

Barriers to Cervical Cancer Screening – Arun and Chichester.

Summary of Survey Results:

Introduction:

Barriers to attending cervical screening are generally well known; Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust list eleven different barriers that can prevent people coming forward for screening <https://www.jostrust.org.uk/professionals/cervical-screening/barriers>. Jo's Trust themselves acknowledge that this list is not exhaustive and barriers can vary between different communities.

The focus of this piece of work was to identify which barriers were most relevant to our local communities and if there were any patterns associated with any particular geographical areas or GP surgeries. Going forward it is hoped that this information can then be used to inform and target any interventions or promotional work.

Delivery:

A short survey was devised in order to start conversations on the barriers faced. The survey was hosted on Google forms and was open over 4 weeks in June and July 2022. The survey was publicised through Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester's (VAAC) members' newsletter and shared via VAAC's social media. Links to the google form were emailed out to the practice managers of all the GP surgeries within the survey area, a total of 26 surgeries, 12 within Chichester District Council and 14 within Arun District Council. A full list of surgeries contacted can be found on page 10 of this report.

In-person responses were also collected from community venues across the survey area. These included: Brookes Lounge, Bognor Regis; Bersted Green Hub, Bognor Regis; St Wilfrids Community Café, Bognor Regis; Creative Heart, Littlehampton; Oving Chill and Chat café, Chichester; Tangmere Chill and Chat café, Chichester. A Family Support Practitioner employed by Family Support Work (www.familysupportwork) also collected some responses whilst doing home visits.

A total of 122 responses were collected, of which 65 were in person (53%) and the remainder were collected online via the link or QR code.

99 (81%) respondents said they had attended their last screening appointment, 23 (19%) had not.

Of those who had not attended their screening, 39% were in the 25-34 years age range, 35% were in the 35-44 years range. The breakdown amongst those who did attend is proportional to the overall representation of the particular age range within the survey.

45 (37%) respondents were from the Chichester area, 49 (41%) from Arun, the remainder are out of area.

Emerging Themes:

Respondents were asked open ended questions regarding the barriers to attending screening and what measures could be taken to overcome these. Those who had attended their screening were also asked about measures that could be taken to make the process easier.

Three main themes were easily identified within the responses and were common between both those who attended their latest screening appointment and those who had not. Within the group who had not attended "time" was the most frequently used word when describing the reasons why,

this related to finding time to book or attend appointments but also to previous experiences eg *“last time it was so painful”*

Booking Systems and Online Booking

Respondents mentioned a range of issues with the practicalities of booking appointments. A total of 19 respondents mentioned that issues with booking were a barrier, these included, phones being engaged, long waits for phones to be answered and long recorded phone messages before speaking to a receptionist

The ability to make online appointments was suggested by both those who had attended and those who had not attended. Online booking was suggested by a total of 10 respondents.

“Have online appointments on their website available. It's a hassle to have to phone up (usually engaged etc) to make an appointment for something I don't particularly want to subject myself too! Hence, why I've avoided doing it for 4 years!”

“Being able to book online rather than through the usual telephone GP booking system and waiting ages to get through”.

Availability of Appointments

The availability of appointments in the evening and at weekends was mentioned 13 times by both those who had attended and those who hadn't. Finding appointments that fit around working hours and childcare responsibilities was a very common theme.

Caring responsibilities

Of those that hadn't attending their last screening (23) a total of 5 respondents mentioned that caring responsibilities, both childcare for children and caring for older dependents made it difficult to find the time to either book or attend an appointment. One mentioned that bringing children with them was difficult and made the experience more stressful.

Of those who had attended their screening, one respondent mentioned that help with childcare would be useful.

Ideas, Suggestions and Partnership Opportunities

Distractions and Relaxation

There are some suggestions for ways to reduce anxiety that could easily be communicated by primary care providers to those attending screening appointments:

- Is it now permissible to bring a friend along? During conversations with respondents there was uncertainty as to whether this was now allowed, as it had not been permitted during Covid restrictions.
- Listening to music or mindfulness podcasts with earphones (obviously at low volume or with one ear free so they can hear the nurse) or calming music in the room
- Calming poster/pictures on the ceiling as a distraction
- One respondent mentioned free cupcakes!

Butterfly Board

Nurses from Tangmere Surgery set up the butterfly board as something positive during the pandemic. It shows how many smears have been done over the last 6 months and everyone that comes in for a smear picks a coloured butterfly that is then added to the board. The sign encourages those who are due their smear to make an appointment. Two of the survey respondents commented on how it made what is a very intimate and personal experience seem part of something bigger; a community of women who were in it together.

Partnership with Family Support Work (FSW)

FSW provides one-to-one, intensive help to children and families in Sussex, plus a range of group support and structured play activities. The Family Support Practitioner for the Bognor area has offered to support with providing childcare at a suitable community venue for any possible mobile screening sessions that could be provided. FSW staff are all DBS checked, first aid trained and hold food hygiene certificates (for providing refreshments!) FWS have assisted with these sessions in the past and the staff have invaluable contacts with local families to encourage attendance.

www.familysupportwork.org

Next Steps

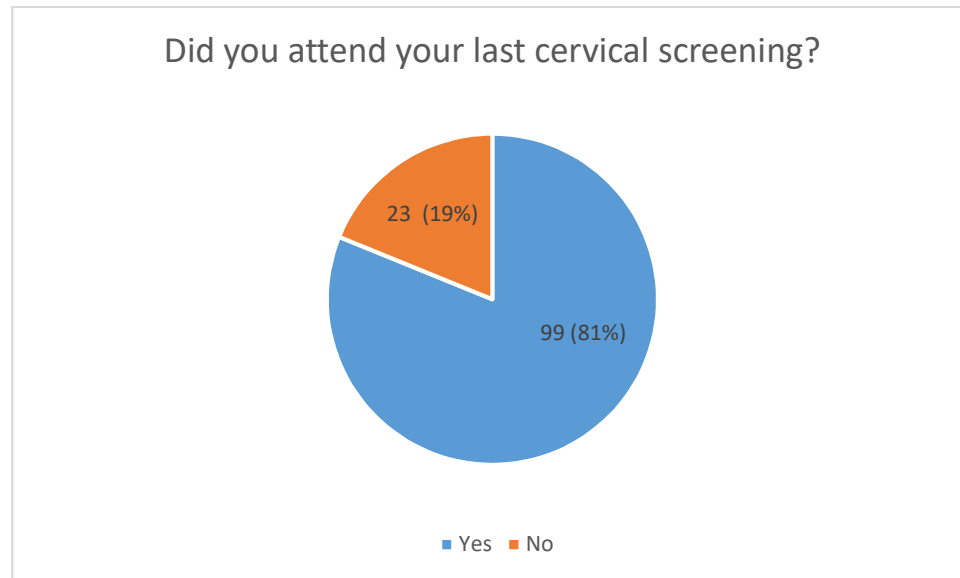
The results of this survey will be presented to the Chichester and Arun LCNs and the report will be shared with all interested parties. After discussions with partner organisations several areas for follow up work have been identified:

- Work with the Regis PCN to scope requirements for a specific cervical screening session for the families in the Bognor area that had been identified by Family Support Work as having barriers to attendance related to childcare.
- Working with Tangmere surgery to write up a case study of the butterfly board to allow ease of replication by other surgeries.
- Further work with the Eastern European community to find out true extent of reported travel to home countries for medical procedures such as cervical screening and why these decisions are made.
- Amalgamate the information gathered here with the work being undertaken in Crawley to provide a larger data set.

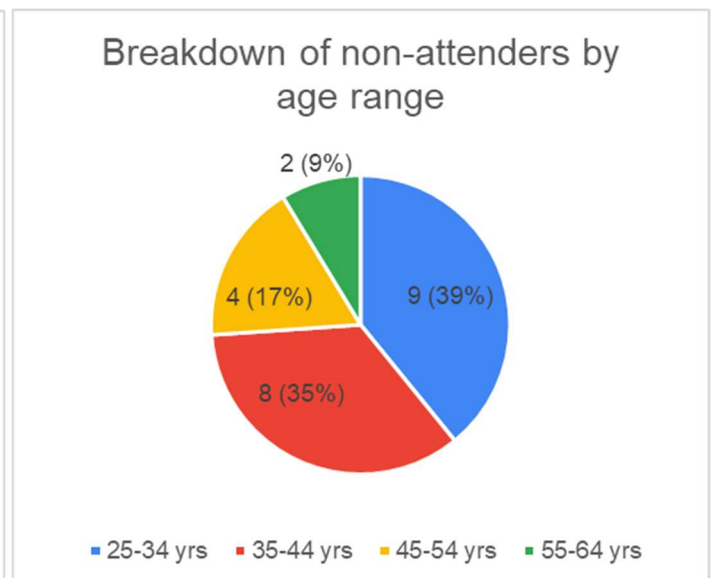
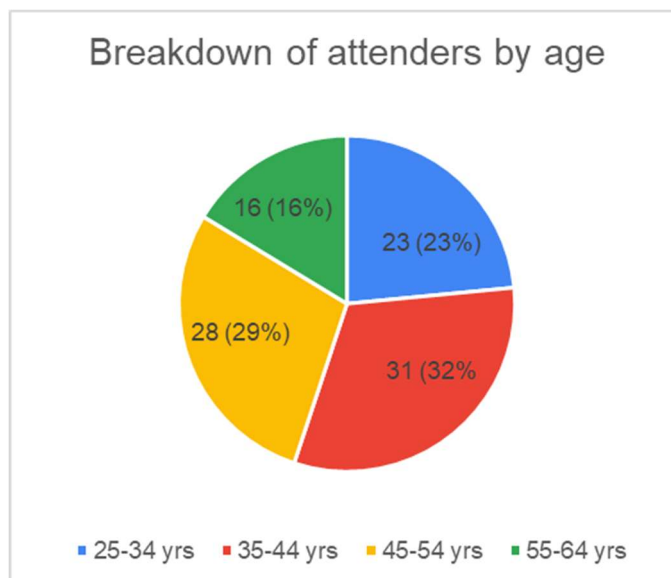
For any further information or specific results relating to a particular GP surgery or PCN please contact Charlotte Walker, Community Participation Officer, Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester on: charlotte.walker@vaac.org.uk

Full Results of Cervical Screening Survey:

Q1) Did you attend your cervical screening last time you were invited? (122 responses)



Breakdown of the age ranges of attenders and non-attenders



Q2) Please tell us the reason or reasons that you haven't yet made an appointment for your cervical screening. (21 responses) All comments are written verbatim (spelling/grammar mistakes included)

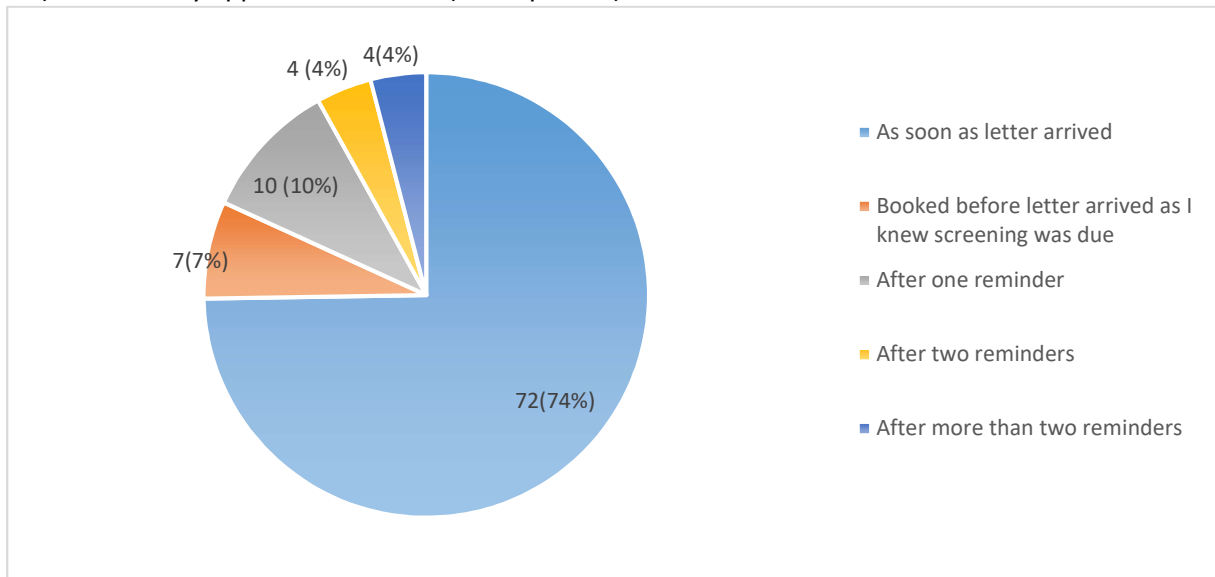
Haven't got the time to book one	I don't know how to book appointment
Too hard to make an appointment	Too busy, times available and I don't care enough if I have cancer or not
Keep forgetting to book	Childcare and too difficult to make an appointment
	I worked
Difficult to fit in to a busy life, especially trying to arrange around monthly cycle. Finding someone to look after the children	Mother was having cancer treatment
Busy mother	Feel anxious / have toddler with me 24/7
It felt too soon after having a baby	I was pregnant at the time, however I did arrange for one after having my baby
The thought of the procedure and it says in the letter contact your GP to do it. Last time I went to a clinic - more efficient than a GP surgery	The last time I had a smear procedure at xxxxx surgery it was sooooo painful, the most painful one I have ever had done, I vowed I would never have one again
No appointments with specific Dr	The toilets at the GP practice were unavailable because of Covid restrictions. Also I did not feel comfortable wearing a mask during a stressful procedure.
It was cancelled	Forget
Not old enough	Scared of results

Q3) Please tell us one thing that your GP surgery could do that would make you more likely to attend. (18 responses)

First of all would be if call to surgery would be answered. Secondly, personally I'm not paid at work if I'm missing a day, and tests are not being taken on Fridays.	Easier to make appointments and evening appointments
Easily to get an appointment and children care	Evening or weekend appointment
Have online appointments on their website available. It's a hassle to have to phone up (usually engaged etc) to make an appointment for something I don't particularly want to subject myself too! Hence, why I've avoided doing it for 4 years!	Easier booking system
Be able to book online	Online bookings
Book online	Online booking for screening appointments
Open the toilets and let women take off masks during the procedure if they want to	Only one female Dr available - she's the only one I'm comfortable with doing it
Learn how to carry out the procedure properly	Use more caring language in the invitation

Introduce self sampling	I will attend
Not sure	Not sure

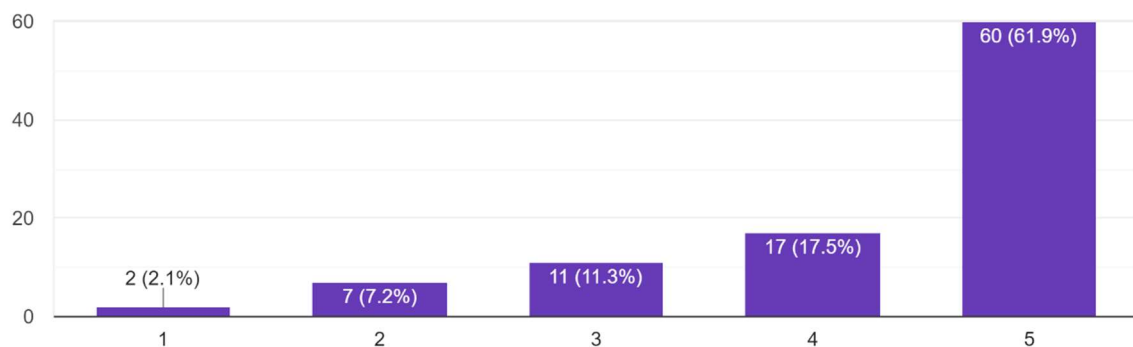
Q4) I booked my appointment (97 responses)



Q5)

How easy was it to book your appointment?

97 responses



1= Not easy at all

5= Very easy

Q6) Please state one thing that would have made your screening experience better?

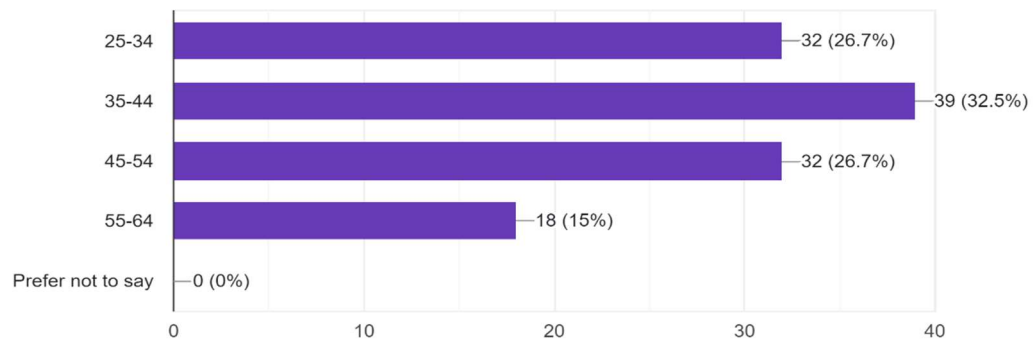
(56 responses)

Waiting times to speak to reception staff to book appointment	Surgery answering phone
Doctors surgery not answering	No long recorded messages at Drs
Menu driven telephone answering machines make a call even longer. Just put me through to a receptionist	Weekend appointment
An early morning or evening appointment	More choice of appointment days and times
Evening appointment	More appointments after work
More options for dates for appointments	more appointments available
More options	Help with childcare
Being able to book online. Not via receptionist who then needs nurse to call you back!!	Being able to book online rather than through the usual telephone GP booking system and waiting ages to get through
Online option	Being able to book online
Doing it online	Was made to feel uncomfortable, speculum was too big, appointment felt very rushed
Not having to do it all over again because the specimen wasn't labelled properly...	More experienced staff as I have a posterior facing cervix which makes it very difficult to do
It's just not a comfortable experience. Even though this is one of many, I'd like to be kindly talked through every step of the procedure, asked if I'm comfortable etc. Doesn't always happen	Communication, things a bit slap dash, talk through the process as doing it and what to expect post natal
Not to have been so painful	Painful and it was third attempt!
Quicker to identify issue	Right size equipment
Nurse should pay more attention to test	Better covering when getting smear test done
Distraction, like music or a poster on the ceiling	Learning what I could do before hand to feel calmer and less embarrassed
Free cupcake!	
Receptionist smiled😊	Lovely lady was calm that did it
Not an issue	Nothing
Nothing, easy and no problem!	Nothing
None	The care at surgery was excellent
Can't think	Nothing
Happy with it	It was fine
Nothing	Nothing very easy to do
Nothing	Nothing
Nothing	Nothing really, it was all fine
Can't think of anything	It was easy. It was during covid period but it was fine
When it was at St Richard's because of tilted womb	I think screening should be done yearly

Q7)

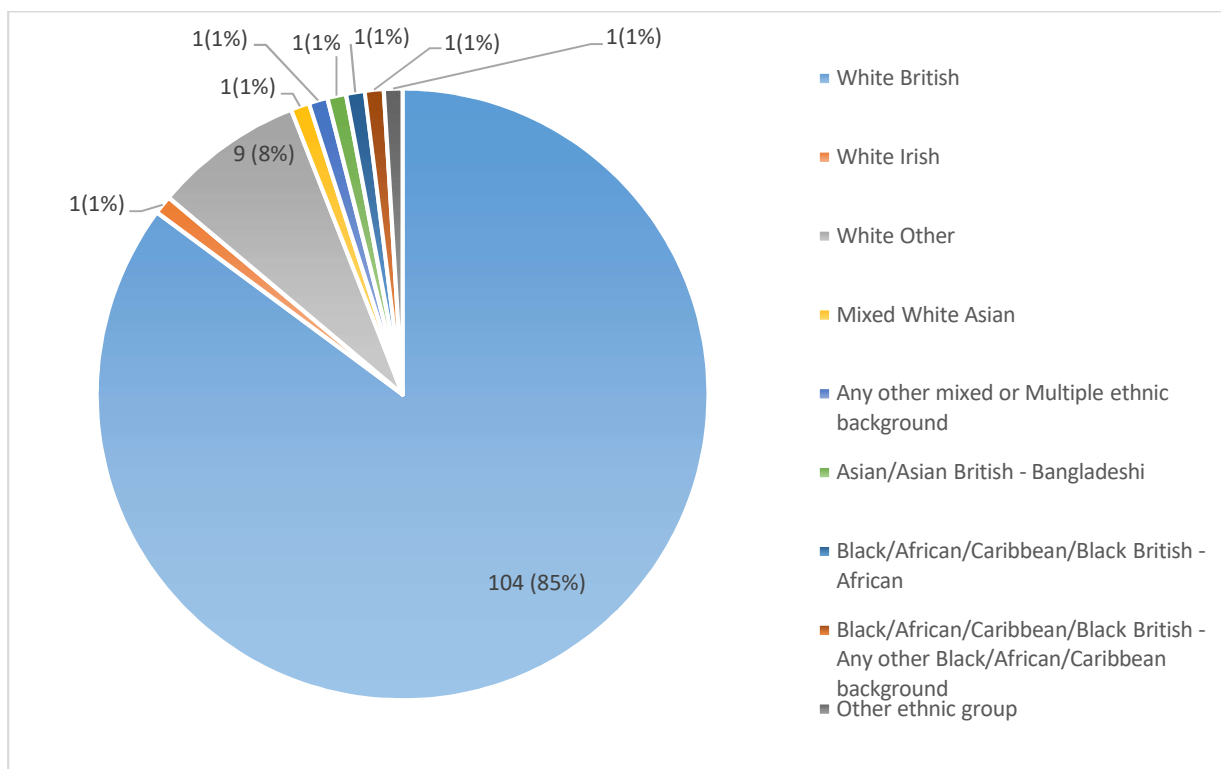
What age range do you fit into?

120 responses



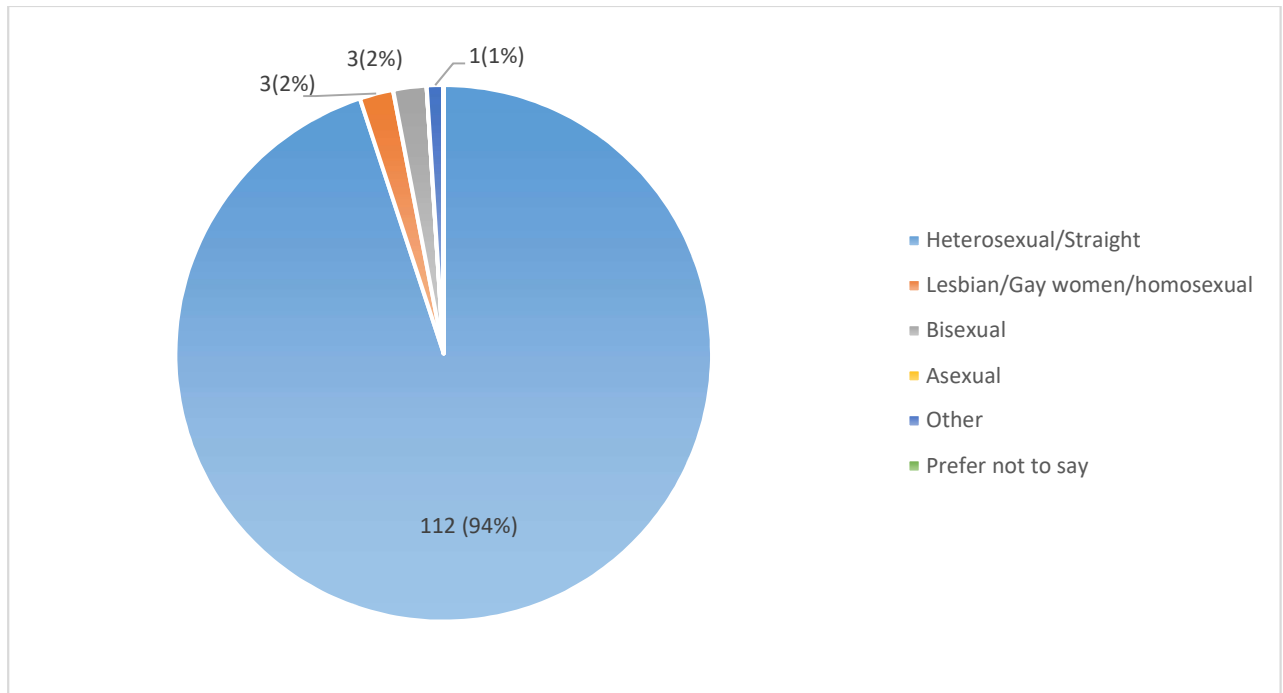
Q8) What is your ethnic background (categories that returned a zero have been omitted from the chart for clarity)

120 responses



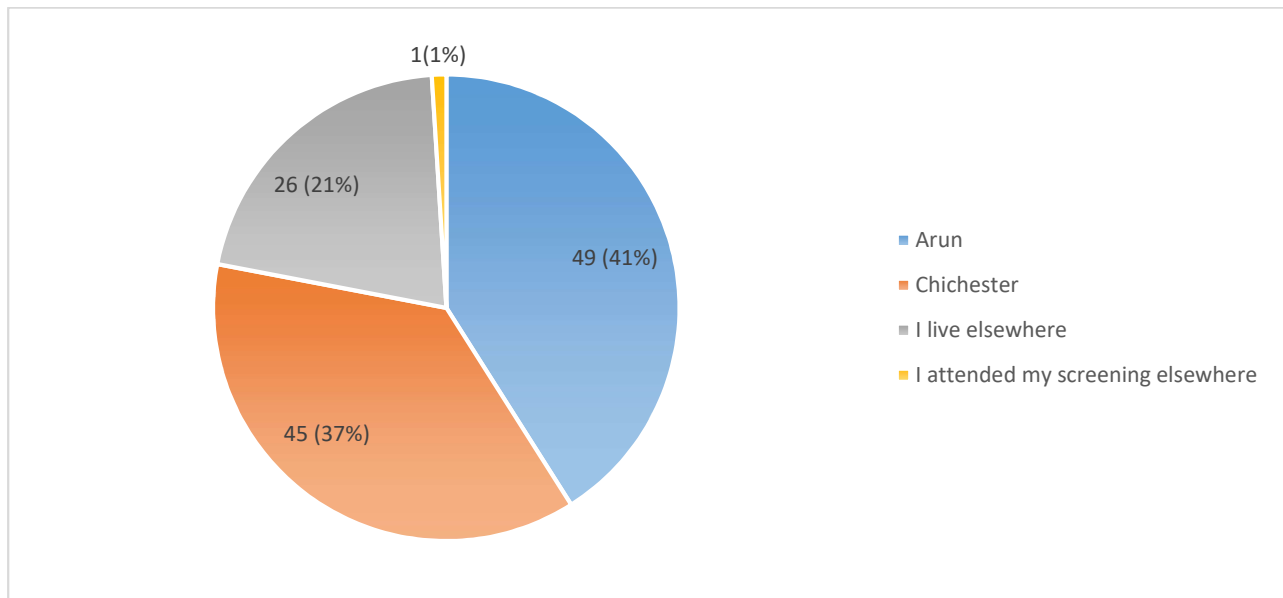
Q9) How would you describe your sexuality?

119 responses



Q10) Which district do you live in?

112 responses



Full list of GP surgeries that were sent the survey link and number of responses received.

Arun	
Arundel Surgery	3
Avisford Medical Centre	1
Bersted Green Surgery	7
Bognor Medical Practice	10
Fitzalan Medical Group	1
Flansham Park Health Centre	6
Grove House Surgery	2
Maywood Surgery	11
The Coppice Surgery	0
The Croft Surgery	1
The Park Surgery	0
West Meads Surgery	2
Westcourt Surgery	1
Willow Green Surgery	1
Chichester	
Cathedral Medical Group	6
Langley House Surgery	3
Lavant Road Surgery	2
Loxwood Medical Practice	5
Parklands Surgery	1
Pulborough Medical Practice	1
Riverbank Medical Surgery	8
Selsey Medical Practice	2
Southbourne Surgery	3
Tangmere Medical Centre	13
Witterings Medical Centre	1

For specific results relating to a particular GP surgery or PCN please contact Charlotte Walker,
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