



Patient-Led Messaging on GP websites

March 2025

healthwatch
Enfield

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Our sincere gratitude goes to all the volunteers and staff of Healthwatch Enfield, whose dedication and hard work were instrumental in delivering this work. Their commitment and effort were key to our success, and we are truly thankful for their contribution.

About Us

Healthwatch Enfield serves as an independent champion for local people who use health and social care services; we lend our ears to the Enfield community and represent their voice. We team up with multiple community organisations and statutory institutions to share information and gather insights in the aim to help improve the quality of health and social care services in the borough.

- We share information and advice with residents to ensure they get the support they need, acting as a health and social care champion.
- We gather feedback through projects, experiences shared by residents and community groups and social listening to share with public health and social care leaders and local decision-makers to help guide local policies and strategies.
- Healthwatch is for everyone that uses all health and social care services, ranging from GPs to care homes, hospitals to pharmacies.

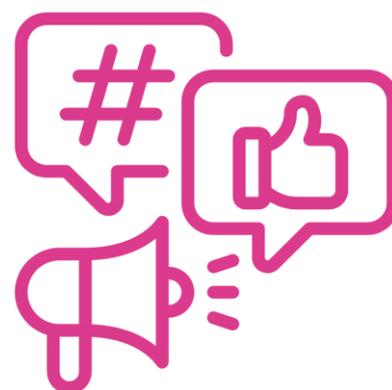
Introduction

In partnership with the North Central London Integrated Care Board (NCL ICB) and Islington GP Federation, we have worked to support and assist GP Practice Managers in improving service delivery for their patients. Recognising the ongoing challenges in primary care access, our focus is on ensuring that GP practices can better engage with their patients and enhance the overall patient experience.

In April 2024, Healthwatch Enfield was commissioned by NCL ICB to gather patient feedback on the information on GP Websites. We were approached to undertake this project because of our unique role in representing the patient voice.

As part of our GP Access work on Patient-Led Messaging, we carried out a series of focus groups:

- Four face-to-face focus groups with community organisations in Enfield
- One online focus group open to residents across North Central London



Patient-led Messaging

To gain a deeper understanding of patient views on GP website information in North Central London, we wanted to investigate:

- What are the barriers individuals face in accessing information on GP websites?
- What information they are aware of?
- What information or improvements they would like to see in their registered practice's website?

Methodology

Facilitating focus groups allow an open dialogue, enabling participants to share their views and lived experiences in their own words, bringing the human experience at the forefront. It's to capture the nuances of patient needs, barriers they face in accessing information, as well as giving them a platform to share ideas for improvement that may not emerge through surveys or other quantitative methods.

Focus groups tend to generate richer discussions, helping to collect themes, such as gaps in the information provided on GP websites and challenges faced in digital exclusion.

Outreach

We utilised our established networks with grassroots organisations and VCSEs to arrange focus groups, these connections were key in reaching out to seldom-heard groups and diverse communities.

We engaged with these organisations through email, telephone, and face-to-face at their events to encourage participation. The online focus group was specifically designed to ensure we captured insights from a broader demographic across North Central London.

Table 2: Organisations we reached out for Focus Groups

Focus Groups	Number of Participants
Dalmar	5
Edmonton Community Partnership	12
One to One	7
Online Discussion	2
Sisters in Mind	17

Data Analysis

The focus group data was analysed using qualitative methods to identify key themes and insights related to accessing information on GP websites and their usability.

Themes were categorised based on patient experiences with GP websites, including their satisfaction with the current information, what they would like to see improved, and their suggestions for better usability.

Findings

Total of 43 participants took part in the five focus group discussions. Insights were gathered in January 2025. For detailed findings, please refer to Patient-led Websites Report on our website.

Focus Group 1: Sisters In Mind

Date: 20 January 2025

Sisters In Mind is a support network for women, offering solidarity and understanding through the challenges of modern life. Born during the pandemic, it became a sanctuary for women to connect, share experiences, and find comfort in a time of social isolation.

- **Number of participants:** 17 women
- **Age range:** 20 to 70+ years old
- **Ethnic backgrounds:** Black, South Asian, African Caribbean, White European, and White British
- **Barriers they face:** Cost of living pressures, Care responsibilities, Low-income backgrounds, and Health conditions and disabilities

Q1. How easy is it to find information about GP appointments on your practice's website?

- Follow-up: What specific details (e.g., appointment availability, booking process, cancellation policies) do you think are missing or could be clearer?

Website Not User-Friendly

- Many participants **struggle to use the website** and prefer face-to-face interactions.
- Some experience technical difficulties, such as login issues (incorrect password/phone number errors).
- GP Websites are **not user-friendly**, leading patients to give up and call reception instead.
- Some feel they are being forced into digital options without adequate support.

Lack of Awareness

- GP surgeries **do not actively promote** their websites or explain how to use them.
- Patients are often directed to Patches or the NHS App, but struggle with these platforms.
- Some patients have never been asked to use online services or offered any guidance on how to navigate them.

Booking Appointment Barriers

- Appointments are unavailable online due to "**gatekeeping**" practices.
- Patches is unreliable – by 8:05 AM, all slots are often gone. GP website signpost to use patches, despite its unreliability.
- Using multiple channels (phone + online) increases the chance of securing an appointment, but this is frustrating.
- Patients report feeling anxious about online booking and prefer speaking to a person.



I get anxious booking online — I'd rather just talk to someone.



Communication Issues

- Patients reported a frustrating cycle when booking same-day appointments. The website directs them to the PATCHS app, which then refers them to the receptionist, who in turn directs them back to the website – creating a repetitive loop.
- Emails and online messages **go unanswered**, similar to phone inquiries.
- Patients want clearer information on appointment availability, booking processes, and cancellations.
- **Claiming travel costs** for hospital appointments should be clearly explained on GP websites.

Prescriptions

- Online prescriptions can be difficult to manage, especially when consultants do not update medication lists properly.
- Some patients have positive experiences with online services (e.g., Medicus for prescriptions).

Suggestions for Improvement

- A tutorial or guidance on using GP websites would be beneficial.
- The role of GP websites was questioned – why not just use the NHS website for general information?
- Patients would like information on Care Passports and other practical resources to be available.

Q2. Does your GP practice's website provide enough information about alternative healthcare services such as Pharmacy First, NHS 111, and out-of-hours care?

- Follow-up: What additional information would help you decide when to use these services instead of visiting your GP?

Limited Usefulness of NHS 111 & Out-of-Hours Care

- Many patients find the NHS 111 service ineffective and often referred back to their GP.
- Calls to NHS 111 get disconnected, requiring patients to restart the process, which is frustrating.
- Out-of-hours care is limited – Consultants at NHS 111 and out-of-hours services cannot prescribe medication, forcing patients to return to their GP.

Digital Exclusion

- Elderly patients struggle with digital devices. Many do not use GP websites and need alternative ways to access information.
- Lack of translated information – NHS 111 does not offer translation services, making it difficult for non-English speakers to access help.

Gaps in Website Information

- Medical records and referrals are not accessible on GP websites, making it hard for patients to track progress.
- No information for caregivers. Websites do not provide guidance or support for carers who may need healthcare advice.

Q3. What kind of health-related information or guidance would you find most useful on your GP's website?

- Follow-up: Would you benefit from more self-care advice, guidance on urgent care options, or explanations of different types of GP consultations (e.g., online vs. in-person)?

Patent-friendly Websites

- Patients want information to be clearer and easier to find. They do not want to spend ages searching for basic details.
- The website structure needs improvement, making essential services and contact options more visible.

Guidance on Navigating Digital Services

- Patients want "How-to" guides explaining:
 - How to use the NHS App, Patches, and online booking.
 - How to access and understand medical records.
- Many feel uncertain about GP consultation types (e.g., why they are only offered a nurse appointment instead of a GP). Patients want information on their right to see a doctor instead of a nurse or physician associate, and what their roles are.

- Patients want clarity on their right to request face-to-face appointments and second opinions.

Claiming Travel Expenses

- Patients do not know they may be eligible for travel cost reimbursement for hospital visits.
- The GP website should include clear guidance on who qualifies and how to apply.

Cross-Border Healthcare Documentation

- Patients with foreign medical records struggle to get them translated when needed for prescriptions or referrals.
- Issues arise when patients need medical services across different countries:
 - A participant's mother needed a UK prescription while visiting from Italy, but the GP refused without a translated medical record.
 - Patients don't know where to get official medical translations—this information should be on the website.
- Guidelines on international treatments would be helpful, as some GPs reject foreign test results and require them to be redone, causing delays.
- Patients suggested there should be guidance on NHS-supported translation services – ideally free or at a low cost.

Additional Information

- Clear explanations of appointment availability (Why can't I see a doctor? Why only a nurse?).
- Guidance on how to join cancellation lists for GP and out-patient referral appointments.
- Information on out-of-hours services, NHS 111, and Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) – what they are and how to use them.
- Clarifications on media-driven health rumours to avoid misinformation.

Q4. What is the best way for a GP website to present important information so that you can find it quickly when needed?

- Follow-up: Do you prefer a dedicated page for different types of information, quick links on the homepage, or a searchable FAQ section?



The website should be clearer. I don't want to spend ages searching for things.



Clear, Structured Information Layout

- Patients want essential information to be easy to find, rather than searching through multiple pages.
- Preferences vary between:
 - Dedicated pages for different topics (e.g., Appointments, Prescriptions, Referrals).
 - Quick links on the homepage for urgent and frequently used services.
 - A searchable FAQ section to quickly find answers.

Focus Group 2: Online Discussion

Date: 20 January 2025

We held an online focus group targeting residents across North Central London. While 17 individuals registered, two participants attended and thorough insights. The limited turnout will inform adjustments to future engagement.

- **Number of participants:** 1 man, 1 woman
- **Age range:** 40 to 70+ years old
- **Ethnic backgrounds:** White British
- **Barriers they face:** Care responsibilities

Q1. How easy is it to find information about GP appointments on your practice's website?

- Follow-up: What specific details (e.g., appointment availability, booking process, cancellation policies) do you think are missing or could be clearer?

Limited Use of GP Websites

- Most participants only use the website for eConsult and do not explore other features.
- Some feel there is no need to use the website, as they prefer getting **information directly from the GP practice**.
- Those living near the surgery find it easier to visit in person rather than navigating the website.

Website Accessibility

- The website contains a lot of information, but not all sections are user-friendly.
- While the homepage layout is clear, deeper pages become more complicated and less structured.

- Underserved patients, such as those with learning disabilities, are excluded due to a lack of **easy-read formats**.
- Some accessibility features exist (e.g., translation options), but no clear support for **dyslexia** or **non-verbal** users.
- This lack of inclusivity may contribute to poorer health outcomes for vulnerable groups.

Information Availability

- Participants acknowledged that essential contact details and out-of-hours information are available.
- Some felt the website had all necessary details, but it wasn't their preferred way to get information.
- Others noted that while there is a good amount of general information, they don't engage with it beyond booking an appointment.

Booking Appointment Barriers: eConsult

- eConsult is the primary method for booking GP appointments, meaning patients must use the website even if they struggle with it.
- Walk-in appointments are not an option, so patients who cannot use the website are at a disadvantage.
- When clicking on "Appointments", the website immediately redirects to eConsult, with **little explanation** or alternative options.
- The entire page focuses on eConsult, making it unclear whether other booking options exist.
- Information about seeing a nurse without using eConsult is not made clear – patients only learn this by asking reception.
- Patients don't always know when or why to use eConsult—more information is needed.
- The system closes down once capacity is reached, often very early in the morning (e.g., Mondays), causing anxiety and frustration.

Need for Further Engagement

- Participants suggested that a focus group should be organised for excluded individuals, such as those with learning disabilities or communication challenges.

- Individuals expressed interest in a focus group on e-Consult and want to be more involved in consultations to improve GPs and healthcare.

Q2. Does your GP practice's website provide enough information about alternative healthcare services such as Pharmacy First, NHS 111, and out-of-hours care?

- Follow-up: What additional information would help you decide when to use these services instead of visiting your GP?

Limited Awareness of Pharmacy First

- None of the participants had heard of Pharmacy First before the discussion.
- Some GP websites mention Pharmacy First, but do not explain what it is or how to use it.
- There is an assumption that patients will look up information themselves, but many do not, even if they are digitally savvy.
- More proactive communication is needed to raise awareness of Pharmacy First.

Use of NHS App & Digital Tools

- Both participants use the NHS App or Patient Access for prescriptions and blood test results.
- The GP website does mention alternative healthcare services, but the information is often unclear or incomplete.

Concerns About Out-of-Hours Services

- Participants were aware of out-of-hours (OOH) care, but rarely used it.
- Some felt OOH services may not be helpful because they lack knowledge of their medical history.
- Instead of OOH care, some prefer going straight to urgent care centres, making a judgment call based on urgency.

Issues with NHS 111 & A&E Referrals

- Some participants had negative experiences with NHS 111, feeling that the checklist-based system often gives incorrect advice.
- People reported being directed to A&E unnecessarily, only to be told on arrival that they did not need to be there.
- There was **frustration with the "tick-box" approach**, as phone assessments lack the personal judgment of a face-to-face GP consultation.

Limited Appointment Availability

- Pre-pandemic, some GPs offered Saturday appointments, but this service has now stopped.
- eConsult is often closed early due to capacity limits, sometimes as early as 8 AM.
- When eConsult is unavailable, patients are referred to 111, potentially contributing to unnecessary A&E visits.

Concerns About Vulnerable Patients

- Participants raised concerns about how people with additional needs are supported in accessing care.
- Some people in supported environments may "fall through the cracks", leading to delayed treatment.
- There was a question about who reviews eConsult forms, and whether carers' input on behalf of service users is accurate.



Pharmacy First is mentioned on my GP's website, but it doesn't explain what it is.



Q3. What kind of health-related information or guidance would you find most useful on your GP's website?

- Follow-up: Would you benefit from more self-care advice, guidance on urgent care options, or explanations of different types of GP consultations (e.g., online vs. in-person)?

Need for Accessibility Features

- Some GP websites include text alteration options, which are helpful, but lack an "easy-read" version.
- A "read out loud" function would improve accessibility for those with visual impairments or learning disabilities.
- The assumption that all users are computer literate creates barriers for those less confident with technology.

Suggestions for Improvement

- A dedicated section explaining the different types of GP consultations (e.g., online vs. in-person) would be helpful.
- Self-referral page on the website, so patients have more control in referring themselves rather than through GP.
- More self-care advice and guidance on urgent care options would help patients make informed decisions.
- A focus group on eConsult should be held to improve usability and inclusivity.
- Many patients would benefit from clear guidance on how to use eConsult effectively.
- To support carers and support workers with the information they need to access appointments and services in behalf of the patient.

Focus Group 3: Dalmar

Date: 21 January 2025

Dalmar at Enfield Angel Community Centre supports Somali and migrant communities. They offer help with health, family and social support, and accessing services. The centre provides advice, workshops, and a safe space for people who face language barriers or need guidance. Their goal is to connect and empower the community. Interpreter was present.

- **Number of participants:** 5 women
- **Age range:** 20 to 50 years old
- **Ethnic backgrounds:** Black Somali
- **Barriers they face:** Language barriers, Care responsibilities, Cost of living, and Low-income backgrounds

Q1. How easy is it to find information about GP appointments on your practice's website?

- Follow-up: What specific details (e.g., appointment availability, booking process, cancellation policies) do you think are missing or could be clearer?

None reported using their GP's websites and some unaware they even had one

Q2. Does your GP practice's website provide enough information about alternative healthcare services such as Pharmacy First, NHS 111, and out-of-hours care?

- Follow-up: What additional information would help you decide when to use these services instead of visiting your GP?

Lack of Awareness

- Most participants had never heard of Pharmacy First before the discussion.
- One respondent realised they had unknowingly used it, highlighting a **lack of clear promotion and explanation**.
- Patients were unsure what conditions Pharmacy First covers and how it compares to seeing a GP.

Limited Understanding of NHS 111 Services

- **All participants were aware of NHS 111**, but only two knew that out-of-hours GP appointments could be booked through it.
- There was confusion over how NHS 111 determines whether a patient needs an out-of-hours GP, A&E, or another service.
- Some felt that calling NHS 111 leads to unnecessary A&E visits rather than practical alternatives.

Website Information is Inadequate

- GP websites do not provide enough details on alternative services.
- Participants felt that if these services were better explained on GP websites, they might use them more confidently.
- Many rely on word of mouth or **trial and error** to navigate these services.

What Information Would Help?

- Clear explanations of when to use Pharmacy First, NHS 111, and out-of-hours GP services.
- Examples of conditions that can be treated by each service to help patients make informed choices.
- Step-by-step guidance on how to access out-of-hours GP appointments via NHS 111.
- Visibility on the homepage so patients don't have to search for this information.

Q3. What kind of health-related information or guidance would you find most useful on your GP's website?

- Follow-up: Would you benefit from more self-care advice, guidance on urgent care options, or explanations of different types of GP consultations (e.g., online vs. in-person)?

Outbreak Alerts & Health Updates

- Participants were interested in updates on outbreaks such as flu.
- They suggested receiving this information in a newsletter format rather than searching for it on the website.

Access to Medical Records

- The group wanted clear guidance on how to access their medical records, including step-by-step instructions.
- Many were unaware of where or how to request their records online.

Fertility Treatment Information

- Participants wanted details on fertility treatments, including eligibility criteria and what is available through the NHS.
- They felt this information was difficult to find or not well explained on GP websites.

Mental Health Support

- Patients wanted **clear signposting** to mental health services, including tips on what they can do while waiting for professional support.
- They suggested links to trusted mental health resources rather than expecting GPs to provide this directly.

Guidance on Children's Health

- A key request was a chart or visual guide on children's poo, helping parents understand what is normal and when to seek medical advice.

Cancer Screening Programmes

- Participants wanted detailed information on cancer screening, including who is eligible, when screenings are due, and how to book them.



Preferred Format of Information

- The group agreed that GP websites do not need to host all this information directly.
- Instead, they suggested clear links to **trusted external sources**, such as NHS pages and specialist organisations.

Additional Information

- Health information on various conditions and self-care advice.
- Somali language resources to support non-English speakers.
- Information on issues affecting them, such as domestic violence, as well as links to support groups and services.

Q4. What is the best way for a GP website to present important information so that you can find it quickly when needed?

- Follow-up: Do you prefer a dedicated page for different types of information, quick links on the homepage, or a searchable FAQ section?

Language Accessibility

- The group highlighted the **need for a translation option**, specifically into Somali, to make the website more accessible to non-English speakers.
- They felt that language barriers make it difficult to navigate online services, leading to more reliance on phone calls or in-person visits.

Online Booking System

- Online appointment booking to reduce the need to call or visit in person.



It would be helpful if the website could be translated into Somali. That would make it easier for a lot of people.



Mobile Optimisation

- One participant struggled with online forms due to limited literacy skills in English.
- They overcame this by using **speech-to-text features** on their phone, highlighting the need for mobile-friendly design and voice input options.

User-Friendly Forms

- Participants suggested that **simpler language** and clearer instructions on forms would help improve accessibility.

Preferred Website Features

- Quick links on the homepage were seen as the most convenient way to access key information.
- A searchable FAQ section was also suggested to help patients quickly find answers without navigating multiple pages.
- Some participants preferred dedicated pages for specific topics (e.g., appointments, prescriptions, mental health support).

Improving Website Usability

- The group emphasised the need for clear and logical website structure, avoiding unnecessary clicks.
- They wanted important updates (e.g., flu outbreaks, changes to booking systems) to be prominently displayed.
- **Mobile-friendly design** was seen as essential, given that many access GP services via their phones.



Websites need to be simple. If I can't find what I need in a few clicks, I just give up and call instead.



Focus Group 4: One to One

Date: 22 January 2025

One to One, Enfield is a charity that supports people with learning disabilities and autism in the borough of Enfield. They provide advocacy, training, and social opportunities to empower individuals, promote independence, and improve access to essential services.

- **Number of participants:** 7 men and women
- **Age range:** 20 to 70+ years old
- **Ethnic backgrounds:** White British
- **Barriers they face:** Digital Exclusion, Cost of living pressures, Health conditions and disabilities

Q1. How easy is it to find information about GP appointments on your practice's website?

- Follow-up: What specific details (e.g., appointment availability, booking process, cancellation policies) do you think are missing or could be clearer?

Many participants with learning disabilities and/or autism do not access GP websites due to digital exclusion and inconvenience. The discussion mainly focused on digital barriers and how access could be made easier for them.

Preference for Face-to-Face Over Digital Services

- Many participants avoid using online services and prefer in-person interactions.
- Some struggle with GP apps, finding them confusing or difficult to use.
- Digital barriers leave some **patients reliant on support workers** to book appointments.
- **Websites have too many steps**, making it hard to find information, such as medical records or test results.

Long Waiting Times & Access Issues

- Phone queues are long, making it frustrating to reach a GP.
- Emergency appointments are difficult to secure, causing stress and uncertainty.
- Patients miss the old system where they could simply call and get an appointment anytime.
- SMS reminders for appointments work well, helping patients keep track of their visits.

Poor Communication & Receptionist Interactions

- Receptionists are often perceived as rude, adding to patient frustration.
- **Patients feel forced to use digital options** even when they struggle with them.
- Having to repeat medical issues to multiple staff members is exhausting, especially when unwell.
- **Lack of notifications** for medical record updates leaves patients unaware of important changes.

Appointment & Prescription Challenges

- GP appointments frequently run late, with wait times of 15–30 minutes past the scheduled time.
- Repeat prescriptions are sometimes missed or incorrect, leading to confusion and inconvenience.
- Booking via apps is unreliable – long wait times and limited appointment availability make it difficult.
- **Passwords often don't work**, making access to online services even harder.

Difficulties with Online Forms & Questionnaires

- **Online questionnaires are inaccessible** – text is small, forms are long, and typing is difficult.
- Patients who struggle to complete them often get a call from reception instead, which feels like wasted time.

Additional Comments & Suggestions

- Telephone call-back services are appreciated, providing an easier way to speak to a GP.
- In-person appointments are still possible, but securing one remains a challenge.
- Some patients want clearer guidance on using online services to improve accessibility.



Questionnaires [on the website] are too long, and typing is hard.



Focus Group 5: Edmonton Community Partnership

Date: 23 January 2025

Edmonton Community Partnership (ECP) is a network of schools and community groups in Edmonton, Enfield, supporting children, young people, and families. Since 2011, ECP has led projects in education, wellbeing, and community engagement to improve opportunities and access to services. Its Eastern European Hub supports Eastern European and Balkan families with healthcare, job applications, and welfare services. Interpreters were present.

- **Number of participants:** 12 women
- **Age range:** 20 to 70+ years old
- **Ethnic backgrounds:** Turkish
- **Barriers they face:** Language Barriers, Cost of living pressures, Care responsibilities, Low-income backgrounds, and disabilities.

Q1. How easy is it to find information about GP appointments on your practice's website?

- Follow-up: What specific details (e.g., appointment availability, booking process, cancellation policies) do you think are missing or could be clearer?

Language Barriers and Digital Exclusion

- Many participants cannot read or write in English, making it impossible to navigate GP websites.
- GP websites do **not offer content in Turkish**, preventing access to online services.
- Patients **struggle with English-language menus** and find it hard to memorise the options.
- Many cannot use the NHS app or email-based services due to lack of IT literacy.

Difficulties Booking Appointments

- Patients reported multiple cancellations of appointments with no clear explanations.
- Many rely on walking into GP surgeries to book appointments.



Lack of Signposting & Referral Support

- Instead of offering care or alternative services, patients have said they are often sent to A&E, increasing hospital pressure.
- The service does not adequately translate information into Turkish, leading to unnecessary hospital visits.
- Patients seek alternative care or services through pharmacies and **community organisations**.

Need for Clearer Information

- GPs do not explain referral pathways. Patients do not understand how to access occupational therapy or adult social care.
- **Lack of signposting**, as patients struggle to navigate health and social care systems.

Recommendations

Simplify Navigation

- Use quick links on the homepage for key services (appointments, prescriptions, referrals).
- Introduce a searchable FAQ section to help patients find answers quickly.
- Improve mobile-friendly design to support patients accessing the site via smartphones.
- Simplify navigation with clear headings and a structured layout.
- Introduce a dedicated "Help & Support" section with FAQs and an interactive chatbot.

Enhance Accessibility

- Promote the website more effectively through GP practices and patient communications.
- Offer translations into widely spoken languages (e.g., Turkish, Somali).
- Provide easy-read versions of essential information for those with learning difficulties.
- Implement text-to-speech features for visually impaired patients.
- Ensure the website meets accessibility standards (e.g., larger text, screen reader compatibility).
- Provide alternative ways to access information for those who struggle with digital platforms (e.g., printable guides, phone support).
- Tailor services for carers and vulnerable groups who may need additional support.

Improve Awareness of NHS Services

- Clear explanation of Pharmacy First, NHS 111, and Out-of-Hours care.
- Provide a comparison table showing when to use each service.
- Offer examples of minor ailments that can be treated at pharmacies instead of GPs.
- Information on language and interpreter services (including BSL and multilingual support).

- Offer guidance on self-care, NHS App usage, and local urgent care centres.

Support Patients with Digital Tools

- Add step-by-step guides on using PATCHS, eConsult, and the NHS App.
- Create video tutorials or downloadable guides to help patients navigate online systems.
- Explain consultation types (e.g., why patients are offered a nurse instead of a GP).
- Provide alternative contact options (e.g., email or chatbot assistance).
- Make the appointment booking process on website more intuitive and easier to access.
- Ensure real-time availability is displayed to reduce confusion.

Provide Practical Health Information

- Include clear instructions on accessing medical records.
- Display self-care advice for common conditions.
- Offer guidance on claiming travel cost reimbursements for hospital visits.

Ensure Better Communication & Engagement

- Use newsletters or alerts to keep patients informed of changes in services.
- Display waiting times and appointment availability more transparently.
- Offer clearer explanations of referral pathways and specialist care options.

Appendix

I. Focus Group Questions

Q1. How easy is it to find information about GP appointments on your practice's website?

- Follow-up: What specific details (e.g., appointment availability, booking process, cancellation policies) do you think are missing or could be clearer?

Q2. Does your GP practice's website provide enough information about alternative healthcare services such as Pharmacy First, NHS 111, and out-of-hours care?

- Follow-up: What additional information would help you decide when to use these services instead of visiting your GP?

Q3. What kind of health-related information or guidance would you find most useful on your GP's website?

- Follow-up: Would you benefit from more self-care advice, guidance on urgent care options, or explanations of different types of GP consultations (e.g., online vs. in-person)?

Q4. What is the best way for a GP website to present important information so that you can find it quickly when needed?

- Follow-up: Do you prefer a dedicated page for different types of information, quick links on the homepage, or a searchable FAQ section?

II. Sisters In Mind Feedback

Selected Feedback: How easy is it to find information about GP appointments on your practice's website?

Digital Barriers

- *"The website is confusing. I can't book an appointment through Patches or the website, so I just call."*
- *"I tried using the NHS App, but it just sent me back to Patches, which didn't work."*
- *"I get anxious booking online – I'd rather just talk to someone."*

Lack of Awareness

- *"I never got an explanation on how to use the online system. I want to learn but need some support."*

Communication Issues

- *"The receptionist at my practice is great, but I don't think the website is helpful."*

Other Issues

- *"I log in at 8 AM to book an appointment, but they're already gone. It's the same issue on the phone."*
- *"There is lots of information about health conditions on the website, which is great, but booking an appointment is a nightmare."*

Selected Feedback: Does your GP practice’s website provide enough information about alternative healthcare services such as Pharmacy First, NHS 111, and out-of-hours care?

Limited Access to NHS 111 and Out of Hours

- *“NHS 111 doesn’t help. They just tell me to go back to my GP.”*
- *“I needed a prescription, but out-of-hours care couldn’t give me one, so I had to wait for my GP.”*

Gaps in Website Information

- *“There’s no information for carers – I take care of my mum, but I don’t know what support is available.”*

Other Issues

- *“Why is there no translation service for NHS 111? Not everyone speaks English fluently.”*
- *“It’s really frustrating when my NHS 111 call drops, and I have to start all over again.”*

Selected Feedback: What kind of health-related information or guidance would you find most useful on your GP's website?

Website Clarity

- *"The website should be clearer. I don't want to spend ages searching for things."*

Travel Expenses

- *"I didn't know I could claim travel costs—I should have seen that on the website."*

Accessing Medical Records

- *"My care notes don't transfer. I feel anxious – what if I go to my appointment and they don't know why I'm there?"*
- *"I need medication for my mum visiting from Italy, but the GP won't prescribe it without a translated record. No one tells me where to get this done."*
- *"London has so many people from different countries—medical translation services should be easy to find."*
- *"Medical translation should be easy to access through the NHS."*

III. Online Discussion Feedback

Selected Feedback: How easy is it to find information about GP appointments on your practice's website?

Website Usability

- *"There is a lot of information, but the deeper pages are complicated and not well-structured."*
- *"I only use the website for eConsult, I don't need it for anything else."*
- *"I live close to the surgery, so I prefer going in person rather than using the website."*
- *"If I need advice, I just go directly to the GP practice."*

Accessibility

- *"The website excludes people with learning disabilities—there's no easy-read format."*
- *"Dyslexic-friendly features exist, but not for non-verbal users. More needs to be done."*

Selected Feedback: Does your GP practice's website provide enough information about alternative healthcare services such as Pharmacy First, NHS 111, and out-of-hours care?

NHS 111

- *"NHS 111 told me to go to A&E, but when I got there, they said I wasn't urgent. It felt like my fault."*
- *"My GP is great, but services like 111 often get it wrong because they rely on a phone checklist."*

Out of Hours

- *"I'm aware of out-of-hours services, but I don't use them because they don't know me."*

Pharmacy First

- *"I didn't know about Pharmacy First—how does the NHS expect people to find out about it?"*
- *"Pharmacy First is mentioned on my GP's website, but it doesn't explain what it is."*

E-Consult

- *"When I click on appointments, it just takes me straight to eConsult—there's no other information."*
- *"I only found out I could see a nurse without eConsult because the receptionist told me."*
- *"Who actually reviews the eConsult forms? How are they improving this system?"*

- *“By the time I wake up, eConsult is already closed. Then I’m told to call 111—that’s probably why A&E is so busy.”*
- *“The system closes as soon as it reaches capacity. On Monday mornings, this happens almost instantly.”*

Urgent Care

- *“When I needed urgent care, I just took my son to an urgent care centre—it felt like the right call.”*

Selected Feedback: What kind of health-related information or guidance would you find most useful on your GP’s website?

Accessibility

- *“My GP website has text alterations, which is great, but no easy-read option.”*

Information Availability

- *“There needs to be clearer information on when and why to use eConsult.”*

Need for Further Engagement

- *“A focus group on eConsult is needed to make it more inclusive and easier to use.”*

IV. Dalmar Feedback

Selected Feedback: Does your GP practice's website provide enough information about alternative healthcare services such as Pharmacy First, NHS 111, and out-of-hours care?

Pharmacy First

- *"I'd never heard of Pharmacy First, but now that I know what it is, I realise I've actually used it."*
- *"A simple list of conditions for Pharmacy First and 111 would make things much clearer."*

NHS 111

- *"I know about 111, but I didn't realise you could book an out-of-hours GP appointment through them."*
- *"It's hard to know when to call 111. I feel like they just tell people to go to A&E."*
- *"GP websites don't really explain these services well. If they did, I might use them instead of waiting for an appointment."*

Selected Feedback: Does your GP practice’s website provide enough information about alternative healthcare services such as Pharmacy First, NHS 111, and out-of-hours care?

Flu & Vaccine

- *“I’d like to know when flu is going around—getting this in a newsletter would be really helpful.”*

Accessing Medical Records

- *“I don’t even know how to access my medical records. That should be explained better.”*

Fertility Information

- *“Fertility treatment information is really hard to find. It would be useful to know what’s available.”*

Mental Health Support

- *“If I’m on a mental health waiting list, I want to know what I can do in the meantime.”*

Paediatric Health

- *“A chart for children’s poo would be amazing—sometimes it’s hard to know if I should be worried or not.”*

Domestic Violence

- *“It would be good to see information on domestic violence and support groups, as well as health conditions.”*

Need for Better Signposting

- *“I don’t expect my GP to provide all this information, but links to the right places would help.”*

Selected Feedback: What kind of health-related information or guidance would you find most useful on your GP's website?

Language Accessibility

- *"It would be helpful if the website could be translated into Somali. That would make it easier for a lot of people."*

Mobile Optimisation

- *"I struggle with forms because my English isn't great. I use speech-to-text on my phone, but it would help if the website was easier to use on mobile."*

Website Navigation

- *"I don't want to click through loads of pages. Quick links on the homepage would be best."*
- *"A search bar or FAQ section would save time—sometimes I just need a quick answer."*
- *"Websites need to be simple. If I can't find what I need in a few clicks, I just give up and call instead."*

V. One to One Feedback

Selected Feedback: How easy is it to find information about GP appointments on your practice's website?

Preference for Face-to-Face

- *"I don't like going online—I prefer face-to-face. The app is too difficult."*
- *"The receptionist told me to use the app, but I can't."*

Waiting Times

- *"When I call, I have to wait a long time just to get through."*
- *"I miss when you could call at any time and just book an appointment."*

Website & App Issues

- *"I tried using the website once, but there were too many steps, and I got confused."*
- *"My password never seems to work when I try to log in."*

Accessing Medical Records

- *"I wanted to check my asthma exam notes, but I couldn't find them."*
- *"I don't get notified when my medical records are updated, but SMS reminders for appointments are really helpful."*

Appointment Delays & Booking Frustrations

- *"I always have to wait at least 15 minutes past my appointment time."*

E-Consult Form Issues

- *“Questionnaires [on the website] are too long, and typing is hard. Reception just ends up calling me anyway.”*

VI. Edmonton Community Partnership Feedback

Selected Feedback: How easy is it to find information about GP appointments on your practice's website?

Website Issues

- *"I can access the website, but I can't use it."*
- *"We go to ECP for advice because we can't use the website."*

Appointment Cancellations

- *"When appointments are booked, the GP cancels them. When we rebook, they get cancelled again."*

Language Barriers

- *"We don't know where we are in the phone queue, and the options are all in English."*
- *"NHS 111 couldn't translate properly, so they told me to go to A&E."*
- *"There are no Turkish interpreters at my GP, so I have to do it myself."*

Signposting Services

- *"GPs don't know how to refer patients to adult social care or occupational therapy."*



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