

# My GP Journey



**June 2017**



# Introduction



We have been looking at how people who find it hard to be heard, get to see their **GP**.



**GP** stands for General Practitioner. A **GP** is your local doctor.



We listened to people in:

- 1 to 1 meetings
- Group discussions



Most people were happy with the care they got, but found it hard to get to see their GP.



Many people didn't know about all the different ways to get health information and advice.

# The people we spoke to

The people we spoke to included:



- Members of the deaf community



- People who have difficulty with seeing



- Carers of people with dementia



- People with a physical disability



- People who are homeless



- People living with mental illness



- People with low income



- People living with cancer



- People with aphasia (damage to parts of the brain)



- **People who have English as their second language**



**People who have English as their second language** will be able to speak and read a different language very well.

They may have difficulty with speaking or understanding the English language.



- People living with HIV
- People with long term health conditions



- Parents of young children

# Common issues



## Difficulty booking appointments

Most people had a difficulty booking appointment because:

- You have to use the phone and some people can't use a phone
- The phone line is often busy. You have to wait a long time to get through



Many people didn't know about booking an appointment online.



People who did know about online booking were very happy with it.



Many people didn't know you could get medical advice and out of hours help from NHS 111.



## Staff don't understand health conditions

3 groups of people said that the staff at the doctor's surgery did not know:

- About their condition
- How to communicate with them



They were:

- Carers of people with dementia



- People with aphasia



- People with a sight or hearing impairment



Carers of people with dementia wanted more information about support groups.



## Difficulties with access

Some people told us about difficulties with:



- Not enough disabled parking spaces



- Getting in with a wheelchair. Sometimes the slopes were too steep



- Not enough handrails

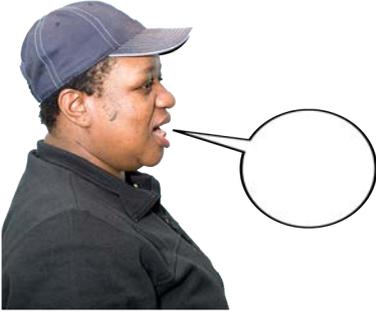


- No disabled toilet



- Automatic doors that closed too quickly

## Problems with translation



Three groups of people told us about problems because they needed a translator or help with language:



- People who are deaf and use sign language



- People who have English as a second language



- People with aphasia



People in the deaf community had difficulties because:

- They couldn't get a sign language **interpreter**



- The surgery did not have a hearing loop



- The surgery wasn't able to send or receive text messages



- The surgery didn't check their emails



**Translation** is where you convert words into a different language.

A **translator** or **interpreter** is the person who converts speech or words into a different language.

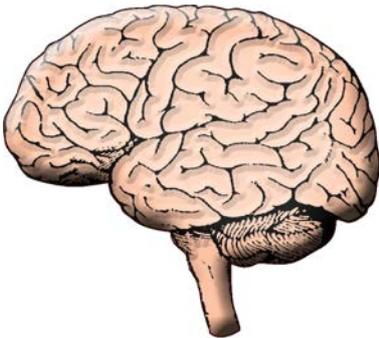


## Staff don't help people to get specialist help

There are usually several different doctors at a GP surgery.

Each doctor may have a special interest in something like:

- Care for older people



- Brain conditions



Receptionists at the GP surgery were not helping people to see the best doctor for them.



## Seeing the same doctor every time

Many people said that they wanted to see the same doctor each time.

They didn't want to explain everything to a new doctor over and over again.

## Patient participation groups



A **patient participation group** is a group of patients and staff that meet to look at ways to improve the GP's surgery.



The patient participation group is a good place to talk about issues with the GP's surgery.



Many people did not know about the patient participation group at their local surgery.

# Ways to get an appointment



## Phone

Most people used the phone to book appointments with their GP.



Many people said they would like the option of booking a talk with their doctor over the phone.



A telephone call with your doctor would save time.



A quarter of people had booked an emergency appointment even though it wasn't really an emergency.



## Going to the surgery

A lot of people said the best way was to go to the surgery and book an appointment.



Some people were worried about having to queue up outside the surgery.



People went to the surgery to get an appointment because they couldn't use the phone. People like:

- Deaf people



- People with a mental illness



- People who have English as a second language



- Patients with aphasia



## Online

The NHS wants GP surgeries to register patients for online services.

This would let people:

- Book appointments online
- Order repeat prescriptions online
- See parts of your medical record
- See letters from the hospital



Most people didn't know that they would be able to do this online.

## NHS 111

People didn't know that they could phone NHS 111 to get an appointment with a doctor out of hours.





## Going to Accident and Emergency at the hospital



The people we spoke to hardly ever went to the Accident and Emergency Service at the Hospital.



The only group that used this service was parents of young children.



These people did not know that NHS 111 could give you an appointment with an out of hours doctor.

## Reception and waiting



Most people did not like the receptionist asking why they wanted an appointment.



Patients who were deaf or had aphasia said that reception staff should have some training in communicating with them.



Carers want receptionists to ask if the appointment is for them or the person they care for.



Some patients didn't like receptionists seeing confidential personal medical information.

## Pharmacy



People were happy with their local pharmacy.



Many people ordered their medication online.



2 people used Pharmacy2u:  
[www.pharmacy2u.co.uk](http://www.pharmacy2u.co.uk)



This lets you order your repeat prescription online and have it delivered free to your home.

# What should happen

## What should health managers do?



- Make sure that access to health care is the main part of their plans



- Look at why many people don't know about NHS 111

- Look at why people don't know about booking appointments online



- Make sure GPs use online booking



## What should GP surgeries do?



- Make their information accessible
- Regularly check their email and text messages so that deaf people can book appointment
- Make sure people can get a sign language interpreter when needed
- Train receptionists in long term illnesses
- Have leaflets and posters about local support groups
- Look at better automatic doors
- Involve patients in staff training
- Ask receptionists to suggest people go to the doctor that knows most about their condition

## What can Healthwatch Surrey do?



- Encourage people to speak up at meetings about changes to health services



- Encourage health managers to listen more to patients



- Help people to know about NHS 111 and GP online booking



- Help patient participation groups and doctors to link with community groups

## What can patients do?



- Go to meetings about plans for health services



- Get involved in the patient participation group at your local surgery



- Register for online services at your local surgery



- Tell Healthwatch Surrey what you think about local health services

# Not happy with your local GP surgery?

If your GPs surgery is not very accessible you can contact:



## NHS England

**Tel:** 0300 311 22 33

**Email:** [england.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net)



### Post:

NHS England  
PO Box 16738  
Redditch  
B97 9PT



## North West Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group

**Tel:** 01372 232 450

### Email:

[contactus2@nwsurreyccg.nhs.uk](mailto:contactus2@nwsurreyccg.nhs.uk)



### Post:

The Customer Service Team  
North West Surrey Clinical  
Commissioning Group  
58 Church Street  
Weybridge  
Surrey  
KT13 8DP

# More information



If you want more information please contact Healthwatch Surrey on:

Telephone: **0303 303 0023**



Website:

**[www.healthwatchsurrey.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsurrey.co.uk)**



Email:

**[enquiries@healthwatchsurrey.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchsurrey.co.uk)**



Text: **07592 787 533**



Text relay: **18001 0303 303 0023**



Post:

**FREEPOST RSYX-ETRE-GXBY**

**Healthwatch Surrey**

**Room GF2**

**Astolat**

**Coniers Way**

**Guildford**

**Surrey**

**GU4 7HL**