National Cancer Patient Experience Survey 2023

Qualitative report

Things people told us about:

- Their cancer care and treatment
- Things that could be better

What is in this booklet

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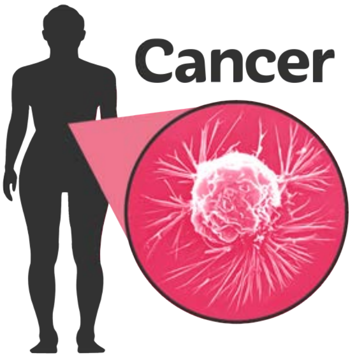
About the National Cancer Patient Experience Survey 2023



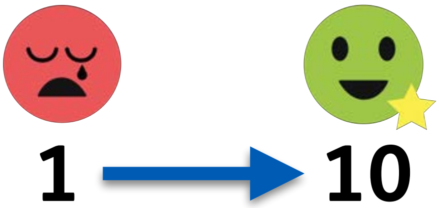
Cancer is a disease people can get. It can be very serious and can make you ill.

Every year, the NHS finds out what cancer patients think about their care and treatment.

We send out a survey. The people who answer the questions have used cancer services.

More than **63 thousand** people did the 2023 survey.

Services can use people’s answers to give better care and support to patients.



Some of the questions asked people to score their care out of 10.

1 meant it was very bad and 10 meant very good.

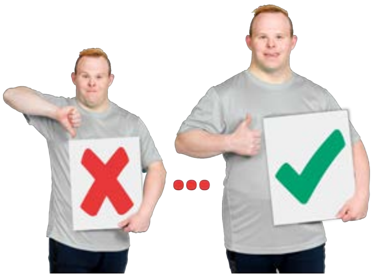
Some of the questions asked people to write a longer answer.

This report is about those longer answers.

Survey questions

We asked 2 questions where people could answer using their own words:

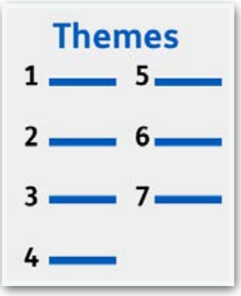
1. What was good about your cancer care and treatment?



2. Was there anything that could be done better?

It is hard to collect information from questions like this. We do it by finding **themes**.

Themes are things that stood out to us the most when we looked at everyone's answers. This was because they affected people a lot.



We found 7 themes.

The rest of this report tells you what people said about each theme.

Theme 1: Gratitude

Gratitude means you are thankful for something. It means a lot to you and you are grateful to have it.

A lot of people were grateful for their care and treatment.

A lot of people said they were happy with their care.

People used words like **good** and **excellent** in the survey.

A lot of people wanted to say thank you to the staff who cared for them.

People also said they were thankful for healthcare services in England.

Theme 2: Staff

Staff are a really important part of cancer care. What staff do affects people's experience of care.

Skills and knowledge

A lot of people were happy with hospital staff.

They felt that staff knew what they were doing and were good at their jobs.

People felt this gave them more chance of getting better.

A lot of people said they were listened to and treated with respect.

A few people said that staff were quick to help if there were any problems. Things like feeling really poorly after having treatment.

How staff treat people

A lot of people said staff were kind, helpful and caring.

A few people said they got along really well with staff.

Some people said staff were honest and open with them about their cancer.

And a few people said staff made them smile. This helped them to feel more relaxed.

Other things people told us

Some people told us some staff need more training.

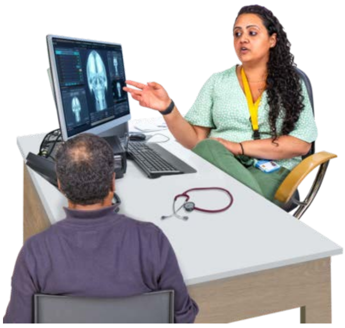
Things like how to take blood and putting a **cannula** in.

A **cannula** is a tube that is put into your arm, for example, to give you drugs directly into your body.

Some people said that staff are too busy, and there are not enough staff on hospital wards.

Not having enough staff meant that care could be rushed.

This means there is less time or not enough staff to ask questions.



Theme 3: Diagnosis

A **diagnosis** is when a doctor does some tests and says you have cancer.

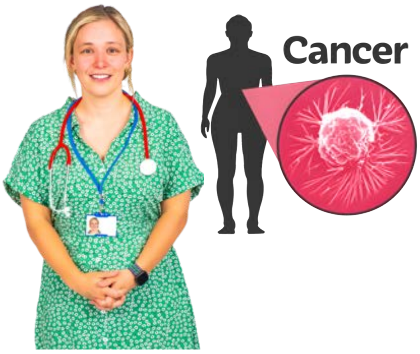
Getting a diagnosis

Finding cancer as soon as possible can make it easier to give you the right care and treatment.

Some people got a diagnosis quickly.

They said their local doctor made a **referral** at the right time.

A **referral** is when your doctor writes a letter to ask another doctor to see you.



The new doctor knows a lot about cancer.

Other people had to wait longer.

This was because of things like:

- They could not get an appointment at their local doctors.

- They were not listened to or taken seriously by their local doctor.

- They were told their cancer was something else.

- Their local doctor was slow to work out what the problem was.

Some people thought their cancer could have been treated more quickly if it was spotted earlier.

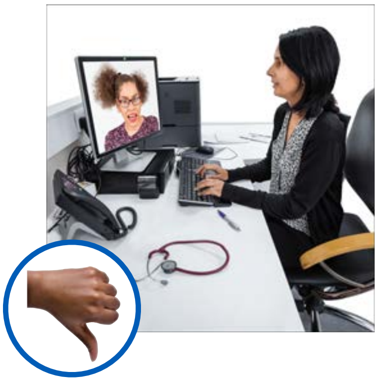
Some people said they got their diagnosis quickly from **Accident and Emergency** at the hospital.

We call this **A&E** for short.

You go to A&E if you are seriously ill or had an accident.

Being told you have cancer

Being told you have cancer can be a big shock. It can make people feel very worried and upset.



Some people did not like having important appointments by telephone or video call.

People said it is very upsetting to hear you have cancer over the phone.

People said staff need to be more kind and caring when they tell people they have cancer.

Some people did not want to be alone when they were told they had cancer.

But asking people to bring someone with them can be upsetting.

It usually means the person is going to get bad news.

People said they were not told they had cancer in a clear way.

A few people told us that doctors did not explain what their test results meant.

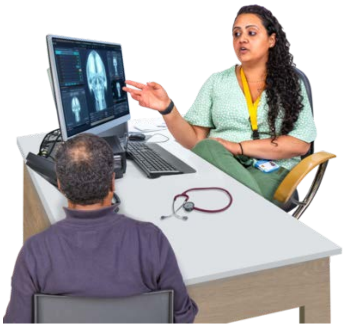
Some people said their doctors thought someone else had already told them they had cancer.

This meant some people had tests or treatment before they were properly told they had cancer.

Theme 4: Waiting times

Some people said they had to wait a long time for things like:

- Having scans and getting test results.



- Getting a diagnosis.

- Getting an appointment.

- Waiting for an appointment.

- Getting treatment or having an operation.

A few people said they had a long wait because there was not enough staff.

Some people said they had to wait a long time at the hospital to pick up their medicines.

Other people were very happy when they did not have to wait very long.

People used words like **amazing** and **impressive**. These are words that show something is good.

Theme 5: Communication

Getting information

Lots of people said the most important time to get information is when they were told they had cancer.

Information about things like:

- The type of cancer they have.

- What treatment they were going to have.

- **Side effects** of treatment.
  Side effects are things that might happen to you after having treatment for cancer.

  Things like feeling very tired or losing weight.

Lots of people said it is better to be told you have cancer face to face.

People said it is really important to have time to ask questions.

Types of information

Some people said it was helpful to be given leaflets and other written information.

This helped them to remember what was said in their appointment.

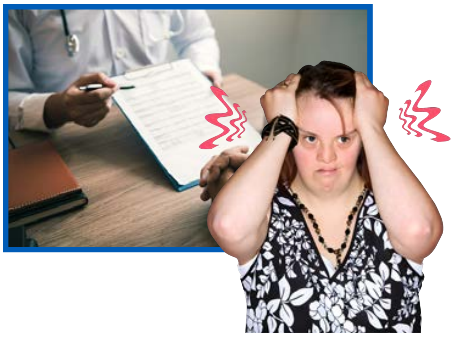
People said it was useful be told about other places where they could get information. Things like:

- A phone number for a nurse to speak to.

- A website to look at.

- A charity to contact for help and support.

Some people said it can take a long time to get a letter if it comes in the post. They said email is quicker.



How much information people get

Some people said they were given too much information all at once.

This made them feel very stressed.

But other people said they did not get enough information.

Doctors should understand that they need to give people the right amount of information for them at the right time.

Some people said they did not get enough support after their treatment.

Staff did not ask if they had what they needed.

Theme 6: Communication and sharing information about cancer care

This could be:

- Between local doctors and hospitals.

- Between services in the same hospital.

- Between different hospitals.

Some people said that communication and sharing information was not good enough.

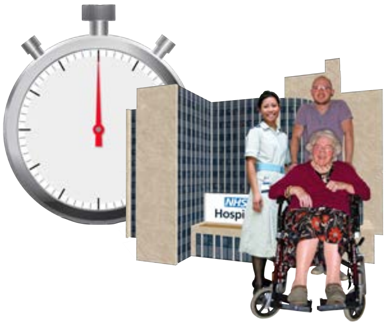
Sometimes people get care and treatment from more than one service or hospital.

Some people told us they had to pass on information between hospitals and services themselves.

Some people thought that bad communication meant they had to:

- Wait longer for appointments

  and



- Wait longer to be sent home from hospital after having treatment.

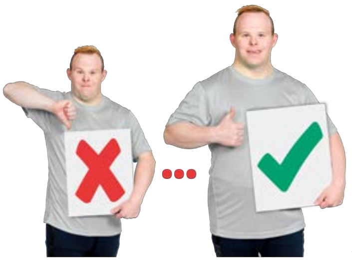
This caused people to feel stressed and upset.

Some people told us they had to sort out their own care and support after being in hospital.

They said doctors, hospitals and community services need to be better at sharing information.

Theme 7: Hospitals

People told us about things that affected their care and treatment:



Hospital wards

People told us that the hospital wards could be better. Things like:

- There are not enough beds or toilets.

- There are not enough seats in waiting areas.

- The **WiFi** is not good enough.
  WiFi is used to connect a phone, tablet or computer to the internet.

A few people said that the hospitals were not very clean.

And a few people said that hospitals were not easy for disabled people to get around.

Travel

A lot of people said they wanted to travel less to get their care and treatment.

Things like:

- Going to a hospital closer to home.

- Having all their treatment in 1 place.

- Having all their appointments on 1 day.

Food and drink

Most people told us the hospital food was not very good. There was not much choice.

Some people have trouble eating after cancer treatment.

A few people said the hospital food was not good for people who have to eat certain foods.

This might be people who are vegetarian or who eat Halal foods.

Other things people told us

A few people told us other things about hospitals:

- It is too noisy.

- There is no gym or space to exercise for people who have to stay in hospital.

- Car parking costs too much money.

- Hospitals need better signs that tell people where they need to go.

- There are not enough **interpreters**. An **interpreter** listens to what someone says and then says the words again in a different language.

  You might need an interpreter at an appointment if you do not speak English.

What will happen now

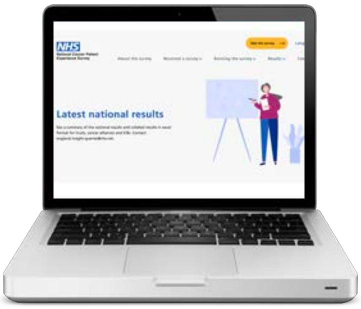
The survey showed lots of good things are happening in cancer care.

But we know there is more work to be done.

Listening to more cancer patients will help us to understand what matters most to people.

This will also help us to understand how to help people in the best way.

More information



This is an easy read version of a bigger report. You can look at the big report on this **website**:

www.ncpes.co.uk/latest-national-results

If you have any questions or want to talk to us about this report, you can:

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