



‘You and Your GP’ mapping

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healthwatch
in Sussex

About us

About Healthwatch in Sussex

Healthwatch Brighton & Hove, Healthwatch East Sussex and Healthwatch West Sussex are your local health and social care champions.

We work together as Healthwatch in Sussex on projects and initiatives where there is value in building a countywide overview of themes and issues.

We make sure NHS leaders and local council decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



About this report

This report summarises findings and recommendations from our exercise to look at channels of communication at GP practices across Sussex during November 2025.

The report gives us a countywide snapshot of how GPs are meeting a new charter for GPs ('You and your GP') including how they communicate with their patients. It shows us some of the issues we found undertaking this activity.

Introduction

To support improvements in access to general practice, the autumn of 2025 saw the NHS introduce 'You and Your General Practice' (YYGP), known by some as a GP Charter.

Through the 2025/26 GP contract, this introduced guidelines about what patients and practices can expect of each other in terms of appointments, support, reasonable adjustments and communications, including sharing feedback or concerns.

In practical terms, this included:

- A requirement for all GP practices to maintain access to all three forms of communication (face-to-face visits; phone calls and digital platforms) between 8am and 6.30pm, Monday to Friday.
- A requirement for all GP practices to respond to requests for appointments or advice within one working day with next steps for patients, and clarity that practices cannot tell people to just call back the next day.
- Guidance for patients to help them act appropriately, including being prepared for appointments, cancelling when necessary, and organising prescriptions as required.
- Information on how to give feedback or complain to practices, as well as complain to their Integrated Care Board (ICB), or feedback to Healthwatch.

A key aspect was all GP practices needing to have shared a link to the NHS England YYGP document on their practice website home page no later than 1st October 2025.



Our project

Feedback on primary care services, especially GP practices, is the most common received by local Healthwatch.

We regularly hear about the challenges people say they face, including the 8am phone rush for appointments, limited hours of operation for digital booking platforms, and not being able to book appointments face-to-face, amongst others.

Following the introduction of the 'You and Your GP' requirements, the three Sussex Healthwatch wanted to explore how these were being carried out locally.

Aim and objectives

Aim:

Identify if GP practices are adhering to the 'You and Your General Practice' requirements.

Objectives:

1. Have GP practices in Sussex shared links to You and Your GP guidance on their website?
2. Do GP practice websites in Sussex make clear if all communication channels are operating between 8am and 6.30pm, Monday to Friday?

What we did

During November 2025, one month after the 'You and Your GP' requirements were introduced nationally, Healthwatch staff and volunteers reviewed 163 Sussex GP practice websites to see if:

- **Have GP practices shared links to the YYGP guidance on their website?**
- **Do GP practice websites make clear if all communication channels (face-to-face visits; phone calls and digital platforms) are operating between 8am and 6.30pm Monday to Friday?**

Each staff member/volunteer was allocated and reviewed a batch of GP websites using the same approach.

Where information could not reasonably be found or was unclear, responses were recorded as 'No' to the questions above.

Limitations

- We limited our review to information available from GP practices directly and not from third-party means e.g. web searches.
- We recognise our snapshot is only accurate as of November 2025 and updates or changes may have occurred since.



We reviewed websites across 163 GP practices for their YYGP and communication channel content



We are telling local NHS leaders how website information may impact patient understanding of contacting their GP

Key findings

- **Most of the 163 GP practices reviewed in Sussex (77.3%) had published the 'You and Your GP' guidance on their websites or provided a link to it. However, 22.7% had not.**
 - Geographical variations exist, with all practices in Brighton & Hove publishing the guidance, compared to approximately two-thirds in East Sussex and West Sussex.
- **The location and presentation of 'You and Your GP' guidance published on GP practice websites varies considerably.**
 - Approximately a quarter of practices placed YYGP content in high-profile locations on their website homepage making the content easy to find.
 - Approximately half of practices located YYGP links and information in their home page footer, which may be hard for patients to see, or understand without context.
 - The location of YYGP content seems linked to the design of the website, with practices using the same design often having YYGP content in the same place.
- **Most GP websites in Sussex (62.0%) included information on the availability of face-to-face access at the practice.**
 - However, in 4-in-10 of these examples, information suggested access was not provided for the full duration of the times required by YYGP (8am to 6.30pm).

Key findings

- **Most GP websites in Sussex (77.9%) included information on the availability of phone access to the practice.**
 - However, in 4-in-10 of these examples, information suggested access was not provided for the full duration of the times required by YYGP (8am to 6.30pm).
- **Most GP websites in Sussex (66.9%) included information on the availability of digital platforms at the practice.**
 - However, in 3-in-10 of these examples, information indicated access was not provided for the full duration of the times required by YYGP (8am to 6.30pm).
- **Few GP websites presented information about all the different communication channels and operating times in a clear and simple way.**
- **Some GP practice websites contain conflicting information on different pages (e.g. phone operating hours vary from surgery opening hours) which may cause confusion amongst patients about what is operating and when.**
- **Some GP practice websites contain content on key themes (e.g. booking appointments), which is doesn't appear particularly patient friendly. Examples include presenting too much information, the use of complicated or technical language, or excessive numbers of links to other website pages.**

You and Your GP guidance on websites

We found most of the 163 GP practices in Sussex (77.3%) had published the 'You and Your GP' guidance on their websites or provided a link to them. However, 22.7% had not.

Is the NHS England YYGP document or its content visible and accessible from the GP practice website homepage?

	All Sussex	Brighton & Hove	East Sussex	West Sussex
Yes	126	31	36	59
No	37	0	19	18

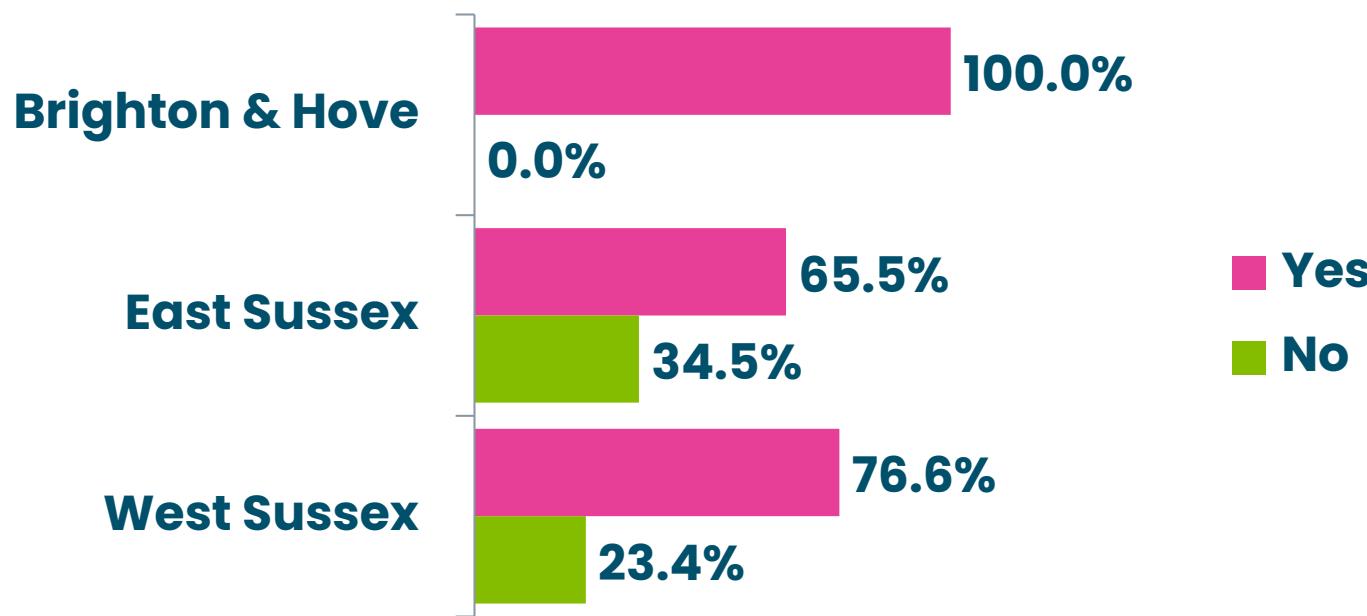
Where present, our reviewers found variations in where 'You and Your GP' guidance was located on websites, which may affect patients' awareness of the requirements.

We found examples where YYGP guidance on practice home pages was prominent as a distinct item, either in content box/tiles or news items. Sometimes it appeared in multiple locations and formats on the home page, which made it more obvious.

Unfortunately, many reviewers identified YYGP guidance was often located at the bottom of home-pages where patients may not see it, and often only as link, with a name that patients may not be familiar with. This may limit patient awareness and levels of access.

You and Your GP guidance on websites

Is the NHS England YYGP document or its content visible and accessible from the GP practice website homepage?



Differences across Sussex were identified in the presentation of YYGP across practice websites.

In Brighton & Hove, all 31/31 practices reviewed had the YYGP guidance present.

In East Sussex, 36/55 practices reviewed had the YYGP guidance present.

In West Sussex, 59/77 practices reviewed had the YYGP guidance present.

YYGP guidance: Good visibility

Here is a positive example, where YYGP guidance is given a prominent location at the top of a GP practice home page, and as part of or adjacent to content tiles providing links to other key practice information/services.

The walk-in service wait time is currently: 1 Hour 30 mins
Updated on 19 November 2025 at 1:01 pm

The walk-in service wait time is currently: 1 Hour 30 mins
Updated on 19 November 2025 at 1:01 pm

Appointments

Book an appointment with a GP or other medical healthcare professional.

[Book an appointment](#)

Prescriptions

Order repeat prescriptions 24 hours a day. Learn more about ordering your repeat prescriptions online.

[Find out more](#)

NHS app

Log in to the NHS app for a range of healthcare services.

[NHS app](#)

Contact us

Need to contact us, find our location or leave feedback? Contact the Practice Plus Brighton Station team now.

[Contact us](#)

Support services

As a patient you can access some of your local healthcare services without visiting your practice. Help at your fingertips.

[Find out more](#)

Walk-in clinic

Our walk-in clinic is open every day and is available to both registered and non registered patients.

[Find out more](#)

You and your general practice

Helping patients understand what to expect from their general practice

[Find out more](#)

Join the practice

We always welcome new patients to register with Practice Plus Brighton Station.

[Join the practice](#)

YYGP guidance: Good visibility

Here is a positive example, where YYGP guidance is given a prominent location at the top of a GP practice home page, and as part of or adjacent to content tiles providing links to other key practice information/services.



Contact us online via Accurx

→ [Submit a medical or admin request](#)

You and your general practice

[You and your general practice](#) is a national guide on what you can expect from your GP surgery. It also explains what you can do to get the best from the NHS.

As well as being prominent, this content also outlines the purposes of YYGP, which may encourage patients to explore content further.

YYGP guidance: Poor visibility

Approximately half the 126 Sussex GP practices displaying the YYGP guidance did this only as a link, often at the bottom of their website homepage – see examples below. The use of a link with no further explanation may also hinder patient's access to this content.

If YYGP uptake amongst patients is low, the potential benefits to GP practices of informed and prepared patients may also be reduced, partially negating the purposes of YYGP.

The consistency of formatting suggests the location of YYGP content may be because of the website template practices use. Those in blue are provided by GPSurgery.net and those in grey by Tree View Designs Ltd.

Helpful links

- [Accessibility](#)
- [Privacy Notice](#)
- [Sussex Health and Care ICS](#)
- [You and your general practice](#)

Helpful links

- [News](#)
- [Sussex Integrated Care Board](#)
- [Deans and Central PCN](#)
- [You and your general practice](#)

Helpful links:

- [NHS Sussex Health & Care](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Privacy](#)
- [Self Care Forum](#)
- [You and your general practice](#)

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- [Accessibility](#)
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- [Sussex Health and Care ICS](#)
- [You and your general practice](#)

Home [Contact us](#)

Appointments [Opening times](#)

Prescriptions [Sick \(fit\) notes](#)

Services [Test results](#)

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[You and your general practice](#)

The Practice

[Opening Hours](#)

[GP Net Earnings](#)

[Meet the Team](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Patient Group](#)

[Practice Policies](#)

[Friends & Family Test](#)

[Complaints & Feedback](#)

[You and Your General Practice](#)

Quick Links

[Contact Us](#)

[New Patients](#)

[Appointments](#)

[Prescriptions](#)

[Get Test Results](#)

[Request a Sick Note](#)

[Change Your Contact Details](#)

[Our Services](#)

YYGP: Face-to-face

Our reviewers found most GP websites in Sussex (62.0%) included information on the availability of face-to-face access at the practice.

However, in 4-in-10 of these examples, website content indicated these were not provided for the full duration of the times required by YYGP (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6.30pm).

Across Sussex, 62 (38.0%) GP websites were identified as not providing information on face-to-face access at the practice.

Are face-to-face communication channels accessible and open between 8am and 6.30pm Monday to Friday?

	All Sussex	Brighton & Hove	East Sussex	West Sussex
YES – for full duration of required times	58	9	21	28
YES – but <u>not</u> for full duration of required times	43	6	13	24
No	62	16	22	24

YYGP: Face-to-face examples

We found examples where GP practices *provided* clear information that face-to-face/walk-in access was available and operated in line with the times required by YYGP.

Making an appointment:

- ✓ [Submit a request](#) to get help with a non-urgent medical problem, administrative queries, including making an appointment.
- ✓ Call us Monday to Friday, 8am to 6.30pm, **01273 770555**
- ✓ Visit the practice and speak with a receptionist, Monday to Friday, 8am to 6.30pm

- ✓ How to [view appointments](#)
- ✓ Please tell us if:
 - There is a specific doctor, nurse or another health professional?
 - You would prefer to consult with the doctor or nurse by phone, face-to-face, by video call or by text or email?
 - Do you need an interpreter?
 - Do you have any other access or communication needs?

YYGP: Face-to-face examples

We found examples where GP practices *failed* to provide clear information that face-to-face/walk-in access was available or the times in which it operated.

Our Appointment System

We offer a mix of pre-bookable and book on the day appointments. These appointments can either be booked as face to face or telephone appointments.

Once all our routine appointments are gone for the day, our clinicians will telephone triage all requests for urgent treatment and advice. If your problem is not urgent but there are no pre-bookable appointments available in an acceptable timeframe, you will be asked to call again opportunistically for a routine book on the day appointment.

Our administrative staff are trained to ask you what you need to consult about, this ensures you see or speak to the most appropriate member of the healthcare team and also enables our clinicians to deal with telephone calls in order of clinical urgency.

In addition to our in-house clinicians we have other services at our disposal which you may be offered as an alternative to seeing or talking to an Arlington Road Clinician. Please see below for more information about the Extended Access Appointments and Pharmacy First.

YYGP: Phone calls

Our reviewers found most GP websites in Sussex (77.9%) included information on the availability of phone access to the practice.

However, in 4-in-10 of these examples, website content indicated these were not provided for the full duration of the times required by YYGP (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6.30pm).

Across Sussex, 36 (22.1%) GP websites were identified as not providing information on phone access to the practice.

Are phone communication channels accessible and open between 8am and 6.30pm Monday to Friday?

	All Sussex	Brighton & Hove	East Sussex	West Sussex
YES – for full duration of required times	75	15	32	28
YES – but <u>not</u> for full duration of required times	52	8	17	27
No	36	8	7	21

YYGP: Phone call examples

We found examples where GP practices provided clear information about the availability of phone contact and these operated in line with the times required

Appointments

To request an urgent appointment for today

- Phone us
 - Little Common Surgery [01424 847575](tel:01424847575)
 - Old Town Surgery [01424 739420](tel:01424739420)
- Visit the surgery and speak with a receptionist

We are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6.30pm.

When you get in touch, we'll ask what you need help with. We will use the information you give us to choose the most suitable doctor, nurse or health professional to help you.

To request a routine appointment

- Phone us
 - Little Common Surgery [01424 847575](tel:01424847575)
 - Old Town Surgery [01424 739420](tel:01424739420)
- [Use an online form](#) (we will respond within three working days)
- Use your NHS account (on the [NHS website](#) or in the NHS App)
- Visit the surgery and speak with a receptionist

We are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6.30pm.

When you get in touch, we'll ask what you need help with. We will use the information you give us to choose the most suitable doctor, nurse or health professional to help you.

We found examples where GP practices failed to provide clear information about the availability of phone contact or the times in which it operated.

Appointment System

If there are no internet appointments available with your preferred GP this means either he or she is on annual leave, or that all the available internet slots with your preferred GP have been already taken.

There are only a certain number of internet bookable slots available every day, so that those patients who do not have access to the internet are not disadvantaged and still have equal access to the doctors at the surgery. If you want to see a particular GP and no internet slots are available, please phone the surgery in the morning as you are still more than likely to be able to get an appointment on the day to see him or her.

You can download the User Guide to Online Appointments [here](#)

YYGP: Digital Platforms

Our reviewers found most GP websites in Sussex (66.9%) included information on the availability of digital platforms at the practice.

However, in 3-in-10 of these examples, website content indicated these were not provided for the full duration of the times required by YYGP (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6.30pm).

Across Sussex, 54 (33.0%) GP websites were identified as not providing information on the availability of digital platforms at the practice.

Are digital communication channels accessible and open between 8am and 6.30pm Monday to Friday?

	All Sussex	Brighton & Hove	East Sussex	West Sussex
YES – for full duration of required times	71	12	30	29
YES – but <u>not</u> for full duration of required times	38	10	7	21
No	54	9	19	26

YYGP: Digital platform examples

We found examples where GP practices provided clear information about the availability of digital platforms and these operated in line with the times required.

Urgent appointments

To request an urgent appointment for today or tomorrow (Monday to Friday)

- phone us on 01273 729194, Monday to Friday, [when we are open](#)
- visit the surgery and speak with a receptionist, Monday to Friday, [when we are open](#)

When you get in touch, we'll ask what you need help with.

We will use the information you give us to choose the most suitable doctor, nurse or health professional to help you.

[Read more about managing your health online.](#)

Routine appointments

To request a routine appointment in the next 7 days

- [use our appointment request form](#), Monday to Friday from 8am to 6:30pm. We will respond within 2 working days during opening times
- phone us on 01273 729194, Monday to Friday, [when we are open](#)

When you get in touch, we'll ask what you need help with.

We will use the information you give us to choose the most suitable doctor, nurse or health professional to help you.

[Read more about managing your health online.](#)

We found examples where GP practices failed to provide clear information about the availability of digital platforms or the times in which they operated.

Urgent appointments

To request an urgent appointment (Monday to Friday):

- phone us, Monday to Friday during [respective practice opening hours](#)

When you get in touch, we'll ask what you need help with.

We will use the information you give us to choose the most suitable doctor, nurse or health professional to help you.

Routine appointments

To request a routine appointment:

- use your [PatientAccess account](#)
- phone us, Monday to Friday during [respective practice opening hours](#)
- use your [NHS account](#) (through the NHS website or NHS App) to book a screening test or vaccination

When you get in touch, we'll ask what you need help with.

We will use the information you give us to choose the most suitable doctor, nurse or health professional to help you.

Conclusion

Our mapping identified most GP practices in Sussex have technically complied with the requirement to publish or link to the 'You and Your GP' guidance on their website.

However, many GP practices placed YYGP information in locations or formats where it is not obvious or easy to access. This conflicts with the objective of YYGP to help patients understand what to expect from their GP and their personal responsibilities in using services.

In part, this may be due to the website templates used to deliver GP websites, with decisions taken by developers being applied across all practices using the same format.

We also found a mixed picture in whether the GP practice met the YYGP requirements for the key channels of communication (face-to-face visits; phone calls and digital platforms) at GP practices to be open from 8am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Whilst most GP websites give information on these channels, some very clearly and in line with YYGP guidance, others present unclear, confusing and contradictory information, and a proportion present no information at all. This picture does little to support a consistent patient understanding of how and when they can contact their GP and may not support practices in reducing pressure on their phone, digital or face-to-face services.

Basic information such as operating hours should not be as challenging to find out as it is. NHS Sussex and GP practices need to work together to support increased, more consistent and patient-friendly information on how and when patients can contact their practice using the method that best fits their needs and preferences.

Recommendations

Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and GP Practices

1. All Sussex GP practices to make sure they publish the 'You and Your GP' guidance on their website in line with the national requirements.
2. Primary Care Networks and GP practices to regularly review website information in-line with YYGP requirements and ensure accessible, clear and consistent information on communication channels and their operating times is provided to patients.
3. Primary Care Networks and GP practices to explore regular (annual) lay testing of website content, including by Patient Participation Groups (PPGs), to ensure their effectiveness from a patient perspective.

NHS Sussex (Sussex Integrated Care Board)

4. NHS Sussex to collaborate with GP practices in Sussex to develop and keep up-to-date websites aligned with 'You and Your GP' principles and delivering clear and consistent contact information,

Local Healthwatch

5. Healthwatch to periodically review GP practice websites in Sussex to assess the quality, clarity and accessibility of content from a patient perspective.

Response from NHS Sussex

NHS Sussex (Sussex Integrated Care Board) responded to our findings and draft report in February 2026:

"NHS Sussex welcomes the findings of Healthwatch's countywide review of GP practice websites and the implementation of the You and Your General Practice (YYGP) requirements. We appreciate the scale of the work undertaken, the clarity of the insights provided, and the constructive spirit in which this exercise has been carried out.

We recognise that Healthwatch and NHS Sussex share a common aim: ensuring that patients across Sussex can easily understand how to contact their GP practice, what to expect when they do so, and how to provide feedback or raise concerns. The introduction of YYGP in the 2025/26 GP contract represents an important step in strengthening this clarity and consistency, and we value Healthwatch's contribution to monitoring its early implementation."

NHS Sussex took a proactive and structured approach to supporting practices with the new contractual requirements. This included:

- Issuing system-wide communication to all practice managers in September 2025, highlighting the national requirements and emphasising the need for YYGP information to be clearly visible on practice home pages.
- Providing exemplar website layouts and links to national guidance, including translated versions, to support consistent implementation.
- Conducting an audit of all 156 Sussex practice websites during October and November 2025 to assess compliance and offer targeted support.

This audit identified 29 practices as initially non-compliant, but following direct engagement, only one practice remained fully non-compliant by 19 November. We also identified issues linked to specific website templates, including instances where YYGP content was added to a site but not placed on the home page. Practices were supported to resolve this, and the majority did so promptly.

Response from NHS Sussex

Healthwatch's findings broadly align with our own audit and reinforce several important themes:

1. Visibility and placement of YYGP content

We agree that while most practices have technically complied with the requirement to publish or link to YYGP, visibility varies significantly. The observation that many practices place YYGP content only in footers or low visibility areas is consistent with our own findings and reflects the influence of website templates used across the system.

NHS Sussex will continue to work with practices and website providers to promote clearer, more prominent placement of YYGP information.

2. Clarity and consistency of communication channel information

Healthwatch's review highlights variation in how practices describe the availability of face to face, telephone and digital access, including examples of unclear or contradictory information. We recognise the importance of ensuring patients can easily understand how and when they can contact their practice.

This is an area where NHS Sussex is committed to working collaboratively with practices to improve clarity, reduce confusion, and support a more consistent patient experience.

3. Impact of website templates and design

We note Healthwatch's finding that the location and presentation of YYGP content often reflects decisions made by website providers rather than individual practices. This aligns with our own audit, which identified template driven inconsistencies.

NHS Sussex will explore opportunities to work with providers to promote more standardised, patient friendly approaches across Sussex.

Response from NHS Sussex

We welcome the recommendations set out in the report and offer the following response:

For Primary Care Networks and GP Practices

NHS Sussex supports the recommendation that all practices ensure YYGP guidance is published in line with national requirements and that website content is regularly reviewed for clarity, accuracy and accessibility. We will continue to reinforce these expectations through our routine engagement with practices and PCNs.

We also support the proposal for regular lay testing of website content, including through Patient Participation Groups. This aligns with our commitment to ensuring patient-centred communication and will be explored further with PCNs.

For NHS Sussex

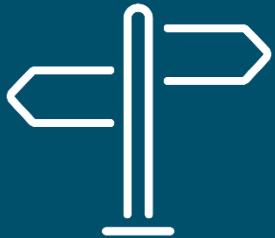
We agree with the recommendation that NHS Sussex should collaborate with practices to develop and sustain websites aligned with YYGP principles. This work is already underway and will continue as part of our wider focus on improving access, transparency and patient experience. Our dedicated YYGP webpage will continue to provide a single point of access for key documents and guidance, supporting both patients and practices.

For Healthwatch

We welcome Healthwatch's intention to periodically review GP practice websites. Ongoing independent insight is valuable in helping us understand how information is experienced by patients and where further support may be needed.

Our ongoing commitment

NHS Sussex is committed to working in partnership with Healthwatch, PCNs and GP practices to ensure that YYGP is implemented in a way that genuinely improves patient understanding and access. We value the constructive challenge and insight provided through this mapping exercise and look forward to continuing our shared work to strengthen communication, consistency and patient experience across Sussex.



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