

Healthwatch Thurrock Health Hubs Report April 2016

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Introduction

The Health Hubs in Thurrock opened in April 2015 and provide the opportunity of a weekend GP or Nurse appointment. We at Healthwatch Thurrock have set about informing the general Thurrock population of these Health Hubs. It is important people know how to get medical advice when they need it and how they can access it. With the **Grays Walk-in-Centre (Thurrock Health Centre)** closing on the 31st March 2016, it is evermore important that people know their options of acquiring medical advice. We informed people in various ways using social media, our weekly information sessions, drop ins and through our networks in the voluntary and charity sectors.

From our outreach work we had noticed there was a trend, people hadn't heard of the Health Hubs in Thurrock. To complement our information campaign on the Thurrock health Hubs we undertook a short survey to get people's views, firstly to find out if they were aware of the Health Hubs and then secondly what they thought of this idea and their experiences if they had used a Health Hub.

Methods/ What we did:

A short survey was created with open and closed questions to gather views on the Thurrock Health Hubs, whether the individual had or hadn't used them before. The survey ran from February to April 2016.

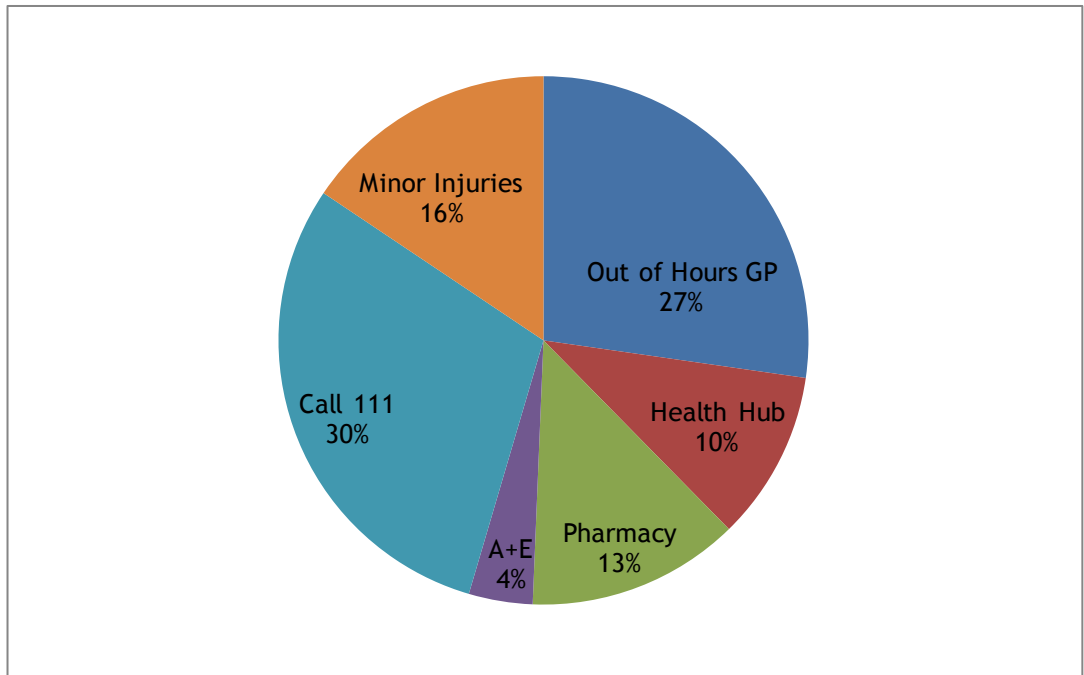
We collected data in the form of a paper survey and an online survey, created via survey monkey. We took the survey out to our Healthwatch drop ins across the Borough and shared the online survey using social media.

The questions comprised of 4 closed questions and 1 open question and then contact information to ensure the person lived in Thurrock. We provided people the chance to get more information about the Health Hubs if they hadn't heard of them before by providing people with an information leaflet either electronically or paper form.

All data was stored confidentially and uploaded onto Excel.

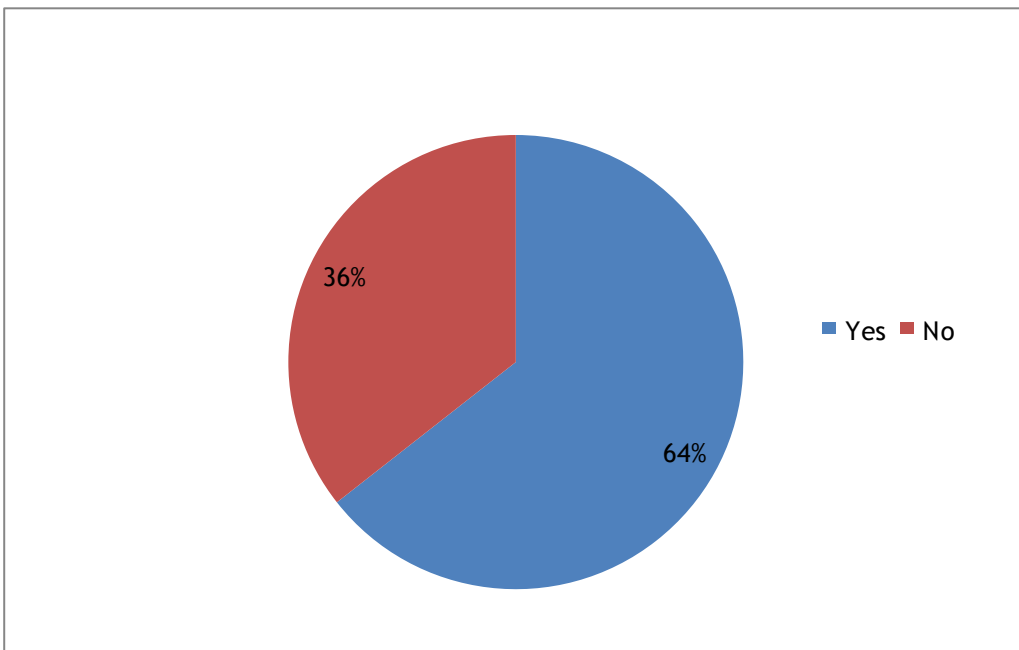
A total of **59 surveys** were completed. However, we did speak informally to many more people across the Thurrock Borough in raising awareness of the Thurrock Health Hubs, this being one of the goals of our outreach work February to April 2016.

Q1. Where would you go if you needed medical advice at the weekend ?



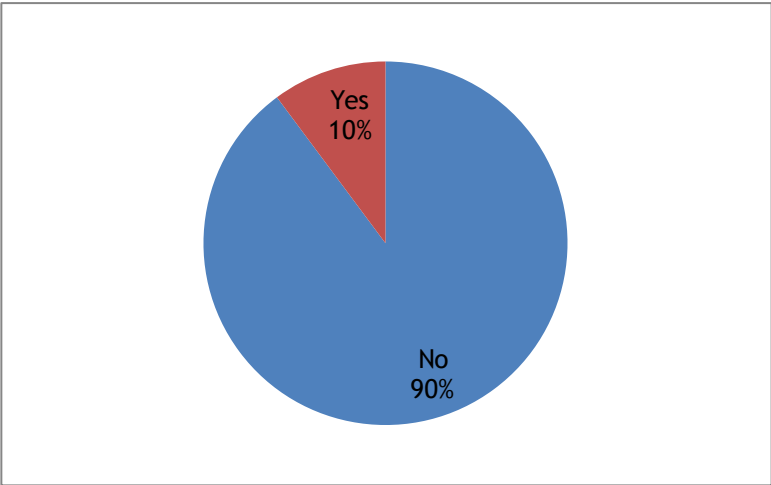
Just under a third of responders (30%) said they would *Call 111*, if they needed medical advice at the weekend, closely followed by using an *out of hours GP (27%)* and then a visit to *Minor Injuries (16%)*. 10% of people said they would use a health hub.

Q2. Are you aware of the Health Hubs in Thurrock?



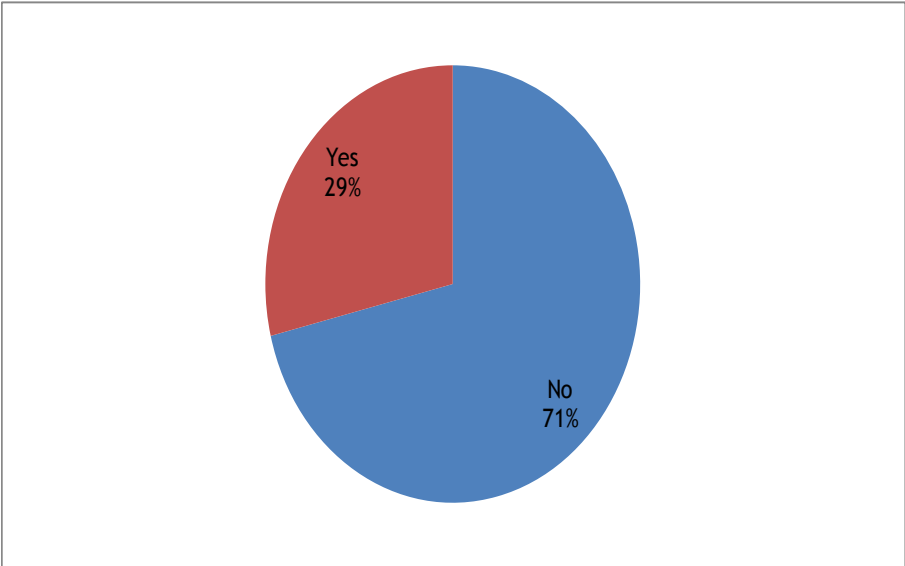
36% of people we spoke to were not aware of what the Health Hubs are in Thurrock.

Q3. Have you ever used a Health Hub in Thurrock?



Most people we spoke to, hadn't used one of the Health Hubs before, this equated to 90% of people.

Q4. Are you aware that Health Hubs in Thurrock can provide GP advice with all your medical history readily available?



We wanted to know if people were aware of some of the benefits that the Health Hubs can offer, the majority did not know (71%) that the Health Hubs were able to access patient own medical records, unlike walk in centres.

Survey Responses

Q5. Any views on the Health Hubs?

I didn't realise I have actually had a "Health Hub" appointment I thought it was an external doctor who was helping my current GP catch up with appointments.

Just learning about the health hubs today, I hadn't heard about them before. They seem like a good idea.

Thinks it's a great idea and useful for her partner

Would be good if you could just turn up & see GP.

Visited the health hubs and was very happy with the service.

My daughter visited the Tilbury hub and could not find her way in as she had never visited before. She came home as she thought it was closed and rang them. The receptionist was very unhelpful about signposting the Open surgery as the Doctor's surgery was ok in the week. You need to make sure all Staff are more helpful to make this good idea work. When she had her appointment (second try) she was very pleased with the service.

Hard to book an appointment sometimes if the reception staff at the current GP service are unhelpful.

Thinks it's a good idea however surprised the walk in centre in Grays has closed. Is glad to know about the Health Hubs now.



Of the people we spoke to over a third (36%) were not aware of the Health Hubs in Thurrock. It is important that people know where they can get medical advice from and how they can get access to it. With people leading busy lives, the option of weekend appointments is generally seen as a positive step forward towards an efficient health system. Most people Healthwatch Thurrock spoke to were impressed with the health hub system, however a few people had experienced difficulty in getting an appointment in the first place. There also seems to be a little bit of confusion over the term “Health Hub”, as after speaking to some members of the public they realised they actually had already had a health hub appointment but it hadn't identified it as being that. Some reception staff at GP surgeries are not using this term which can create confusion.

Healthwatch Thurrock recommendations:

1. Each Hub have a direct telephone line
2. Ensure the term ‘health hubs’ is recognised by health professionals and receptionists at GP surgeries in Thurrock
3. Have a feedback system in place for those who have used the health hubs to ensure they are working well

Healthwatch Thurrock will continue to inform members of the public in Thurrock of the health hub appointments and how they can access them.

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