

Healthwatch Cheshire Citizens Focus Panel January 2023 Access to GP Websites Survey



Introduction

Healthwatch Cheshire, consisting of Healthwatch Cheshire East and Healthwatch Cheshire West, are helping to plan, shape and improve local health and care services. We're gaining feedback and starting or joining discussions to influence decision making, using your voice to encourage those who run health and care services to act on what matters to you.

Healthwatch Cheshire's Citizens Focus Panel enables us to get feedback on current topical issues from a set group of Cheshire residents on a regular basis. Our panel is made up of a wide range of people from all across Cheshire and continues to grow; we're always looking for new volunteers to join us.

GPs' websites are becoming an increasingly substantial part of public interaction with the national healthcare service, particularly noted during COVID and consistently afterwards. Healthwatch Cheshire's feedback centre continuously collects and analyses feedback from the public on health and social care services. In the last year, there has been an increasing trend of feedback involving interaction with GP websites, which highlighted the reliance on this source of information to be informative, accurate and accessible. Healthwatch Cheshire conducted a survey in January 2023 asking the Citizen Focus Panel members about their experience of using GPs' websites, and we received 74 responses.

The purpose of this survey is to help the NHS and its partners to evaluate the effectiveness of GP websites across Cheshire by outlining how easy it is for people to access and find the information they need. The findings of this report will be published on Healthwatch Cheshire West and Healthwatch Cheshire East websites for public access. The report will be widely shared, including with members of Cheshire East Health Care Partnership, Cheshire West and Chester Health Care Partnership, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, as well as our colleagues at Healthwatch England, and the Care Quality Commission.

To view previous reports, please visit:

healthwatchcwac.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports

healthwatchcheshireeast.org.uk/what-we-do/our-reports

Summary of findings

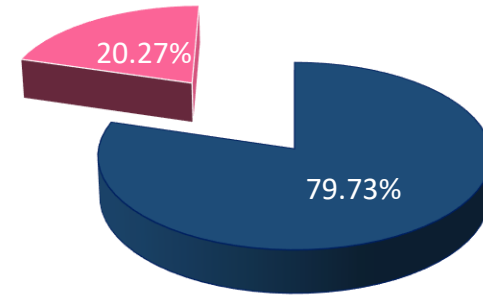
- 74 members of our Citizen Focus Panel responded to this survey, 59 had accessed their GP's website, while 15 hadn't.
- Almost half of panel members had used the GP's website either to make an appointment, find the number to call (58%), or to order a repeat prescription (55%). Around 2% used the website for finding health advice or support.
- 24 out of 45 respondents (53.3%) said that they were able to find the information they were looking for, and 14 respondents (31.1%) said they found some other useful information, while 7 respondents (15.6%) could not find what they were looking for.
- Just under half of respondents (46.6%) reported that the information was fairly easy to find, and around (20%) reported that they found it very easy, whilst 6.6% and 11.1% said it was very difficult or could not find it respectively.
- The majority of respondents told us they had not accessed the GP's website because either they had preferred to call (76%), or they do not use the internet (7.6%), while 23.4% reported other reasons such as, have not needed the GP's services or did not ask for frequent appointments.

Survey Results

Have you ever accessed your GP's website?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0

- The majority **79.7% (59)** of respondents to this question reported they had accessed their GP's website.
- **20.3% (15)** of respondents to this question reported they had never accessed the GP's website before.

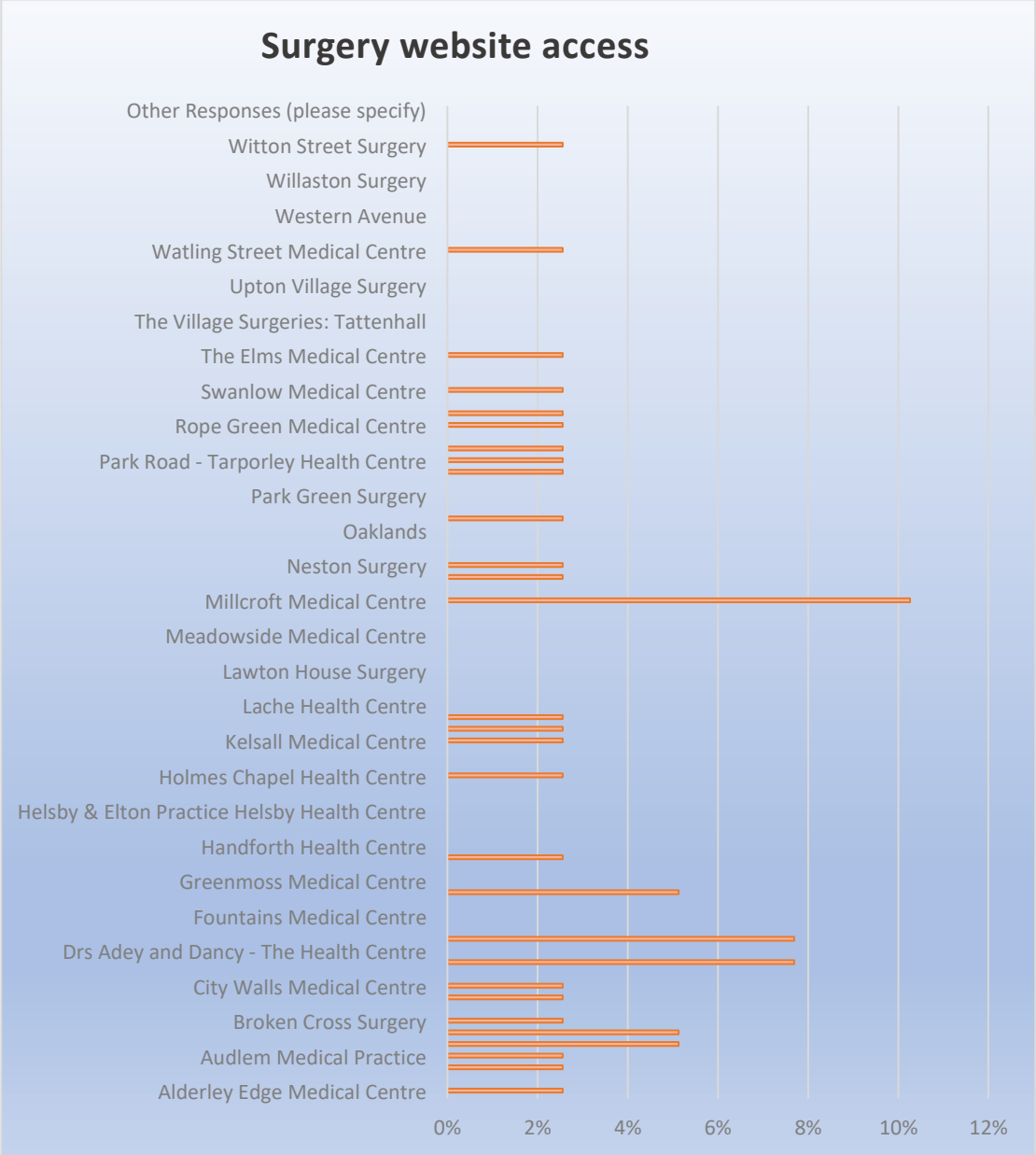


■ Yes ■ No

The name of the surgery who's website you visited

Answered: 39 Skipped: 35

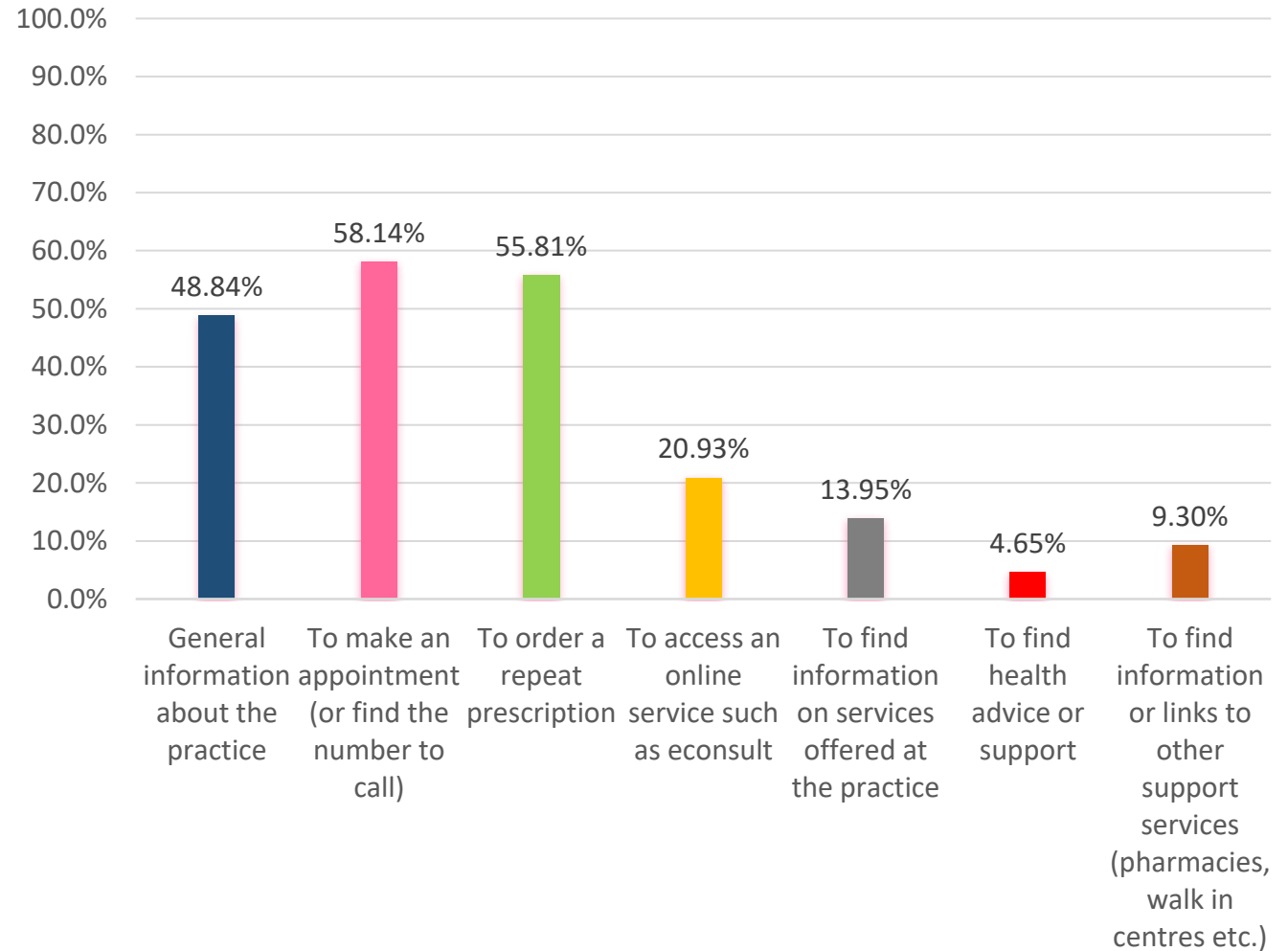
- Out of **84** GP Surgeries across Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester, **Millcroft Medical Centre** had recorded the highest number of responders using the website **10.3 % (4)**.
- Followed by **Danebridge Medical Centre**, and **Earnswood Medical Practice** with **7.7 % (3)**.



What did you access your GP's website for

Answered: 43 Skipped: 31

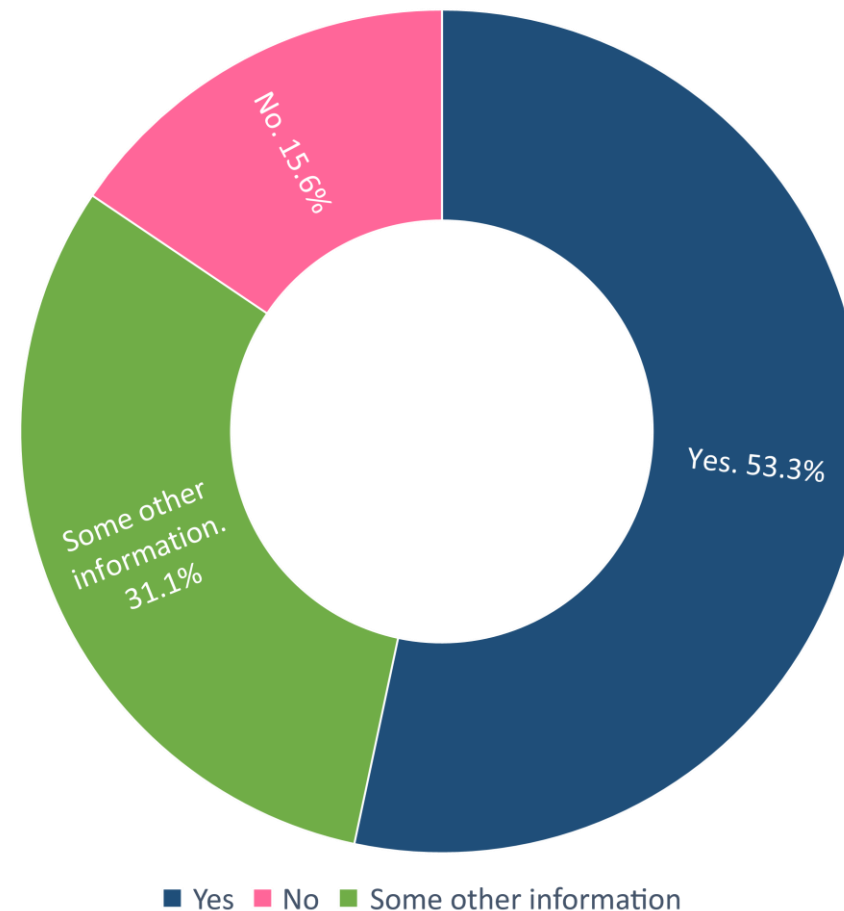
- Most of the respondents **58.1% (25)** and **55.8% (24)** said they had accessed the GP's website either to make appointments, order repeat prescriptions, or to seek general information.
- A small number of respondents, around **4.7% (2)** were seeking health advice.
- Other comments included:
 - *To ask to join the patient participation group*
 - *To find information about 'the MSK man' (Physiotherapist)*
 - *To get their email address*
 - *To access my health records.*



Did you find the information you were looking for ?

Answered: 45 Skipped: 29

- **31.1% (14)** of respondents to this question said they had found some of the information they were looking for, whilst almost half **53.3% (24)** said they had found all the information they were looking for.
- A further **7** respondents (**15.6%**) said that they were unable to find the information they need.



If you could only find some of the information, what couldn't you find?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 47

There were a variety of responses of what type of information they could not find:

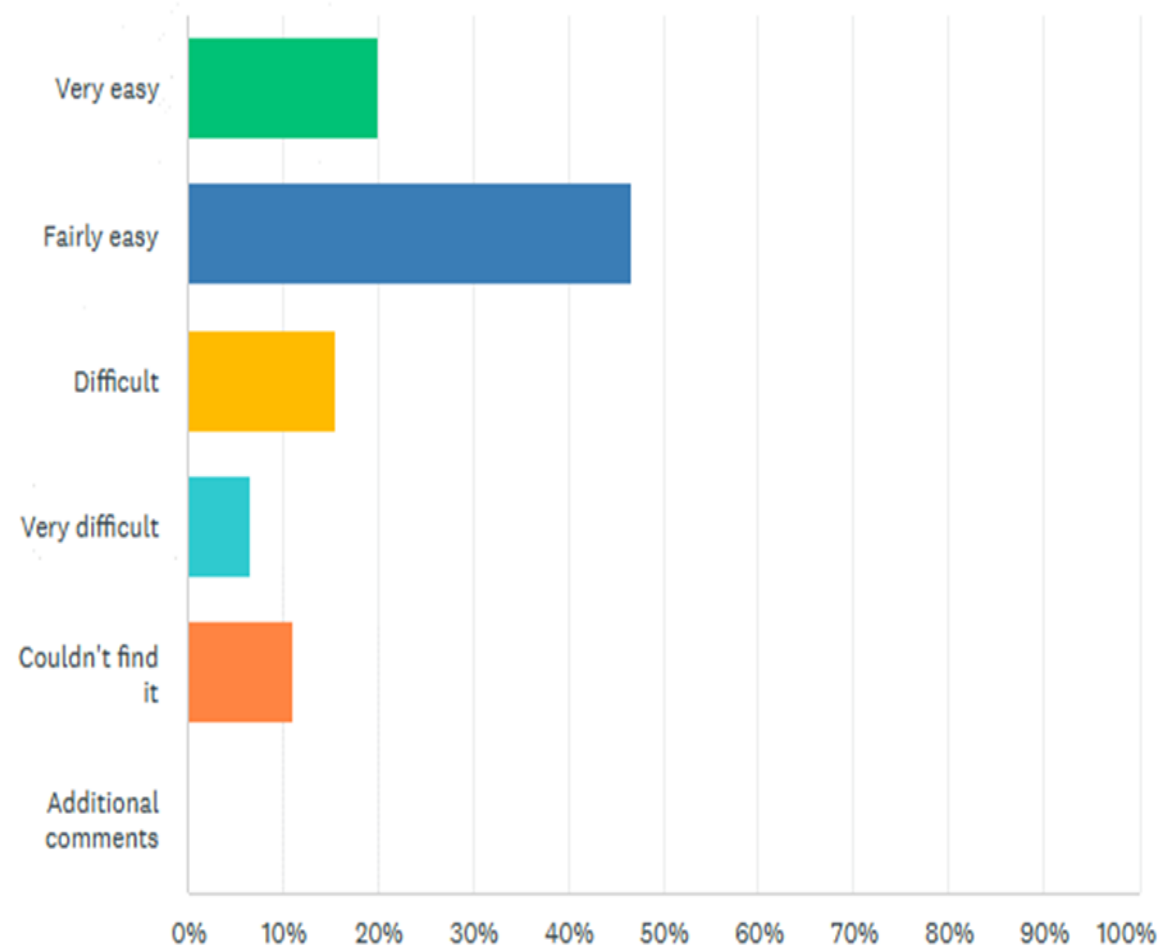
- Sometimes no appointments available
- ID for prescription
- I thought that the website was confusing and not well thought out
- Although it suggests you can book appointments on line with the NHS App - you can't. This is a backward step since Covid
- Medical people they use as msk's (Physiotherapists)
- Patient survey results and a link to Healthwatch Cheshire
- My records
- Nothing specific I can remember.
- PPG on website had minutes of meetings 2 years out of date
- Some links are out of date (sending) to 404 errors, some have loopbacks to the same page
- It tells you that you can book online, you download the app and it only lets you book for payable services.
- Ability to make an appointment
- All found
- How to contact the dispensary
- Could no longer make an appointment or order a prescription
- Searched something else.



How easy was the information to find?

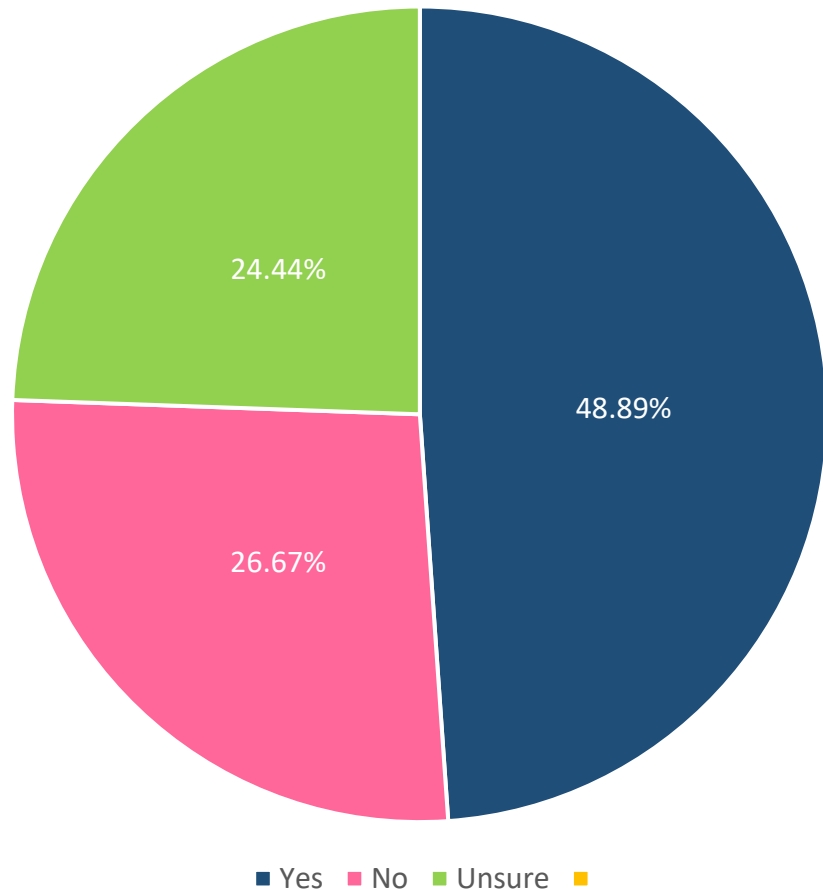
•Answered: 45 Skipped: 29

- We asked the respondents how they would currently rate the ease of accessing the information they are looking for while using the GP's website.
- We received mixed responses, ranging from 'couldn't find it' **11.1% (5)**, to 'very easy to find' **20% (9)**, with the majority of respondents **46.7% (21)** 'found it somewhat easy'.



Was the information up to date?

Answered: 45 Skipped: 29

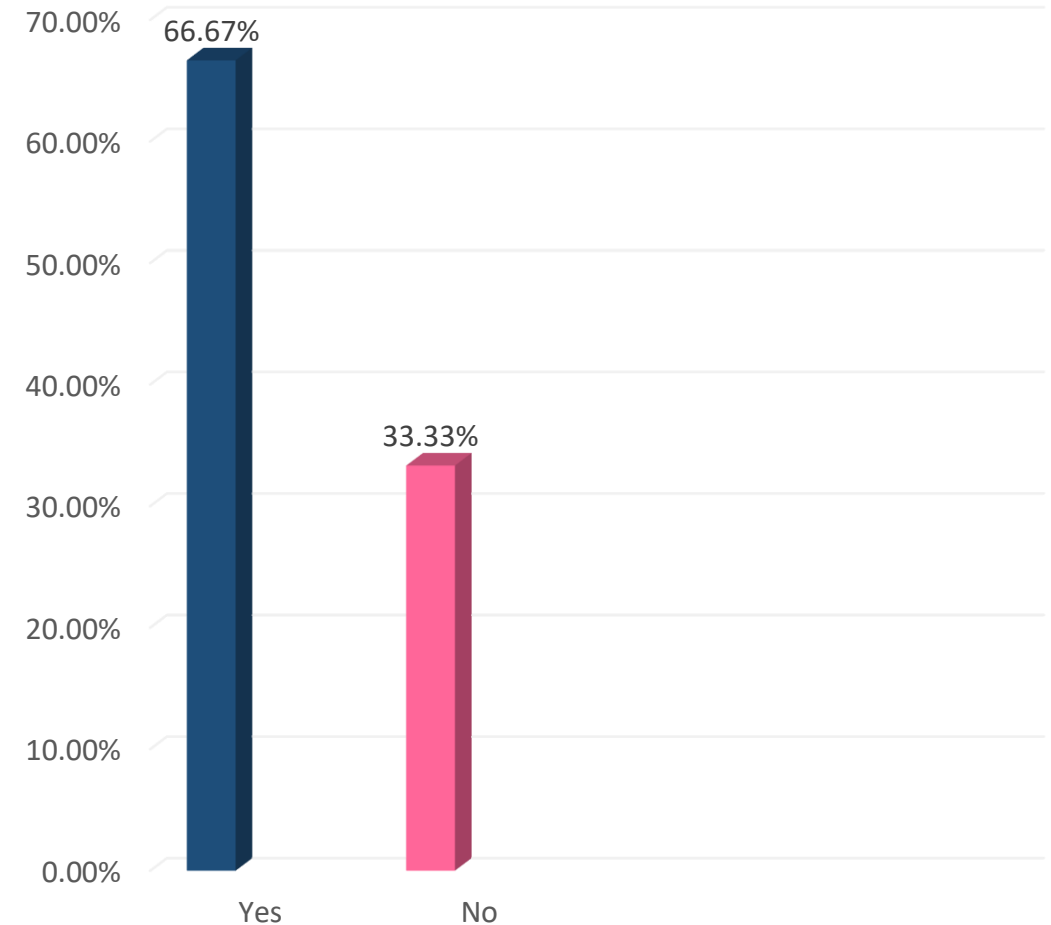


- This pie chart shows how up-to-date the information available on the GP's website is.
- Just under half of respondents, **48.9% (22)**, reported that the information on the GP's website was up-to-date.
- **26.7% (12)** found that the information is outdated
- Whilst **24.4% (11)** were unsure.

Would you recommend the website to other patients?

Answered: 45 Skipped: 29

- **66.7% (30)** of respondents to this question said they had recommended other people to use the website.
- Whilst **33.3% (15)** said they had not recommended the use of the GP's website to others.



If you selected 'yes' to the questions above, why would you recommend this website to others

Answered: 29 Skipped: 45

Responses include:

- *Some information is better than no information*
- *No alternative*
- *Has info relevant to my need*
- *It's not the best of websites, nevertheless, with a good dose of patience, you can find most of the information you might be looking for.*
- *Easy to access*
- *It has improved recently*
- *Some basic information available but not comprehensively*
- *Seems comprehensive including contact numbers.*
- *Seems to have the information on that we need*
- *It gives phone numbers , times etc*
- *Have said yes on the basis it will be developed further, if not it would be a no*
- *Am able to book my blood tests very easily and also order repeat prescriptions.*
- *Saves time and easier to arrange new prescription etc*
- *Generally you can find what you need*
- *Everything you need seems to be there if you look for it.*
- *Good front screen to guide you*
- *It's useful*
- *Best way to communicate with a doctor in first instance and for feedback.*
- *Most things are easy to find and accessible but don't know why we can't access our own health records as other practices can.*
- *Services offered can be found there*
- *Easier than phoning.*

Are there any additional comments you'd like to make or improvements you'd like to see on your GP's website?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 41

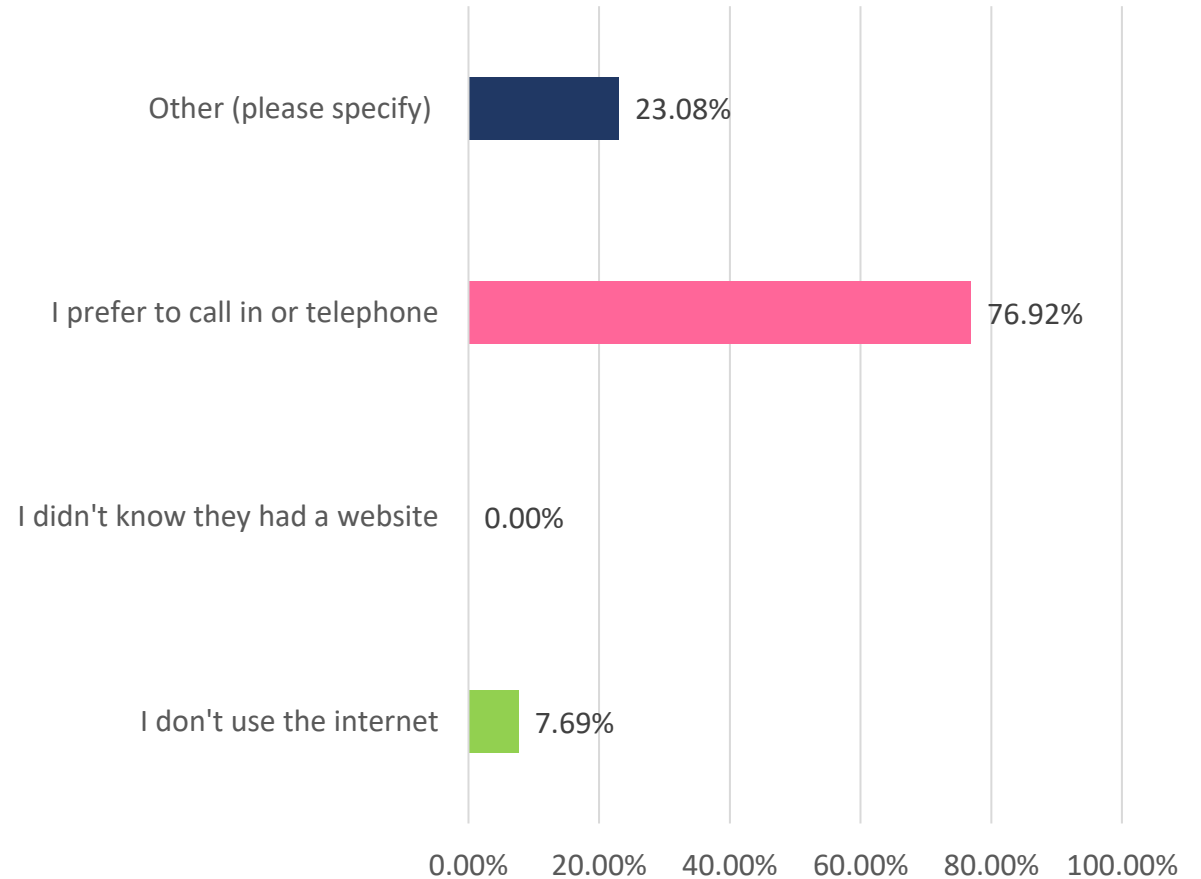
Responses Include:

- *Better information about what services are available either in house or in West Cheshire.*
- *Details and photos of the receptionists, not just the doctors and nurses, as they do a great job and should be recognised.*
- *Possible redesign*
- *Can't think of any*
- *The admin facility was helpful when wanting to ask certain questions if you couldn't get through to the surgery. This is no longer available. Very frustrating that we are back to the ringing at 8.30 method of trying to see a doctor.*
- *The website isn't engaging enough - it looks too bland, too basic, slightly cluttered and quite boring. It doesn't look or feel like a modern, intuitive website.*
- *Not all links work - tried to look at what non NHS funded services they offer and prices but this did not work.*
- *Very hard to get appointments or help*
- *Need to make it easier to navigate and make it relevant/current.*
- *Would have liked to see more upbeat messages instead of sheer increasing workload pressure.*
- *That someone answers emails and that they set up a PPG for Patients*
- *Please let them update everything and use it.*
- *Would like to see a feedback link to the web support team/person so errors can be addressed quickly and development of the site would be more rapid.*
- *As above we should be able to access our own personal health records.*

Why have you never accessed the website? (Please select all that apply)

Answered: 13 Skipped: 61

- All of the **13** respondents to this question were aware that the GP surgery had a website. However, **10 respondents (76.9%)**, said they had preferred to call in or telephone the surgery.
- **One** respondent (**7.7%**) had not used the internet more generally.
- Whilst **three** respondents (**23.1%**) had never accessed the website for various reasons including:
 - *Didn't think to use the website but tend to call as only need infrequent appointments*
 - *Haven't needed to call GP or use the website since living in Cheshire.*



If you have any additional comments you'd like to make about the surgery

Answered: 23 Skipped: 51

Responses:

- No
- All GPs practices need to review their availability and methods of obtaining an appointment. On line appointments should be available as per pre pandemic.
- Would like to see appointments available early morning (before 8am) and some late evening (6-8pm) for those people that don't work locally or shifts.
- Not enough GPs to offer continuity of care, too many patients in the practice for the facilities available.
- Need extra services available to increase expertise in post-pandemic conditions e.g. Long Covid and implications of Health staff suffering and treatment needs, and impact on current staff and services.
- Very hard to get a referral to hospital
- Online booking needs updating
- Some responses from commissioners to show what support is planned to relieve GP pressures.
- I am a 76 year old with Autism. I don't get my over 75 health checks at all.
- Our surgery is extremely good, with excellent doctors. Getting an appointment is reasonably good.
- Like trying to get an appointment is rubbish
- There needs to be improved face to face appointments and less triage undertaken by unqualified staff
- There's need for annual medical check-up for men and women to promote healthy living which will help to reduce cost of healthcare.
- They no longer appear proactive in long term disease management, fortunately Arrowe Park Hospital is, Primary care should be playing a greater role.

**Healthwatch Cheshire Feedback Centre can be found at:
www.healthwatchcheshire.org.uk**

Or contact us on :

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Email: info@healthwatchcheshire.org.uk



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