

Experiences being reported by our communities

Purpose

1. This report informs the Board on people are telling us about their experiences of accessing GP services. It further describes the action that our Healthwatch is taking in response to this feedback.

Background

2. Getting an appointment with a GP has always been one of the top three topics that people tell us about. It has been a very inconsistent picture across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, with some areas clearly struggling to meet local demand more than others.
3. During July and August we received 75 pieces of feedback regarding difficulties getting a GP appointment. It was the second highest topic we heard about during that period.
4. The pandemic has had an enormous impact on GP service delivery and on how local people access primary care. Throughout the period GPs have continued to deliver services, with a large increase in telephone and online consultation. Many GPs have also been delivering the Covid vaccination programme which has placed additional pressure on their services.
5. The demand for GP consultations has hugely increased since before the pandemic. Our Local Medical Committee (LMC), that represents GPs, are expressing concern regarding these pressures. Data monitored by the CCG show that less than half of all consultations are online or by telephone.

Key themes

6. The themes below summarise the feedback we received about access the past six months. There is a clearly an equalities aspect to these.
 - Difficulties getting through by telephone.
 - Concerns about whether diagnosis by telephone is as effective as a face to face consultation.
 - Some concerns around repeated prescriptions for medication (e.g. antibiotics).
 - A range of concerns about access for people with hearing loss when telephone triage and consultation is default option. This also applies to people less able to explain their symptoms.
 - Access to ear wax removal in primary care.

7. We continue to hear about confusion regarding access to vaccination, especially for children. And people are expressing concern about how the 'booster' vaccination programme will work.

Action being taken by our Healthwatch

8. We continue to compile the experiences we hear into our evidence base. This intelligence is shared with the CQC primary care team and with the CCG at regular monthly meetings.
9. We have distributed 'GP registration' cards with a wide range of voluntary sector partners. In the past we have received enquiries from people experiencing difficulties getting registered with a GP. The LMC have assisted by issuing a briefing to practices reminding them of the correct registration process.
10. We have resolved a number of queries around vaccination, liaising with CCG and local authority colleagues. Concerns that are unresolved are shared at a national level with Healthwatch England. We will continue to keep our websites updated with accurate and up to date guidance and instructions.
11. We repeated our 2020 GP website review, Giving GP Websites a Check Up¹, where our volunteers audited information available to the public about the practice services. The follow up findings will be reported to the November Board meeting.

Action required by the Board

12. The Board is asked to:
 - Note the report.

Authors

Sandie Smith, CEO

Julie McNeill, Information Manager

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¹ [Giving GP Websites a Check-up | Healthwatch Cambridgeshire](#)
[Giving GP Websites a Check-up | Healthwatch Peterborough](#)