



Adult Primary Care Survey (APCS)

The adult primary care patient experience survey provides information about the experience of care received by a selection of adults aged 15 years and over who were enrolled with and had a consultation or other contact with their general practice during the survey period. The APCS is the largest health survey in New Zealand, with around 30,000 responses each quarter.

Why is the APCS important for your practice?

The experience of your patients is vital in learning what areas you are exceeding in and what areas could be improved on within your practice.

What does the survey include:

The survey covers different aspects of primary care patient experience, including communication, partnership, physical and emotional needs, cultural safety and access to care.

What is the information used for?

The feedback gathered is used to help improve the quality of care and access to health services. Information gathered at local, regional and national levels is used to benchmark patient experiences across the country and improve services locally. The survey also gives Te Tāhū Hauora and Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand information to help improve the quality of health services at a national level.

How does Ipsos get patient contact details?

Contact information is provided by Manatū Hauora Ministry of Health's National Enrolment Service for the purposes of this survey only. During practice enrolment, patients consent to their contact details being used for quality improvement purposes, including this survey. Once patients complete the survey, all personal information is deleted and removed from the Ipsos system.

How is the survey done:

The survey is completed online, in either English or Te Reo Māori. Invitations are sent by email and/or SMS. Participation is voluntary and patients can opt out when they receive the email. Survey responses are anonymous unless people choose to provide their contact details.

Are responses confidential?

Yes. Patient answers to the survey questions are anonymous. Once patients have completed the survey, all personal information is deleted and removed from the Ipsos system. The survey does not record names, dates of birth or any other personal information that may identify patients.

How to get the most out of the APCS:

The best way to increase your patient engagement with the survey is to sell it!

- Have APCS posters up in the waiting area all year round.
- Pop a flyer on your front desk during the survey sample weeks and hand out to patients.
- Put a message on your Facebook page.
- Have your admin staff tell patients why you value them taking the time to complete the survey.

How often are the survey questions updated:

HQSC hosts regular meetings with PHOs to discuss and decide what questions require modifications or removed/added to the survey. For example, the survey questionnaire was amended in May 2025 to include new questions about patients' access to primary health care. This was to better understand why survey respondents couldn't access health care at their GP practice and what alternatives they were offered.

Timetable of future survey dates:

Adult primary care patient experience survey	Q4 May 2026	Q1 August 2026	Q2 November 2026
Quarter	Q4 Apr - Jun 26	Q1 July - Sept 26	Q2 Oct - Dec 26
Survey sample weeks reminder	Friday, 1 May 2026	Friday, 24 July 2026	Friday, 30 October 2026
Survey sample weeks	Monday, 4 May 2026	Monday, 27 July 2026	Monday, 2 November 2026
Patients with a 'date of last consultation' at the practice they're enrolled with, in a set 1-week sample period each quarter - Week 1 - Census of Māori and Pacific respondents only - Week 2 - Sample drawn from full patient pool	Sunday, 17 May 2026	Sunday, 9 August 2026	Sunday, 15 November 2026
Launch of survey: email invitation sent to sample group of patients - Response rate becomes available on data collection portal	Wednesday, 20 May 2026	Wednesday, 12 August 2026	Wednesday, 18 November 2026
Comment moderation and contact request review period begins	Thursday, 21 May 2026	Thursday, 13 August 2026	Thursday, 19 November 2026
SMS reminder to sample group of patients (2 days following email invitation)	Friday, 22 May 2026	Friday, 14 August 2026	Friday, 20 November 2026
Email reminder sent (7 days following email invitation)	Wednesday, 27 May 2026	Wednesday, 19 August 2026	Wednesday, 25 November 2026
Email/text survey links close (21 days following launch of survey)	Wednesday, 10 June 2026	Wednesday, 2 September 2026	Wednesday, 9 December 2026
Survey results posted to sector secure online reporting portal	Wednesday, 17 June 2026	Wednesday, 9 September 2026	Wednesday, 16 December 2026
Results published on Experience Explorer	Friday, 28 August 2026	Friday, 27 November 2026	Friday, 26 February 2027

Not all surveys receive negative feedback:

A lot of the patient comments are positive and well worth sharing with the wider staff in your practice. Put a copy of the best ones in your staffroom, it's a great way to lift staff moral.

"The staff made me feel comfortable and cared for from the moment I arrived."

"My nurse is always professional and kind, throughout my visit."

"I appreciated how clearly the doctor explained my treatment options."

"Reception staff were welcoming, efficient, and helpful."

"I felt listened to and respected during my appointment."

"The nurses were compassionate, patient, and always willing to help."

"The doctor took the time to answer all my questions thoroughly."

"The nurses always make sure I'm comfortable."

"The receptionist always has a smile when I arrive"

Provide feedback to your patients:

Ensure you let your patients know that you appreciate them completing the survey and how this helps you improve your systems. This can be done by a simple poster with: "We asked, you said, we did".

Resources:

For more information about the survey and resources for health care staff, see the Te Tāhū Hauora website: <https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-data/patient-reported-measures/patient-experience/>