

# Patient Engagement Report



*College Surgery Partnership  
Willand Branch Surgery*

May 2022

## Background

College Surgery is a GP Practice covering Cullompton and surrounding villages.

There are approximately 15,300 patients registered with us and we operate from three sites:

- The main site located in Cullompton (EX15 1FE)
- Branch sites at Willand (EX15 2QP), Uffculme (EX15 3EB) and Bradninch (EX5 4NL)

The limited services that the practice was able to provide from the Willand branch surgery have been under review for a number of years because of the challenges and constraints of providing healthcare on the ground floor of a converted house rather than in a modern healthcare facility.

In March 2020, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic the difficult decision was made to suspend services from the Willand branch, and provide them instead from the main site at Culm Valley Integrated Centre for Health.

In assessing whether to reopen the Willand site the practice felt that given the restraints the building presents and the efficiency benefits that has resulted by consolidating staff to the main site that options should be explored, including permanently shutting the site.

A patient consultation exercise was undertaken.

A letter was sent to all patients registered for care at the Willand Branch. The letter provided the rationale for the closure of the Willand Branch during the pandemic alongside the challenges of reopening.

Enclosed with the letter was a patient questionnaire asking patients for their views. Alongside the letter and physical questionnaire was a digital version of the rationale and questionnaire hosted on the practice website. This engagement was open for comment/feedback for over 3 months and was promoted in the community.

The practice received 146 completed questionnaires from patients, this report provides a summary of the feedback.

# Patient Feedback

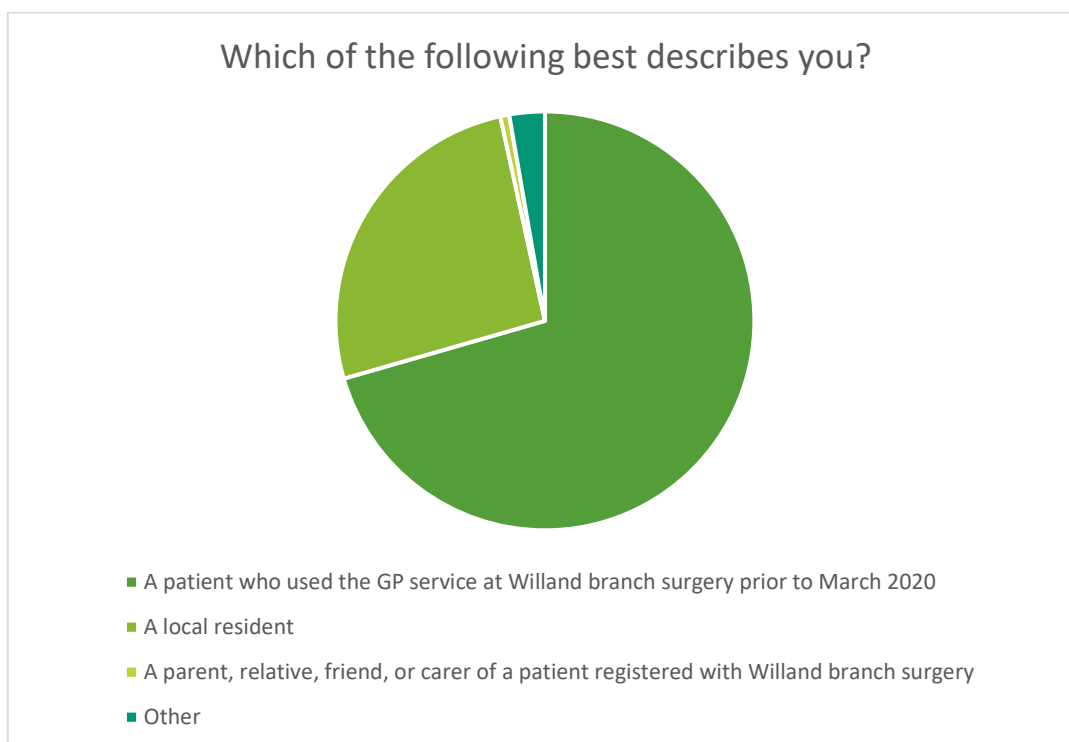
The patient engagement was open from August 2021 and was extended on two occasions, both because of the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and to enable further public and patient feedback to be taken into account. The engagement was closed in March 2022.

146 patients returned questionnaires. Of those 103 identify as a user of the service (roughly 10% of the registered patients)

There was also a small amount of written and verbal feedback from patients. This feedback where relevant has been included in the themes identified.

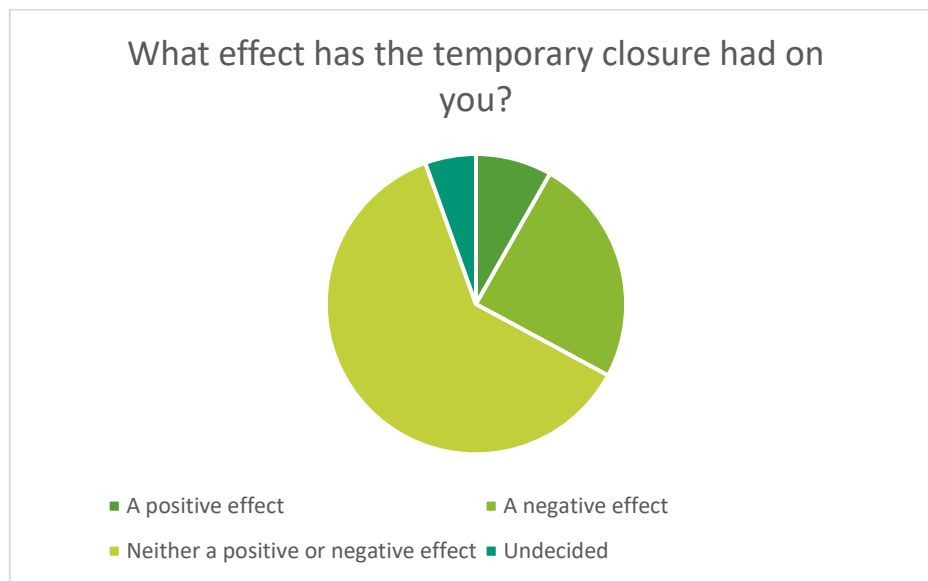
## Question 1:

Which of the following best describes you?	
A patient who used the GP service at Willand branch surgery prior to March 2020	103
A local resident	38
A parent, relative, friend, or carer of a patient registered with Willand branch surgery	1
Other	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>



## Question 2:

What effect has the temporary closure of Willand branch surgery since March 2020 had on you?	
A positive effect	12
A negative effect	36
Neither a positive or negative effect	90
Undecided	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>



### Comments:

*“Lack of Car”*

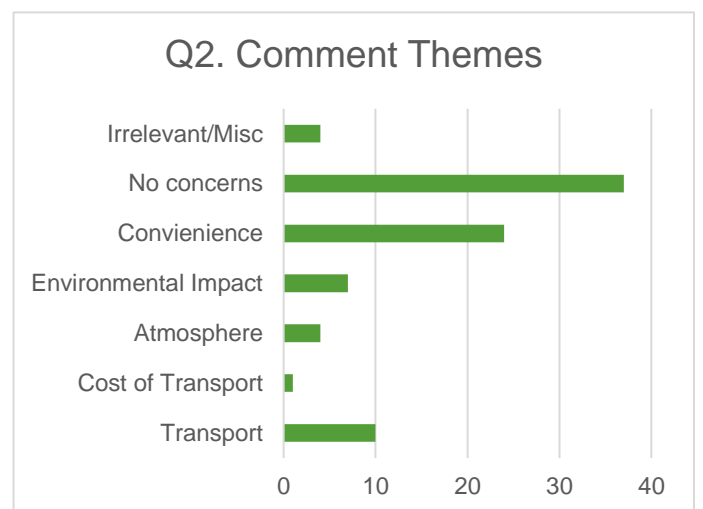
*“Not being able to walk to the surgery but having to use the car to travel to the main site”*

*“It hasn't had any effect on me as I haven't needed to see a doctor. Only had to go to College Surgery for bloods which was able to in the car at that particular time”*

*“With Willand Surgery being closed, it has meant I have had to travel to Cullompton which has meant that I have increased my carbon footprint. If Willand Surgery cannot be adapted, could it be sold off and the proceeds be used to build another purpose-built surgery.”*

*“Prefer to use College Surgery”*

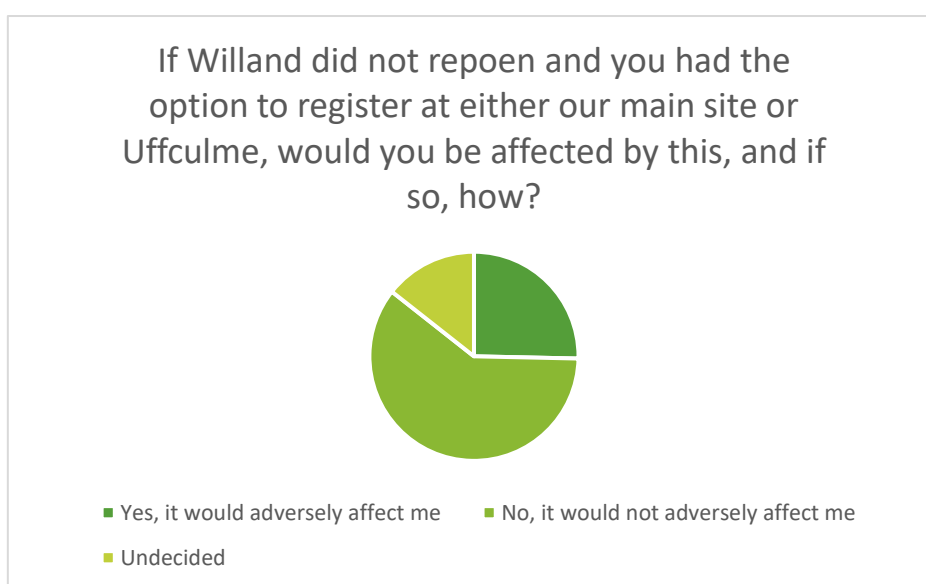
*“Willand is convenient but mostly use the Cullompton site”*



### Question 3:

If Willand branch surgery did not reopen and you had the option to register at either our main College Surgery site or Uffculme branch surgery, would you be affected by this, and if so, how?

Yes, it would adversely affect me	37
No, it would not adversely affect me	88
Undecided	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>



#### Comments:

*"I am affected as it is more of an inconvenience travel wise and it was good to be able to walk to the surgery saving on emissions from my diesel car"*

*"Cannot drive, have to take public transport"*

*"I now have to use the car to get to appointments as the bus service is not regular enough to complete the journey in a timely fashion. It is also often raining and there is not a bus stop very near to my house"*

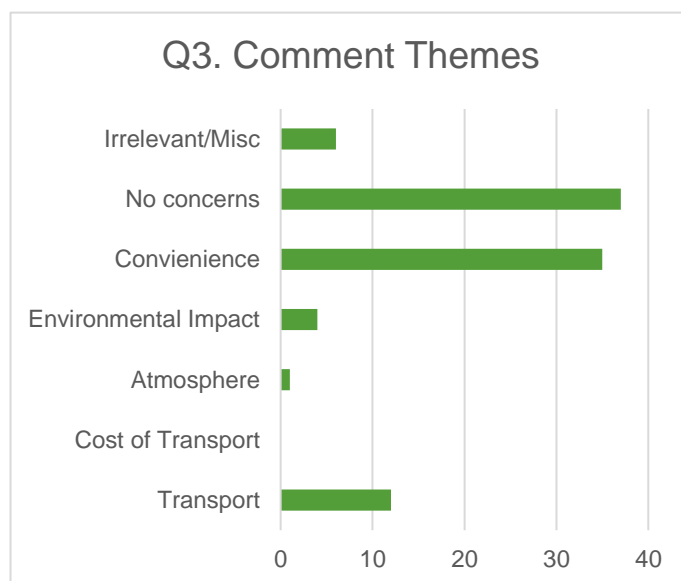
*"Happy to use the main site"*

*"Apart from slight difference in distance - whether Willand or Cullompton is immaterial"*

*"Though we have used Willand, we prefer to travel to Cullompton. There are more options and choice of doctor."*

*"Have not used Willand Surgery, prefer to attend Cullompton"*

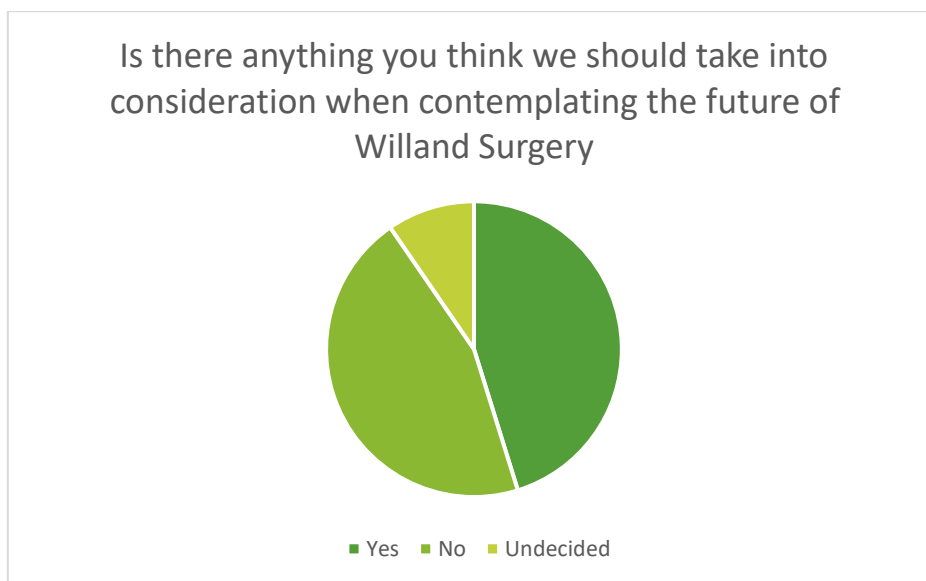
*"I would rather attend College Surgery in Cullompton"*



## Question 4

Is there anything else you think we should take into consideration when contemplating the future of Willand branch surgery?

Yes	66
No	66
Undecided	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>



Comments:

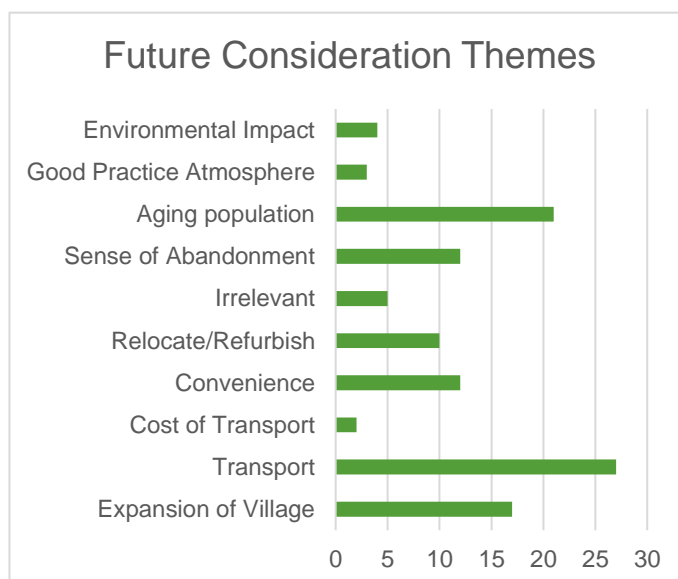
*“Is there an option to have a branch in Willand elsewhere, eg purpose-built. I would feel better walking to surgery in Willand rather than drive elsewhere if I was unwell”*

*“If we are to go carbon neutral as a country, local facilities will become more important. Willand has potential to increase in size so a local surgery is a vital service for residents young and old”*

*“The older generation that prefer local and are not used to modern methods of getting in touch with their GP and the surgery”*

*“They are planning to build another 125 houses so there will be more people who will need a doctor. If you catch a bus to the other surgeries, they only take you to them once an hour they will go there”*

*“The village is expanding lots of young families and, at the same time, very useful for elderly who cannot drive and catching a bus would not be possible due to their health”*



## Key areas of concern:

### *Transport & Environmental Impact*

Concerns about transport and its cost particularly for those who are unable to drive was highlighted a number of times throughout the feedback along with the potential impact on the environment.

**Response:** Willand is serviced by a regular bus to and from Cullompton and is only 2.5 miles away. Given the small number of appointments offered from Willand on a weekly basis and the need for patients to travel to another site for the majority of routine and urgent care this will have minimal impact.

The practice provides home visits and will continue to do so for patients who are too unwell to travel to the practice.

Additionally, Culm Voluntary Care Scheme (Charity Number: 1113709) operates in the local area. They are a charity run with object of providing a community transport service for such residents of Culm Valley (the town of Cullompton and surrounding villages) who are in need of such a service because of age, sickness, disability (mental or physical), financial hardship or because of a lack of availability of adequate and safe public transport. The Scheme provides low-cost journeys, and a driver will either wait for a patient for an extra charge or do two journeys to drop off and collect.

### *Convenience & Atmosphere*

The convenience of having a local 'walkable' service was highlighted throughout the feedback as was the perception that the Willand site had a 'nice atmosphere' and felt 'local'.

**Response:** We fully appreciate that the need to travel to another site will be an inconvenience for some the fact that the majority of the services we offer are based at our main site mean that the convenience mentioned by several respondents relates to service we would not, and have not, provided from Willand Branch for many years.

### *Expansion of Willand and its demographic make up*

Willand, as with other local areas, has housing development planned. This increase in population, alongside the highlighting of the village having a demographic which is predominantly elderly, was raised by significant numbers of respondents in connection with travel difficulties.

**Response:** Whilst there is planned housing development planned in Willand, there is more significant development planned in Cullompton, and the practice is better positioned by focusing on providing the best service possible from the main site.

### *Sense of Abandonment*

Several comments implied that the site closing permanently would indicate that the Practice/NHS is abandoning the village.

**Response:** We hope that the arguments made for the closure provide the reassurance that this is neither the case or the objective and that, by consolidating the practice team, we aim to provide the best services for the populations we cover.

### *Relocating/Refurbishing the Premises*

Comments query whether another site could be utilised for the practice or whether the current site could be made fit for purpose.

**Response:** Currently there is no funding available to refurbish the site and there is limited capacity at the site to significantly improve the space. There is currently no other space that would easily be useable for clinics and an alternative would require substantial investment from NHS England.

### ***Summary and Next Steps***

In relation to the concerns raised around Transport and Access, we would continue to offer home visits for those who are too unwell to travel to the practice, we would also provide details of public and community transport options to Willand Surgery Patients.

In relation to concerns raised around the practice no longer being available in Willand, we would ensure that everyone is regularly communicated with about the services we have available at our main site and other branches, and that access points include face to face, telephone, and online booking.

We will share the findings and outcomes with all those that the original engagement was sent to, including patients, patient representative groups, the Integrated Care Board, MPs, Health Watch, our local councillors and include details on our website and links by social media.

### **Next Steps**

College Surgery will discuss the patient feedback with its Patient Participation Group and NHS Devon to decide on a way forward.

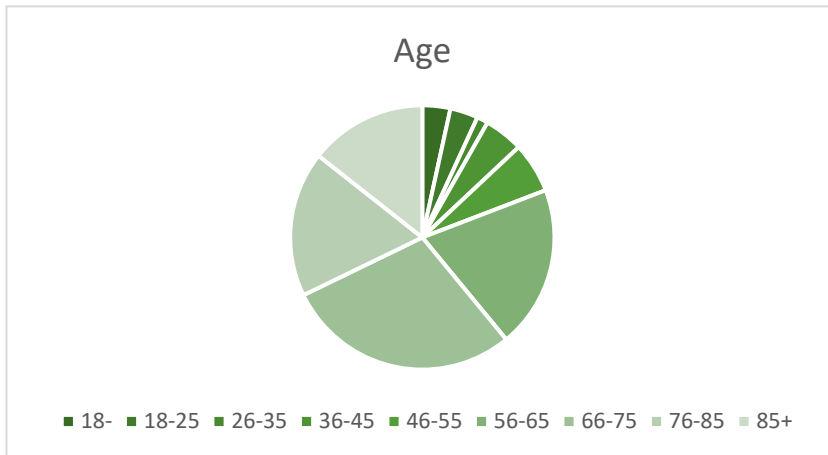


# Monitoring Questions

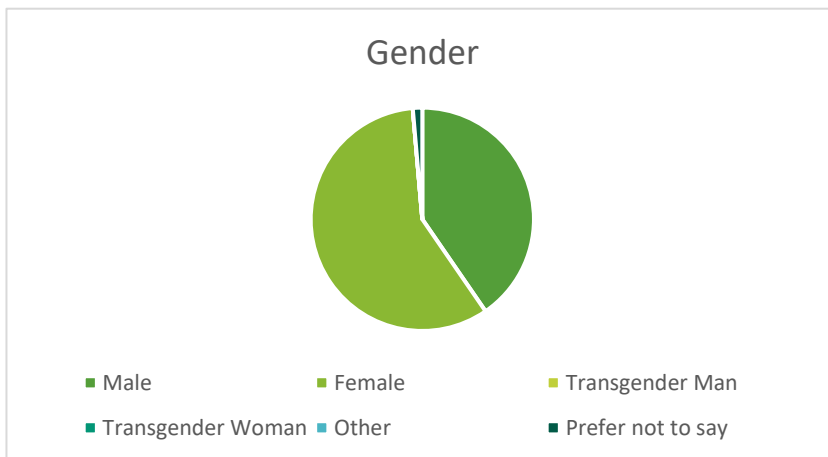
To help us understand the needs of different people, we asked for some additional information about Patients to provide a more accurate picture of the needs of those people responding to this survey

Age Profiles of respondents:

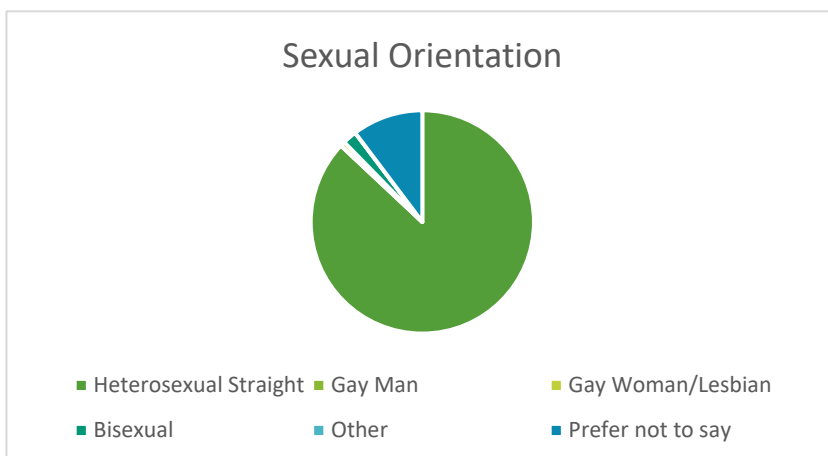
Age	
Under 18	5
18-25	5
26-35	2
36-45	7
46-55	9
56-65	29
66-75	42
76-85	26
85+	21
Prefer not to say	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>



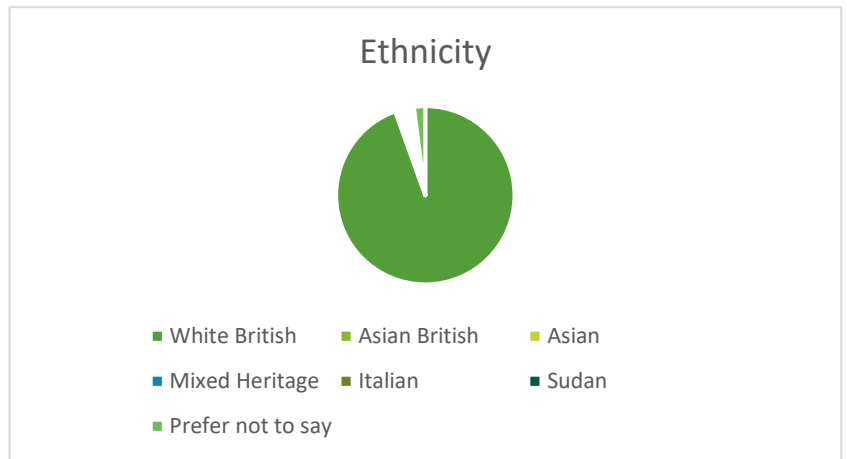
Gender	
Male	59
Female	85
Transgender Man	0
Transgender Woman	0
Other	0
Prefer not to say	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>



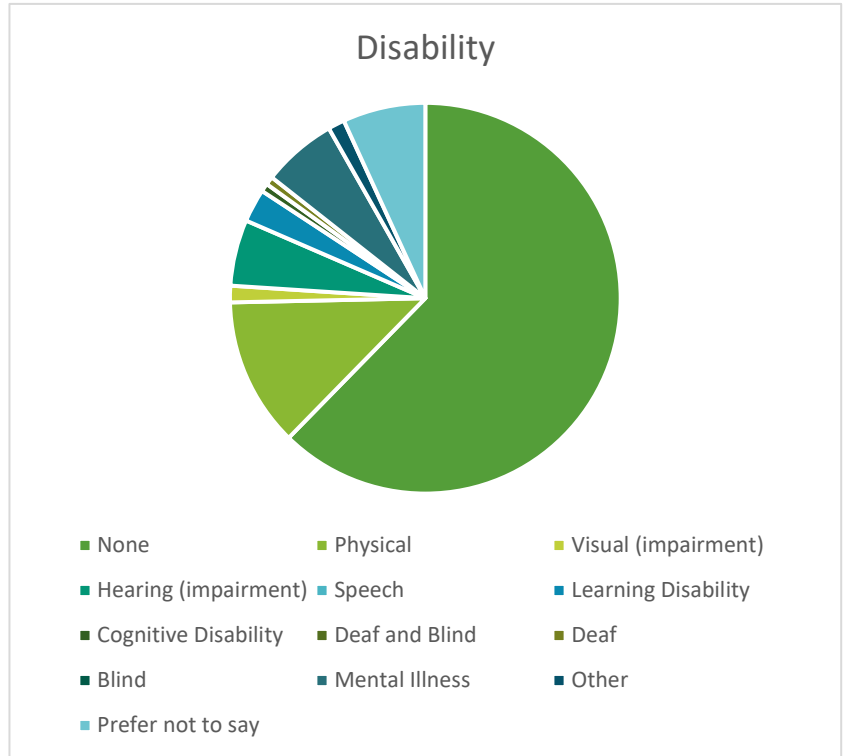
Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual Straight	127
Gay Man	0
Gay Woman/Lesbian	1
Bisexual	3
Other	0
Prefer not to stay	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>



Ethnicity	
White British	138
Asian British	1
Asian	1
Mixed Heritage	1
Italian	1
Sudan	1
Prefer not to say	3



Disability	
None	91
Physical	18
Visual (impairment)	2
Hearing (impairment)	8
Speech	
Learning Disability	4
Cognitive Disability	1
Deaf and Blind	
Deaf	1
Blind	
Mental Illness	9
Other	2
Prefer not to say	10
Total	146



Religion	
Christian	98
Muslim	1
Roman Catholic	1
Humanist	1
None	28
Prefer not to say	17
Total	146

