

**Herefordshire
General Practice
Engagement Report
– Enhanced Access**

July 2022

Contents

Background	2
Patient & Public Engagement	2
Engagement in areas of deprivation	3
General Results Data	4
North & West PCN Data	5
South & West PCN Data	6
East PCN Data	7
HMG PCN Data	8
WBC PCN Data	9
Barriers	10
Summary	11

(Please note all appendices are attached as separate documents)

Background

For many patients, finding the time to see a GP for routine matters can be a challenge. Traditional appointments offered at surgeries may no longer fit the same for home and work responsibilities as it once did for many.

This at its worst could have a significant impact on people who might be tempted to ignore a health issue and hope it goes away.

The current Taurus seven-day improved access scheme offers appointments across six different hub locations in Herefordshire at both evenings and weekends when GP surgeries are closed, the only criteria is that you need to be registered with a Herefordshire GP to get an appointment.

Now progressing this further, Taurus want to understand how an Enhanced Access to general practice, could offer more flexibility and availability of appointments to patients across Herefordshire both in and out of GP surgery hours.

To understand what patients in Herefordshire require, Healthwatch Herefordshire designed a survey in conjunction with Taurus Healthcare asking some specific types of questions to understand how they would need to access services and look at how they travel around the county for their appointments. We already understand rurality and transport access is already one of the biggest barriers for patients in accessing health & social care services.

A copy of the blank survey and the results data can be seen attached as **Appendix 1**.

The following pages of this report detail how we engaged with patients in our communities and the results broken down into the five PCN areas.

A copy of the raw data gathered from the survey (Excel format) and each individual PCN can be found attached as **Appendix 2**.

Public and Patient Engagement

The period of engagement was three and half weeks for this survey, overwhelmingly most completed surveys were done online. The campaign was shared through Healthwatch Herefordshire social media platforms, Taurus Healthcare social media platforms and directly through GP surgeries where the PCNs were able to disseminate.

At the start of the engagement Healthwatch Herefordshire contacted several large employers within Herefordshire in hope to engage further with those in the working cohort, who we believe mat be people that would benefit from enhanced access the most. Unfortunately, we had no response or uptake from any of the employers contacted.

You can review a list of employers contacted and the poster shared both to employers and social media platforms attached as **Appendix 3**.

Engagement in Areas of Deprivation

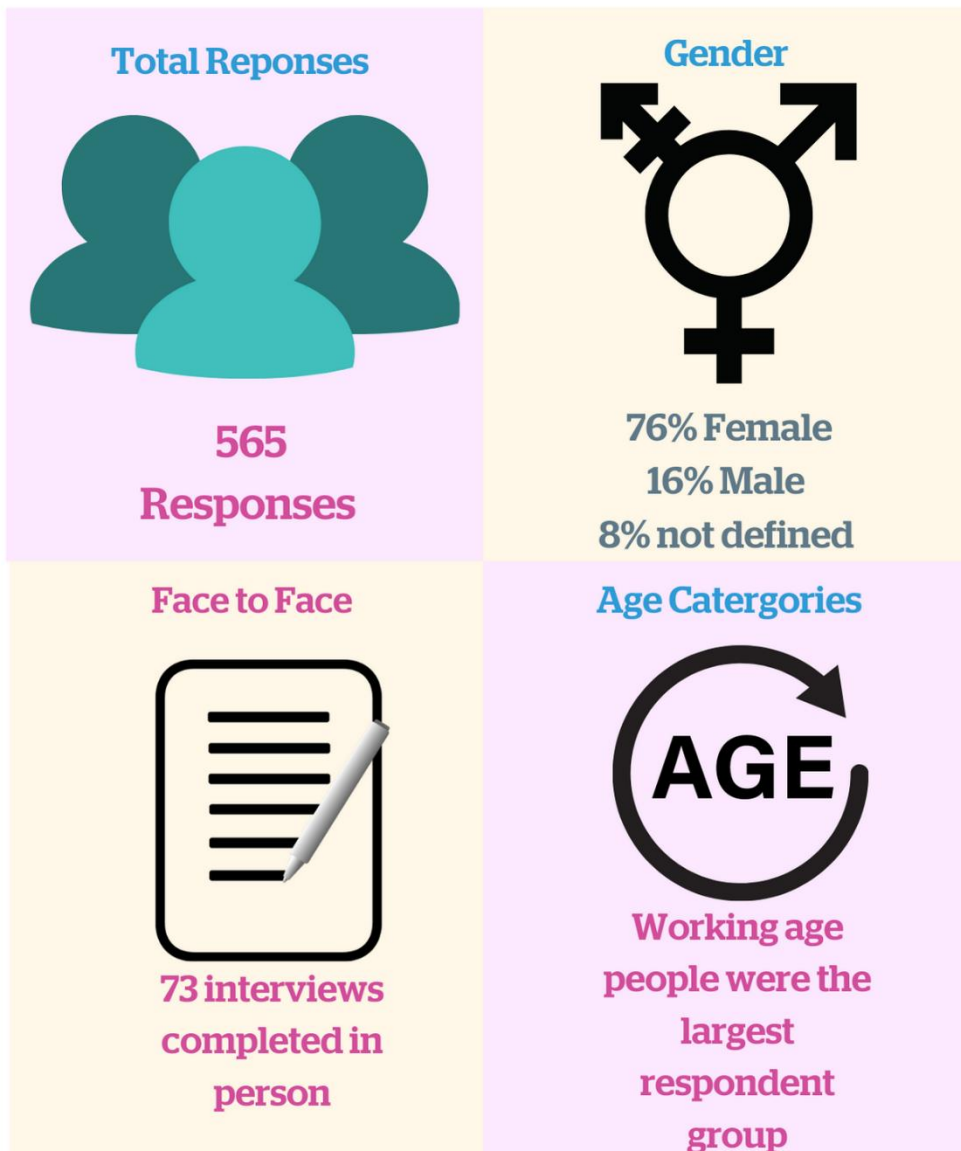
During the 3 weeks of the survey, we pinpointed some areas that would allow us to engage with patients living in areas of deprivation in our county. The diagram below is a breakdown by PCN of where we engaged face to face.

We used hard copy versions of the same survey when speaking with the public, which are included within the overall data.



General Results Summary

Results at a glance



North & West PCN

- ✓ 111 total survey responses
- ✓ 23 of these surveys were conducted as face to face/paper surveys
- ✓ 76 respondents book appointments over the phone
- ✓ 6 respondents book appointments online via NHS App or Surgery Website
- ✓ 4 respondents book appointments in person
- ✓ 2 respondents book appointments through email

- ✓ Over half of the respondents had tried to book an appointment within the last 3 months
- ✓ 2% of those surveyed in North & West PCN had been offered an improved access appointment when booking with their surgery
- ✓ Face to face appointments were the most requested, followed by phone appointments and then video and e-consultation appointments.

- ✓ Appointments in evenings and Saturday mornings were the most requested

- ✓ Health Checks and long term condition management were the two types of appointments respondents would like to see offered as part of an enhanced service offering.

- ✓ Online or video consultation appointments were requested by 30% of respondents.

- ✓ 81% of respondents in the North & West PCN travel to appointments in their own car, 23% walking to appointments and 7% dependent on lifts.

- ✓ 85% of respondents in the North & West PCN would be willing to travel to Kington or Leominster for appointments and the remainder would either be willing to go North of City Centre or City Centre itself.

South & West PCN

- ✓ 71 Total Survey Responses
- ✓ 1 of those surveys were conducted as face to face/paper survey
- ✓ 62 respondents said that they book their appointments over the phone
- ✓ 9 respondents book appointments via the NHS App or Surgery Website
- ✓ 3 respondents book their appointments in person

- ✓ Over half of the respondents had tried to book an appointment within the last 3 months
- ✓ 7% of respondents in the South & West PCN had been offered an improved access appointment when booking with their surgery.

- ✓ Face to face appointments were the most requested and preferred when being offered an appointment, followed by phone appointments and then video and e-consultation appointments.

- ✓ Appointments in evenings and Saturday mornings were the most requested.

- ✓ Health Checks, long term condition management and musculoskeletal appointments were the three main types of service respondents would like to see as part of an enhanced service offering.

- ✓ 88% of respondents in the South & West PCN travel to appointments in their own car with the remainder walking, or dependent on lifts.

- ✓ 98% of respondents would be willing to travel to South of the city centre or Ross on Wye for appointments with another 12% willing to travel to Ledbury.

East PCN

- ✓ 87 Total Survey Responses
- ✓ 4 of these surveys were conducted as face to face/paper surveys
- ✓ 75 respondents said that they book their appointments over the phone
- ✓ 7 respondents book appointments via NHS App or Surgery Website
- ✓ 1 respondent books their appointments in person

- ✓ 75% of respondents had tried to book an appointment within the last 3 months

- ✓ 6% of respondents in the East PCN had been offered an improved access appointment when booking with their surgery.

- ✓ Face to face appointments were the most requested and preferred when being offered an appointment, followed by phone appointments and then video and e-consultation appointments.

- ✓ Appointments in evenings, Saturday afternoons or Sunday afternoons where the most requested.

- ✓ Health Checks and long term condition management appointments were the two main types of service respondents would like to see as part of an enhanced service offering.

- ✓ 74% of respondents in the East PCN travel to their appointments in their own car, with much of the remainder walking and 1% using public transport or dependent on lifts.

- ✓ 82% of respondents would be willing to travel to Ledbury for an appointment with the remainder split, between City Centre and Leominster as an option.

HMG PCN

- ✓ 213 total survey responses
 - ✓ 14 of these surveys were conducted face to face/paper survey
 - ✓ 163 respondents said they book their appointments over the phone
 - ✓ 25 respondents book appointments via the NHS App or the Surgery Website
 - ✓ 3 Respondents book appointments in person
 - ✓ 8 respondents say they haven't been able to book an appointment
-
- ✓ Over half of the respondents had tried to book an appointment within the last 3 months
 - ✓ 6% of the respondents in the HMG PCN said they had been offered an improved access appointment when booking with their surgery.
 - ✓ Face to face appointments were the most requested and preferred when being offered an appointment, followed by phone appointments and then video and e-consultation appointments
 - ✓ Appointments offered in the evenings or anytime on a Saturday were the most requested.
 - ✓ Health Checks, long term condition management and social & wellbeing appointments were the three main types of services respondents would like to see as part of an enhanced service offering.
 - ✓ 78% of respondents use their own car to travel to their appointments, with the remainder split between walking and dependent on lifts. Very few use public transport due to poor accessibility and availability.
 - ✓ Majority of respondents with HMG PCN would be willing to travel anywhere within City Centre, North of the City Centre and South of the City Centre for an appointment that was available.

WBC PCN

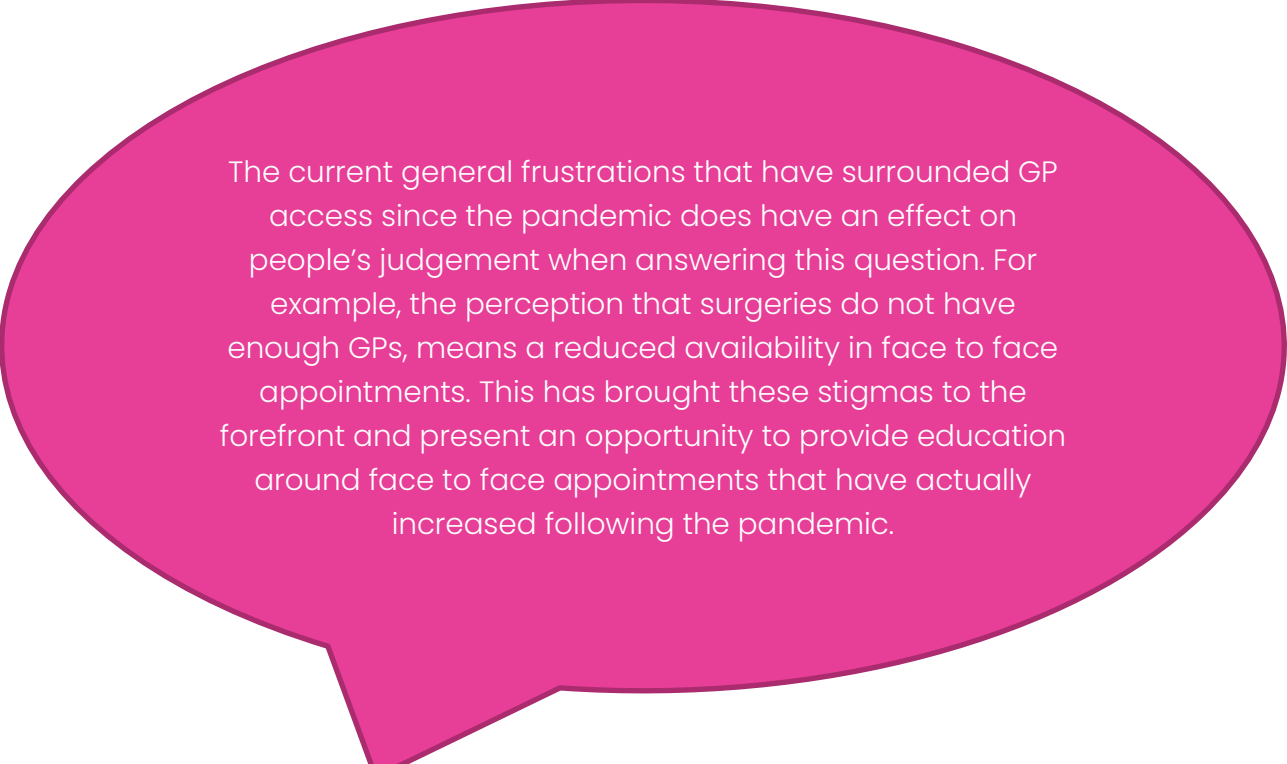
- ✓ 76 total survey responses
 - ✓ 6 of these surveys were conducted face to face/paper survey
 - ✓ 58 respondents said they book their appointments over the phone
 - ✓ 8 respondents book appointments via the NSH APP or Surgery Website
 - ✓ 2 book appointments in person
-
- ✓ Over half of the respondents had tried to book an appointment within the last 3 months
 - ✓ 6% of respondents in the WBC PCN said they had been offered an improved access appointment when booking with their surgery.
 - ✓ Face to face appointments were the most requested and preferred when being offered an appointment, followed by phone appointments and then video and e-consultation appointments
 - ✓ Appointments in the early morning, evening or anytime on Saturdays and Sundays were the most requested.
 - ✓ Health checks, long term condition management, cervical screening and social & wellbeing appointments were the main types of services respondents would like to see as part of an enhanced service offering.
 - ✓ 72% of respondents use their own car to travel to their appointments and 28% walking, using public transport or were dependent on lifts.
 - ✓ Majority of respondents with the WBC PCN would be willing to travel to anywhere within the City Centre, North of the City Centre and South of the City Centre for an appointment that was available.

Barriers

We asked each person surveyed what the main barriers were to them accessing a suitable appointment. Below are the themes of these barriers listed in priority order as a combined result from the survey of all PCNs.

We have combined these together as they are recurring priority themes in each PCN.

- 1) Work commitments and working hours/patterns
- 2) Not being able to get or afford childcare (as not always appropriate to take children with you)
- 3) Not being able to get through to surgery or no appointments available in advance
- 4) Being a carer and not having anyone else that can 'cover' my role for the appointment
- 5) Anxiety and Autism – makes getting to the surgery hard, no quiet or safe spaces available to wait at the surgeries to lessen sensory overload and anxiety.
- 6) Transport if having to rely in public transport or others for a lift
- 7) Triaging at point of getting through to surgeries is perceived by patients as often wrong, so appointments are delayed due perceived priority of the issue.



The current general frustrations that have surrounded GP access since the pandemic does have an effect on people's judgement when answering this question. For example, the perception that surgeries do not have enough GPs, means a reduced availability in face to face appointments. This has brought these stigmas to the forefront and present an opportunity to provide education around face to face appointments that have actually increased following the pandemic.

Summary

The survey and report highlight several common needs across all the PCN areas in Herefordshire. It also shows that patients still have unmet needs when accessing their GP surgeries which is adding to the extra pressure on secondary care services in the county.

The 'working age and carer/childcare groups' of patients are amongst those most affected when trying to make appointments – the most suggested solution to this, is to offer more routine booking appointment further in advance, leaving same day appointments for more 'urgent' appointments. The advance booking option will allow these categories of patients to schedule time off work and/or find suitable care/childcare cover.

Consideration for more 'joined up approach' within each PCN, when booking appointments for improved and enhanced access, where available 'out of hours' appointments within certain area can be shared between surgeries and offered to patients.

Transport to and from surgeries needs to be considered. The survey demonstrates how majority of patients we engaged with are using their own cars to access appointments. However, with more time given to engage further with more communities and areas of deprivation I think that we would demonstrate that many are still reliant on others and public transport, which in Herefordshire is a patchy network. This would also apply to the older people in our communities. Those who do not have access to their own transport need to be considered when booking appointments, so not to deter patients from making appointments to address their health issues.

There is an opportunity within enhanced access service to help educate patients around the multi-disciplinary approach to healthcare in general practice and wider primary care, what is on offer to them at their GP surgeries. This could help reduce stigma that GPs don't want to see patients but encourage patients to understand they are seeing the most suitable person for that particular need at that particular time.

Digital appointments are positively received by many patients, and this can be supported and advanced further with an enhanced service offering. However, it is more evident that understanding the patients at the point of triage and their capabilities of digital technology must be considered. Whilst most generations have smart phones, many still do not use them as a 'digital device' just a phone. GP surgeries have an opportunity here to link patients in with voluntary sector organisations who can support them in enhancing digital skills for future appointments.

Further recommendations

The period of engagement for this work was extremely short due to the requirements of developing enhanced access models in time for the autumn.

It is recommended that future work allows a greater period of time and a wider flexibility to explore the topics relevant to the public to a) reach more communities of interest who may engage less in their healthcare currently and b) fully understand the barriers and opportunities to work differently in service delivery for the local population. Designing the timeline and scope around hearing the voice of those experiencing inequalities should be the aim.

We would like to thank general practice for enabling and assisting us to undertake this quickly, and to the public for giving us their views.



healthwatch

Healthwatch Herefordshire
County Offices
Plough Lane
Hereford
HR4 0LE

www.healthwatch.co.uk

t: 01432 277044

 @HealthwatchHerefordshire

 [Facebook.com/HealthwatchHerefordshire](https://www.facebook.com/HealthwatchHerefordshire)