

Snapshot 2020



**An overview of local people's views
and awareness of change in health &
social care in Sutton**

May 2020

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Summary

- Following the success of the Snapshot 1 survey in 2018, Healthwatch Sutton conducted a second Snapshot survey between October 2019 and January 2020.
- The survey aimed to gather people's views on the quality of health and social care in Sutton, along with their awareness of local proposals and initiatives.
- The results were compared with the 2018 Snapshot findings to gauge if opinions have changed.
- There was some positivity about the quality of services in Sutton. A majority of respondents agreed that pharmacies were accessible (89%), and that hospital (70%) and GP services (64%) were managed well.
- Regarding social care, more disagreed that money was wisely spent and services were run well (27% and 24% respectively) than agreed (21% and 22%).
- There was no significant change in the overall perception of health and care services since 2018.
- When asked for comment, there was a drop in the mentions of NHS changes and a small increase in mentions of health and social care services since 2018. There was a small increase in negative (15%) and a slight increase in positive sentiment (4%) from the last survey.
- A small majority (53%) of respondents were aware of Primary Care Networks.
- There has been no significant change in people's awareness of the Epsom & St Helier proposals since the last survey: 63% reported they were aware, compared to 37% who said they were not.
- In terms of gender, age, ethnicity and geographic spread, the sample did not differ significantly from 2018.

Background

Following a period of planning and implementation of significant changes to services in Sutton, particularly around changes to NHS services, Healthwatch Sutton sought the views of local people about health and social care in the borough. Local residents were surveyed between January and March 2018. Respondents were asked a series of questions about their perception of how well services are delivered and about their awareness of local initiatives and proposals. The findings were published in a report titled Snapshot 1, which was published in April 2018.

The last two years has seen continued pressure on services due to demand and financial constraints. In addition, the Improving Healthcare Together initiative has continued to consult on proposals to change emergency care services across the area currently provided by Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust. Healthwatch Sutton was keen to repeat the survey to gauge whether people's views and experiences have changed in the two years since.

This report has been distributed to the following organisations: Epsom & St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust, South West London & St George's Mental Health NHS Trust, Clinical Directors of Sutton's 4 Primary Care Networks, NHS Sutton, London Borough of Sutton Council, South West London Health & Care Partnership and Sutton Health & Care Alliance. On this occasion, a formal response to the report has not been requested as providers and commissioners found it difficult to respond to the broad findings in the previous report. However, it is hoped that the findings from Snapshot 2020 will prove useful to all the organisations above and others.

Methodology

The design of the survey was similar to that of the previous one, consisting of questions relating to the quality of services, proposals and demography. However, the survey was cut from 12 to 8 key questions pertinent to current initiatives happening in Sutton. The questions were designed to allow meaningful comparison with the Snapshot 1 findings. Questions one and two covered people's views on the quality of health and social care; questions three and four asked about changes to local services; and questions five to eight were about the respondents themselves.

A questionnaire was sent out to some 450 Sutton residents on the Healthwatch Sutton mailing list alongside the autumn newsletter. Recipients were given a freepost envelope in which to return their completed forms. In addition, an electronic copy of the survey was distributed to approximately 250 voluntary and community sector groups so that it could be shared via their networks. An online version was also available via Survey Monkey. A social media promotional campaign, which included links to the online version, ran through the autumn and winter of 2019 to encourage participation.

Results

A total of 142 responses were collected between 10/10/19 and 13/01/20 as part of the Snapshot 2020 survey. In total, 48 paper forms and 94 online forms were received. These were compared, where relevant, with the results from the Snapshot 1 survey. A total of 205 responses were recorded between 26/01/18 and 24/03/18 for Snapshot 1.

Question 1

For question one, respondents were asked how much they either agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about health and social care in Sutton (see Figure 1).

There was some agreement with each of the statements

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? %

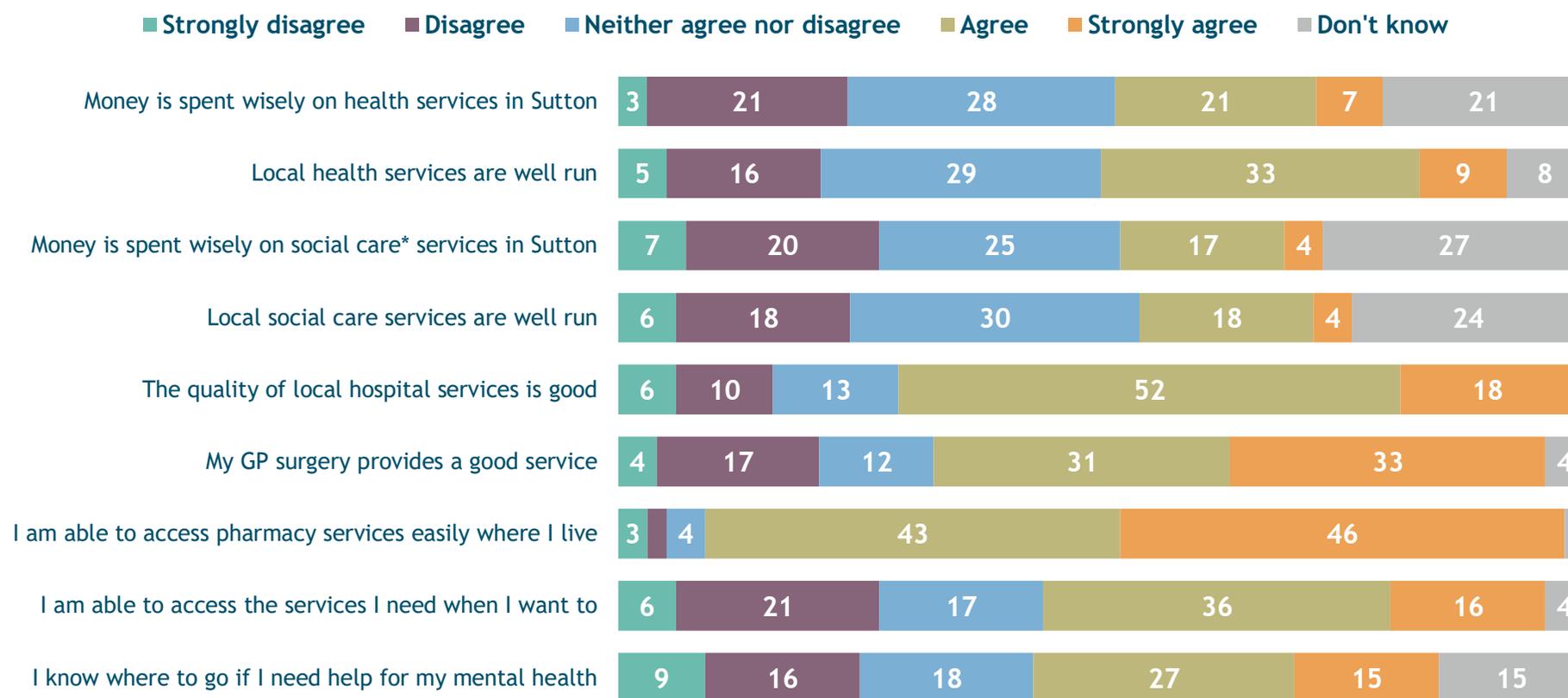


Figure 1. Percentages exclude blanks.

Respondents' answers to the statements were then weighted accordingly: 'Strongly disagree' = 1; 'Disagree' = 2; 'Neither agree nor disagree' = 3; 'Agree' = 4; 'Strongly agree' = 5. These were then used to produce a mean score for each of the statements. 'Don't know' and blank responses were excluded when calculating mean scores. The mean scores were then compared against those from the previous Snapshot survey, shown in Figure 2. A score of 1 implies all strongly disagree, whereas a score of 5 implies the opposite. A score of 3 suggests neutrality or equally polarised responses. These scores are a fairly blunt measure, and have been produced more for the purpose of comparison rather than as an indicator of agreement, thus they should be interpreted with caution. A comparison with the previous survey can be found in Table A1.

There was no significant change in answers from the previous survey

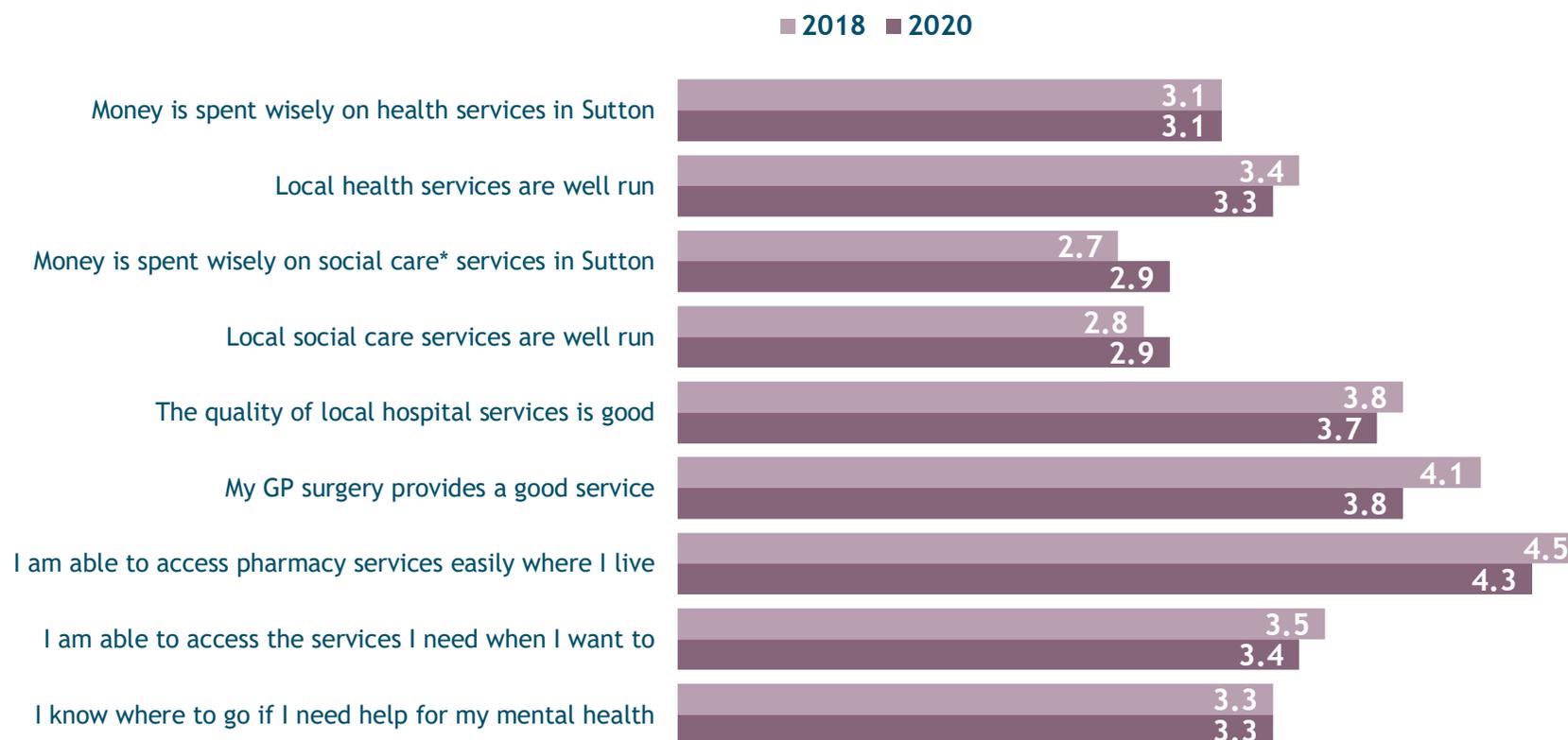


Figure 2. Mean scores of question one answers compared to 2018 Snapshot survey.

The statements in question one are not all like-for-like comparators: the questions regarding money being spent wisely and services being run well are only replicated for health and social care. Nor does this question provide an accurate measure of how effectively services are being delivered. It does, on the other hand, provide a barometer of how people perceive services are run. This difference should be borne in mind when interpreting and quoting the results.

There was some agreement that services are of good quality in Sutton. A majority of respondents agreed ('Agree' and 'Strongly agree') that hospital (70%) and GP services (64%) were effectively run. This is somewhat surprising given the demand and financial pressures that GP surgeries and hospital services are operating under, but it is commensurate with the findings from 2018. A common issue cited in people's comments (page 11) was insufficient funding from central government impacting services, therefore it is not possible to determine whether or not some respondents have adjusted their answers to question one based on this belief. For example, someone may think that services are run well given their perception of the funds available to deliver them.

Regarding social care, a majority was either neutral or did not know whether money was spent effectively (52%), or that services are run well (54%). This is likely due to a lack of experience of such services. However, excluding those answers, more disagreed ('Disagree' and 'Strongly disagree') with the statements on social care spending and delivery (27% and 24% respectively) than agreed with them (21% and 22%).

A large plurality (49%) also said that they were neutral or did not know how wisely money was spent on health services. This may indicate that public health spending in Sutton is not well publicised. As was the case in 2018, people were most positive about pharmacy services, with a large majority (89%) agreeing that they were easily accessible.

Remarkably, there was very little change in respondents' overall answers compared with 2018.

Question 2

Respondents were asked if they had any comments regarding health and social care in Sutton. Their comments were then categorised into themes on the same basis as the previous survey. Figure 3 shows the results compared with 2018. The comments from the 2018 survey are derived from three open-response questions, not one as in the case in 2020, and have been analysed together for simplicity.

There was a drop in mentions of NHS changes and a small increase in mentions of health and social care services

Do you have any comments that you would like to share regarding anything to do with health and social care in Sutton? %

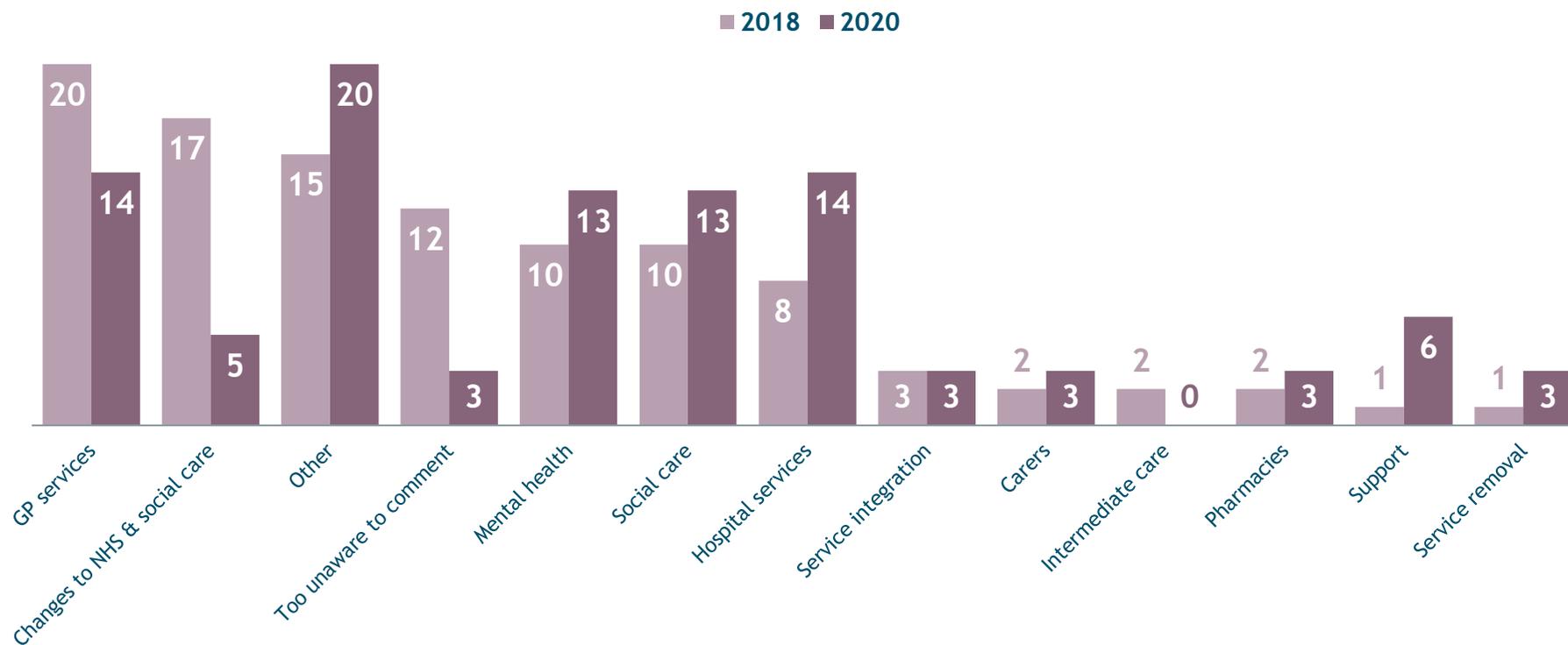


Figure 3. Percentages of total no. of times themes mentioned.

The sentiment of the comments was also recorded and compared with 2018, shown in Figure 4. Full results of question two can be found in Table A2.

There was a small increase in negative and a slight increase in positive sentiment from the last survey

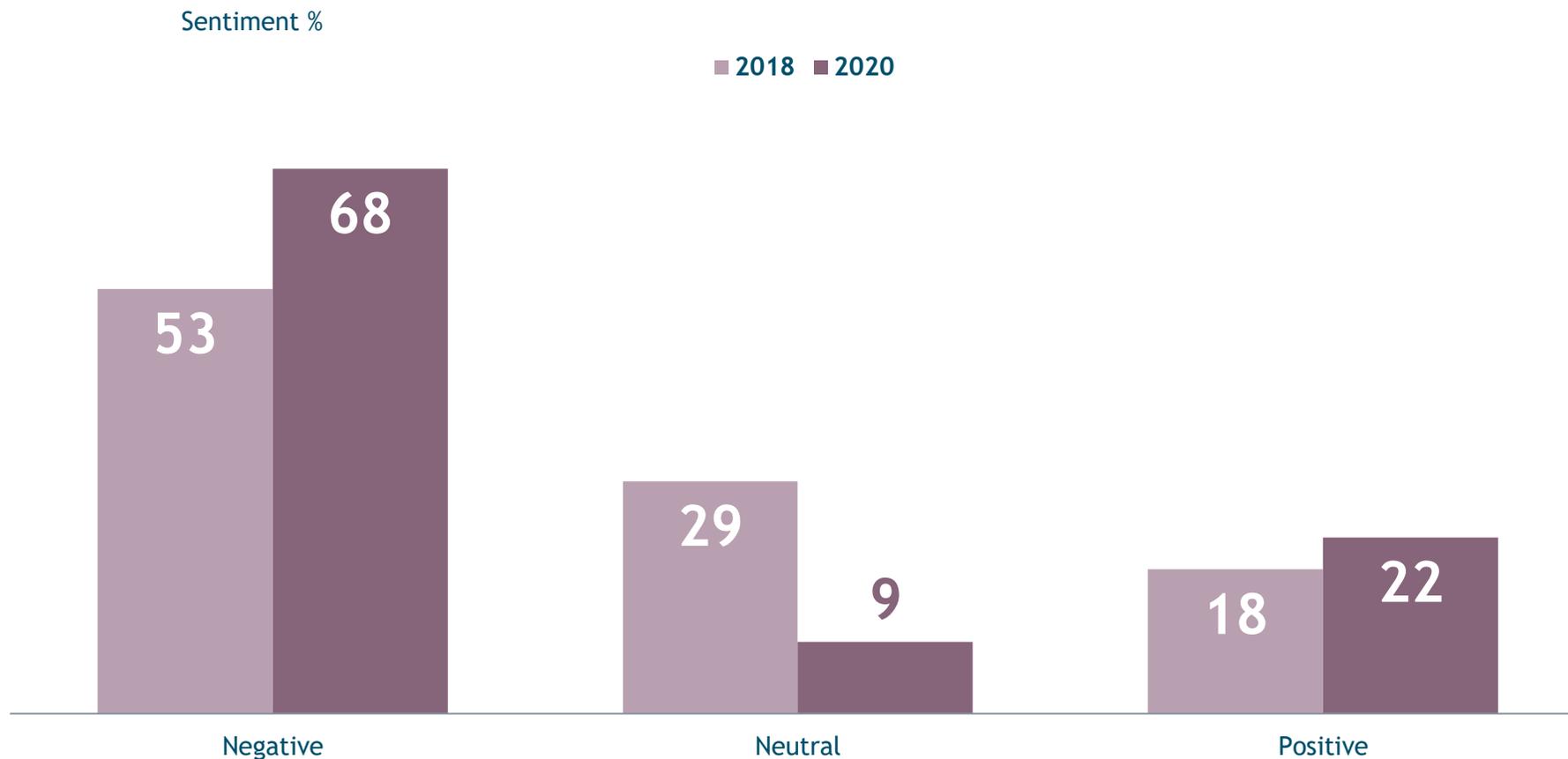


Figure 4. Percentages of total no. of expressions.

The small increases in negative and positive sentiment compared with 2018 are likely attributed to people giving more committal answers, as evidenced the in the 20% drop in neutral comments.

Listed below is a selection of comments grouped into their various themes. Respondents consistently raised the issue of lengthy waiting times for GP appointments and referrals, while others expressed frustration at the difficulty of getting an appointment at a convenient time. Poor provision of mental health services in Sutton was another point of contention in the comments. A common thread was a perceived lack of funding from central government which was thought to impact the quality of health and social care services, although some comments praised the quality of service despite financial constraints. Difficulty accessing information and limited advertisement of services was also cited frequently.

GP services

“My GP surgery is excellent - **** is friendly, caring and easy to get appointment. Would welcome more preventative health services, such as health visiting.”

“I changed my GP Surgery in 2018 (where I had been registered since ****) because I was so dissatisfied with their service.”

“GP hubs - excellent.”

“Lack of continuity of care - difficult to get appointments with the same GP, especially if you want to see your named GP.”

“GP appointments are really hard to get and waiting times for an appointment for routine problems can take over three weeks which is not good. Although hours for GPs have improved, the problem of getting an appointment remains bad.”

“GP waiting times much longer than 10 years ago.”

“Feel my GP is now too remote and inaccessible.”

Changes to NHS & social care

“Keep St Helier hospital and its A&E open at its current location!”

“Primary Care Networks: it will not be easier for patients. Improving Healthcare Together: not in the interest of patients.”

“We need separate A&Es in Epsom and St Helier because they both cover vast areas. People will have to travel further. Matter between life and death.”

Other

“NHS staff are generally excellent, but sadly the service is badly underfunded and underfunded by Central Government. Even the promised funds will not be enough to improve the NHS to the standard required.”

“Services are clearly stretched and that is impacting on quality. I've unfortunately needed a few medical appointments in the last couple of years and none of them have been good experiences.”

“Not all the services are advertised well.”

“Underfunded and understaffed generally by government. Poor provision of specialist care. Those with savings are left to their own devices with poor advice and guidance.”

“More information regarding services.”

“The staff are usually outstanding, professional and conscientious. However, prolonged underfunding of the NHS and social care has led to a decline in services. There aren't adequate staff numbers, equipment or facilities. Private companies profit from provision of home care equipment and medical supplies but do not contribute adequate support in the form of specialist nurse support, particularly in the area of stoma-care, catheter provision and complex medication. Private care agencies claim to have staff trained in certain areas but the turnover is so great, they often have no one willing or able to do the right task. There isn't enough holistic care of patients with rushed appointments only enough to cover one issue. I could go on. Smaller surgeries are better at this but are being phased out - very sad. Essentially too many reports and not enough funding for amazing frontline NHS & Care.”

Mental health

“Mental health services are so limited in scope and accessibility that there is little point encouraging people to speak up and seek help if needs cannot be met outside a very narrow range of conditions. Waiting times are laughable and the length of treatment is insufficient to make any lasting difference. More should be done for people of working age living with debilitating conditions, trying to cope with them alongside work commitments with a health service that makes little concession for that.”

“Mental health services are available but stretched: face-to-face assessment and treatment is so important and these services seem to be poorly resourced.”

“Finding help for a mental health issue is like navigating a maze. Help comes at crisis point.”

“Hard to find out what help there is that caters for dementia patients and mental health sufferers in this borough.”

“There needs to be more focus on the needs of people with learning disabilities and mental health issues.”

“Mental health support is rubbish. Group sessions do not work for patients who have issues that need one-to-one counselling.”

“Having a waiting time of over 12 weeks to see someone for mental health is totally shocking. GPs pass the buck to Inspire who have more demand than they are able to cope with. Better mental health care is needed in Sutton, and the rest of this country, and fast.”

Social care

“Social Care should be Government's responsibility - it is unacceptable that local councils have to provide the service when their budgets have been so badly cut.”

“I think the local authority in Sutton supports the social services team very well which means people living in difficult circumstances benefit.”

“Social services can be slow to act; they are not consistent; they do not always see the bigger picture; and often hand the case over before resolving issues.”

“Health care in Sutton is generally good. However, social care is appalling with a blame culture amongst professionals of carers of vulnerable people with learning disabilities.”

“My grandmother was very well supported by Sutton social services and home care support. They kept her in her home where she wanted to be rather than making her move into a care home at massive cost to all.”

Hospital services

“St Helier services are poor with ridiculous waiting times for appointments.”

“The physiotherapy service seems only interested in giving advice.”

“Hospital is run down. Too many senior managers and not enough core workers.”

“Excellent drop-in eye service in St Helier.”

“Patients are always having to fight for what used to be standard health/social care. Why does St Helier hospital not have a full time learning disabilities liaison nurse, when Epsom has one and St George's has three?”

Service integration

“In addition to GP surgeries working together, six (or seven) CCGs have been asked/told to work together (to share admin costs only?) and three mental health trusts (namely SWLStG/SLAM and Ockley?) have been asked to work together. Will Healthwatch Sutton be able to monitor the numerous trusts providing health services outside Sutton but to which Sutton residents might be referred? Bigger is not always better!”

“There needs to be more joined up services within health and social care, as it appears there is more money spent on health than in the care sector - why is this?”

Carers

“Carers are not given enough consideration. Everything has to be a 'crisis' before there is any intervention.”

“I often feel very unsupported as a carer to two adult children with mental health. I have never received help.”

Pharmacies

“I found I was unable to use the ‘Minor Ailments Scheme’. None of the pharmacies let me use it, and I had to pay for all the goods despite being retired pensioner. I believe the service has been discontinued, but I’m unsure.”

“More services via GP and pharmacy.”

Support

“Secondary services or supporting services, for example podiatry, are very difficult to access.”

Service removal

“Why close the Chiltern Wing and replace it with a ward in Tooting? It’s too far for elderly relatives to go to.”

“The mental health service in Sutton is a disgrace since the Chiltern Wing, Sutton Hospital closed which catered for people with all sorts of mental health problems. What they have replaced it with is not fit for purpose.”

Question 3

Question three asked respondents whether they were aware that GP surgeries are starting to work together in Primary Care Networks in order to provide more services (see Figure 5). See Table A3 for a full count of answers.

A small majority of respondents were aware of Primary Care Networks

Did you know that GP surgeries are starting to work together in groups called Primary Care Networks (four in the Borough) to provide a wider range of services? %

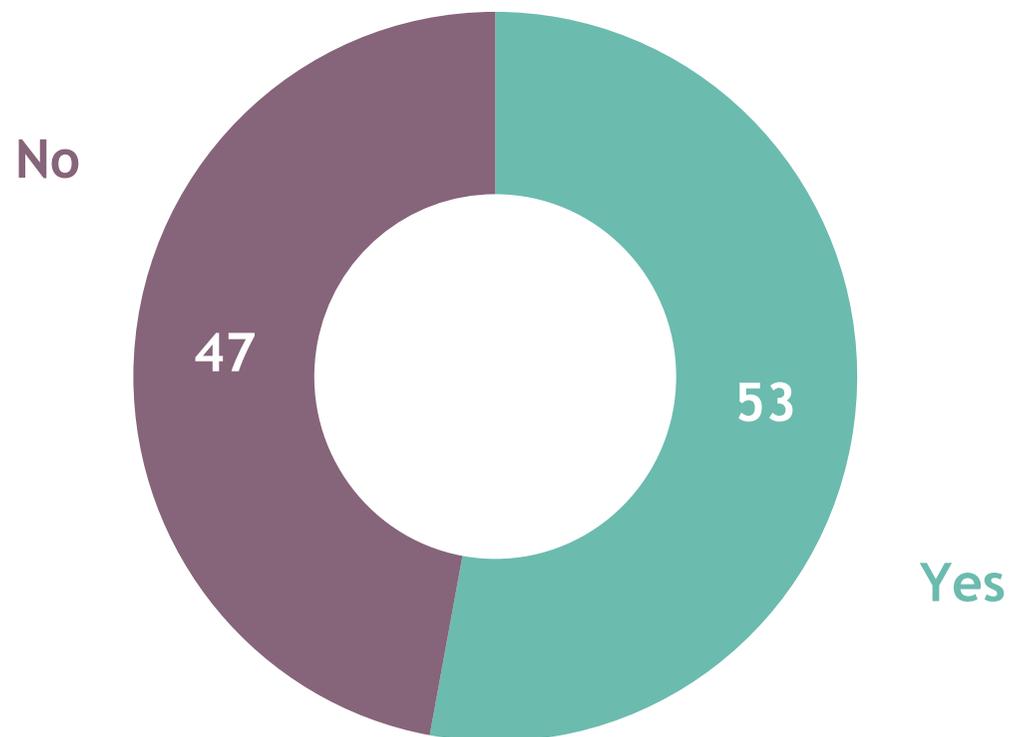


Figure 5. Percentages exclude blanks.

Question 4

Question four asked people if they were aware of the proposed changes to emergency care provision in Epsom and St Helier. Their answers were compared with a question from the previous Snapshot survey which also asked about the Epsom and St Helier proposals. It is noteworthy that there has been no significant change in two years. This perhaps suggests that promotion of the proposals has not reached a wider audience since 2018. A comparison of the results is shown in Figure 6. A full count of answers is shown in Table A4.

There has been no significant change in people's awareness of the Epsom & St Helier proposals since the last survey

Are you aware that the NHS is proposing to change the emergency care provided by Epsom and St Helier hospitals by providing it on one site (not at both as it does currently)? The new site for emergency care could be in the grounds of either Epsom, St Helier or Sutton hospitals. %

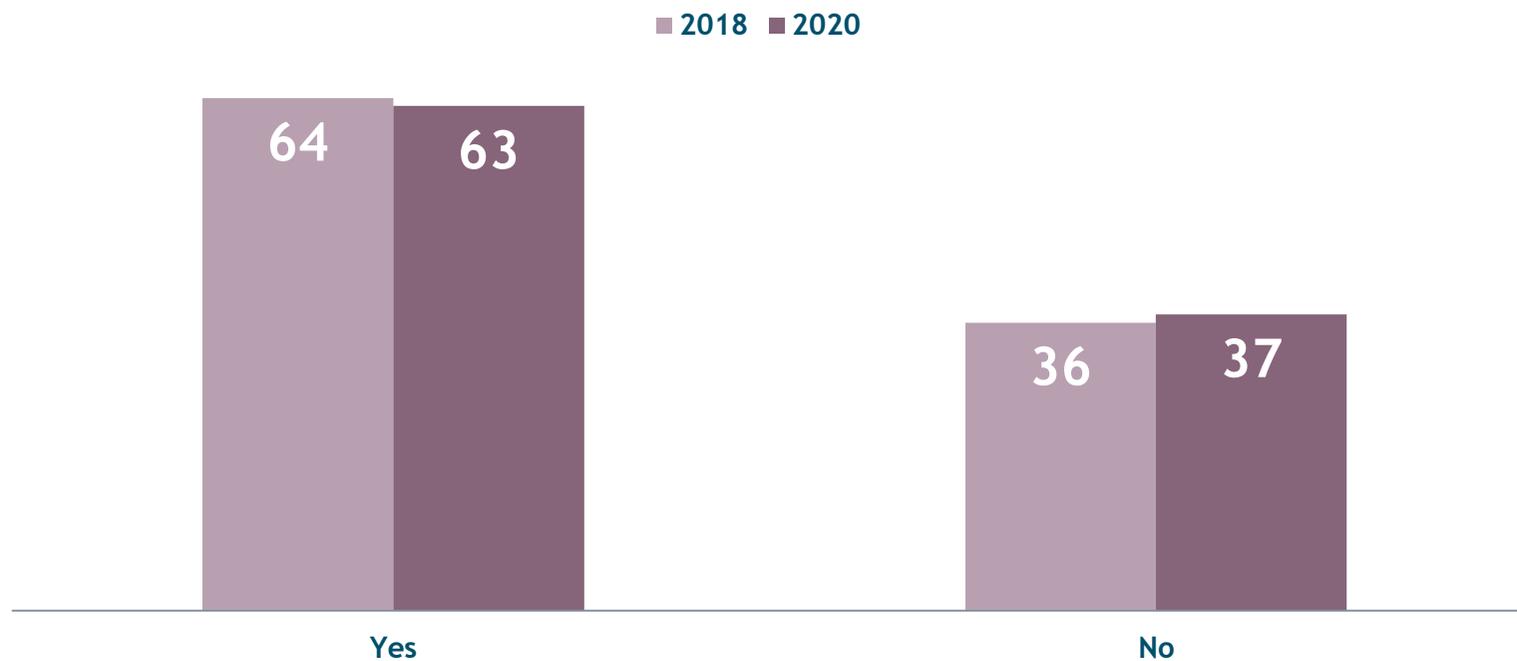


Figure 6. Percentages exclude blanks.

Question 5

A breakdown of the sample by gender is shown in Figure 7. A comparison with the previous survey can be found in Table A5.

The survey sample skewed heavily towards women

Your gender %

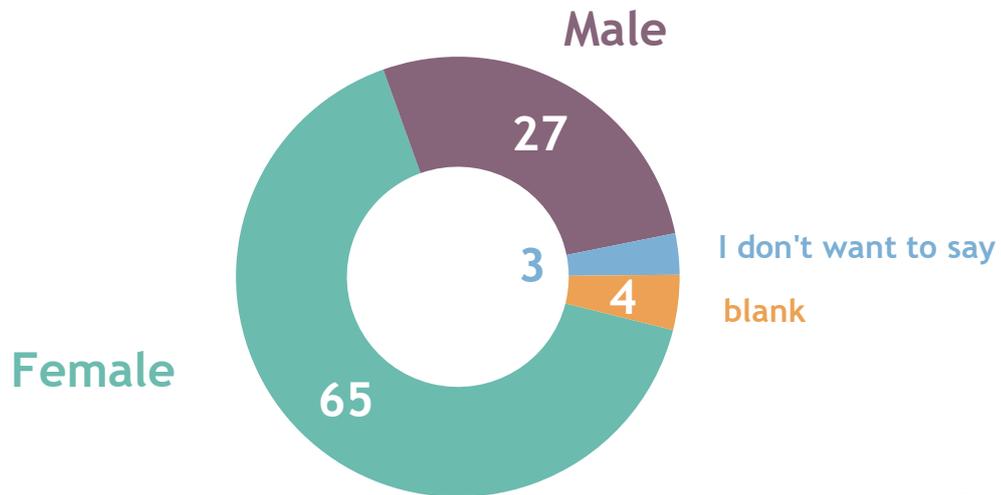


Figure 7.

Question 6

Almost two-thirds (62%) of respondents were aged between 55 and 84. A comparison of age is shown in Figure 8 and a full breakdown of answers is shown in Table A6.

The sample skewed toward middle-aged and older people

Your age %

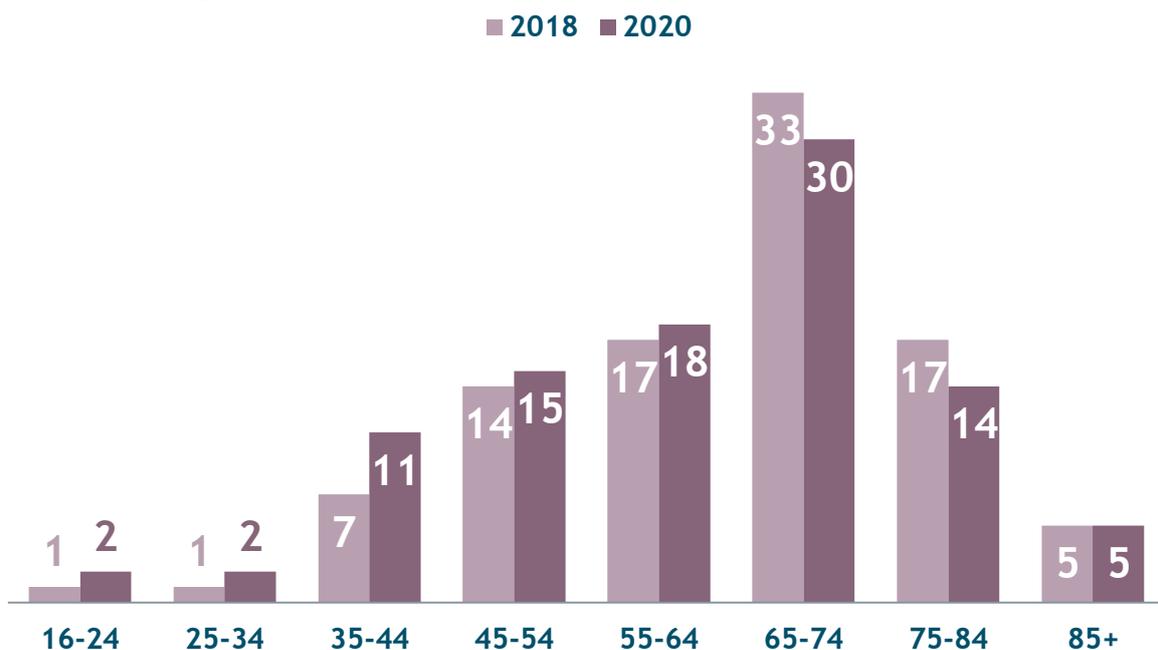


Figure 8. Blank responses not shown.

Question 7

A breakdown of the survey sample by ethnicity is shown in Figure 9. A comparison with the previous Snapshot survey can be found in Table A7.

The sample skewed heavily toward White British

Your ethnicity %

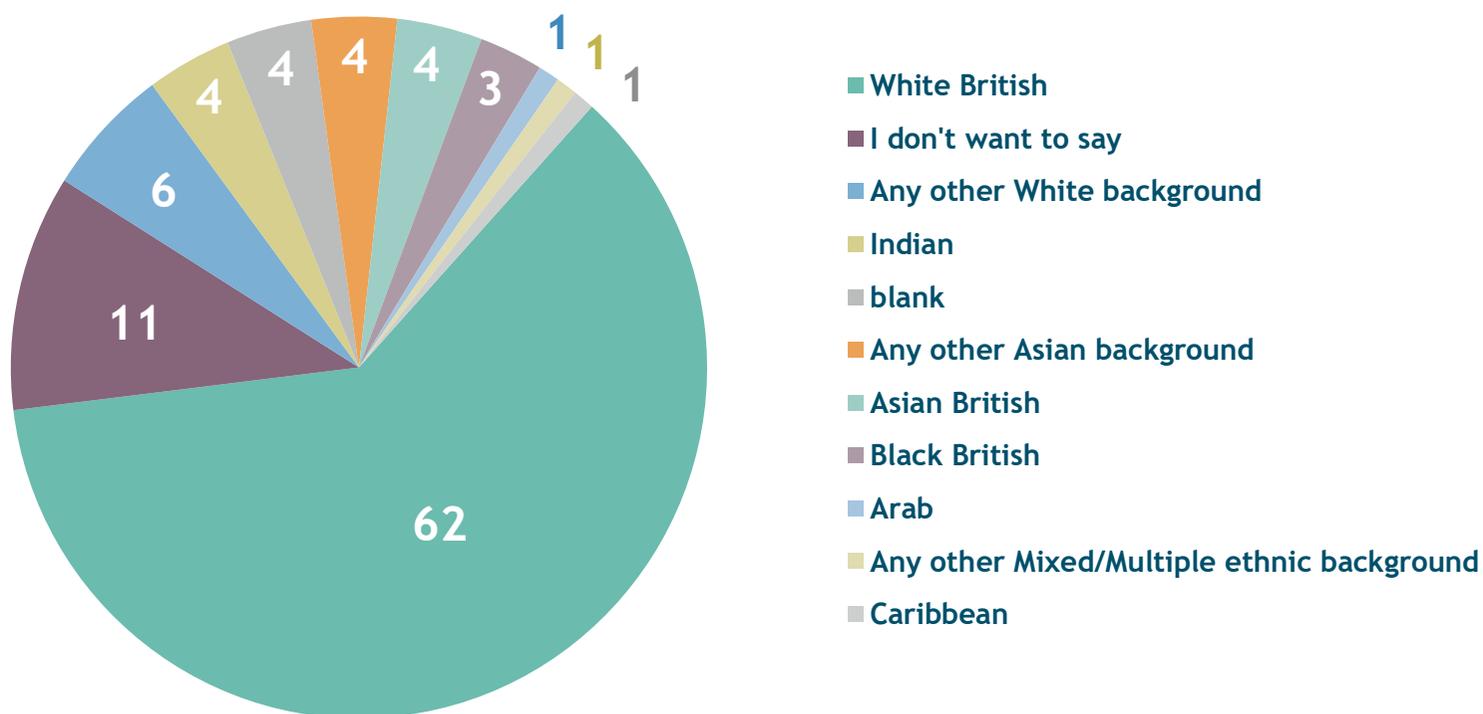


Figure 9. Unrepresented ethnicities not shown.

Question 8

Question eight asked respondents whereabouts they lived (see Figure 10). In addition to the figures below, 3% said they lived outside of Sutton, 8% answered ‘Don’t know/prefer not to say’ and 4% left the question blank. A comparison with the previous survey can be found in Table A8.

There was a reasonably good spread of responses across wards

Your local authority ward %

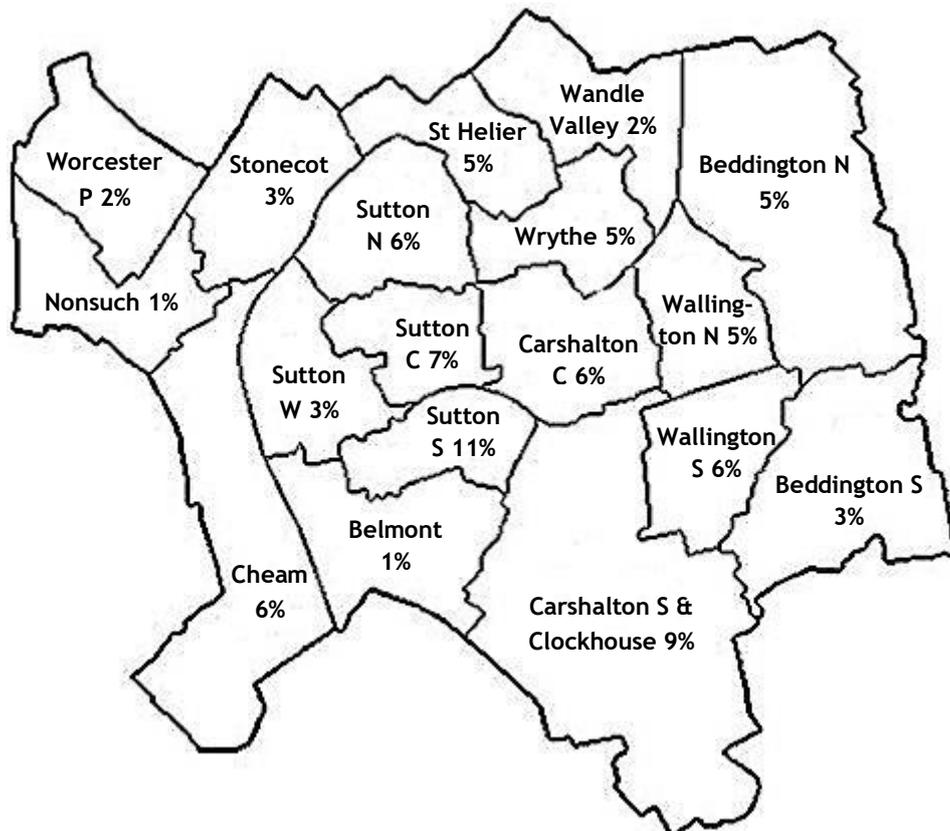


Figure 10.

The composition of the sample showed no substantive difference from that of 2018 in terms of gender, age and geographic spread. There was, however, a small decrease in White British ethnicity (13%).

Limitations

While the results of the survey do provide an overview of people’s opinions, there are some notable limitations. Firstly, the sample has not been randomly selected; the questionnaire was distributed to those on the Healthwatch Sutton mailing list. This is demonstrated by the heavy skew towards women in the sample and the non-normal/skewed distribution of age. Although despite this, the sample ethnicity was

broadly similar to that of Sutton¹. This also may explain, in part, the similar results to questions one and four. Notwithstanding, a similar sample does not detract from the validity of the results. For instance, in relation question four, one might expect to see a change in awareness over a significant period even if the sample group was identical. Secondly, the respondents are a self-selecting sample, and, as such, may be more knowledgeable about health and social care than the wider population of Sutton.

¹ Sample ethnicity is broadly similar to projected ethnic composition of the London Borough of Sutton in 2020 based on data from the Greater London Authority. Source: <https://data.sutton.gov.uk/population/>.

Thank You

This report would not have been possible without the help of all the Sutton residents who gave up some of their time to give their views and share their experiences of health and social care. Healthwatch Sutton would like to say a big thank you to all those that took part.

Appendix

Table A1. Question one.

	Year	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know	Total excl. blanks	blank
Money is spent wisely on health services in Sutton	2020	4 3%	29 21%	39 28%	29 21%	10 7%	30 21%	141 100%	1
	2018	5 2%	33 16%	66 33%	55 27%	3 1%	41 20%	203 100%	2
Local health services are well run	2020	7 5%	23 16%	40 29%	46 33%	13 9%	11 8%	140 100%	2
	2018	7 3%	24 12%	53 26%	82 40%	12 6%	25 12%	203 100%	2
Money is spent wisely on social care* services in Sutton	2020	10 7%	28 20%	36 25%	24 17%	5 4%	39 27%	142 100%	0
	2018	15 7%	46 22%	42 20%	30 15%	4 2%	68 33%	205 100%	0
Local social care services are well run	2020	9 6%	25 18%	42 30%	25 18%	5 4%	33 24%	139 100%	3
	2018	16 8%	41 20%	52 25%	28 14%	7 3%	60 29%	204 100%	1
The quality of local hospital services is good	2020	8 6%	14 10%	19 13%	73 52%	25 18%	2 1%	141 100%	1
	2018	7 3%	13 6%	35 17%	106 52%	34 17%	8 4%	203 100%	2
My GP surgery provides a good service	2020	5 4%	24 17%	17 12%	44 31%	46 33%	5 4%	141 100%	1
	2018	6 3%	14 7%	24 12%	67 33%	91 44%	3 1%	205 100%	0
I am able to access pharmacy services easily where I live	2020	4 3%	3 2%	5 4%	61 43%	65 46%	3 2%	141 100%	1
	2018	2 1%	5 2%	7 3%	68 33%	117 57%	6 3%	205 100%	0
I am able to access the services I need when I want to	2020	8 6%	29 21%	24 17%	49 36%	22 16%	6 4%	138 100%	4
	2018	9 4%	40 20%	24 12%	80 39%	37 18%	13 6%	203 100%	2
I know where to go if I need help for my mental health	2020	13 9%	22 16%	25 18%	38 27%	21 15%	21 15%	140 100%	2
	2018	14 7%	31 15%	38 19%	53 26%	31 15%	36 18%	203 100%	2

Table A2. Question two comments compared with all comments from the 2018 survey.

	2018		2020	
GP services	39	20%	17	14%
Changes to NHS & social care	32	17%	6	5%
Other	28	15%	24	20%
Too unaware to comment	22	12%	3	3%
Mental health	19	10%	15	13%
Social care	19	10%	16	13%
Hospital services	15	8%	17	14%
Service integration	5	3%	4	3%
Carers	3	2%	3	3%
Intermediate care	3	2%	0	0%
Pharmacies	3	2%	4	3%
Support	2	1%	7	6%
Service removal	1	1%	3	3%
Total no. of times themes mentioned	191	100%	119	100%
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Negative	97	53%	65	68%
Neutral	52	29%	9	9%
Positive	33	18%	21	22%
Total no. of expressions	182	100%	95	100%
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Total no. of comments	174		86	61%
blanks	n/a		56	39%

Table A3. Question three.

	Frequency	
Yes	73	53%
No	65	47%
Total excl. blanks	138	100%
blank	4	n/a
Total incl. blanks	142	n/a

Table A4. Question four compared with question three from the 2018 survey on the same topic.

	2018		2020	
Yes	130	64%	87	63%
No	72	36%	51	37%
Total excl. blanks	202	100%	138	100%
blank	3	n/a	4	n/a
Total incl. blanks	205	n/a	142	n/a

Table A5. Question five.

	2018		2020	
Female	139	68%	93	65%
Male	52	25%	39	27%
I don't want to say	4	2%	4	3%
blank	10	5%	6	4%
Total incl. blanks	205	100%	142	100%

Table A6. Question six.

	2018		2020	
16-24	3	1%	3	2%
25-34	2	1%	3	2%
35-44	14	7%	15	11%
45-54	29	14%	21	15%
55-64	34	17%	26	18%
65-74	68	33%	42	30%
75-84	35	17%	20	14%
85+	10	5%	7	5%
blank	10	5%	5	4%
Total incl. blanks	205	100%	142	100%

Table A7. Question seven.

	2018		2020	
African	0	0%	0	0%
Any other Asian background	3	1%	5	4%
Any other Black background	0	0%	0	0%
Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background	2	1%	1	1%
Any other White background	10	5%	9	6%
Arab	2	1%	2	1%
Asian British	3	1%	5	4%
Bangladeshi	0	0%	0	0%
Black British	4	2%	4	3%
Caribbean	2	1%	1	1%
Chinese	0	0%	0	0%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0%	0	0%
Indian	1	0%	6	4%
Pakistani	1	0%	0	0%
White British	153	75%	88	62%
I don't want to say	14	7%	15	11%
Blank	10	5%	6	4%
Total incl. blanks	205	100%	142	100%

Table A8. Question eight.

	2018		2020	
Beddington North	10	5%	7	5%
Beddington South	3	1%	4	3%
Belmont	7	3%	2	1%
Carshalton Central	10	5%	8	6%
Carshalton South & Clockhouse	18	9%	13	9%
Cheam	17	8%	9	6%
Nonsuch	4	2%	1	1%
St Helier	14	7%	7	5%
Stonecot	7	3%	4	3%
Sutton Central	12	6%	10	7%
Sutton North	9	4%	8	6%
Sutton South	19	9%	16	11%
Sutton West	11	5%	4	3%
The Wrythe	7	3%	7	5%
Wallington North	5	2%	7	5%
Wallington South	15	7%	8	6%
Wandle Valley	3	1%	3	2%
Worcester Park	7	3%	3	2%
Out of Borough	0	0%	4	3%
Don't know/prefer not to say	17	8%	11	8%
Blank	10	5%	6	4%
Total incl. blanks	205	100%	142	100%