



#MyGPandMe
Building Better Together

easy read



About this report



This is a report about what people with disabilities think about their GP surgery or health centre building and **environment**.



Environment is the things that fill our space and surroundings.



Other reports tell us that people with disabilities do not get equal health care or treatment.



We think this is unfair and must change.



We wanted to find out if GP surgeries and health centre buildings play a part in this.

600



600 people took part in our research.



They included people with disabilities who go to their GP surgery or health centre.



And people who support someone with a disability to go to their GP surgery or health centre.



This included family members and paid support staff.



Some people sent us answers to our questions.



Some people met us in person to talk about it in groups.



We want to thank everyone who has been a part of our research.



Our research was done before Covid-19 and lockdown.



We think it's important to talk about how Covid-19 and lockdown has changed health care.



How Covid-19 lockdown has affected people's experience of health care is at the end of this report.



Thank you for reading our report.



How people feel about their surgeries and health centres

65%



65 % of disabled people felt that their surgery or health centre setting met their needs.

48%



48 % of people said that they felt happy in their surgery or health centre setting.

14%



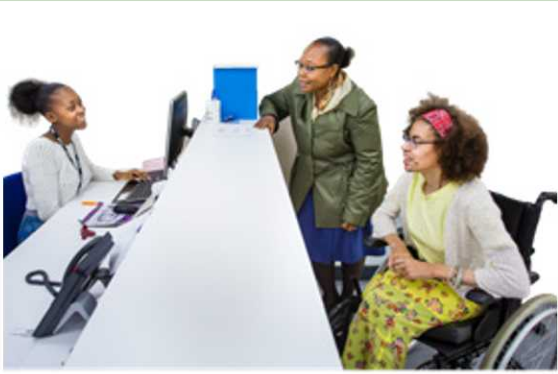
14 % of people who have a disability said they felt unsafe in surgery or health centre settings.



People who supported someone in health services were less happy or satisfied than people who have disabilities.



Less than half of people who supported someone felt that the setting met the needs of the person they supported.



And less than half felt it was easy to support someone while they were at the surgery or health centre.



We spoke with supporters to find out why they feel this way.



We think it is because they often support people with higher needs.



This means they come across bigger barriers.



The next part of the report tells you about **4 important types of things** our research found.



Number 1: Independence, choice and control



This is about how buildings and environments affect getting around independently.



Independently means without needing more support than they normally would.



This includes signs, ramps, railings and doors.



Lots of people in our research said it was difficult to do what they needed to in surgeries without support.

22%



Only 22% of people said they felt independent in their GP surgeries or health centres.

18%



Only 18 % of people who support someone thought the person they supported could understand the signs in their surgery.

50%



Half of disabled people said they could not understand the signs at their GP surgery or health centre.



People told us that big signs with large print and symbols make them easier to understand.



They also told us that automatic doors would help them to move around in a wheelchair independently.



This means without needing to rely on other people to open and hold doors.



Number 2: Dignity



People said it was important not to be left in difficult or embarrassing situations.



People did not always feel like they were treated with dignity and respect when they were in GP surgeries or health centres.



This is stressful.



Some people said that stress and anxiety could lead to leaving the surgery and missing their health appointment.



A private space where people can communicate with surgery staff was important to people.



The reception area in buildings were seen as very important.



People wanted to be able to communicate with staff privately and not be looked down on from a high counter.



People also told us that having accessible toilet facilities was important. This includes Changing Places facilities and equipment for wheelchair users.



Less than half of people felt that toilet facilities met people's needs.



People were very disappointed about this.



Number 3: Feeling relaxed



People said that an environment can affect how relaxed or stressed they feel.



This includes things such as lighting, decorations, furniture and sounds.



People who said that the GP surgery or health centre didn't meet their needs were more stressed.



We found that people have very personal ideas for how surgery or health centre environments should look and feel.



Waiting Room

But people agreed that there is a need for a quiet waiting area.



This could be a separate waiting area that could be used for people who found it difficult in the main waiting area.



People told us they wanted friendly and welcoming environments.



80 % of people said the surgery or health centre was neat and tidy.



People that liked the decor were more likely to feel relaxed.



This is important because people told us that feeling stressed could lead to them leaving the building and missing appointments.



Number 4: Patient care and customer service



This research is about buildings and environments.



But lots of people told us about the service and behaviour they receive at their GP surgery or health centre.



A lot of people told us that they could only get around their GP surgery if members of surgery staff were available to support them.



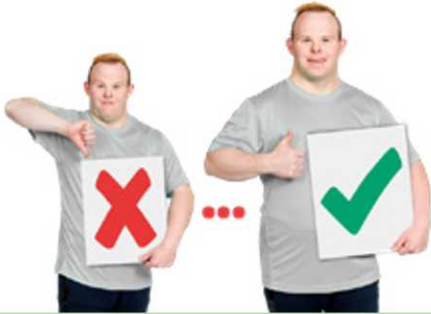
It can become stressful for patients, supporters and surgery staff if buildings are unsuitable.



The right building and the right customer service go hand in hand.



Some recommendations



These are things that we think should happen to help make things better.



1. That buildings and settings are flexible



This means that they can change depending on what's best for a person.



Or that there are different options for the person to choose from.



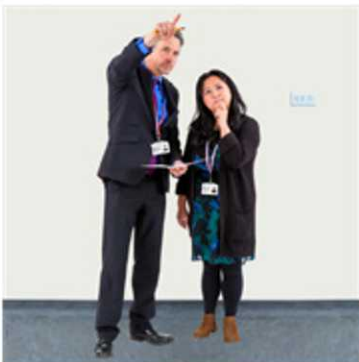
2. That we must involve disabled people in the design of buildings and environments



Understanding what people need will make buildings and experiences better.



Disabled people know what works well for them and can give good advice.



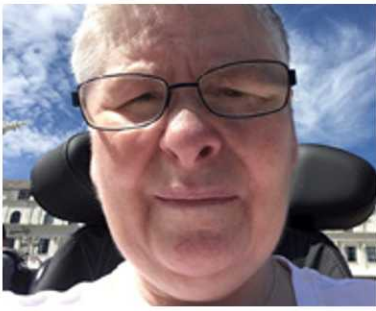
3. That regulators pay more attention to how GP surgery buildings affect patients



Regulators are people that set standards and inspect services.



They can help make sure buildings are right for disabled people.



Ann's conclusion



Ann McCallum is someone who is disabled and she thinks this report is important.



She is one of Dimensions Quality Consultants and a self-advocate.



She says: "I know from personal experience that people can get a fear of doctor's surgeries."



"But I know that if those places could get things right for me, then I might be a bit more forthcoming."



"This report has given the tools to people so that they can change things for the better."



Covid-19 and lockdown



We spoke to people 5 months after the Covid-19 lockdown began. They said...



It is sometimes helpful to have a video or telephone appointment with a nurse or doctor.



This is especially true for people who feel very anxious or stressed about visiting their GP or health centre.



However, people mainly prefer face-to-face appointments.



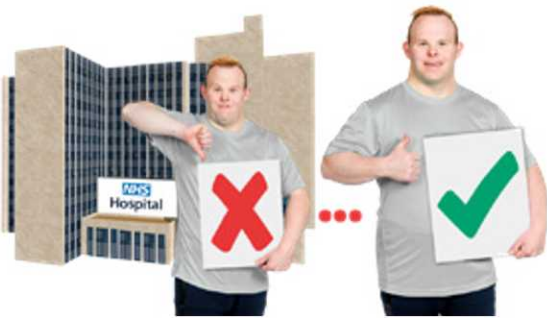
This is very important for people who do not use words to communicate.



And for people who need regular tests.



Covid-19 has made it even more important that people feel relaxed and safe in their GP surgery or health centre.



This is a great opportunity to make buildings and environments better for disabled people.



Good and equal access to health care will help disabled people have better experiences in GP surgeries.



This means they will be healthier as well.



Find out more



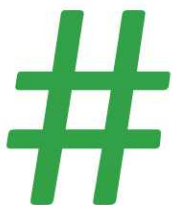
You can find out more about the #MyGPandMe campaign...



On our website at:
www.dimensions-uk.org/mygpandme



On social media by following @DimensionsUK



By using the #MyGPandMe hashtag on social media



By emailing:
DimensionsCampaigns@dimensions-uk.org

Proving life can get better

Dimensions provides evidence-based outcomes-focused support for people with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs. We help people to be actively engaged in their communities.



Find out more about #MyGPandMe

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