

## Access to GP-led services in Berkshire West – Project Summary

### Overview and project rationale

Across Berkshire West, the three Healthwatch joined together to produce a health and social care survey which asked local people what matters most to them. The results showed us that GP access, and quality of GP services, were their top priorities.

It is well known that GP practices are extremely stretched nationally as well as locally. However, what we have heard locally is that people registered with local GPs are not aware of new ways of working and therefore their expectations do not match what they might experience when contacting their GP practice or seeking help.

Our project will focus on exploring this further to understand what the public do know, where the gaps are and how communication can improve to address these.

The project is also supported by the following documents.

[Berkshire West Health and Social Care Priorities 2023 -2024](#)

[Healthwatch England GP Recovery Plan](#)

[Healthwatch Wokingham Borough Patient Views July 2022](#)

### Project Aims

To support GP surgeries to improve their communication with the public, thereby reducing the number of complaints received about access to GP-led services.

To increase public awareness of other options available for help and self-help, including the NHS App, thereby reducing phone waiting times.

### We will meet our aims through:

- Exploring the public understanding of what to expect when contacting their GP practice regarding the new ways of working.
- Listening to how the public are receiving information from their surgery and what they would like to see improved or changed.

- Increasing awareness of other options available to seek help with their wellbeing.
- Presenting our findings to the GP practices in Berkshire West via the Primary Care Alliance, PCN Managers Forum and BOB ICB Primary Care Manager to share what people think about communication of key information and make recommendations as appropriate.
- Following up our recommendations after 6 months to find out whether our aims have been achieved.

## What is the new way of working?


### GP-led services






- Triage when appointments are booked with trained person
- Same day appointments booked early morning
- Telephone access and cloud telephony – call back function (phased implementation)
- Phone / online appointments
- Appointments with other healthcare professionals such as paramedic or pharmacist
- Use of online systems such as eConsult
- Use of the NHS App
- Not seeing the same GP each time
- Named team or GP, especially for long term/chronic/complex conditions

### Choosing the right service

## Stay well


Guide to help you choose the right service for you and your NHS




Self-care	Pharmacy	GP	Minor Injuries	A&E/999
<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Hangover. Cough. Colds. Grazes. Small cuts. Sore throat.</p>  <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Self-care is the best choice to treat minor illnesses and injuries.</p> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">A large range of common illnesses and injuries can be treated at home simply with over-the-counter medicines and plenty of rest.</p>	<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Diarrhoea. Earache. Painful cough. Sticky eye. Teething. Rashes.</p>  <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Pharmacists advise and treat a range of symptoms. This can avoid unnecessary trips to your GP or A&amp;E department, and save time.</p> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">No appointment is needed and most pharmacies have private consulting areas.</p>	<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Arthritis. Asthma. Back pain. Vomiting. Stomach ache.</p>  <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">GPs and nurses have an excellent understanding of general health issues and can deal with a whole range of health problems.</p>	<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Cuts. Sprains. Strain. Bruises. Itchy rash. Minor burns.</p>  <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Minor Injuries Units, Walk-in Centres and Urgent Care Centres provide non-urgent services for a range of conditions.</p> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">They are usually led by nurses and an appointment is not necessary.</p>	<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Severe bleeding. Breathing difficulties. Severe chest pain. Loss of consciousness.</p>  <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">A&amp;E or 999 are best used in an emergency for serious or life-threatening situations.</p>

**NHS 111**

If you're feeling unwell, unsure or if you want health advice and guidance for non-life threatening emergencies call NHS 111.




24 hours a day  
7 days a week



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24 hours a day  
7 days a week

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Produced in-house by the communications team for the two NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups in Devon

## Methodology

- Speak to PPGs.
- Conduct focus groups:
  - General face to face.
  - Targeted face to face, e.g. people with learning disabilities, people with mental health difficulties, older people.
  - Online (minimum of one per area).

We aim to speak to at least 100 people per locality.

- Request information from all GP practices on their services which will be used to check what people know about their surgery and raise awareness of how practices now work.
- Seek baseline information for previous six months from practices / PCN / PCA then re-request 6 months post-project:
  - Number of complaints and concerns received that cite appointments and access to services as the main issue.
  - Phone waiting times.
  - Percentage of patients signed up the NHS App.

## Communications

We will seek participants through a broad range of traditional and online channels including:

- GP Surgeries / PCNs
- PPGs
- Voluntary Sector Organisations
- Primary Care Manager at BOB ICB
- Health and Wellbeing Boards
- Local Authorities
- Media (newspapers, social media, radio)

## Timescales

September to November 2023	Networking / Comms / Focus Groups
December 2023	Data analysis
January 2024	Draft report to PCNs and BOB ICB
February 2024	Publish final report
August/September 2024	Re-request data and ascertain changes made as a result of the project