

# **Initial Findings on Migrants' Pathways and Journeys in Aberdeen**

## **Grampian Regional Equality Council**

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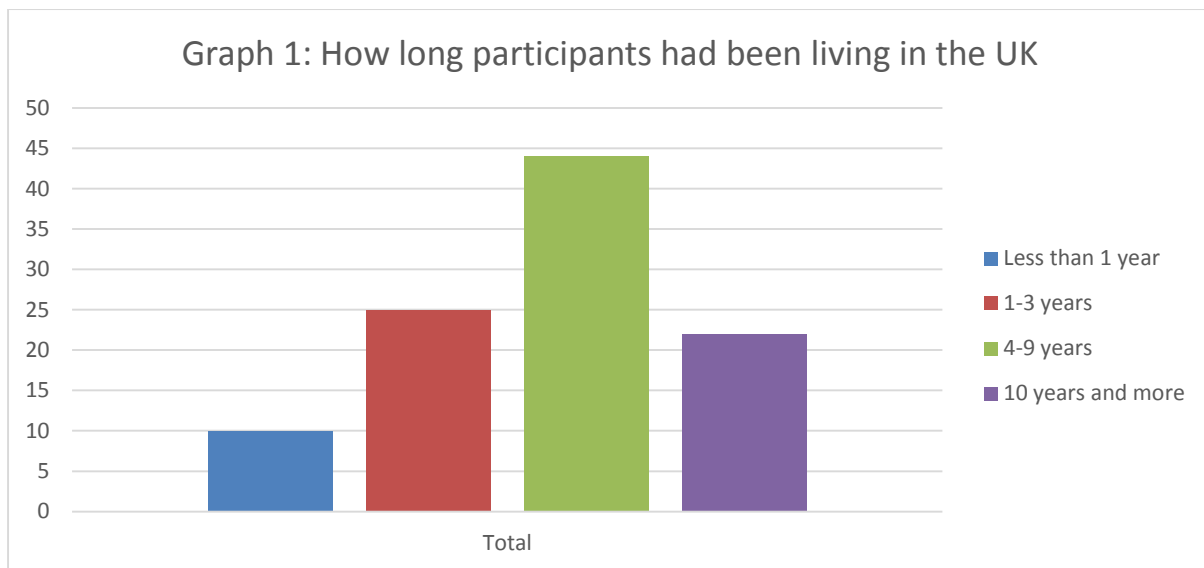
### **Introduction**

The report presents initial findings on the research on the migrant pathways and journeys in Aberdeen. This short survey intended to provide the answers on three research questions: firstly, we tried to find out if new migrants have any networks when they arrive, such as, friends, family or established groups. Secondly, we tried to comprehend what the first institutions and organisations people turn to upon their arrival. Finally, we attempted to see how sources around searching for health information is changing over time.

Participants were asked three questions: 1) where they used to search for information upon their arrival when they were sick, 2) where they search for it now 3) what were their first steps in Aberdeen. The consultation took place during two events in November 2015: "One RGU Many Nations Carnival", and NHS/GREC Feedback Day. Overall, 106 people took part in the study.

### **Participants**

Representatives of various ethnic minorities took part in the study. Each participant was asked to specify how long they live in the UK. This division is presented in Graph 1.



The majority of participants had been living in the UK for at least 4 years. Thus, this study is very beneficial to see how the source of information around health has changed over years.

### **Findings**

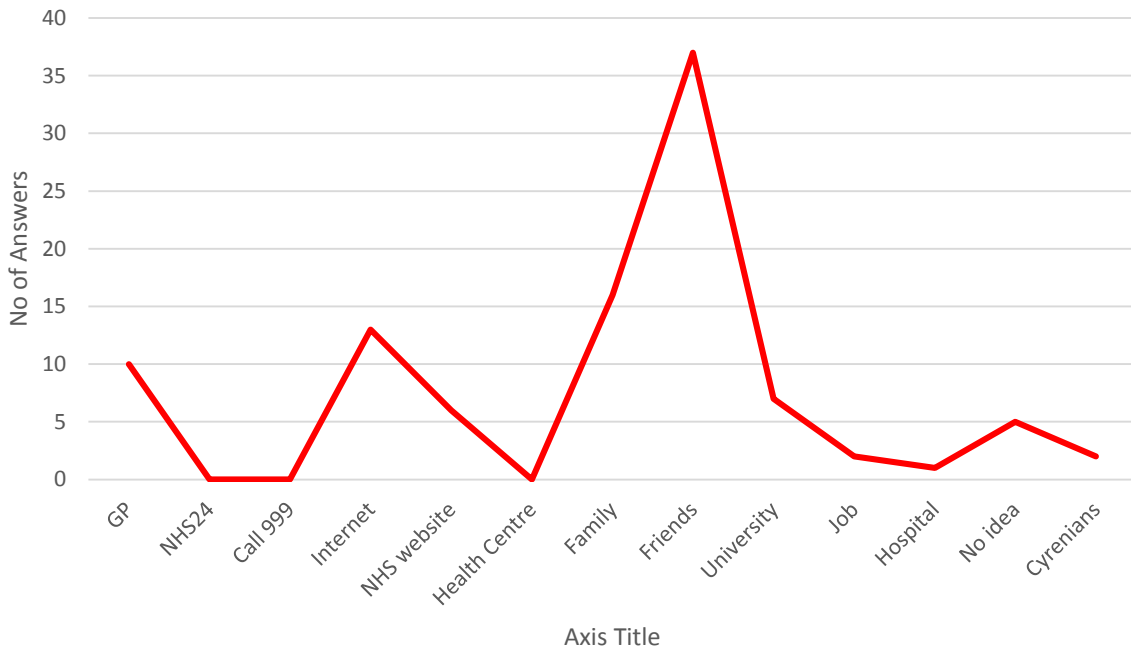
Upon arrival the majority of newcomers would search for information regarding their health among their family members and friends. Clearly, it shows the importance of “word of mouth”. Some said they would try to find information on the NHS website, Internet or they would go to their student union. Participants did not specify what kind of page they meant by answering they would search for it online, but it is possible that it was Google or NHS. Some people had no idea who to turn to.

Nowadays, when they are sick, most participants would go straight to their GP to ask for assistance. Only a few of them would still rely on friends and family. However, there is also a growing of number of people who would use NHS24, the Internet or call 999.

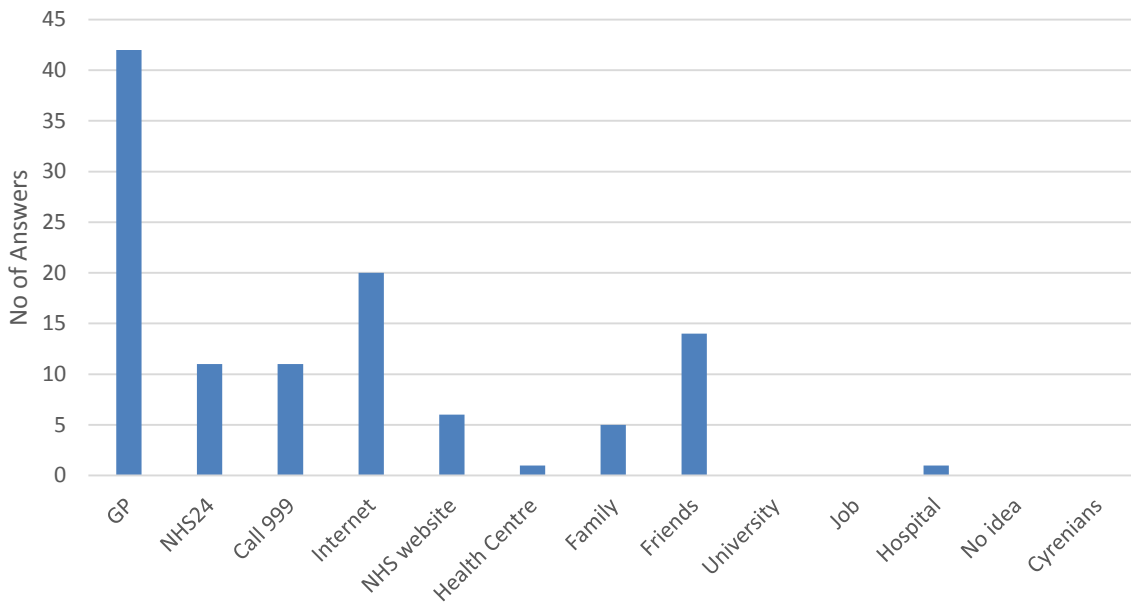
Graph 4 shows how the balance has changed between where people search now and where participants searched upon their arrival.

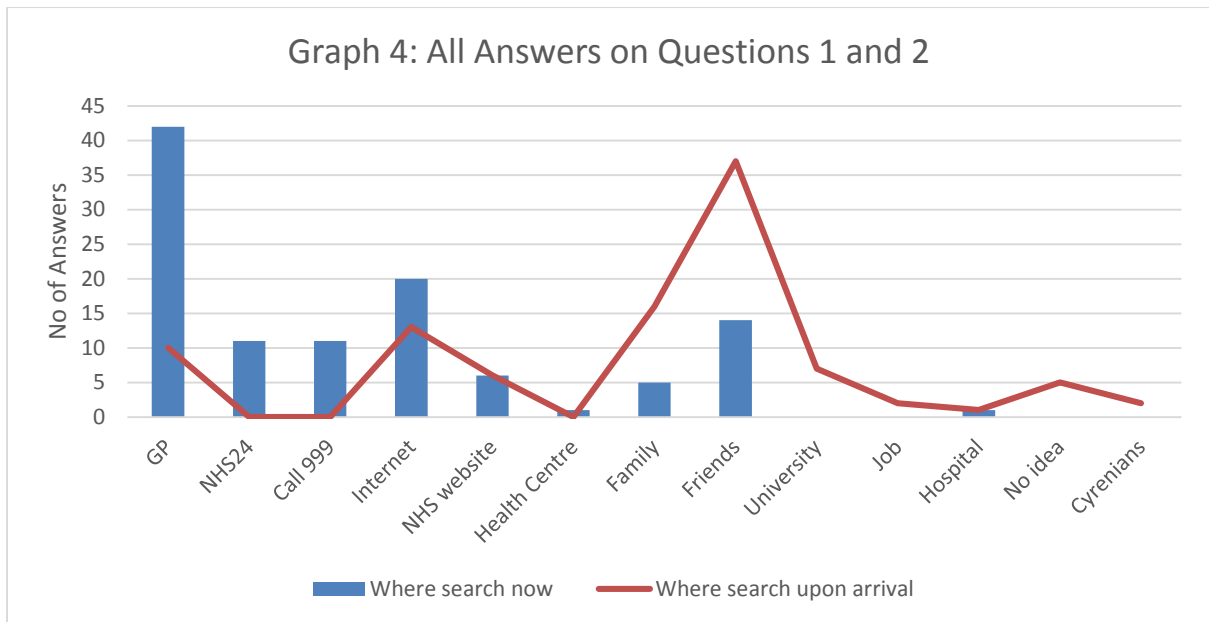
Of interest is that one of the participants wrote that it always depends how sick he or she feels.

Graph 2: Where search upon arrival



Graph 3: Where search now





Graphs 5 and 6 show the division based on the length of residence in the UK.

Only people who live here less than 5 years (more than 20% of them) would call 999.

Moreover, only people who have lived in the UK more than 10 years would use NHS 24 or call NHS. On the other hand, 40% of people who live in the UK for less than a year would use the Internet. It shows that people who just arrived are not aware of NHS online and phone services.

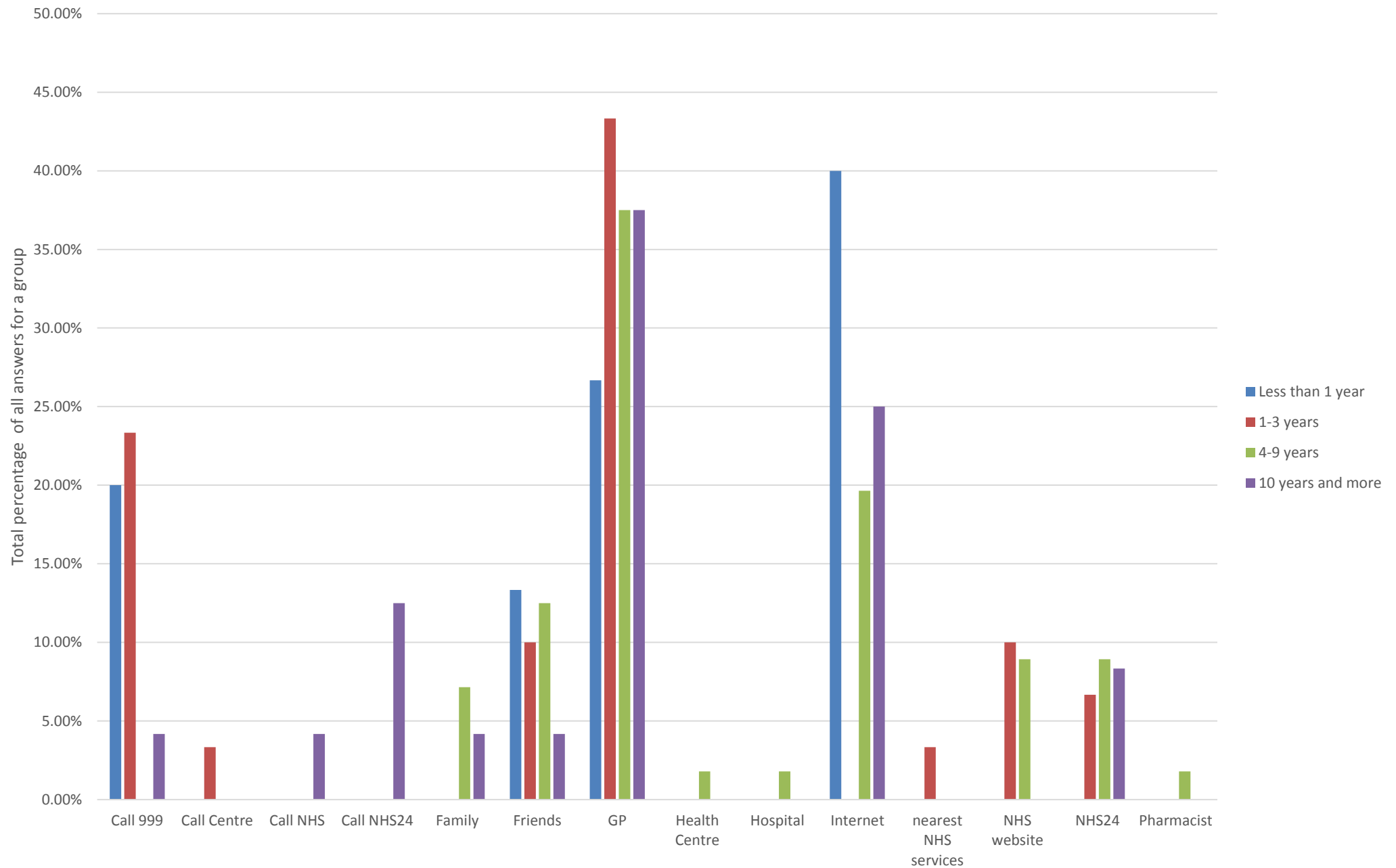
The GP is popular as the first place of contact when sick. Usually more than 35% of people would go straight to the GP, except participants who live here for less than 1 year, but 20% of them would call 999 instead.

These results show that migrants' pathways change over a period of time. Word of mouth is the most important source of people's knowledge, but then typically people start to rely more on GPs.

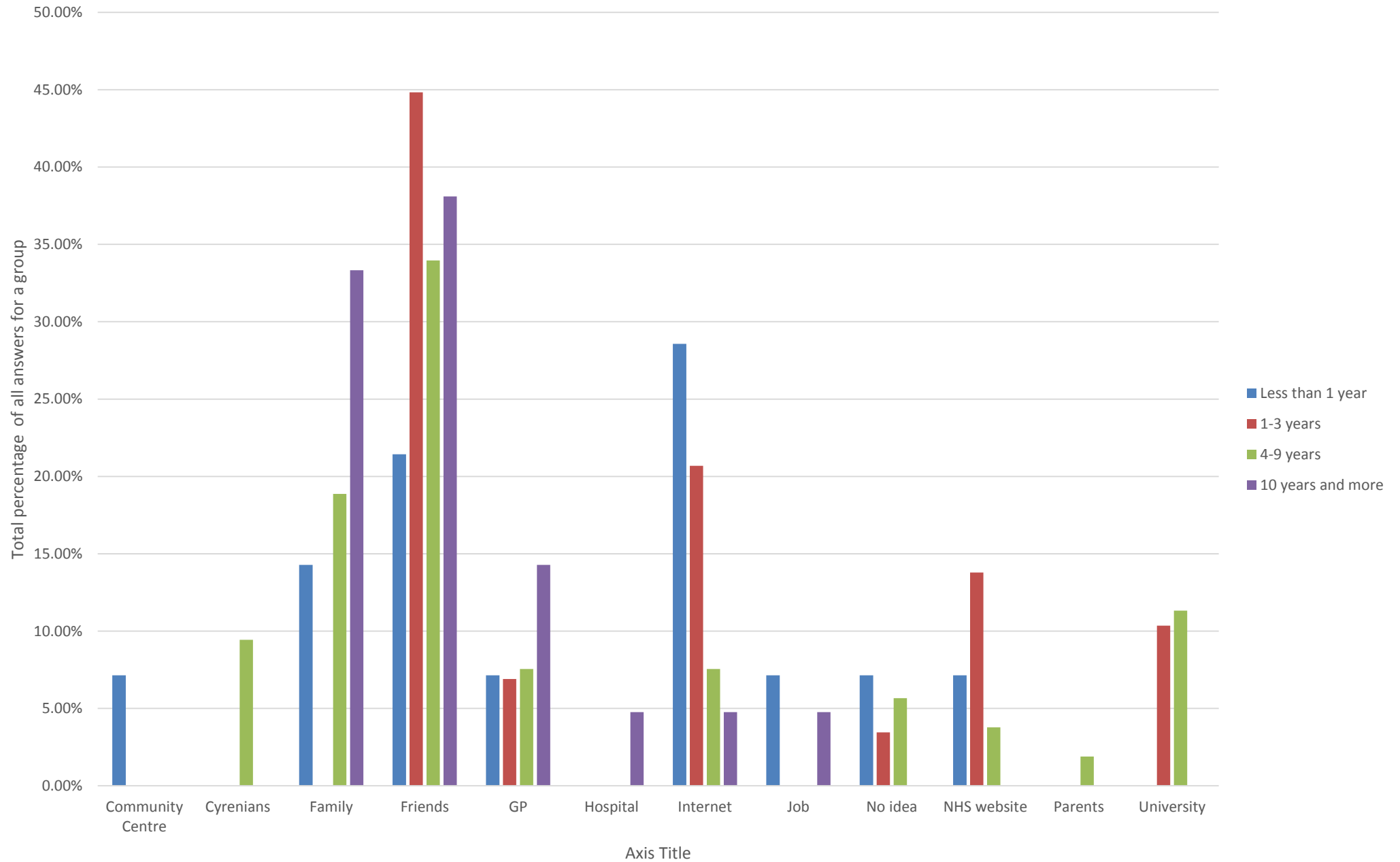
What is surprising is that almost no one would turn to their pharmacist for advice. Furthermore, participants used to search for information on the NHS website, but nowadays a smaller percentage of them would check the NHS page.

Last but not least, participants who have been living here for 10 years and more turned to their families for advice during the first 2-3 months of their stay, groups, which have lived here less than 10 years were less dependent on their families when they first arrived. It is an interesting pattern and there are two possible explanations to it. Firstly, newcomers do not have family in Aberdeen when they arrive. Another option is that the development of modern technologies limited the impact of the word of mouth on the people's knowledge.

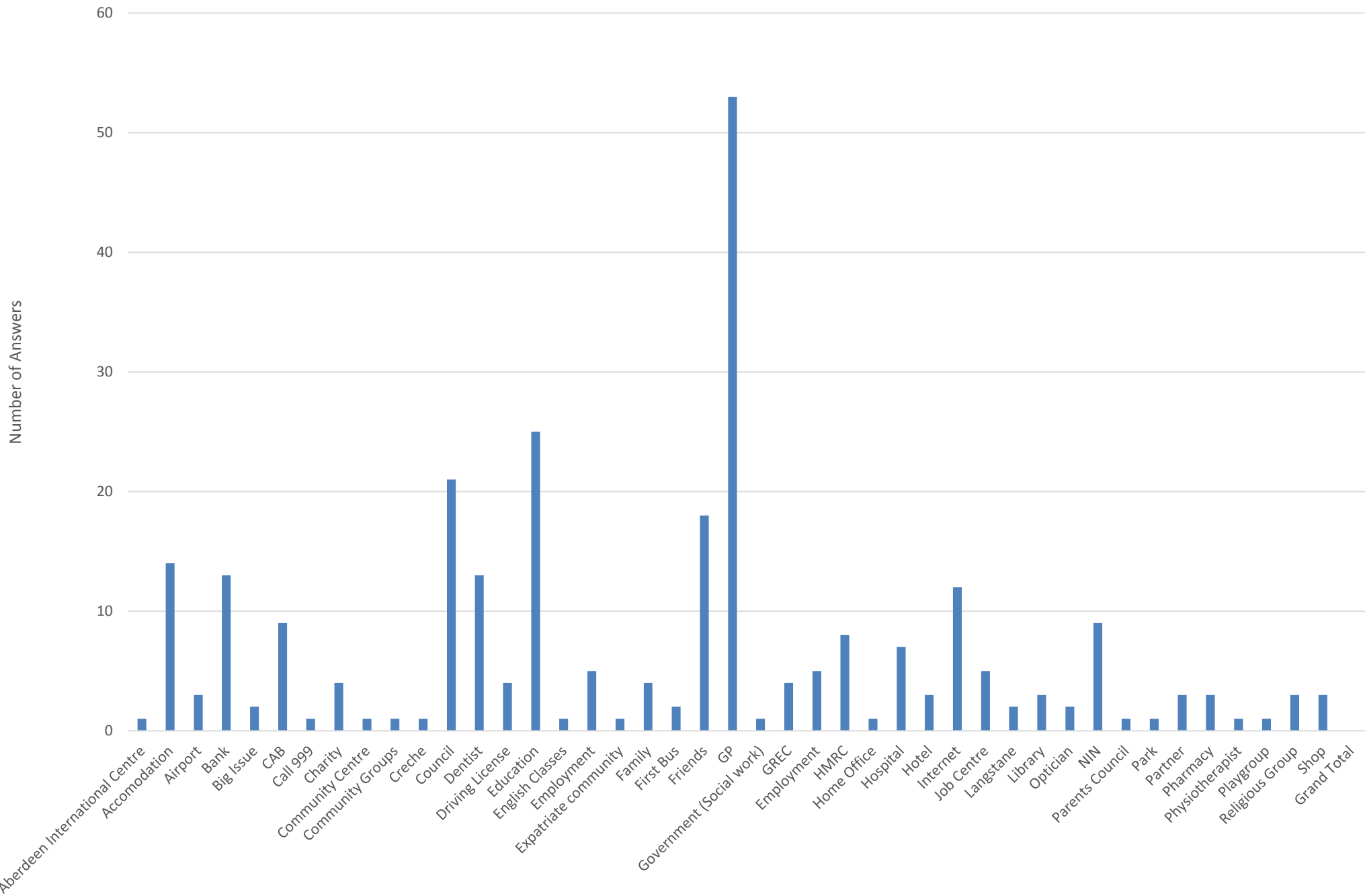
Graph 5: If you become ill and don't know what you should do, how would you find out which service to go to?



Graph 6: During your first 2-3 months in the UK, how did you find out information about which NHS service you should go to when you were ill?



Graph 7: What were your first steps in Aberdeen?





Graph 7 presents the results on the third question. Participants were asked to name up to five different organisations or places they came upon their arrival.

GP is the most popular answer. It shows that health issues are important for newcomers. The other popular organisations are: Council, Education (including College, University and Schools), Smaller numbers of participants mentioned Accommodation, Dentist, HMRC or application for National Insurance Numbers. Last but not least, it is important to note that some local organisations and charities, which provide support were mentioned: Aberdeen International Centre, Big Issue, CAB, GREC, as well as unspecified religious groups, expatriate community organisations and community centres.

The last question suggests which organisations and charities should be approached with the information for newcomers in Aberdeen. It would be important to investigate what kind of information they provide at this stage and how it can be ensured that they are always up to date with new information. These findings could be used to improve the leaflet “Welcome to the North East of Scotland” and identify any new places where the leaflet should be available.