Checklist of essential information

Helping GP surgeries improve their websites

From Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Healthwatch Peterborough

Introduction

This checklist has been put together to help local GP practices make sure their websites give patients the information they need.

It has been co-produced by our Healthwatch volunteers and the Peterborough City College Access Champions – a group of young people who are passionate about improving access for disabled people in and around Peterborough.

And follows on from our audit of 98 GP websites across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and the publication of our '**Giving GP websites a check-up**' report earlier this year. As part of the audit, our volunteers checked how easy it was to find key information that was up to date, clear and easy to understand.

The report - also available in Easy Read - urges GP websites to make it clear and easy for patients to make appointments and complaints. You can read our 'Giving GP websites a check-up' report and see the recommendations.

- [Click here to read](#) it on our Healthwatch Cambridgeshire website

- [Click here to read](#) it on our Healthwatch Peterborough website

Together with the findings from our ['Care during Covid report'](#) (October 2020), we know that patients are asking for up to date, accurate and easy to find information in an accessible way.

We know too that some people lack confidence using technology. By keeping website information simple, you will help keep your patients informed and could reduce the number of phone calls to the surgery.

Give the latest Covid information

Check you are sharing the most up to date information and advice.

Booking appointments

Have a clear section on "How to make an appointment" by phone or online. You might like to consider using a short video of a GP or staff member explaining this and any new ways of working such as remote consultations.

Include the best time to call for different reasons, such as for test results.

Give your patients information about how to get help out of hours, including:

- Contacting the NHS online at 111.nhs.uk/ or calling 111

- You may want to include the British Sign Language link for 111

- The NHS 111 option 2 First Response mental health service

- The local Minor Injuries Unit or Urgent Treatment Centre

Opening hours

Make sure your surgery and pharmacy's opening hours (if you have a pharmacy) are on the website.

Key details

Don't forget to add the surgery phone number and address. This has been missed on some websites.

Keep your website up to date

Out of date information is off-putting and could make patients less trusting of your website.

Make your site easy to navigate with picture links to other areas

Other tips from our volunteers:

- **Easy to read.** Keep the information concise and use clear, easy to understand language. Don't use abbreviations.

- **Long-term conditions.** Provide links to further information for long term conditions. It is important to include information about any changes to treatments during the pandemic.

- **How to register.** Create a section for new patients explaining what the process is.

- **Practice policies.** These should include how to feedback about the surgery and how to make a complaint. Please make sure this information is easy to find.

- **Patient Participation Group.** Explain the group's role, how it aims to benefit patients, how patients can get involved and who to contact. Keep meeting dates, agendas, and other information up to date.

- **Social Prescriber/link worker.** Consider a page or section introducing these professionals. You might like to add a short video of them talking about their role and how to contact them.

List your current staff, their specialities and add a photograph

Many patients like to know who they will be having their appointment with or dealing with at the practice. This is especially important for patients with learning disabilities or autism, who may be anxious about meeting people they are unfamiliar with.

Accessibility

By law, information must be accessible for people with sensory impairments and learning disabilities. And all GP websites should have complied with accessibility standards for public sector organisations since 23 September 2020.

This is part of the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018. For guidance on how to make sure your website or apps are accessible, see this information from the Government: www.gov.uk

About us

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to make sure that those running services, put people at the heart of care.

Our sole purpose is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf.

We listen to what people say about services, and what could be improved. We encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them.

We also help people find the information they need about services in their area.

Contact us

The Maple Centre
6 Oak Drive
Huntingdon
PE29 7HN

Call: 0330 355 1285

Email: enquiries@healthwatchcambspboro.co.uk

Web: www.healthwatchpeterborough.co.uk

Web: www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk

Date: 4 December 2020