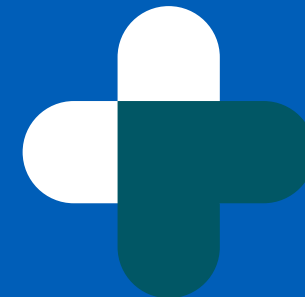


London Digital First Programme: South East London Patient Perspectives Case Study

healthinnovationnetwork.com/digital-first-primary-care



Case study undertaken by the Health Innovation Network (HIN)
South London on behalf of NHS England's London Digital First
Programme



Contents

03

Introduction and context



04

Case Study : South East London (SEL)



08

Online Forms



12

NHS App



15

GP surgery websites



17

Communications



18

Appendices

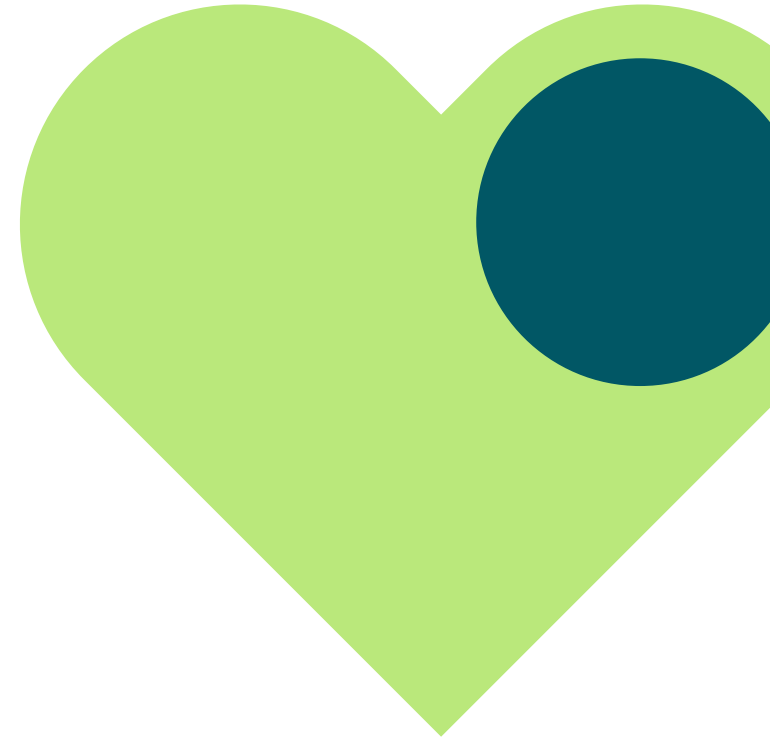


Introduction

This case study was developed with patient feedback gathered from existing sources of feedback data, an online survey and an online focus group with patients from South East London (SEL) Integrated Care System (ICS).

This report represents the experiences and perspectives of patients regarding three digital tools used to access general practice - Online Forms, the NHS App and GP surgery websites.

Please see the main report for further details, including London-wide findings, conclusions and recommendations.



Executive Summary



Online Forms (also known as Online Consultations)

Most survey respondents (83%) had used Online Forms for themselves or on behalf of someone else, showing high awareness of this tool. Access was primarily via the GP surgery website (66%) for the purpose of booking appointments (58%), medical advice (48%) or ordering prescriptions (31%). This was supported by the focus group discussion, with benefits raised around the ability to order prescriptions and view medication history. Other benefits highlighted were around being able to upload photos to support diagnosis, the opportunity to express concerns without worrying about being judged, and time saved - with patients able to access forms in their own time, and receive a prompt response without waiting in queues.

Most survey respondents (65%) were either strongly or somewhat happy with the outcome of using Online Forms, although there are opportunities to improve this. The focus group suggested that limited questions on the forms can prevent people from sharing detailed information, and this may contribute to why some people are unhappy with their outcomes. Additionally, some found that the algorithm can direct patients to a service (such as A&E) which did not provide the support that was needed. Other challenges raised were around inconsistent response times, which aligns with the survey finding that only 66% of respondents were contacted within the stated time after submitting their form.

No previous data was available to compare changes in attitude or experience over time.

83%
use Online Forms

67%
find Online Forms easy to use

65%
were happy with the outcome following use

86%
use monthly or less



NHS App

Most survey respondents (82%) had used the NHS App for themselves or on behalf of someone else. This is supported by data from the NHS App Reporting Dashboard which reported an average of 145,786 views per month (between July 2022 and June 2023), however usage fluctuated throughout the year (see Appendix 1: Existing patient feedback on the NHS App for more information).

The focus group discussion highlighted key benefits around the simple and intuitive design which enables 24/7 access to all information in one place such as medical records, booking of appointments and prescription management - the three most common uses identified in the survey. Participants also enjoyed being able to access test results and proof of Covid-19 vaccination as well as using it as a source of comprehensive, reliable information. However, some raised challenges around not being able to access their full medical history and not being able to book a GP appointment. Others raised concerns about security of personal data and the risk that some who don't have access to a smartphone, or possess digital skills, may be excluded.

82%
use the NHS App

85%
found it easy to sign up

80%
find it easy to find the information they need

82%
use it monthly or less



GP surgery website

Most survey respondents (86%) had used GP surgery websites for themselves or on behalf of someone else and 71% found them easy to use. This is higher than other data sources which showed only 58% of people found their GP surgery website 'easy' to use (see Appendix 2: Existing patient feedback on GP surgery websites).

86%
use their GP
surgery website

71%
find it easy to use

88%
only use it
monthly or less



Communications

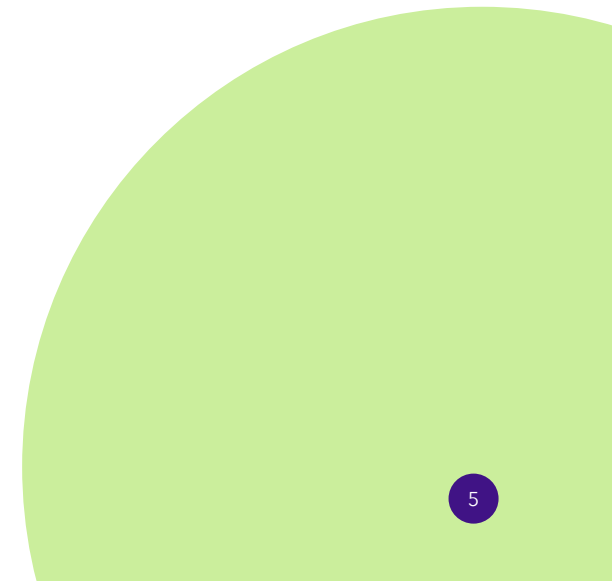
Appointment reminders (70%), invitations to book appointments (55%), and surveys (27%) were the most common reasons for receiving contact from a GP surgery via text message.

When asked about preferred communication methods, SMS / text message (53%), email (23%) and telephone (8%) were the top three responses.

53%
prefer SMS / text
messages

23%
prefer email

8%
prefer telephone



South East London (SEL) ICS:

This case study is drawn from the analysis of three main data sources

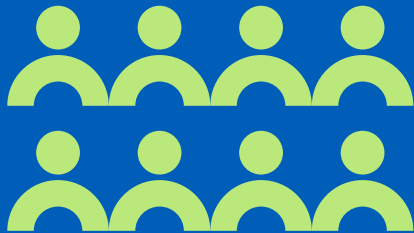
1. Existing data

 South East London ICS GP Patient Survey 2020-2023

 NHS App Reporting Dashboard July 2022-June 2023

3. Online focus group

A focus group was held to obtain conversational and detailed patient perspectives on key themes identified from the analysis of existing data and online survey.



x8

Eight participants



x4

Four of the six South East London boroughs represented

2. Online survey

An online survey using the Qualtrics platform was developed to obtain ICS-level feedback and indicate prominent areas for exploration with the focus groups.

1,400

1400 text messages sent by SMS

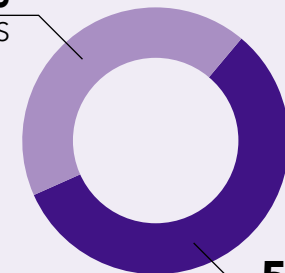
by seven GP surgeries (Bursted Wood Practice, Dysart Surgery, Eltham Medical Practice, Nexus Health Group, New Mill Street Surgery, Minet Green Practice, Triangle Group Practice).

154

responses received

43%

via SMS link



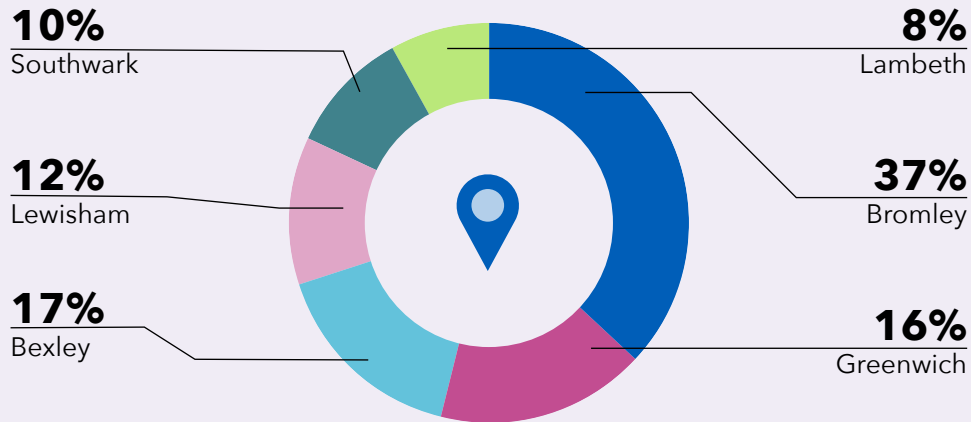
57%

via other routes

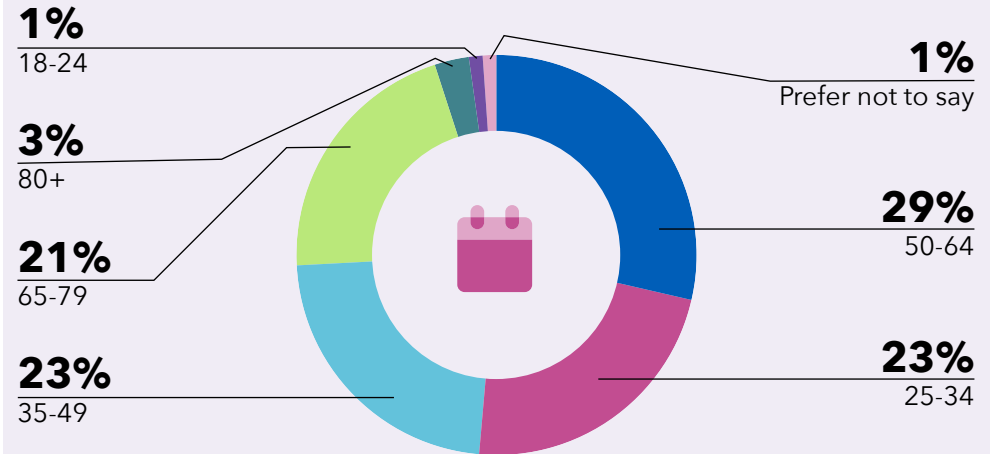
Key demographics of survey respondents are detailed overleaf.

South East London ICS: Survey respondent demographics

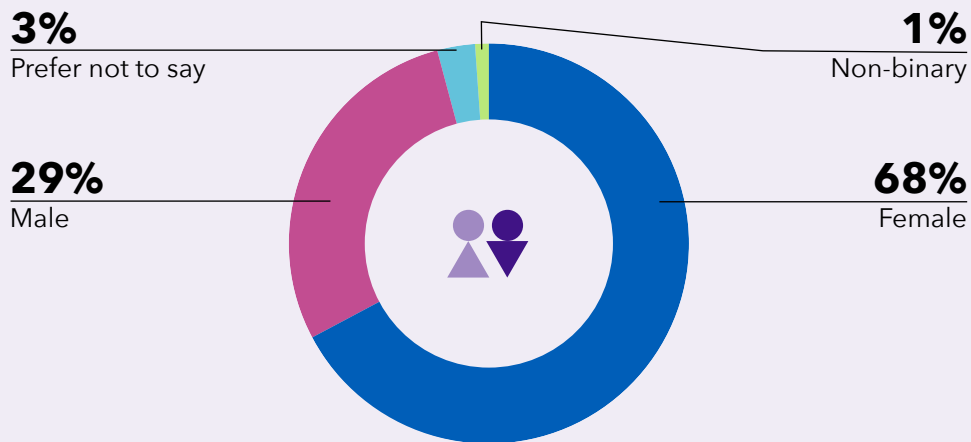
Borough (n=154)



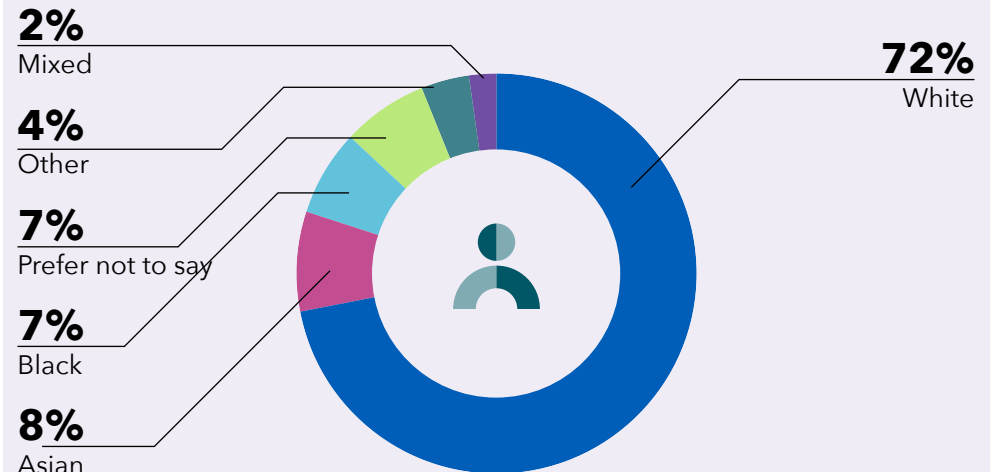
Age group (n=150)



Gender (n=150)



Ethnicity (n=150)



South East London ICS: Online survey results relating to Online Form use

Most respondents had used Online Forms:

of the 152 respondents, 83% had used an Online Form for themselves or on behalf of someone else.

Most respondents do not use Online Forms frequently:

of 120 respondents, most use them monthly (31%) or rarely (55%).

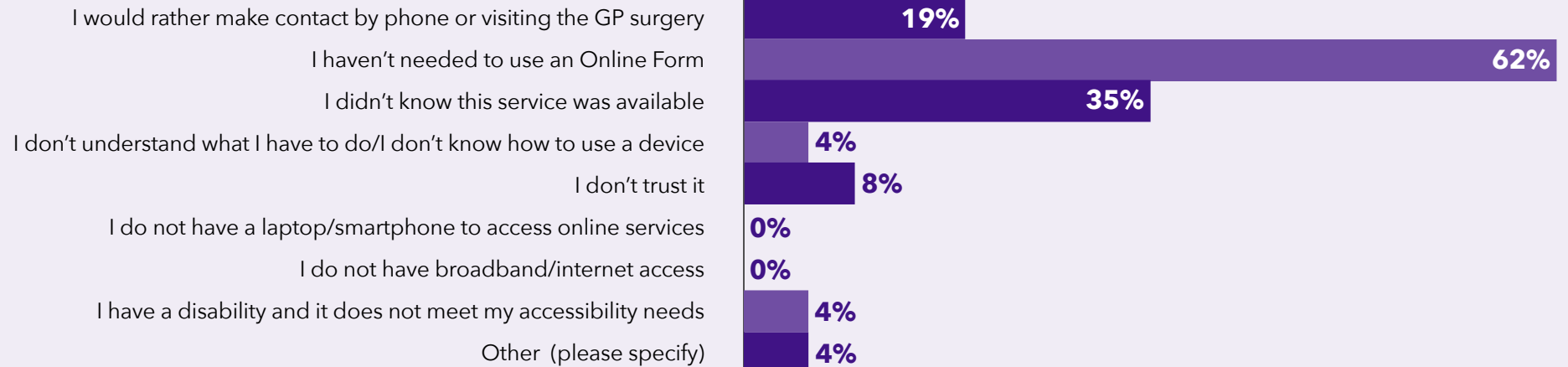
Most respondents heard about Online Forms via their GP surgery website*:

of the 129 respondents, 62% heard about them via their GP surgery website, 29% by the GP surgery/ staff, 18% via SMS/text message and 17% via family and friends.

Online Forms are mainly accessed via GP surgery websites or apps:

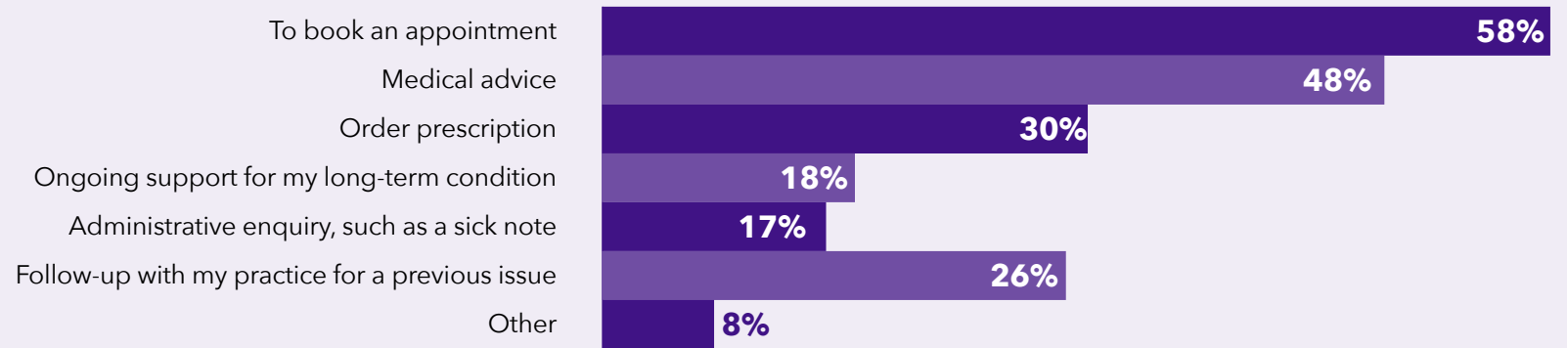
of the 127 respondents, 66% and 17% accessed Online Forms via GP websites or apps, respectively. Only 5% said they required help from GP reception staff or family/ friends.

Reasons for not accessing the service* (n=26)

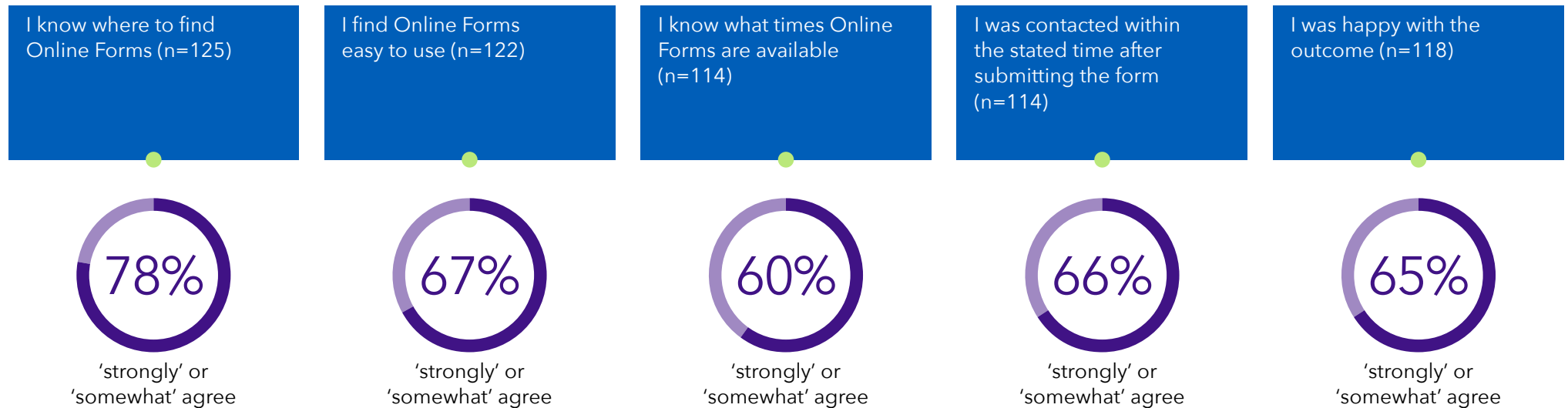


* Respondents could choose more than one answer, so the total is more than 100%

What have you used Online Forms for?*(n=128)



The following statements were asked:



* Respondents could choose more than one answer, so the total is more than 100%

South East London ICS: Overall experiences of using Online Forms



This section uses data from all three sources: existing feedback, online survey and focus groups

Positive experiences

Time saving

- ✓ Don't need to travel or wait in phone queues
- ✓ Can access service in own time
- ✓ Quick response from GP surgery

More accurate

- ✓ Have time and means to express concerns in detail
- ✓ Able to express self without being judged

Prescription management

- ✓ Order repeat prescriptions without need to contact the GP
- ✓ Medication history is saved and accessible

Visual technology

- ✓ Photos can support diagnosis

“The best part of the online services is being able to order repeat prescriptions online. My prescription history is there and I just select the medicines I need - and if I have plenty of one because I haven't used it so much I simply don't select it for renewal, so nothing is wasted.”

Negative experiences

- Lengthy, irrelevant, or numerous questions
- There are too many methods to access the same information
- Deaf patients unable to access video consultations, which is required to access healthcare services
- There can be inconsistent response times, with some not receiving responses at all
- Limited availability outside of normal working hours
- Some members of the population, particularly the elderly, may face challenges due to limited technology skills, lack of access to devices or the internet or unease with unfamiliar online services

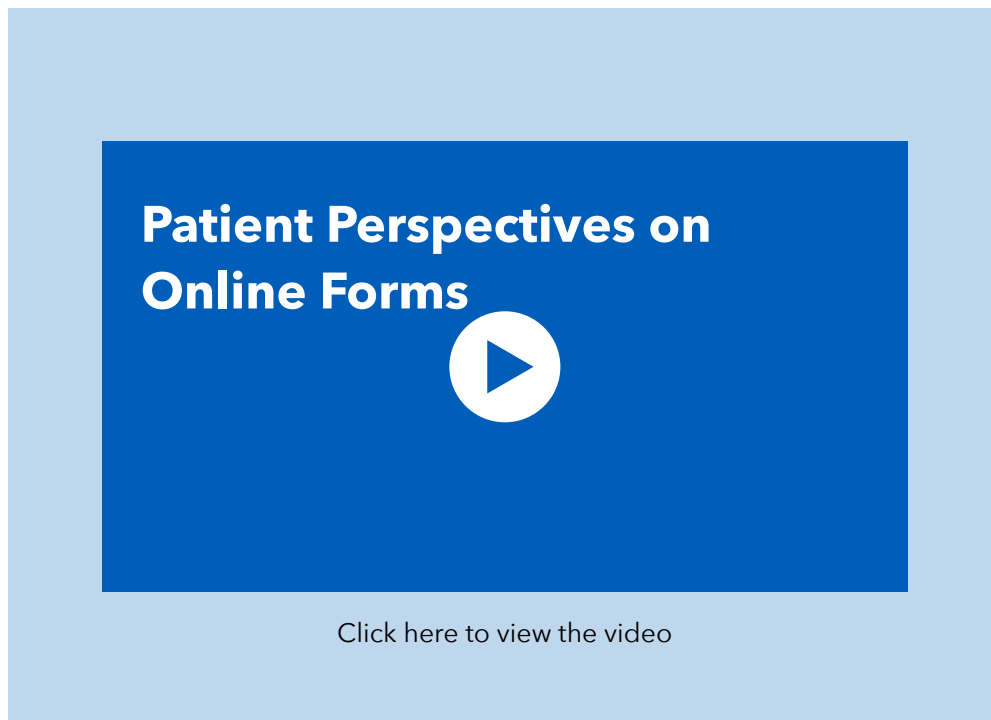
“During covid they demonstrated they could do video consults as an option instead of phone calls now they have gone back to only phone call which is not ok for people who are deaf.”

Suggestions for improvements

- Include a 'summarise your concerns' free text option to streamline and eliminate the need to navigate multiple fields
- Review the website algorithm to ensure that signposting is appropriate when selecting certain options
- Offer training sessions to patients to improve their confidence in using Online Forms
- Review Online Forms to ensure accessible/simple language is being used
- Include contact information of the message sender, to discourage anonymous communication and assist patients if follow up is required
- Ensure there is the option to be offered a video consultation, to ensure that remote care is fully accessible
- “I'd like to be able to just give the information in an open written form. I've often got caught in a questioning loop. It would be nice to have three questions - general description, symptoms, desired outcome.”**

South East London ICS: Overall experiences of using Online Forms

A series of clips were collected from the focus groups held about patient perspectives of online forms. A video was created to highlight the perspectives from participants in each London region.



South East London ICS: Online survey results relating to the NHS App

Most respondents had used the NHS App:

of the 146 respondents, 82% had used it for themselves or on behalf of someone else.

Most respondents do not use the NHS App frequently:

of 118 respondents, most use it monthly (36%) or rarely (46%).

Most respondents heard about the NHS App via Covid-19 communications*:

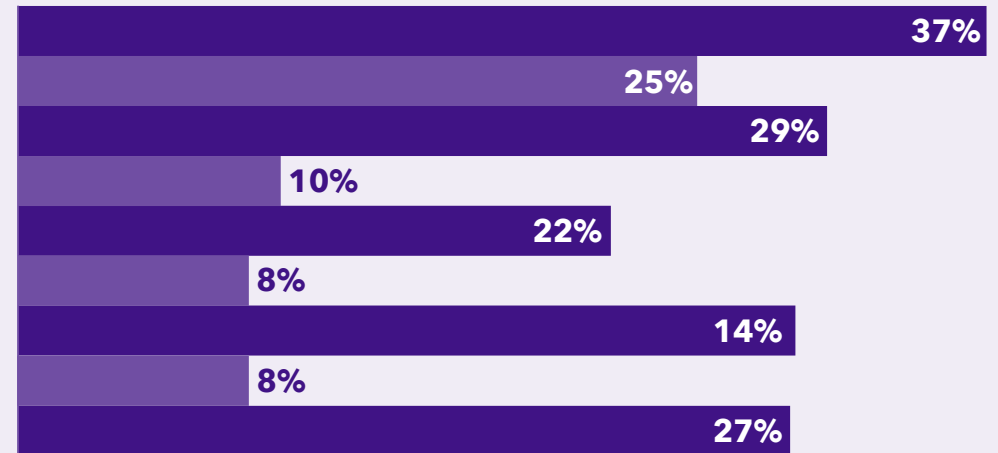
of the 129 respondents, 40% had heard about it via communications related to Covid-19, 33% via the NHS website and 22% via their GP surgery website.

The most common use of the NHS App is to view medical records*:

over half (56%) of the 126 respondents reported using the NHS App for this purpose. Other common uses were to order repeat prescriptions (40%) and to book a GP appointment (29%).

Please let us know why you are not using the NHS App* (n=51)

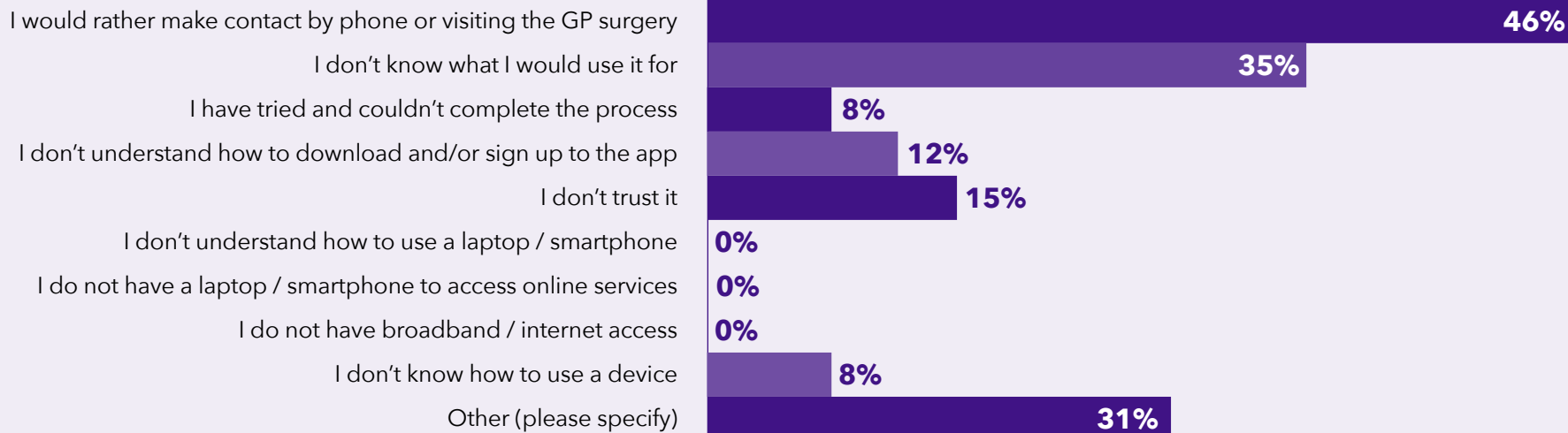
- I only needed it for my Covid-19 pass
- There are not usually online appointments available
- I do not need to order repeat medications
- I find it difficult to use
- My GP record is not available for me to view - I have not asked my GP
- My repeat medications are not available for me to order on the NHS App
- I don't find it useful
- My GP record is not available for me to view - I have asked my GP
- Other (please specify)



This question was asked to respondents who said they only rarely use the NHS App.

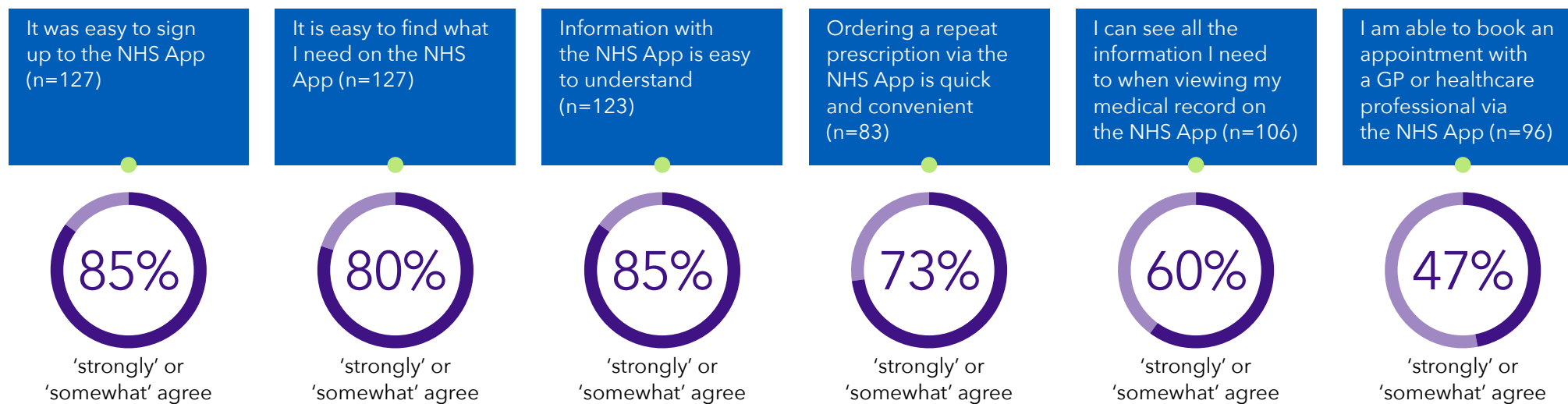
* Respondents could choose more than one answer, so the total is more than 100%

Please indicate why you haven't used the NHS App* (n=26)



This question was asked to respondents who said they have never used the NHS App.

The following statements were asked:



* Respondents could choose more than one answer, so the total is more than 100%

South East London ICS: Overall experiences of using the NHS App



This section uses data from all three sources: existing feedback, online survey and focus groups

Positive experiences

Ease of use

- ✓ Simple
- ✓ Straightforward
- ✓ Able to access at any time
- ✓ All information in one place

Access to information

- ✓ Able to access medical history
- ✓ Able to access test results
- ✓ Comprehensive source of information
- ✓ Access to proof of Covid-19 vaccine

Prescription management

- ✓ Order repeat prescriptions without need to contact GP, which reduces the burden on pharmacists

Appointment management

- ✓ Able to book and cancel GP appointments

“Found accessing medical records useful in NHS App as meant you could share your medical history / vaccination records with doctors abroad if travelling and need medical assistance.”

Negative experiences

- Unable to book GP appointments directly
- Limited information available, including access to full medical history
- Concerns around the security of personal data
- The NHS App does not always integrate with other applications and systems that patients use to manage their healthcare
- Only available to access on mobile devices, as such some members of the population may face challenges due to limited technology skills, lack of access to devices or the internet or unease with online services

“Not all of the specialist information is on it. It gets quite tiresome having to check three different apps for each trust.”

Suggestions for improvements

- Introduce the functionality to book appointments (where not already in place) providing patients with a more convenient process
- Update medical records, so patients have access to their full medical history
- Ensure regular updates are made to allow patients to access test results from hospital or specialists' appointments
- Offer training sessions to patients to improve their confidence in using the NHS App

“A group demonstration session at the surgery for all things digital access.”

South East London ICS: Online survey results relating to GP surgery websites

Most respondents have accessed their GP surgery website:

out of the 147 respondents, 86% had accessed their GP website for themselves or on behalf of someone else.

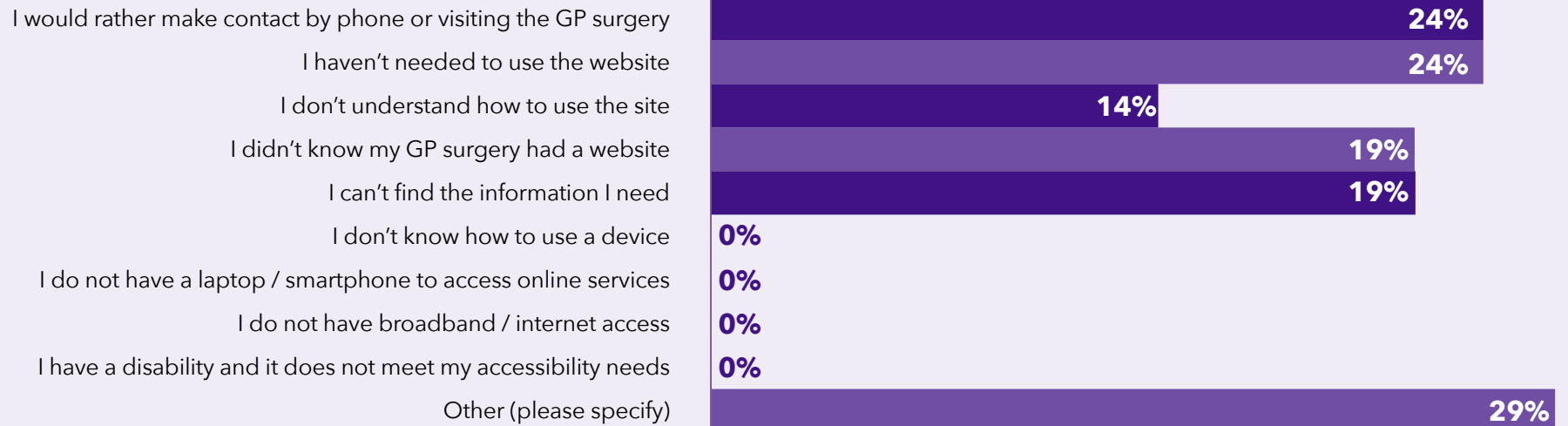
Most respondents do not access their GP surgery website frequently:

of the 125 respondents, most only access their GP surgery website monthly (26%) or rarely (62%).

Finding information is relatively easy

most of the 132 respondents found it very (28%) or somewhat (43%) easy to find what they need on their GP surgery website.

Please indicate why you haven't used your GP surgery website* (n=21)








* Respondents could choose more than one answer, so the total is more than 100%


South East London ICS: Overall experiences of using GP surgery websites









This section uses data from all three sources: existing feedback, online survey and focus groups


Negative experiences

-  The website lacks an email contact option for patients who cannot use voice telephony to reach the practice
-  Information on the GP website is not kept up to date
-  Unable to book GP appointments directly
-  Difficult to navigate and use, especially for those individuals who may have less experience using online platforms
-  Some members of the population, particularly the elderly, may face challenges due to limited technology skills, lack of access to devices or the internet or unease with unfamiliar online services

 **“Make the website less busy so that it is easier for those with disabilities or learning difficulties to find what they need.”**

Suggestions for improvements

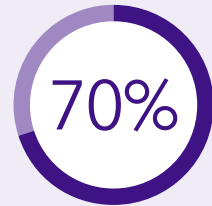
-  Simplify and improve the menu structure and signposting to make information easier to find
-  Ensure all websites adhere to the 2016 NHS Accessible Information Standards and patients preferred contact methods are recorded
-  Implement mandatory training for staff to ensure they understand how the 2016 NHS Accessible Information Standards are relevant to their respective roles
-  Include a ‘live chat function’ to allow patients to engage with the GP surgery in real time to answer any queries they may have when navigating the website
-  Ensure the website is kept up to date, to accurately reflect services available, members of staff, opening hours and contact information for example
-  Adopt a common template across the London region to ensure consistency in user experience

 **“All GP surgeries through the UK had the same look and navigation whilst still giving the GP surgeries the ability to add their personalisations.”**

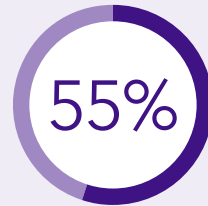
South East London ICS: Online survey results relating to communications

Most text messages from GP surgeries are around appointments*

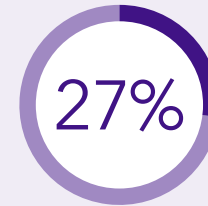

152
respondents



said they receive appointment reminders via text



said that they receive invitations to make appointments



said that they receive invitations to complete surveys

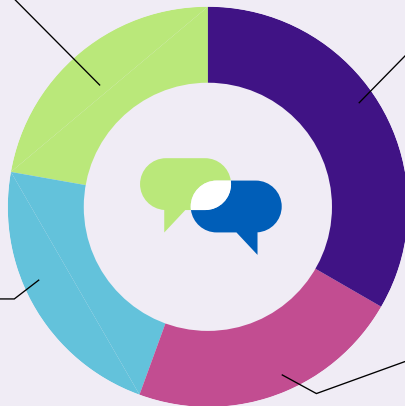


said that they receive information about test results

Please let us know why you do not receive text messages from your GP surgery (n=9)

22%

Other (n=2)



33%

I didn't know my GP surgery could send me text messages (n=3)

22%

I have not provided my GP surgery with my mobile number (n=2)

22%

I chose to opt out of receiving text messages (n=2)

Participants were asked 'How would you prefer to receive communications from your GP surgery?' (n=127)

Answers, in order of most preferred were:

01



SMS / text message

04



Messaging via NHS App

02



Email

05



Letter/post

03



Telephone

06



WhatsApp

* Respondents could choose more than one answer, so the total is more than 100%

Appendices

Appendix 1: Existing patient feedback on the NHS App

An analysis was carried out on data from the South East London ICS GP Patient Survey 2020-2023 and the NHS App Reporting Dashboard (July 2022-June 2023). The following themes were identified:

Theme																	
Annual use of accessing medical records online	<p>Across SEL ICS there was a year-on-year increase in the percentage of patients who had accessed their medical records online in the past 12 months from 2020 to 2022 (7% in 2020, 8% in 2021, 18% in 2022), however this figure remained the same in 2023, with 18% of respondents stating they accessed their medical records online in past 12 months.</p> <p>Note: this is in relation to accessing medical records generally, not specifically via the NHS App.</p>																
Monthly use of patient access to prospective medical records (NHS App)	<p>The data from the NHS App Reporting Dashboard (July 22 - June 23) showed fluctuations throughout the year. Key data is shown below.</p> <table><thead><tr><th>View</th><th>Average number of views per month</th><th>Highest number of views</th><th>Lowest number of views</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Record views</td><td>145,786 views</td><td>May 2023 (178,225 views)</td><td>December 2022 (115,808 views)</td></tr><tr><td>Summary coded record view</td><td>143,458 views</td><td>May 2023 (176,263 views)</td><td>December 2022 (113,587 views)</td></tr><tr><td>Detail coded record view</td><td>96,816 views</td><td>June 2023 (138,080 views)</td><td>September 2022 (68,843 views)</td></tr></tbody></table> <p>Note: the detailed coded view holds all medical information, whereas the summary coded record view only contains information about a patient's medicines and allergies. Patients need to contact their GP surgeries to request accessed to the detailed coded record.</p>	View	Average number of views per month	Highest number of views	Lowest number of views	Record views	145,786 views	May 2023 (178,225 views)	December 2022 (115,808 views)	Summary coded record view	143,458 views	May 2023 (176,263 views)	December 2022 (113,587 views)	Detail coded record view	96,816 views	June 2023 (138,080 views)	September 2022 (68,843 views)
View	Average number of views per month	Highest number of views	Lowest number of views														
Record views	145,786 views	May 2023 (178,225 views)	December 2022 (115,808 views)														
Summary coded record view	143,458 views	May 2023 (176,263 views)	December 2022 (113,587 views)														
Detail coded record view	96,816 views	June 2023 (138,080 views)	September 2022 (68,843 views)														

Appendix 2: Existing patient feedback on GP surgery websites

An analysis was carried out on data from the South East London ICS GP Patient Survey 2020-2023. The following themes were identified:

The data showed an increase in the percentage of patients using online services, such as booking appointments online, ordering repeat prescriptions online, and having an Online Consultation or appointment, from 2020 to 2023.



Of the online services, booking appointments online appeared as the most used service (32% of patients in 2023) and filling in an Online Form the least used service (15% of patients in 2023).



The data showed a year-on-year decrease from 2020 to 2023 in how easy patients found the GP surgery website to use to look for information or access services.

When asked, 'how easy is it to use your GP surgery website to look for information or access services' 71% of patients in 2020 agreed it was easy. This remained at 71% in 2021 and reduced to 60% in 2022 and 58% in 2023.

