

The SHS patient survey 2025

Design process

We looked at previous survey topics and canvassed opinions from team leaders for areas where patient opinion could inform practice development and review. The possible topics were distributed to 49 members of the PPG (Patient participation group) and the areas identified as most important to the patients were used to form the survey. Please see the attached document to see details about our PPG.

Distribution

The survey was sent via SMS to 2592 patients who had a consultation in the preceding 2 months. All questions were mandatory to answer. We had a total of 172 respondents. The outcome was circulated for review by team leaders and discussed in a meeting, with action points generated.

Questions

The questions centred around these key areas:

- Ability and ease of updating records with preferred pronouns, title and calling name
- New telephone system
- NHS app
- Accurx Online Consultation Service
- Strengths of Students' Health Service
- Waiting area layout

Profile of respondents

- 72% undergraduate, 21% postgraduate, 6% former students still living in the area, and 2% a relative or partner of a student
- 73% UK national, 3% EU/EEA national and 22% international student from outside EU. This is representative of the student population (25% international) and comparable to previous years.
- 94% are neither a carer nor a parent
- 31% consider themselves to have a significant, longstanding health condition. Although still a high percentage, this is lower than last year (40%) and the year before (75%). Patients with longstanding conditions are more likely to use our services and will therefore have more frequent reminders to provide feedback.
- 73% female, 21% male, 3% non-binary, 1% 'unsure how to describe myself', 1% 'prefer not to say' and 2% 'other'. The 2% other included transgender patients.

Questions in the Patient Survey

Updating records

Did you know you can update your medical record to include your preferred pronouns, title (e.g., Mx, Ms), and the name you'd like to be called?

44% were aware that they could update their information, but 34% advised it was not relevant for them. 56% were unaware, but 48% advised it was not relevant for them. For the 8% (13 patients) who were unaware, and it was relevant, they were directed by the question to contact the reception team.

How easy did you find it to make changes to your record of gender identity at Students' Health Service?

18 responses were received from those who had made changes. 83% had found it 'very easy' or 'quite easy'. 17% had found it difficult but 0% very difficult.

Do you feel your pronouns and gender identity have been recognised and respected?

18 responses were received, with 67% saying yes, 33% saying not relevant to them, and 6% (one patient) saying no.

Actions

[Gender and sexuality | Students' Health Service | University of Bristol](#)

The website has been checked to ensure that it contains the guidance to advise the practice on changes that patients would like- *'Let us know your calling name so we can add it to your NHS medical records. Please also let us know which pronouns you use. If we forget to ask you, please tell us!'*

New Phone System

Background information was provided-

In March 2025, we updated our phone system to meet the latest NHS standards. We're now looking to gather feedback to ensure the new system is working well for everyone.

Have you called the practice since 11th of March 2025?

76% (131 patients) had called the practice since the new system had been installed. This was therefore a good representation of our users of the new phone system.

Do you think the menu options on the new phone system were an improvement?

Of the 131, 49% said Yes and 44% were unsure. Only 7% (9 patients) said No.

Have you used the call back facility?

17% (22 patients) had used the callback facility

How would you rate the call back facility?

96% found it either 'quite useful' or 'really useful'. Only one patient (5%) advised it was not useful.

Do you have any comments about the new phone system?

20 patients commented on the phone system but 6 were to say, 'no comment'.

Of the comments some were positive- including 'Very helpful :)', 'Liked how u can hold space in the queue', 'and I like the clear instructions a lot more, it makes me feel better as an autistic adult'.

Others did not clearly relate to the phone system but were positive comments- 'I like the people I talk to when I have called' and 'I am completely satisfied with my registered GP'.

Some comments were less positive or raised concerns- 'Long winded wait before selecting options for call', 'It feels like the people in the queue are being helped before my callback activates', 'The new systems instructions are clearer, but feels long/complicated',

Others included helpful suggestions for improvements- 'Would be great if there was a button to bypass having to hear all the options and go straight to reception', 'There were lots of unnecessary prerecorded messages all in different voices that could probably be shortened or removed', 'The website on the Bristol university page needs to be updated to match the new phone system - it currently says to press ?? Or I could be mistaken but that is no longer the right number to press.', 'The music is too loud compared to the volume that the phone operator speaks at when the call goes through', 'When receiving texts to advice me to call the SHS I was told to call Option 1 but this was not the appropriate option for my reason for calling', and 'please make the introduction shorter'.

Actions taken

- Reviewed the messages ensuring only essential information was recorded. The wait time for selecting options is now 40 seconds*.
- You do keep your place and are called back at your place in the queue - no further action needed on this feedback.
- All the messages have been reviewed and where the phone system allows, the same voice has now been selected.
- Re 'The music is too loud compared to the volume the operator speaks at when the call goes through' - The point has been raised with the provider, and we are awaiting a response.

**"Welcome to the, University of Bristol Students Health Service. All calls are recorded for training and monitoring purposes. If you have a medical emergency such as chest pain,*

breathing difficulties or vomiting blood, please hang up and dial 999 . For repeat prescriptions, please visit our website for information on how to re-order. We will always ask a brief reason for your appointment in order to direct you to the most appropriate person

If you are calling today to check when you have an appointment or to cancel an appointment, please press 1 or hold for the main menu

Please listen to the following options.

To book or change an appointment, press 1.

For admin queries, test results, hospital referrals & symptomatic sexual health appointments, excluding exceptional circumstances, press 2.

If you are phoning for a letter to support exceptional circumstances, press 3.

For prescription queries, press 4

To hear these options again, please press star"

NHS App

Background information was provided-

The NHS App is a free, secure mobile application that allows individuals in England to access various NHS services and their health records on their smartphones or tablets. It enables users to view their GP health record, manage appointments, order repeat prescriptions, and access other health information.

I have installed and use the NHS app

84% had used the NHS app, so a good representation of 145 patients for the follow on questions

I have used the NHS app for...

67% had used for Test results, 44% for Checking progress of a referral, 32% for Vaccination records, 56% for Prescription requests, 55% for Reading through consultation notes. Other uses for 3% included checking appointments, reading messages and appointment reminders and correspondence. One commented they were unable to connect.

How easy was it to install and connect the app to Students' Health Service?

83% had found it easy to install and connect the app to SHS. 17% had found it either difficult or somewhat difficult.

How useful do you find the NHS app?

97% found the app either somewhat or really useful.

Actions taken

We are considering steps to further improve the uptake of NHSapp usage as part of a PCN drive to improve numbers.

In a later free text option a patient commented that 'the NHSapp is clunky', however we are unable to modify the app itself.

Accurx Online Consultation Service

Patients were asked about their use of the online consultation service-

I have used the Online service for contacting Students' Health Service

34% had used the service

How useful was the Accurx Online consultation service?

This was divided into those who used the service to request a non-urgent medical appointment where 92% had found it 'really' or 'somewhat useful', and those who used the service for requesting admin assistance such as obtaining a list of vaccines, receiving blood test results, etc. where 81% found it 'really' or 'somewhat useful'.

This was helpful feedback confirming that patients are satisfied with this service.

Strengths of Students' Health Service

Background information provided - We are committed to providing the highest standard of care to our patients, even within the challenging demands of the NHS.

How does the care you've received at Students' Health Service compare to other GP practices you've experienced? We'd value your thoughts. What do you think we are doing well? Are there any areas where you feel we could improve?

93 patients provided responses which provides a significant insight into their opinions of the practice. However, a number of the responses were advising that they had not used an alternative GP service previously and were therefore unable to compare.

We used an AI tool to summarise the thematics from the feedback to enable review.

What Patients Say You're Doing Well

Access & Speed

- Many patients found it much easier to book appointments compared with home GPs.

“It’s so much easier to get an appointment here than at my GP at home.”

“Same-day appointments are a lifesaver – I’d never get that elsewhere.”

Staff Attitudes

- Doctors and nurses are described as kind, empathetic, and thorough.

“The doctors really listen and take me seriously.”

“Everyone is so kind – I feel cared for and understood.”

Communication

- Explanations and treatment plans are valued.

“The GP explained everything so clearly, I felt reassured.”

“I never feel rushed – they make sure I understand my options.”

Environment

- Patients like the calm, organised atmosphere and inclusive touches.

“It feels more welcoming and less stressful than my old GP.”

“The alternative waiting area for autistic patients is brilliant.”

Continuity & Support

- Being able to see the same GP for ongoing issues is appreciated.

“I’ve had amazing support for my mental health – better than I expected.”

“They helped me with letters for my studies and accommodation, which made a huge difference.”

Areas Where Patients Feel You Could Improve

Reception Experience

- Feedback here is very mixed. Some found reception staff helpful, others found them rude or unhelpful.

“Receptionists can be really rude and dismissive – it puts me off calling.”

“Sometimes reception are lovely, but other times it feels like they don’t want to help.”

Process Failures

- Issues with prescriptions, test results, and specialist letters not being handled smoothly.

“My prescription request wasn’t sent through properly.”

“I waited weeks for a hospital letter to be passed on – it delayed my care.”

Appointment Challenges

- While access is generally better than elsewhere, some mention waits for non-urgent care or repetition of history.

“It used to be faster to get an appointment – now I sometimes wait a week.”

“I’ve had to repeat my whole story to three different doctors.”

Clinical Consistency

- Quality of care can feel uneven across different GPs.

“One doctor was amazing, another just dismissed my concerns.”

“I was told my symptoms were nothing – but later it turned out to be serious.”

Communication with Hospitals

- Poor links between SHS and hospitals sometimes create problems.

“The hospital said they’d sent my results, but SHS didn’t have them – I got stuck in the middle.”

Special Services

- Suggestions for STI testing, contraception access, and better follow-up.

“It would be great if I could do STI testing here instead of elsewhere.”

“I was told to wait and see – but no one followed up afterwards.”



Overall Impression

Most patients see Students’ Health Service as **better than their home GP practice** in terms of speed, care, and staff attitudes. The strongest praise is for **kindness and professionalism of clinical staff**, while the biggest improvement opportunities lie in **reception interactions** and **admin/communication processes**.

Actions taken

Results of the survey and relevant comments to be discussed at Reception and Office Team meetings.

As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance customer service, it's worth noting that the reception team undergoes annual training focused on best practices and communication skills. Additionally, the implementation of a new phone system that records calls provides a new valuable resource for training and quality assurance.

Waiting area layout

Background information was provided-

In recent Friends and Family survey feedback students have commented on the layout of the main surgery waiting room, we have been trialling different layouts and would appreciate feedback on your likes and dislikes.

Have you recently visited the Students' Health Service and spent time in the waiting area?

96% had attended recently.

We have tried to make the area inclusive to all and have added areas in circles where patients can engage with others, areas where there are rows of seats facing the digital screens and rows facing the reception desk. We have also designated a quiet waiting area for anyone who finds the main area overwhelming, this is located down the corridor past the toilets to the right of the reception desk. Which area(s) do you find most comfortable?

58% identified a Circle of seating around a small table, 41% Rows facing the digital screens, 22% Rows facing the reception desk and 27% Seating in the quiet waiting area. Some made additional comments via the other section explaining the importance to them of magazines being nearby, or good internet connection, and not having someone behind them.

Actions taken

The reception staff have been tasked with setting up the waiting room with a variety of seating plans as a range of options are desired by those attending the surgery. Signposting to the quiet area has been discussed but also concerns raised that such a high percentage of respondents suggested they would prefer this area that it would no longer be a quiet area. Staff are highlighting this area to patients with sensory sensitivities and will continue to do so.

[Appointments and contacts | Students' Health Service | University of Bristol](#)

The website now has a section under 'appointments and contacts' called 'Worried about your appointment?' which highlights the quiet waiting area- *'If you feel anxious waiting in the waiting room or find it overwhelming, let reception staff know as we have a quieter waiting area you can use. If you are autistic, you can download and print an ['I am autistic' card from Autism UK](#) to let staff know you may need a little extra support or a quiet space.'*

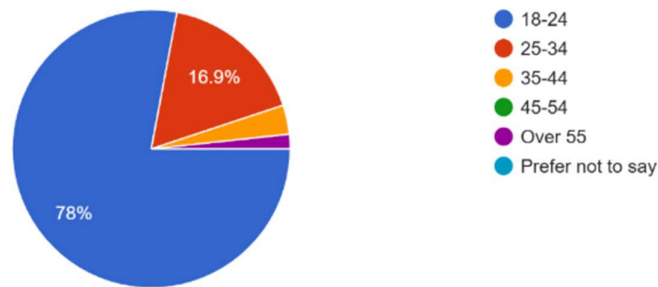
Students' Health Service – Patient Participation Group (PPG) 2025

The Patient Participation Group (PPG) at the Students' Health Service (SHS) is reformed each year to ensure it reflects the current student/patient population. Invitations to join the PPG are promoted through our website, displayed in the waiting room, and sent directly to patients who have had a face-to-face or telephone appointment within the previous three months.

In January 2025, we invited 1,428 patients to participate. A total of 59 patients expressed interest in joining the group. The charts below provide demographic information about the respondents, illustrating the diversity of the group in terms of gender, age, and academic background.

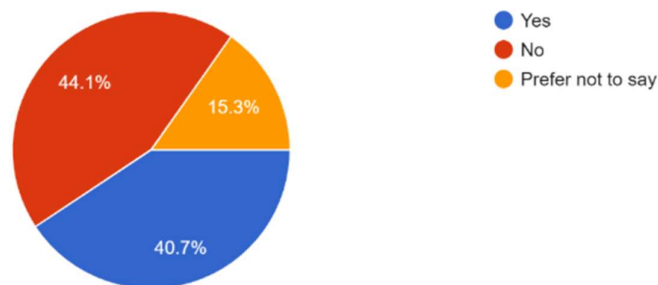
Age

59 responses



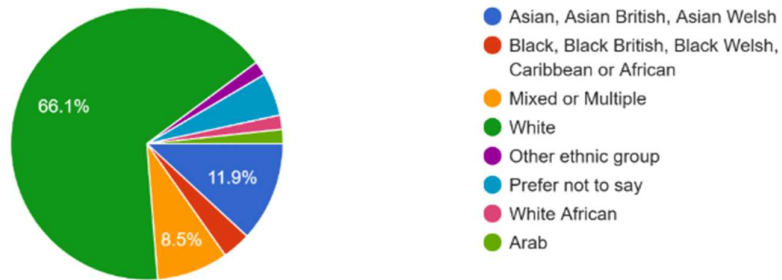
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

59 responses



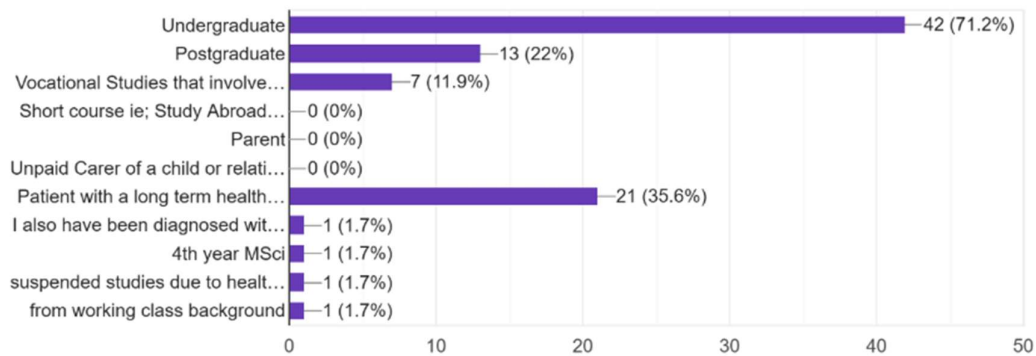
Which ethnic background do you most closely identify with?

59 responses



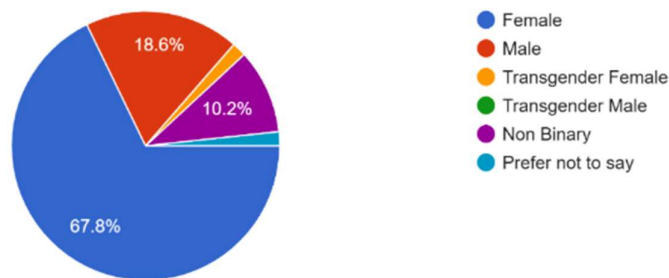
About you - please tick all that are relevant

59 responses



Gender

59 responses



(Please not the last category on the About you chart the patient has added themselves there was no question about class background)