
South Glamorgan Community Health Council

Who Are You Going To Call?

January 2023



Accessible formats

This report is also available in Welsh.

If you would like this publication in an alternative format and/or language, please contact us.

You can download it from our website or ask for a copy by contacting our office.

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About the Community Health Councils (CHCs)

CHCs are the independent watchdog of the National Health Service (NHS) within Wales. CHCs encourage and support people to have a voice in the design and delivery of NHS services.

CHCs work with the NHS, inspection and regulatory bodies. CHCs provide an important link between those who plan and deliver NHS services, those who inspect and regulate it and those who use it.

CHCs hear from the public in many different ways. Before the coronavirus pandemic, CHCs regularly visited NHS services to hear from people while they were receiving care and treatment. CHCs also heard from people at local community events, and through community representatives and groups.

Since the coronavirus pandemic, CHCs have focused on engaging with people in different ways.

This includes surveys, apps, videoconferencing and social media to hear from people directly about their views and experiences of NHS services as well as through community groups.

There are 7 CHCs in Wales. Each one represents the “patient and public” voice in a different part of Wales.

Executive Summary

The South Glamorgan CHC wanted to gain feedback and insight from patients and their families on how they would access Accident & Emergency Services in University Hospital Wales, Cardiff, as well as their experiences of the CAV 24/7 and Welsh Ambulance Service Trust [WAST] 111 telephone service.

We received a number of surveys which asked respondents to provide feedback on:

- How they would access A&E services.
- Their awareness and experiences of CAV 24/7.
- Their awareness and experiences of WAST 111 service.

A&E Access

There was an equitable split between the two most common responses to how patients would access A&E services for a non-threatening issue. 39% respondents would call the WAST 111 to access A&E. 38% of respondents would attend the A&E Department in person.

CAV 24/7

Awareness of this services was relatively low with only 26% of respondents reporting their awareness of this service.

Experiences were mixed with some reporting the service to be useful and efficient, other reported still experiencing long waits in the A&E Department, long waits for appointments and long waits for return calls from the service.

WAST 111

Awareness of this service was much higher with 79% respondents confirming their knowledge of this service.

Some patients reported very positive experiences, receiving the most appropriate advice or treatment, from the most appropriate healthcare professional for their concern.

Many respondents however felt this service was '*pointless*' and simply signposts callers to their GP or A&E with this process simply adding to the overall time taken to be seen in A&E by a Clinician.

Introduction & Background

The South Glamorgan Community Health Council strives to hear from patients and the public across all demographics, communities, and groups within Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

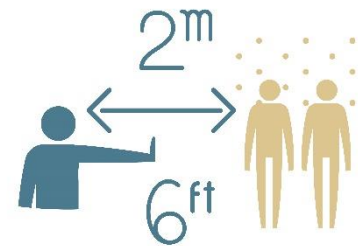
As well as requesting general feedback from the public on matters concerning their healthcare, the CHC also runs specific, targeted campaigns for information and feedback from patients with specific health conditions or disabilities, or on specific services within the NHS, in order to ensure we hear from all groups of society in regard to their healthcare provision.

In this instance, the CHC wanted to hear directly from patients with regards to how they would access Accident & Emergency Services in University Hospital Wales, Cardiff, as well as their experiences of the CAV 24/7 and Welsh Ambulance Service Trust [WAST] 111 telephone service.



In March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic caused unimaginable disruption to all aspects of everyday life, including access to Health care services.

Government restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic, around social distancing, PPE and infection control, as well as increased workforce pressures caused by sickness and self-isolation requirements, resulted in a reduction in capacity of services across the NHS.



The CAV 24/7 'phone first' system pilot was introduced for patients wishing to access Accident & Emergency (A&E) Services at University Hospital of Wales (UHW) in Cardiff. Patients were required to telephone a dedicated number, provide information on their health concern, and would be given an appointment time to attend A&E, or directed to another healthcare service if appropriate.

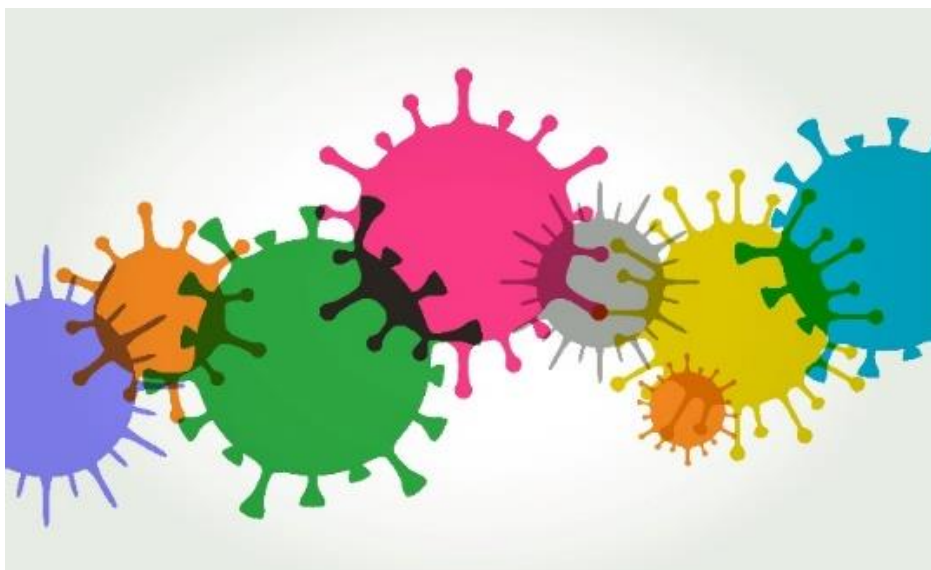
It is the understanding of the CHC that Cardiff & Vale University Health Board (C&V UHB) introduced this pilot in an attempt to manage the footfall and patient numbers in the A&E Department at UHW, and to reduce the length of time patients would be required to be present in the waiting room of the department. All with a view to protecting staff and patients and adhering to

government guidelines introduced with regards to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In March 2022, Cardiff & Vale Of Glamorgan became the final Health Board area in Wales to have access to the National 111 telephone service run by the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST).

The CHC wanted to gather feedback and insight from patients on their awareness of, and experiences of accessing the CAV 24/7 service and WAST 111 in Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan.

Feedback is gathered with a view to making recommendations to the Cardiff & Vale University Health Board and the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust on how to improve the experience from a patient point of view, if appropriate to do so.



What we did

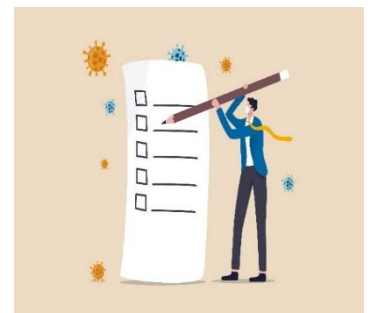
The South Glamorgan CHC devised and published an online survey to gain feedback from patients around their experiences of accessing A&E Services, and their awareness and experiences of accessing the CAV24/7 service and WAST 111.



The survey was listed on our website and publicised through our Facebook and Twitter social media channels. Details of the survey were also included within our regular stakeholder briefings. The survey was available for completion in both English and Welsh.

The survey was available online for completion from 1st August 2022 to 31st October 2022 and asked respondents to provide information around the following:

- ❖ How they would access A&E services.
- ❖ Their level of awareness of the CAV 24/7 service and the 111 service.
- ❖ Their experiences when accessing the CAV 24/7 service and 111 service.



Who we are hearing from

The CHC survey was open to all patients and the public in Cardiff & Vale Of Glamorgan whether they were aware of, or had accessed any of the services detailed within the survey.



What we heard

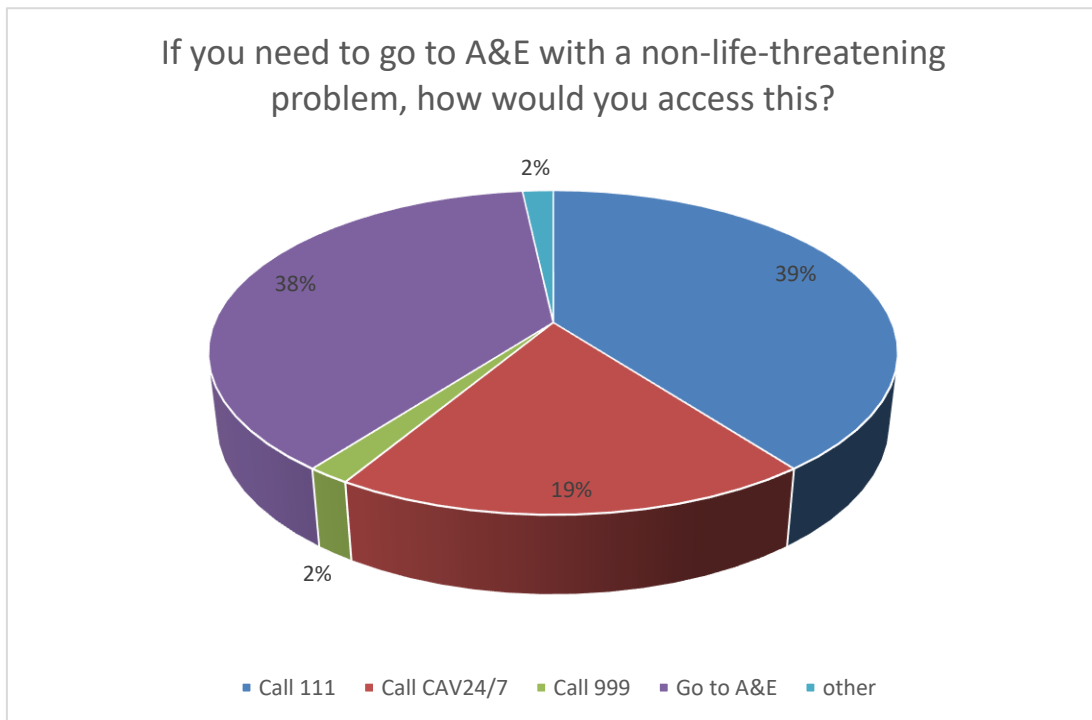
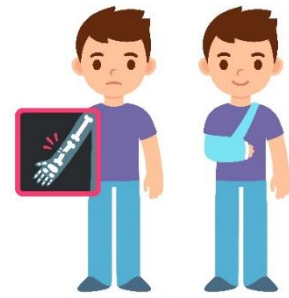
At a glance....

<p>39% survey respondents would access A&E Services by phoning 111.</p>	<p>19% survey respondents would access A&E services by phoning the CAV24/7 service.</p>
<p>79% survey respondents have heard of the 111 service.</p>	<p>57% survey respondents have never heard of the CAV24/7 service.</p>



The CHC wanted to understand how patients access A&E services.

The first question in our survey asked respondents to tell us how they would access A&E services for a non-life-threatening problem.



39% survey respondents would call 111.

19% survey respondents would call CAV24/7.

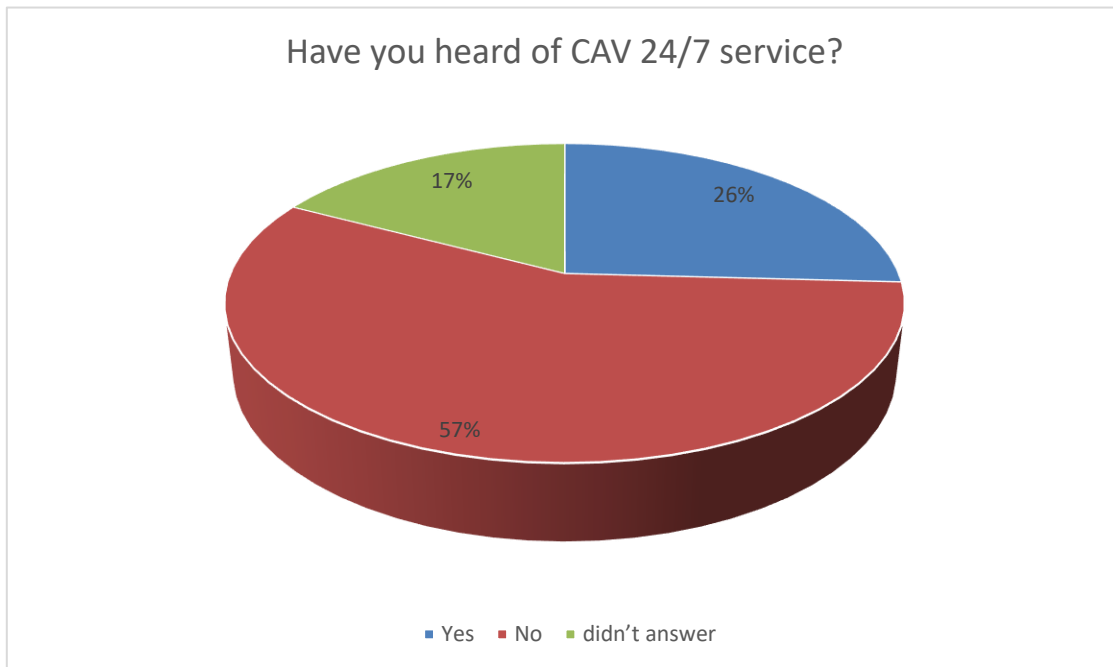
2% survey respondents would call 999.

38% survey respondents would go to A&E.

2% survey respondents answered 'other' to this question.

For those who answered 'other' to this question, when given the opportunity to explain further it was reported they would contact their GP.

Our survey then questioned respondents on their awareness of the existence of the CAV24/7 service.



26% survey respondents confirmed that they had heard of the CAV24/7 service.

57% survey respondents confirmed that they had not heard of the CAV24/7 service.

17% survey respondents chose not to answer this question.

It was interesting to note that one respondent who had heard of the CAV24/7 service, then went on to state that this was only due to the fact that they worked in a GP Surgery.

'because I work in a GP surgery otherwise wouldn't have known.'

We asked those respondents who had heard of the CAV 24/7 service to share their experiences with us and received mixed responses.



Some respondents informed the CHC of very positive experiences describing the service as 'Excellent', 'Very efficient', and 'Helpful'. Phrases such as 'Couldn't fault the service' were used by some, with others praising the service for their assistance in finding the best way to accommodate their disabilities.

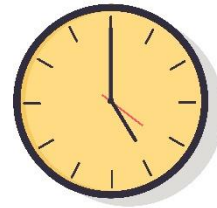
'Good, helpful. Helped me find the best route to accommodate my disabilities and support needs whilst getting the correct treatment even if it meant travelling slightly further.'

'Used during Covid lockdowns for advice on where to go, was excellent and triaged by doctors to make sure you get good advice, including to go to A and E if required. Truly great.'

'used it - very efficient'

'Called CAV24/7 when my daughter needed medical assistance they triaged over the phone. They actually sent a first responder to my home who was amazing along with an ambulance. Couldn't fault the service.'

For those who reported negative experiences with the CAV24/7 service, the main theme of the issues revolved around time.



Time spent on the phone, time taken to receive a call back and time taken to be seen by a Clinician were all reported as issues for respondents.

'A family member was asked to attend at an allocated time it made no difference to the waiting time, in fact the wait for call to be answered added to the end waiting time.'

'They take too long to get back to people'

'wasn't the greatest experience. My daughter had fallen and broken her ankle and we had to wait 14 hours before she was seen...turned out she had snapped it in 3 different places and doctors were shocked we were left for so long before being given an appt'

'When I did use it, it ok ages to get through, then ages to get a call back from a qualified member of staff only to be given a time to attend A&E in a few hours time, when we got there we waited for several hours to be seen again. The whole process just seemed to delay getting seen in A&E'

'One daughter age 10 broke wrist (unknown at the time) - rang the following morning after self-medicating her at home, had a 25min wait for someone to answer after being placed on hold, then when they did answer and I requested an xray was told to wait for Dr to call back, Dr rang and back, I was going to send her to school she said it cant be that bad and said she didn't need x-ray! Rang back the following day as arm had swollen even more and was uncontrollably shaking, given appt immediately. Seen by the amazing childrens' A&E Nurses and Drs x-rayed and cast within the hour!!! Called back after 2 weeks due to them ringing me to say they had picked something up on x-ray she had broke her scaithoid (sic) bone needed proper cast and further appts. This should have happened as soon as I rang the first time, and 2 weeks is too long to leave someone in the brown cast/support when proper cast needed. Not the Nurses or A&E Drs fault who saw her might I add but the time it took x-ray to look into her x-rays. Was told it should have taken max 2 days not 2 weeks!!'

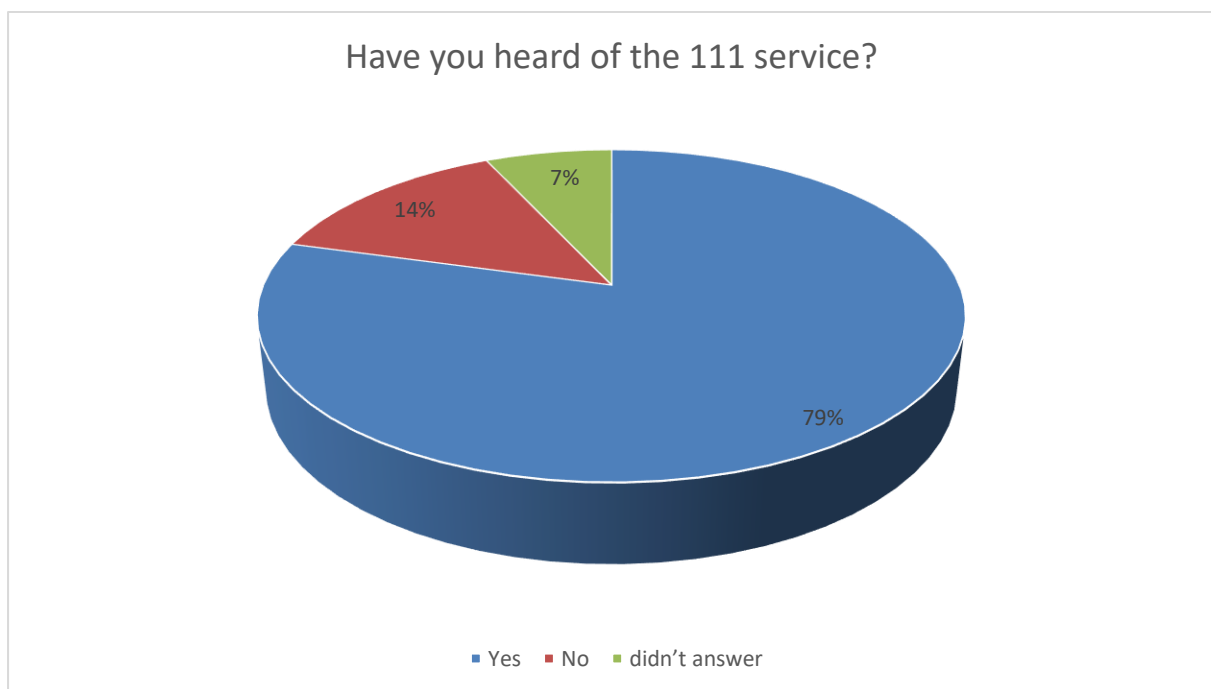
It was concerning to hear that for one respondent, the length of time spent on the phone incurred a mobile phone charge of £25.00.

'Had to ring for my mother who was under palliative care - took 30 minutes to get through, which was charged to my phone at £25!!'

A poor experience was also reported by one respondent who referenced difficulties faced by adult patients with Autism and complex needs.

'they are no good with complexity needs and adults with autism and speak problems when the adult does not have another phone them.'

Our survey then asked respondents if they had heard of the 111 service.

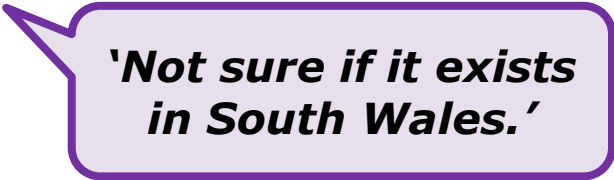


79% respondents reported they had heard of the 111 service.

14% respondents had not heard of the 111 service.

7% respondents chose not to answer this question.

A number of respondents informed us they had seen TV adverts for the helpline. Although there was confusion amongst some respondents who were unaware the 111 service was available in Wales.



'Not sure if it exists in South Wales.'



'They say it's only for England'

Another respondent confirmed they had heard of the 111 service but had also heard unfavourable reviews of the service.



'Yes but heard it's a waste of time.'

Our survey then asked respondents to share their experiences of using the 111 service with mixed responses provided.

A number of respondents described the 111 as *'pointless'* as all it does is advise you to attend A&E or your GP Surgery.



'Yes, almost always result in being advised to go see GP anyway.'

'Yes I used it once but they just said go to A&E.'

'Yes they always tell you to go to hospital or GP don't really give any other advice.'

'Find 111 directs you to a and e so it's a bit pointless'



'We used this when trying to get through to out of hours doctor for advice. The pre-recorded message is dated and the advice is no longer of any use, it added to an already stressful situation. The whole call lasted 42 minutes before I spoke to someone and even then no headway was made in which direction to go apart from A&E and I knew this wasn't strictly correct'

'Used many times. Find not great: triage service always seems to result in being advised to go to A and E, then get berated at A and E if they decide you didn't need to be there.'

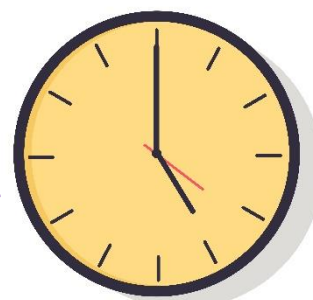
A number of respondents commented on the length of time spent on the phone or the length of time it took to receive a call back from the 111 service.

'We used this when trying to get through to out of hours doctor for advice. The pre-recorded message is dated and the advice is no longer of any use, it added to an already stressful situation. The whole call lasted 42 minutes before I spoke to someone and even then no headway was made in which direction to go apart from A&E and I knew this wasn't strictly correct.'

'It was a call of 45min then another call back that was 30+ min at this time sent to UHW at the time of first call Barry was open.'

'Take too long to get back to people'

'yes used once but had to wait over 4 hours for a call back. Not impressed.'





'Called when child was ill. Very helpful but did take a bit of time to get call back.'

One respondent shared their experiences of not being able to get through to the 111 service.



'Yes, I called several times when my son injured his thumb in a different part of Wales to where we live. After trying to get through for about 20 minutes, I got cut off on 2 occasions so I abandoned that idea and attended a walk in minor injuries unit in the area where the injury occurred. They were great and diagnosed the fractured metacarpal but could not arrange any trauma clinic follow up back in Cardiff and vale UHB (where we live) so we ended up having to attend A&E again just to get a trauma clinic appointment the next week.'

Other respondents reported positive experiences regarding the speed in which they received advice or treatment. Others noted how they received the most appropriate advice or treatment regarding their concern.

'Yes, used the service when partner was unwell, spoke to a Nurse first who said a Dr would call within 2 hrs, which they did and called us in for appt. Shame it was at Cardiff Royal Infirmary and not closer to home in the Vale.'

'Phone 111 for non-medical emergencies. They triage you and a Clinician calls you within a time scale depending on how busy they are. On this occasion we were given an appointment with OOH. Brilliant service.'

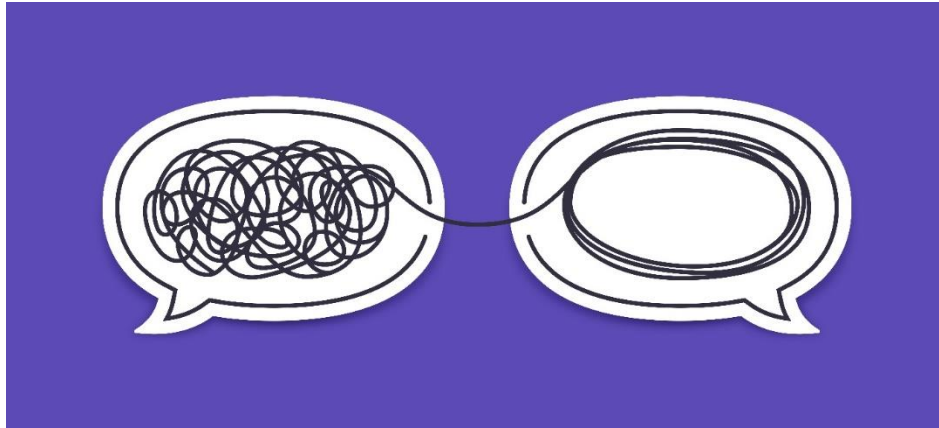
'Yes, have used the service once and was very good. Was triaged over the phone and advised to go to out of hours, which was the correct decision. Was also easier than going to A and E and having to wait a long period of time.'

Other respondents praised the staff they spoke to.



'Yes. They can be very helpful.'

'Excellent nurse on the other end of the telephone. Assisted me with the problem and very patient.'



Learning from what we heard

From the results of our survey there appears to be a poor awareness of the CAV 24/7 service amongst the public of Cardiff & Vale, with only 26% respondents aware of the service.

Respondents who had experience of engaging with the service reported issues such as the length of time they had to wait for an appointment, the length of time taken to receive a call back from the service and most concerning, the length of time patients were still required to wait in the A&E Department past their allocated timeslot, to be seen by a Clinician.

Also concerning to hear was the financial costs incurred by respondents using their mobile phone to contact the service. This will disadvantage patients who are unable to satisfy this charge, putting financial barriers in place for these patients in terms of access.

Also concerning to the CHC were the issues experienced by patients with learning difficulties and those with more complex needs.

With regards to the 111 service, awareness of this service was much more widespread with 79% respondents aware of this, having heard of the service via TV or word of mouth amongst other avenues. It must be noted however that there is confusion amongst some respondents as to whether this service is available to residents of Wales and Cardiff.

Experiences of the 111 service ranged from '*rubbish*' to '*brilliant service*'. Public perception amongst a number of respondents is that the service is '*useless*' with the only advice offered being to attend A&E or contact your GP. With respondents reporting instances of being berated by A&E staff as their attendance following advisement by the 111 service was inappropriate for their concern.

Again issues were reported around the length of time taken to receive a call back from the service.

Patients who did report positive experiences praised the service as '*efficient*' with helpful and patient staff being highlighted for praise.

Thanks

We thank everyone who took the time to share their views and experiences with us about their health and care services and to share their ideas.

We hope the feedback people have taken time to share influences healthcare services to recognise and value what they do well – and take action where they need to as quickly as they can to make things better.

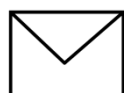
Feedback

We'd love to hear what you think about this publication, and any suggestions about how we could have improved it, so we can use this to make our future work better.

This report is available in Welsh and English.



Contact details



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If you write to us in Welsh, we will answer in Welsh. This will not lead to a delay in responding to your correspondence.

We welcome telephone calls in Welsh.

South Glamorgan Community Health Council