



GP Website Accessibility Summary Report

GP Website Accessibility: Project

Summary

Healthwatch Leeds ensures that people's voices are at the heart of shaping health and care services in Leeds. One of our priorities is that everyone has equal access to health and care services, including people with additional communication needs. This includes making sure the Accessible Information Standard (AIS)¹ is followed, so healthcare information is easy for everyone to understand.

We invited a diverse group of people, including those with learning disabilities, visual and hearing impairments and people with English as a second language, to test five surgeries' (or group surgeries') websites. We worked with the [Central North Primary Care Network \(PCN\)](#) which covers the following GP practices:

- Alwoodley Medical Centre
- Meanwood Health Centre
- North Leeds Medical Practice
- Street Lane Practice
- Diamond Medical Group (Rutland Lodge, Carlton Gardens Surgery, Oakwood Surgery and Shadwell Medical Centre)

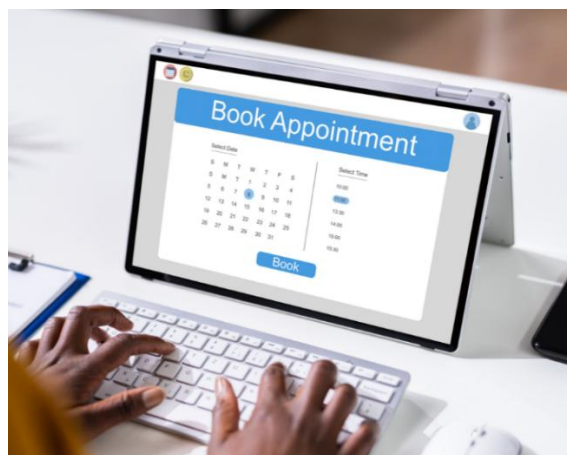
Testing took place in summer 2024.

We asked Healthwatch Leeds volunteers, disability groups and GP patient participation groups to help us test the websites. Included in testing were men and women aged 18 to 79 from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Some had specific communication needs linked to their disability, some had none. One person spoke English as a second language. All had some familiarity with using the internet.

In line with NHS England's GP website web audit tool, our testers assessed whether the website met each criterion "well", "adequately" or "inadequately".

We broke down the testing into three different focus areas:

1. Finding the appointment page and information about booking an appointment. This includes information about online consultation tools, such as PATCHs.
2. Finding the prescriptions page and information about ordering repeat prescriptions.
3. Website accessibility for people with additional communication needs.



We gave the testers 18 criteria from the NHSE benchmarking tool to use in their evaluations. However, due to the time and support required for group members with additional communication needs, they focused on a smaller number of criteria.

Once our testers had handed in their evaluations, we converted them into a set of scores.

Our findings

We analysed the findings in two ways. First, we assessed how people with additional communication needs rated each website. Second, we assessed how people without additional needs rated it.

We provide detailed findings and recommendations for each website in their dedicated reports. All websites had strengths and weaknesses.

Here are some of the commonalities we identified:

1. People with additional needs consistently rated the websites lower than people without. This suggests that people with needs remain at a disadvantage when using the websites.
2. All websites have some areas in which they are performing well, according to our testers, without additional needs.
3. All websites had areas in which they could provide more information.
4. Some websites are performing markedly better than others in terms of accessibility. The following common issues were identified:
 - There is a lack of provision for people who use British Sign Language.
 - All websites' writing and structure could be simplified to make them more accessible to people with additional needs.
 - When websites provided translations, the quality wasn't always flawless.



Our Recommendations:

We recommend that all practices which took part in the testing to prioritise making their websites more accessible, in line with findings from the summary and detailed reports. This will help ensure fair and equal access for everyone.

Key priorities (but are not limited to) include the following:

1. **Provide BSL interpretation** for key services on the website, so Deaf people can fully access healthcare information and services.
2. **Enhance language translation**, improving both the quality and availability of translated content for people who speak English as a second language.
3. **Create a dedicated accessibility support webpage** that clearly explains all communication support available at the practice. This page should include, for example:
 - A list of available adjustments at the practice to support people with additional communication needs (e.g.: communication aids, alternative formats for appointments)
 - Information about the provision of BSL and language interpreters.
 - How to access to Easy Read and large print materials.

Individual reports have been shared with respective practices, who are encouraged to complete an action plan. These action plans should be used as tools for improving each website's accessibility, based on our testers' feedback.

We look forward to working with the practices and Central North PCN to ensure that everyone in Leeds has full access to health services and information.