



CYNGOR IECHYD CYMUNED  
COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL

DE MORGANNWG | SOUTH GLAMORGAN

# **Text Local Highlight Report**

South Glamorgan CHC  
October 2020

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# Your Community Health Council

Community Health Councils (CHCs) are the independent watchdog of NHS services within Wales and we seek to encourage and enable members of the public to be actively involved in decisions affecting the design, development and delivery of healthcare for their families and local communities.

CHCs seek to work with the NHS and inspection and regulatory bodies to provide the crucial link between those who plan and deliver the National Health Service in Wales, those who inspect and regulate it, and those who use it.

CHCs maintain a continuous dialogue with the public through: a wide range of community networks, direct contact with patients, families and carers through enquires, our Complaints Advocacy Service, visiting activities and through public and patient surveys, with the CHC acting as the "Public & Patient Voice" within Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan.

# Introduction

In June 2018 the South Glamorgan Community Health Council (the CHC) launched a free to use Text Local Service in the Cardiff & Vale area to hear from the patients and public about their experience of an NHS Service they have attended. The Text Local Service allows people to share their experiences as they happen whilst waiting for or receiving care, by sending a text message on their phone to the Text Local number, 62277. This Report will highlight some of the themes that have been found through the text messages the CHC have received.

## Background

One of the CHC's core functions is to continuously engage with the public to ensure their views about local health services are heard. This also allows the CHC to represent the public and patient voice when discussing the operations of health services at a higher Management Level. The CHC tend to engage with the public through the use of surveys, public meetings, local and national events, and social media.

In June 2018, The South Glamorgan CHC took this opportunity to use this Service as a way to collect live patient experiences.

## Aim

The aim of this piece of work was to hear live experiences from the public. A key objective was to identify areas that the CHC Members could visit as part of another core function the CHC undertakes.

## What we did

A patient's experience can depend on many aspects of the NHS, from the treatment patients received to the environment they were in. The CHC wanted to hear about all these experiences.

The CHC created posters to publicise the Text Local Service in NHS service settings such as hospitals and GP Practices. A QR code was also created, so patients and public could scan the code on to their phones to share their experience. (Appendix 1)

Once the posters were created, Members and Staff went to NHS Services to display posters on every ward and public area, such as Dayrooms and waiting areas. The CHC delivered posters to the following NHS Services;

- University Hospital Wales, UHW
- University Hospital Llandough, UHL
- Children's Hospital for Wales, CHfW
- Barry Hospital
- St David's Hospital
- Velindre Cancer Centre

Posters were also delivered to GP Practices prior to undertaking CHC Visits to these Practices. CHC general posters were displayed alongside the Text Local posters to provide further information about the role of the CHC.

Unfortunately, the CHC were unable to promote the Text Local Service in all NHS Service areas, such as Dentists, Ophthalmology Services and Pharmacies. However, the CHC hope to do this in the future, to hear the experiences from individuals using these services.

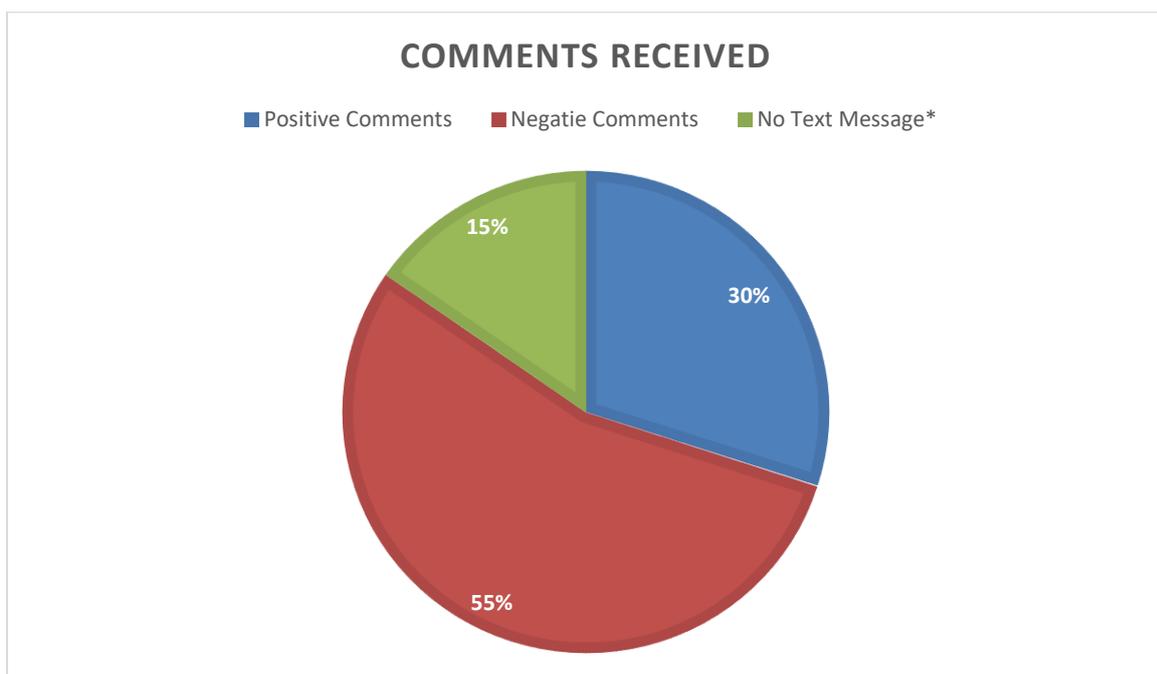
# What we were told

The CHC received a total of 267 text messages between June 2018 and October 2020.

The quality of the experiences were invaluable, and they provided the CHC with enough information to identify common themes.

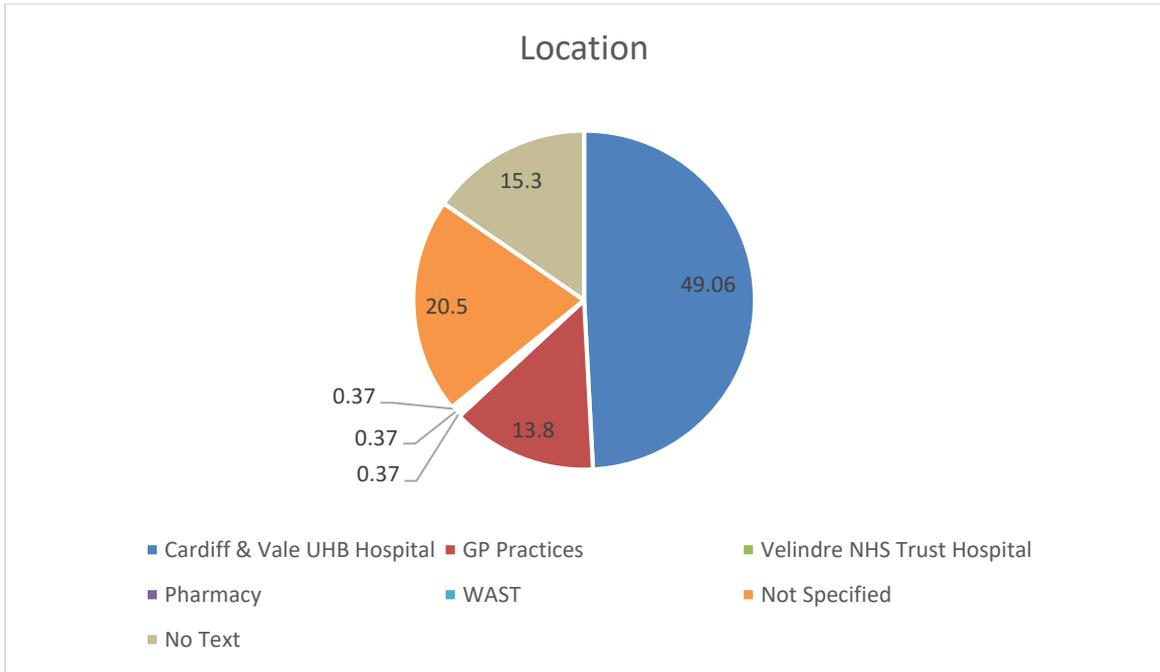
The decision to include the texts where no information was provided highlights the patient and/or public's attempts to share their experience with the CHC.

The overall results were as follows:

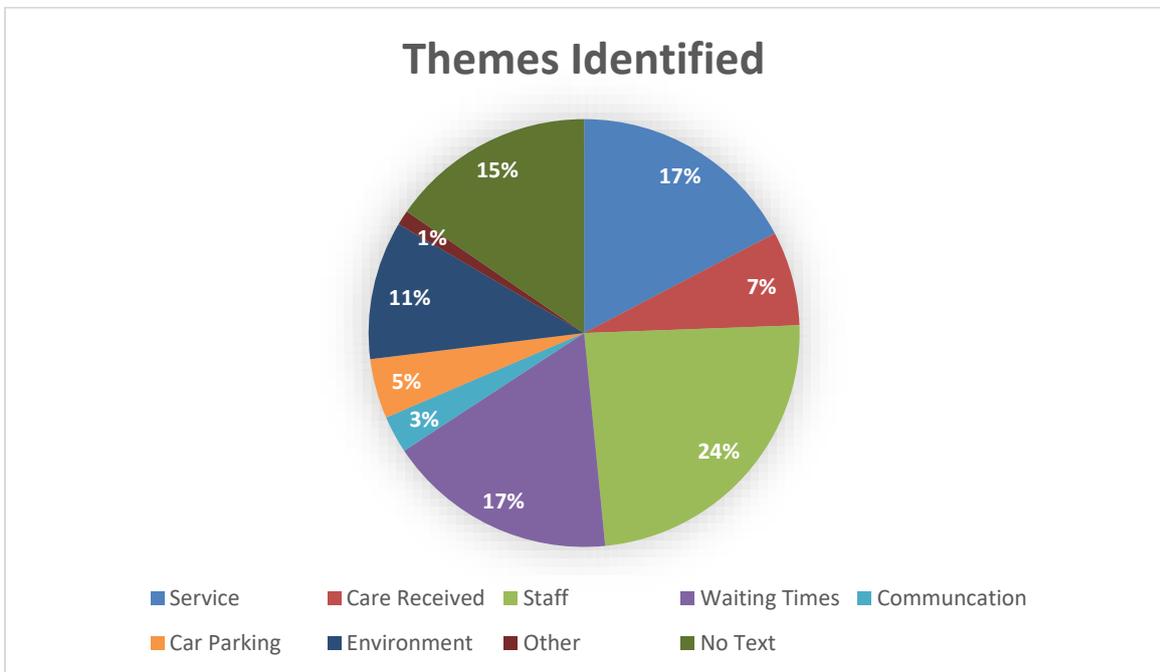


\*Individuals have attempted to share their experience but no text information was provided.

The pie chart shows that over half (55%) of the text messages received were negative, however it was positive to see there were also some good experiences received as well.



The following themes were identified from the experiences provided:



## Service

Many of the texts received refer to a service that the patient or relative attended or stayed.

Out of the 48 texts about NHS Services, 26 texts were positive and wanted to thank the NHS for the service delivered.

"I'm a patient at [GP Practice Omitted]... The triage system is great for emergency appointments if you've been unable to get one on the day. The care at the surgery is great and I'm very glad I chose this surgery over one closer to home for my family and myself."

"Just had a CT scan at the Heath. Radiographers running ahead of time, efficient & empathetic. Excellent patient experience for [patient name] well done."

"My experience today has been fantastic; [I] am thoroughly grateful for the treatment and think the NHS does a fantastic job under the very difficult circumstances it faces."

One text shared their recent experience of attending a service during the Coronavirus pandemic.

"My son is an outpatient and we visited the radiology and oncology ward today. As always the standard of care was incredible. They had measures in place to make us feel completely at ease with the new Covid-19 procedures. We are very [grateful] for the continued support and care from the hospital."

However, there were still considerable amounts of negative experiences received. This experience in particular is a reminder that NHS Services need to be accessible to everyone.

"I am visually impaired and have a guide dog! Last week I was booked into the CIU for 10:00am today for my chemo. Turned up today - nobody seems to be expecting me, so me & the dog are sat in a waiting room somewhere waiting. I don't orientate well as I do not see well, so for something like this – please, please can you make sure visually impaired patients are expected! Been sat here over an hour now - no idea where toilets are or anything else. I'm grateful for all that is being done for us but if you would rather I come without my Guide dog, please let me know. Thank you and sorry if it sounds like I'm ungrateful - I'm not - I just feel a bit lost. Thank you."

## Waiting Times

The number of texts received about Waiting Times highlights a general issue of long NHS waiting times in Wales and the UK.

Waiting Times were noted in the following services;

- Hospital appointments/clinics
- Accident & Emergency Units
- GP Practices
- Pharmacy
- Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST)
- Not Specified

"My 74 year old mother was sent to UHW, MAESU with suspected low sodium levels as she has been acting erratic and disorientated. She came in at 4pm and we are still waiting at nearly 11pm..."

"Wait far too long to see doctor. Over 2.5 hours since scan appointment and still waiting. Waiting room too hot and not enough seats, given this is an antenatal unit."

"Hello [I] have been waiting patiently here at Colposcopy, [arrived] well before time for my 15.30 appointment, as [I] write this still waiting! No information or update as to why it's running late, this is unacceptable in this day and age...."

One individual text the CHC twice whilst they were waiting...

"Been waiting in assessment unit UHW for 4 hours waiting to see doctor with daughter in pain. No one has come to speak to us ask if she's ok or needs anything!!! There has got to be a better way of doing things than this!!"

"Waited for another 4 hours making 8 in total, this is not a service!!"

Waiting times can have a knock on effect on individuals, regardless of how long they have waited:

"I had an appointment at 9am with [Doctor name omitted] arrived on time for it... but wasn't seen until 10:10! I left my 14 week old baby with my husband who's been waiting for me to come home so he can go to work. Both of us had only 3 hours sleep last night..."

And it's not just long waits for appointments either;

"I regularly visit hospital by ambulance as I have chronic R.A Why do I have to wait hours and hours for one [ambulance], both there and back!"

## Staff Attitude

A patients experience can be based entirely on how they were treated by NHS staff, and this is evident from the texts received.

Individuals thanked staff for the way they were treated. For most, staff were thanked for their professionalism and good service...

"I cannot thank the staff enough for the helpful and professional manner in which they looked after my wife.."

"Excellent as always, staff are friendly, helpful and attentive."

"I am a patient at the university hospital of Wales in Cardiff and I have found that all the staff from doctors nurse to the cleaning staff , everyone is most helpful and passionate to get you well again, they tell you all the answers and make sure you do everything right to recover as fast as possible, they are brilliant. "

But there were also texts where staff were thanked for their compassion, and making the patient and/or relative feel at ease during a difficult time.

"I am so thankful for all of the compassion and wonderful care shown by the nurses, consultants, health care assistances and receptionists in both [gynae] outpatients and on ward C1. They have made a difficult time a lot easier for me, nothing is ever too much trouble and they always made me feel like I was in good hands..."

"Thanks so much to all the staff here; all have been kind, caring and great to talk to and have a laugh to take your mind off things. Can't praise them highly enough..."

"...They're truly unsung heroes and we'll be forever grateful."

"I've been lucky enough to have been referred to the physiotherapy department at St David's hospital... my physio there has been amazing. Not only has she helped my physical condition with detailed analysis and questions, but she has stamped out my anxiety, too. She has made me feel extremely comfortable and I am very grateful to the NHS for providing this help..."

It highlighted the importance of providing care as well as providing a service, both being just as important as the other.

On the other hand, some felt that staff were rude and unhelpful. Of the 19 negative texts received about staff, 12 texts were specifically about receptionists, who are usually the first point of contact to the NHS service.

"Ignored at reception whilst two female staff were chatting, then prescription collection services man arrived and he was served before me. Queue formed. No welcome. No smile. No acknowledgement of my presence. This actually happens regularly at this surgery unfortunately."

"Receptionists at [GP Practice Omitted] are always exceptionally rude, dismissive and blunt and don't seem to have any sympathy for anyone... They cause undue stress and upset with their poor service. Urgent training or replacement required."

These were two of many GP Practices that were mentioned concerning their Reception Staff, indicating a common theme amongst GP Practices. Being the first point of contact into an NHS Service, the patient needs to feel that they can voice their concerns and to be seen by the appropriate healthcare professional.

## **Environment**

The Environment is split into four different groups; Facilities, Cleanliness, Signage and Noise.

### **Facilities**

The CHC received 10 texts regarding the facilities available to patients and public, mainly in the hospitals.

Many people commented on the temperature of the environment saying that it was too cold.

"The staff here in the MACEU have been fantastic, but please turn on the heating for [their] sake and the patients. I'm finding it very cold..."

"I spent 2 days on the North medical assessment unit on [date omitted] September and the temperature on the unit was so cold the patient were freezing wrapping up in three and four [blankets] at night... We are all very cold!!"

One individual commented on the lack of toilet facilities at University Hospitals Wales;

"There are no public toilets other than in concourse. When elderly visitors can't make it down from 7th floor. This is a ridiculous situation. Several staff [were] asked if any facilities nearer but all staff directed my mother to the concourse. For a hospital this size it is a dreadful situation."

There were even comments about the general look of the hospital and the atmosphere it creates for patients;

"... The waiting areas are like waiting in a mortuary. [Surely] something needs to happen to make this a welcoming place to be!! Its dull and depressing place to be!"

## **Cleanliness**

Eight messages related to the cleanliness of the environment, where only one text was positive. Most of the negative messages commented on the general state of the hospital.

"Visiting a patient on A1 South ward, UHW. While the fabric of the building, walls, floors and ceilings are in poor shape, I understand the problems you have concerning this, but the hygiene is grim. The floor clearly hasn't been swept today and even maybe yesterday, there are among discarded items and general filth on the floor, medication/tablets rolling about! We have drawn attention to this before and it resulted in a flurry of activity but clearly the day to day cleanliness is poor. I hope something can be done to remedy the situation. If there was a brush pan and mop I would happily clean the place myself."

"For around 3 weeks I was visiting my father while in hospital and I can say that on every visit the public toilets in the Concourse are absolutely disgusting. Toilet paper on the floors of cubicles, no toilet paper in the holder. No soap in the dispensers. My father who is not just going to the hospital for clinics today, at 10.30am the toilets were still in a dirty state."

## Signage

Patients and public asked for more signage, particularly for the car park and at the entrance to the University Hospital Wales.

"...entering the site by car its chaotic signage - a real test to find the main entrance - once in and being directed by staff member - take a look at the multitude of signs at the lifts for block 5 - bonkers!"

"Visitors car park could be much better sign posted. There are some initial signs but nothing obvious as you drive around the campus. There is no clear signs to main reception or how to find the ward we required (T4). Even hospital staff were unsure when asked."

## Noise

The CHC received very few texts around Noise, nevertheless, the ones that were received commented on the music in GP Practices...

"[GP Practice Omitted], dance music playing (inappropriate) in the waiting area, doctor running 25mins late so far and I'm trying to keep a four year old amused. Absolutely shocking."

"I hate having to listen to the radio while waiting. Clanging guitars, wailing singer, insistent drum beats, national road traffic news and insane verbal diarrhoea from presenters drives me mad. I'd like to wait in peace and quiet, read a book without battling the audio backdrop."

## Care Received

Some individuals provided their personal experience of the care they have received by the NHS.

Some highlighted how the care they received helped to improve their well-being...

"This is my 3rd week here I cannot thank everyone enough. I wasn't able to comb my hair with my left arm for years but I can now. I was sent here because of my Balance that is so much better too. All the staff are amazing, their kind, caring and really treat us oldies as human beings. Thank you so so much all of you."

Whilst others felt a patient's well-being was dis-regarded;

"The long [wait] was expected but I am concerned and saddened by the lack of dignity provide to patients. Doctors informing patients of results, prognosis and treatment in the overcrowded busy waiting room. Lack of resources in assessment room. There was No sick container, he [son] asked but they didn't have any and as readily caused my son to have vomit all over the small room floor. This was humiliating for him and obviously costly to the NHS. No tape for his arm after giving blood. We are still waiting for results and listening to everyone else's business being shouted around the waiting room."

## Car Parking

All the text messages around car parking were negative and highlighted the same issues of trying to get a parking space at University Hospital Wales and University Hospital Llandough.

"Parking an absolute nightmare. My son's appointment was 10am, we arrived at the hospital 9:35. At 10:25 I was still driving around looking for a space, in the end I had to park in a 20 min space just so I could get him to his appointment even though by this time he was 30 mins late. Parking situation here is ridiculous!!"

"I arrived at around 2:25 and spent nearly half an hour driving around various car parks to find a parking space. Thinking I was going to be late for my appointment, I had to park or risk costing the NHS £160 for possibly a missed appointment. Unfortunately, this resulted in me having to park in a staff space in the multi storey car park, something I wouldn't have normally done. When I told the receptionist how bad it was to park on that day her response was that everyone was having the same problem. Now I face a possible £70 fine due to a lack of patient spaces."

## Communication

Several messages received highlighted the lack of information given to patients.

"...My wife has been in different hospitals, scores of times over the past 15 years. There has been one constant thing during each stay, information from the medical staff, or more pertinently, lack of information. Nobody explains anything, nobody tells you anything, your stay from first day to discharge is a closely guarded secret. Nurses and doctors sweep in, sweep out no explanation as to why they are there, what your condition is, how its progressing, how long treatment will take... nothing...."

There were issues raised about the text system used to confirm appointments;

"No letter, no phone call. [They] sent txt msg day before, turned up at the new surgery where we are made to go, only to been told I should be at St David's surgery and that they have not sent me a txt, [I] had to show on [my] phone. Really run badly, when can we have St David's back for our part of the community?"

"Would have been useful on the text reminder which department I was attending and some direction as to how to get there."

## Other

Further texts received focused on experiences about;

- Travel
- Medical Records
- Confidentiality

# Learning from what you told us

Thanks to the Text Local Service and the experiences shared, the CHC were able to undertake their role of representing the voice of the public and patient in the local area. The CHC were able to use the experiences shared as intelligence and plan CHC visits in the upcoming year.

The experiences received were included within CHC Members briefings for visits. When CHC Members prepare to visit an NHS Service, they were given the text messages as part of their briefing to help them during the visit. CHC Members will use these texts messages as guidance during their visit, to test the intelligence and to raise any concerns with NHS staff at the end of the visit. They were also included within the final visit report that is sent to the Health Board.

In 2018, the CHC received a significant amount of texts from patients at the Assessment Unit at University Hospital Wales. These messages were provided within a short time period, highlighting the same issues and concerns. Following these texts, CHC Members and the Chief Officer undertook an urgent unannounced visit to the Assessment Unit. The CHC found evidence to back up the issues raised by patients and this resulted in a significant amount of recommendations made to the Cardiff & Vale University Health Board to improve patient experience. This area of concern later went to the News media and HIW undertook its own inspection, where further issues were found. If it weren't for the patients for sharing their live experiences the CHC wouldn't have been able to identify the issues and highlight the need for change in this service.

These experiences will also be used in future CHC focused work. Each year the CHC plan to undertake a focused piece of work. For example, last year the CHC undertook work around Wayfaring, which focused on the patient experience getting to

and around Hospitals. In the upcoming year the CHC hope to undertake a focused piece of work around Car Parking, and so the texts received relating to this topic can be included within the Report as part of the intelligence and reasons to carry out this work.

Due to the success of the Text Local Service so far, the South Glamorgan CHC will continue to use this as a way to hear from the patient and public in the local area.

## Conclusion

As part of the South Glamorgan CHC's function of continuous engagement, and to represent the patient and public voice, South Glamorgan CHC wanted to hear live experiences from individuals currently using NHS Services, using the new Text Local Service facility recently obtained.

In the first two years of launching the service, the South Glamorgan CHC have received over 267 text messages from the patient and the public about their recent experiences to NHS Services. The experiences shared were invaluable and could be used as part of the CHC's intelligence to plan CHC activity. It was good to see that the CHC were receiving positive experiences as well as negative experiences.

Even though the CHC value patients and the public providing their own personal experiences, several themes were identified from the text messages received. The main themes being;

- Service
- Waiting Times
- Staff attitude
- Environment
- Care Received

- Car Parking
- Communication
- Other

The CHC were able to undertake various pieces of work and to help improve the patient experiences in service areas, such as the Assessment Unit.

The CHC will continue to use the Text Local Service to gather intelligence and to hear from patients and public about their NHS Services.

## **Acknowledgement**

The CHC would like to thank everyone who took the time to share their experiences.

If you would like to share your own experience with the CHC please feel free to text CAVOGCHC followed by your message on 62277.

# Appendix 1

Text Local Poster - English



**Your Local Independent Patient NHS Watchdog**

**What's been your  
experience today?**

**As a Patient or Visitor using:  
NHS Services**

**Why not tell us:**

**Text: CAVOGCHC**

**To: 62277**



**Followed by your message:**

Please indicate the location where you had your experience.

**All texts to this number are free**



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**Corff Gwarchod Annibynnol Lleol y GIG i Gleifion**

**Sut oedd eich profiad heddiw?**

**Fel Cleifion neu Ymwelydd gan  
ddefnyddio:**

**Gwasanaethau'r GIG:**

**Rhowch wybod i ni!:**

**Tecst: CAVOGCHC**

**I: 62277**



**Yna, rhowch eich neges:**

**Nodwch y lleoliad lle cawsoch chi eich profiad**

**Mae pob tecst i'r rhif hwn yn  
rhad ac am ddim**