



Hanging On

A report on GP Phone Access

About the survey

- Online survey carried out for one month, 25 March-25 April 2021
- 339 respondents, majority living in Reading, plus some residents elsewhere in Berkshire West
- Aimed to measure people's experience of the most used NHS service as lockdown eases
- Major strength of feeling and calls for change expressed by respondents
- Listen on for people's stories in their own words...

People's stories

Note: Actual comments, names changed, computer generated voices, photos by models

Raveen



Nicole



Jake



Gwynn



Zeina

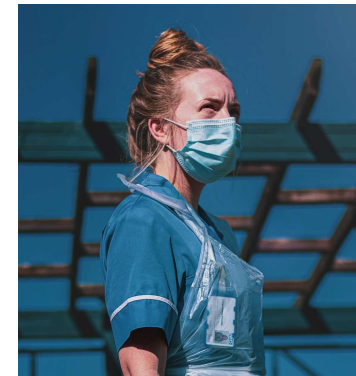


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** 'The telephone is not the best. Patients are not always good at describing symptoms and if the doctor cannot see and observe the patient, things can be missed.'*

Sue



Positive feedback (16% of survey comments)

Kim



Note: Actual comment, name changed,
computer generated voice, photo by model



Key survey findings

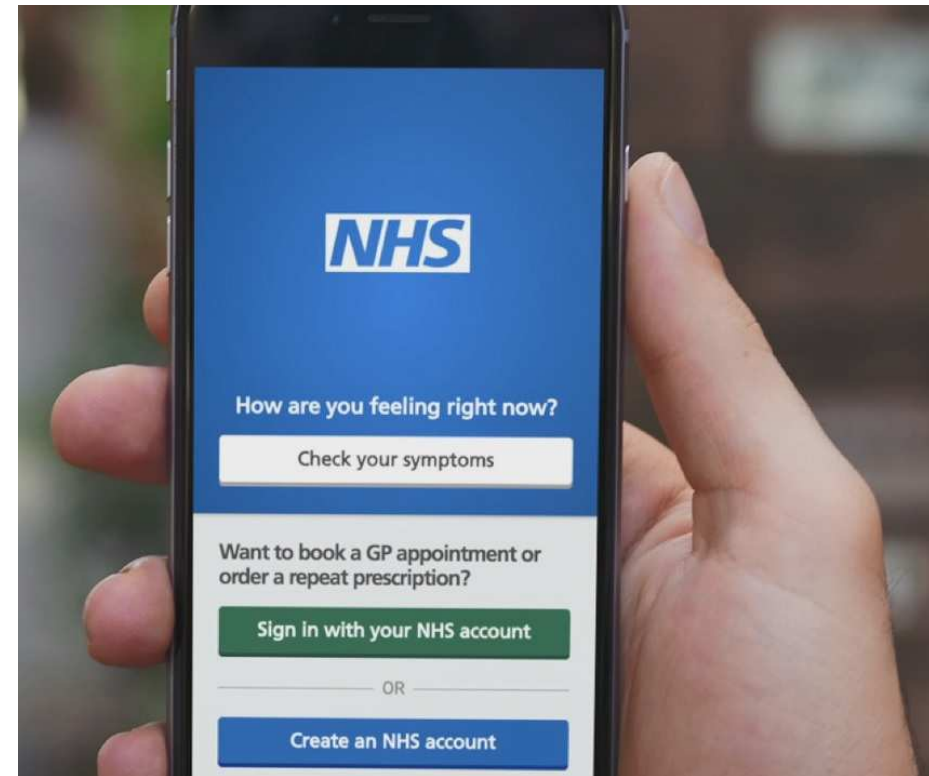
- 67% were put on hold when they first called; 20% got an engaged tone & had to redial
- 46% had their call answered within 10 minutes; 22% waited 10-30 mins; 15%, 30 mins+
- 35% were trying to book a routine appointment; 26% wanted an urgent appointment
- 54% said the experience of calling was difficult; 46% said it was easy
- 51% of people living in central or south Reading postcodes said calling their surgery was difficult, compared with 22% in west Reading and 8% in north Reading
- 221 extra comments were left, mostly about lack of online booking, appointment delays, lack of face-to-face appointments and manner of receptionists

Mixed messages on GP access

- Many surgeries have turned off online booking
- This forces everyone to book by phone
- Phone lines can't cope
- People give up, possibly missing medication, tests, referrals or treatment

BUT

- Pre-Covid, surgeries had national targets to increase online appointment booking
- The NHS App - an online booking tool - is more popular than ever as it stores 'vaccine passports'
- Local commissioners are now recruiting 'digital health champions' to encourage online access to services and health advice



What patients want

'Please bring back being able to book appointments online. When telephone appointments are given, no time slot is specific so you have to wait by your phone for almost 12 hours and if you don't pick up, you've missed your appointment.'

'Doctors' surgeries have been impossible to contact since coronavirus and I feel it's been used as an excuse. Coronavirus should not take priority over every other type of illness.'

'Telephone access is ok if necessary, but face-to-face meetings are preferable. These allow the GP to gain a better understanding of the problem and so give the patient greater confidence in the recommended next steps.'

Thank you for listening

Any questions or comments?

Contact Us:



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