



National Cancer Patient Experience Survey 2021 Qualitative report



Things people told us about:

- their cancer care and treatment
- things that could be better



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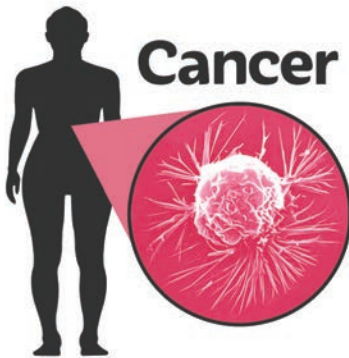
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About the National Cancer Patient Experience Survey 2021



Cancer is a disease people can get. It is very serious.



Every year, we find out what cancer patients think about their care and treatment.



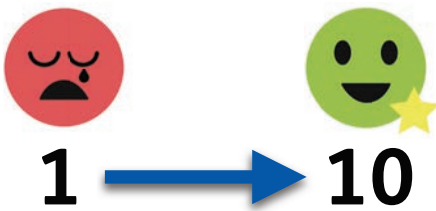
We send out a survey. The people who answer the questions have used cancer services.



More than **59 thousand** people did the 2021 survey.



Services can use people's answers to give better care and support to cancer 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 3 questions where people could answer using their own words:



1. Tell us about your care and treatment



2. Was there anything that could be done better?



3. Is there anything else you want to tell us about your care and treatment?



A lot of the answers to question 3 were the same as the answers to the questions 1 and 2.



In this report we just looked at the answers to questions 1 and 2.



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.

Themes	
1	5
2	6
3	7
4	

We found 7 themes.



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

Theme 1: Gratitude



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



A lot of people said they had excellent care.

People used words like **brilliant** and **outstanding** in the survey.



A lot of people said staff were kind and caring. They helped people to feel safe and relaxed.

Theme 2: GP practices



Your **GP Practice** is your local doctors surgery.



Finding cancer as soon as possible makes it easier to treat.



Some people told us that when they first visited their GP, they were not listened to or taken seriously.



Some people said their GP told them their cancer was something else.



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



Some people said that their GP practice was not as involved in their cancer treatment as they thought it should be.



Some people did not feel cared for by their GP after their treatment.

They found it hard to get an appointment and felt like they had been forgotten.



Theme 3: Communication

People did not get all the information they needed.



They wanted better support after treatment and a person to contact about their care.

Information

Lots of people said they needed more information about things like:



- the type of cancer they have



- decisions about their treatment



- **side effects** of treatment. **Side effects** are things you might feel after having treatment for cancer



- getting better after surgery



Follow-up support

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



They found it hard to get an appointment or did not get a follow-up appointment at all.



main contact person

1 person to contact

A lot of people said it was important to have someone they could contact about their treatment. For example, a nurse.

This is called a **main contact person**.



When people did not have a main contact person, it made things much harder.



How to communicate

COVID-19 is an illness that spread around the world.



Because of COVID-19, people had to follow lots of rules.



The rules made things very difficult for patients. They could not always see their doctor face to face.



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



They found it harder to talk about their worries over the phone or computer. It was harder to explain how they were feeling.



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

Theme 4: Communication and sharing information about cancer care



This could be:

- between services in the same hospital

or



- 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 or services themselves.



Some people thought that bad communication meant they had to wait longer for treatment.

This caused people to feel stressed and upset.

Theme 5: Waiting times

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



- getting information



- getting an appointment



- waiting for an appointment



- getting medicine from the hospital pharmacy



- getting signed off by the doctor after finishing treatment



The biggest problem is when waiting for treatment to start after finding out you have cancer.



Some people's cancer got worse while they were waiting to have it treated.



Some people also had to wait a long time between arriving at the hospital and getting their treatment. This was very upsetting.



People sometimes had to wait a few weeks for test results. This made them feel very anxious.

Theme 6: Hospital staff



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.

Rushed care means there is less time to ask questions.

People told us things like:

- there was no **porter** to take them to their treatment.



A **porter** is someone who moves patients in a bed or wheelchair around a hospital.



- there was no nurse to take them to the toilet



- nurses took a long time to answer the call button



A few people said they had bad care or bad attitudes from staff.

A few people told us staff need more training in:

- how to take blood and put a **cannula** in.



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



- protecting people from infections



- how to tell people bad news

Theme 7: Hospitals



People told us that things like food, parking and noise affected their care and treatment.

Hospital wards

Some people said there was no privacy in hospital.

For example, it is hard to talk privately in a room when there are other patients close by.





Some people said the beds were uncomfortable and the wards needed painting and decorating.



The COVID-19 rules meant that people could not bring someone to hospital with them.



People missed having a friend or relative to support them. This made appointments and hospital stays harder to cope with.



Waiting rooms and wards felt like places where it would be easy to catch COVID-19. This made a few people feel anxious.

Parking

A few people said there were problems parking at the hospital. Things like:



- car parks being too expensive

and



- not enough parking



Food and drink

Some 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 a special diet.

What next



The things we have found out are a good start.



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

Things that services could work on might include:



- better support from GPs



- faster tests and test results



- shorter waiting times



- more information about cancer and about treatments and side effects



- a main point of contact



- more staff and more time to talk to staff



- better communication between hospital services and between different hospitals



- more privacy on hospital wards



- more parking and cheaper places to park



- better food and more choices