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**What people want from Continence Services**

The NHS Cheshire, Warrington and Wirral PCT cluster has been asked by the Department of Health to find out what people would want from future continence services. During October 2011over 350 people took part in a survey across Central, Eastern and Western Cheshire, Warrington and Wirral to answer this question, while others gave their views in small group discussions; this paper gives a summary of the key findings.

**Where continence services should be provided?** Most people want to be able to access continence services either at their local GP practice or at home, while over three-quarters of people would prefer continence services to be within five miles or less of where they live:

**How long should you have to wait for a first appointment?** Many people recognise the pressures on the NHS; even so the majority feel a first appointment should happen within a week:



**Being referred to the service:** The majority of people are divided between those who want to be able to refer themselves to a continence service and those who want to be referred by their GP:



**Products and medications:** Most people want products such as pads delivered to them at home either during the day or in the evening or weekend, depending on whether they are working or not. While more than a quarter of people said they were happy to pick-up medications from their local pharmacist, two-thirds said they would also prefer these to be delivered to their home:



**Contact with continence services:** In most cases people would prefer to contact the service by phone during the day, with a quarter saying they would prefer to talk to some one in person:



**Receiving information about the service:** In the main people would prefer to find out about continence services through their GP, who could help them make an informed choice about continence services:

**What’s important in choosing a continence service:** People expect a service that is confidential, that treats them with respect and dignity and which has expert and knowledgeable staff. Privacy is also very important as is having courteous staff and information about eligibility for products that is both fair and transparent. Most people also think a clean and comfortable environment is important as is not feeling rushed, though they are less concerned about having a choice of where they are treated or the time of appointments.

**Finally…**

For many, if not most people, continence is a very personal matter that can be the cause of great embarrassment. However, a number of people we talked to recognise the need to change this, so that people feel more able to talk about something that affects many people and most importantly seek the advice and support that is available.

This consultation was undertaken by Icarus, which is an independent research agency: [www.icarus.uk.net](http://www.icarus.uk.net) / e-mail: [admin@icarus.uk.net](mailto:admin@icarus.uk.net)