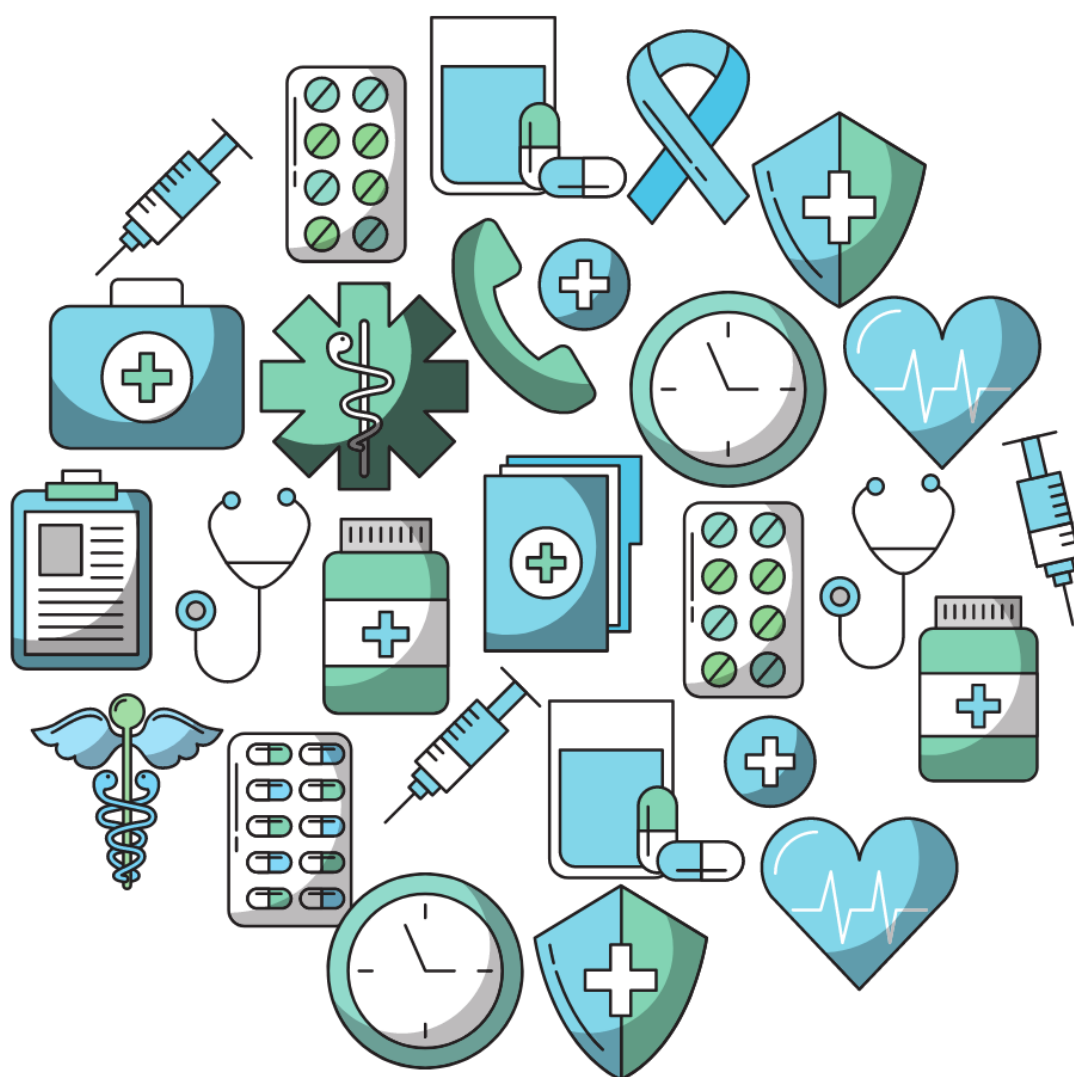


## Report of findings January 2024



## Background

Fullwell Cross Medical Centre launched a new appointment system in July 2023 that allows patients to request an appointment using the online contact form as well as through telephone or in person. This was introduced in response to patients finding it difficult to get through to the surgery by phone to make an appointment. Before this new system was introduced, the surgery had received negative reviews about making appointments on Google. Since introducing the online contact form, the reviews received for the surgery have improved.

Once the new system had been running for some months, the surgery along with the Patient Participation Group (PPG) wanted to find out how people were finding getting access to seeing a health professional since the online contact form was introduced. They also wanted to find out where other improvements could be made.

## Methodology

NHS North East London worked with the PPG group and the surgery manager to design questions for a survey.

The survey covered questions on getting an appointment with health professionals, services at the surgery and how easy the information they received was to access and understand.

The survey was available online via an online platform, and a printed copy was developed for the surgery to use with patients who may not be able to complete the digital version. A poster was also provided for the surgery to display which had a QR code and the link to the online survey.



The survey was sent to all patients via text message or email by the practice manager.

The survey ran from 4 December 2023 and closed on 8 January 2024.

**Total responses were 630.** This is made up of 627 online responses and 3 paper-based ones.

## Audience

Please note the following shows the choices that had been selected and does not include those that had not selected a choice.

|   | Demographic  | Percentage of participants                                    |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Gender</b><br>(464 respondents)              | Male<br>Female<br>Prefer to self-identify<br>Prefer not to say   | 36%<br>63%<br>1%<br>1%  |
| <b>Age</b><br>(465 respondents)                 | 18-25<br>26-35<br>36-45<br>46-55<br>56-65<br>66-75<br>76-85<br>86+<br>Prefer not to say  | 4%<br>11%<br>14%<br>18%<br>19%<br>22%<br>10%<br>1%<br>2%      |
| <b>Ethnicity</b><br>(460 respondents)           | White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British<br>Mixed ethnicity<br>Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese)<br>Black (African, Caribbean, any other)<br>Any other ethnic group | 58%<br>4%<br>27%<br>5%<br>6%                                  |
| <b>Sexuality</b><br>(460 respondents)           | Heterosexual<br>Lesbian<br>Gay<br>Bisexual<br>Prefer to self-identify<br>Prefer not to say   | 86%<br>1%<br>1%<br>2%<br>2%<br>9%                             |
| <b>Religion</b><br>(451 respondents)            | No religion<br>Atheist<br>Buddhist<br>Christian<br>Hindu<br>Jewish<br>Muslim<br>Sikh<br>Prefer not to say<br>Other   | 11%<br>3%<br>1%<br>38%<br>13%<br>11%<br>12%<br>3%<br>6%<br>2% |
| <b>Types of disability</b><br>(371 respondents) | Vision<br>Hearing<br>Mobility<br>Learning, concentrating or remembering<br>Mental health<br>Stamina or difficulty breathing<br>Autism<br>ADHD  | 2%<br>6%<br>21%<br>4%<br>6%<br>6%<br>1%<br>1%                 |

|   |                      |     |
|---|----------------------|-----|
|   | Prefer not say       | 6%  |
|   | Does not apply to me | 63% |
| <b>Employment status</b><br>(455 respondents) | Full-time employment | 33% |
|   | Part-time employment | 14% |
|   | Unemployed           | 9%  |
|   | Self-employed        | 7%  |
|   | Student              | 3%  |
|   | Retired              | 35% |

## Summary of findings

| Access to health professionals |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 47%                            | Find it very easy or easy to get an appointment with a health professional   |
| 60%                            | Know that there are other health professionals in addition to GPs and nurses |
| 60%                            | Have been given information about these other health professionals           |
| 64%                            | Have used the new online contact form  |
| 58%                            | Find the online form easy to use   |
| 36%                            | Of those who don't use the online form said they prefer speaking to someone  |

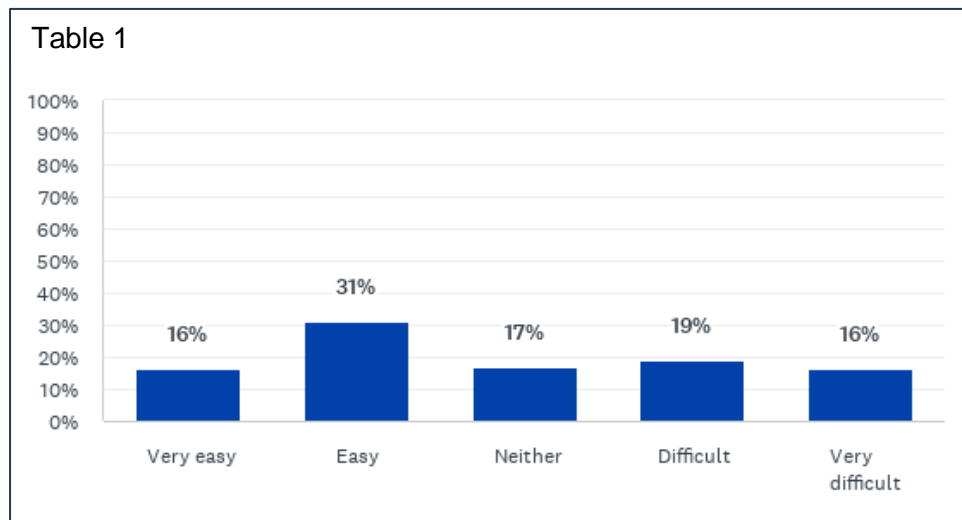
| Services at the surgery |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| 59%                     | Are very happy or happy with the reception services   |
| 47%                     | Feel it is important to be able to request to see a male or female health professional  |
| 43%                     | Of those who said they have a long-term health condition (263 people) feel they get enough help from the surgery to manage it |
| 56%                     | Said they have enough information to manage their condition themselves  |
| 52%                     | Of those on ongoing medication (241 people) said they have regular medication reviews   |

| Information and accessibility |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 48%                           | Get information about services the surgery offers from the website  |
| 77%                           | Of respondents said they know about the NHS app   |
| 43%                           | Of people who said they have a long-term health condition feel they get enough help from the surgery to manage it |
| 43%                           | Of respondents prefer to be given information digitally   |
| 80%                           | Of respondents feel the surgery understands and meets their accessibility needs                                   |

## Analysis of findings

### Access to health professionals

A total of 47% of respondents said they found it very easy or easy to get an appointment with a health professional at Fullwell Cross Medical Centre. Just over a third (35%) said they found it difficult or very difficult. Table 1 shows the full results of the responses.



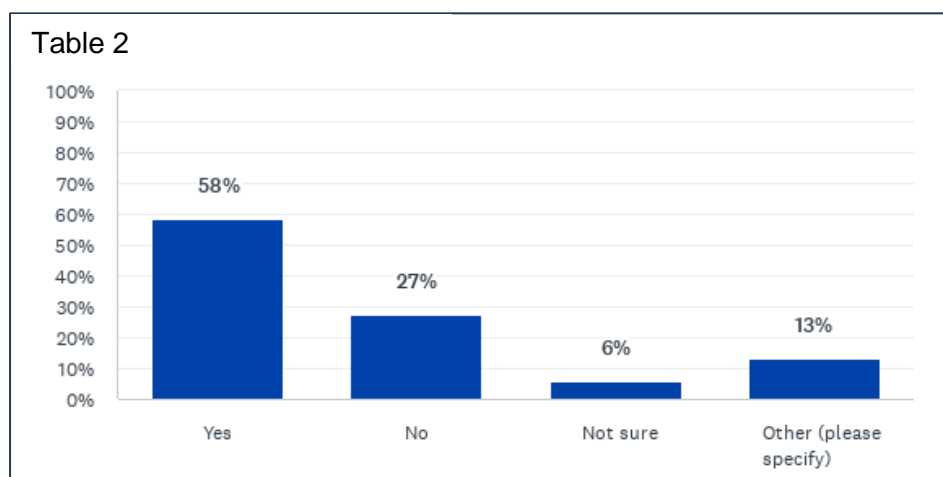
The survey then asked if people knew that there are other health professionals at the surgery they can see and if they have been given information about this.

- 60% of respondents said they know that there are other health professionals at the centre, 27% said they did not and 14% said they were not sure
- 60% said they had not been given information about the other health professionals that are available

### Online contact form

The questions then focussed on people's use of the new online contact form. 64% of respondents said that they have used the online form to contact the surgery.

Table 2 shows that 58% of people find the online form easy to use and 27% said they do not find it easy to use.



Those who **find the form easy to use were asked what they find easy about it.**  
A summary of answers includes:

- Finding the form easy to access and quick to submit
- Easier to get appointments and quick responses
- Not having to waiting in a telephone queue at 8am
- A lot of people find the form easy to find and complete
- Convenient for people who are able to use online forms
- Able to select a time to receive a call from the surgery

**Selection of actual comments from people who find the online form easy to use**

"The use of a diagram to indicate where the physical issue is located. Space to provide more detail on your condition. The times I've use the online form I have been able to get an appointment confirmed within an hour or so."

"I moved here 6 months back and I clearly see a huge difference between my previous medical centre and FCMC. It is super easy to get an appointment and staff is very helpful. Thanks"

"It's incredibly easy to use and I'm very impressed with the responses and quick turnaround in which I'm notified of an appointment."

"So much better than ringing for ages, I've used this several times & definitely find it fantastic!"

Those who say **they don't find the online form easy to use were asked what they would change about it.** A summary of answers includes:

- Form asks for too much detail and can be too long for some people especially if they are not feeling well
- The body graphic may not be accessible or easy to use for everyone
- Form is not easy for everyone to understand
- Needs to be easier to find the form on the website
- Does not allow you to add any notes
- People would prefer to have one box to write down their issue rather than multiple questions to answer
- Option needed on form to be able to submit pictures
- Does not cover all health issues including long term health conditions or booking other routine appointments
- Instructions on how to fill in the form are not clear to all

Some people commenting are also under the impression that completing the online form is the only way they are allowed to contact the surgery so it may not be clear to all patients that they are still able to ring the surgery for an appointment.

**Selection of actual comments from people who do not find the online form easy to use**

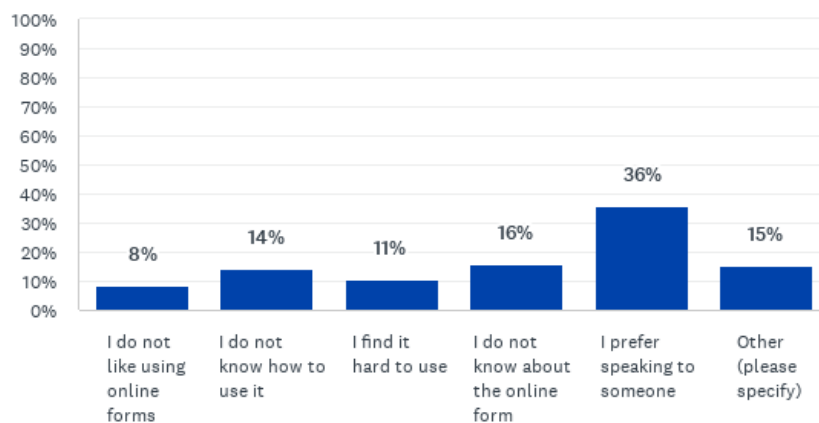
"There are so many questions and it's so long which is confusing for people of a certain age or limited ability. And it's hard to describe in written form your issue or concern. So in short. Perhaps less questions and just one area of explanation within the form that prompts a phone conversation."

"I found there weren't enough options eg women's health did not include smear tests so had to go to admin queries. I did receive a quick reply though."

"It is easy to put in symptoms for a doctor's appointment but not easy to use if you have a specific query, want to check something or book something routine such as with the nurse. I tried to book a B12 injection and the option for this wasn't clear. I had to repeat my request a few times"

The survey also asked "**If you don't use the new online contact form, is there a reason why?**". Table 3 shows the results of this, with 36% saying they prefer speaking to someone, 16% saying they do not know about the online form and 14% saying they do not know how to use it.

Table 3



Other reasons given for not using the online contact form include:

- Finding the process confusing when obtaining a password
- Due to data protection
- Phone not having internet access
- Due to having a health condition that makes it difficult to complete the form online such as Parkinson's
- Having Dyslexia

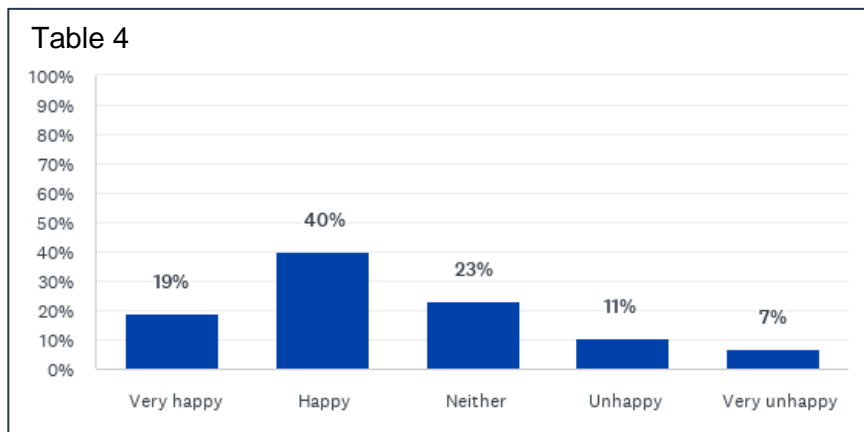


## Services at the surgery

### Reception services

In this section of the survey, people were asked about the reception services, access to male or female health professionals when required and support given for long term health conditions.

A total of 59% of respondents said they were very happy or happy with the reception services; 23% were neutral and 18% were unhappy or very unhappy (see table 4).



Respondents were able to give reasons why they choose their answer about the reception services.

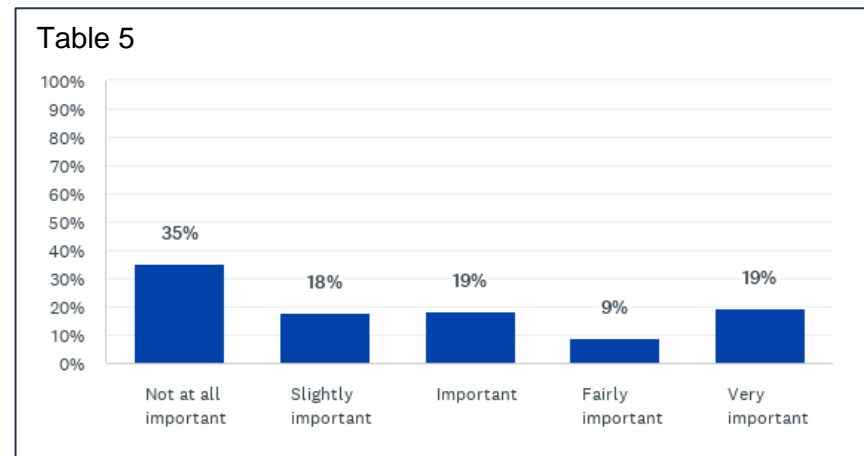
Generally, people said they find staff at the reception friendly, welcoming and helpful. However, there are people who have said they have had experiences of being made to feel unwelcome at times. Comments suggest that people find some staff are more helpful and friendly than others.

Other feedback includes:

- Needing to have more patience with elderly people
- Experiencing difficulty getting through to speak to someone
- Not feeling comfortable talking about their health issue to the reception staff when asked
- Self-check in service at reception not always working leading to queues. This can then result in people being late for their appointments despite being on time
- A lot of people commented on being directed to the online contact form but not everyone is able to fill it in without help
- Difficulty hearing through the glass screens
- Concerns about people being able to hear private information when booking appointments face to face

## Health professional request

Table 5 shows the results of responses to the question “**how important is it to be able to request to see either a male or female health professional?**”. This shows that 47% of people feel it is important or very important to be able to request to see a male or female health professional. 53% felt it was slightly or not at all important.



## Long-term health conditions

268 people responding to the survey have a long-term condition. 263 of these went on to answer questions about managing their long-term condition and the results were:

- 43% of people (out of 263 who responded to this question) said they feel they get enough help from the surgery for their long-term condition. 30% said they did not and 27% said they were unsure.
- 56% (of the 263 people) said they have enough information to manage their long-term condition themselves. 26% said they did not and 18% said they were unsure.
- 92% (241 people) are on ongoing medication and 52% of these have regular medication reviews.

## Other services

The survey asked people if there are any other services they would like to see provided at the surgery. The following is a summary of the suggestions made:

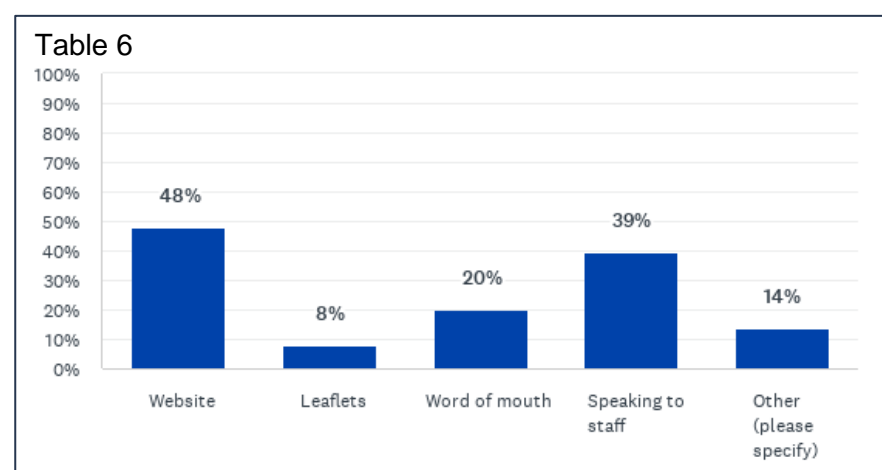
- Re-introducing video call appointments
- Exercise and nutrition support
- Dermatology services
- Post treatment cancer care
- Menopause clinic
- Mental health clinic
- Sexual health clinic
- Foot care series
- Pre and post-natal care
- Bereavement services
- Ear, nose and throat clinic
- Men's health clinic
- Regular general health screening
- Ear syringing
- Speech therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Fertility support
- Massage therapy services for people with conditions such as arthritis

## Information and accessibility

The final part of the survey asked questions about where people get information about the surgery from, use of the NHS app and about accessibility of information at the surgery.

### Information about the services the surgery offers

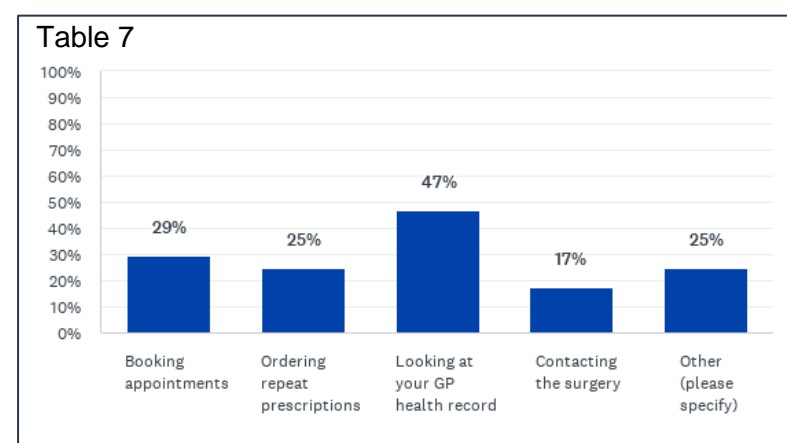
Table 6 shows that a high number of people get their information from the surgery website (48%) and from speaking to staff (39%). Comments in the 'other' option including through the NHS app, through text messages, posters at the surgery and Patient Access website.



### Use of the NHS app:

516 people responded to the question about whether they know about the NHS app and of them 77% said they did.

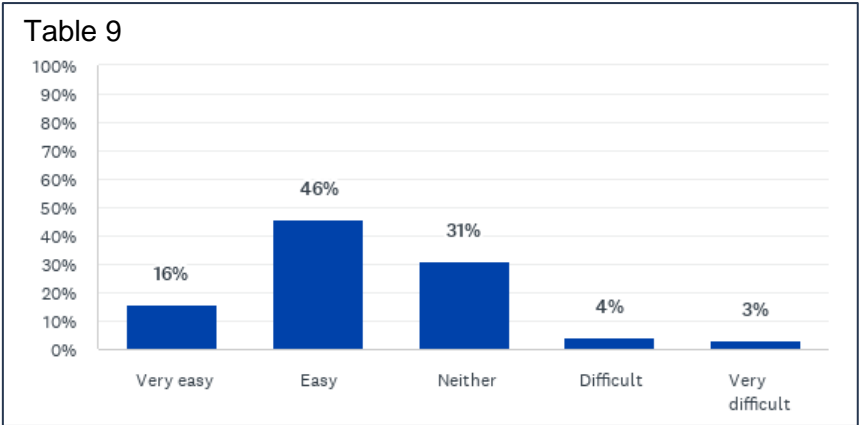
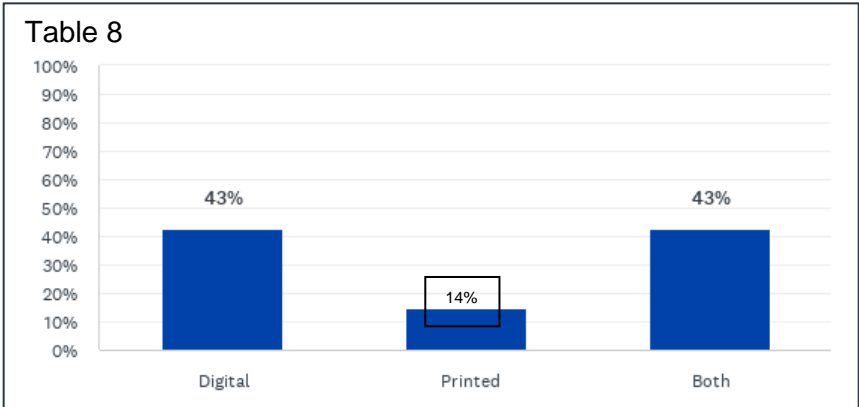
390 people went on to answer the question about what they use the NHS app for (table 7). 47% use the app to look at their GP record, 29% to book appointments, 25% to order repeat prescriptions and 17% to contact the surgery. Other comments included using it to access their Covid vaccination record and to get messages from their GP. People also commented that they use the [Patient Access](#) website rather than the app.



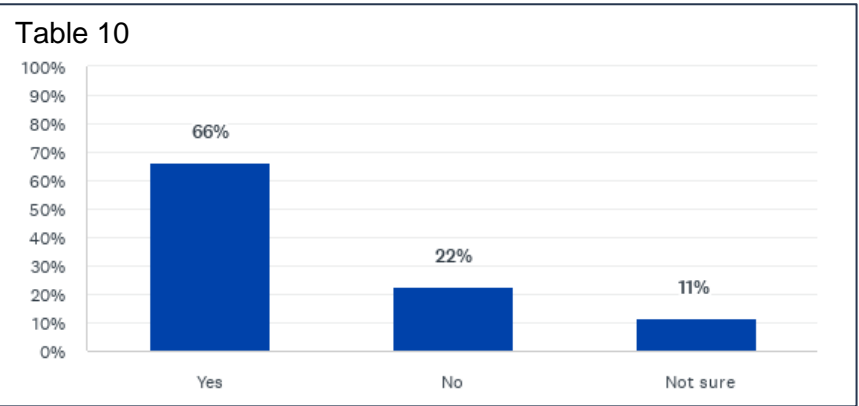
Providing information

Out of 500 respondents:

- 80% felt that the surgery understands and meets their accessibility needs for information given in particular formats and ways
- 43% prefer to get information digitally, 14% prefer printed and 43% prefer both digitally and printed (see table 8)
- 62% found information given to them easy to understand, 7% said they find it difficult or very difficult and 31% were neutral. (see table 9)



Finally, respondents were asked if they were aware that one of the surgery’s health professionals may send a text with a link to book a consultation with them after they have received a completed online contact form. Table 10 shows 66% said yes, 22% said no and 11% were not sure.



## Recommendations

The results from the survey suggest that a lot of patients have been using the online contact form to book appointments and over half of respondents find the form easy to use.

There were, however, a lot of people who stated that they either did not know about the contact form or were not sure how to use it. There was also feedback which suggested that people thought the online contact form was the only option for making an appointment and had commented on being directed to this when phoning the surgery.

Out of the 630 responses, only three were completed offline. This means that the results do not fully capture the views and experiences of patients at the surgery who may not have access to the internet or be able to complete forms online. It would be advisable to use a printed survey in future engagement to capture the thoughts of those who were not able to complete the online one.

The following are recommendations based on the survey results and analysis of the free text comments as well as the surgery website:

- **Ensure patients know that there are multiple ways to contact the surgery to book an appointment.** Although it says on the practice website that patients can complete the contact form online, phone or visit the surgery to make an appointment, there were many comments to suggest that not everyone knows that.
- **Share information more widely about the other health professionals available at the centre** and how they can help. Although there is information about the surgery staff on the practice website, it may not be easy for patients to find. A section on the homepage that takes patients to the about the staff page would be helpful. We would also recommend adding a video about the additional professionals onto the page and having a poster or leaflets in the surgery. The NHS North East London Communications and Participation team have resources to help with this.
- **Review the online contact form with PPG members.** Feedback from respondents was that a lot of them find the form too detailed and not easy to complete. Having gone through the form we agree that there are a lot of initial options that people have to complete about their symptoms. This may not be easy if someone has accessibility needs, language barriers or generally not feeling well. If there is an option to make changes to the online contact form it would be good to get some patients involved in developing this.
- **Provide an information pack on how to use the online contact form.** A step by step guide with screenshots or training sessions may be helpful to those who are not confident using the form.

- **Ensure the self-check in service screen is working in the reception.**  
This will help to avoid people waiting at the reception desk and ensure they do not miss their appointments.
- **Ensure people are given information about how to manage their long-term conditions.** It is important to make sure this information is given in a way that people understand and have the opportunity to talk it through.
- **Explore best practice in primary care across North East London and London in general.** There are many examples of initiatives that can help patients such as health fairs run by GP surgeries, educational classes for patients, health clinics and working with community organisations that may be useful for patients of Fullwell Cross Medical Centre.