

Healthwatch Swindon

Feedback report: COVID-19 Vaccine Report

March 2021



Introduction

Acknowledgements

We wish to express our gratitude to all of our partners across Swindon who helped to share the survey with their networks, and to the local residents who took part.

Purpose of this work

The purpose of this work was to hear from local people and understand their views of the COVID-19 vaccine and whether or not there is hesitancy in getting vaccinated.

At the beginning of February we invited people across Swindon to take part in a month-long survey to find out their views, attitudes and concerns towards the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out and the communications that have supported this. This was part of a wider piece of work undertaken by local Healthwatch throughout England and nationally.

The findings of the survey enable us to provide rapid insight to NHS England, the Clinical Commissioning Group and local GP practices Swindon and to help Healthwatch England build the national picture.

About

This report focuses on:

- Attitudes towards the vaccine
- Access to the vaccine for vulnerable groups
- Logistical access to the vaccine
- Experience of the roll-out

Who did we hear from?

765 people took part in the survey. We had a good spread of ages taking part but the highest proportion of ages was 35 - 74. Nearly three quarters of respondents identified as women.

Attitudes to the vaccine

We found that the majority of respondents had a positive attitude towards vaccines in general. More than three quarters of respondents had heard positive information about the COVID vaccine and a similar number felt that the information from the NHS or the Government about the vaccine and its roll out had been communicated clearly and effectively

When asked how likely it would be that they would get the COVID-19 vaccine, at no charge through the NHS, we were told:

- 40% had already had the vaccine
- 49% definitely would have it
- 6% probably would have it
- 2% probably not have it
- 1% definitely would not have it
- 2% were not sure

37 people expressed hesitancy about the vaccine, telling us they definitely would not have it, would probably not have it or were not sure.

Gender: Female respondents expressed more hesitancy than male respondents - 4% in total. It should, however, be noted that there were significantly more female respondents to the survey so we cannot draw significant conclusions from this. Nine women disclosed they were either pregnant or had been in the last 12 months. All but one respondent from this cohort said they either definitely would or probably would get the vaccine.

Ethnicity: Most of the 765 respondents felt positive about the vaccine. Just under 30% (216) of the respondents were from BAME backgrounds and nearly 70% (528) were from White backgrounds. Of the 37 who expressed hesitancy 16 were BAME and 15 were from White backgrounds. It should be noted though that the numbers were low from both groups.

Age: 35 - 44 year olds expressed more hesitancy than other age ranges with 16 of the 37 being from this category.

Reasons for resistance and concern

Even some of those people who were positive about the vaccine had some concerns. They, together with those who were unsure or doubtful about taking vaccine selected these reasons:

- 19% said they could not be vaccinated for health reasons
- 3% said they were against vaccines in general
- 11% said they did not think the vaccine will be safe
- 10% said they did not think the vaccine will be effective
- 6% did not trust the intention behind the vaccine
- 5% did not think the coronavirus posed enough risk to them
- 16% said they would want to wait until others have had it first
- 1% said their family/ community were against it
- 1% said their faith/religion/belief systems say it was wrong for them to have the COVID-19 vaccine

- 12% said they were concerned about the ingredients used in it
- 49% said they were not sure

Vaccine trust

Whilst people overall welcomed the arrival of the vaccine and were happy to be vaccinated, there was mistrust in the vaccine. Some respondents chose to expand on what their concerns were, including the impact on people's fertility.

Although the feedback we received about fertility concerns were very low - we received three comments in total - we know from discussions we have had with other stakeholders in Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) that this is an issue that keeps coming up. Overall, though, it is fear of the unknown that crops up repeatedly: the side effects of the vaccine, the ingredients being used, the efficacy of the vaccine, the impact of different mutations on efficacy and so on.

What people told us:

- “There is no way I will be someone's Guinea pig. This is not normal, you do not need to vaccinate the entire planet against a disease with a 99.8% survival rate. If you think this [is] normal you have been brainwashed. [] if you think that this is norm discourse, you are brainwashed. I am young, healthy and pose no threat to the NHS. I haven't used a doctor is years. I do not need or want this vaccine and neither does anyone else.” **Female, White British, 25-34**
- “Concerns about potential fertility issues” **Female, White British, 25-34**
- “You need to be totally honest about concerns surrounding the long term fears people have eg my sons are concerned about it affecting their fertility. Don't use older scientists, use younger ones and debate the pros and cons whilst taking their concerns seriously.” **Female, White British, 55-64**
- “Communicate about the pros and cons of vaccine” **Female, Asian/Asian British: Indian, 25-34**
- “I'm a type 1 Diabetic and am at high risk. These vaccines are new and we simple don't fully know what long-term side effects there maybe. Yes it is probably better than dying from Covid, but considering I've managed to not contract it and I KNOW I am well capable of avoiding a virus by health and hygiene I simply feel like because of other's stupidity I am now forced to take a vaccine that could cause serious health conditions later in life. The company that made the vaccine asked the government to ensure that they are protected from any law suits if anything goes wrong.” **Male, White British, 25-34**
- “The efficacy difference between the Oxford Astra Zeneca and others. As its not honest and clear view being presented. The 60% efficacy vaccine is not good enough [especially]t for CEV [Clinically Extremely Vulnerable] category.” **Female, Asian/Asian British: Indian, 35-44**

What people told us:

- “Too rushed, and I feel this government has a hidden agenda. SAGE scientists have a vested financial interest in this vaccine.” **Female, White British, 55-64**
- “just concerned that it may not cover all of these new variants” **Female, Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups: Black Caribbean and White, 65-74**
- “The idea of delaying the second dose up to 12 weeks can be understood as a reason to vaccinate as many people as possible, but if a manufacturer recommends it to be given within 3-4 weeks then in my view it could be that the efficacy would not be as high as suggested by the manufacturer. Therefore it maybe waste of time giving a 2nd jab. I suggest data is published in this respect derived from scientific facts.” **Male, Asian/Asian British: Indian, 55-64**

Logistical problems

We asked respondents if there was anything that may stop them from taking a vaccine when it is made available to them, despite wanting to have the vaccine. The majority of people were clear that they would have the vaccine no matter what, but for others there were logistical issues, such as distance they may have to travel to get the vaccine. For those people who would struggle to get the vaccine, every effort should be made to make it as easy as possible for them.

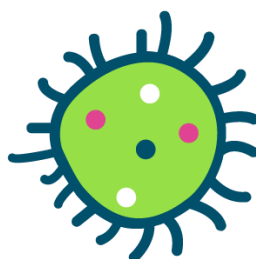
Respondents were able to select more than one option and we heard:

- 86% said nothing would stop them from getting the vaccine
- 3% said the fact that they would have to get public transport or a taxi to the location of the vaccine appointment might stop them getting it
- 7% said the distance to the location where the vaccine appointment takes place might stop them from getting it
- 4% said the times available to have the vaccine appointment might stop them from getting it
- 2% said having to book the vaccine appointment online might stop them getting it
- 5% said not being able to book a vaccine appointment at their GP surgery might stop them getting it
- 4% said they were not sure

Motivation for getting the vaccine

We asked people to tell us the main reason why they would want to be vaccinated. They were able to pick more than one response:

- 88% said that it was to protect their friends and family from getting COVID-19
- 78% said that it would be to protect themselves against getting COVID-19
- 75% said it would be to protect people who are vulnerable/at higher risk of getting COVID-19
- 71% said that it would help society in general to get back to normal again
- 68% said it was the responsible thing to do
- 64% said to help protect the NHS
- 52% said it would help get the economy going again
- 32% said that that they wanted to visit older family members at home or in care homes and the vaccine would ensure this was safe for them
- 27% said that a medical/healthcare professional e.g. GP, nurse, pharmacist, recommends it
- 14% said that it would enable them to get back to work
- 12% said because a family member/friend recommends it
- 2% did not know or were not sure



Experience of vaccine roll out

40% of the respondents had already received their vaccine. Some respondents chose to expand on how this went and it is clear from the feedback we received that the experience for them was very positive.

The professionalism of staff and the speed and efficiency of the administration of the vaccination centres was applauded. The sentiment gleaned from the feedback received was that services across the country have done a remarkable job at organizing the vaccine roll out, often having to adapt to last minute changes quickly.

What people told us:

- “The local organisation of vaccination at Steam worked very well indeed[.] All done and dusted on time. No problems.” **Female, White British, 75-84**
- “The vaccine centre was well organized” **Male, Asian/Asian British: Indian, 25-34**
- “I was very impressed in Swindon NHS services[.] The nurses and volunteers were helpful[.] They are a credit to the service, I am looking forward to going back to have my second one in May. Thank you all.” **Male, White British, 65-74**
- “Quick and not painful. A very well organised and efficient service.” **Female, Asian/Asian British: Indian, 45-54**
- “I’ve had my covid vaccination & it was very well organised at my local hospital. I felt the staff were very professional but also caring & made me feel very much at ease.” **Female, White British, 65-74**
- “The organisation and the giving of the vaccination at Steam in Swindon, was excellent. It was quick, efficient [and] safe and the staff were kind, understanding and reassuring. Well done. Such a fast throughput [to] real the day I was there. I had no side-effects or after-effects - very pleased to receive the vaccine.” **Female, White British, 65-74**
- “I had mine at the Steam museum. It was all managed brilliantly.” **Female, White British, 55-64**
- “I think the roll out has been incredibly well done. As a carer to 2 disabled children I can’t wait to have the vaccine to protect them and others” **Female, White British, 35-44**
- “At GWH the overall process was excellently operated ... in and out in a matter of a few minutes. Thank you” **Male, White British, 65-74**

Vaccine access - vulnerable groups

There was real fear and anxiety from respondents who told us they were carers and were

concerned what would happen to the person they were caring for, especially if they were the sole carer. They were understandably keen to get the vaccine and to ensure that their loved ones, who may be clinically extremely vulnerable, were too. In total 186 respondents told us that they were carers. Lots of discussions have taken place about how to ensure that unpaid carers are prioritised, and this has resulted in carers going into cohort 6 of the vaccine programme.

Other concerns were raised from those who have been shielding as to when they will get their vaccine, and from others who feel that there is not always consistency in who has received the vaccine.

What people told us:

- “So I don’t get sick, because I am a carer for my parents. They have no one else. This worries me, I then can’t help them. They are vaccinated, which is great! I think the groups now are getting confusing who is eligible eg unpaid carers, asthmatics and people with disabilities etc” **Female, White British, 45-54**
- “I am a carer with children with special needs who depend on me, also I am shopping for my Mum who is housebound. I am desperate to get it done as my anxiety is through the roof.” **Female, White British, 45-54**
- “Any protection is worth having - I am worried as to how my body/immune system will react if/when I get Covid - As I am Sole Carer and Single Parent I need to be able to continue caring for my son.” **Female, 35-44**
- “Still heard nothing so far. I'm 56 and had a shielding letter last year. Very confused as to why I'm still waiting.” **Female, White, 55-64**
- “Our adult son with severe learning difficulties not vaccinated yet. We are not even recognised as carers [despite] written evidence to G.P. two week ago. We have to isolate just in case he has covid when he comes home, which he does three weekly, as a bribe to keep him socially distanced while he is at his home with carers visiting. (When they have enough staff not self-isolating)!!! **Female, White British, 65-74**
- “My age put me high on the list and I have had both. I wanted to swop with my son as he is a transplant patient. It was not allowed but he had a bigger chance of dying rather than me. I would wait until it was his turn” **Male, White British, 75-84**
- “Personally unpaid [and] full time carers should receive vaccine at the same time as the person who they care for. I don’t know [how] we would cope if I couldn’t care for my daughter...it scares me!” **Female, White British, 45-54**
- “No consistency. My age group in other areas have got it. I am still waiting [in spite] of me in a higher risk group - BAME. Diabetic IHD” **Female, Asian/Asian British: Indian, 65-74**

What next?

We continue to speak to people in Swindon about their experiences of the vaccine roll out. Whilst we know that confusion can be felt by people about how safe the vaccine is and about how they go about getting the vaccine, the feedback we have received so far has been largely positive.

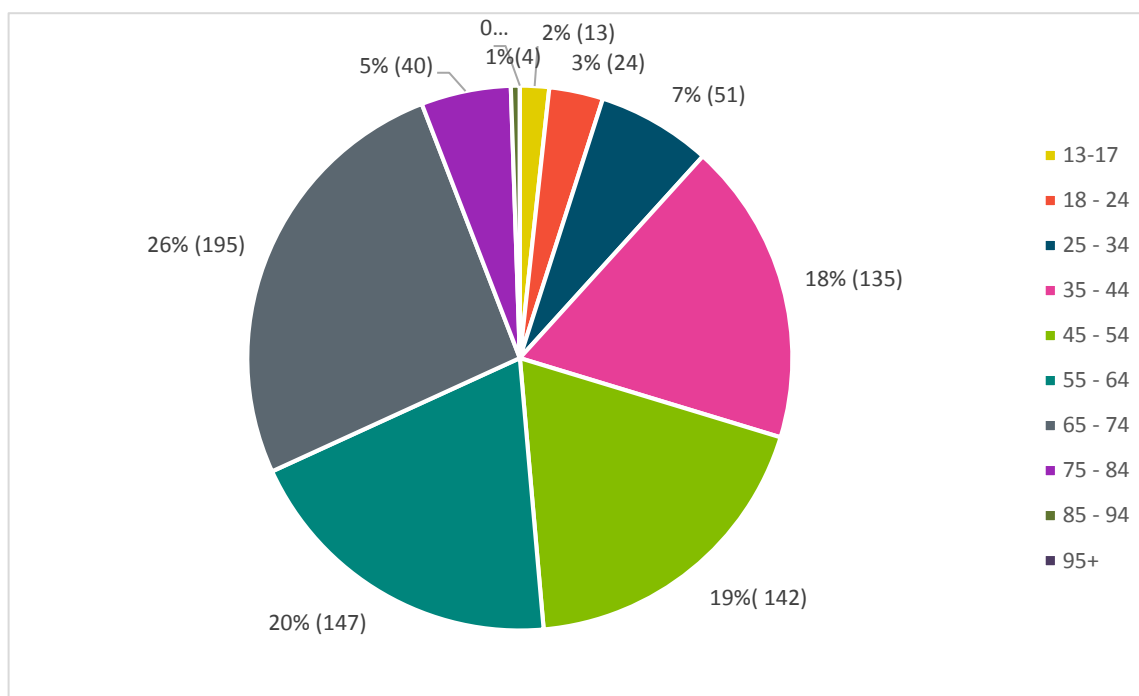
That is not to say that vaccine hesitancy does not exist - it does. Collectively we need to make every effort to understand why people feel the way they do and not make judgements about those views. The government and services also need to ensure that the information provided is clear, easy to understand and consistent - and crucially is available in multiple formats and languages. The pandemic has meant that things have moved at pace and it can be confusing to navigate an ever changing landscape.

Talk to us

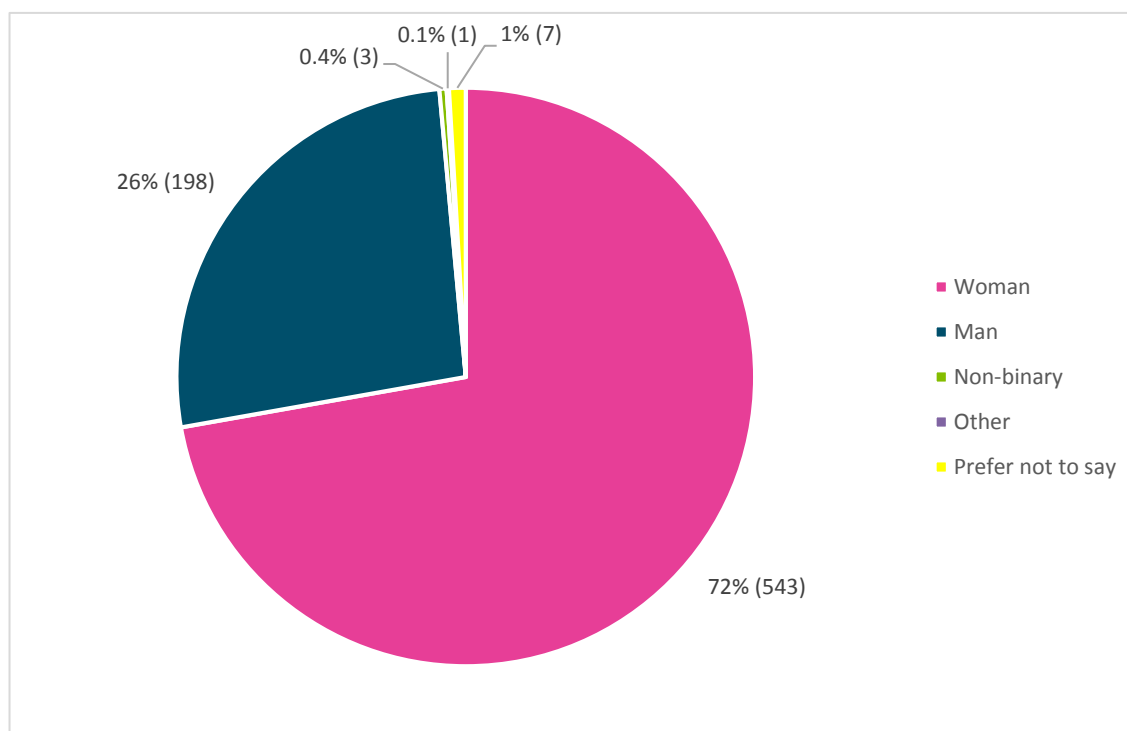
If you want to speak to us about your experience of the COVID-19 vaccine speak to one of the team by emailing info@healthwatchswindon.org.uk, by calling 01793 497777 or by going to www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk

Demographics

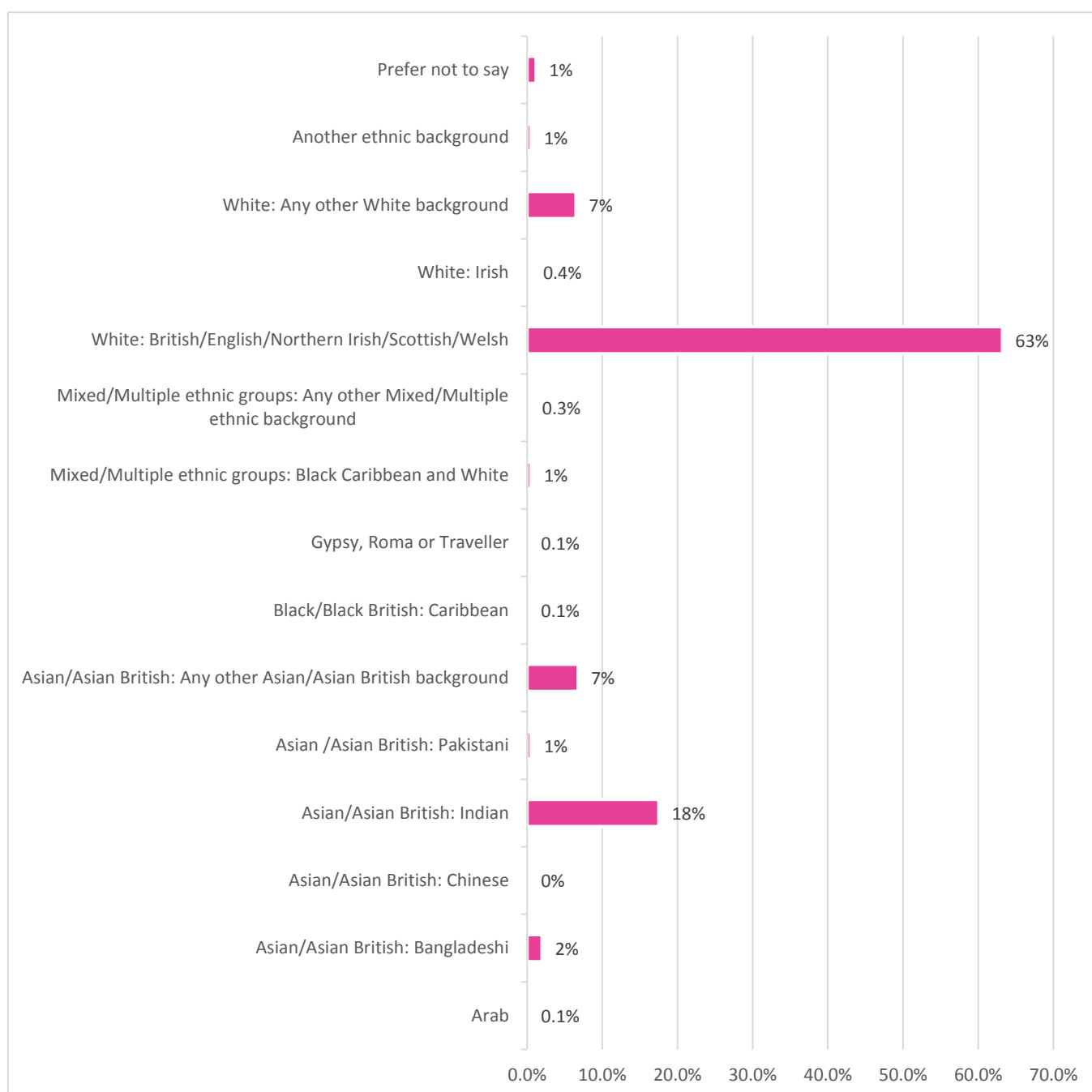
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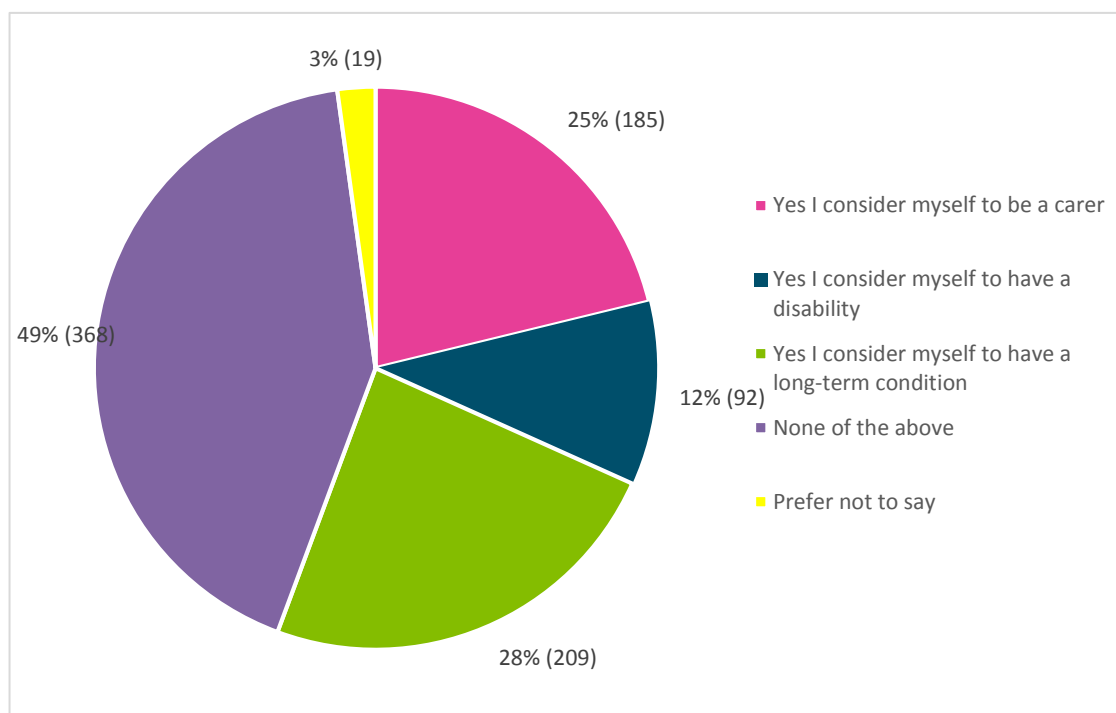
Gender:



Ethnicity

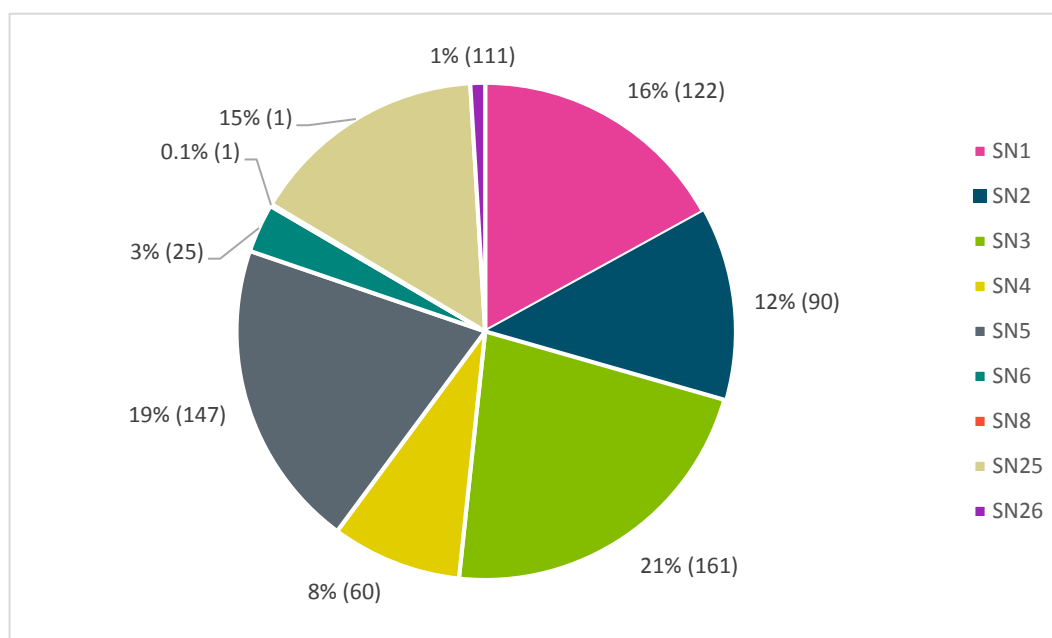


Do you consider yourself to be a (family) carer, have a disability or a long-term health condition?



*Respondents could pick more than one answer

Postcode:



*It should be noted that we have only included the postcodes for Swindon so the figures will not add up to 100%. Only a small proportion of respondents were from other local authorities or used GP practices outside Swindon.