

Primary care out-of-hours services

Report supplement: Results of the
survey of out-of-hours patients



Prepared for the Auditor General for Scotland
August 2007

Auditor General for Scotland

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Introduction

1. As part of a study looking at the development of primary care out-of-hours care, Audit Scotland commissioned a telephone survey of the general population in Scotland in March 2007.¹ A copy of the survey form is included in **Appendix 1**. Of the calls carried out, 1311 people had accessed out-of-hours services in the last six months and of these, 600 people agreed to answer questions on their experience of primary care out-of-hours services. Around half (51 per cent) of those interviewed responded on behalf of themselves as the patient; the remaining 49 per cent responded on behalf of someone else.
2. The telephone survey explores issues such as which out-of-hours services have been used, how accessible these services are and how satisfied respondents are with a range of different out-of-hours services. This report provides the full data from the telephone survey. Key findings from the survey are included in *Primary care out-of-hours services*.²

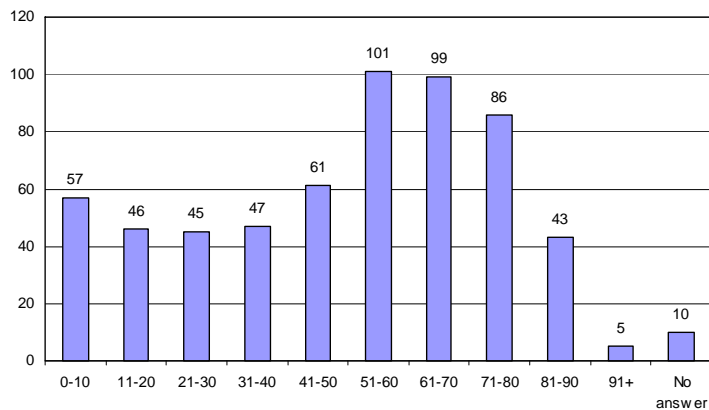
¹ Telephone interviews were carried out by George Street Research on behalf of Audit Scotland.

² *Primary care out-of-hours services*, Audit Scotland, August 2007.

Part 1. About the service users

3. In order to ensure the sample is representative, we asked the 600 respondents a series of demographic questions. We collected data about the age of the person using primary care out-of-hours services (ie the respondent or the person they contact out-of-hours services on behalf of. **(Exhibit 1)**

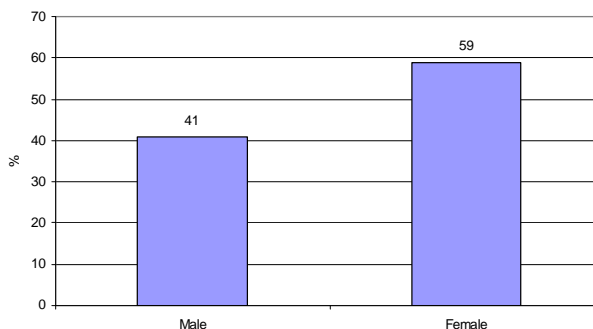
Exhibit 1.
Age of service users



Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

4. We also asked the gender of the service user. **(Exhibit 2)**

Exhibit 2.
Gender of service users (percentage)

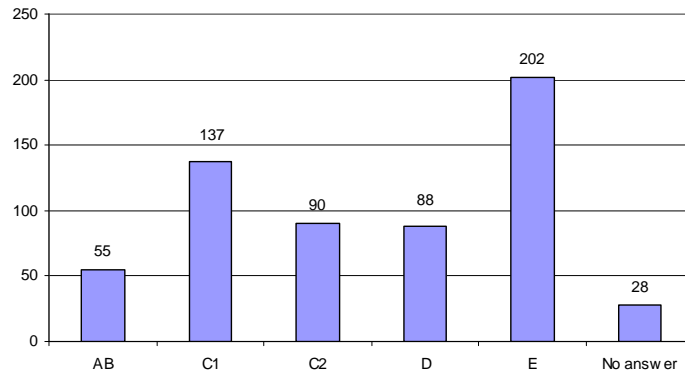


Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

5. We collected demographic data on the socio-economic grouping of Head of Household (HOH) / Chief Wage Earner (CWE). **Exhibit 3** shows that there is an even spread of responses across socio-economic groupings.

Exhibit 3.

Socio-economic grouping of Head of Household (HOH) / Chief Wage Earner (CWE)³

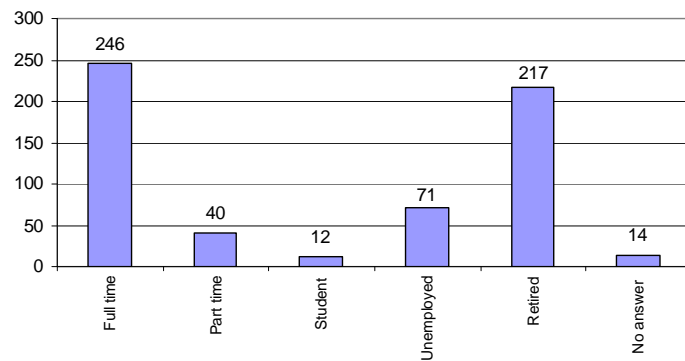


Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

6. Similarly we asked respondents about the working status of the Head of Household (HOH) / Chief Wage Earner (CWE). **Exhibit 4** shows a breakdown of responses, with a high proportion either working full time or retired.

Exhibit 4.

Employment status of Head of Household (HOH) / Chief Wage Earner (CWE)

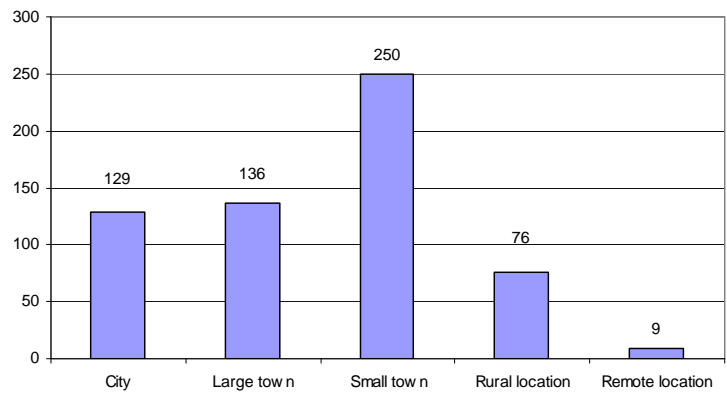


Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

³ The socio-economic grouping used is the ABC1 scale which is defined as follows: E – Unskilled manual (including general labourers, bar staff); D – Semi-skilled manual (including bus drivers, fitters); C2 – Skilled manual a (including electricians, plumbers); C2 – Skilled manual b (including master builders, carpenters); AB – Professional workers and white collar workers (including doctors, farmers, teachers).

7. In order to consider issues of remoteness and rurality we also asked respondents about their location.
(Exhibit 5)

Exhibit 5.
Location of respondents



Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

Part 2. Initial contact with out-of-hours services and NHS 24

8. We asked respondents about the last time they contacted out-of-hours services and how they got in touch, to better understand how people access out-of-hours services. In total 90 per cent of respondents (538) indicated that they had contacted out-of-hours services through NHS 24, with only nine per cent indicating that they had preferred to go to A&E directly. The remaining one per cent of respondents attended a walk-in centre or primary care centre.
9. We asked people why they had contacted out-of-hours services to see whether it was due to concerns about access to in-hours services. Most people contacted out-of-hours services to receive urgent care, with few people saying that the reason was that out-of-hours services were more convenient than in-hours services. (**Exhibit 6**)

Exhibit 6. ⁴

Reasons for contacting out-of-hours services

	Main reason	2 nd reason	3 rd reason
I felt the problem needed urgent medical attention	346	32	19
The problem was causing pain	112	63	73
I just wanted advice	60	29	20
The problem was causing anxiety	42	146	41
Needed medical attention	17	3	2
It was more convenient than seeing my GP during the day	10	3	6
It was difficult to get an appointment with my GP during the day	3	6	4
GP practice was closed	7	13	4
Was told that I could not be seen unless referred by NHS 24	1	0	0
I was seen by my own GP during the day and was not happy with how my problem was handled	0	2	1
I was unsure of who to contact	1	3	2
To get medication	1	0	0
No reason	0	300	428
Total	600	600	600

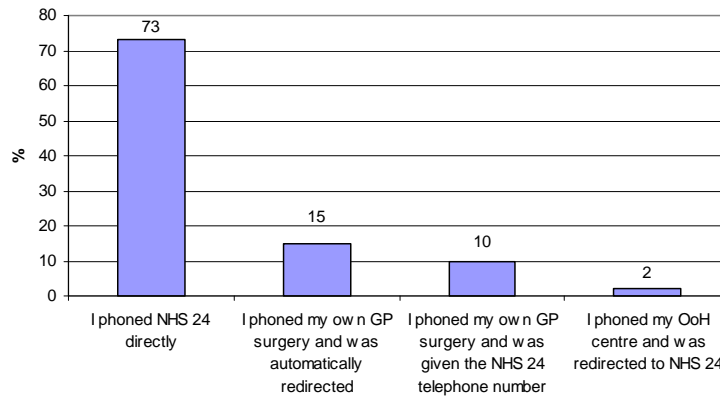
Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

⁴ Exhibit 7 shows pre-coded questions and further options raised by respondents during interviews.

10. We then asked a series of specific questions about NHS 24 and asked the 538 respondents who had contacted NHS 24 in the last six months how they had accessed NHS 24 services. Most people were able to phone NHS 24 directly and did not need redirecting from another service. **(Exhibit 7)**

Exhibit 7.

Accessing NHS 24 services



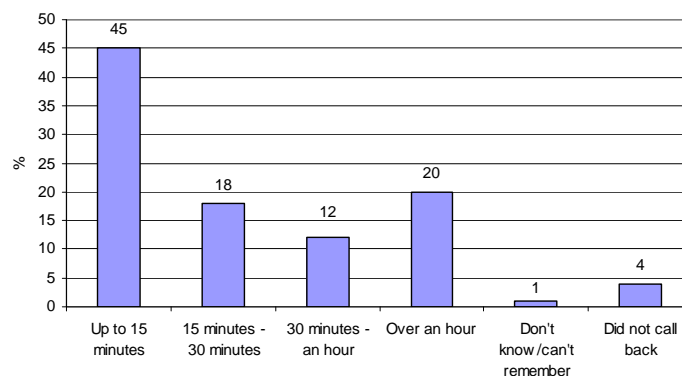
Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

11. We asked those who had contacted NHS 24 in the last six months whether they were transferred to a nurse immediately. Most respondents (67 per cent) said they were transferred to a nurse immediately, six per cent said they were put on hold, 26 per cent said they were called back and the remaining one percent of service users did not know.

12. We asked the 26 per cent of respondents(142) who had to wait for a call back from NHS 24 how long they had to wait. Just under half received a call back within 15 minutes. **(Exhibit 8)**

Exhibit 8.

NHS 24 call back



Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

13. We asked respondents if they felt these call back times were acceptable given their symptoms, and 76 per cent felt that they were.
14. We asked respondents how satisfied they were with various aspects of the service they received over the phone from NHS 24. Most respondents said they were satisfied with the service they received. **(Exhibit 9)**

Exhibit 9.

Percentage satisfaction with service received from NHS 24 (n = 538)

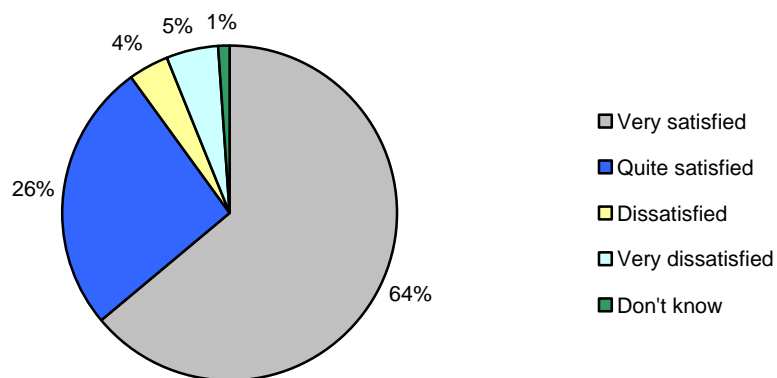
	Very Satisfied	Quite Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't know
The nurse's manner	68	26	2	2	2
The way the initial call was handled	57	33	6	3	1
The advice received	55	31	5	5	4
Time it took to speak to a nurse	53	35	6	4	2

Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

15. Overall most respondents were very satisfied with the service they received from NHS 24. **(Exhibit 10)**

Exhibit 10.

Overall satisfaction with the service received from NHS 24 over the phone (n = 538)



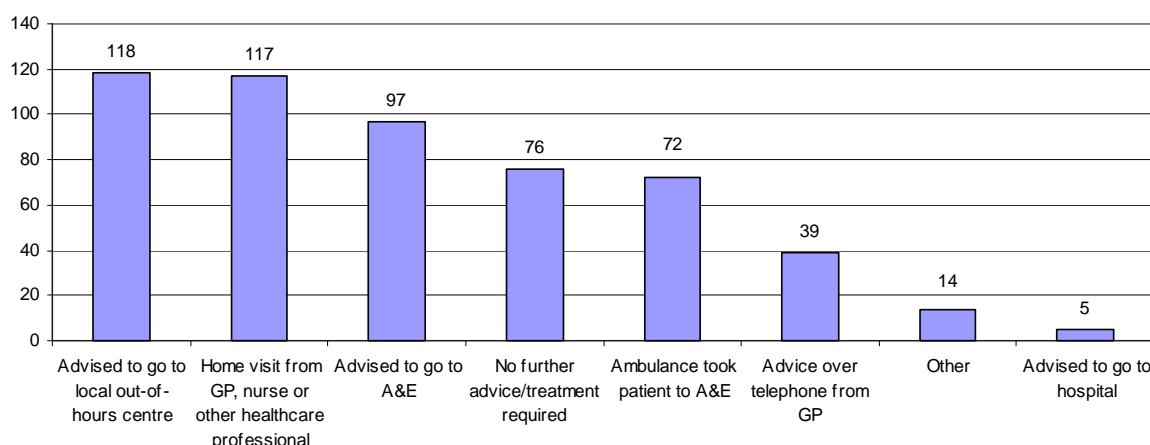
Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

Part 3. Experience of local out-of-hours services

16. Users of out-of-hours services can be referred on to a number of different local services after they have contacted NHS 24. We asked a series of questions to find out what happened after respondents had contacted NHS 24 to collect data on satisfaction with these local services. We asked questions about what services respondents were referred on to, what care they received, and how satisfied they were with the various services they encountered. **Exhibit 11** shows what happened to patients following their contact with NHS 24.

Exhibit 11.

What happened after respondents contacted NHS 24 (n = 538)



Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

17. We asked respondents whether this advice/referral on was what they expected to happen, and 72 per cent said that it was what they expected. We asked the 18 per cent (99 people) who did not expect this course of treatment/referral on what they had expected. Most said they had expected a home visit (35 per cent), 16 per cent said they had expected an ambulance to take them to A&E and 14 per cent said they had expected to receive advice from a GP over the telephone.

18. We then asked respondents further specific questions about the subsequent care or advice that they received.

Advice over the telephone from a GP

19. We asked respondents if they had received advice over the phone from a GP about how to deal with their health-related problem. We asked the 39 patients who had received such advice how satisfied they were with certain aspects of the service they received. (**Exhibit 12**)

Exhibit 12.

Percentage satisfaction with advice over the telephone from a GP (n= 39)

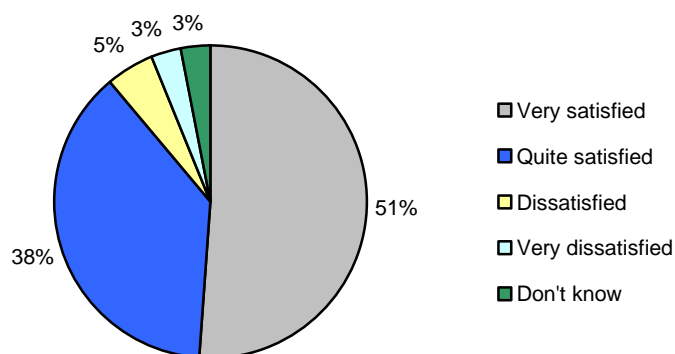
	Very Satisfied	Quite Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't know
Time you had to wait to speak to the GP	49	31	15	5	0
Information the GP gave about the health related problem	56	31	10	0	3
The GP's manner	61	33	3	0	3

Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

20. Overall most respondents were very satisfied with the service they received from a GP over the telephone (**Exhibit 13**).

Exhibit 13.

Overall satisfaction with telephone advice from a GP (n= 39)



Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

Advice over the telephone from a pharmacist or community psychiatric nurse

21. No respondents had received advice over the telephone from a pharmacist about how to deal with their health-related problem. Only six people received advice over the telephone from a community psychiatric nurse, but of those who did most were quite satisfied with the service they received.

Attending the out-of-hours centre

22. We asked the 118 respondents advised to attend their local out-of-hours centre a number of questions about the service they received. When asked about transport to the centre, 97 per cent of respondents said transport to the centre was not provided for them. When asked how easy respondents had found it to get to the centre, 78 per cent said they had found it very easy, 17 per cent quite easy and only five per cent indicated any problem in getting to the centre. Of those who experienced difficulty getting to the centre, the main reason was because the centre was too far away.
23. Although 118 respondents were advised by NHS 24 to attend an out of hours treatment centre, 124 patients actually attended a centre. We asked these 124 respondents about waiting times to receive treatment at the centre, most respondents said that they were either treated immediately (33 per cent) or had to wait up to 15 minutes (35 per cent). A further 19 per cent of respondents waited between 15 and 30 minutes, and the average wait overall, as reported by respondents, was 14 minutes.
24. We asked respondents who attended an out-of-hours centre how satisfied they were with certain aspects of the service they received and most respondents were very satisfied. (**Exhibit 14**)

Exhibit 14.

Percentage satisfaction with service at a local out-of-hours centre (n = 124)

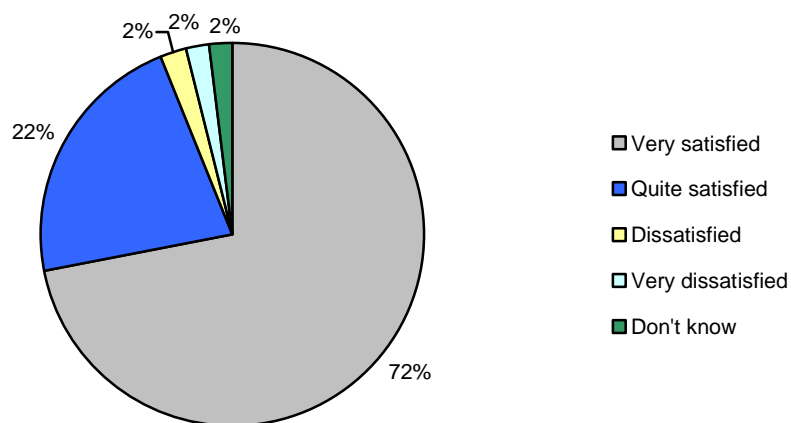
	Very Satisfied	Quite Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't know
Time waiting to be treated	62	27	7	2	2
Treatment received for the health related problem	67	23	5	2	3
Time the medical/nursing staff spent treating the problem	59	34	3	2	2
Information received about the health related problem	62	27	6	2	3
The medical/nursing staff manner	78	15	3	2	2
If appropriate, satisfaction with the transport arranged (note this only applies to 4 respondents)	75	25	0	0	0

Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

25. Overall most respondents were very satisfied with the service they received at their local out-of-hours centre. **(Exhibit 15)**

Exhibit 15.

Overall satisfaction with services at local out-of-hours centre (n = 124)



Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

Attending the out-of-hours pharmacy

26. Only five respondents attended their local out-of-hours pharmacy, but most who did found it easy to get to the pharmacy. Of the four people who indicated levels of satisfaction with this service, three said they were satisfied and one said they did not know.

Home visits from GPs or other healthcare professionals

27. After contacting NHS 24, 117 people received a home visit from a GP or other healthcare professional. When asked about the time they had to wait to receive the visit, 62 per cent said they had to wait less than an hour, 22 per cent between one to two hours and 14 per cent had to wait longer than two hours. The remaining two per cent of respondents could not recall how long they had to wait.
28. We asked respondents who received a home visit from a GP or other healthcare professional how satisfied they were with certain aspects of the service they received, and most were satisfied. **(Exhibit 16)**

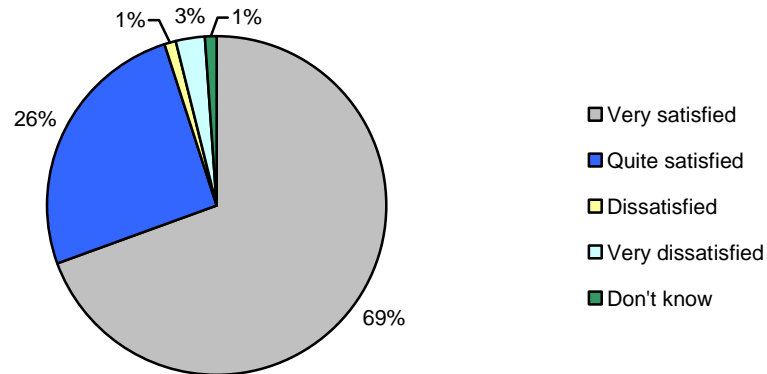
Exhibit 16.

Percentage satisfaction with home visits (n = 117)

	Very Satisfied	Quite Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't know
Time taken waiting for the home visit	43	37	11	8	1
Treatment received for the health related problem	63	26	5	3	3
Time the GP / other healthcare professional spent treating the problem	56	37	2	2	3
Information received about the health related problem	53	34	5	3	5
The GP / other healthcare professional's manner	70	24	3	2	1

Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

29. Overall most respondents were very satisfied with out-of-hours home visits. **(Exhibit 17)**

Exhibit 17.**Overall satisfaction with out-of-hours home visits (n = 117)**

Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

Attending A&E

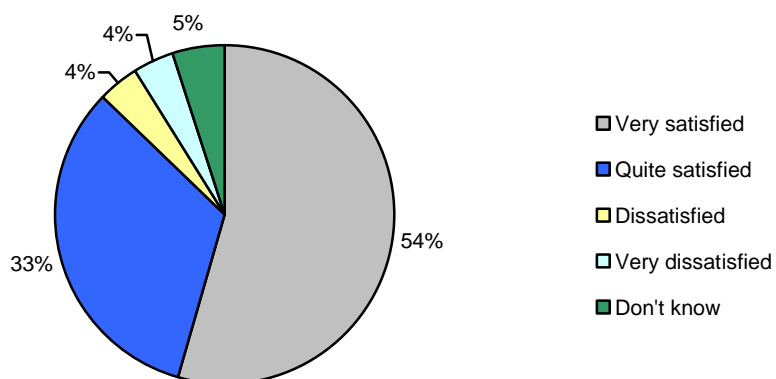
30. NHS 24 advised some respondents to make their own way to A&E (97 respondents), some other patients were taken by ambulance to A&E following their call to NHS 24 (72 respondents) whilst some respondents chose to go directly to A&E without going through NHS 24 (56 respondents).
31. Transport was organised for 83 (37 per cent) of the 225 people who were either advised by NHS 24 or decided to attend A&E. Transport was not arranged for 135 (60 per cent) of respondents who needed to go to A&E, and of these people 85 per cent found it easy to get to A&E. Seven respondents (three per cent) who were advised by NHS 24 to attend A&E chose not to. Only 12 per cent reported any difficulty in getting to A&E. When asked about the time they had to wait for treatment once they were at A&E, most people said that they had to wait less than 30 minutes, with the average time for respondents being 43 minutes.
32. We asked respondents who had attended A&E how satisfied they were with certain aspects of the service they received and most respondents were satisfied. (**Exhibit 18**)

Exhibit 18.**Percentage satisfaction with A&E (n = 218)**

	Very Satisfied	Quite Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't know
Time waiting to receive treatment	45	31	8	10	6
Treatment received for the health related problem	54	31	6	4	5
Time the medical / nursing staff spent treating the problem	52	34	5	3	6
Information received about the health related problem	50	32	6	5	7
The nursing / medical staff's manner	64	25	3	2	6

Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

33. Overall most respondents were very satisfied with the service they received at A&E. (**Exhibit 19**)

Exhibit 19.**Overall satisfaction with A&E (n = 218)**

Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

Part 4. Overall satisfaction with out-of-hours services

34. To conclude our survey, we asked respondents a series of general questions to understand their overall levels of satisfaction with out-of-hours services, given the changes that have taken place in how these services are delivered. We asked respondents whether the out-of-hours service dealt with their problem in the way that they expected, and 80 per cent of all respondents said that it had, whilst four per cent of respondents didn't know. **Exhibit 20** shows the breakdown of responses to an open question of those who felt that the out-of-hours service had not dealt with their problem the way they had expected (98 respondents).

Exhibit 20.

Issues raised by respondents who felt the out-of-hours service did not deal with their problem as they had expected (n = 98)

Issues raised	Number
Should have been dealt with more speedily	36
Was not taken seriously / should have been more thorough	17
Convenient / better than expected	13
Should have sent a doctor	13
Was given inappropriate advice	8
Was not given advice / information / enough advice / enough information	8
Should have arranged transport	8
Other	20

Note: Multiple responses included.

Source: Audit Scotland, August 2007

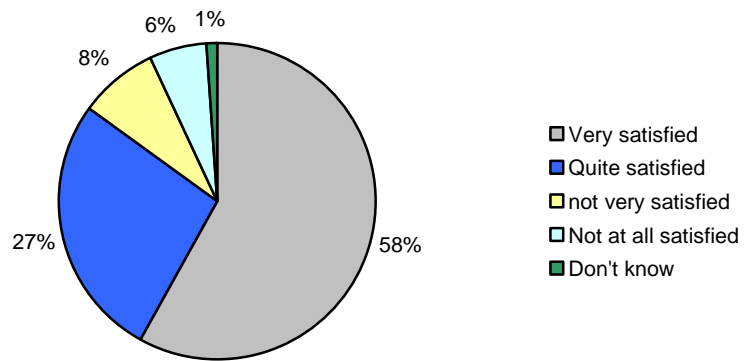
35. We asked how many times respondents had to explain their health-related problem before they spoke to the person who was able to deal with their problem. Just under half of respondents only had to explain their problem once (46 per cent), 36 per cent had to explain their problem twice, and 15 per

cent of respondents explained their problem three or more times before they spoke to the person who dealt with their problem.

36. We asked, overall how satisfied respondents were with the out-of-hours service they received. Overall most respondents were very satisfied with the out-of-hours service they received. (Exhibit 21)

Exhibit 21.

Overall satisfaction with out-of-hours services (n = 600)



Source: Audit Scotland August 2007

Appendix 1. Patient survey

Contacting out of hours services

Q1 Have you contacted out of hours services in the last 6 months during the out-of-hours period? This could be contact you made for yourself, or someone made for you or you made on someone's behalf.

Yes 1 – CONTINUE
No 2 – THANK AND CLOSE

Q2 The last time you contact out-of-hours services, how did you get in touch?

Through NHS 24	1 - GO TO Q3
Attended walk in centre / primary care centre with no call to NHS 24 (this centre might be located alongside an accident and emergency centre)	2 – GO TO Q18
Preferred to go to Accident & Emergency (A&E) rather than NHS 24	3 – GO TO Q24
I am in contact with services already and have a direct contact number	4 – THANK AND CLOSE

Contact with NHS 24

Q3 There are a number of possible reasons for contacting the out-of-hours services. Thinking about the last time you phoned NHS 24, please indicate the main reason that applies to you. If more than one reason applies, please indicate up to three reasons.

	Main reason	2 nd reason	3 rd reason
I felt the problem needed urgent medical attention			
The problem was causing anxiety			
The problem was causing pain			
It was more convenient than seeing my GP during the day			
It was difficult to get an appointment my GP during the day			
I had seen my GP during the day and wasn't happy with how my problem was handled			
I was unsure of who to contact			
I just wanted advice			
Other (please specify)			

Q4 If you have contacted NHS 24 in the last 6 months, how did you get in touch? (this could be contact you made for yourself, or someone made for you or you made on someone's behalf)

I phoned NHS 24 directly
I phoned my own GP surgery and was automatically redirected to NHS 24
I phoned my own GP surgery and was given the NHS 24 telephone number
I phoned my out-of-hours centre and was redirected to NHS 24

Q5 Once your call was answered, were you transferred to a nurse at once?

Yes 1 – GO TO Q8
No, I was put on hold 2 – GO TO Q8
No, I was called back 3 – GO TO Q6

ASK Q6 FOR ALL THOSE CODED 3 AT Q5

Q6 Approximately how long did you have to wait until NHS 24 called you back?

Up to 15 minutes	1
15 mins – 30 mins	2
30 mins – an hour	3
> an hour	4
Don't know / can't remember	5

Q7 Did you feel that the time you had to wait until you were called back was acceptable, given your symptoms?

Yes	1
No	2

ASK ALL RESPONDENTS

Q8 How satisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the service you received over the phone from NHS 24? Would you say you were very satisfied, quite satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

The way your initial call was handled
Time you had to wait to speak to a nurse
The advice you received
The nurse's manner
Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received over the phone

What happened next and how satisfied were you?

Q9 Please could you tell me, from the list I am going to read out, what happened next? MULTI CODING ALLOWED

No further advice/contact with out-of-hours services was required after discussion with NHS 24
I received advice over the phone from a GP
I received advice over the phone from a pharmacist
I received advice over the phone from a Community Psychiatric Nurse
I was advised to go to my local out-of-hours centre
I was advised to go to an out-of-hours pharmacy
I received a home visit from a GP or a nurse, or other healthcare professional
An ambulance was arranged to take me to A&E
I was advised to make my own way to A&E
Other (please specify)

Q10 Was this what you had expected to happen?

Yes	1 – GO TO Q12
No	2 – GO TO Q11
Don't know	3 – GO TO Q12

ASK ALL CODED 2 AT Q10. ALL OTHERS GO TO Q12

Q11 What did you expect to happen? READ OUT. MULTI CODING ALLOWED

I expected to receive advice over the phone from a GP
I expected to receive advice over the phone from a pharmacist
I expected to receive advice over the phone from a Community Psychiatric Nurse
I expected to be advised to go to my local out-of-hours centre
I expected to be advised go to an out-of-hours pharmacy
I expected an ambulance to take me to A&E
I expected to be advised to make my way to A&E
I expected a visit at home from a GP or a nurse, or other healthcare professional
Other (please specify)

Contact with out-of-hours services (see responses at Q2 and Q9)

ASK ALL CODED 2 AT Q9

- Q12 If you received advice over the phone from a **GP** about how to deal with your health related problem, how satisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the service you received? Would you say you were very satisfied, quite satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

Time you had to wait to speak to the GP
Information the GP gave you about your health related problem
The GP's manner
Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received from the GP?

ASK ALL CODED 3 AT Q9

- Q13 If you received advice over the phone from a **pharmacist** about how to deal with your health related problem, how satisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the service you received? Would you say you were very satisfied, quite satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

Time you had to wait to speak to the pharmacist
Information the pharmacist gave you about your health related problem
The pharmacist's manner
Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received from the pharmacist?

ASK ALL CODED 4 AT Q9

- Q14 If you received advice over the phone from a **Community Psychiatric Nurse** about how to deal with your health related problem, how satisfied were you with each of the following aspects of the service you received? Would you say you were very satisfied, quite satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

Time you had to wait to speak to the Community Psychiatric Nurse
Information the Community Psychiatric Nurse gave you about your health related problem
The Community Psychiatric Nurse's manner
Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received from the Community Psychiatric Nurse?

ASK IF RESPONDENT CODED 5 AT Q9

- Q15 If you went to / were advised to go to your **out-of-hours centre**, did the out-of-hours services arrange transport for you?

Yes 1 – GO TO Q20
 No 2 – GO TO Q16

- Q16 If the out-of-hours service did NOT arrange transport, how easy was it for you to get to the out-of-hours centre? Would you say very easy, quite easy, not very easy or not at all easy?

Very easy 1
 Quite easy 2
 Not very easy 3
 Not at all easy 4

- Q17 If you had difficulty getting to the out-of-hours centre, please can you tell me why?

Because of injury or illness
Centre was too far away
Don't have own transport
Childcare problems
Other (please specify)

Q18 If you went to/were advised to go to the out-of-hours centre, approximately how long did you have to wait to be treated? (from the time you arrived at the centre)

Didn't have to wait
Up to 15 mins
15 – 30 mins
30 mins – an hour
> an hour
Don't know / can't remember

Q19 How satisfied were you with the following aspects of the service you received at the out-of-hours centre? Would you say you were very satisfied, quite satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

Time you had to wait to be treated
Treatment you received for your health related problem
Time the medical/nursing staff spent treating your problem
Information you received about your health related problem
The medical/nursing staff manner
Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received at the out-of-hours centre?

ASK ALL CODED 6 AT Q9

Q20 If you went to or were advised to go to your **out-of-hours pharmacy**, how easy was it for you to get there? Would you say very easy, quite easy, not very easy or not at all easy?

Very easy	1
Quite easy	2
Not very easy	3
Not at all easy	4

Q21 How satisfied were you with the following aspects of the service you received at the out-of-hours pharmacy? Would you say you were very satisfied, quite satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

Advice or information you received from the pharmacy
The pharmacist's manner
Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received at the out-of-hours pharmacy

ASK IF CODED 7 AT Q9

Q22 If you received a visit at home from a **GP or another healthcare professional**, roughly how long did you wait for the visit?

< an hour
1 – 2 hours
2 – 3 hours
3 – 4 hours
> 4 hours
Don't know / can't remember

Q23 How satisfied were you with the following aspects of the service you received from the GP or other healthcare professional during the home visit? Would you say you were very satisfied, quite satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

Time you had to wait for the home visit
Treatment you received for your health related problem
Time the GP / other healthcare professional spent treating your problem
Information you received about your health related problem
The GP / other healthcare professional's manner
Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received at the GP / other healthcare professional during the home visit

ASK IF CODED 3 AT Q2 or 8/9 at Q9

Q24 If you **were advised to go to A&E** or you **preferred to go to Accident & Emergency (A&E) rather than NHS 24**, how long did you have to wait to be treated by a doctor/nurse (from the time you arrived at A&E)

Didn't have to wait
Up to 15 mins
15 – 30 mins
30 mins – an hour
1 – 2 hours
2 – 3 hours
3 – 4 hours
> 4 hours
Don't know / can't remember

Q25 How satisfied were you with the following aspects of the service you received from A&E? Would you say you were very satisfied, quite satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

Time you had to wait to be treated
Treatment you received for your health related problem
Time the medical / nursing staff spent treating your problem
Information you received about your health related problem
The nursing / medical staff's manner
Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received at A&E

Overall

Q26 Overall, do you feel the out-of-hours services dealt with your problem in the way you had expected?

- Yes 1 – GO TO Q28
- No 2 – GO TO Q27
- Don't know 3 – GO TO Q28

Q27 Please can you tell me what you feel should have happened? PROBE FULLY

Q28 Overall, how many times did you explain your health related problem before you spoke to the person who dealt with your problem?

- Once 1
- Twice 2
- Three times 3
- Four times 4
- > 4 times 5
- Don't know 6

Q29 Overall, how satisfied are you with the out-of-hours service you received? Would you say very satisfied, quite satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied?

- Very satisfied 1
- Quite satisfied 2
- Not very satisfied 3
- Not at all satisfied 4
- Don't know 5

Q30 Are there any other comments you would like to make about the out-of-hours service you received?

Primary care out-of-hours services

Report supplement: Results of the survey of out-of-hours patients

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