

Swindon Interactive Arts Service Survey Report

Introduction and methodology

Late in 2019 we invited bids from non-profit organisations in Swindon for a small amount of funding to undertake a survey with their contacts or members. These were likely to be people from whom we were otherwise less likely to hear.

Five organisations¹ were selected by our Advisory Group and a standard survey was developed with the groups' involvement. It was adjusted slightly for each to acknowledge the specific differences of organisations' remits. Four were asked to survey up to 100 participants between April and June 2020. One small activity group undertook to survey its 25 members though that number was not achieved.

Covid-19 intervened and the 11 surveys in this report were all completed between May and June 2020 on paper by people involved with [Swindon Interactive Arts Service \(SWIAS\)](#).

Key findings

- People have found it difficult to get appointments at GP surgeries. Access for people with limited or no personal access to online services need to be maintained.
- The Special Care Dental Service was appreciated.
- Although not expressed in the survey results, the absence of day services during the Covid-19 period will have been a challenge for those previously attending them.

Who participated?

Data was collected between 1 May and 23 June 2020 from 11 people with learning disabilities. In each case the survey was physically completed on paper by a family carer. Not everyone answered every question.

- 11 people were registered with seven different GP practices in Swindon (out of a potential 24)

Three were at Abbey Meads, two at Homeground/North Swindon Practice, two at Westrop in Highworth, and one each at Moredon, Lawn, Hawthorn and Ashington House Surgery.

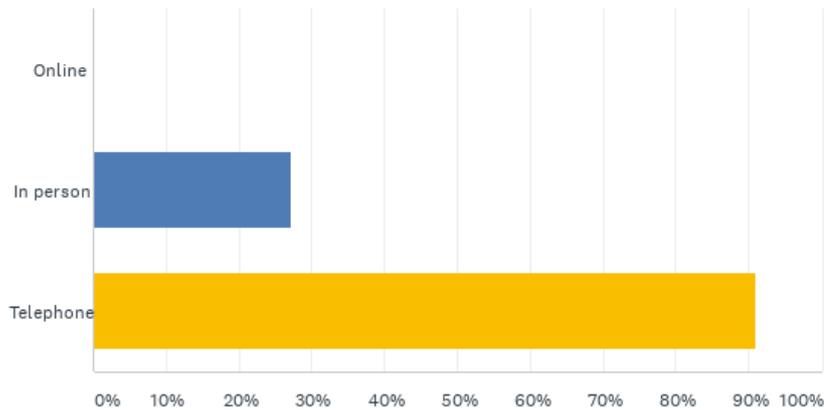
¹ The organisations were Parkinson's UK Swindon & District, Swindon & Gloucestershire Mind, Harbour Project, Swindon SEND Families Voice and Swindon Interactive Arts Service (SWIAS).

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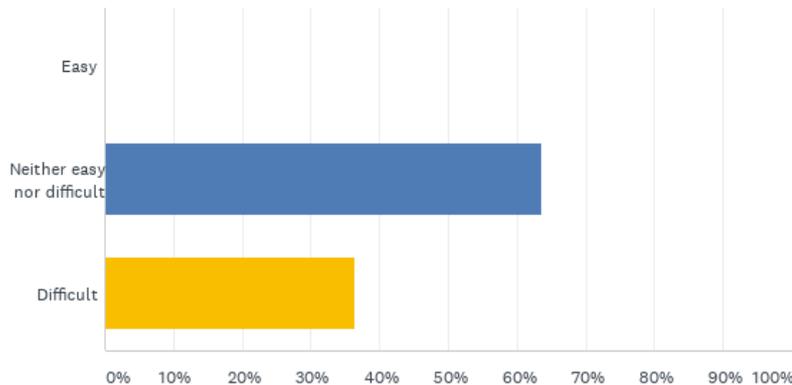
What did we hear?

We asked how people made appointments at their GP surgery and how easy or difficult they found doing so.

All but one made their appointment by telephone with the help of a support worker, carer or parent. Some also made appointments in person.



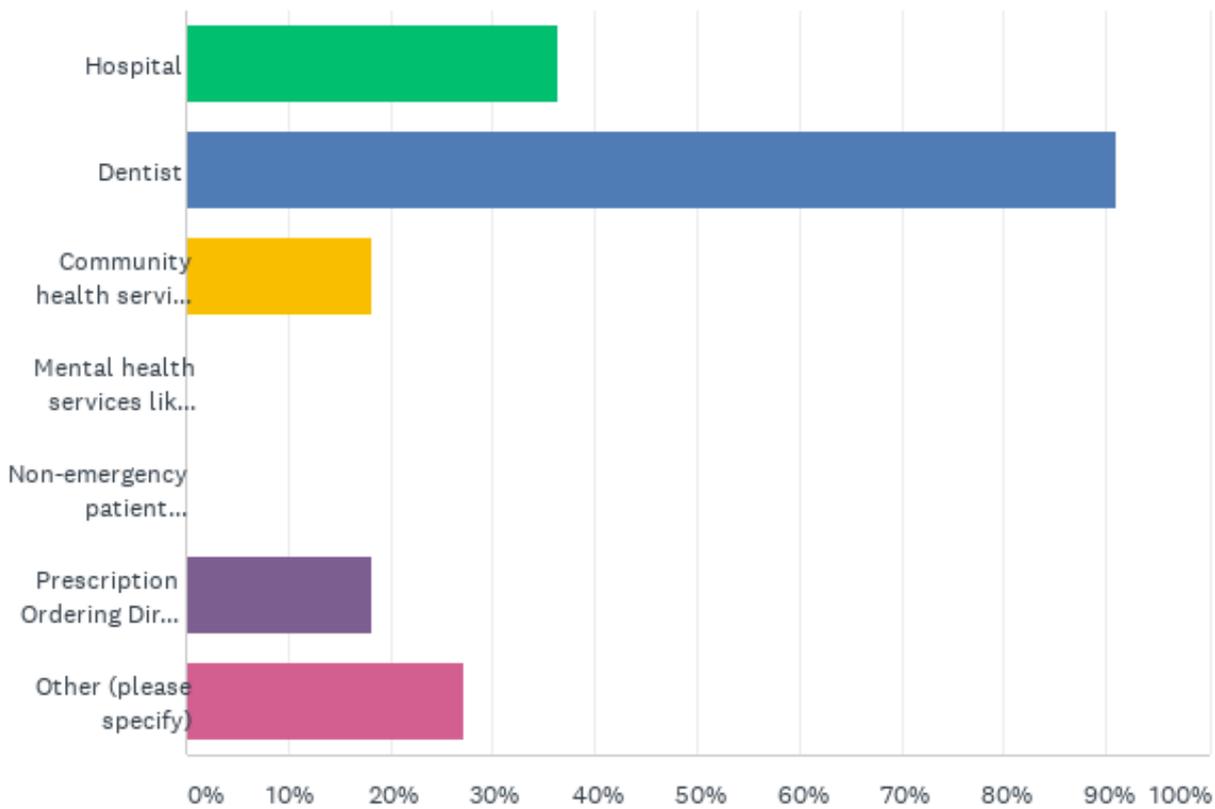
- “Takes a long time on the telephone. Easier to visit surgery which is not ideal but gets a better result.”
- “Difficult both for appointments needed on the day (urgent) or in advance. Very difficult to call first thing in the morning. Then if you cannot get through it’s all booked up.”
- “Need to make longer appointment as LD and deaf”



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Most had had experience of using various health and care services during the preceding 12 months.

Ten people had visited a dentist and four had been to the hospital.



- Others included a diabetes check, a call to NHS 111 and some footcare.

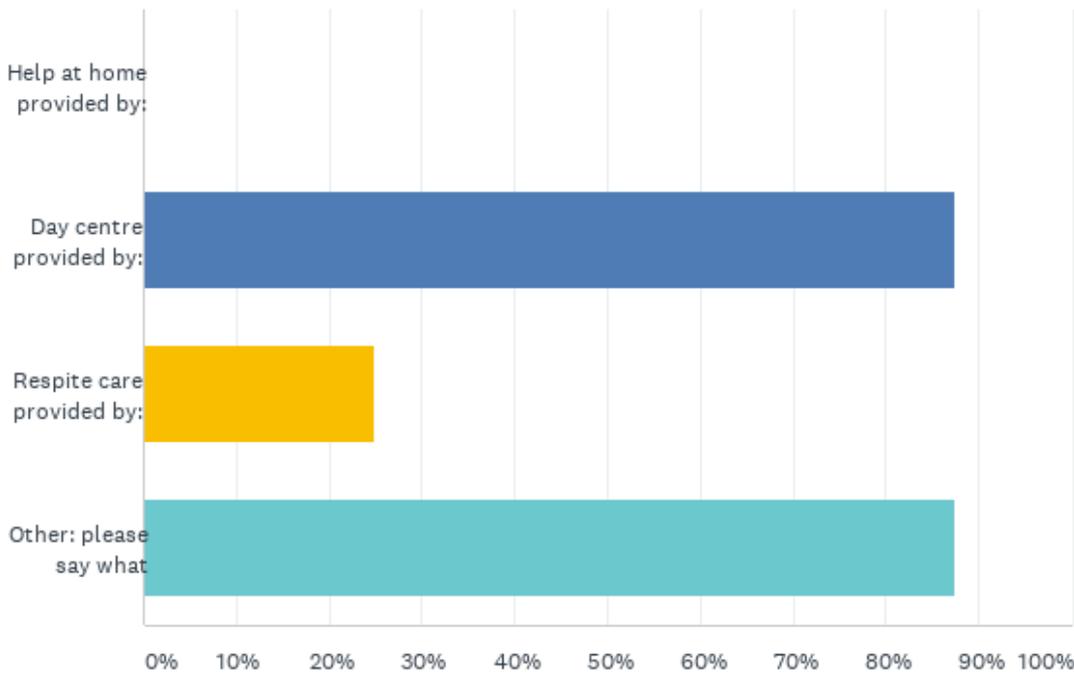
This is what they told us about using these health services - people's experience of the same service can be very varied. The survey was completed during the Covid-19 lockdown period whilst everyone was adjusting to new ways of working. Nevertheless the comments were all positive.

- “Hospital consultations at GWH for my cardiac condition are excellent but my parents have to ensure/chase up/pursue the appointments system otherwise she would not get yearly appointment slot.”
- “Hospital experience good Dental service at West Swindon excellent. Bit concerned about possible move to GWH as son doesn't like change and more difficult to get to.”
- “Community dentist good and supportive (check up)”
- “Continence - order online - easy Dentist - they give next appointment”

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Seven people completing the survey attended day services and two had been to respite at Firethorn Close.

- Day services (described in “other” below) include [OK4U](#), [The Open Door](#), [SwIAS](#), [Singing for the Brain](#), music therapy and the [Forget-Me-Not](#) walking group.



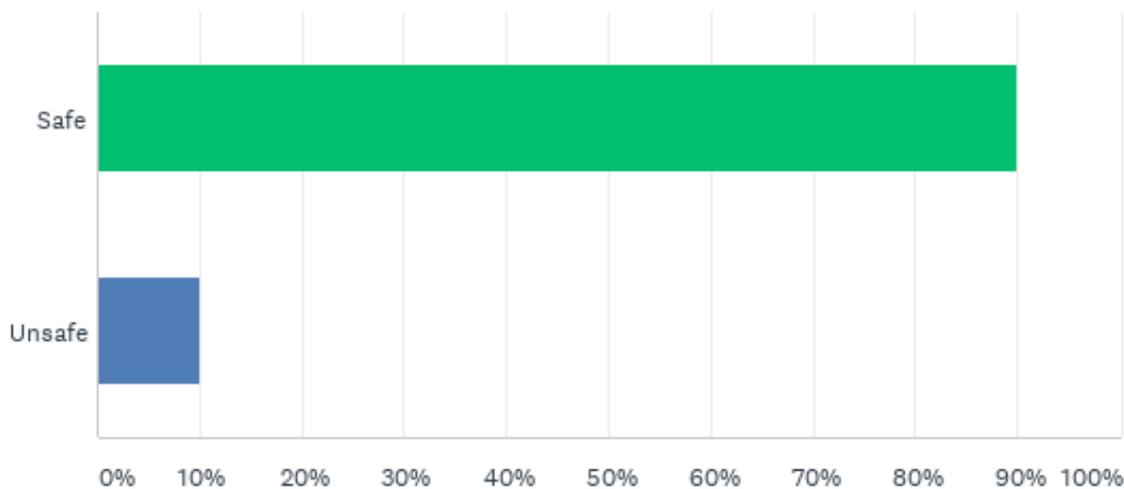
This is what people told us about the care services they had used:

- *“SWIAS - Brilliant Open Door - Enjoyable”*
- *“Had to ask for a meeting to discuss activities. Slow to respond.”*
- *“SWIAS - excellent care and service OK4U is a social meeting place but could do with improvement.”*

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We asked people how safe they felt in the local community.

Because our surveys are being carried out by five different agencies with participants from different communities of interest, we expected considerable variation in both interpretation of the question and response to it.



Swindon Borough Council and Healthwatch have recently been trying to gauge the extent to which people understand the term “[safeguarding](#)”. Each of our surveys include the question and there was broad understanding of the issue and where to report a concern.

But several people said they (or the person they cared for) did not know.

- “I understand a little bit and if I saw something had happened eg if someone had fallen over and needed help I know to call 999.”
- “All individuals have the right to live lives free from coercion, intimidation, oppression and physical, sexual or mental harm. The right to family life and privacy, confidentiality in respect of personal information insofar as this does not infringe the rights of other people. All individuals have the right to receive full and comprehensive information to enable them to make informed choices about their own circumstances; and all individuals have the right to the protection of the law and access to the judicial process. People should be protected from these in whatever setting they are in by society. If someone was at risk I would contact social services/police.”

“My son doesn't understand anything about safeguarding.”

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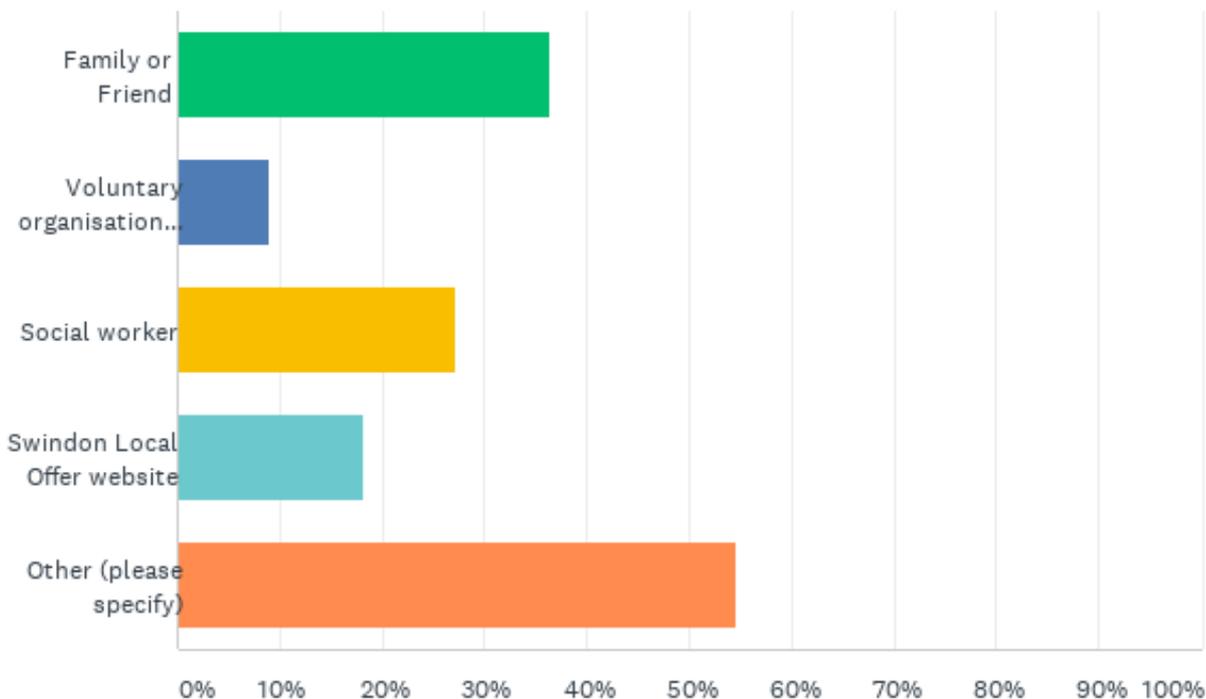
What could be better?

Most people have views about the improvements that could be made to health and care services they use:

- “Help improve my medication in not changing the packaging or colour of tablets as this confuses me”
- “Service on NHS is good if you are in system. You have to fight the good fight with all your might to get into system. "Too many fob offs”
- “More communication”

Where do people go for information?

We wanted to find out how familiar people are with the available sources of information about services and where they go to find out more. Some use the internet to search including [Swindon Local Offer](#); a carer, shared lives officer, support staff or housemates or [Swindon Carers Centre](#).



“Would be done by family on his behalf”

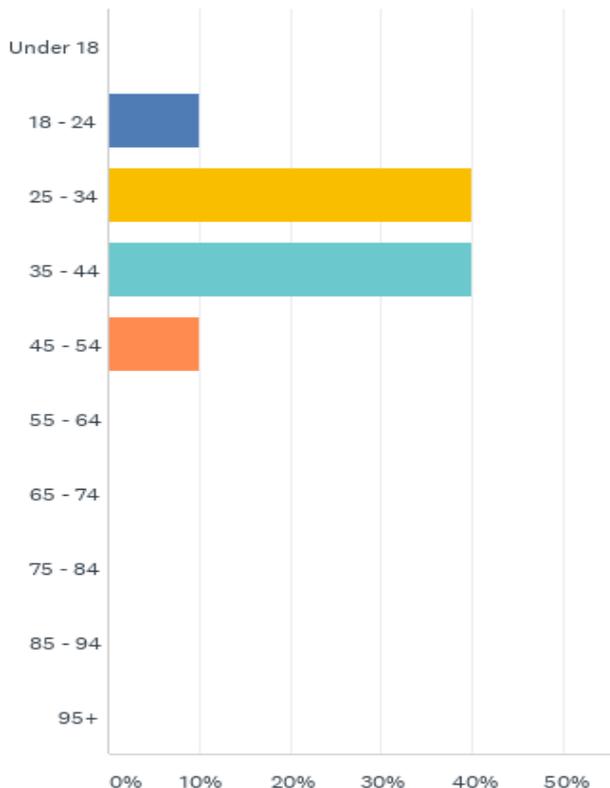
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We asked what one thing would improve people’s health and wellbeing.

- “To stay fit and strong”
- “To have less anxiety”
- “More communication from services to see what’s available”
- “More regular health checks. Not just one per year. Health professionals would listen to my parents more as they know when I am ill and not try hit and miss diagnosis. Then I have to go back to them again when my problem was plain and obvious in the first place”
- “To find a full time job to gain more confidence. I am already working voluntary and part time “
- “More opportunities in the community”

Who completed the survey?

People completing the survey were aged between 18 and 54.



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People living in SN postcodes completed the survey and the numbers reflect that they were self-selected.

SN2	5
SN25	3
SN6	2
SN5	1

10 people identified as White/British. One person identified as Indian/Portugese. We asked people to identify their gender. Eight people identified as female and three as male.

Bearing in mind that this survey was of people attending a learning disabilities service, we asked people if they had any disabilities, physical or mental health conditions.

All 11 said they had. These included one person on the autistic spectrum, one with epilepsy, three with Down's syndrome and one person who was deaf. One person had metachromatic leukodystrophy, one a thyroid condition, one a heart condition and one person had diabetes.

None gave us their contact details to follow up specific queries or comments.

Conclusions

- The survey was completed with the support of parents or carers of a small group of people attending SwIAS. Fewer people than we and SwIAS hoped completed it because Covid-19 intervened so that the group's activities were suspended.
- These findings, along with those from the other surveys completed as part of this programme, will be used to report to relevant boards and committees to influence planning, commissioning and providing services in Swindon.

We would like to thank Swindon Interactive Arts Service for supporting this piece of work and their contacts for sharing their views with us.

