

the



project

Progress Report

March 2024



Centre for Health Services Studies

The Faversham Healthy Futures Project Report on the Town Hall Exhibition and Survey

Introduction

The NHS had never been that focussed on planning for small, relatively self-contained (but growing!) communities like ours. At a time when the responsibility for ensuring people have access to appropriate healthcare services was moving from a local to a regional level, it seemed right that planners and policy makers had a clear view about how the people of Faversham and the surrounding villages thought their future health and care needs should be met. So, the *Faversham Healthy Futures* project was launched.

To help us, we partnered with the *Centre for Health Service Studies (CHSS)* at the *University of Kent* and *Faversham Town Council*. With their help and support, we ran an exhibition in the town hall together with a survey to try and understand the views of local people about current and future health needs and services. When you took part in the survey you expressed an interest in us keeping you informed of progress. That is why you have received this report.

The results of the survey and our commentary on them are set out in this report, together with some ideas about how we might go further and involve the wider community of Faversham and surrounding villages in the process. However, we realise that we have gone about as far as we can without working together with the *Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board* – our regional body.

What's interesting is that they are committed to developing integrated, place-based health and care services and more important at this stage to high levels of community involvement in planning how those services are delivered. So, we have mutual interests! We are going to talk to the *Kent and Medway ICB* (as well as our local GPs of course!) to see how best we can all work together.

Contributors

The local Faversham team... Gill Wagstaff (lead), Laurie McMahon (lead), Graham Elvy, Jacqui Dabnor, Andrew Holden, Alison Reynolds, Cllr Carole Jackson, Cllr Hannah Perkin

Advisors from University of Kent...

Dr Melanie Rees-Roberts, Mr Steve Childs, Dr Rebecca Cassidy, Dr Ambrose Gillick, Dr Sarah Hotham, Dr Amanda Bates.

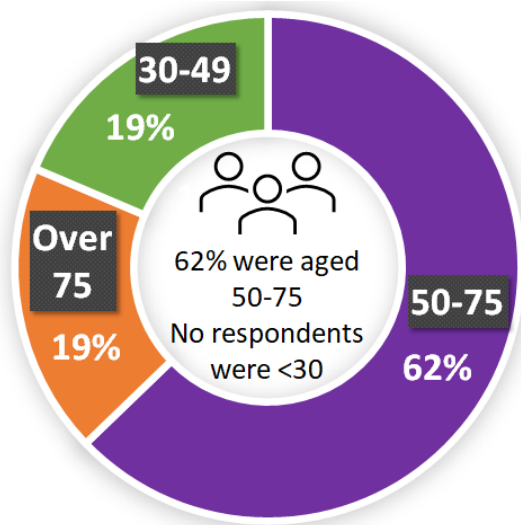
Contributors from Faversham Town Council

Chair Community Committee Josh Rowlands, Town Clerk Louise Bareham, Deputy Town Clerk Adrienne Begant, Assistant to Town Clerk Rob Gibbs, Facilities Manager Stacey Woolf.

Who the people were: the exhibition participants

The Exhibition was a great success – it offered information about services and needs via large wall displays and posters. There were many visitors to the exhibition over the two weeks it was open and of those 130 people took the trouble to fill in our survey. The illustrations below summarise who they were.

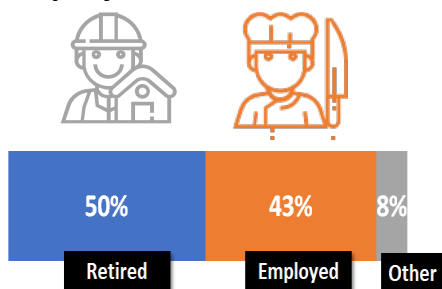
Age Distribution



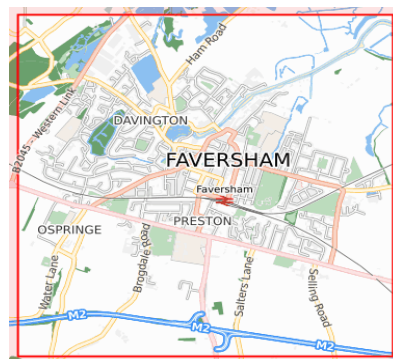
Ethnicity

Self-described ethnicity	% of people
White	75%
British	8%
White European	4%
Indian	1%
Pakistani	1%
White Irish	1%
Did not answer	10%

Employment

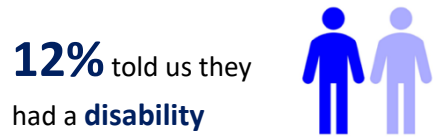
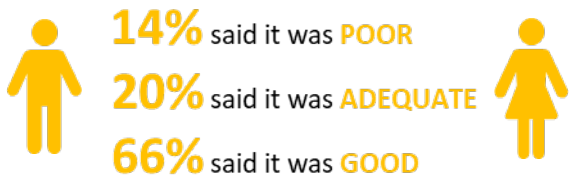


Location

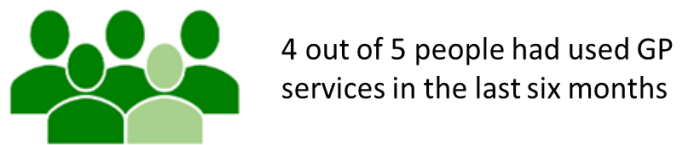


Respondents were well spread across the town and included people from local villages

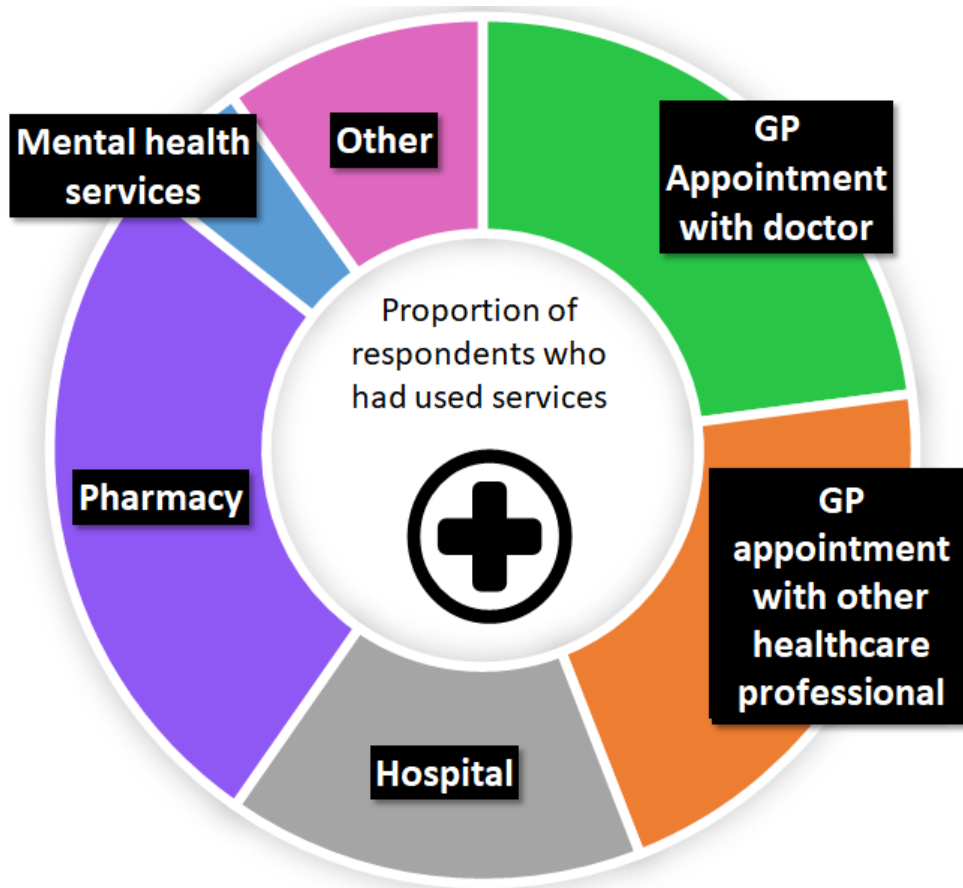
When asked about their health...



Asked about the services they used...



More generally service use looked like this.....



What people think: views on current and future services

Laid out below is what our respondents told us about health and care. So as to ensure that we did not 'guide' responses by the way that questions were framed, people were asked three general questions to which they made relatively unstructured responses. The questions were:

- *What gets in the way of citizens health?*
- *What services are important to citizens?*
- *What would help citizens become healthier?*

When the researchers analysed the responses they found that they fell into four cross-cutting themes:

- *Creating a healthy life...*
- *Health issues and long term conditions...*
- *Good local resources and services...*
- *Preventing ill health...*

These are set out below:

Creating a healthy life balance

- Lack of time, busy lives and overload prevents Faversham citizens being as healthy as they would like to be.
- Self-care is a challenge leading to unhealthy diets, tiredness, stress and anxiety.
- Long work hours, lack of local work options, low pay and work stress created poor work-life balance.
- Many citizens have caring responsibilities which impact on their own health.
- Creating routines and knowing your own identity helped.
- Prices and the cost of living is a big problem!

Health issues and long term conditions

- Many citizens are dealing with long term health conditions, or waiting for vital treatment.
- This impacts on their health, mobility and quality of life.
- Lack of specialist support services and slow, disjointed existing services mean people are in poorer health.
- More support as people get older including practical and social support at home is needed.
- Better support is needed for living well with conditions: disability, learning disabilities, diabetes, cancer, mental health and asthma

Preventing ill health and being active

- *Citizens said they needed:*
 - Proactive action to prevent illness
 - Information about staying healthy
 - Support for healthy lifestyles
 - Help to reduce bad health habits, e.g. weight loss/nutrition
 - More and better mental health support
 - Access to low or zero cost activities
 - Support for community activities
- *As the environment is key to helping people stay healthy, they wanted*
 - Reduced pollution and improved air quality
 - Action about climate change *now*
 - Recreation and green space to promote activity
 - Improve roads and traffic management for cycling, walking and running

High quality accessible local services

- GP's that are accessible, with a variety service and appointment options to suit patients' circumstances
- Better access to specialists and diagnostic services in Faversham or at most 30 mins distance.
- Quick GP referral with acceptable waits
- Good access to local hospital services and to make better use of the cottage hospital
- Consider creating Estuary View (above Whitstable) style services in our town.
- Faversham's Urgent Treatment Centre is very highly valued.
- Improvements in emergency care access – both ambulance and A&E
- Improved access to NHS dentistry
- Better use of pharmacies – advice/prescriptions
- Better support for care in the home (social/practical/health)

Commentary

Not surprisingly, there were many concerns about access to primary and social care and about waiting times for acute services. However, since we had pushed people to think beyond their immediate concerns, the majority of comments were about how our services need to be provided in the future.

At the heart of this was the idea that primary, community and social care need to be better integrated at a local level and that a much wider range of diagnostic and specialist out-patient services needed to be provided within the town. This is entirely consistent with what most expert commentators and regional health and care planners believe would lead to improving access to health and care services whilst improving the efficiency of the system.

People also said that elderly people needed better care in their homes and that there had to be a more consistent approach to helping people with long term conditions 'live well'. It was felt that the lack of local access to these services impacts directly on the health, mobility and quality of life of local people.

Equally prominent in people's comments was the need to prevent ill health and promote healthy living. People were concerned about improving air quality, about ensuring there was sufficient green space for recreation and to encourage activity. Consistent with that, people were aware of the need to improve our roads and paths for cycling, walking and running.

Interestingly, these public health issues are threaded all the way through the latest Neighbourhood Plan for Faversham. Once approved there will be a legal requirement for planners and developers to follow the plan which should ensure that a healthier environment is developed.

On the subject of planners and 'developments', in our conversations with visitors to the exhibition it was clear that there are real concerns that housing planners would not consider the effect that a relatively rapid growth in the town's population would have on existing health and care services. They expected planners to anticipate what the extra demands will be and to plan the provision of services to meet them. This will require a working relationship between local authority planning departments, health service commissioners and the local authorities social care providers.

Next Steps

When we first talked about the Faversham Healthy Futures project we suggested that after the exhibition we would go on to recruit a representative group of people from the town and surrounding villages.¹ If we then gave them access to local and national health and care planners and providers we could help them become 'Citizen Experts' in health and care. If this group understood all the intricacies, complexities and trade-offs involved in planning and providing health and care services they would be ready, through a facilitated process, to engage directly with providers and planners to create a clear and accepted plan. Central to that will be our two key primary care providers.

We believe that this approach is still the best way forward but we have realised that even with the support of Faversham Town Council and the research team at the University of Kent, we will be unable to go much further without the support and commitment from health service and social care commissioners.

¹ If you would like to be considered for this group then please get in touch: fhf@favershamtowncouncil.gov.uk

As we mentioned in the introduction, these commissioning responsibilities now lie with the newly formed *Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board* (ICB). They have a declared commitment to work with communities such as ours to 'co-design' how future health and care needs will be met. We have recently met with senior figures from the ICB and they are interested to learn how they can help us pursue our mutual interest in making Faversham and the surrounding villages a healthier place to live.

Thank you for supporting the project thus far. We will keep you informed of progress.

Gill Wagstaff and Laurie McMahon
Faversham Healthy Futures

March 2024