so. The reason for this slight decrease may be due to the different way in which patients were asked to participate in this survey.

Previous Surveys

The number of patients who have completed questionnaires online for previous surveys is very low. For each of the following projects paper questionnaires were also provided in the survey packs sent to patients.

- EEAST Out of Hours Ongoing Patient Survey internet completion 10/222 = 4.5%
- Community First Responder Patient Survey internet completion 5/330 = 1.5%
- EPCR Patient Survey internet completion 22/358 = 6.1%

Type of Response

Unfortunately, due to an error in the set up of the online questionnaire some of the first responses received were not retrievable. However, it was possible to determine that 23 patients responded to the questionnaire online before the problem was discovered and rectified. Therefore, although it is very unfortunate that the views of these 23 patients were lost it is still possible to meet the objectives of this project, to determine how many patients

are willing and able to complete a questionnaire online, even if we have not been able to obtain all of their views.

County	Type of Response				Total type of responses
	Internet submission	Request for paper questionnaire	Telephone Call	Returned 'No internet access' slip	
Norfolk	10/87 (11.5%)	6/87 (6.9%)	10/87 (11.5%)	61/87 (70.1%)	87
Suffolk	10/76 (13.2%)	7/76 (9.2%)	11/76 (14.5%)	48/76 (63.2%)	76
Cambridgeshire	14/39 (35.9%)	0/39 (0.0%)	0/39 (0.0%)	25/39 (64.1%)	39
Bedfordshire	4/28 (14.3%)	1/28 (3.6%)	1/28 (3.6%)	22/28 (78.6%)	28
Hertfordshire	5/39 (12.8%)	5/39 (12.8%)	4/39 (10.3%)	25/39 (64.1%)	39
Essex	20/62 (32.3%)	6/62 (9.7%)	3/62 (4.8%)	33/62 (53.2%)	62
County Unknown	26/29 (89.7%)	0/29 (0.0%)	0/29 (0.0%)	3/29 (10.3%)	29
Total	89/360 (24.7%)	25/360 (6.9%)	29/360 (8.1%)	217/360 (60.3%)	360*

*Note: This figure is higher than the response rate shown on the previous table as it includes all responses received. E.g. where patients' have given more than one type of response each response has been included. For example, several patients telephoned to request a paper questionnaire, therefore their response is included in both results.

The above table shows how patients in each county responded to the survey. It can be seen that in every county the majority of participants responding returned the 'No access to the internet' slip. Participants in Norfolk and Suffolk were most likely to call either to request paper questionnaires or to give their comments over the telephone. However, the most requests for a paper questionnaire came from patients in Hertfordshire. Only 6.9% of participants requested a paper questionnaire which implies very few patients without internet access will request the questionnaire to complete if it is not initially provided for them with the introductory letter. Therefore, unless there is a significant increase in patient access to the internet in order to maintain a good response rate and to avoid excluding any participants it would currently be unwise to adopt the methodology used in this survey project for future survey work. However these results show there is potential to increase online survey completion, and as such the methods used to promote online questionnaires need to be considered to see if it is possible to replicate the level of online response achieved in this survey project in the future.

Patients attended in the counties of Cambridgeshire and Essex appear to have the greatest access to, or willingness to use the internet to respond, with approximately a third of responses from participants in each county being submitted online this is twice the percentage of any other county. Overall, nearly a quarter of participants (24.7%) responding to this survey completed a questionnaire online. If it is possible to replicate this online response rate for every survey project the Trust conducts considerable savings in the cost of postage, paper, and printing could be made.

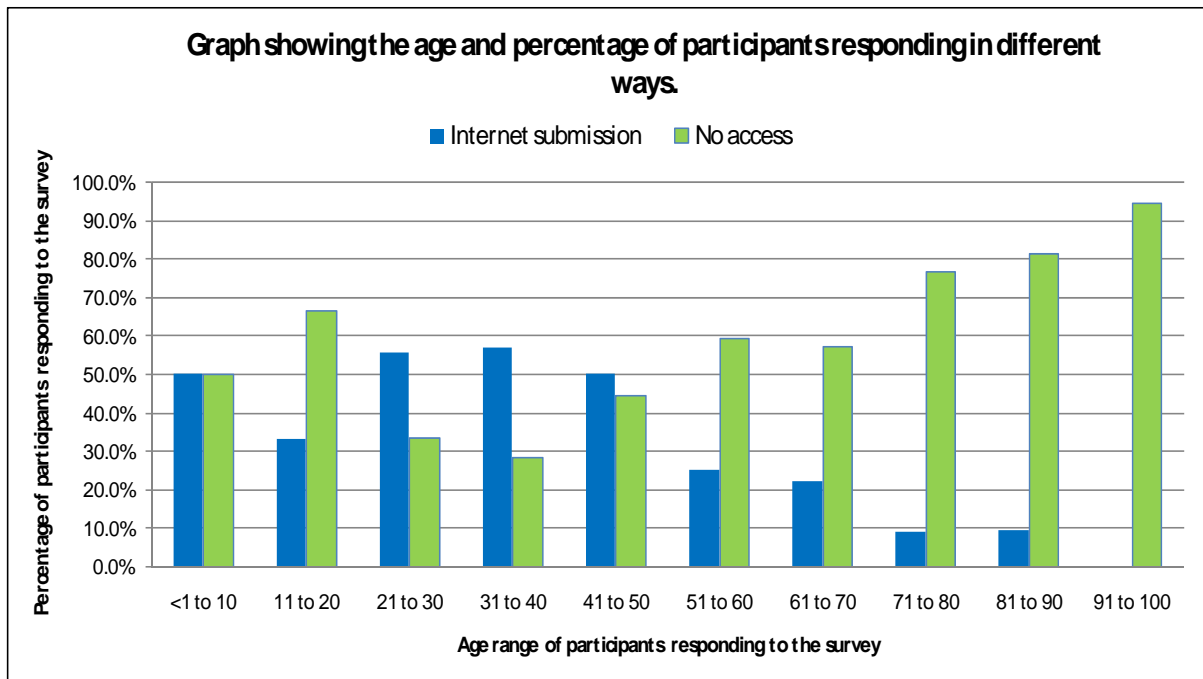
Looking more closely at the type of patient who has access to the internet reveals that there is no significant difference in the percentage of males and females who completed the survey online or who do not have access to the internet.

Completion	Gender	
	Males	Females
Responding online	23/129 (17.8%)	37/187 (19.8%)
No internet access	86/129 (66.7%)	128/187 (68.4%)
Paper questionnaire request	10/129 (7.8%)	15/187 (8.0%)
Telephone call received	13/129 (10.1%)	15/187 (8.0%)
Total number of patients responding to survey	129	187

Gender does not appear to be a factor in the method of response to the survey.

Looking at the age of patients responding to the survey shows that there is a significant difference in the age of patients who stated that they do not have access to the internet and those that completed the questionnaire online.

Age of respondents in years	Internet Submission	No Access Slip Returned
Range	1 to 86	<1 to 97
Mean	53.1	71.6
Median	54.5	77
Mode	63, 76, 84	82



Results of this survey show that there is a distinct trend in the age range of participants who do not have access to the internet and those that completed the questionnaire online. Generally the older the patient the less likely they are to have access to the internet and the ability to complete a questionnaire online. The highest percentage of online responses was received from the 31- 40 age group where 57.1% of patients in this age group responded online, the least from the 91-100 age group where no patient completed a questionnaire online.

It is very important to consider these results when designing the format of a survey questionnaire. Project completed online will exclude a significant proportion of the patient population, particularly at the older end of the age range. In light of the fact that approximately 50% of the Trusts patients are over the age of 60, the Trust would prevent a significant proportion of its patients from taking part in surveys if it were to only provide access to questionnaires online. Results to this survey have shown that encouragingly nearly a quarter of patients (24.7%) responding completed a questionnaire online. However, while such a large majority of patients do not have access to the internet the principle method for surveying patients should remain as a paper questionnaire to avoid excluding any patient from taking part and giving the Trust their feedback on the service provided due to the lack of internet access.

Section 2 - Questionnaire results

The following are the results to the questionnaire for all participants who completed a questionnaire online, over the telephone, or requested and returned a paper copy.

Demographics

Q1- Completion

The patient completed the questionnaire: $69 / 85 = 81.2\%$

Completed on behalf of the patient: $16 / 85 = 18.8\%$

3 respondents gave no answer to this question.

Q2- Age

Range = <1 - 89 years

Mean = 56.7 years

Median = 61 years

Modes = 76, and 84 years

8 respondents gave no answer to this question.

Q3- Gender

Females: $50/85 = 58.8\%$

Males: $35/85 = 41.2\%$

3 respondents gave no answer to this question.

Results Q4 - Q18

Q4- How did you find out about this survey?

This question only appeared on the questionnaire on the internet site. Answers to this question helped filter out people who had completed the questionnaire because they found it on the website rather than being in this survey sample and invited by the Trust to complete the questionnaire.

During the period allowed for responses to this survey 93 internet responses were received. 89 were from patients who had received a letter from the Trust inviting them to take part in the survey online. The remaining responses were from people who had found the questionnaire whilst browsing the Trust website but had not specifically been prompted to take part in the survey by the Trust. 2 of these were patients and 2 were members of the public who had not used the service.

Q5 –Please tell us if you had contact with any of the following health care providers before contacting the ambulance service for this incident.

Response	County						
	Norfolk	Suffolk	Cambridgeshire	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire	Essex	All Counties
GP Surgery	2/15 (13.3%)	5/17 (29.4%)	2/16 (12.5%)	1/5 (20.0%)	3/14 (21.4%)	5/28 (17.9%)	18/95 (18.9%)
Out of Hours Doctor's Service	2/15 (13.3%)	2/17 (11.8%)	2/16 (12.5%)	0/5 (0.0%)	1/14 (7.1%)	4/28 (14.3%)	11/95 (11.6%)
NHS Direct	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/16 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	2/14 (14.3%)	1/28 (3.6%)	3/95 (3.2%)
A walk-in centre	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/16 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/28 (0.0%)	0/95 (0.0%)
Pharmacy	1/15 (6.7%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/16 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/28 (0.0%)	1/95 (1.2%)
The Ambulance Service were the first health care provider contacted	9/15 (60.0%)	10/17 (58.8%)	11/16 (68.8%)	2/5 (40.0%)	6/14 (42.9%)	16/28 (57.1%)	54/95 (56.8%)
Other	1/15 (6.7%)	0/17 (0.0%)	1/16 (6.3%)	2/5 (40.0%)	2/14 (14.3%)	2/28 (7.1%)	8/95 (8.4%)
Number of responses to question	15	17	16	5	14	28	95
No response given	0	0	0	1	1	1	4

31/84 (36.9%) of participants who answered this question had contacted another health care provider prior to the ambulance service.

3/84 (3.6%) contacted more than one other health care provider before contacting the ambulance service.

Examples of comments made by participants answering other:

“Doctor who lives next door.” (Case 33)

“I tried calling the out of hours number, but for 10 minutes no one answered.” (Case 49)

“Health care worker.” (Case 62)

“Community care alarm (piper).” (Case 75)

In the majority of cases the Ambulance Trust were the first health care provider contacted. However, over a third of all patients answering this question contacted another health care provider prior to the ambulance service, the most regularly contacted being GP surgeries followed by the GP Out of Hours service. This pattern is consistent in every county and shows that a significant proportion of patients using the Ambulance Service do seek help in other ways rather than turning to the ambulance service straight away. Whether this was the appropriate course of action is not something which is possible to determine from this survey but this is something that could be investigated further in another project.

Q6- How did you make contact with the ambulance service?

Response	County						
	Norfolk	Suffolk	Cambridgeshire	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire	Essex	All Counties
I called 999	4/15 (26.7%)	0/17 (0.0%)	4/14 (28.6%)	1/5 (20.0%)	5/12 (41.7%)	6/28 (21.4%)	20/91 (22.0%)
Someone else called 999 on my behalf	6/15 (40.0%)	13/17 (76.5%)	9/14 (64.3%)	4/5 (80.0%)	5/12 (41.7%)	14/28 (50.0%)	51/91 (56.0%)
I was referred to the Ambulance Service by another health care provider	2/15 (13.3%)	3/17 (17.6%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/12 (0.0%)	7/28 (25.0%)	12/91 (13.2%)
Other	3/15 (20.0%)	1/17 (5.9%)	1/14 (7.1%)	0/5 (0.0%)	2/12 (16.7%)	1/28 (3.6%)	8/91 (8.8%)
Number of responses to question	15	17	14	5	12	28	91
No response given	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Example of comments made by participants answering other:

“Via the out of hours doctors’ service.” (Case 18)

“It was called in whilst I was unconscious.” (Case 23)

“Community care alarm and my son when I activate alarm.” (Case 75)

“Doctor called service.” (Case 90)

The above results show that over half of all patients had someone else contact the ambulance service on their behalf. However, there is some variance between the different counties in the percentage of patients contacting the ambulance service in each of the different ways. For example, a quarter of responses from patients in Essex said they were referred to the ambulance service by another healthcare provider, however, interestingly in Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, and Hertfordshire no patient was referred to the service in this way. Also, of interest is that Suffolk was the only county where no patient called for the ambulance service themselves.

Q7- Were you made aware of the length of time you would be waiting for the ambulance service to attend you?

Response	County						
	Norfolk	Suffolk	Cambridgeshire	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire	Essex	All Counties
Yes, I was given an exact time	1/15 (6.7%)	2/17 (11.8%)	1/14 (7.1%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	4/27 (14.8%)	8/88 (9.1%)
Yes, I was given an approximate time	9/15 (60.0%)	4/17 (23.5%)	6/14 (42.9%)	0/5 (0.0%)	4/10 (40.0%)	8/27 (29.6%)	31/88 (35.2%)
No, no time was given	1/15 (6.7%)	5/17 (29.4%)	5/14 (35.7%)	2/5 (40.0%)	1/10 (10.0%)	8/27 (29.6%)	22/88 (25.0%)
Unable to say	4/15 (26.7%)	6/17 (35.3%)	2/14 (14.3%)	3/5 (60.0%)	5/10 (50.0%)	7/27 (25.9%)	27/88 (30.7%)
Number of responses to question	15	17	14	5	10	27	88
No response given	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

There is no Trust policy that stipulates that a time must be given to patients to tell them how long the ambulance service will take to reach them. However, individual call takers may make callers aware of the length of time or in the case of GP urgent the doctor may give the patient an approximate time.

Results show that overall a small 9.1% of patients were given an exact time the ambulance would take to arrive, and over a third (35.2%) were given an approximate time. Unlike the majority of questions in this survey there does not appear to be any strong consistency between the results for each county to this question. For example, in Norfolk the answer that received the highest percentage of responses was “an approximate time was given.” However, in Bedfordshire no patients reported a time being given at all.

Q8- How would you describe the length of time you waited for the ambulance service to arrive?

Response	County						
	Norfolk	Suffolk	Cambridgeshire	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire	Essex	All Counties
Very acceptable	11/15 (73.3%)	9/17 (52.9%)	9/14 (64.3%)	4/5 (80.0%)	8/10 (80.0%)	17/27 (63.0%)	58/88 (65.9%)
Acceptable	2/15 (13.3%)	4/17 (23.5%)	4/14 (28.6%)	0/5 (0.0%)	2/10 (20.0%)	8/27 (29.6%)	20/88 (22.7%)
Fairly acceptable	0/15 (0.0%)	2/17 (11.8%)	1/14 (7.1%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	3/88 (3.4%)
Unacceptable	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	1/5 (20.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	1/27 (3.7%)	2/88 (2.3%)
Very unacceptable	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	0/88 (0.0%)
Unable to say	2/15 (13.3%)	2/17 (11.8%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	1/27 (3.7%)	5/88 (5.7%)
Number of responses to question	15	17	14	5	10	27	88
No response given	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Although the results of question 7 showed that very few patients were given an exact time the ambulance would take to arrive the majority of patients $(58+20)/88 = 88.6\%$ would describe the time the ambulance took to arrive as acceptable or very acceptable. The most satisfied were patients in Hertfordshire where 100.0% described the length of time they waited for the response to arrive as acceptable or very acceptable. 2 patients answering this question did find the length of time unacceptable, these were cases 50, and 56 who made the following comments:

“Very surprised to have to wait four hours for an ambulance.” (Case 50)

“I was involved in a head on car crash with another driver and was surprised at the length of time it took for ambulances to arrive at the scene. Fortunately, neither myself or the other driver was seriously hurt so this didn't cause any problems but I am glad that neither weren't seriously injured. As a point of interest it also took the police a long time to arrive too. (Case 56)

Case 50 was a patient booked in as a GP urgent. The call was received at 12:35 and the arranged pick up time was 16:35, a response arrived at the patient's home at 15:30. Therefore, according to Trust records there was no delay in the response this patient received. However, it may have been the case that the patient was unaware that they were booked in as a GP urgent and that the response would be several hours rather than an emergency response.

Our records for case 56 show that the call for the RTA was received at 16:22 and the first vehicle on scene arrived at 16:37. It could be debateable whether this response time was appropriate however, a 15 minute cat B response is usual for an RTA. It is interesting to note

that the patient was unhappy with this and that they would have expected a faster response in these circumstances.

Q9- Did the ambulance service staff introduce themselves to you?

Response	County						
	Norfolk	Suffolk	Cambridgeshire	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire	Essex	All Counties
Yes	13/15 (86.7%)	17/17 (100.0%)	14/14 (100.0%)	4/5 (80.0%)	5/9 (55.6%)	24/27 (88.9%)	77/87 (88.5%)
Yes, but I would have liked them to introduce themselves to a greater extent	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/9 (0.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	0/87 (0.0%)
No	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	1/5 (20.0%)	1/9 (11.1%)	0/27 (0.0%)	2/87 (2.3%)
Unable to say	2/15 (13.3%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	3/9 (33.3%)	3/27 (11.1%)	8/87 (9.2%)
Number of responses to question	15	17	14	5	9	27	87
No response given	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

A significant 88.5% of patients responding to this question said that the ambulance service staff introduced themselves. This is a really positive result to see, with only 2/87 (2.3%) answered that staff had not done so.

Q10- How would you describe the attitude of the ambulance service staff that attended you?

Response	County						
	Norfolk	Suffolk	Cambridgeshire	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire	Essex	All Counties
Very professional	14/15 (93.3%)	17/17 (100.0%)	14/14 (100.0%)	5/5 (100.0%)	9/10 (90.0%)	27/27 (100.0%)	86/88 (97.7%)
A little improvement necessary	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	1/10 (10.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	1/88 (1.1%)
Not professional	1/15 (6.7%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	1/88 (1.1%)
Unable to say	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	0/88 (0.0%)
Number of responses to question	15	17	14	5	10	27	88
No response given	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The results of this question are extremely positive. With 97.7% of patient’s responding would describe the attitude of ambulance service staff as very professional and in 4 of the 6 counties a 100.0% of participants consider staff to have been very professional.

1 patient described staff as unprofessional. This was case 23 who made the following comments:

“Every other time I have had an ambulance crew out to me (approx 30 times now), I am checked over (i.e. B.P., E.C.G., Blood Sugar levels, obs etc), this time I was helped from the road in which I had been lying unconscious and ordered to go home with no further

investigation. I was actually going to make a formal complaint but didn't want it to affect the amazing care that I am normally given.”

To investigate this comment the record for this incident was looked at. According to Trust record on this occasion this patient appears to have been sufficiently triaged. This being the case and the fact that the patient states that she is a regular user of the ambulance service, may indicate it was another incident to which this patient is referring rather than the one in the sample period, but without details this is not an incident we are able to trace to investigate.

Q11- Did the ambulance crew explain your care and treatment to you in a way that was easy to understand?

Response	County						
	Norfolk	Suffolk	Cambridgeshire	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire	Essex	All Counties
Yes, definitely	12/15 (80.0%)	14/17 (82.4%)	12/14 (85.7%)	4/5 (80.0%)	7/10 (70.0%)	25/27 (92.6%)	74/88 (84.1%)
Yes, to some extent	0/15 (0.0%)	1/17 (5.9%)	2/14 (14.3%)	0/5 (0.0%)	1/10 (10.0%)	1/27 (3.7%)	5/88 (5.7%)
Yes, but not in a way I was able to understand	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	0/88 (0.0%)
No, no explanation was given	1/15 (6.7%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	1/5 (20.0%)	1/10 (10.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	3/88 (3.4%)
Unable to say	2/15 (13.3%)	2/17 (11.8%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	1/10 (10.0%)	1/27 (3.7%)	6/88 (6.8%)
Number of responses to question	15	17	14	5	10	27	88
No response given	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The majority of patients responding to this question have said that the ambulance crew explained their care to them in a way that was easy to understand. Patients in Essex answered most positively with 25/27 (92.6%) stating they received an explanation of their care and treatment that they considered easy to understand. 3 patients answered negatively to this question, indicating that they had received no explanation from ambulance service staff of the care and treatment they were given. These were cases 23, 67, 74. For comments from case 23 see q10.

Both case 67, ad 74 were patients who were unconscious at the time of the incident and therefore could be considered as valid exceptions to receiving and explanation of their care from ambulance service staff at the time of the incident.

“Patient could not breathe and was unconscious.” (Case 67)

“...Phone call from neighbour saying patient needed ambulance. Patient never regained consciousness and died following day. The ambulance worked hard and efforts were appreciated. (Case 74)

Overall, both case 67 and the person responding on behalf of the patient in case 74 were overall satisfied with the service they received form the Ambulance Trust. (See results of q18)

Q12- Were you satisfied with the advice you received from the ambulance service staff?

Response	County						
	Norfolk	Suffolk	Cambridgeshire	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire	Essex	All Counties
Very satisfied	13/15 (86.7%)	14/17 (82.4%)	11/14 (78.6%)	4/5 (80.0%)	7/10 (70.0%)	24/27 (88.9%)	73/88 (83.0%)
Satisfied	0/15 (0.0%)	1/17 (5.9%)	3/14 (21.4%)	0/5 (0.0%)	1/10 (10.0%)	2/27 (7.4%)	7/88 (8.0%)
Fairly satisfied	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	2/10 (20.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	2/88 (2.3%)
Unsatisfied	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	0/88 (0.0%)
Very unsatisfied	1/15 (6.7%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	1/88 (1.1%)
Unable to say/ No advice was given	1/15 (6.7%)	2/17 (11.8%)	0/14 (0.0%)	1/5 (20.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	1/27 (3.7%)	5/88 (5.7%)
Number of responses to question	15	17	14	5	10	27	88
No response given	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

80.0% to 100.0% of patients are very satisfied or satisfied with the advice they received from ambulance service staff. Patients from Cambridgeshire are most satisfied with the advice they received with $(11+3)/14 = 100.0\%$ giving a positive response. Overall, the majority of patients $(73+7)/88 = 90.9\%$ are very satisfied or satisfied with the advice they received from the ambulance service. The patient who answered that they were very unsatisfied was case 23. (See q10 analysis)

Q13- Did the ambulance service staff assess you for pain?

Response	County						
	Norfolk	Suffolk	Cambridgeshire	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire	Essex	All Counties
Yes	13/15 (86.7%)	15/16 (93.8%)	14/14 (100.0%)	4/5 (80.0%)	6/9 (66.7%)	25/27 (92.6%)	77/86 (89.5%)
No	2/15 (13.3%)	1/16 (6.3%)	0/14 (0.0%)	1/5 (20.0%)	3/9 (33.3%)	2/27 (7.4%)	9/86 (10.5%)
Number of responses to question	15	16	14	5	9	27	86
No response given	0	1	0	0	1	0	2

When attending a patient a clinician should always assess the patient's pain. If the patient does not appear to be in any pain and does not indicate that they are experiencing any pain the clinician may make the assessment that the patient's pain score is 0, and may not inform the patient that they had made this assessment.

The majority of patients answering this question stated that they were assessed for pain by the clinician (89.5%). However, looking at the records for the patients who completed questionnaires shows that only $41/88 = 46.6\%$ had a pain assessment recorded on their medical record. This is an interesting inconsistency as it either indicates that a significant proportion of staff are conducting pain assessments but are not recording them, or that a significant proportion of clinicians are not assessing pain but that patients are remembering details of the incident to the contrary.

Q14- Did the ambulance service staff give you any pain relief?

Response	County						
	Norfolk	Suffolk	Cambridgeshire	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire	Essex	All Counties
Yes	9/16 (56.3%)	3/18 (16.7%)	3/15 (20.0%)	1/5 (20.0%)	2/11 (18.2%)	7/29 (24.1%)	25/94 (26.6%)
No	5/16 (31.3%)	8/18 (44.4%)	7/15 (46.7%)	2/5 (40.0%)	6/11 (54.5%)	10/29 (34.5%)	38/94 (40.0%)
Unable to say/ cannot remember	1/16 (6.3%)	3/18 (16.7%)	2/15 (13.3%)	1/5 (20.0%)	1/11 (9.1%)	0/29 (0.0%)	8/94 (8.5%)
I was not experiencing any pain	1/16 (6.3%)	4/18 (22.2%)	3/15 (20.0%)	1/5 (20.0%)	2/11 (18.2%)	12/29 (41.4%)	23/94 (24.5%)
Number of responses to question	16	18	15	5	11	29	94
No response given	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Interestingly, around 20% of patients are given pain relief in the majority of counties with the exception of Norfolk where the figure is significantly higher at 56.3%. This means 36% more patients received pain relief in Norfolk than any other county.

Q15- Were you taken to hospital by the ambulance crew?

Response	County						
	Norfolk	Suffolk	Cambridgeshire	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire	Essex	All Counties
Yes	13/15 (86.7%)	17/17 (100.0%)	9/14 (64.3%)	3/5 (60.0%)	7/10 (70.0%)	22/27 (81.5%)	71/88 (80.7%)
No, I went to hospital by other means	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	1/5 (20.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	1/88 (1.1%)
No, I was left at my home	1/15 (6.7%)	0/17 (0.0%)	3/14 (21.4%)	1/5 (20.0%)	3/10 (30.0%)	4/27 (14.8%)	12/88 (13.6%)
No, I was left at the scene of the incident which was not my home	1/15 (6.7%)	0/17 (0.0%)	2/14 (14.3%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	1/27 (3.7%)	4/88 (4.5%)
Number of responses to question	15	17	14	5	10	27	88
No response given	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Ambulance Trust statistics show that approximately a quarter to a third of all patients are not conveyed to hospital. Results to this question are not consistent with this expected figure with only $(12+4)/88 = 18.2\%$ of patients reporting that they were not conveyed to hospital. 80.7% of patients were taken to hospital by the ambulance crew. Results from patients in Cambridgeshire appear to be the most representative of the kind of figures usually expected for this trust. Some of this difference in the outcome of incidents may be due to the sample population used. Patients in the NSC sample were all taken from EPCR. Currently, EPCR is predominantly in use in ambulances and is yet to be installed in singleton responder vehicles, as such, singleton staff responders are still using PRFs. Therefore, patients who received a singleton responder who did not require an ambulance to convey them to hospital were less likely to have an EPCR. This may have been slightly have caused the sample to have been bias to include more patients who require ambulances and who were then conveyed to hospital. While this may account for some of the differences in the NSC area it does not account for difference in the other counties. Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire results are approximately as expected but Essex does seem to have conveyed more patients than the Trust would usually expect with this type of general sample.

Q16- How involved do you feel you were in the decisions made regarding your care?

Response	County						
	Norfolk	Suffolk	Cambridgeshire	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire	Essex	All Counties
Very involved	12/15 (80.0%)	13/17 (76.5%)	11/14 (78.6%)	3/5 (60.0%)	9/10 (90.0%)	16/27 (59.3%)	64/88 (72.7%)
Fairly involved	1/15 (6.7%)	2/17 (11.8%)	1/14 (7.1%)	1/5 (20.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	7/27 (25.9%)	12/88 (13.6%)
Not involved	2/15 (13.3%)	2/17 (11.8%)	2/14 (14.3%)	1/5 (20.0%)	1/10 (10.0%)	4/27 (14.8%)	12/88 (13.6%)
Number of responses to question	15	17	14	5	10	27	88
No response given	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

It is important that patients are involved in their care and are involved in, and given choice in the decisions made about their care. $(64+12)/88 = 86.4\%$ of patients felt that they were involved in some way in the decisions made about their care. Patients in Hertfordshire appear to be most involved in decisions regarding their care with 90.0% giving this positive response. Overall, a fairly significant 13.6% of patients answered negatively, that they were not involved in the decisions made. Looking into these cases in more detail reveals that all of the 12 patients answering that they were not involved in the decisions made (except case 23) were very satisfied or satisfied with the service they received. No patient commented specifically on their involvement in decisions made about their care and treatment.

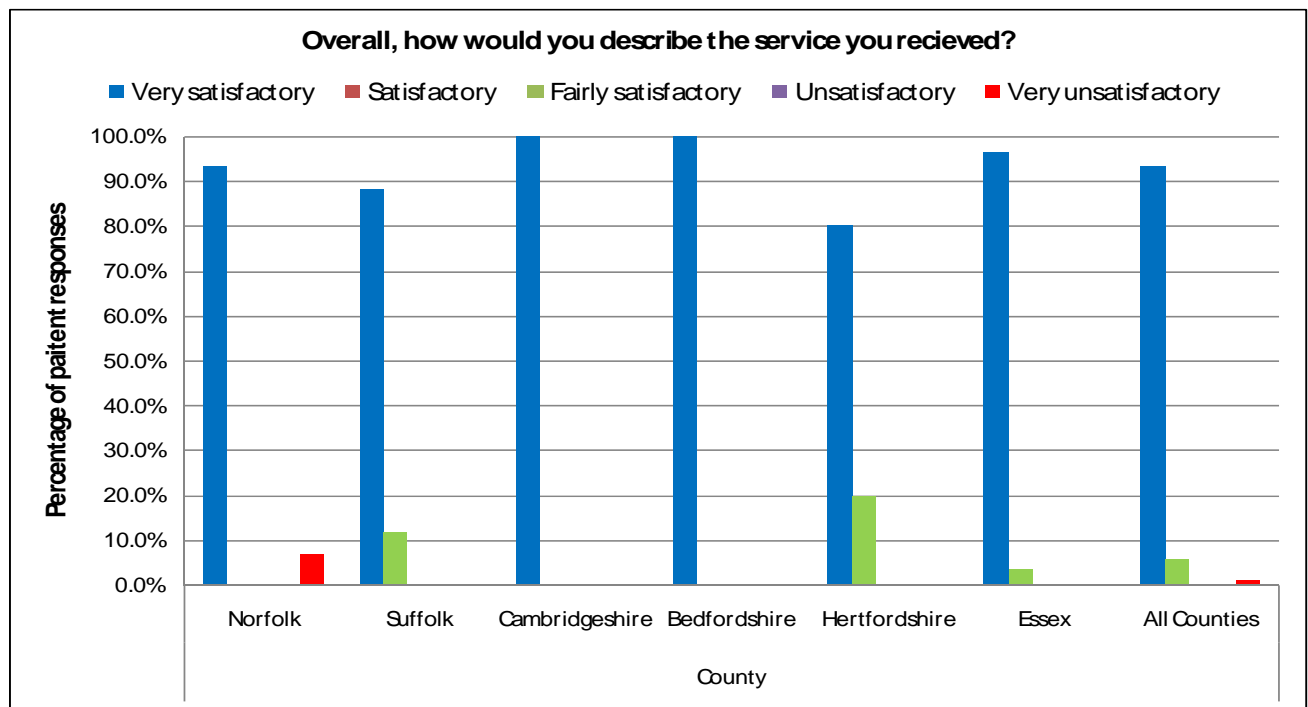
Q17- How would you describe the service you received in relation to your expectations?

Response	County						
	Norfolk	Suffolk	Cambridgeshire	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire	Essex	All Counties
Exceeded my expectations	9/15 (60.0%)	10/17 (58.8%)	9/14 (64.3%)	3/5 (60.0%)	7/9 (77.8%)	9/27 (33.3%)	47/87 (54.0%)
Met my expectations	4/15 (26.7%)	6/17 (35.3%)	5/14 (35.7%)	2/5 (40.0%)	1/9 (11.1%)	18/27 (66.7%)	36/87 (41.4%)
Reasonably met my expectations	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	1/9 (11.1%)	0/27 (0.0%)	1/87 (1.1%)
Barely met my expectations	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/9 (0.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	0/87 (0.0%)
Did not meet my expectations	1/15 (6.7%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/9 (0.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	1/87 (1.1%)
Unable to say	1/15 (6.7%)	1/17 (5.9%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/9 (0.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	2/87 (2.3%)
Number of responses to question	15	17	14	5	9	27	87
No response given	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

The results of this question were highly positive with $(47+36)/87 = 95.4\%$ of patient describing the service as having met or exceeded their expectations. The 1 patient who did not have their expectations met was case 23. (See q10 analysis)

Q18- Overall, how would you describe the service you received?

Response	County						
	Norfolk	Suffolk	Cambridgeshire	Bedfordshire	Hertfordshire	Essex	All Counties
Very satisfactory	14/15 (93.3%)	15/17 (88.2%)	14/14 (100.0%)	5/5 (100.0%)	8/10 (80.0%)	26/27 (96.3%)	82/88 (93.2%)
Satisfactory	0/15 (0.0%)	2/17 (11.8%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	2/10 (20.0%)	1/27 (3.7%)	5/88 (5.7%)
Fairly satisfactory	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	0/88 (0.0%)
Unsatisfactory	0/15 (0.0%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	0/88 (0.0%)
Very unsatisfactory	1/15 (6.7%)	0/17 (0.0%)	0/14 (0.0%)	0/5 (0.0%)	0/10 (0.0%)	0/27 (0.0%)	1/88 (1.1%)
Number of responses to question	15	17	14	5	10	27	88
No response given	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



(82+5)/88 = 98.9% of patients responding to this survey would describe the service they received as very satisfactory or satisfactory. 1/88 (1.1%) would describe the service as unsatisfactory. This was case 23 whose comments were discussed in response to question 10.

Overall, this is a highly positive result and shows that the Eeast is providing a good service that patients are happy with.

Ethnicity

A report published in November 2006 by the Health Care Commission (HCC) Variations in the experiences of patients using the NHS services in England 2004/2005 found that patients from minority ethnic groups are more likely to be dissatisfied with the service they received from the NHS. This question on ethnicity was asked to ensure that patient's experience of the ambulance service is the same regardless of ethnicity.

q23- Ethnicity	q17- Overall, how would you describe the service you received?						Total number of responses
	No reply	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Fairly satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Very unsatisfactory	
No reply	0	7	1	0	0	0	8
White British	0	71	4	0	0	1	76
White Irish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Any other White	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White and Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White and Black African	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indian	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Pakistani	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Bangladeshi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Caribbean	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
African	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Any other Asian background	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Any other Black background	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Any other mixed background	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

From looking at the ethnicity of patients responding to this survey it can be seen that there is no difference in patient's responses based on ethnicity. No patient from an ethnic minority group appears to be dissatisfied with the service provided. However, this is a very small sample of Trust patients and as such may not be representative of the patient population. To find out if patients from ethnic minority groups are less satisfied with the service the Trust provides it would be prudent to conduct a future survey project specifically aim at these groups.

Patient Comments

For a complete list of additional comments made by participants see appendix.

Conclusions

The purpose of this survey was to investigate whether it is possible to encourage more participants to complete a questionnaire online, results of which have proved both insightful and valuable. Results have shown that not providing a paper questionnaire significantly increased the online survey response rate, from between 1.5% - 6.1% in previous surveys to nearly a quarter at 24.7%, thus effectively increasing online participation. However, with a large majority of patients responding that they do not have internet access it is clear that a significant proportion of our patient population would be excluded from giving feedback if the Trust was to stop providing paper questionnaires. Therefore, unless there is a significant increase in patient access to the internet it would currently be unwise to adopt the methodology used in this survey project for future survey work to ensure a good response rate is maintained and that no patient is excluded from giving feedback.

Having said this, it is evident that the Trust should continue to encourage patients who have access to the internet to complete questionnaires online. This survey has proven it is possible to achieve an online response rate of nearly 25%, which if this could be replicated for every survey project the Trust could make significant savings on the cost of postage. Currently, encouragement to complete questionnaires online is through a comment on the letter sent to patients which indicates online completion saves the Trust money. As yet, this method has not achieved the 25% online response rate that this project has shown is possible. It is therefore clear that this method of promoting online completion is not working effectively and needs to be reconsidered to see if the 25% online response rate can be replicated in the future.

The result in response to the questionnaire itself were very positive with a significant 98.9% of patients answering that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received and 95.4% had their expectations met or exceeded. The majority of patients made contact with the ambulance Trust by having someone else call on their behalf and for over half of patients the ambulance Trust is the first health care provider they contacted for the incident. Although a significant proportion of patients were not given an estimation of the length of time ambulance service staff would take to arrive, the Trust is arriving on scene in a timely manner with 88.6% of respondents finding the length of time it took acceptable or very acceptable.

Questions regarding pain relief show that 89.5% of patients believe they were assessed for pain by the ambulance crew, however, this is not reflected in Trust records where only 46.6% of patients had a pain assessment score recorded. Overall, just over a quarter of patients reported that they were given pain relief across the Trust except in Norfolk where the percentage is significantly higher at 56.3%.

Ambulance service staff continue to perform well with 97.7% of patients describing staff attitude as very professional and 88.5% stating that the staff introduced themselves. Furthermore, 89.8% of patients felt the ambulance staff described their care in a way that was easy to understand, 91.0% of patients answered that the advice they received was satisfactory or very satisfactory and 86.4% of patients felt they were involved in decisions made regarding their care. These are all very positive results that reflect well on the performance of Trust staff.

Action

Action	Person responsible	Planned Action Date
Review survey cover letter to encourage more patients to complete surveys online.	Victoria Maillardet, Trust Patient Survey Co-ordinator	December 2007

Abbreviations

EEAST – East of England Ambulance service NHS Trust

EPCR – Electronic Patient Care Record

PRF/ CRF – Patient Report Form / Clinical Report Form

OOH – Out of Hours

NSC – Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire

Appendix

Case Number	Comments
7	Mine was a very minor injury so in many ways it doesn't matter but I felt the 'care' given was quite off-hand - maybe because they are used to seeing people in a much worse state, which is understandable but I was in shock from a car accident and didn't feel very well looked out for.
19	Excellent service also when I arrived at hospital making sure I was comfortable and attended too promptly
22	Fantastic treatment by ambulance staff, will always remember.
23	Every other time I have had an ambulance crew out to me (approx 30 times now), I am checked over (i.e. B.P., E.C.G., Blood Sugar levels, obs etc), this time I was helped from the road in which I had been lying unconscious and ordered to go home with no further investigation. I was actually going to make a formal complaint but didn't want it to affect the amazing care that I am normally given
33	Wonderful service
38	The ambulance paramedics were absolutely marvellous
39	I suffered concussion so unable to answer some questions as I have no recollection of incident. Although what friends say has been very positive.
48	Excellent service crew very friendly and helpful
50	Very surprised to have to wait four hours for an ambulance
51	I can't fault the excellent service I received
56	I was involved in a head on car crash with another driver and was surprised at the length of time it took for ambulances to arrive at the scene. Fortunately, neither myself nor the other driver was seriously hurt so this didn't cause any problems but I am glad that neither weren't seriously injured. As a point of interest it also took the police a long time to arrive too.
58	I was not in a coherent state having experienced a brain seizure. The fact that I was taken to hospital for much needed treatment endorses the actions of the NHS Ambulance
65	I have filled in this form on behalf of my mother in law who unfortunately has had to use the ambulance service before .the ambulance service has always been excellent in the service it has given and has always shown every care and consideration to my mother in law. Many thanks.
67	Patient could not breathe and was unconscious
71	No Negatives, Just 1st Class professional Service. THANKS
73	Not actually part of this remit, but the care shown by the ambulance crew was not matched by the local pHs trust locally. If the quality had been matched, it is my belief, that the discomfort and ongoing insomnia would have been negated
74	It was suggested patient saw gap social worker to arrange. Phone call from neighbour saying patient needed ambulance. Patient never regained consciousness and died following day. The ambulance worked hard and efforts were appreciated.
75	On the whole I have found paramedics to be fantastic.
76	Ticked exceeded expectation Q17, having used service may times they

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	could not get any better without being superhuman. They also looked after my wife.
78	Ambulance men to be thanked very kind, caring and sensible
80	Marked car paramedic really pleased. No wheelchairs available at Broomfield hosp
81	sense of humour good - put him at ease
82	Very pleased, gentleman very thorough and professional and handled situation well.
83	I was very impressed that the ambulance staff checked my flat was left safe before taking me to hospital. Many thanks
90	Can't fault the service on their attitude-very grateful to them
93	The service received was excellent. I had broken a bone and needed surgery and was in a lot of pain. Well done to the paramedics for helping me thank you. x
94	I was very pleased with ambulance staff. I was relieved to see them they were very kind
95	Second time used the service. both times fantastic, very good, very funny lovely.