



Patient and professional experiences of using digital tools in primary care.

Year three report
June 2023 – June 2024

healthwatch
Norfolk

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Registered office: Suite 6, The Old Dairy, Elm Farm, Norwich Common,
Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 0SW

Registered company limited by guarantee: 8366440 | Registered charity: 1153506

Email: enquiries@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk | Telephone: 0808 168 9669

Please contact Healthwatch Norfolk if you require an easy read; large print or a translated copy of this report.

Who we are and what we do

Healthwatch Norfolk is the independent voice for patients and service users in the county. We gather people's views of health and social care services in the county and make sure they are heard by the people in charge.

The people who fund and provide services have to listen to you, through us. So, whether you share a good or bad experience with us, your views can help make changes to how services are designed and delivered in Norfolk.

Our work covers all areas of health and social care. This includes GP surgeries, hospitals, dentists, care homes, pharmacies, opticians and more.

We also give out information about the health and care services available in Norfolk and direct people to someone who can help.

At Healthwatch Norfolk we have five main objectives:

1. Gather your views and experiences (good and bad)
2. Pay particular attention to underrepresented groups
3. Show how we contribute to making services better
4. Contribute to better signposting of services
5. Work with national organisations to help create better services

We make sure we have lots of ways to collect feedback from people who use Norfolk's health and social care services. This means that everyone has the same chance to be heard.

Summary

This is the final year of a three-year project, commissioned by Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board. In previous years the project explored how patients use digital tools to access and attend GP appointments, seek information and advice, get repeat prescriptions and find other information or advice. We also looked at the new “Shared Care Record”, which was launched in March 2023, and the use of the NHS app by patients.

The focus for this report has been on the levels of awareness of how patients can use digital tools to access their GP practice, the methods people use and the barriers to this. We have looked at the awareness of the shared care record and wanted to understand if our previous recommendations have been met.

We used a survey to get feedback from the public, which could be completed online or as a paper copy. There were 768 responses to the survey – all of these were completed online. We also interviewed eight people and held a focus group with six people who had a disability or were living with a long-term health condition. We also attended four events and visited four GP practices to learn how they promoted digital access to their patients.

The main limitation of this project is that those people we interviewed and those who completed the survey are likely to be those who are more digitally confident. Comparing this year’s data to that from Year One is difficult because in Year One our survey was open to people from Norfolk and Waveney, but in this year, we have only been seeking responses from Norfolk residents.

We had responses from patients from just over 80 GP Practices, with three surgeries, Attleborough, Millwood Partnership and Lionwood Medical Practice having the most patient responses. Most people described their use of technology as good, with slightly more men than women saying this. This confidence decreased with age. People with a disability were less likely to rate themselves as good.

People access their GP website via mobile phone, computer, laptop, tablet or I-pad and mainly use the website to cancel or request appointments, message reception or get information. Most people found it easy or okay to use the GP

surgery website, which was broadly similar to the previous year. There is some variation of ease of use depending on the system used.

Nearly three quarters of survey respondents had used the NHS app – a slight increase from Year One. The app is popular for ordering repeat prescriptions and for accessing medical notes. In the first year, people's use of the app was more focussed on Covid vaccine information and accessing their Covid pass. Ease of use was broadly similar to Year one – with half of the respondents finding it easy. There were few suggestions of how to improve the app. The feedback on the other apps (Airmid and Patient Access), which were used by far fewer people was broadly similar to the feedback on the NHS app.

Just over a third of survey respondents were aware of the Norfolk and Waveney Shared Care Record. People generated a list of questions about the Shared Care Record that could be used as a basis for future communications promoting this tool.

The Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) service is due to cease in June 2024. Current POD users will be encouraged to use alternative methods to order their prescriptions, including via the NHS app and their doctors' surgery website. Our report highlights several examples of ways some GP surgeries have used to promote, encourage and support patients to use the NHS app and surgery websites.

Young people aged 13 years and older are able to use the NHS app, but nationally and within this project findings show that just over 20% of young people use the NHS app and there is a lack of awareness amongst those aged 25 years and younger about the NHS app and what it can be used for.

Our recommendations from previous years had been addressed, apart from one, independently evaluating digital innovation, which we have repeated this year.

As a result of our findings Healthwatch Norfolk made five recommendations:

- Promote awareness of the NHS app and availability to younger patients in Norfolk to empower them to be independent with their healthcare needs.
- Any communications about the Shared Care Record should include information that addresses the questions identified in our survey.
- Ensure that all digital innovation is independently evaluated, focusing on patient experience and satisfaction.
- Continuously liaise with Patient Participation Groups for feedback on the accessibility of communication materials and digital tools or form an

accessibility panel to check that communication materials relating to digital tools are accessible whether in a paper or digital format.

- Encourage more research into digital access for those who are digitally illiterate or who do not have access to technology.

Why we looked at this

Introduction

Healthwatch Norfolk have been commissioned by Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB) to conduct a three-year piece of work investigating digital tools and digital access to primary care in Norfolk.

This report is a continuation of the work conducted in year one and year two to find out how patients have been digitally accessing and attending doctors' appointments in the final year of this project.

In year one of the project, Healthwatch Norfolk were interested in finding out how the public have been using digital tools (e.g., their doctors' surgery website, NHS app and video consultations) to:

- make appointments
- attend appointments at their doctors' surgery
- seek information and advice about healthcare
- order repeat prescriptions
- access any other information, advice, or support from their doctors' surgery

In year two of the project, Healthwatch Norfolk explored the introduction of the Norfolk and Waveney Shared Care Record, which was launched in March 2023, and how aware Norfolk residents are of its existence. We also investigated public awareness of the NHS app and wanted to discover if people are not only downloading the NHS app, but if they are regularly using it and what for. The year two report also examined how Patient Participation Groups can support the Digital Team to raise awareness of the NHS app within their local surgeries and examples of innovative uses of digital tools to illustrate how primary care is evolving to improve access.

The reports for years 1 and 2 of this project can be found [here](#).

Why are digital tools and updates about them important?

Access to primary care services, particularly via digital routes is constantly evolving to meet health system and patient needs. The transformation of digital access to healthcare has been '*accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic*' (Butcher and Hussain, 2022). But introducing innovative new ways of accessing primary healthcare will be ineffective if "*patients are denied access through lack of digital literacy, restricted*

access to devices and data, or from poverty,” (Butcher and Hussain, 2022). According to the “Tackling the digital divide” report, 10 million UK adults are unable to access the internet by themselves and 11 million UK adults lack the essential digital skills needed for everyday life (Lloyds Bank, 2021).

Digital technology has the potential to change how healthcare is delivered, and making health services more “accessible, flexible, person centred” (The King’s Fund, 2023) and a better experience for patients and staff, but this will not be effective if digital literacy rates are low or there is no guidance and support to use these systems.

This type of work is also important due to frequent updates to digital tools used to access primary healthcare, to see how they have been transformed in line with national guidance and to keep up with patient demand.

As Norfolk residents become more informed about changes and different ways to access their doctors’ surgery, they may have concerns or questions that need to be addressed.

One example of how digital access to healthcare has moved on are the changes to patient access to their electronic patient record. Since the year two report has been published, doctors’ surgeries must give patients online access (dated from November 2022) to any new health record entries. Digital access to a person’s health record can be via the surgery’s website or the NHS app (Healthwatch England, 2023.) From 31st October 2023, Norfolk patients should be able to view their health record which contains information about the care they have received from their doctor or another primary care professional. The health record could include information on:

- Prescribed medication
- Allergies
- Vaccination dates
- Conditions a person has been diagnosed with
- Test results
- Notes from appointments

Another important aspect of digital access to primary care that is being updated on a regular basis is the NHS app. If the NHS app is to become the ‘digital front door’ (NHS, 2022) to primary healthcare, it’s imperative that Norfolk citizens know it exists, what it is for, how to download the app, the sign up process and how it can benefit them. This is one of the core aims of the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System (ICS) Digital Transformation Strategic Plan and Roadmap (NWICS, 2023). The NHS app has been in existence for five years and with 33.6 million registered users, the app’s monthly traffic has risen by more than half in 2023 (NHS, 2023d). Between November 2022 and

November 2023, the total number of monthly logins increased by 54% from 16.8 million to 25.8 million in November 2023; the equivalent of 10 logins a second.

According to an NHS report (2023c), some of the future developments and objectives for the NHS App in 2023/2024 include:

1. Maximising the value from the NHS App by increasing self-service and self-care to reduce demand on the front line.
2. Continuing to develop access to appointment, patient record access and prescription ordering process to keep up with policy and patient need.
3. Developing the design and navigation of the NHS app to meet patient need.
4. Enhancing the messaging facility between healthcare professionals and patients.
5. Extending the services available in the NHS App to support localisation.

Year three project work

In year three of this project, Healthwatch Norfolk wanted to see if more Norfolk residents are not only aware of the different ways of digitally accessing their doctors' surgery, but if they are using the different methods and if there are any barriers stopping them. We also wanted to see if awareness of the Norfolk and Waveney Shared Care Record had increased and to invite local citizens to ask any questions they may have about it. This report will also explore if the Digital Team at Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board have taken on board our previous recommendations and actioned them as part of their Digital Transformation Strategy and Roadmap (see appendix 2 for an outline of this strategy).

The Healthwatch Norfolk project plan for year three of this work was based on the year two report recommendations and can be found in more detail as appendix 1.

All the digital tools, facts and figures quoted in this report are correct as of April 2024 and may have changed since they were published.

How we did this

The first part of this year three project involved exploring whether public knowledge and access of different digital access portals to doctors' surgeries has increased since our year one report. To gather feedback about the different types of digital access to primary care (which includes the NHS app, doctors' surgery websites and the Airmid or Patient Access apps), Healthwatch Norfolk conducted an online survey, a focus group and one to one interviews.

Healthwatch Norfolk developed a range of promotional materials to encourage participation from Norfolk residents to take part. We wanted to reach as many people as possible to hear their feedback about digital access to their doctors' surgery.

Healthwatch Norfolk promoted the opportunity to complete the survey, be part of a one-to-one interview or to be part of the focus group via several different channels. These included:

- 🔗 Healthwatch Norfolk social media accounts (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter).
- 🔗 Healthwatch Norfolk newsletter and website.
- 🔗 Promotion by local voluntary organisations.
- 🔗 News items and updates on Norfolk Doctors' Surgery Websites.

Online and Paper Survey

Healthwatch Norfolk compiled a survey with a series of questions to meet the aim and objectives of the project. An online survey was deemed the best way to collect information to allow for as wide a reach as possible, and to ensure consistency and ease of analysis. The survey was available online through SmartSurvey and in paper form.

There was also the option to call Healthwatch Norfolk so that the survey could be completed over the telephone. This was to ensure that those who may be digitally excluded had the chance to take part.

Most responses (768) came from members of the public completing the survey online which ran from 1st November 2023 to 2nd January 2024.

The survey comprised of a range of question types including multiple choice, closed-ended, and open ended questions where respondents could type their own comments. Participants' answers were analysed using thematic analysis and this enabled participants' free text responses to be coded to establish themes, which are reflected in the 'what we found out' section of this report. Comments in this report are direct quotes from survey respondents and these have been left unchanged to ensure originality. Percentages in this report are rounded to the nearest whole number and a copy of the survey questions can be found as appendix 3. Survey participants' demographic data and their individual doctors' surgeries can be found as appendix 4 and 5. We have also provided a comparison of the survey responses from year one and year three and this can be found as appendix 9.

One to One Interviews

To obtain more in-depth information and opinions regarding patients' experiences of digital tools being used to access their doctors' surgeries, Healthwatch Norfolk conducted eight one to one, semi structured interviews online via MS Teams. Interview participants were recruited from the survey, where they had expressed an interest in participating further with the project and consented to being contacted to talk about their experiences in more detail.

Conducting interviews enabled more detailed data to be collated through open-ended responses from participants, provided an opportunity for Healthwatch Norfolk to learn about a patient's experience in more depth and allowed participants time to open up about their experiences. The interviewer had a list of broad topic areas and questions that mirrored the contents of the online survey, to cover during the interview process. The interviews varied in length from just 20 minutes to up to an hour depending upon the experiences of the participant and the extent of their use of digital tools to access their doctors' surgery. The interview data was thematically analysed and the questions can be viewed as appendix 6.

Focus Group

In February 2024, Healthwatch Norfolk conducted one online focus group to explore what participants knew about their doctors' surgery website and the NHS app and how accessible they are. This was achieved by talking to six people living with either a disability or long term health condition.

A focus group was used in this research because they enable and encourage participants to provide fuller answers to questions through guided conversation. Focus groups are also a more accessible way of engaging with participants who may be

more confident talking rather than writing in a survey. Focus group settings also encourage fuller conversations in terms of participants interacting with and responding to each other, rather than just the interviewer.

To support each participant's feedback, particularly those who had never used their doctors' surgery website or the NHS app, Healthwatch Norfolk provided each person with a list of questions and tasks to help them navigate both tools. It was noted within the instructions that this was not a compulsory exercise and should only be used if it helped with their feedback. Healthwatch Norfolk also advised each participant not to reveal confidential medical information within their answers or the focus group, unless they wished to. During the focus group, we agreed as a group to keep any confidential information within the focus group and to protect the identity of each person taking part. For a list of questions and tasks posed to the participants, please visit appendix 7.

Data Collection Method	Number of Participants
Online and Paper Survey	768
One to One Interviews	8
Online Focus Group	6
Total Number of Participants	782

Table 1. A table to show how many people Healthwatch Norfolk heard from for year three of this project.

Patient involvement and Consent

Participation in the survey, interviews and focus group was entirely voluntary and anonymous, however, to take part in providing feedback, participants consented for their answers and feedback to be shared. Should participants have wanted to leave more in-depth feedback or leave any comments on the survey, interview questions or focus group content, they were advised to contact Healthwatch Norfolk at: enquiries@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk

Healthwatch Norfolk also attended events to support the promotion of digital tools in primary care and to hear feedback from Norfolk residents about their digital access experiences. We also visited doctors' surgeries to hear more about their methods of promoting digital access to primary care professionals.

The locations visited or approached by Healthwatch Norfolk include:

- Breckland Alliance, Norfolk and Waveney ICB and Thetford Library NHS App Inclusion Event
- College of West Anglia (King's Lynn Campus)
- Digital Connect Event (Dunston Hall)
- Hoveton and Wroxham Patient Participation Group Health and Wellbeing Show
- Lawson Road Surgery
- Mundesley Medical Centre
- Roundwell Medical Centre
- Sheringham Medical Practice

Limitations

There were some limitations to this project, which must be acknowledged. The recruitment of participants meant that the sample were self-selecting because they responded to requests for interview and focus group participants through the online survey. The survey was available as a paper-based version, but all the participants who wanted to take part in interviews expressed this through the online survey. Whilst we ensured that our survey was available in paper form, all our responses were received online. This may mean that the results are biased towards more digitally confident members of the public.

It should also be noted that although a comparison between the year one and year three data has been suggested, caution should be taken when drawing any conclusions on differences in the data. This is due to year one of the project inviting participation from Norfolk and Waveney residents and year three inviting participation from only Norfolk residents. 45 people from Waveney practices completed the survey, the anonymised data was shared with Healthwatch Suffolk.

What we found out

Online and Paper Survey

Healthwatch Norfolk hosted an online and paper survey ran from 1st November 2023 – 2nd January 2024 and invited Norfolk residents to tell us about their experiences of digitally accessing their doctors' surgery.

We invited participants to feedback their experiences of using their doctors' surgery website, the NHS app or the Airmid and Patient Access Apps to:

- 1) make appointments
- 2) attend appointments at your doctors' surgery
- 3) seek information and advice about healthcare
- 4) order repeat prescriptions
- 5) access any other information, advice, or support from your doctors' surgery

About survey respondents

We received survey responses from 768 people about their experiences with digital tools in primary care.

Of these responses:

- Most were women (64%, 482)
- Most were 56 years old or older (72%, 529)
- Most were heterosexual /straight (87%, 638)
- Most were White: British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh (92%, 695)
- Over half had a long term health condition (55%, 406)

To see a full demographic breakdown of respondents see appendix 4.

In the year one survey, we heard from 337 people with 68%, (229) respondents aged 56 or older. Please note that the year one report included response from Norfolk and Waveney residents, whereas the year three report focused on Norfolk residents.

The most common doctors' surgeries that respondents were patients at were Attleborough Surgeries (52 respondents), The Millwood Partnership (48 respondents), and Lionwood Medical Practice (35 respondents). To see a list of all surgeries and the number of respondents see appendix 5.

Nearly two thirds of respondents (65%, 497) told us that they would rate their skill at using technology as 'good'. This decreased with age group, with 89% (17) of those 35 or under rating their skill as 'good', and only 51% (48) of those age 76 or older. Men were slightly more likely to rate their skill as 'good' (69%, 176) than women (61%, 296) and gay and lesbian respondents were more likely to rate their skill as 'good' (93%, 26) than heterosexual respondents (63%, 405). People with a disability who responded to the survey (143, 18%) were less likely to rate their skill as 'good' (55%, 78) than the (598, 78%) people without a disability (67%, 399).

Within the year one survey results, 66% (223) respondents rated their skill at using technology as 'good', 29% (99) rated their skill at using technology as 'OK' and only 4% (15) rated their skill with technology as 'bad', with four of these respondents not having any experience of using any of the digital tools in this survey. The year one survey data revealed that the older the respondents were, the less likely they were to rate their skill with technology as 'good'. These findings mirror the pattern we found in the year three data.

Doctors' Surgery Websites

Most respondents were from surgeries who use SystemOne (90%, 693) for their clinical system and Silicon Practice – FootFall (85%, 649) for their online consultation system. The year one survey was completed by people who attend surgeries who use Silicon Practice – FootFall (96%, 307) for their online consultation system.

In the past 12 months, most people used their doctors' surgery either monthly (42%, 324) or once every few months (39%, 296). Of those who had used their surgery website in the past 12 months 60% (441) told us that they use a mobile phone to access the website, 53% (393) use a computer or a laptop, and 31% (227) use a tablet or an iPad.

The most common reason for using their surgery website is for requesting and cancelling appointments (60%, 443), this was followed by messaging reception (38%, 284), and looking up surgery opening times or contact details (35%, 255). Other uses of the website are displayed in Figure 1. In year one, the most common reason that people used their surgery website was also to request and cancel appointments (72%, 231), followed by messaging reception (45%, 143) and accessing test results (33%, 104).

Figure 1

Figure 1. Responses of 738 people to the question “what do you use your doctors’ surgery website for?”. Respondents could select more than one option. ‘Other’ responses were mostly prescription / medication requests.

Ease of using surgery website

Most people told us that they found their surgery website either ‘ok’ (45%, 344) or ‘easy’ (38%, 271) to use. People who were patients at surgeries who used the PATCHS online consultation system seemed to find the system slightly more difficult to use than patients who used other systems, with 25% (18) rating the website as ‘difficult’ to use. The different systems and how they were rated are displayed in Figure 2.

In year one, survey respondents were asked how easy they find their doctors’ surgery website to use. Most respondents reported finding it ‘OK’ or ‘Easy’ (79%, 253). It is worth noting that 18% of respondents who rated their technology skill as ‘good’ in year one still reported that they found the doctors’ surgery website difficult to use (38 respondents).

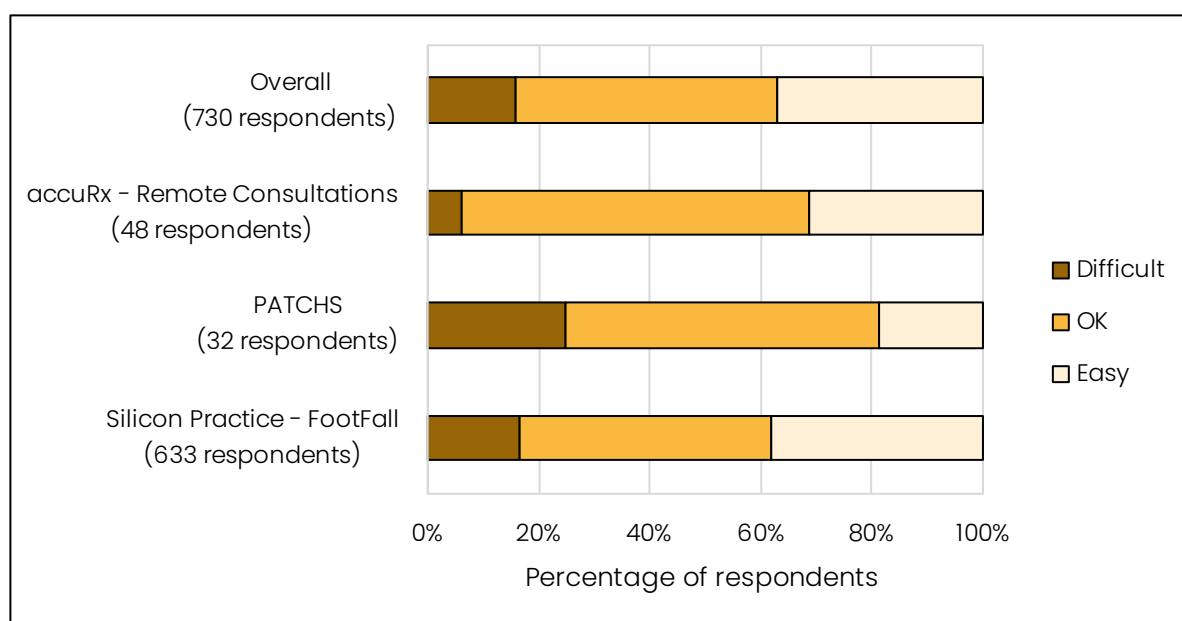


Figure 2. Responses from 730 people to the question “How easy do you find the website to use?” split by the most common online consultation systems.

Those who rated their tech skill as ‘bad’ found their surgery website as difficult to use (68%, 15) more frequently than people who rated their skill as ‘ok’ (16%, 37) and ‘good’ (13%, 63).

People who used the website more frequently were more likely to find it easier to use; 51% (35) who used the website weekly said it was ‘easy’ to use in comparison to 25% (10) of those who only used it once in the year.

There did not appear to be much difference in ease of use and the type of device patients used for visiting the website; 39% (150) of those who used a computer / laptop found it easy to use, 37% (160) of mobile phone users, and 34% (76) of tablet / iPad users.

It is worth noting that experiences of using surgery websites often varied by the surgery regardless of the surgeries having the same online consultation system. For example, Attleborough Surgeries and Wymondham Medical Centre both use the Silicon Practice – FootFall system and are both in the same PCN area (Ketts Oak PCN) but only 19% (10) of Attleborough patients rated their website as 'easy' to use in comparison to 41% (12) of Wymondham patients.

Within the survey, we asked respondents what they liked about their doctors' surgery website. The most frequently mentioned aspect that 17% (103) of the question respondents liked is how easy their doctors' website is to navigate and how easy it is to contact primary care staff through the website.

"For me I like the convenience of being able to communicate with Doctors, nurses and receptionists online. I love the convenience of often being able to have online consultations and medication reviews through online messages and not having to visit surgery! So much quicker easier and convenient doing online messaging and consultations without having to leave the house and attend a surgery."

15% (52) people that answered this question found that having digital access to their surgery saves them time which is helpful because *"as a full time carer, I don't have time to go to the surgery."* Another survey respondent commented that the site is not only easy to navigate, but that the website pages are *"clear and it's easy to read the text, but not too busy with info"* and enables *"patients to get a quick response without spending hours hanging on to a phone awaiting someone to answer."*

Healthwatch Norfolk asked survey respondents what improvements they believe need to be made to their doctors' surgery website. 19% (129) people that replied to this question reported that the ability to make an appointment with a Doctor or Nurse would improve their experience of using the website.

"Make it easier for patients to access appointments whether face to face or via telephone by adding an online booking system to the website where patients can choose the date and time of their appointment based on availability. Also when submitting online form, the option to upload multiple photos relating to the nature of the form."

7% (46) of people that answered this question believe that their doctors' surgery website should be more user friendly, *"the design is very old-fashioned"* with a need to be *"simplified and streamlined."*

"When trying to get an appointment with a clinician. On the website you go round and round and get nowhere as it just goes back to the beginning. You have to use normal message button at the bottom of the screen!"

During one of the interviews with a survey respondent, they mentioned that they frequently use their doctors' surgery website, provided by SystmOnline, to order medication. The interviewee preferred the website over the Airmid app because they found the website easier to use but would like the opportunity to send messages to their surgery, book online appointments and have the ability to *"check existing appointments."*

Survey respondents also commented that the surgery websites often had red news banners and *"annoying out-of-date pop up messages"* appearing on the home page. One interviewee found it confusing because they *"may decide to just read one"* and when you hit dismiss and then they all disappear, but *"some of them have been there since the times of covid and you aren't 100% sure if you've closed something that may have been relevant."* 6% (41) of respondents that suggested website improvements would like online forms to be open for longer, including over weekends and bank holidays, to allow greater access and communication routes for patients.

"Stop turning off the message facility. If you can't get through on phone or don't need immediate help, a message is the sensible way to get help. Too frequently this option is turned off on the website."

Healthwatch Norfolk asked survey respondents if there is anything they would like to use their doctors' surgery website for, that they can't already. 486 people responded to this question and in addition to being able to book and manage appointments (31%, 150) and send messages for non-urgent requests or health issues (9%, 46), respondents would like access to their full electronic patient record (6%, 28) and access to up to date test results (6%, 23).

"It is only a one direction tool. It is hardly possible to book a doctor and when you do, you can't reply to their reply, for example, to ask questions so you have to wait another day and get another appointment."

NHS App

In the past 12 months 568 stated that they used the NHS app. People most commonly used the NHS App monthly (25%, 195) or every few months (29%, 226). However in addition to this, nearly a quarter of respondents told us they had not used the NHS App in the past 12 months (24%, 183). Over half of respondents who had used the app in the past 12 months told us they used it to 'order a repeat prescription' (56%, 317) and over half also used it to 'view medical record and notes' (52%, 293). *Figure 3* displays other uses of the app. In the year one survey, over two thirds of respondents (68%, 230) told us that they use the NHS App, with 29% of respondents (96) using it monthly, which is a similar to the year three data.

Due to the time period that the year one survey was conducted, the most popular responses to the question, 'what do you use the NHS App for?' was accessing their NHS Covid Pass 49% (113), viewing their Covid-19 vaccination record 43% (98) and ordering a repeat prescription 39% (89). This will have influenced the different responses of NHS usage between year one and year three and accounted for some of the difference in answers.

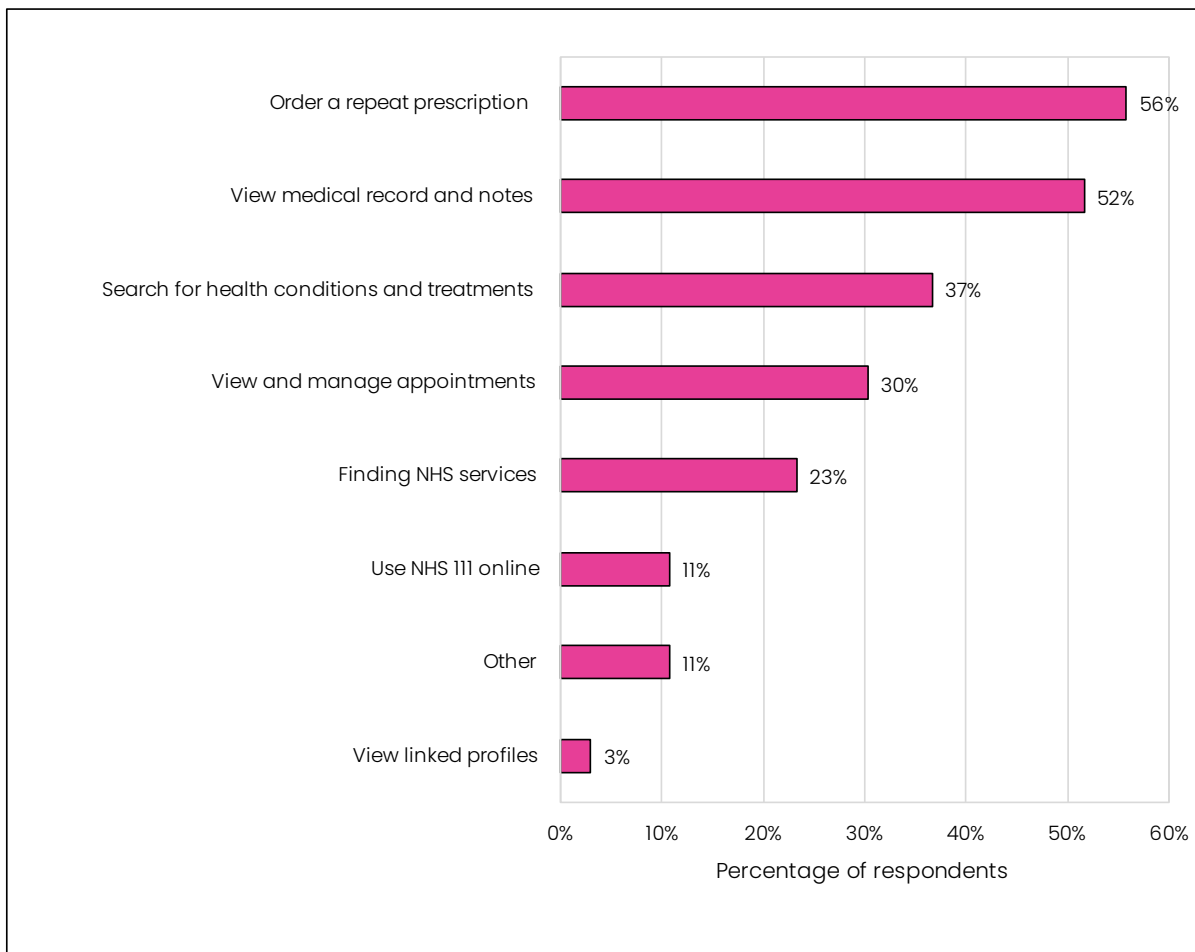


Figure 3. Responses of 568 people to the question "What do you use the NHS App for?". Respondents could select more than one option. 'Other' responses mainly included

booking and managing COVID vaccination appointments and viewing their vaccination record.

Just over half of respondents who used the app told us that they found it 'easy' to use (51%, 286). In the year one survey data, just under half of the respondents using the NHS app (45%, 98) found it 'easy' to use.

In year three, those who used the app more often told us they found it easier to use, with people using the app weekly rating it as 'easy' to use 71% (42) of the time in comparison to only 29% (25) of people who used it once in the year.

Healthwatch Norfolk asked survey respondents what they like about the NHS app and 396 people provided an answer to this question. 27% (109) people liked how easy the NHS app is to use, *"it's easy to find information and access searches for local services."* 24% (98) respondents liked the ability to view their electronic patient record, *"I like the ability to read my notes,"* whilst 20% (80) respondents thought the NHS app contains *"very clear language and design"* and provides *"everything in one place."* 14% (56) of respondents found the NHS app useful for ordering repeat prescriptions and providing the *"convenience of not having to go to chemist, surgery or waiting on the phone"* to place the order.

Within the survey, we asked respondents what could be improved with the NHS app. 395 people answered this question and 11% (43) respondents said that the NHS app works well as it is and is functional for what the need from it. 7% (29) respondents were unsure about how the NHS app could be improved and 3% (13) respondents would like the ability to see their full electronic patient record, from birth and 3% (11) participants would like the ability to make online appointments.

"It could be improved by being able to make appointments and seeing my full health records. All I can see at the moment is basic information i.e. test results and when I have ordered a repeat prescription."

One survey participant suggested that an *"induction to the service when you sign up so there is awareness from the outset of how to make the most of the app"* would be helpful and this is a similar idea to the website tour facility available on Footfall.

The final section in the NHS app part of the survey asked the public if there is anything they would like to use the NHS App for, that they can't use it for already. 302 people answered this question, with 11% (34) respondents wanting to be able to make appointments through the app, 5% (15) respondents wishing to see a detailed view of

their electronic patient record and 2% (7) respondents would like to view any up to date test results via the app.

2% (5) of survey respondents requested that the NHS app could be more integrated with doctors' surgery website and wished *"it combined everything with the GP website too and had everything in one place."*

Healthwatch Norfolk interviewed one Norfolk resident who is regularly monitored by their local surgery due to a history of hypertension. They were invited via a text message to attend a yearly health review which required a blood test and blood pressure monitoring. This *"triggered"* something in the patient's mind and they decided to join and login into the NHS app to view their results and were delighted that to see that, *"lo and behold, they were there."*

"I went and looked at them and being inquisitive as I am, I wanted to understand what something meant. The interesting thing is as I drilled in, there were very understandable explanations about individual items."

Airmid and Patient Access

The Airmid and Patient Access apps were used by a small proportion of respondents, 14% (105) told us they had used the Patient Access app in the past 12 months and only 10% (75) had used the Airmid app.

The most common use for both apps was to 'order a repeat prescription' with 68% (67) of Patient Access users and 57% (42) of Airmid users choosing this option. The other uses are displayed in *Figure 4*.

In year one, 34 respondents told us that they had used the Airmid App and 43 respondents shared that they had used the Patient Access App. The most common task that these respondents used the apps for was to view medical records, with 44% (19) of Patient Access and 68% (23) of Airmid users choosing this option.

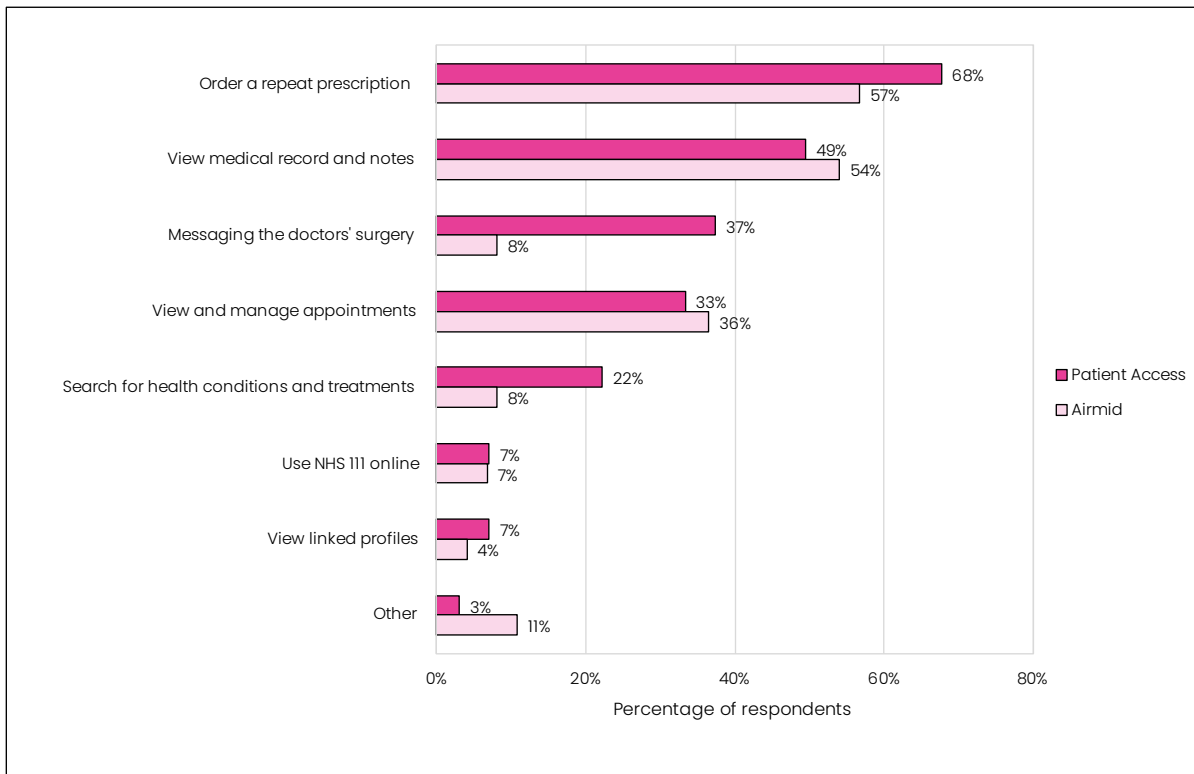


Figure 4. Responses of 173 people to the question "What do you use the Airmid / Patient Access App for?". Respondents could select more than one option.

Users of both apps in year three reported similar experiences of ease of using the apps, 55% (23) of Airmid app users told us it was 'easy' to use and 49% (39) of Patient Access app users. In year one, of 50% (36) Airmid app users told us it was 'easy' to use and 33% (39) of Patient Access app users which suggests only a very small change to people's perceptions of 'ease of use' of the apps over the three years period.

Healthwatch Norfolk asked survey participants what they like about the Airmid and Patient Access apps. 95 people provided feedback to this question and 25% (24) respondents said that the apps are "easy to use and not full of complicated jargon," straightforward and easy to navigate, "I like the way everything from records, to test results, to general stats are easily accessible." 5% (5) participants revealed that they like "the ease" with which they can order repeat prescriptions and that "the request doesn't get lost in the system as frequently as it did when I used the practice site."

The next question asked survey participants what could be improved about the Airmid and Patient Access apps. 103 people answered this question and 11% (11) respondents said that the apps were already good and did not need any improvements. 5% (5) participants requested the ability to make online appointments and 2% (2) participants hoped for the introduction of two way communication with their doctors' surgery via the apps, "it could be improved by being able to make appointments at my gp and

send them messages [sic].” One survey respondent said that they required “a better understanding of how to use the apps and what they offer.”

82 survey respondents answered the final question about the apps and told us what they would like to use both the apps for, which they can't already. 26% (21) respondents reiterated that they would like to make appointments via the apps, 6% (5) respondents would like a messaging facility and 1 respondent *would “prefer only to have to use either the NHS app, surgery website or Airmid for services as having to jump between isn't good use of time and confusing.”*

Shared care record

Information about the Shared Care Record and its introduction can be found in our Year Two [report](#).

In our survey this year Healthwatch Norfolk asked respondents if they were aware of the Norfolk and Waveney Shared Care Record, 36% (272) of respondents told us they were aware of it, 56% (428) were not aware of the record and 9% (66) were not sure. The Shared Care Record was introduced in March 2023.

The next part of the survey asked if Norfolk residents have any questions about the Shared Care Record that they would like to ask the Digital Team at Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board. The responses generated should be considered by the Communications Team, so that this can be incorporated into information used to promote the Shared Care Record.

The following questions were asked by survey respondents:

- Which health and social care professionals could access my medical records at the point of care?
- How will the Shared Care Record protect my data and keep my medical records secure?
- Is there a way to view what information health and social care professionals can see about me?
- Will the Norfolk and Waveney Shared Care Record be extended and shared with Dentists and Opticians?
- Will I be notified if different organisations have accessed my Shared Care Record?
- What safeguarding procedures and policies will protect my information if I have been subject to any type of abuse at the point of care?

- Does the Shared Care Record link with Addenbrookes or other out of area medical services? If not, how will information be shared if patients are referred on for specialist care?
- Do I have to give my permission for my records to be linked?
- What is the process for correction if an entry is made in error to my medical record?
- Can a patient opt to reduce the range of organisations and healthcare professionals who can access their records?
- Have patients been involved in what information is important to share between organisations?

Focus Group

In February 2024 Healthwatch Norfolk conducted a focus group and invited six people living with a disability and / or a long term health condition to participate. The focus group shared their experiences of digitally accessing their doctors' surgery via the NHS app or their doctors' surgery website. We asked each participant to think about each method and consider what they believe what works well, what needs to be improved and how accessible they are. If a participant did not use either of them, we asked them to explore their doctors' surgery website and download the NHS app and enquired what would encourage them to use either resource to continue digitally accessing their doctor.

To help with this task, Healthwatch Norfolk provided questions and tasks for each participant to consider and help them to structure their answers. The questions and tasks can be found as appendix 7.

The following case studies are based on the personal experiences of the focus group members when digitally accessing their doctors' surgery. Their names and any identifiable information has been changed to ensure anonymity.

Andy*

Andy lives in a semi-rural part of Norfolk and prior to this focus group he usually booked and managed his doctors' appointments over the phone.

As part of the focus group, Andy downloaded the NHS app onto his phone to see how easy it is to download, set up and access using his iPhone's voiceover function.

"I found it quite an interesting experience downloading the app and going online. Very interesting."

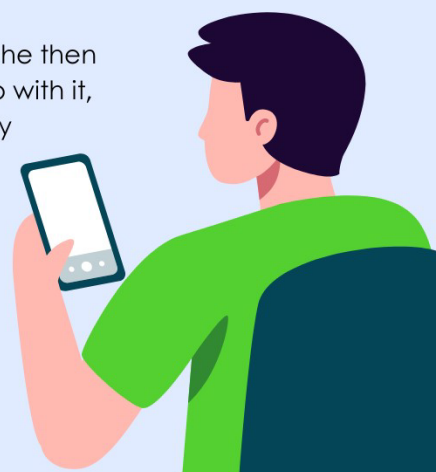
Andy reported that he found initially downloading the NHS app and discovering his NHS app as "quite easy" because the instructions could be read out to him. It was the next stage that Andy found difficult as the sign up process required that he verify his identity by uploading a copy of his passport photo.

"It soon got tricky because it wanted me to upload an image of my passport photo. As a visually impaired person, I would not have been able to do that, so I hit and hoped. It came up with different options to submit a photo "if you can take a picture" or "if you are visually impaired." it asks you a lot of questions about "can you see all four corners?" I couldn't see any of it. When I tried doing the submit it as a visually impaired person there came back with this network error problem. I tried this for about three days on and off and in the end somebody sighted got the photo taken for me and we submitted it normally and it worked perfectly."

The next part of the sign up process required Andy to submit a video, whilst reciting some numbers to verify his identity. Andy found it impossible to get his face in shot and "somebody sighted had to help me do that and then I uploaded it and I had to wait two days to be informed whether I've been accepted or not."

Once access to the NHS app was granted for Andy, he then looked around the app to find out what he could do with it, what information was available to him and how easy the functions are to access.

"There were some bits that were pretty accessible but it took me quite a long time to find certain things on there."



Andy stated that he thinks the NHS app is *“good... if a little clunky with some bits that were still not quite right to it,”* but Andy acknowledged that this could be down to the device that he was using to access the app.

“I think it's a really good app... I definitely would consider doing things like looking at medication and booking appointments on there because I think it's a good way forward. I think it's great you can log straight on and you've got your information right up there.”

Andy concluded by explaining that something like the NHS app does give him independence to manage his own healthcare, despite finding it difficult to set up his profile. *“It's nice to be in control and know about my records. It's interesting to have all my records on there.”*

One concern he does have is for other visually impaired people that *“don't have that sighted assistance to help them set it up”* could mean they are unable to access the NHS app. Andy believes that the sign up process *“needs to be easier and more straightforward... so you don't need to upload photos and videos.”*

*Names have been changed in this case study to provide anonymity.

April*

Before the focus group was arranged, April didn't use the NHS app very often, unless it was *"to remind myself if I had an appointment because I'm very forgetful."* April prefers to use her doctors' surgery website to get in touch with them, request an appointment and to view their opening times.

April described the website's appearance as *"terrible"* and *"clunky"* and feeling being exposed to *"lots of information being pushed at you"* on the website's homepage, which could make the content *"very difficult to read or to access and to kind of sift through."*

When navigating the website to request an appointment, April reported that it did not feel *"intuitive"* about how you get to the booking page. April thinks this process is made more difficult by the website asking patients if they *"could you do something else? Could you call somewhere else? Could you go somewhere else?"* before finally reaching a screen that does not even have a button to press for scheduling an appointment. This experience left April thinking, *"okay, you really don't want me to come in."*

Healthwatch Norfolk asked April what would encourage her to use the NHS app instead of the surgery website. April replied that being able to *"communicate directly with my GP surgery through the NHS app and being able to book appointments directly"* would be something she would find useful and encourage her to use the NHS app more.

April finds the NHS app a little confusing to navigate and suggested that the NHS app may benefit from being broken down a little into sections, particularly in the health record section.

"What would be great on the app is if with your medical record, they could also break it down and they could have an area where you could see your blood pressure history. You could just go and just look at your blood pressure history when it was taken and what the reading was. It would be great if you could separate that out so you could have quick access to some of that information."

April also suggested that a separate section would be useful for anybody receiving annual health checks so their weight, height and blood pressure can be clearly recorded. She believes this would stop patients needing to *"trawl through a lot of the lingo and jargon and letters that are in your health record, to help find what you're looking for."*

*Names have been changed in this case study to provide anonymity.



Ben*

Ben is a Norfolk resident who uses the NHS app in *"a limited capacity at the moment"* to order repeat prescriptions. Ben reported that he would be more likely to use his doctors' surgery website to book and manage appointments, but experiences having *"limited success with the website...as sometimes I can book stuff through there, but other times I can't."*

Ben believes he should be able to make an appointment through the website but the inability to smoothly access the booking system leaves him *"ending up ringing most of the time ... whereas if I had a reliable communication, that would be fantastic, I could just use the website."*

Due to a health condition, Ben's doctor requested that he regularly submits blood pressure readings through their website. This process proved incredibly difficult as Ben experienced inconsistent communication with his surgery when submitting his readings through the website.

"I'm aware some people are able to communicate directly with their surgery, but then for my surgery, you can to a certain degree, you can see messages that come up when they're trying to get hold of you but not consistently, so not every time."

The only way that Ben could consistently submit blood pressure readings was by sending a complaint or compliment every time with his personal readings through the surgery website. This meant that Ben *"didn't know where the readings went or who had access to them,"* leaving him feeling uncomfortable. To get this issue resolved, Ben reached out to the surgery admin staff to get an email address to submit his readings to, but he still does not receive a reply to acknowledge receiving the readings and his personal information.

"I'm a bit concerned that the loop is not closed in terms of communication and you just want to make sure that the meds you're taking are the right level that the readings are right. Then if you have to take any corrective action, you can do it quickly."

After experiencing these issues, Ben was left in a situation that meant he did not have the right dose of blood pressure medication, *"no one rung me back or messaged me back... the messaging facility is really important."* This left him feeling anxious and wondering whether his readings has been received and if they were being recorded accurately on his medical record.

Ben highlighted that his doctors' surgery website has *"changed several times over the last few years,"* and hoped that it would be *"fully accessible and tested against web accessibility standards,"* but he reported that it's not always accessible to him via his screen reading software.

After this experience, Ben spent time exploring the accessibility functions of different doctors' surgery websites around Norfolk and remarked, *"what baffles me is looking at other GP's ... they all seem to have a different approach to accessibility and there are key access issues for all these websites."*

Ben suggested that the surgery website could include an integrated *"reasonable adjustments profile"* or *"an access profile,"* to limit the number of times he finds himself repeating his accessibility needs both through the website and to primary care staff.

"Something that really frustrates me is each department that I have to go and see, I have to retell them my access needs. I asked them, "why do you keep sending me paper letters? I need emails. If you have any access needs, for example: wheelchair access I find it tiring to keep re-explaining myself."

Every few years Ben finds himself being asked to provide a selection of evidence when renewing his Personal Independence Payment claim. Previously, Ben has used Subject Access Requests *"for the dreaded assessments like PIP and they ask for evidence over and over again."* Ben thinks that it would be useful to have full access to his medical records either via the surgery website or NHS app a function that allows patients to download and print consultant letters and important medical letters.

"If there was a way for you to print off at home all the interactions you've had in preparation for a PIP assessment or a blue badge application... if there's a self-serve, you can then go, "right, you need that. I've got that. It's somewhere in there. Let me have a look at that and I know I had that appointment then let me just print me a copy or send me a copy" and I've done it myself I know I've got it. I feel my anxiety's gone down. I haven't irritated the practise and cost them time or money."

For regular prescription ordering and accessing his NHS number, Ben uses the NHS app at least once or twice a month through his iPhone and find this a convenient process.

"I just go on here and type in NHS and my app's there and I have it linked to my face ID, so I never have to remember a password, then I'm in and I can then see everything on the NHS app that I need."

Due to a Dyslexia diagnosis, one of the aspects of the NHS app that Ben finds difficult to navigate is the colour combination on the app to show if a person has selected a particular menu button.

"I have is Dyslexia which this part blends in quite a bit. When you've clicked on something, it goes to a shade of purple, which is very, very similar to the shade of blue, so I don't know if I've clicked it or not. I spend a lot of my time thinking "am I in the right place?" I'm looking at that and my brain is melting because I've got to really focus and read to know which way I'm clicking and then I might make a mistake, which means I then have to go back and just click through. I spend a lot of time unnecessarily clicking into sections which might not be relevant."



*Names have been changed in this case study to provide anonymity.

Stephen*

Stephen lives an active life in Norfolk and is occasionally supported by his sister to order repeat prescriptions and to book doctor's appointments through his doctors' surgery website.

"I don't use the website online service. My sister has all the prescriptions for me, it's because if I'm going through a bad phase then she needs access, she has access. I give her permission."

Stephen has downloaded the NHS app and regularly logs in to look at its functionality. When searching for his medical history, Stephen reported that he had to *"look through all the menus to look for what I want... to find a particular information within my record."*

He believes that a bit more description on the home page would help people to navigate the app better, noting that *"it can be a bit of a faff trying to find a way around."* Stephen finds it beneficial to be able to access Doctor and Consultant letters that he has been copied into and believes it *"might be useful if you can download letters from consultants to GPs if you've got the right information."*

Stephen emphasises that regular communication with his sister is incredibly important for consent and to *"always discusses with me what she's going to do beforehand."* This is vital to maintain trust in their relationship, especially as Stephen's sister now has access to his information through the NHS app.

"She can now access my app. But this is like for when I'm really not well and she needs to do something."

Stephen thinks that the NHS app could prove useful for someone living with a long term health condition or disability in the event of an emergency so *"there is a way that paramedics say could access my information through the app because then they've got quick, instant information."*



*Names have been changed in this case study to provide anonymity.

Will*

Will is a regular user of the NHS app and is quite aware of how it works and what it can be used for. Will uses the NHS app to order repeat prescriptions and to look at his electronic patient record and reports that he thinks *"it's a good app, but I feel it could go further. It could do more."*

Due to an undiagnosed condition, Will relies on regular medication to control pain, but experiences difficulties when he orders a new batch on the NHS app. Will is unable to track the status of his prescription or when it might be ready.

"When I order my prescriptions on the app, I've ordered them, but then I'm waiting. And the problem is I don't know what the process then is happening. So what I do is leave it three days... then I go down to the pharmacist and say, "have you got my prescription?" and they're like, oh no, not yet. We haven't had the doctor sign that one off, not yet. So I think, well, how long do I need to wait?"

When Will chases the status of his prescription, he has been informed that it can take up to 10 days until a doctor signs it off and he can be left in a situation where his tablets have run out. Previously, the Pharmacist has advised Will to call the Doctor if he requires an urgent prescription, which is not an accessible option for him.

"Obviously the problem with me, I can't call the doctor. Luckily because I use a BSL interpreter through work time I can access a phone call to the doctor by using my interpreter and I can get an emergency prescription that way."

If Will was unable to access a British Sign Language interpreter, he would resort to contacting his surgery through their website to complete a form requesting an emergency prescription. Unfortunately, the form states that it may take 48 hours to receive a response. Will remarked that it would be quicker for him to visit his doctors' surgery.

"As a hearing person you would just pick up the phone and make that call. But for me it's about then travelling to the pharmacist, travelling to the doctors because of communication."

Will would appreciate a feature on the NHS app that updates a patient about their prescription status so he can track it and know when it's ready to pick up. He believes the NHS app could be particularly useful when accessing other healthcare services, especially if a practitioner asks a patient about their current medication or treatment history.



"If I go to the dentist and they ask me is there any medication changes or anything? And I'm like, "oh yeah, I'm on this tablet" and they ask the name of your medication. They're like, "you should know what it is." And I'm like, "well yeah, I can't, like maybe I could finger spell it and it's how to pronounce it." Actually using the app and be able to show whether it's a dentist or whoever to go, "this is the medication I take", that's really useful."

*Names have been changed in this case study to provide anonymity.

Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) Service

The Prescription Ordering Direct service currently enables patients in Norfolk and Waveney to order repeat medications over the phone or online. This service is available in 18 of the 105 doctors' surgeries in Norfolk and Waveney but will be ceasing from 30th June 2024. This service will be replaced by a smaller roving team of expert pharmacy technical staff who will support surgeries with prescription ordering across the whole of Norfolk and Waveney. Current POD users will be encouraged to use alternative methods to order their prescriptions, including via the NHS app and their doctors' surgery website.

Healthwatch Suffolk (2024) conducted a piece of work exploring the concerns of current POD users once the service is closed. The report highlighted concerns for patients around not being aware of alternative methods to order medication online and called for improved communication about the availability of POD alternatives.

Digital Connect Event

On Friday 10th November 2023 the Digital Team at Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board hosted a “Digital Connect Event” at Dunston Hall. The aim of the event was to provide an opportunity for local system partners, digital leads and integrated care system representatives to see the progress being made in the digital strategy, help design digital inclusion work, and to ask how they would like to get involved in digital healthcare.

The organisations invited by the Digital Team included the acute hospitals, community hospitals, the county council, district councils, mental health trust, and representatives from the voluntary sector.

A member of the Digital Team reported that the event was created to “*promote all the great work that’s actually been happening and is happening across the whole system in Norfolk and Waveney. Anything to do with digital, so it could be virtual reality, virtual wards, the NHS app and what’s going on in that world and GP websites.*”

Some of the aims of the event included strengthening the joined up approach to digital inclusion for accessing healthcare in Norfolk, identifying if there are any problems with digital tools and considering if a system-wide digital inclusion strategy is required.



Figure 5. A poster about the Digital Connect Event

The main topics that were covered by the event included developments with:

- The Norfolk and Waveney Shared Care Record
- Electronic Patient Records
- Data Hubs
- Virtual Wards
- Assistive Technology

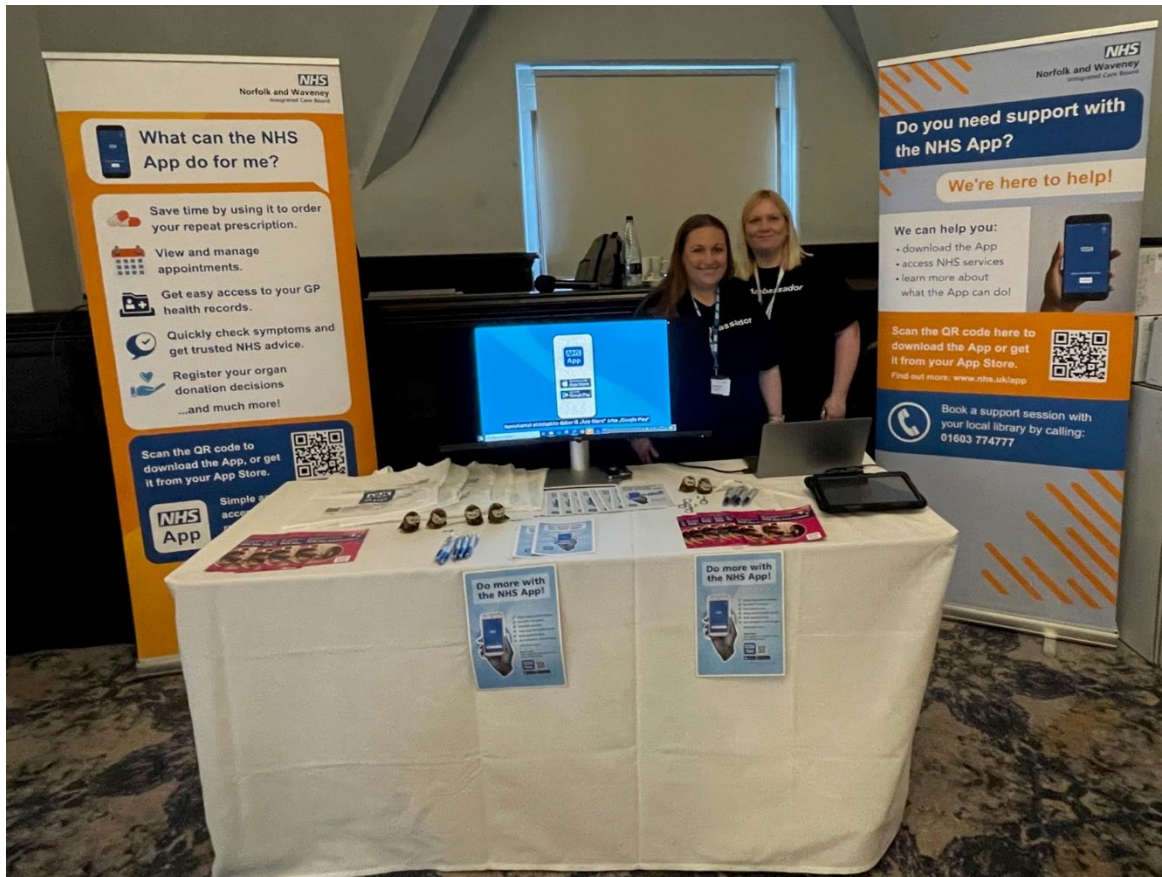


Figure 6. The NHS App Ambassador stand at the Digital Connect Event.

During the event, system partners were invited to showcase their digital tools and innovations to attendees via stalls located around the room. Exhibitors included Tech Skills for Life, NHS App Ambassadors, the Norfolk and Waveney Shared Care Record team, Cassius Service, Reverie (the Virtual Reality Project), representatives from the Virtual Ward team, Norfolk Library Service, the Social Care Online Portal, the Electronic Patient Record, representatives from CardMedic, Feebris and Healthwatch Norfolk.



Figure 7. Healthwatch Norfolk's stand at the Digital Connect Event

The Digital Team invited 12 digital leads from their system partners to host roundtable discussions to talk about their digital work. The talks were held throughout the day and included the following subjects:

- Health Literacy, Literacy and Digital Literacy (Norfolk Library Service)
- The Digital Inclusion Programme in Waveney (Suffolk County Council)
- The Role of AI and Innovative Experiences in Releasing Capacity (Feebris)
- Patient and Professional Experiences of Using Digital Tools in Primary Care (Healthwatch Norfolk)
- Net Zero – How Can Digital Technology Contribute to Saving the Planet? (Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board)
- Exploring How the ICS Partners Can Access Support from the Good Things Foundation for Place Based Digital Inclusion (Good Things Foundation)
- The Opportunities and Barriers to Data Sharing Across all ICS Partners? (Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board)
- Barriers to Digital Inclusion for 'Seldom Heard Groups' (Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board)
- The Role of VCSE Organisations in Achieving Digital Independence for Our Communities (Norfolk Community Foundation)
- Robotic Process Automation (RPA) – The Opportunities for Productivity Gains in General Practice (Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board)

📌 Digital Inclusion Strategy (Norfolk County Council)

The Digital Team created the roundtable discussions with the aim to introduce each *“facilitator as the expert in their topic relating to the digital inclusion agenda and as a great opportunity to actually get your voice heard.”*

For the Healthwatch Norfolk roundtable discussion, we asked system partners to think about how the advance in digital access to healthcare impacts society, specifically Norfolk citizens. We then asked each participant to take part in a mind-mapping exercise and consider the question *“as system partners, how can we work together to promote the NHS app?”* During the exercise, we asked each participant to consider their answer in terms of:

- 📌 What action their organisation could take to support the NHS app promotion.
- 📌 How their organisation could put this into practice and to consider who they would need to work with.
- 📌 The intended outcomes from this action.
- 📌 How they could measure if this action has any impact on the promotion of the NHS app.
- 📌 When they will aim to report back to the Digital Team when the action is complete.

The answers that each system partner provided were then recorded on an NHS Digital Team Outcome Form as ideas for how they could work with each organisation in the future. This process was the same for each of the 12 roundtable presenters and enabled new ideas to flow between the Digital Team and system partners to support the advancement of digital access to healthcare.

Raising awareness of the NHS app

The NHS England (2023b) report, 'Delivery Plan for Recovering Access to Primary Care' stated that they will be investing £645 million over two years to "expand services offered by community pharmacies." The report outlined that NHS England would like to enable patients in over 90% of practices to see their electronic patient records, receive practice messages, book appointments and order repeat prescriptions using the NHS App by March 2024. According to the report, this would enable each surgery to "tackle the 8am rush and make it easier and quicker for patients to get the help they need from primary care." This is something that the NHS Digital Team at Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board have already undertaken work on and they have been working with their NHS app ambassadors to raise awareness and sign ups of the NHS app with Norfolk surgeries.

Lawson Road Surgery

Lawson Road Surgery is based in the Lawson Road Health Centre, with a Boots pharmacy co-located in the health centre and provides health care to approximately 8,500 patients. Their team processes approximately 350 prescription scripts a day for their patients.



Figure 8. A map of the Lawson Road Surgery catchment area and photo of the front of the Surgery building.

In late 2022, due to clinical safety reasons, Lawson Road Surgery stopped taking prescription requests over the telephone. Most prescriptions are ordered by patients either through the pharmacy, on the patient's behalf, or through the NHS app, the surgery website or by patients physically drop off their script to reception staff.

In 2023, the Boots pharmacy located within the Health Centre gave notice of their intention to withdraw their managed repeat prescription service from 4th July 2023, which was giving patients a non-digital option to request their medication. Lawson

Road Surgery faced a potentially unmanageable increase in workload to process the paper request forms and there was no resource to support patients to access the NHS app. Healthwatch Norfolk spoke to the Practice Manager to find out more about the situation.

“Boots notified us that they were struggling with various issues, including ordering prescriptions for patients. There had been delays to patients getting scripts and then a bit of ping pong for the patient between us and the pharmacy. The surgery met with the pharmacy managers and area managers and came up with a plan to have a clear audit trail.

We decided that we needed to do something and this would be promoting the NHS app because you can order prescriptions via that. Obviously, that helps us as well with digital access because if we get more patients signed up to that it will reduce contacts to the surgery because patients can look at test results, letters and referrals and appointments on the NHS app. They're bolting on more and more functionality onto the NHS app, so we reached out to the digital team at Norfolk and Waveney ICB and asked for support.”



As a result, Lawson Road Surgery, Norwich reached out to the Digital Team at Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board to support them with a public engagement event for their 8,500 patients. The primary focus of this event (which was supported by Boots pharmacy) was to encourage as many patients as possible, except for those classed as vulnerable, to move over to the NHS App or the surgery website to order repeat prescriptions.



Figure 9. Boots Staff at the Lawson Road Health Centre.

Lawson Road Surgery were very keen to promote the use the NHS app and one of the partners said, *“not only is it easy for a patient to order their scripts, but they also then can check their bloods, can check their medical records, can alter their pharmacy, they can then start using the whole NHS app.”* The surgery staff are aware that the NHS app will worry some patients, particularly vulnerable patients that *“it’s complicated or that it’s difficult”* and wanted to invite their patients to the event to show them how to sign up, login and use the NHS app.

The benefits of encouraging more patients to order their repeat prescriptions through the NHS app include:

- a reduction in paper scripts and wasted or unwanted medication.
- a clearer audit trail.
- fewer calls to the surgery for test results.

The event was promoted through the doctors’ surgery Website (via an NHS App tile and information on the surgery’s website), on the news section of their website, via social media, text messages sent to patients and Lawson Road Surgery created their own

three page poster with information regarding the changes to ordering repeat prescriptions.

NHS

Ordering your repeat prescriptions is changing

What are repeat prescriptions?

Many people have repeat prescriptions; this means you can get your medicines on a regular basis without having to go to your GP Practice every time.

Some people order these repeat prescriptions themselves and others choose to use a pharmacy or dispensing company to order medicines on their behalf.

What is changing?

From 1 September 2020, you (or a person nominated on your behalf) will have to order repeat prescriptions directly from your GP Practice.

You will no longer be able to order repeat prescriptions through your pharmacy, an online pharmacy or other dispensing contractor.

What is not changing?

If you already order repeat prescriptions from your GP Practice, you will not be affected and don't need to do anything.

If you collect your medicine from your local pharmacy, or have it delivered to your door you can continue with these arrangements.

If you receive your medication through a monitored dosage system, for example a dosette box or a blister pack, this change will not affect you.

Electronic Repeat Dispensing

Ask your GP Practice or pharmacy about Electronic Repeat Dispensing. It's quick and easy and can save you time.

What do I need to do?

From 1 September 2020, or earlier, you need to ask your GP Practice for a repeat prescription. There are a number of ways to do this:

OPTION 1

Order online via your GP Practice website

First register with your GP Practice for their online services.

To do this, visit your Practice with photo ID (passport or driving licence) and complete a short form.

OPTION 2

Order through the new NHS App

Download the NHS App to your smartphone or tablet from iTunes App Store or Google Play.

You then need to set up an NHS login to use the NHS App. You can use the details your GP Practice gave you when you registered for their online services. Ask your GP practice for a letter containing these details if you don't have a copy.

Or use one of the following documents;

- Passport
- Driving licence (UK full or provisional / EU full)
- European national identity card

As part of the set up process, you need to record a short video. This is so the NHS can check your face matches the face in your photo ID. It is also the best way to ensure no one is trying to use your ID to access your medical record.

OPTION 3

In person, at the surgery

Simply tick the medicines required on the white, tear-off section of your prescription and drop it into your GP Practice.

Figure 10. A three page poster about the changes to the prescription ordering process.

Clinical Systems Team members from the Digital Team worked with Lawson Road Surgery to ensure their Clinical System settings were optimised to support Primary Care Staff with digital skills, so that they are comfortable with the NHS App registration and login processes and would be able to support patients to access it.



Figure 11. The Clinical Systems team, Lawson Road Surgery staff and Digital Health Hub teams working together to promote the NHS app.

The Digital Inclusion Team attended the event to inform patients about the NHS app and to support them to sign up and access the app. The team were supported by the Digital Health Hub, Digital Champions and Healthwatch Norfolk to promote the event and provide support on the day.



Figure 12. Promoting the Digital Health Hub at Lawson Road Surgery.

Case Study: Mundesley Medical Centre

Mundesley Medical Centre have been promoting the NHS app and supporting their patients in accessing it. Mundesley Medical Centre is a busy, practice with one doctor, located in the village centre (see figure 13). The practice has a medical staff of four and provides care for over 5,800 patients in Mundesley and the surrounding area, which includes North Walsham and Cromer.

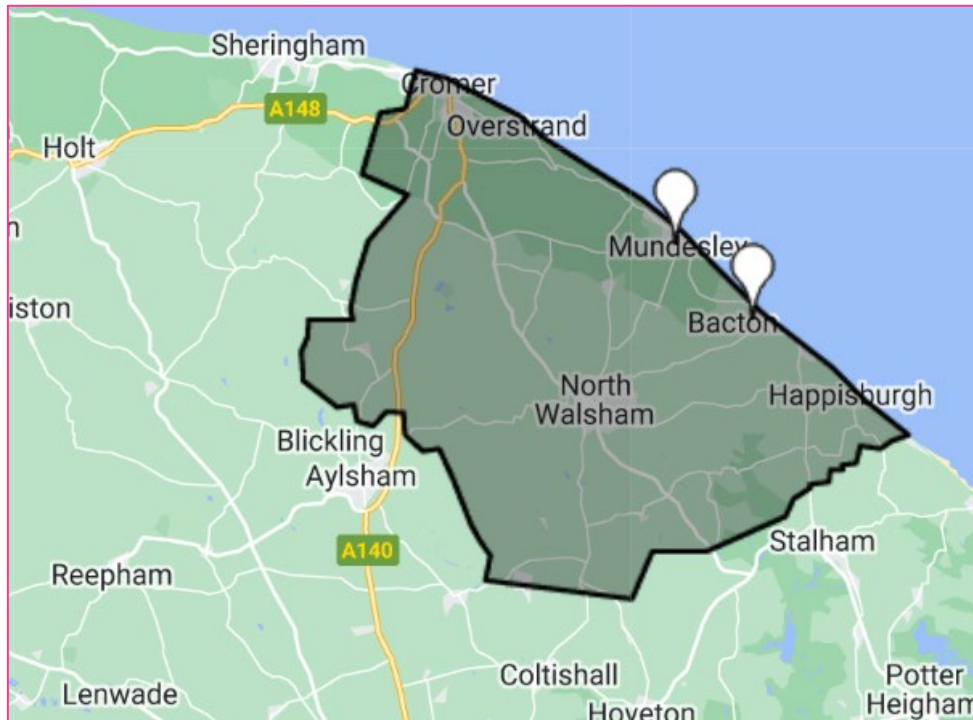


Figure 13. A map showing the catchment area for Mundesley Medical Practice

The practice faced issues with workload due to the number of paper and phone message prescription orders, and so decided to take action to do things differently as this was becoming unmanageable. They began to promote the NHS app with patients and ensured that letters were sent to those ordering prescriptions via paper or phone rather than promoting it electronically. The surgery also wanted to promote use of the app to help patients in booking appointments and accessing any results or medical records, reducing the overall amount of calls they were getting that were going to voicemail.

“We wanted to improve the processes in our dispensary to improve the workload because we were getting up to 120 messages on our voicemail a day on a Monday and so many paper prescriptions. And it’s such a thing that has so many steps in order to actually make the order that it can reduce our workload massively and also is a lot easier for our patients if they know how to use it [the NHS app].”

From sending out letters, the surgery saw an increase in the number of patients using the NHS app to order their prescriptions. However, there were those that were unsure of how to use the app. In response the practice set up clinics that would allow patients to come along and learn how to use, and make the most of, the app. Since starting their clinics in the summer the practice have helped approximately 70 people, including couples and families, to get the app set up on their device and help them through step-by-step what they need to do when using it at home. Thanks to the promotions of the app and clinics the practice has been able to demonstrate an increase in app registration and prescription order via the app (see table 2).



Figure 14. The Care Coordinator and PPG Members promoting the NHS app at Mundesley Medical Centre.

The Care Coordinator at the practice has found that the clinics are helping with *“enhancing their [the patients] digital confidence”*. They felt that it is *“quite rewarding”*, helping patients go from *“not knowing how to even use the phone”* to being able to *“use it quite easily”* and seeing that as prescription orders via the app increase. Feedback from patients on their appointments was all positive:

- *“I found the appointment very helpful and was given time to review what I was told. I have use app now with no problems. Thanks.”*
- *“I was very grateful for the help I received from the lovely member of staff at the health centre. I am now able to use the app.”*
- *“I saw [the Care Coordinator] to help with NHS app who was great – she spent a long time with me, she was brilliant and very patient.”*

- “[The Care Coordinator] was absolutely brilliant, made it so easy for me to understand.”

To further help promote the NHS app among their patients, the practice approached their Patient Participation Group (PPG). Their PPG meet three times a year and discuss issues that directly affect the surgery and healthcare in Norfolk. The Patient Participation Group at Mundesley Medical Centre gives patients the opportunity to contribute their ideas for improving the services offered. The group works with the practice on a variety of issues, such as:

- Acting in an advisory capacity for future surgery plans,
- Improving communication between patients and the practice,
- Providing a patient perspective on suggestions that benefit the practice,
- Assisting with patient satisfaction questionnaires,
- Forming action plans to address patient concerns,
- Representing the practice at specific events,
- Providing the practice with practical support to implement changes.

PPG members volunteered to help at the clinics by “helping people download the apps or standing at the dispensary desk to then be able to promote the app and show people that we [the practice] can help them use it.” One of the volunteers has previous experience of using technology in a clinical setting and the other has experience promoting, teaching, and helping people learn to use online banking apps.



Figure 15. Two Mundesley Patient Participation Group members promoting the NHS app inside the reception area.

The PPG volunteers have found that there are mixed responses when talking with other patients about if they use the app, why they may not, if they are interested in using it, and if not then why not.

“There are some people that are just adamant that they’re not going to do anything online similarly to online banking. [...] There was one lady who told me that she definitely wasn’t going to do it because it was creating a two-tier society, those with computers and those without. So she didn’t want anything to do with it. But there are people that sort of say that they tried but they’d not been successful. So they were the ones that, actually, we were able to persuade and then help and get onto the app. And then once they started using it and found how easy it was. They were really very grateful for that.”

Whilst they felt that some people can be *“naturally worried with the internet”*, being able to explain how the app works helps to *“dispel some of that fear”*. By involving PPG members in promoting the app and helping patients, the volunteers felt this helped to build the confidence of the patients they were reaching. *“If they see somebody that looks like them, and they’re confident, then it gives them a little bit of confidence”*.



Figure 16. Promoting the NHS app at Mundesley Medical Centre.

With the help of the PPG members volunteering, letter promotions, social media posts, and the clinics, the practice saw an increase of 774% in patients registering with the NHS app. The added increase of patients using the app for prescription ordering has greatly helped the dispensary improve *“workload but also the safety side”* as less manual input is required and time saved.

“We have so much to do in the dispensary, not just the process of the prescription. You have to then get it dispensed and checked and bagged as well as receiving orders and

all the other things that we have to do. So it means that it's reduced the amount of time that we spend doing the phone. Obviously the online orders have increased but they are far quicker to process and are more accurate because it's an automated thing on the system."

Mundesley Medical Centre App Figures - 2023

Category	July	August	% increase between July and August
Monthly Prescriptions	19	166	774%
Repeat Prescriptions	547	865	58%
Logins	3384	5337	58%
Record Views	1278	1684	32%
Appointments Booked	4	8	100%
Appointments Cancelled	4	8	100%

Table 2: A table showing increase in NHS app use for Mundesley Medical Centre between July and August 2023.

Breckland Alliance NHS App Inclusion Event

On 25th January 2024 School Lane Surgery and Grove Surgery worked with Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board and Thetford Library to host a joint information event. The event focused on helping patients to get the most out of the NHS App and the surgery website.



Figure 17. The Breckland Alliance NHS App Inclusion Event at Thetford Library.

The aims of the event included:

- Demystifying the NHS App by unlocking features for patients and allowing them to discover the full potential of the NHS App with guided support.
- Enabling patients to download and set up the NHS app. Staff from both surgeries and NHS ambassadors taught patients how to download and set up the NHS App on their smartphone or tablet through a step-by-step process.
- Teaching patients how to use the NHS app. The NHS App ambassadors demonstrated how to order repeat prescriptions, view test results and view clinical records.
- Providing technical support to patients who had downloaded the NHS app but were experiencing problems.



Figure 18. A poster advertising the NHS app Inclusion Event and promotional material and leaflets available to the event attendees.

During the event, one of the practice managers introduced a slideshow for attendees and talked about navigating the surgery’s website and online access to their services. This included a demonstration of how to navigate the website, how to find important contact details and how to access helpful health tips and advice.

After the slideshow, Healthwatch Norfolk provided patients with an overview of the work on digital access to primary care over the past two years. The event concluded with a question and answer session with the NHS ambassador and an opportunity to learn more about the app on a one to one basis.

Healthwatch Norfolk spoke to one of the practice managers responsible for the event and asked them to provide feedback on the success of the event.

“The NHS App Inclusion Event held at Thetford Library was a resounding success in promoting digital health tools and bridging the gap in digital literacy.

Focused on advocating for the NHS App, the event aimed to alleviate any concerns or barriers to its use by providing hands-on demonstration, explanation of the app and its features as well as personalised guidance. Participants were not only introduced to the functionalities of the NHS App but also received valuable insights on navigating the School Lane and Grove Surgery websites. This will increase efficiency within the surgery and reduce the number of calls to those only who are not able to use the app.

The positive response from attendees underscores the need for ongoing engagement and education to reduce digital exclusion. With plans for future events, the initiative aims to empower the community with the knowledge and confidence to embrace digital tools for their healthcare needs.”



Hoveton and Wroxham Health and Wellbeing Show

On 21st September 2023 Hoveton and Wroxham Patient Participation Group hosted their second annual Health and Wellbeing Show at Hoveton Village Hall. The event was linked in with the Alzheimer's Society to promote awareness of the condition and World Alzheimer's Day and to Prostate Cancer UK.



Figure 19. A poster advertising the Hoveton and Wroxham Health and Wellbeing Show.

During the event, there were many charities, local organisations and healthcare providers that attended including:

- The Community Connector Team
- Healthwatch Norfolk
- Hear for Norfolk (providing Hearing Aid advice)
- Hoveton & Wroxham Medical Centre
- The Wellbeing Service and Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust
- Lions
- Neatishead Gym
- MIND (Mental Health Support)
- Samaritans
- Norfolk Library Service and the Digital Health Hub
- Assistive Technology Team
- Rotary
- First Responders
- Empathy (providers of suicide bereavement support)

- Wroxham and Hoveton Patient Participation Group
- Supporting Women Activities Network (SWAN)
- UK Fishing School
- u3a (University of the Third Age)



Figure 20. The Healthwatch Norfolk stand at the Hoveton and Wroxham Health and Wellbeing Show.

Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board also attended the event to promote the introduction of the Shared Care Record. NHS app ambassadors from the Digital Team were present to support members of the public to download and access the NHS app.



Figure 21. The Norfolk and Waveney Shared Care Record stand.

The event gave the opportunity for local health and social care organisations to raise awareness of their services, for the Digital Team to promote how patients can digitally access their health records and primary care services, for professionals to collect feedback from the public about their services and for members of the public to learn more about local services, ask any questions they may have and give everyone the chance to network in one place.

The event was well received by local attendees and some of the feedback included:

“It was very well attended given the time of day, the PPG members were very welcoming and there was enough space for everyone.”

“The event was very well attended, with good engagement with the public. It’s fantastic to see the community being able to access information and talk to someone about health and well-being because many people might not know certain services are available.”

“The Village Hall had an excellent variety of stalls and made for a very relaxed vibe with plenty to see.”

Sheringham Medical Practice

Sheringham Medical Practice is a rural dispensing practice about 20 miles from Norwich in North Norfolk. The practice has 9,400 patients covering a rural population in several local villages. They also look after a range of nursing and residential homes, mental health care homes and have a high number of temporary residents.

The Practice recently employed a digital transformation lead who meets regularly with primary care team members to discuss if there were any digital tools that they would like to introduce to improve access to their services.



Figure 22. A photo of Sheringham Medical Practice.

The team at Sheringham Medical Practice have also been regularly meeting with their Patient Participation Group (PPG) to work together on new projects, utilise their skills and ask them for their feedback on future plans from a patient perspective. Healthwatch Norfolk spoke to the Practice Manager who said they have been working with the PPG to change their website.

“Prior to that we asked for their opinions on what currently on the website was working well and what wasn't working well to help us with a new website and get it to where we want things to be. We also asked if the information on the website was correct, was it useful from a patient perspective and we used that going forward.”

Once the website was up and running for a couple of months, practice staff asked members from the PPG to put together a set of questions for the team to send out as a patient questionnaire to all of their patients. For the patients they have consent from, the practice turned the questionnaire into a Microsoft form which they can send out to patients via text message. This will enable patients to feedback on anything that needs changing to the website that staff might not have thought of.

The Practice Manager said that it has been *“a great exercise we're doing with them [patients] and the PPG members that we've got who are helping us with it are quite keen to do more things like that going forward.”*

Sheringham Medical Practice moved from Footfall over to an AccurRx (Iatro) hosted website which staff found worked *“quite well and integrated with SystemOne as well.”* The Practice Manager explained that Footfall did begin to integrate with SystemOne, although there was *“quite a lot of configuration you had to do for it... whereas AccurRx is pretty much ready to go and with our website it looks a lot neater as well.”* Primary Care staff based within the surgery reported that it was *“easier to find things”* on the new website from a patient perspective and appears *“to be a lot more uniformed and easier to use than Footfall.”*

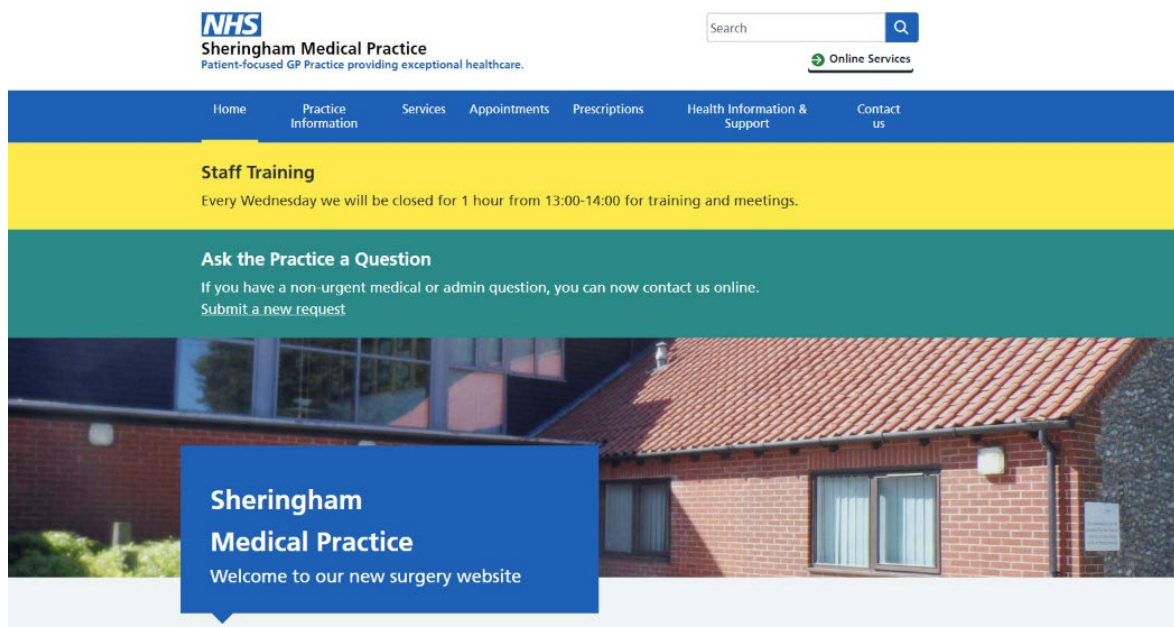


Figure 23. The new Sheringham Medical Practice website.

Healthwatch Norfolk asked the Practice Manager if they have been promoting the NHS App. The Practice Manager reported that they advertised the NHS app during Covid but have promoted the app even more because *“it's just so much easier for patients to use now.”* Sheringham Medical Practice serves an area that has quite a few elderly patients. Their Practice Manager believes that a high proportion of older patients have smart phones and *“most of them, they are quite good at doing stuff like this.”*

The Practice Manager contacted the NHS App team at Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board. Together they arranged a meeting that included the surgery's digital transformation lead and two members from the PPG. The aim of the meeting was to ask for support *with “doing a real push and advertise the NHS app”* during the covid clinics.

“We've also got an iPad, which we had supplied to us and we've got a test patient for the NHS app now as well, which the digital team sorted out for us. We've got the NHS app on the tablet, got it all set up, and the two PPG members came in for the Covid clinic and they had the app with them. They could show patients what it can do. In the waiting room, we have lots of posters and leaflets around the surgery about the NHS app... around the waiting room as well.”

Together with PPG members, staff at Sheringham Medical Practice came up with a few ideas to promote use of the NHS app with their patients. The ideas included approaching patients that came in with their paper prescriptions to hand in and telling them about the ability to order prescriptions through the app so they don't have to come in each time. PPG members were able to go through the registration process with patients and set them up on the app. Staff also spoke to the dispensary and asked them to hand out an NHS app leaflet with each prescription. The Practice Manager realises the value and support the PPG gives the practice.

“The PPG are really handy and helpful to help with things like this and I think it's important to get them on board and help with things like this instead of having a discussion about things that are going wrong. It's good to have them proactive and helping us move forward.”

Increasing Public Accessibility to Information About Digital Tools – College of West Anglia

The Healthwatch Norfolk survey conducted between 1st November 2023 and 2nd January 2024 heard from 813 people aged 18 and over about their experiences of digitally accessing their doctors' surgery. Only 0.6% (5) survey respondents aged between 18 and 25 completed the survey and out of these 5 responses, only one person used the NHS app monthly to view and manage their appointments.

Due to the low response rate from Norfolk residents aged 25 and under, Healthwatch Norfolk organised an engagement event on 28th February 2024 at the King's Lynn Campus of the College of West Anglia to find out about student awareness of the NHS app.



Figure 24. The King's Lynn campus at the College of West Anglia.

The King's Lynn campus serves as the base for the University Centre West Anglia (UcWA) and provides various vocational programmes, A-levels, T-levels, and apprenticeship opportunities.

We spoke to 40 students aged between 18 and 26 and asked them questions about the NHS app. For a breakdown of the demographic data, please see appendix 8.

The questions we asked included:

- 1) How do you usually access your doctors' surgery? For example: booking or managing appointments, ordering prescriptions or arranging vaccinations.)
- 2) If you use the NHS App, what do you like about the NHS App?
- 3) If you use the NHS App, how could it be improved?
- 4) If you do not use the NHS App, what would encourage you to use it?

5) What questions do you have about the NHS app?



Figure 25. The Healthwatch Norfolk stand at the College of West Anglia.

9 (23%) students regularly used the NHS app to order repeat prescriptions and view their medical record but did not use any of the other features. 31 (77%) did not regularly use the NHS app or had downloaded it but since deleted it without ever using it. Of the students that used the NHS app, they liked how easy it is to access and download the app, being able to see their medical history and NHS number, the convenience of ordering prescriptions and being able to log in with the face detection feature. The most common reason for not downloading and using the NHS app given by 10 students (25%) was that a parent or guardian arranged appointments and ordered prescriptions on their behalf, (25%, 10).

We asked each student that did not use the NHS App, what would encourage them to use it and they gave the following answers:

- 🕒 If I could make appointments with my Doctor and view up to date test results.
- 🕒 I think my Mum has the NHS app but I don't know much about it. I would need to know more.
- 🕒 I haven't needed the NHS app so far; therefore I don't know what it is.
- 🕒 Being able to book appointments.
- 🕒 Accessing my NHS Number.
- 🕒 I'm quite fortunate that I rarely get ill. I don't know who my GP is. Would the app tell me that?
- 🕒 The NHS app would be easy to access on my phone, but my Mum organises appointments for me.
- 🕒 My Mum organises my prescriptions for me. I'm turning 17 soon and maybe I will download it then.

Healthwatch Norfolk also wanted to know if the students had any questions about the NHS app, which we were able to answer on the day of the visit. The questions included:

- 🗨 How long does the NHS app take to download?
- 🗨 Does it show my NHS number?
- 🗨 I don't know anything about the NHS app. What information is available and in what format?
- 🗨 Where can I access information about the NHS app and how to use it?

Young People and Accessing the NHS App

Introduced in December 2018, the NHS App seeks to offer a simple and convenient way to access NHS services either on a smart phone or tablet.

To use the NHS App you must be aged 13 years or older. If a person is aged between 13 and 15, your doctor will need to individually approve their access to many of the services, in accordance with any local policies, and the young person may not be able to access all services.

If a young person is believed to have enough understanding to fully appreciate what's involved in their treatment and competence around managing their own healthcare (known as being 'Gillick competent') they may also request access to their electronic patient records.

As a young person, to access this service via the NHS App, you will need to register for an NHS account:

- 🟢 if you are 16 or over and already registered on the NHS App, you will automatically be granted access when the service is switched on.
- 🟢 if you are below the age of 16 and registered on the NHS App, you will automatically be granted access when you reach the age of 16.
- 🟢 if you are aged 11 – 16, you can apply to your doctors' surgery for access to your health record, but it will not be granted automatically.
- 🟢 if you are aged 11 – 13 and your doctors' surgery agrees, your access will be limited to the web version of the app.

If a young person has any questions about access the NHS app themselves, they should contact their local doctors' surgery.

NHS Youth Forum – Digital Access Report

The NHS Youth Forum is a group of 25 young people aged between 14 and 25 who meet regularly to discuss how the NHS could improve and influence change within the health services provided for young people.

Their Digital Access Report (2023) was written by the Digital Sub-group of the NHS Youth Forum and focuses on changes that could be implemented within the NHS App. Their project was based around three key areas: Promotion, Accessibility and Personalisation of the NHS app.

The Digital Sub-group conducted a survey in December 2022 to understand people's feelings and opinions surrounding the app and received 341 responses. 77% (263) of survey respondents admitted never having used the NHS App and 27% (92) of survey respondents found it difficult to understand the information on the NHS app.

Their survey revealed that respondents felt there are issues surrounding the NHS App, including a lack of awareness across all age groups about the NHS App and uncertainty surrounding its use. The report discovered that there was a need for the NHS App especially for young people because they can often feel anxious when accessing healthcare services. They made several recommendations for making the NHS app more accessible for young people, including:

- An increase in promotion using both digital and 'print' methods to be inclusive of different demographics.
- Implementing customisability by providing users the choice of other languages, screen colour and text size.
- Having more images and less text on the main pages of the NHS app could act to both convey information without words.
- Implement a friendlier user interface, through images, dyslexia-friendly customisation, and larger text.

What this means

As digital technology and access to health and social care evolves, it's essential for healthcare providers, system partners and Norfolk residents to be kept up to date. This will not only encourage Norfolk residents to digitally access primary care but may also inspire them to work on their digital literacy skills. This can be achieved by raising awareness of digital tools and increasing public accessibility to information about digital tools.

We wanted to discover if the NHS Digital Team at Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board are continuing to raise awareness of digital tools to both patients and healthcare professionals. This included our year two recommendations to provide either in person or signposting information to patients to empower them to become more digitally literate and support and enable them to digitally access their GP surgery.

During year two of the project, there has been evidence that the Digital Team have been connecting local Primary Care Networks, health and social care professionals, and patient participation group members to raise awareness of digital tools. The Digital Team and NHS ambassadors have been working with local doctors' surgeries (for example: working with Lawson Road Surgery and the Breckland Alliance) to support patients with accessing the NHS app and promoting the support provided by the Digital Health Hub.

There were two cohorts of Norfolk residents identified in the year three work that may need more focus on when promoting access to doctors' surgeries via the NHS app. There needs to be a focus on supporting younger people and former Prescription on Demand users to learn about and be able to use the NHS app as an alternative to calling their surgery or pharmacy to order medication or access primary care services.

Healthwatch Norfolk wanted to explore how the Digital Team share knowledge of doctors' surgeries using digital tools innovatively in Norfolk to support digital access for citizens. One of the year two recommendations stated that the Digital Team could encourage Primary Care Networks to share innovative examples of digital tool use between them, potentially via a physical or online digital networking event. This recommendation was met through the Digital Connect Event which encouraged different health and social care providers to showcase their digital tools.

A year two recommendation stated that the NHS Digital team should ensure that all digital innovation is independently evaluated, focusing on patient experience and satisfaction. This is still something Healthwatch Norfolk can facilitate and support the NHS Digital Team with.

Within the year two report, Healthwatch Norfolk recognised the importance of Norfolk residents being able to access information regarding the NHS app and Shared Care Record. We recommended that the Digital Team could liaise more with Patient Participation Groups (PPG) to promote digital access to primary care. During the year three work, there has been evidence that the Digital Team has been working with PPG members to promoting access to the NHS app and the arrival of the Shared Care Record to both healthcare professionals and patients. The Digital Team's involvement in the Hoveton and Wroxham PPG Health and Wellbeing Event is one example of this.

One issue highlighted from the Focus Group Healthwatch Norfolk hosted was how accessible the NHS app is for different people's needs and how this should also be reflected in any communication materials used to promote the NHS app. Therefore, it might be worth considering forming an accessibility panel to check that digital communication materials are accessible whether in a paper or digital format and to user test the NHS app to provide feedback.

Recommendations

Raising Awareness of Digital Tools

- Promote awareness of the NHS app and availability to younger patients in Norfolk to empower them to be independent with their healthcare needs.
- Any communications about the Shared Care Record should include information that addresses the questions identified in our survey (see page 23).

Innovative Use of Digital Tools in Primary Care

- Ensure that all digital innovation is independently evaluated, focusing on patient experience and satisfaction. This is work that Healthwatch Norfolk have previously undertaken and could support the NHS Digital Team with.

Increasing Public Accessibility to Information About Digital Tools

- Continuously liaise with Patient Participation Groups for feedback on the accessibility of communication materials and digital tools or form an accessibility panel to check that communication materials relating to digital tools are accessible whether in a paper or digital format.

Future Research

- Encourage more research into digital access for those who are digitally illiterate or who do not have access to technology.

Response from NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB)

I would like to express my appreciation for the comprehensive and insightful report on digital access to healthcare in Norfolk. The findings outlined in this document are both enlightening and encouraging. It is heartening to see the level of awareness and proactive steps being taken to enhance digital communications and access to healthcare services.

The recommendations provided, such as promoting digital literacy among younger patients and ensuring accessibility for those without digital access, are crucial for creating an inclusive healthcare environment. The ongoing work by Healthwatch Norfolk to understand and address barriers to digital access is invaluable and will undoubtedly contribute to better healthcare outcomes for all.

Anne Heath, Associate Director of Digital, NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB

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Appendix

Appendix 1: How this work fits with the Year Two Healthwatch Norfolk Report Recommendations

Recommendation Number	Theme / Digital Tool	Recommendation
1A	Raising awareness of digital tools	Raising awareness of the presence of the digital tools available to local people and providing opportunities for patient support and upskilling to be able to digitally access their GP surgery.
1B		The Digital Team within Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System should connect with local Primary Care Networks to link in with Peer Support Workers, Social Prescribers and Community Connectors to promote the free services provided by the Digital Health Hub. This will enable healthcare professionals to refer patients to the Digital Health Hub to learn about digitally accessing healthcare services and information.
1C		Explore training and nominating a Digital Champion within each Primary Care Network, GP practice or Patient Participation Group to promote, refer and / or train people using the Digital health Hub via the Learn My Way platform.
2A	Innovative use or promotion of digital tools within primary care	The ICB has knowledge and examples of GP Surgeries using digital tools innovatively in Norfolk and Waveney to support digital access for citizens.

2B		Encourage Primary Care Networks to share innovative examples of digital tool use between them, potentially via a physical or online digital networking event including a presentation from the Digital Health Hub.
2C		Ensure that all digital innovation is independently evaluated, focusing on patient experience and satisfaction. This is work that Healthwatch Norfolk have previously undertaken and could support the NHS Digital Team with.
3A	Norfolk and Waveney residents can access information regarding the NHS app and Shared Care Record.	Continuously liaise with Patient Participation Groups for feedback on the accessibility of communication materials and digital tools or form an accessibility panel to check that communication materials relating to digital tools are accessible whether in a paper or digital format.
3B		Patient Participation Groups are a valuable and unique connector between GP surgeries and patients. PPGs could be utilised more in research and feedback, especially if they are provided with knowledge, understanding and training. This could be useful for promoting access to the NHS app and the arrival of the Shared Care Record to both healthcare professionals and patients.
3C		Create a straightforward, accessible guide to the NHS app that encourages Norfolk citizens to use it as the digital front door to primary healthcare.

Outcome One: Raising Awareness of Digital Tools

HWN working with NHS App ambassadors and Digital Health Hub to raise awareness of NHS App for accessing appointments and ordering repeat medication within Norfolk GP surgeries. HWN to produce a case study about the Lawson Road Surgery Event.

1A Raising Awareness of Digital Tools

3A Norfolk and Waveney residents can access information regarding the NHS app and Shared Care Record.

3B PPGs could be utilised more in research and feedback, especially if they are provided with knowledge, understanding and training. This could be useful for promoting access to the NHS app and the arrival of the Shared Care Record to both healthcare professionals and patients.

Healthwatch Norfolk to repeat the public year one survey.

1A Raising Awareness of Digital Tools

3A Norfolk and Waveney residents can access information regarding the NHS app and Shared Care Record.

3B Patient Participation Groups are a valuable and unique connector between GP surgeries and patients. PPGs could be utilised more in research and feedback, especially if they are provided with knowledge, understanding and training. This could be useful for promoting access to the NHS app and the arrival of the Shared Care Record to both healthcare professionals and patients.

Invite patients to be interviewed in more depth about their experiences of access to digital tools for primary care (including online consultation systems, clinical systems (including electronic patient records) and the NHS app.

1A Raising Awareness of Digital Tools

3A Norfolk and Waveney residents can access information regarding the NHS app and Shared Care Record.

3B Patient Participation Groups are a valuable and unique connector between GP surgeries and patients. PPGs could be utilised more in research and feedback, especially if they are provided with knowledge, understanding and training. This could be useful for promoting access to the NHS app and

	the arrival of the Shared Care Record to both healthcare professionals and patients.
CWA Event	1A Raising Awareness of Digital Tools 3A Norfolk and Waveney residents can access information regarding the NHS app and Shared Care Record.

Outcome Two: Innovative Use of Digital Tools in Primary Care

Healthwatch Norfolk to produce Case Studies of local GP Surgeries (according to old CCG localities) that utilise digital tools in an innovative way	2A The ICB has knowledge and examples of GP Surgeries using digital tools innovatively in Norfolk and Waveney to support digital access for citizens.
Healthwatch Norfolk to facilitate a workshop at the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board “Digital Connect” Event	2B Encourage Primary Care Networks to share innovative examples of digital tool use between them, potentially via a physical or online digital networking event including a presentation from the Digital Health Hub.
Discussions for extending Digital Tools research and networking with digital healthcare stakeholders at the Digital Connect Event	2C Ensure that all digital innovation is independently evaluated, focusing on patient experience and satisfaction. This is work that Healthwatch Norfolk have previously undertaken and could support the NHS Digital Team with.

Outcome Three: Increasing the Public Accessibility of Digital Tools
Norfolk and Waveney residents can access information regarding the NHS app.

Host focus groups with members of the public and PPG members to gauge awareness of the NHS App and invite members to ask questions about it. The focus groups will be held with people who represent Core20+5 demographics and have a focus on accessibility.	3A Continuously liaise with Patient Participation Groups for feedback on the accessibility of communication materials and digital tools or form an accessibility panel to check that communication materials relating to digital tools are accessible whether in a paper or digital format. 3B Patient Participation Groups are a valuable and unique connector between GP surgeries and
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	patients. PPGs could be utilised more in research and feedback, especially if they are provided with knowledge, understanding and training. This could be useful for promoting access to the NHS app and the arrival of the Shared Care Record to both healthcare professionals and patients
Healthwatch Norfolk to continue working with Norfolk and Waveney ICB to share clear and accessible information about the NHS app on our website and social media outlets.	1A Raising Awareness of Digital Tools
Healthwatch Norfolk to advise on the creation of a straightforward, accessible guide to the NHS app.	3C Create a straightforward, accessible guide to the NHS app that encourages Norfolk citizens to use it as the digital front door to primary healthcare.

Outcome Three: Increasing the Public Accessibility of Digital Tools

Norfolk and Waveney residents can access information regarding the Shared Care Record

Conduct survey with members of the public and to gauge awareness of the Norfolk and Waveney Shared Care Record and invite participants to ask questions about it.	1A Raising awareness of the presence of the digital tools available to local people and providing opportunities for patient support and upskilling to be able to digitally access their GP surgery.
Healthwatch Norfolk to continue working with Norfolk and Waveney ICB to share clear and accessible information about the Shared Care Record on our website and social media outlets.	1A Raising Awareness of Digital Tools

Appendix 2: Digital Transformation Strategic Roadmap

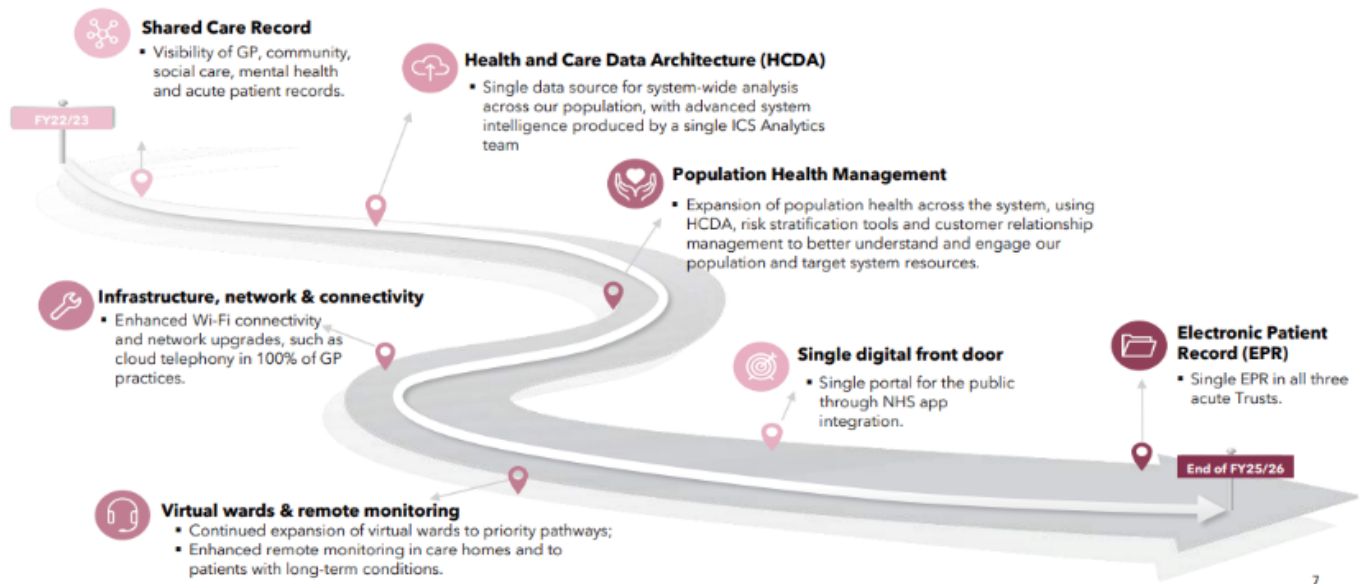
Executive Summary



Over the next few years, we will achieve key milestones on our digital transformation strategic roadmap as we work together to improve the health and wellbeing of people living across Norfolk and Waveney.

Digital Transformation Strategic Roadmap

Digital will enable transformation across all care settings, including outpatients.



Appendix 3: Survey Questions

Who is Healthwatch Norfolk?

Healthwatch Norfolk is the independent voice for patients and service users in the county. We gather your views of health and social care services to ensure they are heard by the people in charge.

What is this survey about?

We are working with Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB) to find out how patients in Norfolk and Waveney digitally access and attend primary care appointments with doctors and other healthcare professionals.

We would like to know more about your experiences of using your digital tools (for example your doctors' surgery website, the NHS app or the Airmid and Patient Access Apps) to:

- make appointments
- attend appointments at your doctors' surgery
- seek information and advice about healthcare
- order repeat prescriptions
- access any other information, advice, or support from your doctors' surgery

The survey will take around 10 minutes to complete.

If you would prefer to do this survey with us over the phone, please call Healthwatch Norfolk on 01953 856029 and we will arrange a time to ring you back to complete the survey.

How the survey results will be used

Survey responses are being collected and analysed by Healthwatch Norfolk. You can read our full privacy policy at:

www.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk/about-us/privacy-statement

All responses will be anonymous and will be used to make recommendations to health and social care providers. The report will

also be publicly available on our website and may be used in other Healthwatch Norfolk communications.

Want to keep in touch?

To stay up to date with what we are doing at Healthwatch, you can sign up to our newsletter via our website: www.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk

If you do not use email, you can call Healthwatch Norfolk on 01953 856029 to ask to receive our newsletter via post.

Please note that questions marked with an asterisk (*) require responses.

Survey Closing date: 2nd January 2024

Please tick the box here to confirm that you have read and understood the privacy policy: *

I have read and understood the privacy policy

Healthwatch Norfolk produce newsletters about health and social care in Norfolk. If you'd like to receive this newsletter please leave your email here:

Doctors' Surgery

1. Which doctors' surgery do you use? *

2. How would you rate your skill at using technology?*

Good

Ok

Bad

Doctors' Surgery Website

3. In the past 12 months, how often have you used your doctors' surgery website?*

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Once every few months
- Once in the year
- Never

4. What device do you use to access your doctors' surgery website?

- Computer / Laptop
- Mobile Phone
- Tablet / iPad
- Other (please specify):

5. What do you use your doctors' surgery website for?

Managing Appointments

- Requesting and cancelling appointments
- Requesting appointments for others (children/family etc...)
- Completing a Health Review / Managing long term conditions

Information and Advice

- Surgery opening times / contact details
- Information and advice about illness or injury
- News and surgery updates

Administration

- Message reception
- Provide surgery feedback
- Access test results
- Sick/Fit Notes

Self Referral

- Self-refer to a service: e.g. smoking cessation, physiotherapy

Other

- please specify:

6. How could your doctors' surgery website be improved?

7. What do you like about your doctors' surgery website?

8. How easy do you find the website to use?

- Easy
 OK
 Difficult

9. Is there anything you would like to use the website for, that you can't already?

NHS App

10. In the past 12 months how often have you used the NHS App? *

- Daily
 Weekly
 Monthly
 Every few months
 Once in the year
 Never

11. What do you use the NHS App for?

Information and Advice

- Search for health conditions and treatments
 Finding NHS services

Manage Personal Information

- View medical record and notes
 View and manage appointments

View linked profiles (e.g. children)

Access NHS Services

Use NHS 111 online

Order a repeat prescription

Other

please specify:

12. How could the NHS App be improved?

13. What do you like about the NHS App?

14. How easy is the NHS App to use?

Easy

OK

Difficult

15. Is there anything you would like to use the NHS App for, that you can't already?

Airmid and Patient Access Apps

16. In the past 12 months, have you used either of these two apps to access your doctors' appointments, order repeat prescriptions or discover local health services? *

Airmid

Patient Access

Neither

Unsure

17. What do you use the Airmid and Patient Access App for?

Information and Advice

- Search for health conditions and treatments

Manage Personal Information

- View medical record and notes
- View and manage appointments
- View linked profiles (e.g. children)
- Messaging the doctors' surgery

Access NHS Services

- Use NHS 111 online
- Order a repeat prescription

Other

- please specify:

18. How could the Airmid and Patient Access App be improved?

19. What do you like about the Airmid and Patient Access App?

20. How easy is the Airmid and Patient Access App to use?

- Easy
- OK
- Difficult

21. Is there anything you would like to use the Airmid and Patient Access App for, that you can't already?

Norfolk and Waveney Shared Care Record

This is a new way of bringing a person's health records together from the different organisations involved in their health and social care. The health records would then be visible to frontline health and social care professionals, but only at the point of care, in a read-only view. The Shared Care Record should allow the following organisations and professionals to view your health record, if necessary:

- Doctors Surgeries
- NHS 111/Out of Hours Service
- Social Care Providers
- Emergency Department
- Outpatient Departments
- Local Hospitals
- Maternity Service
- Mental Health Practitioners
- Care Practitioners

For more information, please visit:

<https://improvinglivesnw.org.uk/our-work/healthier-communities/digital/shared-care-record/>

Frequently Asked Questions about the Shared Care Record can be found here:

<https://improvinglivesnw.org.uk/~documents/ics-publications-1/digital/the-norfolk-and-waveney-shared-care-record-faqs>

22. Were you aware of the Norfolk and Waveney Shared Care Record and its purpose?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

23. Do you have any questions or concerns about the Norfolk and Waveney Shared Care Record?

24. Please use this space to tell us anything that we have not asked about digital technology to access your GP surgery that you think we should know:

Healthwatch Norfolk would like to interview people to find out more about their experience of digitally accessing their doctors' surgery.

If you would like to be interviewed for this project, please leave your first name and preferred contact details here and we will be in contact.

Demographics

In this next section we will be asking you some questions about yourself and your life. All these questions are optional.

Why we ask these questions.

Your answers help us make sure that we hear from people from different backgrounds and that we understand the needs of different groups in our community. Remember: all your answers are strictly confidential and the survey is anonymous.

25. How old are you?

26. What is your gender?

- Man
- Woman
- Non-binary
- Genderfluid
- Questioning
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe:

27. What is your sexuality?

- Bisexual

- Gay or Lesbian
- Heterosexual or straight
- Pansexual
- Prefer not to say

If you feel the choices do not provide a suitable option, please write how you would describe your sexual orientation:

28. What is your ethnic group?

Arab:

- Arab

Asian / Asian British:

- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Any other Asian / Asian British background

Black / Black British:

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black / Black British background

Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups:

- Asian and White
- Black African and White
- Black Caribbean and White
- Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups background

White:

- British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh
- Irish
- Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller
- Roma

Any other White background

Other:

Any other Ethnic Group

Prefer not to say

If other, please specify:

29. Please select any of the following that apply to you:

I have a disability

I have a long term condition

I am a carer

None of the above

I prefer not to say

30. Where did you hear about this survey?

GP website

Healthwatch Norfolk Event

Healthwatch Norfolk Newsletter

Healthwatch Norfolk Website

News (website / radio / local newspaper)

Podcast

Search Engine (e.g. Google)

Social Media (e.g. Facebook / Instagram / Twitter)

Through a friend or co-worker

YouTube

Other (please specify):

Appendix 4: Demographics of survey respondents

		Percentage of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Age (733 respondents)	16 to 25	1%	5
	26 to 35	2%	14
	36 to 45	8%	60
	46 to 55	17%	125
	56 to 65	26%	193
	66 to 75	33%	241
	76 to 85	12%	86
	86 or over	1%	9
Gender (749 respondents)	Woman	64%	482
	Man	34%	254
	Non-Binary	<1%	2
	Genderfluid	<1%	2
	Prefer to self-describe	<1%	1
	Prefer not to say	1%	8
Sexuality (735 respondents)	Heterosexual or straight	87%	638
	Gay or Lesbian	4%	28
	Bisexual	2%	18
	Pansexual	<1%	3
	Prefer to self-describe	<1%	1
	Prefer not to say	6%	47
Ethnic Group	Arab	<1%	1

(754 respondents)	Asian / Asian British: Chinese	<1%	2
	Asian / Asian British: Any other Asian / Asian British Background	<1%	1
	Black / Black British: African	<1%	1
	Black / Black British: Any other Black / Black British background	<1%	1
	Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups: Black Caribbean and White	<1%	1
	White: British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh	92%	695
	White: Irish	1%	8
	White: Roma	<1%	1
	White: Any other White background	3%	23
	Any other Ethnic Group	<1%	1
	Prefer not to say	3%	19
Do you consider yourself to have any of the following? (741 respondents)	I have a disability	19%	143
	I have a long term condition	55%	406
	I am a carer	13%	96
	None of the above	30%	224
	I prefer not to say	5%	34

Appendix 5: Doctors' surgeries and number of survey respondents

Doctors' Surgery	Number of respondents
Attleborough Surgeries	52
Millwood Surgery (Bradwell)	48
Lionwood Medical Practice	35
Wymondham Medical Centre	30
Fakenham Medical Practice	26
Southgates & The Woottons Surgeries	23
Humbleyard Practice	20
Hoveton and Wroxham Medical Centre	19
St. Stephens Gate (Norwich)	19
Watton Medical Practice	18
The Beaches Medical Centre	17
Long Stratton Medical Partnership	17
Oak Street Medical Practice	17
Hingham Surgery	16
Feltwell Surgery	16
The Market Surgery (Aylsham)	15
The Park Surgery (Great Yarmouth)	15
Parish Fields Practice (Diss)	14
Plowright Medical Centre	12
St James Medical Practice (King's Lynn)	12
Campingland Surgery	11
Trinity & Bowthorpe Medical Practice	11
Orchard Surgery (Dereham)	11
Ludham And Stalham Green Surgeries	11
Old Catton Medical Practice	10
Coastal Village Surgeries	10
Castle Partnership	9
Chet Valley Medical Practice	9
Heacham Group Practice	9
Cromer Group Practice	9
East Harling & Kenninghall Medical Practice	8
Norwich Practices Health Centre	8
Woodcock Road Surgery	7
Hellesdon Medical Practice	7
Theatre Royal Surgery (Dereham)	7

Aldborough Surgery	7
Grove Surgery	7
Old Mill & Millgates Medical Practice	7
Lawson Road Surgery	7
West Earlham Health Centre	6
East Norwich Medical Partnership	6
School Lane Surgery (Thetford)	6
Drayton Medical Practice	6
Mundesley Medical Centre	6
Stalham Staithe Surgery	5
Watlington Medical Centre	5
Taverham Surgery	5
Great Massingham and Docking Surgeries	5
Mattishall and Lenwade Surgeries	5
Sheringham Medical Practice	5
Windmill Surgery	5
Manor Farm Medical Centre (Swaffham)	5
Roundwell Medical Centre	5
Paston Surgery (North Walsham)	5
Magdalen Medical Practice	5
Thorpewood Medical Group	4
Prospect Medical Practice	4
West Pottergate Medical Practice	4
Church Hill Surgery (Pulham Market)	4
Beechcroft and Old Palace Surgeries	4
Gayton Road Health Centre (Vida Healthcare)	4
Holt Medical Practice	4
Boughton Surgery	4
Lakenham Surgery	4
Grimston Medical Centre	4
Bridge Street (Downham Market)	4
Blofield Surgery	3
Shipdham Surgery	3
Birchwood Medical Practice	3
Litcham Health Centre	3
St John's Surgery (Wisbech)	3
Harleston Medical Practice	3
East Norfolk Medical Practice	2
Acle Medical Partnership	2
Elmham Surgery	2

Upwell Health Centre	2
Brundall Medical Partnership	2
Reepham & Aylsham Medical Practice	1
UEA Medical Centre	1
Heathgate Medical Practice	1
The Burnhams	1
Hunstanton Medical Practice (Vida Healthcare)	1

Appendix 6: Interview Questions

About Healthwatch Norfolk

Healthwatch Norfolk is the independent consumer champion for anyone in Norfolk who uses health and social care services. Our role is to capture the views and experiences of local people and use this as evidence to influence the people and organisations who pay for and provide your health and social care.

About Digital Access to GP Surgeries

Healthwatch Norfolk are working on the third year of a project looking into digital access to GP Surgeries in Norfolk. The project is exploring what the public know about using their doctors' surgery website and the NHS app to access primary care services.

Thank you for agreeing to talk to us in more detail about your use of digital tools to:

- book and manage appointments
- order repeat prescriptions.
- securely view your medical record.
- look up information about health conditions and your doctors' surgery.

If you would like to pause the interview at any moment or have any questions, please let me know.

Doctors' Surgery Website

- Which doctors' surgery do you use?
- What do you use the doctor's surgery website for?
- What do you like about the doctor's surgery website?
- What do you not like the doctor's surgery website?
- What would you like the doctor's surgery website to be able to do?
- How accessible do you find the website?

NHS App

- What do you use the NHS App for?
- What do you like about the NHS App?
- What do you not like the NHS App?
- What would you like the NHS App to be able to do?
- How accessible do you find the NHS App?

Appendix 7: NHS App Focus Group Guide

healthwatch

Norfolk

Digital Access to GP Surgeries.

A Focus Group to discuss the

NHS app.

Healthwatch Norfolk Report

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Digital Access to GP Surgeries: Year Three

Focus Group Date:	
Focus Group Time:	
HWN Staff:	
Focus Group Priority Area:	NHS App

Question	Notes	Complete
Introduction		
Welcome and ask for consent to start recording.	Confirm attendees are happy for session to be recorded for transcription purposes. Recording will be deleted once when the report is published, and any direct quotes will be anonymised. <ask each participant to complete consent form and demographics form (if permissible)>	
Introduction to Healthwatch.	'Healthwatch Norfolk is the independent voice for patients and service users in the county. We gather people's views of health and social care services in the county and make sure they are heard by the people in charge. Our work covers all areas of health and social care. This includes GP surgeries, hospitals, dentists, care homes, pharmacies, opticians and more. We also give out information about the health and care services available in Norfolk and direct people to someone who can help.'	
Focus Group Participant Introductions.	<Ask everyone to introduce themselves>	
Purpose of focus group	Healthwatch Norfolk are exploring digital access to Norfolk and Waveney GP surgeries. We are now in the third year of the project. This focus group will be discussing the NHS app (not the test and trace app).	

	<p>During this focus group, we would like to hear what you know about the Shared Care Record and NHS app and what you would like to find out about.</p> <p>There are no right or wrong answers at this session, we are just really interested in hearing peoples' personal experiences and opinions.</p> <p>The information we take away from this focus group discussion will be anonymised and will be used in the Year Three report, which will be given to the Digital team at Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board.</p> <p>Please can we ask that you share with us what you feel happy and comfortable doing with and respect the privacy of other attendees by treating information confidentially.</p> <p>Thank you for your time today!</p>	
Any Questions?	If you have any questions about the focus group or NHS app, please let us know and if we can't answer them today, we will reach out to the Digital Team at the ICB for clarification and feed the answers back to you.	
Focus Group Discussion: NHS App		
Plan and Conduct Focus Groups to gather intelligence for Digital Team at Norfolk and Waveney ICB to produce their own 'How to Guide'.	Do you use the NHS app regularly?	
	If so / If not, why is this?	
	What would encourage you to use the NHS app more?	
	Do you need any information or support to be able to use the NHS app more? If so, in what format? (for example: 1:1 training / video / leaflet)	
	What do you like / not like about the NHS app?	
Focus Group Wrap Up and Conclusion (20 minutes)		

Additional Feedback	Do any attendees wish to share any other experiences/views before the end of the session?	
Summary of Themes	Feedback main themes to group about the NHS app.	
Thank you!	Thank you very much to everyone that has helped with this focus group today. If you would like to see a copy of the Year Three report, please let us know and we will send a copy out when it is complete (approx. date - May 2024).	

Digital Access to GP Surgeries

Focus Group Consent Form

Project Lead: Rachael Green

Part 1: Information Sheet

About Healthwatch Norfolk

Healthwatch Norfolk is the independent consumer champion for anyone in Norfolk who uses health and social care services. Our role is to capture the views and experiences of local people and use this as evidence to influence the people and organisations who pay for and provide your health and social care.

About Digital Access to GP Surgeries

Healthwatch Norfolk are working on the third year of a project looking into digital access to GP Surgeries in Norfolk and Waveney. The project is exploring what the public know about the NHS app.

A copy of the Year One report can be found here:

<https://healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk/report/patient-and-professional-experiences-of-using-digital-tools-in-primary-care/>

A copy of the Year Two report can be found here:

<https://healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk/report/digital-tools-year-two/>

About your participation

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this Focus Group. The conversation will last about an hour and a half, and you will be asked to give permission for the conversation to be recorded to help with later analysis.

We aim to encourage all communities to take part in decision-making and influence the way that local health and social care services are planned and delivered. As a result, you may be asked some personal questions regarding your age, gender, ethnicity etc. You do not have to answer these questions if you do not want to.

We are required by law to protect your privacy. Your personal details will be confidential and will not be shared outside of Healthwatch Norfolk, unless we feel that it is necessary to prevent harm to you or others. All recordings and notes will be kept on a secured system and will be destroyed once the project has been completed. We will be publishing a written report of our findings so that we can share the results with the people and organisations who pay for and provide your health and care. When this report is published you will remain anonymous, and we will take great care to ensure that nobody will be able to use your story to identify you.

Participating in this project is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to take part and you may change your mind at any time up to a month after the focus group takes place. Once this time has lapsed, it will not be possible for you to withdraw your permission. You will not receive a reward for participating and your participation will not affect the quality of any care or support that you are currently receiving. If at any point you are not happy with the questions that you are being asked, you would like to take a break or stop the conversation entirely, please let us know.

If you have any questions, please contact Rachael Green on: 01953 856029 or by emailing: rachael.green@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk

What is the NHS app?

The NHS app provides a secure way for people to access a range of NHS services on their smartphone or tablet. It allows people to:

- book and manage appointments at their GP practice.
- order their repeat prescriptions.
- securely view their GP medical record.
- check their symptoms using NHS 111 online and the health A-Z on the NHS website.
- register as an organ donor.
- choose whether the NHS uses their data for research and planning.

Pre-Focus Group Activity

As part of the focus group, I will be asking questions about your experience of using the NHS app and / or your doctors' surgery website and what you think of them.

I have created some tasks and included some questions below to help you with providing feedback about your experience of the NHS app and / or your doctors' surgery website.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the tasks and if you don't get time to complete all the tasks, please don't worry as it is just a guide.

NHS App

- 1) What type of device you are logging onto the NHS app with?
(for example: a smart phone, computer or a tablet)
- 2) How easy was it to sign up to the NHS app and how did you find the login process? Please describe what you did to sign up and what worked well / what did not work well and what could be improved.
- 3) NHS App Accessibility- What do you think of the layout of the NHS App home page? Is it easy to navigate? Are the colour combinations accessible to you and easy to read?
- 4) Does the options menu make sense to you and is the language used accessible and easy to understand?
- 5) From the NHS App home page, how easy is it for you to navigate to your GP health record? Please give this a go and make a note of how you find this process. (Please do not include sensitive or confidential information within your answer.) If you cannot view your GP health record, please note this down.
- 6) On this page, what year does your GP health record go back to on the NHS app?
- 7) Do the abbreviations on your GP health record make sense and can you find out what they mean if you are unsure?

- 8) Now navigate back to the main menu and record how easy it was to go back.
- 9) Do you ever order prescriptions from the NHS app? If so, how easy do you usually find this process? If not, is this something you would consider?
- 10) I would like you to locate the 'be part of health research' page on the app and write down how you get on with this task. Was it easy to find? (Only sign up if this is something you want to do, I'm not advocating it for this exercise).
- 11) Does the NHS app allow you to book GP appointments via the app?
- 12) Now I would like you to look up 'health information' via the NHS app and find some information about 'Mumps' and post one fact here. How easy was this information to find?
- 13) Overall, what do you like about the NHS app, what could be improved and what would you like to use the NHS app for (if you can't already)?
- 14) What would encourage you to use the NHS App?

Doctors' Surgery Website

Have a look at your Doctors' Surgery website and make a note of:

- 15) what do you like about the website?
- 16) what about the website could be improved?
- 17) how accessible you think the website is?
- 18) What would encourage you to use the website

Part 2: Consent Form

Your initials and signature below mean that you have read the above information about this project, that you have had a chance to ask questions to help you understand how your story will be used, and that you give permission to allow your story to be used in this project.

Please initial each box:

	This project has been fully explained to me and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
	I give my permission for this conversation to be recorded and shared with a GDPR compliant external organisation for transcription.
	I understand that my personal details will not be accessible to anyone outside of Healthwatch Norfolk, unless Healthwatch Norfolk feel it is necessary to share my details to prevent harm to myself or others.
	I understand that my (anonymised) story may be used in future reports, publications, articles or presentations by Healthwatch Norfolk.
	I have been informed of the risks and benefits, if any, of allowing my story to be used in this project.
	I have been informed that I do not have to participate in this project.
	I have read each page of this form.
	I have agreed to participate in this project.

Name of participant

Signature

Date

Name of Project Lead

Signature

Date

Demographic Information of Focus Group Participants

In this next section we will be asking you some questions about yourself and your life. All these questions are optional. Your answers help us make sure that we hear from people from different backgrounds and that we understand the needs of different groups in our community.

Remember: all your answers are strictly confidential, and the survey is anonymous.

How old are you?

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Genderfluid
- Genderqueer
- Intersex
- Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-describe:

Please select any of the following that apply to you:

- I have a disability
- I have a long term health condition
- I am a carer
- None of the above
- Prefer not to say

What is your ethnic group?

Arab

- Arab

Asian / Asian British:

- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Any other Asian / British Asian Background

Black / Black British:

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black / Black British background

Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups:

- Asian and White
- Black African and White
- Black Caribbean and White
- Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups background

White:

- British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh
- Irish
- Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller
- Roma
- Any other White background

Other:

- Any other Ethnic Group
- Prefer not to say
- If other, please specify:

Appendix 8: College of West Anglia Student Demographic Information

Do you use the NHS App?	Number of Respondents	% of respondents
Yes	9	23%
No	31	77%
Total	40	100

Age	Number of Respondents	% of respondents
16	5	12.5
17	16	40
18	8	20
19	5	12.5
20	1	2.5
21	1	2.5
22	2	5
23	0	0
24	0	0
25	0	0
26	2	5
Total	40	100

Gender	Number of Respondents	% of respondents
Female	18	45
Male	20	50
Genderfluid	1	2.5
Trans Male	1	2.5
Total	40	100

Ethnicity	Number of Respondents	% of respondents
White British	35	87.5
White Other	1	2.5
Asian	3	7.5
Black African American	1	2.5
Total	40	100

Appendix 9: Year One and Year Three

Survey Data Comparison

	Year One	Year Three
Total Number of Responses	337 responses	768 responses
Respondents Aged 56 years plus	68%, 229	72%, 529
Respondents Aged Under 56 years	32%, 108	28%, 239
Tech Skill Rating Good	66%, 223	65%, 497
Tech Skill Rating OK	29%, 99	32%, 243
Tech Skill Rating Bad	4%, 15	3%, 28

Doctors' Surgery Website

	Year One	Year Three
Doctors Surgery Website Footfall	96%, 307	85%, 649
Doctors Surgery Website Other	4%, 13	15%, 119
	Total = 320	Total = 768
Ease of Use - Difficult	21%, 68	16%, 115
Ease of Use - OK	46%, 147	47%, 344
Ease of Use - Easy	33%, 105	37%, 271
	Total = 320	Total = 730

Airmid and Patient Access Apps

	Year One	Year Three
Ease of Use - Difficult	12%, 9	10%, 17
Ease of Use - OK	40%, 31	38%, 62
Ease of Use - Easy	48%, 37	52%, 84
	Total = 77	Total = 163

NHS App

	Year One	Year Three
Ease of Use - Difficult	5%, 10	8%, 44
Ease of Use - OK	50%, 109	41%, 233
Ease of Use - Easy	45%, 98	51%, 286
	Total = 217	Total = 563

	Year One	Year Three
Get your NHS Covid Pass	49%, 113	N/A
View Covid-19 vaccination record	43%, 98	(included in 'other')
Order a repeat prescription	39%, 89	56%, 317
View medical record and notes	37%, 86	52%, 293
Receive advice about Covid-19	32%, 74	N/A
Search for health conditions and treatments	30%, 69	37%, 208
View and manage appointments	20%, 45	30%, 172
Finding NHS Services	N/A	23%, 132
Use NHS 111 online	9%, 20	11%, 61
View linked profiles (e.g. children)	3%, 6	3%, 17
Other	N/A	11%, 61*
	Total = 230	Total =568

*other mainly included booking and managing COVID vaccination appointments and viewing vaccination record

The questions asked in the year one and year three reports were not all marked as compulsory, therefore the number of respondents will vary from question to question.



healthwatch

Norfolk

Healthwatch Norfolk
Suite 6 The Old Dairy Elm Farm
Norwich Common
Wymondham
Norfolk
NR18 0SW

www.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk
t: 0808 168 9669
e: enquiries@healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk
@HWNorfolk
Facebook.com/healthwatch.norfolk