



**Amplifying the Youth Voice  
during COVID-19 and beyond**

**Youth Poll 2020**

# OUR PROJECT

Amplifying the Youth Voice project brings together 24 young people from across Queensland (the Youth Reference Group, or YRG) to work on three main activities:

- Engagement with young people across Queensland about their experience of COVID-19, the barriers to engagement and priorities for health services.
- The development of a young health consumers network for Queensland, and
- A strategy aimed at increasing engagement with young people in the development and delivery of health services.

The Youth Poll was undertaken in parallel with a set of Kitchen Table Discussions and was complementary to that process.



# ABOUT THE YOUTH POLL

The Youth Poll mirrored the main questions used in the Kitchen Table Discussions.

1. Overall how would you rate your experience of using health services in Queensland?
2. What are the main barriers for you when it comes to using health services? You can select more than one issue
3. During the height of COVID-19, tell us about your use of health services?
4. What health services would you like to see continue beyond COVID-19?
5. What's important to you when engaging with health services?
6. Tell us which of these options would be the most likely to improve your experience of accessing health services? [More health services available in schools]

There was also an open question at the end of the poll for freeform comments or suggestions.

The poll was conducted using Google Forms, and was accompanied by a video with voiceover instructions (completed by YRG member Breanna Medcalfe) and was promoted on the HCQ eAlerts and the Facebook page as well as emailed to key stakeholders. The poll was open from late November to mid-December 2020.

There were a total of 30 responses from young people aged between 16 and 25 years. There were 12 views of the video.

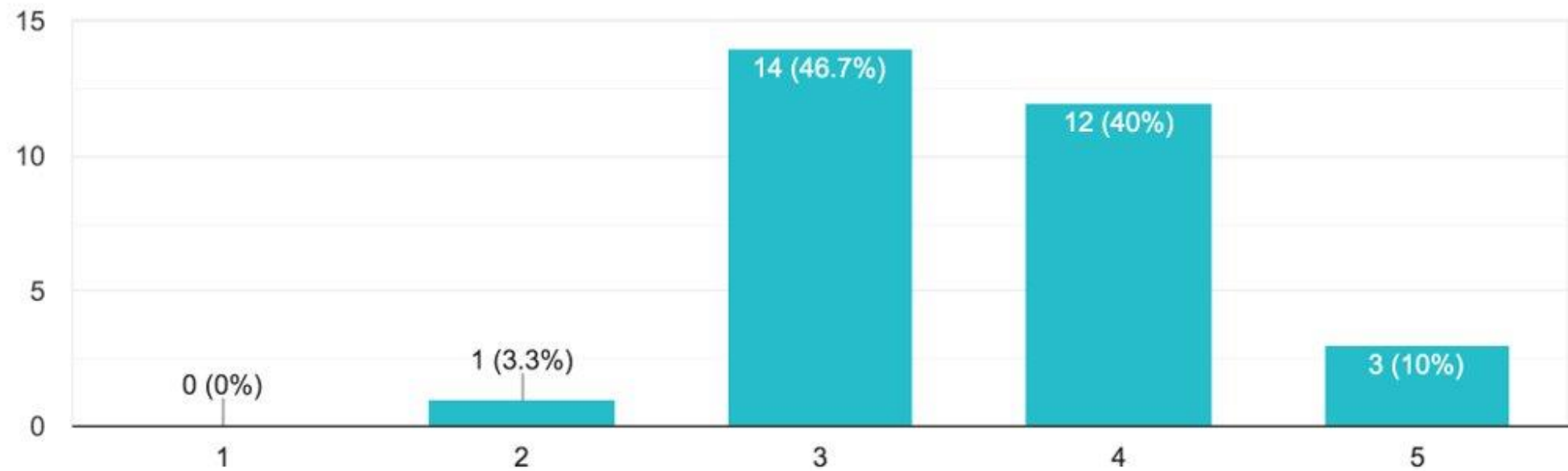




# WHAT DID YOUNG PEOPLE SAY?

1. Overall how would you rate your experience of using health services in Queensland? (1 star being poor, 5 stars being great)

30 responses



Most young people rated their experience of using health services in Queensland at 3 or 4 stars (26 responses out of a total of 30), with 5 stars being great and 1 star being poor.

This may be interpreted as an overall positive experience, but with **room for improvement**.

## 2. What are the main barriers for you when it comes to using health services? (results in order of high to low)

- Difficulty finding the right dr or health team (41.4%)
- Difficulty getting an appt (37.9% of respondents)
- Difficulty finding information about health services (37.9%)
- Challenges moving from one service to another (31%)
- Unable to afford the cost (27.6%)
- Lack of support (from health service) (27.6%)
- Difficulty understanding health information (27.6%)
- Not included in decision-making about health (20.7%)
- Don't trust health services (13.8 %)
- Lack of support from family, friends or carers (6.9%)
- No culturally appropriate health services available (6.9%)
- Don't have a medicare card (0%)



This question asked people to select from a range of potential barriers to using health services. Young people could select as many responses as were applicable.

The top three barriers, in order, were:

- Difficulty finding the right doctor or health team
- Difficulty getting an appointment at health service
- Difficulty understanding health information

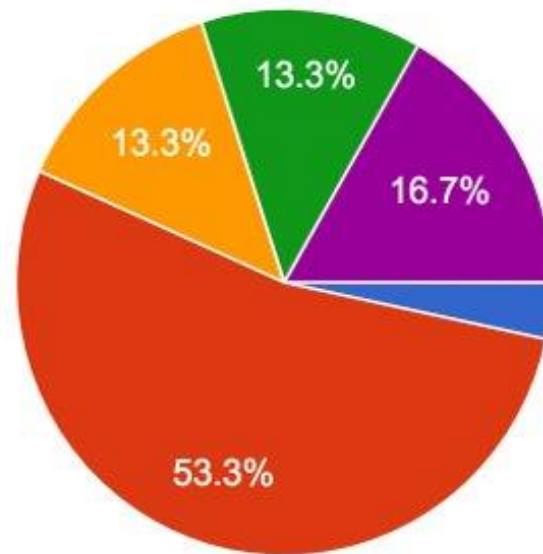
*I'm 16 and  
not sure what  
to do*

*Sometimes I  
don't know  
whether I'm  
reaching out to  
the  
right service*

*Don't trust health  
services, not  
able to properly  
meet my needs,  
stigmatising, not  
youth friendly*

### 3. During the height of COVID-19, tell us about your use of health services?

30 responses



- I was not able to use health services easily
- I was able to use health services but there were some changes
- I was able to use health services easily
- I chose not to use health services because of the risk of COVID-19
- I delayed using health services

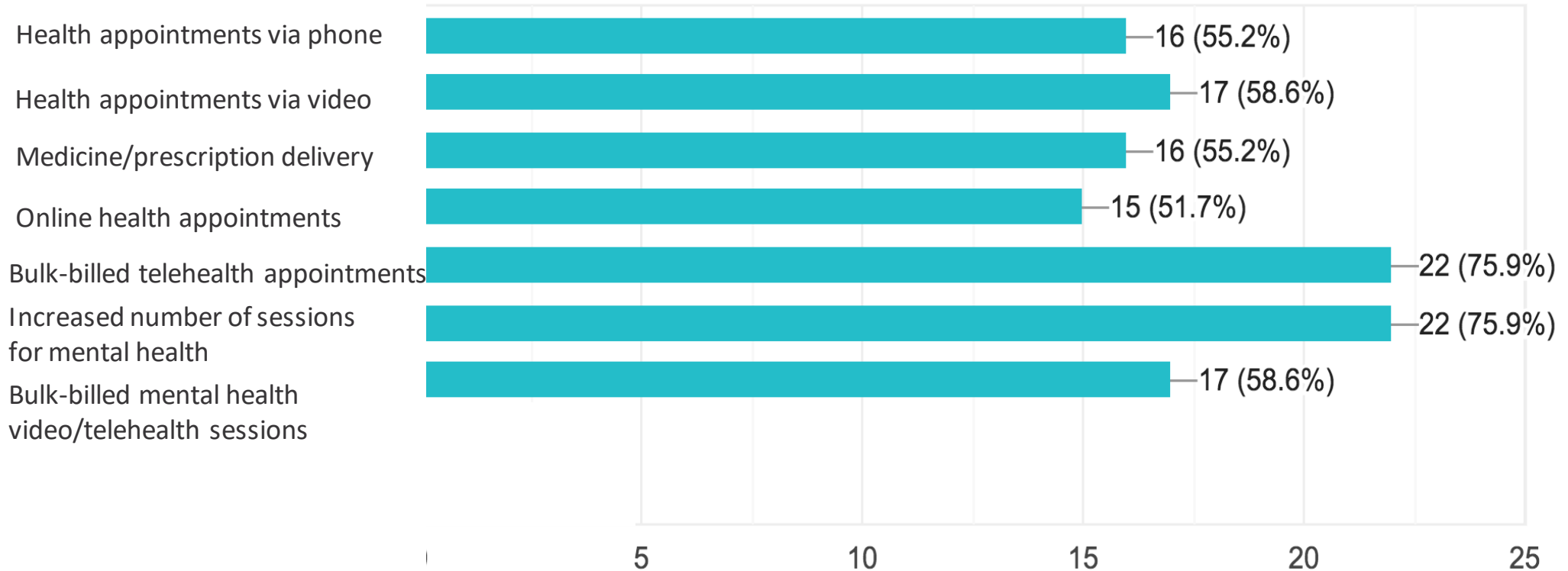
Approximately 30% of respondents either chose not to use health services or delayed their use of health services during COVID-19.

One respondent indicated they were not able to easily use health services during this time.

Although the majority of respondents indicated they were able to use health services despite changes, these results highlight that some young people **may not seek out services** due to **perceived risk** rather than **actual risk**.

## 4. What health services would you like to see continue beyond COVID-19?

29 responses



This question asked respondents to indicate their preferences for service continuation post-COVID-19 from a range of options.

Respondents indicated strong support for the continuation of **bulk-billed telehealth appointments** and an **increased number of mental health sessions** (75.9% of respondents).

There was also high support for all other options – this may indicate a preference for being **able to choose** from a **variety of ways** that services are delivered or provided.

## 5. What's important to you when engaging with health services?

Having a  
healthcare  
provider I can  
trust (96.6%)

Being treated  
with respect  
(89.7%)

Being treated  
like an individual  
(75.9%)

Receiving clear  
and consistent  
communication  
(75.9%)

Getting an  
appointment  
easily (72.4 %)

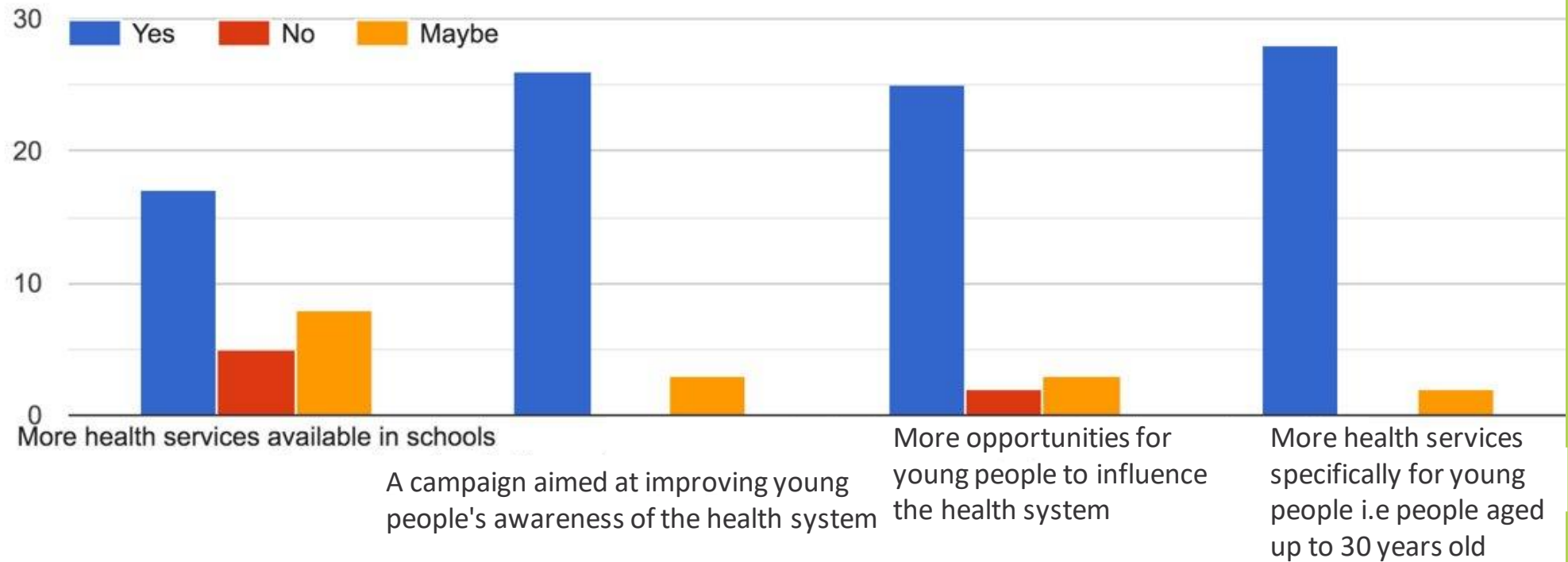
Being involved in  
shared decision-  
making (65.5%)

This question asked people to indicate what's **important to them** when engaging with health services.

**Trust, respect** and **being treated as an individual** were rated highly by respondents. This aligns with the HCQ Principles for Engagement the results from the Kitchen Table Discussions. Young people want health care that is designed and delivered holistically to meet their needs and supported by engagement that is:

- Age-appropriate
- Respectful of values, beliefs and expectations, and
- Culturally safe

6. Tell us which of these options would be the most likely to improve your experience of accessing health services?





This question asked respondents to rate four actions (yes, maybe, no) on the likelihood of improving their experiences of health services.

The most popular action was to provide **more health services that are specific to young people** i.e services for people aged up to 30 years.

The next most popular actions were to **undertake a campaign** aimed at improving young people's awareness of the health system, closely followed by providing **more opportunities for young people to influence the system**.

The least popular action (5 No's) was to provide more health services in schools.

# OTHER COMMENTS

- Better access to mental health services that don't judge you
- The transition from paediatric to adult health services is a serious issue - the age for 'youth' health services should not stop at 18, it should be 25 minimum, up to the max age of 30.
- In the public mental health space, the differences between child and youth mental health services in comparison to public adult mental health services (both outpatient and inpatient) is alarming and concerning. For a young person / young adult with severe mental health issues, having to be placed into a hospital environment (whether an inpatient unit or emergency department) really highlights how stigmatised mental health is. It's not ok.
- I have ulcerative colitis, I'm 22 and currently pregnant.
- I feel like there are three main barriers when it comes to adolescent health. The first being a lack of specific services for my age group. The second being inexperienced in life and therefore am still learning how to navigate things like the healthcare system is both daunting and difficult at times. The third occasionally being treated as a child. I feel like this is the biggest obstacle. Older adults presuming that due to our age we are still immature and unable to understand/comprehend/handle our own health.
- The public health system delayed necessary surgery and therefore I had to go private - the transition from being 15.5 years old and classified adult at 16 made everything so much more difficult in the after care.
- Having more sessions with a physiotherapist on the EPC plan. 5 sessions is nowhere near enough when there is a complex/longterm condition involved
- That it is hard enough to be a young lesbian without people suggesting I am a guy

# KEY ACTIONS & NEXT STEPS 2021



This poll highlights how much young people are keen to make a difference to health services and improve the health system.

A key end goal of the youth project is to provide health services with guidance to engage and partner with young people in health service design.

We will launch an engagement strategy and youth network in early 2021.

# WANT TO KNOW MORE?



- The Youth Reference Group is keen to connect with young people across Queensland. If you're interested in being part of the project, get in touch.
- If you're an organisation who is already working with young people in the health sector and would like to collaborate or if you have an interest in engaging young people in the work you're doing, or you just want stay in the loop, email us and let us know.
- Contact:  
[leonie.sanderson@hcq.org.au](mailto:leonie.sanderson@hcq.org.au) or [Chelsea.gourgaud@hcq.org.au](mailto:Chelsea.gourgaud@hcq.org.au)