



Hampshire, Southampton and Isle of Wight Clinical Commissioning Group response to GP Patient Survey 2021

1. Introduction

This paper provides background information on the 2021 GP Patient Survey for Hampshire, Southampton and Isle of Wight Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), alongside key findings from the report and the next steps being taken by primary care.

2. Background

The GP Patient Survey assesses patients' experience of healthcare services provided by GP practices, including experience of access, making appointments, the quality of care received from healthcare professionals, patient health and experience of NHS services when their GP practice was closed.

The results of the survey are published by Ipsos MORI on behalf of NHS England and NHS Improvement on the [GP Patient Survey website](#).

Data for this survey was collected via postal and online entries from January 2021 to the end of March 2021.

Although there are four comparable years of data for most of the GP Patient Survey questions (2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021), the questionnaire was redeveloped in 2021 to reflect changes to primary care services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic - the effect of which should be taken into account when looking at results over time.

This is also the first year in which results are recorded for the newly-formed Hampshire, Southampton and Isle of Wight CCG.

3. Results

In total, **41,598** questionnaires were sent out across the Hampshire, Southampton and Isle of Wight CCG footprint, and **18,269** were returned completed. This represents a response rate of **44%**.

Overall in 50% of the questions asked, the CCG scored above the national average for positive responses, compared to three questions where it was on par with the national average.

Highlights from the report include:

- More than 9 in 10 people (91%) said they were given a time for their appointment
- More than 4 out of 5 people (88%) said their mental health needs were recognised and understood during their last general practice appointment
- More than 4 out of 5 people (83%) said their overall experience of their GP practice was either very good or fairly good
- More than two thirds (67%) of people found it easy getting through to their GP practice over the phone
- When asked about ease of using online services, two-thirds of patients (75%) responded to say they found online services easy to use
- Two-thirds of people (65%) responded to say they were satisfied with their appointment time
- Two-thirds of people (66%) responded to say they were satisfied with their choice of appointment
- More than 4 in 5 people surveyed (83%) were satisfied with the appointment they were offered
- Overall 7 out of 10 people surveyed (70%) said they had a very good or fairly good experience of making an appointment
- More than three-quarters of people (76%) respond to say they felt supported with managing their long term condition

While many of the results show we are in line with the national average, we recognise we have more to do to further support patient demand and this remains a key priority for the CCG.

4. Primary care update

The Hampshire, Southampton and Isle of Wight CCG (CCG) welcome the findings of the survey. It is one of many pieces of work which continue to help us inform what we do, and proves to be a valuable benchmarking tool.

Primary care demand – both for same-day access and general appointments – is higher than it ever has been before. The number of appointments given each month has risen to higher than pre-pandemic levels. Each day practices interact with thousands of patients through a number of methods including over the phone, via video consultation, online consultations and face-to-face appointments.

This is alongside delivering the biggest vaccination programme in the history of the NHS – with more than 75 per cent of COVID-19 vaccinations being delivered within primary care.

The way primary care works drastically changed in March 2020, as part of the Government's response to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic. In order to keep patients and colleagues safe, people are requested to either call or visit the practice online get support for their health concern/condition.

In mid-July this year, the Government ended COVID-19 restrictions in many settings. However, Public Health England's infection prevention control guidelines and hospital visiting guidance have remained in place for all staff and visitors in healthcare settings, GP practices, hospitals, dental practices, optometrists and pharmacies to ensure patients and staff are protected.

For our practices, this means they have continued to ask patients to either call or use an online consultation form to make contact with them initially. It also means anyone accessing or visiting healthcare settings must continue to wear a face covering and follow social distancing rules.

It's important to highlight that face-to-face appointments have always been, and continue to be, offered to patients. This never stopped during wave 1 and wave 2 of the pandemic. GP practices talk to patients to find out what support they need and then provide them with an appointment that best suits their clinical needs.

For example this could be an invitation to come in for a face-to-face appointment, or it could be a referral to another service or given advice and guidance on how to manage their issue within the community.

It's also important to note that the primary care workforce is very diverse and alongside GPs, practices now also employ specialists such as physiotherapists, mental health practitioners, and social prescribers so that patients can be directed to the specialist who can give them the appropriate care as soon as possible.

While online and telephone consultations work for many, the CCG is aware that this method doesn't suit all. The balance between keeping people safe while we provide healthcare has been challenging in this pandemic however ensuring a safe balance is struck is of the greatest importance to the CCG.

The CCG also recognises that there have been long-standing challenges within primary care, including informing and engaging members of the public about these changes. To help tackle this, the CCG has provided a short communications and engagement update on current work plans.

Communications and engagement

With many changes taking place in primary care happening rapidly, the CCG recognises that continued work needs to take place to inform and engage with our patients about these changes.

A communications and engagement strategy for primary care to ensure the communications and engagement activities carried out align with the key priorities for primary care has been finalised.

The strategy has identified six areas: GP access, internal communications, supporting COVID and flu vaccination programme, supporting practices to engage

with their patients, supporting PCN development and reducing health inequalities and encouraging people to stay well.

An action plan to deliver the strategy is in its final stages of completion –it's important to note that some work to deliver the strategy has already been actioned given the urgency of some issues and examples of this will be given below.

A campaign is currently being developed to inform people on the changing face of primary care. This includes providing people with information about the different roles within a GP practice, and that seeing someone with this specialist skill can be more beneficial than seeing a general practitioner, who by their professional nature will only have general expertise in some areas, for example seeing a physiotherapist for musculoskeletal issues.

The campaign will inform people about roles such as social prescribers, mental health practitioners and physiotherapists to name a few. It will also include a reminder about how to access primary care, which includes different methods, and which method is the most appropriate. It will also include a joint element of respect and care for our colleagues and patients.

This is being developed with practice managers on the Isle of Wight, who have been providing vital information and insight to ensure the messaging is useful. This campaign is due to launch in September.

The CCG recognises that our primary care teams also need support to communicate and engage with their patient population. Engagement work with practice managers has been carried out to find out what challenges they face and what solutions can help. This report is currently being finalised.

Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) support practices in both sharing concerns/comments raised by patients, but also are an important check point for practices to ensure they can communicate/engage on any changes taking place. The pandemic has meant many PPGs switched from meeting in person to face-to-face and while this worked for some, it has not worked for all.

The communications and engagement team is due to start work with primary care leads across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to see how we can support the reinvigoration of PPGs and other methods to engage with our patients.

Communications toolkits which include social media assets and wording, example website messaging, posters, text messaging and sample voicemail messaging, have been created to support practices share consistent messaging.

Toolkits have been created for a whole host of areas, including GP access, infection prevention control measures in primary care, bank holiday support holiday, COVID vaccination status support, NHS data opt-out support, anti-abuse of staff and ongoing resources to support the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Isle of Wight update

- Access:
 - Improved telephone access for patients in Cowes Medical Centre. They installed a new phone system in August 21 which has significantly improved how people access by phone
- Online services:
 - Increase in use of e-Consult by patients by more than 1,000%
- Appointments:
 - New remote primary care appointment service which offers telephone consultations to support practices who need additional support on the day. As part of this service, NHS 111 can also book in a person for a remote primary care appointment if they need to be supported within 1-2 hours. Combined this provides on average an additional 360 appointments per week.
- More varied roles:
 - Successfully recruited to social prescribers, paramedics, health and wellbeing coaches, occupational therapists, musculoskeletal first contact practitioners.
- Services closer to home:
 - Phlebotomy services have moved from St Mary's Hospital to primary care for GP requested blood tests. This has meant people can access blood tests closer to home
 - Blood pressure monitoring scheme underway in practices
 - A pilot Tissue Viability Service, which supports people who have conditions such pressure ulcers, leg ulcers and leg wounds, is being developed in the South Primary Care Network. This has significantly improved quality of life for patients and provided consistency in care
 - Covid Oximetry @ home in place and Long COVID service
 - Weight management enhanced service underway

5. Recommendation

The committee is asked to note this update briefing.