

GP Accessibility Report:

Report summary:

This report highlights the findings from our GP Access public health campaign. The campaign was aimed at young people and gathered their views about the accessibility of GP services and the quality of those services. We wanted to find out if a patient's age can lead to a lower quality and rushed experience.

We designed a survey and created a suggestion box so that students could give their ideas on how GP accessibility and appointments could be improved. A timeline was created, and students were given cards with different ways to make a GP appointment, then arranged the cards in the order they preferred.

What were the key findings?

- Younger people felt they needed more flexibility in appointment times and that there is a need for GP appointments to be more accessible to people of all ages.
- 72% of young people attend a GP appointment with their guardian.
- 39% of people were made to wait at least a week for an appointment.
- There really was a need for the GP to be more accessible and not just for appointments. This was shown through people's replies to the survey and their suggestions and recommendations.
- People had very mixed feelings about the quality of their appointment with 28% giving a rating of 7/10 and 3% giving a rating of 3/10.

We received a lot of useful feedback which gave a real insight into the experiences of people, of all ages, accessing their GP. The report draws conclusions from the views that have been shared with us and makes recommendations based on these. Overall, the campaign was very successful in gaining the feedback we needed, and this has been summarised into graphs and a pie chart.

Introduction:

We are students from Wiltshire college studying level 3 Health and Social care and have partnered with Healthwatch Wiltshire to gather feedback from students to seek their views and experiences of GP services and find out how accessible GP services are amongst college staff and students. This was raised as an issue as we have all had negative experiences whilst trying to access our own GPs and we believe age is a big reason for this.

What we did:

We carried out a public health campaign as a part of our work experience with Healthwatch Wiltshire to gather the views of young people on GP accessibility and to see if there were any links between an individual's age and their experience of accessing GP appointments. We designed a survey and created a suggestion box to gather feedback from students about their experiences. Our aim was to collect this research and report back to Healthwatch Wiltshire as part of their GP Access project. We also wanted to find out how people felt their experience of accessing the GP could be improved and how to make the GP more accessible for each individual person.

Our activities:

We created an anonymous survey on google forms so that students had easy access to it, and to gather as much feedback as possible. We included questions such as who they go to the GP with and how they felt the experience had been.

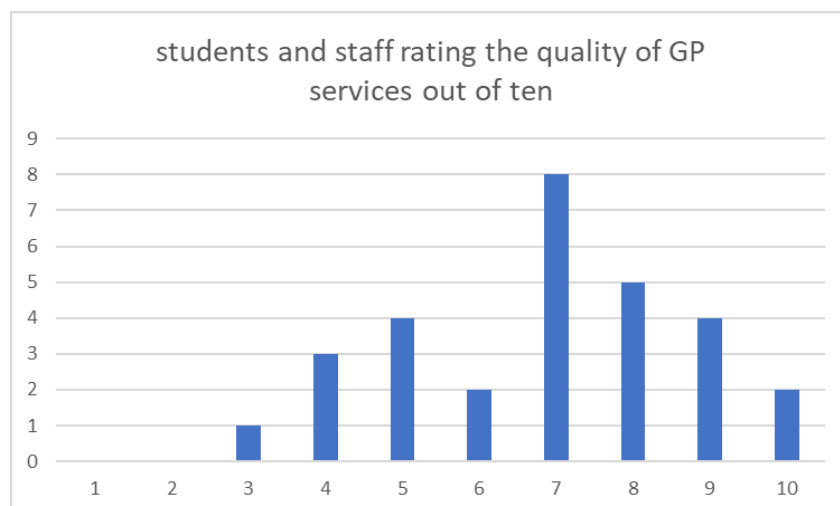
We created a suggestion box with feedback slips which were anonymised and included their age, gender, and any suggestions they had to make GPs more accessible. This was also a good way to collect information and allow people to share their thoughts.

Finally, we created a timeline activity where people would place cards with a series of ways to contact the GP to get an appointment. They then put the cards into the order of how they, individually, would contact their GP.

27 people shared their experiences with us.

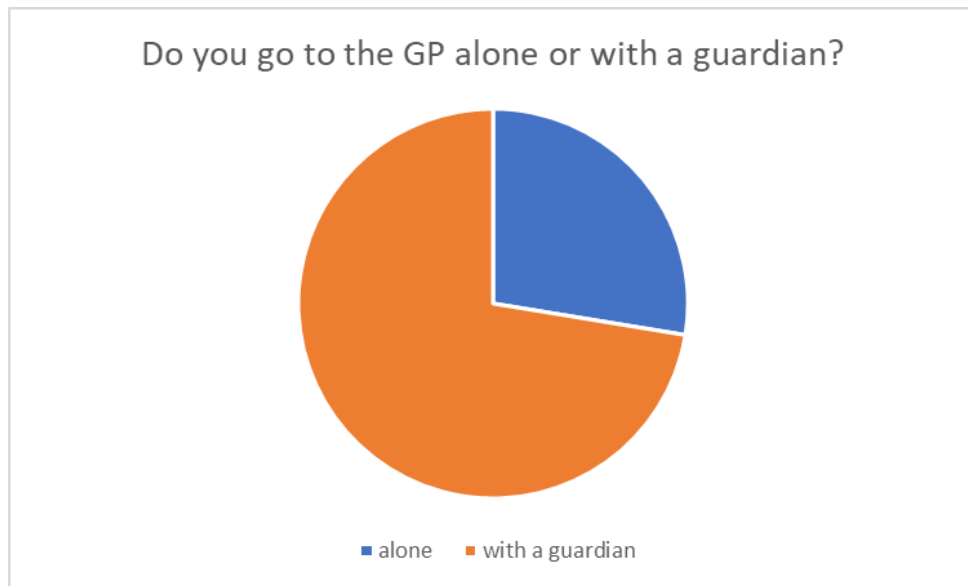
What people told us:

How would you rate the quality of your GP service?



Overall, the feedback received about the quality of GP services was positive. For most students and staff, the quality of their GP service was good with 28% of respondents rating the service 7/10, however, 3% rated their experience as 3/10.

Do you go to the GP alone or with a guardian?



72% of respondents said that they go to the GP with a guardian and 28% said that they go alone.

Do you feel like who you go with affects the quality of your appointment?

For some young people going with a guardian felt like the only way to be taken seriously by the GP while other preferred to go alone due to not wanting to be completely honest when their guardians were with them.

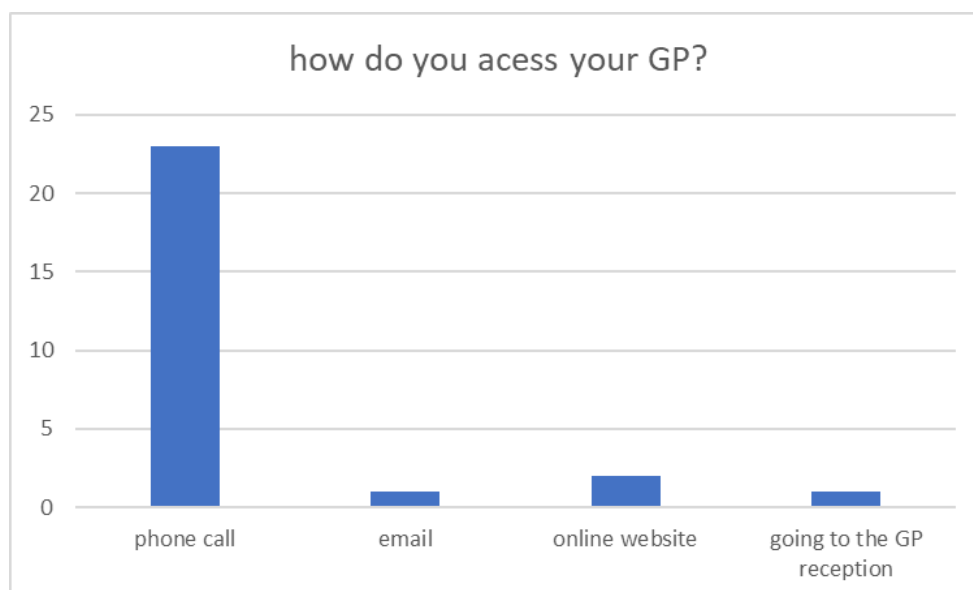
"It affects the quality of my appointment, as I feel like if I am going by myself, I won't be taken seriously by the GP".

"The appointment is usually quicker when I go alone".

"Yes, because I can't be fully honest with my guardian around".

"If you have a parent with you, and you don't feel want to say certain things in front of them, you may be dishonest with your GP to avoid dealing with what your parent might say or do".

How do you access your GP?



In response to this question, 85% of students said that they made their appointments by telephone, while 7% made an appointment online. 3% of students made their appointment by email and 3% went to the GP surgery.

How long do you have to wait for an appointment?

For a face-to-face appointment, 39% said they need to wait at least a week from when they rang to make the appointment. 71% said that they got an appointment within a short space of time, however, it was a phone call, not face-to-face.

Is there anything else you would like to say about GP services?

When asked if they had any other comments about GP services, some young people felt that GPs were not providing the same quality of care and were not listening to their concerns as they did with older people.

“I would offer young adults the same opportunity to receive an appointment as older people do and provide young people with the same quality of care and listening to as older people from the GPs.”

Students said that being able to access a GP in the evenings and at weekends was important to them.

“Opening hours during the weekend and after people finish work”

“Having more accessible appointment times like the doctor's surgery staying open later because people are working or at school and college and can't make the doctors until night-time.”

“Some young people do not have the time to go to the doctors during the week as they are simply too busy, so by having weekend appointments it would make the GP more

accessible...especially the younger generation who can't drive or have school, work, studying, and hobbies all going on in their everyday lives."

Being able to choose an appointment when booking online or being able to see what spaces were available before telephoning the surgery to book an appointment, was also seen as important to young people when accessing GP services.

"Somewhere you can book appointments online or at least see what spaces are available before you phone up and find out there aren't any available when you actually go."

More face-to-face appointments rather than telephone calls was something that young people said they wanted as phone calls can be missed when in class and is not suitable when talking about personal matters at college.

"Having more face-to-face appointments and less phone calls as phone calls can be missed if you are sat in class and cannot answer your phone."

Reducing the amount of time sat waiting to be called into a GP appointment was also raised as something that could be improved.

"Quicker waiting time so you can go to your appointment on time"

Other feedback from students included being able to ask to see a male or female doctor.

"Being able to say if you want a male or female doctor"

Thank you to the students at Wiltshire College for sharing their thoughts and experiences with us, we are grateful for their input.

Conclusion and recommendations:

Overall, the feedback received from young people about the quality of their GP service was positive, however they have told us that they feel rushed and not listened to when accessing a GP appointment alone, and feel their concerns are treated more seriously when a guardian is present.

Not being able to access a GP when needed was highlighted as an issue and reducing the time having to wait to go into a booked appointment was something young people said could be improved.

For the students, having the choice to access evening and weekend appointments was important due to other demands on time during the week and being able to check for availability of appointments before booking or telephoning the surgery would allow for more choice on when and where they are seen. This was especially important for young people who live in rural areas and rely on their guardians to take them due to public transport issues.

More face-to-face appointments were wanted. A telephone call can be missed if a student is in class and there is a reluctance to talk about personal information over the telephone in a college setting. It was also felt that there should be a choice around whether you see a male or female doctor.

Based on what we heard from young people who took part in our campaign we make the following recommendations:

- Ensure that young people's concerns are listened to and taken seriously by medical staff
- Be aware that when a guardian is present a young person may not feel able to talk freely about their concerns
- Offer young people more choice on when and where they are seen, including weekend and evening appointments
- Reduce the waiting time to be called into an appointment
- Consider more face-to-face appointments as telephone appointments may not be convenient and the young person may not want, or be able, to disclose personal information
- Consider asking young people if they would prefer to see a male or female doctor

Thank you to all the young people who shared their views and experiences with us.