

## HWW GP Practice Feedback Summary

April to September 2021

91 people contacted Healthwatch Worcestershire from the start of April to the end of September 2021, to share feedback about their GP practices.

- Q1 - April to June - 21 people
- Q2 - July to September - 70 people

These experiences were reported by telephone, email, via the HWW website, via Facebook and face-to-face as part of online and in person engagement. This was in addition to feedback gathered via our surveys and focussed engagement work.

### I. Positive Feedback

12 people reported positive feedback about their GP practice - giving examples of efficient systems for booking appointments and accessing the practice and praise for the care received from practice staff.

*'This GP has been exemplary and even more so throughout the pandemic. Receptionists are helpful and empathetic. All GP's have been helpful and I've been seen when needed.'*

*'A great system where you can go online and complete an e-consultation to whoever you need to contact: GP, Admin, Pharmacy etc. It has been great, very efficient and call you within 24 hours and a face to face is arranged after if needed.'*

### II. Issues and Concerns

79 people raised issues and concerns about the service they had received from their GP practice.

- 1. Organisation of practice and appointments - 56 people**
  - 1.1 Remote consultations / lack of face to face - 34 people
  - 1.2 Contacting practice by phone - 15 people
  - 1.3 Continuity of care - 5 people
  - 1.4 Attitude of staff - 5 people
  - 1.5 Communication with patients and other services - 5 people
- 2. Quality of treatment and speed of diagnosis - 16 people**
- 3. Availability of procedures and regular checks due to Covid-19 - 8 people**

## 1. Organisation of the practice and appointments

56 people raised concerns about the systems used within the practice, such as arrangements for making appointments, blood tests, prescriptions, registration and communication with patients and other health services.

*'I have rung for an appointment recently and had to call 72 times before I got through. Getting an appointment is very difficult, receptionists are generally very unfriendly and guarded. It is a constant stress when we know we want to contact them about anything.'*

*'It is impossible to get an appointment because you can only ring at 8.30am. Everyone goes into a queue and by the time you get to the front of the queue half an hour later all the appointments for the day are gone for the day. You cannot book appointments for the next day you are told to ring at 8.30 that morning and go through the queue process again.'*

*'Quite worrying that it is almost impossible to see a Doctor.'*

*'No routine appointments available when the Doctor asks to review your medication.'*

### 1.1 Remote consultations / lack of face-to-face

34 people raised specific concerns about the lack of ability to make face-to-face appointments, effectiveness of remote consultations in making a diagnosis and barriers that people experience in accessing remote appointment, including due to working situation, learning disability, hearing impairment, age and nature of the condition or issue.

*'Sadly I have lost all confidence as there is no relationship to build all these anonymous phone calls on.'*

*'Then a further two phone calls and a 20 minute discussion persuading the GP [84 year old relative] needs to see a Doctor not a phone call.'*

*'Unable to get face-to-face appointment, no proper examination.'*

*'I believe had the GP seen her in person and conducted proper tests this [emergency hospital admission] could have been avoided.'*

*'Was told to buy a blood pressure monitor and send in results.'*

*'No time slot, just am or pm, which makes it difficult if you are working and not able to carry a mobile phone.'*

### 1.2 Contacting practice by phone

13 people specifically mentioned the difficulties they have contacting their GP practice by telephone.

*'Waited up to 55 minutes to be answered and then not got an appointment.'*

### 1.3 Continuity of care

5 people commented about difficulties access a specific or named GP and lack of continuity of care.

*'Not a chance of speaking to our regular Doctor, its anyone who is available. Valuable time is spent repeating history /problems over and over again... it's very frustrating. No continuity of care!'*

### 1.4 Attitude of staff

5 people told us about issues relating to their experiences of practice management staff and the attitude of reception staff being unhelpful.

### 1.5 Communication with patients and other services

5 people mentioned communication issues, both in relation to the practice not passing on information to the patient or keeping them informed and with information not being passed onto other health services, for example referrals and information needed by consultants.

## 2. Quality of treatment and speed of diagnosis

16 people told us they were unhappy with the quality of the treatment or speed of diagnosis and / or treatment that they had received from their GP practice. This included examples in which people believe a hospital admission could have been avoided if further investigation and treatment had been carried out sooner, examples in which patients felt that they should have been able to access appropriate treatment sooner, two examples of harm as a result of errors made in procedures carried out at practices and one case where the patient felt a diagnosis of cancer had been missed.

3 people gave specific feedback in relation to difficulties accessing mental health support and reviews of medication.

*'I still have not had my medication looked at nor have I had an appointment with my GP to discuss my now severe anxiety and I believe I am now getting depressed.'*

## 3. Availability of procedures and regular checks due to Covid-19

8 people commented about the lack of availability of procedures due to Covid-19, including ear syringing, spirometry testing, cervical screening and long-term condition checks.

## **HWW Digital Access to Healthcare Survey**

In addition to the feedback summarised, Healthwatch Worcestershire has been carrying out a Digital Access to Healthcare Survey since August 2021. This survey looks at how individuals access the internet, how easy they find using online systems and their experiences of remote health appointments. To date we have collected approximately 300 responses, predominantly through face-to-face engagement and paper copies returned by post. When the survey and related engagement is complete a report will be produced with findings and recommendations.

Preliminary findings suggest that many of the experiences in relation to accessing GP appointments echoes themes identified above - difficulty making appointments and contacting practices by phone and frustrations about not being able to see a Doctor face-to-face.