

# Despite improvements in hospital care for children and young people, more can be done to improve their experience

## For immediate release

Over 33,000 respondents completed the Children and Young People's Patient Experience Survey 2018 capturing their experiences of hospital care and that of their parents/carers.

The questionnaires are split into three different age groups:

- The 0-7 questionnaire; sent to parents/carers
- The 8-11 questionnaire; sent to parents/carers and patients
- The 12-15 questionnaire; sent to parents/carers and patients

The survey, developed by Picker and licensed to the CQC, ran from January to May 2019 and 129 NHS acute and specialist trusts from across England participated, with 33,179 completed questionnaires being received.

Overall, the survey results showed that most children and young people have good experiences of care in hospital. 70% of those aged 8-15 said they were looked after "very well", and 82% of parents of younger children said they were "always" well looked after. Despite this, there are still some key areas where care could be improved – including around involvement and entertainment.

Involvement is recognised as one of the key principles of person-centred care, but the survey showed that many young people and their parents or carers found this lacking. Almost one in three (30%) parents and carers said they wanted to be more involved in the care of their child. Young people themselves had worse experiences: less than half (46%) of 8-15 year olds said they had "a lot" of involvement in decisions about their care and treatment. Although this represented a significant improvement from a figure of 43% in 2016, there is a long way to go to make involvement of younger patients the norm.

The importance of playing with children is well known, however we have seen a decline in the number of CYP age 8-11 being played with by hospital staff. Less than one in four (23%) of 8-11 year olds said that hospital staff played with them a lot, down 2% from 2016. This fall in play is also seen in the 0-7 year category with 73% of parents saying staff played with their 0-7 year old child (down 1% from 2016), despite them wanting the staff to play with their children.

Good quality WiFi access is important to help young people and their families stay connected with friends whilst in hospital. Results from this year's survey show that less than half (41%) of CYP

aged 8-15 always had access to WiFi that was good enough to do what they wanted. When parents of 0-7's were asked only 36% rated the Wi-Fi as good enough to entertain their child. This contrasts with the priority given to WiFi access in the NHS: [98% of NHS trusts](#) report offering free WiFi, but it is clear that the service is not meeting expectations.

The role of play is changing for older children and the availability of WiFi has an impact on whether they considered there to be enough to do whilst in hospital. Amongst young people who said the WiFi was good enough, 66% said there was enough to do in hospital – compared to only 31% of those who found WiFi services lacking.

*Chris Graham, CEO, Picker, said:*

*“Our work with children and young people – and their parents and carers – have shown that they have different needs and preferences when being treated in hospital compared to adults. Understanding and addressing these needs is essential to provide person centred services and to create a therapeutic environment that supports holistic wellbeing. Trusts need to acknowledge the different needs of the children and use this to improve their services. In particular, ensuring children are occupied whilst in hospital is important to aid their recovering: the survey results show that this could be improved through upgrades to the NHS IT estate, and this should be addressed to better meet the needs of young patients. Similarly, staff at the front line should be encouraged to involve young patients and their parents or carers to better meet their needs.”*

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## Notes for Editors

- [Picker](#) is an international charity working across health and social care. We believe in high quality person centred care for all and promote this by measuring and encouraging the use of staff and patient feedback
- The 2018 Children and Young Person's Survey was conducted by [Picker](#) on behalf of the [Care Quality Commission](#). A total of 129 acute and specialist NHS trusts took part in the survey
- 33,179 completed questionnaires were received, a response rate of 25%
- Full details of the survey methodology, questions, and results are available on the dedicated survey website at [nhsstaffsurveys.com](https://nhsstaffsurveys.com)
- Chris Graham is available for media interview. To arrange your interview, or if you have any other media enquiries, please contact the Communications Manager at Picker, Emma Newton – [emma.newton@pickereurope.ac.uk](mailto:emma.newton@pickereurope.ac.uk)