

Rowhedge & University of Essex Medical Practice response to the 2026 GP Patient Survey

We thank all patients who took the time to complete the 2026 GP Patient Survey. We value patient feedback and use it to help us identify areas where we can improve.

We recognise that **response bias is a challenge for all surveys**, particularly when the response rate is very low. At Rowhedge, the response rate was **approximately 10% (among the lowest in the country)**. This represented **just 96 responses from a patient population of more than 16,200 patients**. People with particularly strong views may be more motivated to participate, meaning the results may not fully reflect the views of our wider patient population.

NHS England and Ipsos advise that the survey uses a random sample and non-response weighting to adjust for differences in response patterns across demographic and socioeconomic groups. While these methods help reduce known sources of bias, **no survey can eliminate non-response bias completely** (especially with such a low response rate).

As our surgery is almost unique in its makeup, we approached NHS England to discuss the negative press we received in the Colchester Gazette “league table”; NHS England considered points raised by Rowhedge & the University of Essex Medical Practice and provided the following helpful response:

“Thank you for taking an interest in the GP Patient Survey results. We appreciate the concerns you have raised and understand why the publication of survey results in the local media has been frustrating for your practice.

The GP Patient Survey is designed to provide a robust national and local measure of patients' experiences of primary care, but we recognise that individual practices can have unique circumstances that are not always readily apparent when results are directly compared to other practices or reported by third parties.

NHS England and Ipsos do not have a way to identify the circumstances of individual practices in order to include this in our outputs and unfortunately have no control over how external organisations or media outlets choose to interpret or present published survey results. However, we know that some practices will have unique circumstances which could impact their results, therefore we always advise that results are viewed with local context in mind.

We have also highlighted the use of ranking tables in local media coverage to NHS England's media team and are exploring whether there is anything further we can do to discourage oversimplified interpretations of survey findings.”

We have considered the NHS survey results alongside other sources of patient feedback, including the Friends and Family Test, complaints, compliments and direct feedback, to help us understand our patients' experiences and identify areas for improvement.

We remain committed to listening to our patients and continually improving the care and service we provide at Rowhedge Surgery.