

# Swindon Polish Catholic Mission Survey

## What is Healthwatch?

**Healthwatch is here to *demonstrably influence commissioning, service provision or strategic decision making*... This impact report outlines our findings across Swindon after Healthwatch Swindon commissioned the Swindon Local Polish Catholic Mission (LPCM) to undertake research with the Swindon Polish community to record their views of health and social care services.**

Healthwatch Swindon worked in collaboration with the Polish community to reach a significant number of people from whom we otherwise do not hear and whose views may not otherwise be taken into account by the commissioners and providers of health and social care services.

The aim of this project was to record the views of 100 people from the Swindon Polish community about their recent experience of health and social care services (within the preceding twelve months). By the time the survey closed the views of 133 people were gathered. These were mainly older people whose first language may not be English and younger people who have more recently come to Swindon and whose first

language is Polish.

LPCM undertook research, recorded and reported information from people who either opted to participate in the survey or who were selected from community contacts, including within the older people's day centre and elsewhere.

It is recognised that these views may or may not be representative of the wider community but will be a record of the personal experiences of those who completed the survey.

"The NHS has served me well and am grateful for all their support over the years. My doctor services have been good but a note should be made that elderly women present heart attacks differently and twice they missed mine and maybe if I had been treated years earlier maybe my vascular dementia would not have happened"

Swindon Polish  
Community Member

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[healthwatchswindon.org.uk](http://healthwatchswindon.org.uk)



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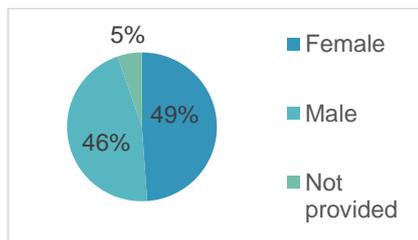
Healthwatch Swindon produced an online survey to gather feedback from the Polish community about their views on health and social care services in Swindon.

# Swindon Polish Catholic Mission Survey

## Survey results

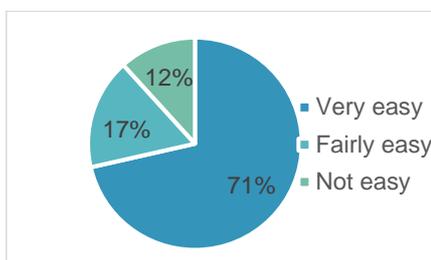
Views were sought from the Swindon Polish community members about GPs, Great Western Hospital, podiatry services, district/ community nurses, dietetic services, diabetes services, social care, mental health services and dentists. A snapshot of the findings of the survey can be found within this report.

Out of the respondents who participated in the survey 49% were female and 46% were male - an almost even split.



One of the aims of the survey was to ascertain whether or not the language needs of the Polish population who took part in the survey were being met when accessing health and social care services in Swindon.

### If your first language is not English how easy does your surgery make it to communicate verbally/in writing?



When asked if English was not their first language how easy it was to communicate with their GP, 77 people responded. Of these 71% said that it was 'very easy', 17% said that it was 'fairly easy' and 12% saying it was 'not easy'.

Some respondents commented that their GP, the hospital or service they were using provided an interpreter or they took a family member along if they needed help translating.

The survey also asked the same question of more specialised services and whilst the number of respondents decreased, the proportion of people's positive and negative experiences were broadly similar.

Overall though the findings were good. Some did have difficulties with language and understanding medical terms but the majority of people (79% when asked about GPs and 76% when asked about Great Western Hospital) either managed well on their own or services were meeting their needs sufficiently well. One commentator, with reference to Great Western Hospital, said it would be helpful "If there was an option to hear pre-recorded messages in another language (GWH)".

"Sometimes ask to explain but staff are happy to help"  
Swindon Polish Community Member

"It was very helpful when there was a Polish speaking doctor on a temp basis"  
Swindon Polish Community Member

"Long waiting time for appointments sometimes I think there is no point as by the time I get one I am better. Or see Polish doctor privately"  
Swindon Polish Community Member

Healthwatch Swindon produced an online survey to gather feedback from the Polish community about health and social care services in Swindon.

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## How easy is it for you to make an appointment with your GP surgery?

There was a wider disparity in experience when it came to asking how easy it was to make an appointment at their GP.

In total 121 people responded to this question with 53% saying it was 'very easy', 17% saying it was 'fairly easy' and 31% saying it was 'not easy'. One commentator said "It is very difficult to make an appointment, I called 5 times and never get an appointment with my GP. I had to go to Carfax".

When asking the same question about General Western Hospital 90% of the 67 respondents said it was either 'very easy' or 'fairly easy'. A lot of the comments about GWH focused on the need for a GP referral to get an appointment and long waiting times once there of 2 - 3 hours. One respondent commented that "When given an appointment through post found it is cancelled a lot (GWH)"

## Other observations

One of the questions asked what could be done to improve each of the services. A lot of the suggestions made were about employing more staff, providing more appointments to reduce waiting times, as well as extending these so people could go after work and on weekends.

Several commentators suggested the option of being able to make appointments online, more training for receptionists in GP practices and the possibility of speaking directly to the GP over the phone. When asked across all services whether the participants booked online the overriding majority responded no.

There were several suggestions across the different services, particularly with reference to opticians and dentists, that these should be accessible within GP practices. And when speaking about mental health services one respondent said "positive contact in hospital. Fair access to [LiFT psychology services](#) through GP. GP does not link with mental health practitioner after hospital discharge."

Accessibility did not appear to be an issue although one commentator stated ~ "daughter normally attends would be helpful to have more disabled bays at the hospital" and someone else said GWH was not accessible for elderly people. There was also a call for more parking spaces.

Of the 53 people who responded to questions about improving access to their dentists many commented that it was too expensive and that more NHS dentists should be made available. A significant number also said they go back home as the treatment is cheaper.

"In some cases I feel that my symptoms are dismissed by doctors as it seems to be advised as an 'age' thing. Think a temporary doctor referred me to a specialist at the hospital. This was overridden I ended up seeing a physiotherapist who passed me a photocopied paper standard procedure which wasn't enough, It would be useful to see the same doctor sometimes I feel I am passed away with painkillers with no treatment."

Swindon Polish Community Member

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"They (dentists) should be part of NHS - free of charge"

Swindon Polish Community Member

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# Swindon Polish Catholic Mission Survey

Healthwatch will take this information and inform our stakeholders, including NHS England, Healthwatch England, the local authority and NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group of our findings.



“Very fortunate as have family to support. the NHS should offer more assistance and accompany people who need help and have interpreters on hand .”

Swindon Polish  
Community  
Member

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“Please improve the way to make appointments with specialists e.g. dermatologists etc ”

Swindon Polish  
Community  
Member

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