

Accessing GP Services

A report by Healthwatch Enfield



September 2021

“It has been a nightmare trying to get through.

A recent example being when I phoned I was 19th in a queue, after 20 minutes I was down to 13th in the queue, 10 minutes later I was still 13th and then got cut off.”

Local Resident

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1. Introduction

Healthwatch Enfield welcomes the opportunity to report on what residents are telling us about their experiences of using primary care.

As a local Healthwatch our role is to ensure that local people are actively involved in shaping the health and care services that they use, and that they have a say about the health and care services available to them. We also monitor local provision and hold commissioners and service providers to account for the quality of locally publicly funded health and care services.

2. Background

How Primary Care was provided needed to change fast and drastically during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Usual ways of accessing services were suspended and new urgent changes were introduced.

The commitment and dedication of our health colleagues during these incredibly challenging times has been unquestionable and admirable. The GPs that we have spoken to often felt tired and overworked but have continued to put in long hours, including now running vaccination clinics during weekends. They have been dedicated to providing the best level of care possible to their patients in incredibly difficult times.

Primary Care and the local GP is the front door to health, it is the opportunity for early intervention and prevention. The pandemic has put considerable strain on all health services, but local people are particularly impacted by the changes at their local GP surgery.

North Central London ICP for Enfield requested local Healthwatch to provide some context for patient experience in primary care to support the Access to Services, Recovery and Innovation workstream as it considers how services are being provided 'post' pandemic in what are still very challenging times. This report will support the initial discussions and it is anticipated will support further consideration of patients experiences.

3. Methodology

Healthwatch Enfield capture and collate the patient experiences, enquiries and requests for information from local people. These are captured over the telephone, via the website and at outreach and community engagement events. This is not a systematic sample of the Enfield population but does reflect the experiences of many local people.

In addition, our volunteers completed an audit of all local GP websites against a common set of criteria as reflected in the analysis.

4. Strengths & Limitations

As per the methodology and with resource available the experiences are those of people already aware of and able to contact their local Healthwatch. Healthwatch Enfield has a large circulation for its newsletter (6000) as well as connections across local community organisations so this has supported the capturing of patient experience.

Thanks to our dedicated volunteers Healthwatch Enfield were able to do an audit of all GP websites, this was focused on the information provided on the site and GP registration.

5. Executive Summary of Findings

From April - August 2021 we collected the feedback of 390 local people.

Experiences have been methodically reviewed, with access related themes identified, and examined to establish what has worked well, and what could have worked better.

This is a summary of key findings - see sections 6 - 7 for the analysis in full.

Key Findings

Telephones

- Compared with online, people are three times more likely to book through the phone.
- Having to call-in at certain times (such as 8am or 3pm) leads to congestion.
- Waits of several minutes (or hours) are reported and many people are cut off.
- Some people have been entirely unsuccessful in making contact.

Registration

- A minority of people report a 'smooth and simple' process.
- Issues cited include an excessive burden of proof, delays, and a lack of information.

Administration

- Accounts of errors are varied, such as incorrect booking, messages not passed on, missing paperwork and out-of-date medical records.
- Those reporting errors say that reception staff have acted swiftly to resolve.

Medication/Repeat Prescriptions

- Many say their medication has been changed without notification or consultation.
- Prescriptions are not always passed to the pharmacy and delays are also reported.
- Those using online services for prescriptions appreciate the convenience.

Waiting Lists

- A large number of callers are simply told to 'call the next day' if lists are full.
- While some people are seen promptly, a significant number are not.

Appointment Booking

- Triage for appointments by reception staff is a cause of discomfort & inconvenience.
- Some people with apparently good reason to see a doctor have been denied access.
- Those making contact by phone are sometimes advised to use the online form.
- While most feedback is critical, we also receive praise for supportive staff members.

Key Findings (continued)

Online Systems

- The convenience & versatility of online systems is valued, with varied examples given.
- While some people receive a prompt response after submission, others do not.
- The PATCHS system is easy to use and reliable, however it is not always active.

Advice/Information

- We receive similar volumes of positive and negative feedback, with some people feeling well informed, and others not.
- Receiving test results can be a particular difficulty.

Staff Attitude

- While feedback is mixed, we receive accounts of staff ending calls prematurely.

Support

- On booking, receiving test results, referrals and hospital follow-up support, mixed reviews are given.

User Involvement

- Many people have felt involved in their treatment and care, with accounts of being listened to, respected and given options.
- A lack of in-person appointments is reported, including for children.
- Interpreters have not always been provided, in one case despite 'repeated requests'.

Waiting Times

- The majority of comments are complimentary, with punctual treatment reported.
- We also hear about delays, and call-back slots that are excessively wide.

In July 2021 Healthwatch Enfield volunteers conducted an accessibility review of the borough's GP practices.

GP Accessibility Review

We found that:

- The vast majority are confirmed to be accepting new patients.
- It is not possible to register online at 20% of practices.
- 61% do not have online information about interpreters.
- While 80% are confirmed to have a Patient Participation Group, we are unsure as to how active they may be (online content is often lacking, or outdated).

6. Analysis of Feedback

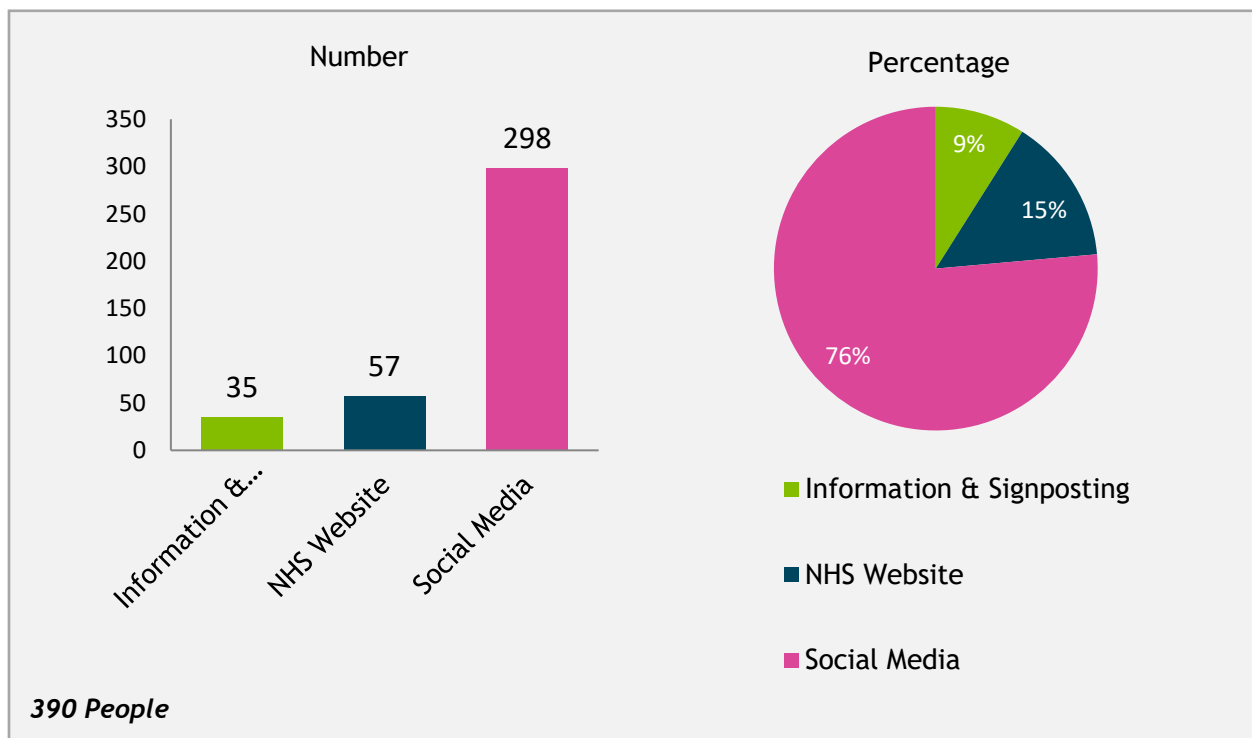
From April - August 2021 we collected the qualitative feedback of 390 local people.

Experiences have been methodically reviewed, with access related themes identified, and examined to establish what has worked well, and what could have worked better.

It is worth noting that while around 90% of feedback is impartial, 10% constitutes enquiries made directly to Healthwatch Enfield - by residents who are largely unsatisfied with the services received.

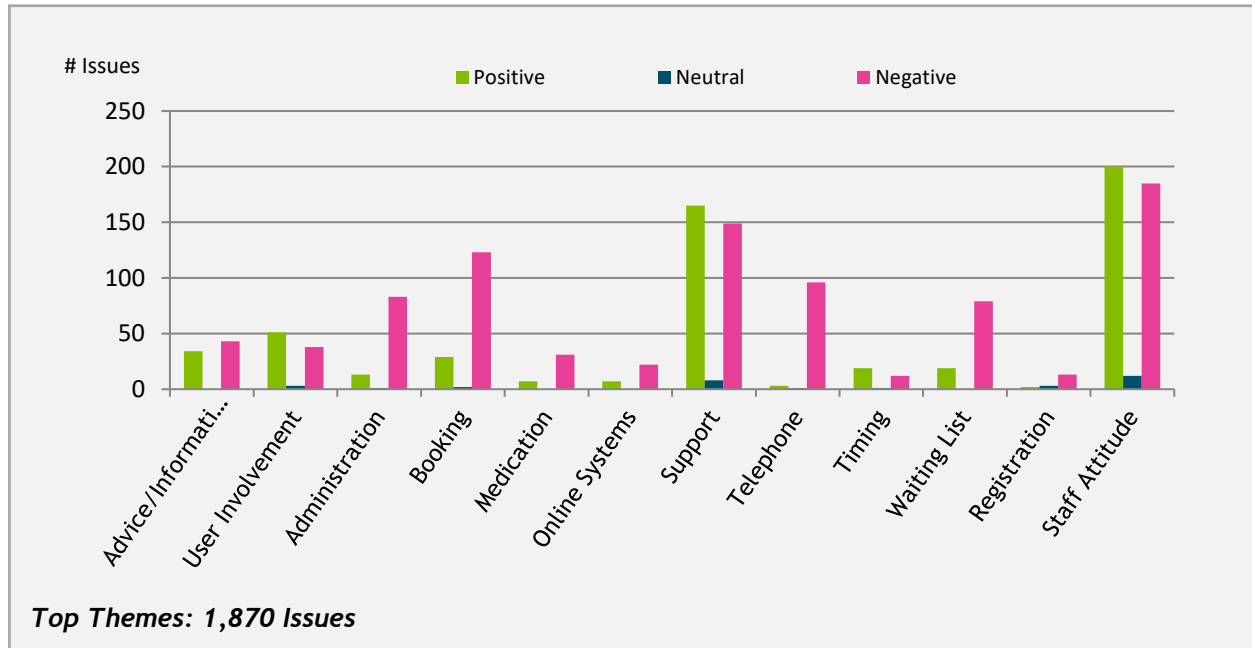
We recommend you also view the [2021 GP Patient Survey](#), hosted by Ipsos MORI.

6.1 Source of Feedback



Three quarters of feedback (76%) was collected from social media channels and 15% from the NHS website. Information and signposting (enquiries made directly to Healthwatch Enfield) accounts for around a tenth of feedback (9%).

6.2 Identified Themes



We reviewed all feedback to identify themes, with positive, neutral or negative sentiment applied.

When ranking themes by ratio of positive feedback, it is clear that people are least satisfied with telephone access, which is just 3% positive as a topic. Administration, Medication, Waiting Lists, Booking & Online Systems are also clearly negative themes.

6.2.1 Themes by Ratio of Positive Feedback

	# Issues Identified	% Positive Ratio
Telephone	100	3%
Registration	18	11%
Administration	97	13%
Medication/Repeat Prescriptions	38	18%
Waiting List	98	19%
Appointment Booking	154	19%
Online Systems	29	24%
Advice/Information	77	44%
Staff Attitude	397	50%
Support	322	51%
User Involvement	92	55%
Waiting Times	32	59%

6.3 Access Related Themes

In this section, we look in detail at themes relating to service access, with positive and negative examples given.

6.3.1 Telephone

As a topic, telephone is 3% positive overall. 100 people mention the telephone while just 29 cite online systems.

A requirement by practices to call at certain times undoubtedly leads to congestion on the lines. While some people have been able to get in touch without difficulty, the vast majority describe long waits on the phone, and in many cases then being disconnected, by the system, or reportedly by staff. The accuracy of queuing systems is also called into question - some people have remained stuck in certain positions, and one person remained in the queue after the practice had closed. The inability to leave messages is an additional frustration.

Accounts of attempting to make contact for hours, or even days are not uncommon and some practices are reported to have had no working connection - for weeks.

Selected Feedback

Positive

“Was notified of the need to make a shingles vaccination appointment. Easy to do on the phone with friendly helpful person.”

“Got through on the phone quickly and dealt with efficiently.”

“The only difficult thing is there is always a long wait time on the telephone but it tells you what number you are in the queue and the receptionists are very helpful.”

Negative

“You’re only allowed to book appointments at 8am or 3pm for some reason, if you call before or after that they say they don’t take appointments.”

“It has been a nightmare trying to get through. A recent example being when I phoned I was 19th in a queue, after 20 minutes I was down to 13th in the queue, 10 minutes later I was still 13th and then got cut off.”

“They make you wait on the phone for over an hour and hang up on you.”

“I’ve been calling for 3 days - I have spent 7 hours on the phone.”

“For over 2 weeks now the surgery hasn’t had a working phone line.”

“Called them and I was 1st in the queue for 25 minutes.”

“I have been the 14th caller on hold for 1 hour.”

“Waited on the line for over half an hour, being told I’m second in line. At 6:39pm I check to see what time they close! 6pm!!!!”

“I tried calling the surgery 4 times and nobody answered and there was no option to leave a message.”

When looking at experiences by Primary Care Network (PCN), just one receives positive feedback.

6.3.1a Telephone by Primary Care Network

	# Issues Identified	% Positive Ratio
Enfield Care Network	37	0%
Enfield South West	9	0%
Enfield Unity	41	0%
West Enfield Collaborative	6	50%

6.3.2 Registration

As a topic, registration is 11% positive overall. We hear about a ‘smooth and simple’ process, and also about delays, and having to provide an excessive amount of identification. One person has been de-registered without notification, and another, who moved practices says their medical records have not been transferred.

Selected Feedback

Positive

“I popped into this surgery today with my forms to register as a new patient. My experience was one of professionalism. Both members of staff were polite and courteous.”

“It was simple to register and I have had two appointments so far.”

Negative

“More than 30 minutes waited behind the line, rude receptionist, made up policies against the NHS rules (asking for 3 proof of address and passport) 3 weeks behind registering new patients and the list goes on and on. Think again before registering with this surgery.”

“The caller’s father registered with a GP practice 3 months ago. They have asked the surgery on many occasions if they can give him his NHS number, but they keep being told it has not been issued yet. The caller wants their father to have the Covid vaccine and this is delaying the process.”

“They wiped my husband off the system (they said they sent a letter home to see if he still wanted to be registered there, we received no such letter). We now tried to re-register him (as our household is all registered there) called on numerous occasions asking if he has been updated to the system to which they replied there’s a backlog, understandable.. called again for them to say “we don’t understand where the registration form could be”, basically they’ve lost them!! I am in the process of moving our household to another surgery.”

“I was thrown off their books as I changed address. Several months later, they still have not sent my records to my new GP.”

1 PCN under-performs the average positive ratio of 11%. Enfield Care Network receives no comments about registration.

6.3.2a Registration by Primary Care Network

	# Issues Identified	% Positive Ratio
Enfield Unity	7	0%
West Enfield Collaborative	3	33%
Enfield South West	2	50%

6.3.3 Administration

As a topic, administration is 13% positive overall. Examples of administrative errors and issues are varied, such as appointments booked incorrectly (or not at all), messages not passed on from reception to clinicians, missing paperwork and out of date medical records.

We also receive accounts of errors corrected swiftly.

Selected Feedback

Positive

“I also had to call the reception at one point because my name on the NHS records was spelt wrong, and the lady on the phone very kindly helped me out and fixed the issue within 3 minutes of calling. Great service!”

Negative

“My kids were booked for vaccinations and they told us that only one of them was booked.”

“They keep sending me to the wrong places for doctors appointments.”

“The reception staff are terrible. They consistently mess up appointments, either not booking them in correctly or simply not booking them in at all! On many occasions I've turned up to be told that I don't have an appointment! Perhaps staff could be reminded that some people take time out of their working days to attend appointments.”

“Issues which should be managed by a GP are being left to the staff who don't pass on messages to the appropriate doctor.”

“Can't organise referrals properly, paperwork gets lost regularly and there's honestly very little care given from the front office staff.”

“They were informed we have moved. However, we still receive reminders for various jabs such as Flu and Covid. We believe that they kept us on their books despite the fact that we have moved out.”

“We were very happy with everything until our kids needed immunisation. The records have disappeared somewhere...”

2 PCNs under-perform the average positive ratio of 13%.

6.3.3a Administration by Primary Care Network

	# Issues Identified	% Positive Ratio
Enfield Care Network	22	9%
Enfield Unity	37	11%
Enfield South West	15	20%
West Enfield Collaborative	6	50%

6.3.4 Medication/Repeat Prescriptions

As a topic, medication is 18% positive overall. In some cases, prescriptions have not been passed from practice to pharmacy, and in others, medication has been changed, reduced or stopped without the patient's knowledge or opportunity to discuss in person. Delays are also reported.

For repeat prescriptions, the online system is complimented for its convenience.

Selected Feedback

Positive

"I have a rare autoimmune disorder and sometimes I need medication ASAP. If I run out, they always try their best to get me what I need."

"Over the years, I have seen them upgrade / offer more tech solutions to their services, which I do prefer than having to wait in a long telephone queue for everything or having to attend the surgery (ie; being able to order repeat prescriptions online)."

Negative

"I ordered a repeat prescription and after 4 days I went to the nominated pharmacy to collect my medicines, but I was told you don't have any prescription to collect."

"They always ruin my prescriptions, forget to put them in and complain when I get annoyed."

"My doctor changed a medication without seeing me, and then when I became unwell she then changed a different tablet dosage, again without seeing me."

"Doctors prescribing antibiotics without seeing patients (child) in person."

"They drove me literally to tears, they decide to stop your medication without any notification, and then tell you to speak to a doctor to reinstate it, problem is you can never see a doctor."

"Ordered a repeat prescription via the NHS app, waited over a week and still wasn't approved."

2 PCNs under-perform the average positive ratio of 18% and 1 receives no positive feedback.

6.3.4a Medication by Primary Care Network

	# Issues Identified	% Positive Ratio
Enfield Care Network	10	0%
Enfield South West	8	13%
Enfield Unity	10	30%
West Enfield Collaborative	4	75%

6.3.5 Waiting Lists

As a topic, waiting lists is 19% positive overall. Those making contact are commonly told that 'all appointments are gone' and having to call again the next day is a cause of frustration - and may result in the same outcome.

While some people have received timely appointments, a much larger number experience waits of days (including for a reported emergency) or longer. Some people have not been successful at all in obtaining appointments - including for their children.

Selected Feedback

Positive

"I have received all treatments and medical attention immediately from the doctor."

"Sure, you have to call early as the phones get busy, but details are taken quickly, call-backs are received the same day, and appointments are also made promptly depending on the severity of the issue."

Negative

"You call them midday for an appointment, they're fully booked."

"I waited 53 minutes on hold only to be told there were no appointments, I am dealing with an issue that has been ongoing for 5+ years now and still have had very little done. I just wanted help before I lose my job through illness."

"A struggle to get through by phone and when you do after an hour told to call back in the morning."

"Having to wait for a phone call appointment nearly a month."

"I've been in pain and trying for days to get to see a doctor but got told I have to wait a week to get a telephone consultation, shocking!"

"This GP Practice is a joke, they never have available appointments even for children."

"I joined the surgery in April and I have not been able to get an appointment no matter how many times I have called."

1 PCN under-performs the average positive ratio of 19%.

6.3.5a Waiting Lists by Primary Care Network

	# Issues Identified	% Positive Ratio
Enfield Care Network	25	8%
Enfield Unity	47	19%
Enfield South West	10	30%
West Enfield Collaborative	6	83%

6.3.6 Appointment Booking

As a topic, appointment booking is 19% positive overall. Triage for appointments by reception staff is a cause of discomfort and inconvenience, and some people, with apparently good reason to see a doctor have been denied access. In one case, we hear a receptionist has prescribed medication for a child.

One person says that constant changes to the booking system has resulted in confusion, while another - advised to complete the online form 'several times' says that it simply advises to call reception.

While most feedback is critical of booking processes, we also receive appreciation for supportive and accommodating staff, and extended opening hours.

Selected Feedback

Positive

"The receptionist did go out of her way for me to ensure I had a callback from the doctor in these difficult times."

"Warm & welcoming environment, friendly and helpful staff. Fantastic service delivered by all. Very reassuring when arranging appointments and built to our needs."

"They also do evening appointments for those that work and you can also book appointments on line in advance."

Negative

"Previously I rung at 8 only to be told to ring at 4. No checking of the reason why or if it's urgent."

"The caller contacted their GP surgery to get an emergency appointment but was told by the receptionist that her condition was not considered an emergency. The caller was not happy that the receptionist was making decisions about their medical issues."

“The caller has been waiting over 6 weeks for a letter to help with their benefits. They have been blocked at each point. They have been trying to see the GP who stated that they would have it ready, but can’t get an appointment to see them.”

“Have had good experiences with the doctors and nurses, however the receptionist has recently tried to diagnose and prescribe Calpol to help my 6 month old instead of giving us an appointment with the doctor. Non-medical staff should not be trying to diagnose and prescribe to patients.”

“They have introduced so many different ways of booking in appointments that I just can’t keep up anymore. Gives me terrible anxiety every time I have to call this horrendous place.”

“Rude and very unhelpful at reception these people seem to forget 99% of the phone calls they receive are from people who actually need some sort of help or advice, so to just to be palmed off to fill out an online form for the 8th time which once completed tells you to call your doctors surgery is just an absolute mess.”

1 PCN under-performs the average positive ratio of 19%.

6.3.6a Appointment Booking by Primary Care Network

	# Issues Identified	% Positive Ratio
Enfield Care Network	42	10%
Enfield Unity	59	22%
Enfield South West	20	25%
West Enfield Collaborative	14	50%

6.3.7 Online Systems

As a topic, online systems is 24% positive overall. The convenience and versatility of online systems is praised - with functions mentioned including prescriptions, blood test and x-ray forms, ability to attach photos and to describe symptoms in writing, and automated appointment reminders.

Some people receive a prompt response after submission, while others comment on waiting days - and one person says there is a requirement, like the phone system, to complete the form by 8am.

It is also noted that at times, the online system does not fully cater for emergency situations and one person comments on the complexity of the online form itself.

Selected Feedback

Positive

"I needed to find out about my prescription, blood forms and chest x-ray forms. I clicked onto the little blue box eConsult and got started. Very easy to complete, possibly 2 mins. Then the rest followed so smoothly. My query was dealt within 24 hours."

"I have used the eConsult service since the pandemic and I do find it convenient, being able to explain the medical issue in my own words and if appropriate, include photos for the GP to review."

"I like the e-consultation form as texts are sent to remind me when my telephone appointment with the doctor is."

Negative

"They don't even pick up the phone, if a patient wants to sort things out online - as suggested by the GP practice - it takes 3 days or longer."

"The request app is rubbish all online but you still have to be on the app by 8 am because by 8.10 all appointments are gone."

"I have used the app before but sometimes you need to speak to a person regarding some emergencies."

"Now spent all day trying to fill out an e-consultation appointment. Quite frankly easier to crack the De Vinci code than complete it. It's beyond frustrating. The website is not user friendly or fit for purpose."

15 people mention the PATCHS online system specifically. While convenient, easy to use and responsive, some complain it is not always accessible. Several people say that despite getting through on the phone, reception staff have directed them to use the PATCHS system (though one comment is received to the contrary).

Selected Feedback

Positive

"The new online PATCHS system makes their services much more accessible."

"I went online last Saturday to book an appointment with my GP only to discover they were using a new system called PATCHS. I was asked to answer 4 simple questions about my symptoms, the times I am available to chat to the GP and my expectations from the GP with regard to these non urgent symptoms. I received an email from the GP first thing Monday morning offering me a telephone appointment on Thursday morning at a time that worked for me. She already knew what I wanted so we only needed to have a short but productive conversation. Time saved all round. Win-win as far as I am concerned."

“I have never had a receptionist more helpful and actually listened to what I had to say and helped me there and then rather than to make a new request via PATCHS.”

Negative

“The Patchs system is a joke that patients have very little chance of accessing.”

“Register and try to use their on-line PATCHS service and it says they are currently unavailable for requests. And it is within their opening times.”

“I called two days ago to inform the surgery I was pregnant and was told to register with "patch" and book an appointment. This is the second day in the morning I have tried to book with this ridiculous online form and still not getting anywhere. I'm just so tired of this service.”

“You can never see a doctor, speak to one or leave a message even on their diabolical patchs system!!”

“Called in and left messages through PATCHS. No one responds.”

“When I called the reception, they said write over patch. I wrote it - and it was not sent. I spoke to the doctor and he said it is not my field.”

3 PCNs under-perform the average positive ratio of 24%.

6.3.7a Online Systems by Primary Care Network

	# Issues Identified	% Positive Ratio
West Enfield Collaborative	2	0%
Enfield Care Network	8	13%
Enfield South West	5	20%
Enfield Unity	12	42%

6.3.8 Advice/Information

As a topic, advice/information is 44% positive overall. We receive many accounts of helpful and informative staff, of all categories, while a similar volume of feedback suggests that staff have given incomplete or inaccurate information, and have not been supportive with enquiries. As well as a lack of detail on medication changes, many people say they have struggled to obtain test results.

Selected Feedback

Positive

“Always responsive, professional, caring and most of all available for any query big or small.”

“Even the manager helped me with my enquiry... thank you very much. Outstanding work.”

“The receptionists are always very helpful, they sort out my queries and give me updates.”

“I feel so secure and reassured and all my questions get a reply and throughout the pandemic I could reach the surgery so easily.”

“Very helpful staff. Doctors are all very knowledgeable and professional and give good advice. They take time to listen and really care. They take the patient's wishes into consideration and offer choices. The practice is very well organised.”

Negative

“I decided to email the practice, so I wouldn't have to bear the impatience and agitation of reception - I got one reply of four words... not even answering my question, so when I replied back stating this and reiterating my question, I never got a response. I sent the email a further two times and it has been 10 days... still no response!”

“Went for my blood test and was turned away as I hadn't completed a form (which I knew absolutely nothing about).”

“Misinformation given by reception staff - insistent and without empathy.”

“These receptionists are rude, and dismissive and their attention to detail is appalling, often missing things.”

“Doctors don't follow up on test results and leave you in the dark.”

1 PCN under-performs the average positive ratio of 44%.

6.3.8a Advice/information by Primary Care Network

	# Issues Identified	% Positive Ratio
Enfield Unity	22	32%
Enfield Care Network	17	47%
Enfield South West	21	48%
West Enfield Collaborative	10	80%

6.3.9 Staff Attitude

As a topic, staff attitude is 50% positive overall. Patients and carers give examples of empathetic and respectful reception staff and doctors. We also hear that reception staff have ended calls sooner than expected, been unhelpful with booking and repeat prescriptions, and some visiting the practice observe a lack of focus.

Selected Feedback

Positive

“I have been with this GP for a long time now, I have never ever had any problems. The staff are always helpful and try to cater to what I need or ask for. I am a little bit of a complex patient unfortunately but they always look after me with care and consideration.”

“Drs and receptionists are all polite well mannered, very helpful understanding.”

“Admin staff caring just as much as the doctors and they deserve a great big thank you as well because they have been working so hard to make all of us happy.”

“Have been with this surgery for many many years, have always found all staff in this surgery to be extremely helpful and accommodating. As long as you treat them with respect they will respect you.”

“All I can say is how wonderful the practice have been at helping my mum and how easy they have made it for me too. I have to do a lot remotely at present but they have made it so easy and have made my mum feel at ease and treated with total respect.”

Negative

“Waited 16 minutes to speak to a receptionist, only to be hung up on after 30 seconds abruptly. I still had questions to ask, and was told goodbye, before the call was ended. My issue has not been fully resolved, I needed more information and was about to ask more based on our short conversation.”

“The receptionist on the front desk most mornings, is rude, obnoxious and unhelpful with everything from an appointment to repeat script.”

“Every time I need to speak to a doctor I feel as though I am bothering the receptionists for asking for help. They are most condescending and rude considering their audience.”

“When I've been into the surgery I have watched the reception staff have conversations amongst themselves and ignore what is actually going on around them.”

“Rude receptionist, actually caught one on her mobile to her boyfriend whilst phones were ringing off the hook.”

“I asked the doctor to arrange a consultation. They called as I was explaining that I have tried several times a verruca treatment, he mentioned that I have no other option but to try again as they cannot help and he just hung the phone up as I was in mid sentence.”

2 PCNs under-perform the average positive ratio of 50%.

6.3.9a Staff Attitude by Primary Care Network

	# Issues Identified	% Positive Ratio
Enfield Care Network	102	46%
Enfield South West	68	49%
Enfield Unity	148	51%
West Enfield Collaborative	57	75%

6.3.10 Support

As a topic, support is 51% positive overall. On booking, receiving test results, referrals and hospital follow-up support, mixed reviews are given.

Selected Feedback

Positive

“I'd like to thank the doctors for their ongoing support and guidance this month when two of us in my household have had fairly severe Covid symptoms. We were provided with an oximeter and readings have been monitored by a very compassionate and professional care coordinator who has maintained contact with us almost every day.”

“I think this practice went really above and beyond what I would have expected in terms of follow-up. Really impressed.”

“Brilliant reception staff, they always try to be helpful and polite. They often go out of their way to help! I am very pleased with doctors and nurses. Thank you all for everything!”

“I have in the last 18 months been struggling with my special needs daughter who has been having huge problems both mentally and physically but it's been made helpful with the support I have received from GPs at this practice - their help has been immense so I would like to say a big thankyou to them also certain receptionists thankyou.”

Negative

“I called the surgery to speak about my blood test and the receptionist hanged the phone up on me. Wasn't helpful.”

“I feel awfully sick and have done for over a week and still cannot get an appointment to be seen. I've been given a very short course of antibiotics over the phone, by a different doctor, without a sample being tested. Those are finished and I still feel the same. Just throwing drugs at me without finding the cause.”

“They have prescribed me the wrong medication (dangerously wrong prescriptions) they don’t take notice on what’s wrong with you.”

“Very disappointed they only tell you I can’t refer you there I can’t refer you here I only can give you pain killers and nothing more I can’t do this I can’t do that that’s the only thing they keep saying.”

“They have also ignored medical reports from their hospital consultant.”

2 PCNs under-perform the average positive ratio of 51%.

6.3.10a Support by Primary Care Network

	# Issues Identified	% Positive Ratio
Enfield Care Network	78	42%
Enfield South West	62	45%
Enfield Unity	115	53%
West Enfield Collaborative	48	85%

6.3.11 User Involvement

As a topic, user involvement is 55% positive overall. Many people have felt involved in their treatment and care, with accounts of being listened to, respected and given options. While some prefer telephone consultations, others report a lack of in-person appointments - including for their children.

On accessibility, we hear that one person was able to receive a letter in braille, while another complains that interpreters have not been provided - despite repeated requests.

Selected Feedback

Positive

“When I rang for an appointment at 8:00am, the receptionist was polite and a good listener. This was very nice. On seeing the doctor in the evening, I was so happy with the service I received. The doctor was able to communicate with my 8 year old daughter, explaining to her why she was being given the medicine and why she had to take it to feel better.”

“The staff at the practice have been working tirelessly to serve us during this difficult time. Always being calm and helpful. Well done each and every one.”

“Much better having quicker appointments by phone than have to go in.”

“The caller was very happy to have received a proof of vaccine letter for travel in braille.”

Negative

“Very bad attitude and rude. She needs to be trained on how to be polite and listen to the patient.”

“The individual was very concerned that it has been very difficult to have a face to face appointment with their GP. the practice has 8 GP's but each time they have asked to see one there has only been one on duty.”

“The caller was very concerned that their parents had not been able to see a GP face to face for some time. They were unhappy that there was no flexibility, taking away control over their health decisions.”

“No face to face appointments - even for children.”

“Every time when making an appointment I asked them for an interpreter for my parents, but every single time there's no interpreter and I have to translate.”

1 PCN under-performs the average positive ratio of 55%.

6.3.11a User Involvement by Primary Care Network

	# Issues Identified	% Positive Ratio
Enfield Unity	26	46%
Enfield Care Network	36	56%
West Enfield Collaborative	10	70%
Enfield South West	17	71%

6.3.12 Waiting Times

As a topic, waiting times is 59% positive overall. The majority of comments are complimentary, with punctual and prompt treatment reported.

We also hear about delays, and call-back slots that are excessively wide (such as 2.30pm - 6.00pm).

Selected Feedback

Positive

“Both appointments were made on the day and I was called in a timely manner.”

“Calls are answered quickly also Drs appointments made on time.”

“I have always had phone calls on time.”

“Was not crowded, hand sanitiser was available at entrance. Received prompt service.”

Negative

“Had a very good phone consultation with the doctor. However, the call was booked for 10.10am but I wasn't called until after 11am. Had made sure that I was free from work and somewhere where I had a decent phone signal so, this wasn't really convenient.”

“Poor service and honestly a waste of my time. Meant to have an emergency appointment in the morning and it's now the end of the day, apparently I'm still on the list and the Dr won't even call me. So annoyed.”

“The worst part is I called at 08:23 this morning. And I'm due a call back between 14:30 to 18:00.”

3 PCNs under-perform the average positive ratio of 59%.

6.3.12a Waiting Times by Primary Care Network

	# Issues Identified	% Positive Ratio
Enfield South West	1	0%
Enfield Care Network	16	56%
Enfield Unity	12	58%
West Enfield Collaborative	3	100%

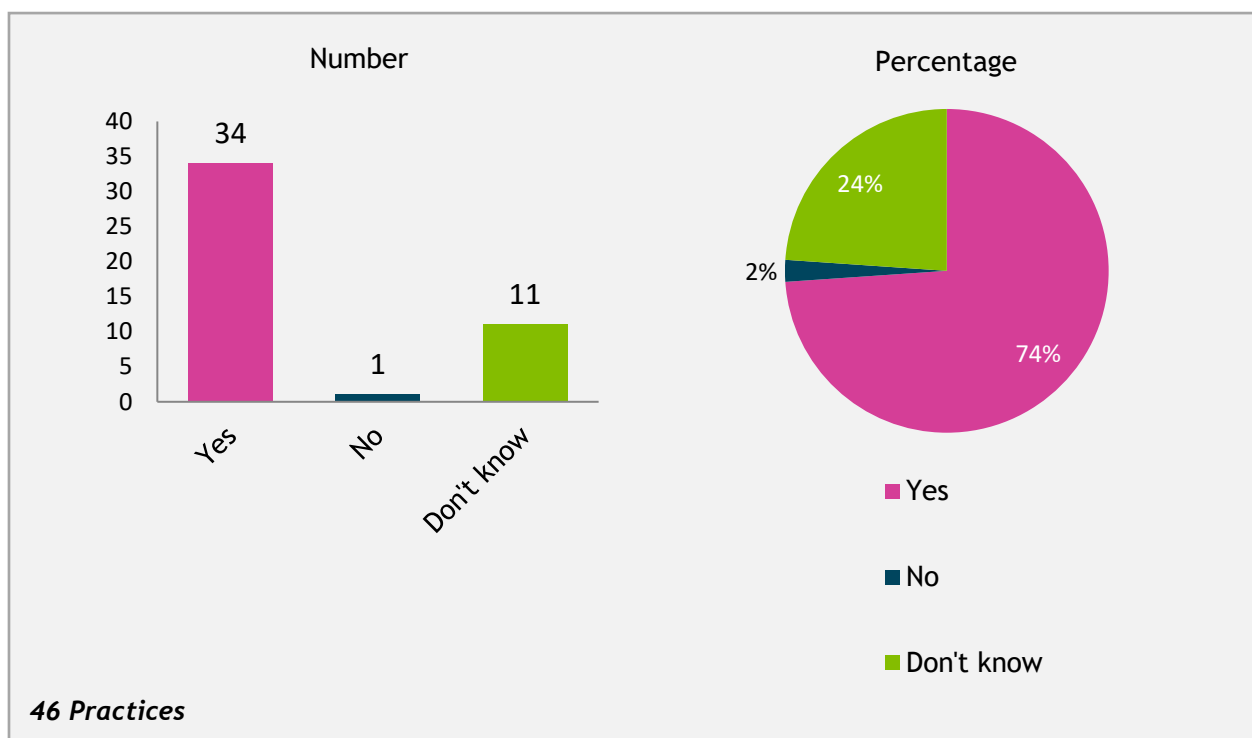
The surgery also said they is no record of her condition on their system event though the hospital and patient have sent copies, staff are also very rude.

7. GP Access Survey

In July 2021 Healthwatch Enfield volunteers conducted a review of the borough's GP practices, to establish whether:

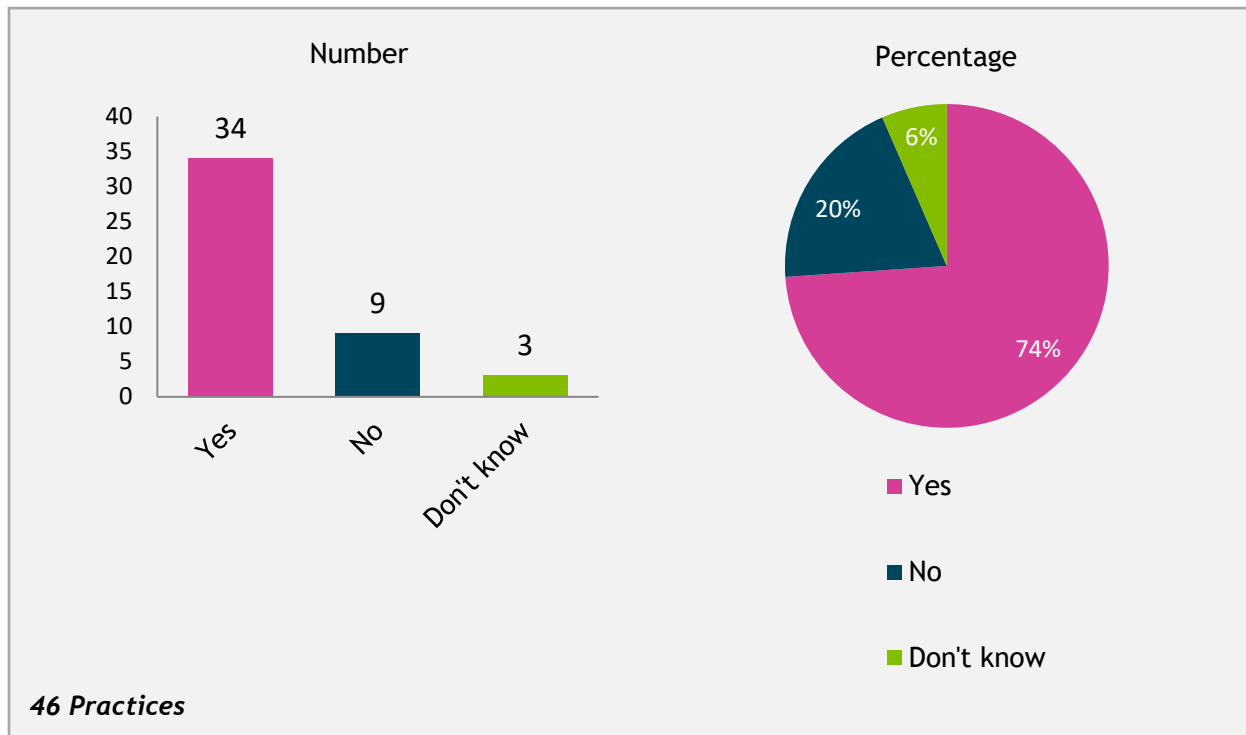
- They are accepting new patients.
- Patients are able to register online.
- Community languages are spoken at the practice.
- Information about interpreters is available online.
- The practice has a Patient Participation Group.

7.1 Is the surgery taking new patients?



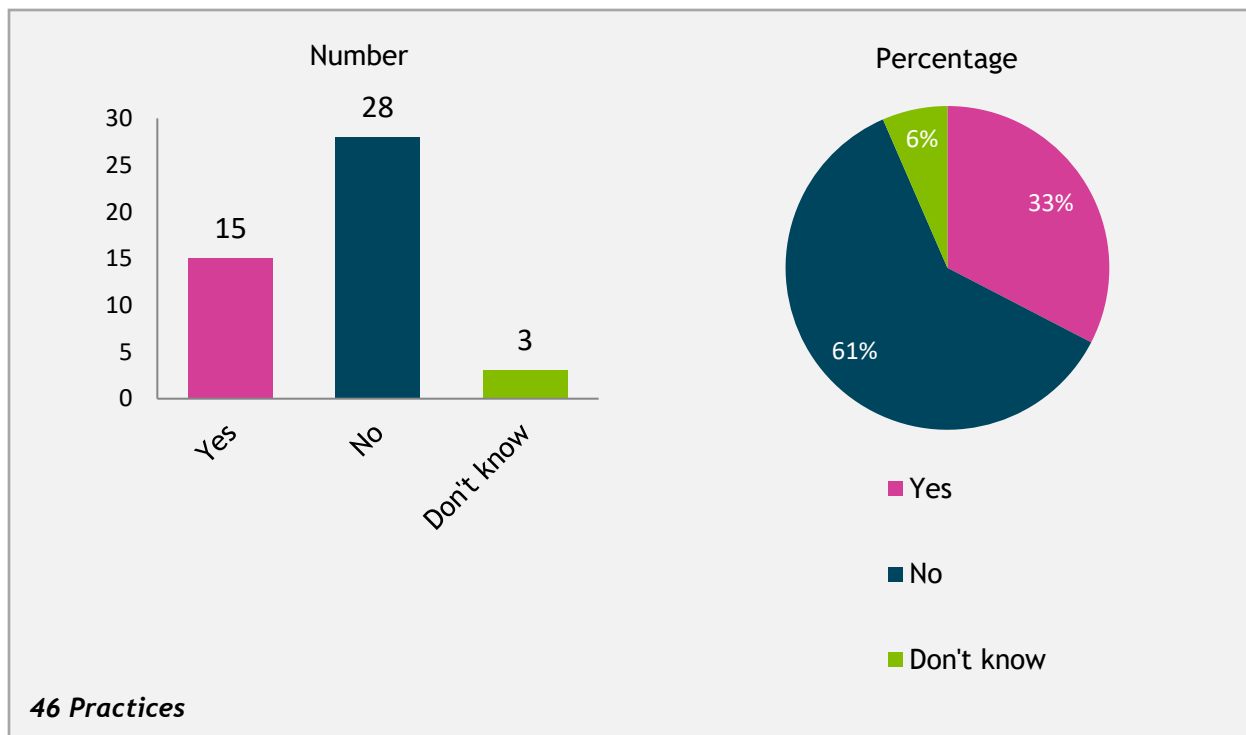
Three quarters of practices (74%) are accepting new patients. For a quarter (24%) we are unsure if this is the case. Just one practice is confirmed to be not accepting new patients.

7.2 Can you register online?



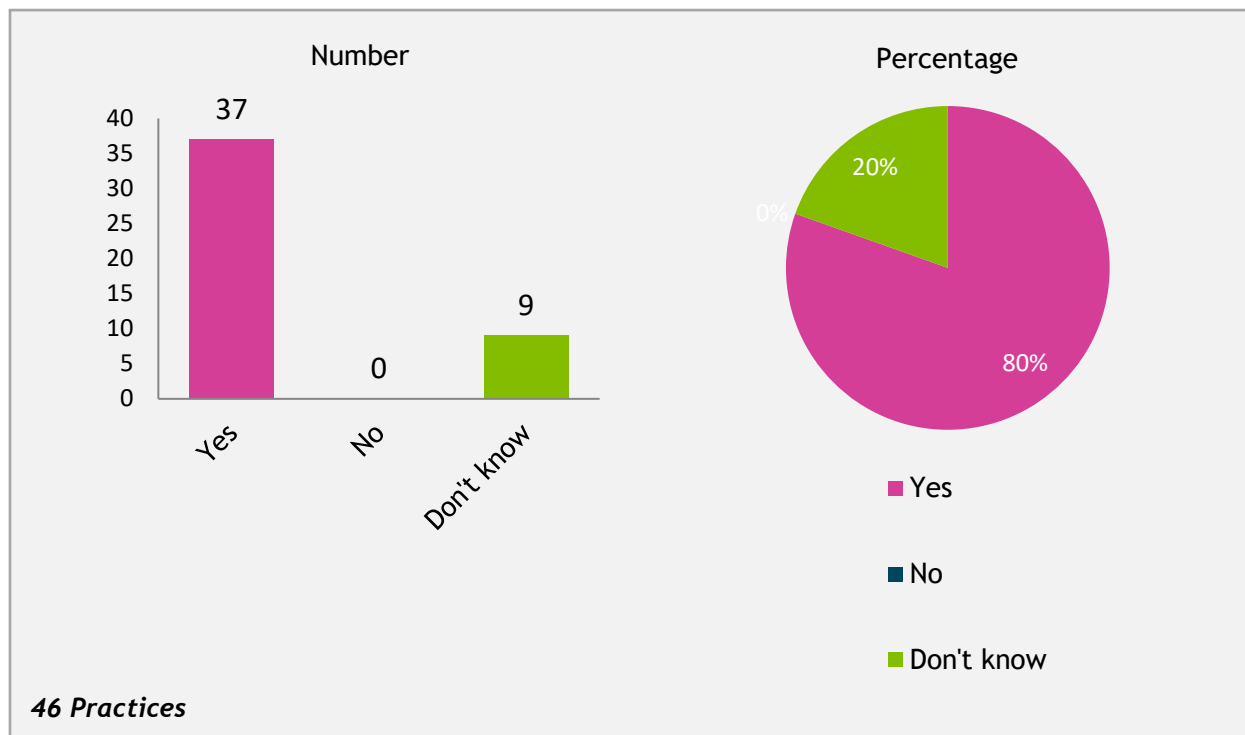
At three quarters of practices (74%) it is possible to register online, while at a fifth (20%) it is not.

7.3 Information available online about interpreters?



We found information online about interpreters at a third of practices (33%).

7.4 Does the surgery have a Patient Participation Group?



The vast majority of practices (80%) are confirmed to have a Patient Participation Group. While this is the case, we are unsure as to how active they may be (online content is often lacking, or outdated).

8. Glossary of Terms

PCN

Primary Care Network

9. Distribution and Comment

This report is available to the general public, and is shared with our statutory and community partners. Accessible formats are available.

If you have any comments on this report or wish to share your views and experiences, please contact us.

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“Sure, you have to call early as the phones get busy.

But details are taken quickly, call-backs are received the same day, and appointments are also made promptly depending on the severity of the issue.”

Local Resident