

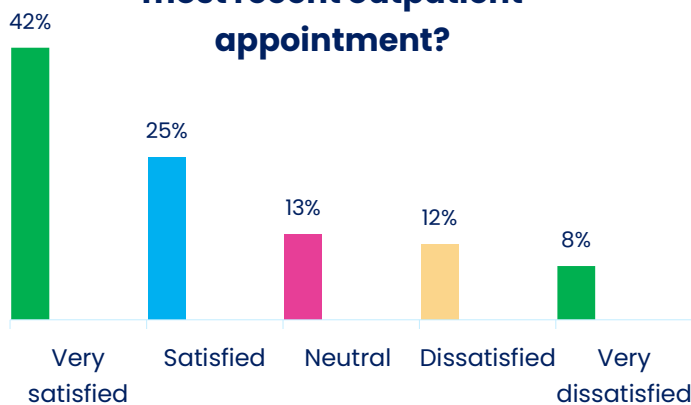
Poll: Hospital Outpatient Appointment letters

In October 2024, Healthwatch in Sussex sought experiences of hospital outpatient appointment letters, which are intended to give you clear information about your appointment and what to expect when you attend.

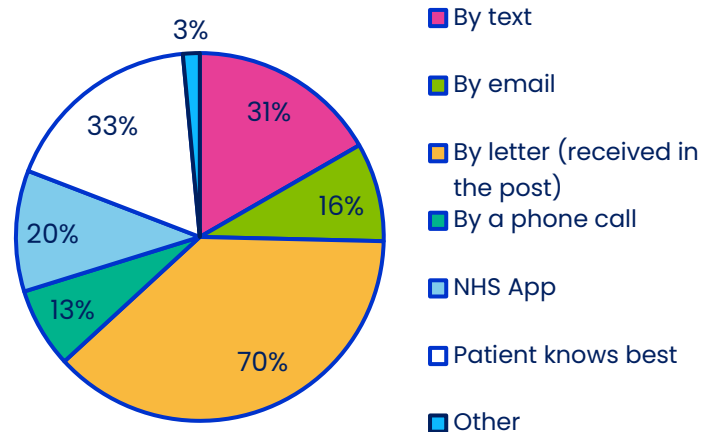
330 people from across Sussex shared their views with us:

- Overall, respondents felt 'very satisfied' (42%) or 'satisfied' (25%) with the communication they received regarding their most recent outpatient appointment. 12% felt 'dissatisfied' and 8% felt 'very dissatisfied'.
- Respondents were most dissatisfied with were information about who to contact with a query about your appointment (14%) and letter/ communication arriving sufficiently ahead of your scheduled appointment (13%).
- Of those who needed to contact the hospital with a question about their appointment, 10% could not get to speak to anyone and 11% spoke to someone but their question was not answered to their satisfaction. 24% spoke to someone and felt their question was answered to their satisfaction.
- 79% of respondents said they were not given any information about choosing which provider (i.e. what hospital or service) they wanted to receive care from.

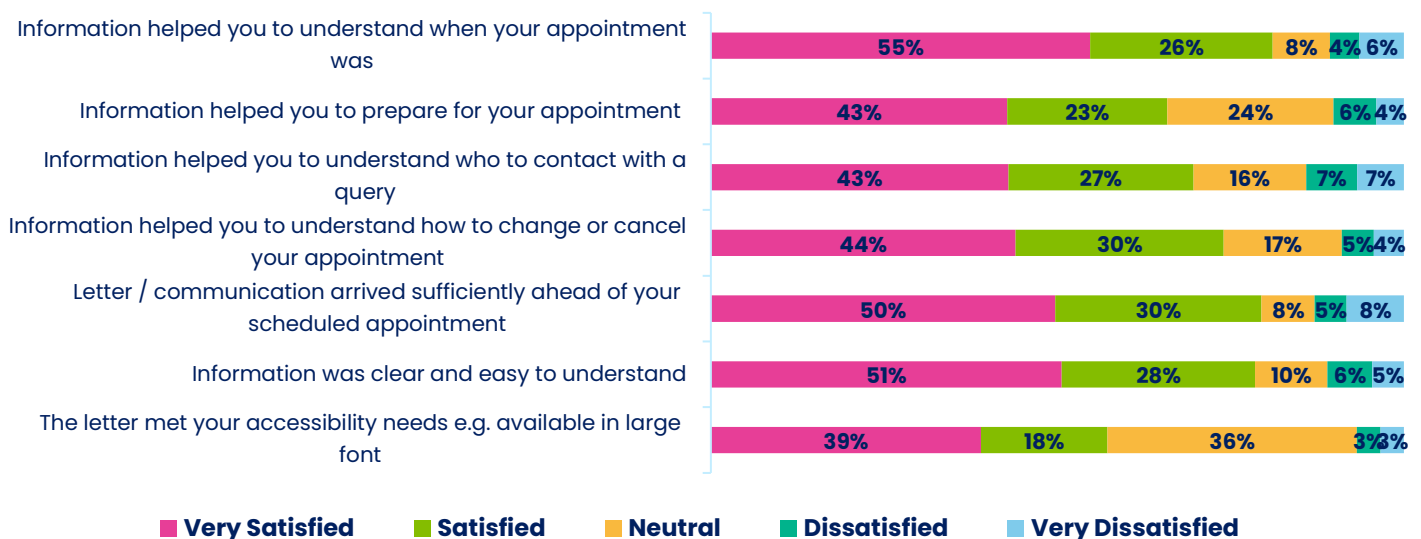
Overall, how satisfied are you with the communication regarding your most recent outpatient appointment?



How did you receive details about your outpatient appointment?



Please tell us how satisfied you were with the following aspects of your most recent appointment letter?



Respondents to our poll told us they would like to see:

- **Clearer information** contained in hospital outpatient appointment letters (39 comments) about appointment details such as date and time of appointments and how to prepare in advance of your appointment.

"Making it very clear, at the top and in bold and in a square separate box, the date and time of the appointment."

"Had a letter for gastroenterologist appointment however it had no details to say it was a gastroscopy which could have been a disaster if I'd eaten recently".

"The letter I received [..]gave no information about the appointment. It looked like a bad photocopy and the content gave me no clue as to why I had to phone the number it was asking me to call".

- **A move away from letters to more digitalized communication methods (29 comments)** to save money, avoid duplication and avoid letters arriving too late in the post (18 comments).

"Don't waste money with printing & posting letters, email with attachments is way better"

"Get rid of the paper letters - it's not 1950 anymore! Just communicate through the app. So much money must be wasted generating and sending paper letters and by the time they arrive you have maybe changed the appointment anyway!!"

"Letters following consultations are duplicates of those sent to my GP and often arrive a long time after the appointment. I think much of this communication could be done by email which would save the expense of postage and not be subject to the vagaries of the postal service".

- **Better information on how to change appointments (17 comments)**

"Clear details of how to change an appointment is required"

"When an appointment is cancelled a new one should be given immediately and a number to contact to change that if it is inconvenient."

"[It] took days to get in contact with someone for query and [was given an] incorrect phone number in letter."

Tell us your experience

We always want to hear more about people's experiences of health and care services. Share your story with your local Healthwatch:

Healthwatch Brighton & Hove

info@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk or 01273 234 040

Healthwatch East Sussex

enquiries@healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk or 0333 101 4007

Healthwatch West Sussex

helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk or 0300 012 0122