

Changes at your GP surgery

Help us monitor how care improvements benefit you as a patient

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healthwatch
Bristol

healthwatch
North Somerset

healthwatch
South Gloucestershire



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About this booklet

People across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire shared their experiences of care at their GP surgery and in the community with us and other local Healthwatch across England.

Following patient feedback, the NHS has committed to making it easier and quicker for you to get the help you need from your GP and the healthcare community around your surgery

This booklet sets out changes you may see at your surgery and highlights good practice.

About Healthwatch Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire



Healthwatch Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire is your health and social care champion.

If you use GPs and hospitals, dentists, pharmacies, care homes or any other support services, we want to hear about your experiences. We have the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to your feedback and improve standards and the design of care. We also help people find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

What is the GP Access Recovery Plan?

It's an NHS commitment to tackle the issues you've told us about, and the things that don't work. The plan aims to take the pressure off the '8am rush', and make it easier and quicker for you to get the help you need from primary care*.

The NHS has said it will:

- Offer ways you can manage your own health needs, e.g booking appointments using the NHS App.
- Ensure patients know on the day how your request will be handled, respecting your preference for a telephone call, face-to-face appointment, or online message.
- Build capacity so practices can offer more appointments.
- Cut bureaucracy and work better with other services, giving practice teams more time to focus on patients.

Find out more about the Access Recovery Plan:

www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/delivery-plan-for-recovering-access-to-primary-care-2/



*Primary care services provide the first point of contact in the healthcare system, acting as the 'front door' of the NHS. Primary care includes general practice (GP), community pharmacy, dental, and optometry (eye health) services.

What does this mean for me?

GPs will offer easier ways to book appointments and order prescriptions through the NHS App.

You will be able to refer yourself to a range of health and community services

Changes that will make it easier for you to access care from your GP surgery

New professional roles at GP surgeries have been created to offer more specialist and joined-up care. This may include actions such as pointing you to community-based services. You can find a list of these new roles on the following pages.

Pharmacies can offer support for a wider range of health conditions.



Who could you see at your GP surgery?

Your GP surgery will have a number of qualified health professionals who will be able to support you and offer care. We have outlined a variety of their roles below.

Practice Nurse

Involved in many aspects of care – from family planning advice and childhood immunisations, to blood samples and managing your long-term conditions.



Advanced Nurse Practitioner

Highly trained professionals who can record a patient's medical history, diagnose issues, prescribe medication and create treatment plans. They can carry out many of the tasks traditionally provided by a GP.



Mental Health Nurse

Support patients with mental health and long-term psychological conditions. They adopt a holistic approach, working with the person and their families and carers. They can advise about therapy options, medication, treatment, activities and support.



Healthcare Assistant

Deliver treatment, support preventative care, promotion, and education. They are often trained in wound care and managing chronic illnesses.



Nursing Associate

Work with healthcare assistants and registered nurses to support the treatment team.





Receptionist/Care Navigator

The role of a GP receptionist has changed massively and to reflect this change, they can be referred to as Care Navigators. They are trained to signpost patients to the right health professional or support at the first point of contact.

First Contact Physiotherapist

Clinical practitioners who can assess, diagnose, treat, and manage musculoskeletal problems caused by injury, illness or disability. Patients can now have a direct consultation at the surgery without a GP referral, ensuring a quicker and more efficient service.



Clinical Pharmacist

Can assess and treat you. They have expert knowledge of medication, and can carry out reviews and manage patients with complex needs and multiple conditions.

Community Paramedic

Provide urgent assistance to treat wounds, certain infections and other minor injuries and illnesses. They are trained to manage patients whose conditions are rapidly deteriorating. They can also care for those with long-term conditions and administer certain types of medicine directly to patients.



Social Prescriber/Link Worker

Can assist in directing people to local services to help their physical health and mental wellbeing, allowing people to take greater control of their own health.

Your surgery may not have all of these roles, or may have additional ones. Pharmacies are improving the help and support they offer. Your local pharmacy may save you a visit to your GP.

Changes at your pharmacy

You can usually speak to a pharmacist without an appointment. Pharmacists are highly skilled and a number of changes have been made which mean you can get care for more health issues from your local pharmacy.

Pharmacy First: pharmacists can now prescribe medication for seven conditions: sore throat, uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTIs), sinusitis, shingles, infected insect bites, impetigo, and acute otitis media (inflammation or infection of the middle ear).

New Medicine Service: a pharmacist can help you when you start taking a new medicine, and follow up with you two to four weeks later to ensure you are getting on with the medication and understand how best to use it.

Community Pharmacist Consultation Service: allows GPs and NHS 111 to refer you to a pharmacist for a consultation. This speeds up the process as patients are seen within hours.

Discharge Medicines Service: on discharge from hospital, details can be shared with your pharmacy. They can follow up to ensure everything is going well regarding your medication.

Hypertension Case-Finding: pharmacies can identify people over the age of 40 who have previously not been diagnosed with hypertension (high blood pressure), and refer you on for appropriate care. Pharmacies can check your blood pressure or give you the means to do so at home.

Contraception Supply Service: you can go to a pharmacy to pick up your repeat supplies and some pharmacies can also support you if you are asking a contraception prescription.

Digital and non-digital access

There are many ways of using online health services. Examples include booking a GP appointment using the internet/an online form, having an online consultation via video, and using the NHS App. Benefits include:

- You don't have to travel to an in-person appointment
- You can access your medical records e.g. via the NHS app
- GP surgeries have seen a decrease in people who do not attend (DNA) their appointment

However, there are many people who don't want to or can't use online health services. You have the right to receive care and treatment that is appropriate to you, meets your needs and reflects your preferences.

It's important to remember that you can contact your GP surgery:

- by calling them on the phone
- in person, by going into the surgery and talking to a receptionist or care navigator



NHS App

You can use the NHS App or log in through the NHS website to access your GP health record. This is a record of your personal health information. It may include details about your health conditions and treatments you've had.

You can receive messages from your GP practice in your NHS App, instead of by SMS text or letter. Make sure you turn on notifications in your phone's app Settings menu. You can find instructions for this here: www.bnssg.icb.nhs.uk/health-and-care/health-advice-and-support/nhs-app/

Once your GP practice has switched on access to new record entries, you will be able to use the NHS App to read new entries made in your GP record. This avoids the need to contact your GP practice to see this information.

For more information, go to: www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/

You have a legal right to access the personal information held about you by health and care organisations.

You can use the NHS App to:

- order repeat prescriptions
- access NHS 111 online
- receive messages from your GP practice
- find NHS services
- view your health records
- get test results
- and much more



What if I've run out of my medication?

If you have run out of prescribed medicine and need some urgently, there are a few ways to get an emergency supply, including out of hours.

If you get your medicine with a repeat prescription, you can use the 111 online emergency prescription service.

Go to 111.nhs.uk/emergency-prescription

- They'll ask some questions, including where you are and when you are due to take your medicine so they can suggest the best way to get it.
- They may refer you to a pharmacy to get your medicine.
- If your medicine is not prescribed as a repeat prescription, you can get help from 111 online or call 111 to discuss your options.

Visit a pharmacy: they can provide certain emergency medicines even if you don't have a prescription, but you may need to pay.

Visit an urgent treatment centre: you may be able to get your medicine from an urgent treatment centre after a consultation.

Call your GP surgery: if it's outside their usual opening hours, they should have details of their out-of-hours service recorded on their answering machine.

Help us monitor these changes

Have you noticed improvements in your care? Are online health services helpful? Can you speak to your surgery on the phone? Share your feedback with us using the contact details below:

Bristol

www.healthwatchbristol.co.uk/share-your-views

0117 2033594

contact@healthwatchbristol.co.uk

North Somerset

www.healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk/share-your-views

01275 244238

contact@northsomerset.co.uk

South Gloucestershire

www.healthwatchsouthglos.co.uk/share-your-views

01454 506176

contact@healthwatchsouthglos.co.uk

Postal address: Healthwatch BNSSG,
UG21, The Galleries, Broadmead,
Bristol BS1 3XD



What's happening in our local area?

People told us about healthcare initiatives that have benefited them across the local area.

The following pages highlight the variety of work that is happening across GP surgeries, pharmacies, and community groups – all of which are starting to make a real difference to people's health and wellness.

From Nailsea to Weston and Easton to Emersons Green, we collected stories of positivity and support. The examples range from helping people with long term conditions and treating leg ulcers, to improving access to GP surgeries and championing community clinics.



Greenway Practice - North & West Bristol

Greenway Practice have made sure that patients get the right care quickly through their use of first contact physiotherapists. These physiotherapists can help patients with issues such as back and neck pain, without having to be referred by a GP.

After suffering from mild arthritis and a painful knee and hip, Norma decided to phone Greenway. She was able to see a first contact physiotherapist the next morning. After examining and diagnosing Norma, the physiotherapist advised that pain should clear up in 6-12 weeks.



'I felt reassured, and I knew what I could do myself to aid my own recovery. I am now much better' - Norma

Milton Road Surgery - North Somerset



To improve patient access, Milton Road Surgery has upgraded its telephone system to 'Surgery Connect', managed by 'X-on'.

Surgery Connect is more responsive to patient needs than the previous telephone system. Individuals are now able to find out where they are in the appointment queue. The system also provides a call back function when you have been waiting over a certain amount of time.



'I'm really impressed with the new phone system, it's quick and effective. Phone calls are now clear and easy to follow.' - Patient



'We have had a positive response to the call system and we have hardly any missed calls now. Recorded calls are also good for training purposes.' - Faye, Receptionist

One You - South Gloucestershire

'One You' is a friendly service supporting people in South Gloucestershire with building a healthier future. They can help you with managing your weight, stop smoking, getting more active, drinking less alcohol and improving your mental wellbeing.



One You is now working more closely with GPs to connect people with the professionals they need. Their bespoke wellbeing service aims to help you to:

- Feel less isolated and anxious
- Feel able to make changes in other areas of your life
- Feel more confident about managing your emotional and mental wellbeing
- Feel more able to get involved in your local communities

Website: www.oneyou.southglos.gov.uk

Telephone: 01454 865337

East Trees Open Health Days - Inner City & East Bristol



Open days are run regularly at the East Trees Health Centre. They are a fun but informative way to learn more about specific health problems and the support available.

Each open day focuses on a different topic or range of topics, and provides information about a wide range of health issues and concerns. Information is also available about translation services.



'I've made a better connection with my health centre through open days. In these events I learn more, and get health advice rather than having to book an appointment.' - Anton

Nailsea Leg Club - North Somerset



Nailsea Leg Club supports people with any problem involving their legs, from varicose veins, skin tears and eczema, to leg ulcers or difficulty walking.

The club is hosted in the town's Tithe Barn rather than a traditional medical setting, giving it a real sense of community. Former patients volunteer there, The club serves patients registered with Tyntesfield Medical Group and other associated GP practices.

Medical care is provided by Practice Nurses from Tyntesfield Medical Group, and a nurse from Sirona care & health attends monthly. Refreshments are provided, paid for through donations and fundraising. There's no need to make an appointment, and transport to and from the club can be arranged. To contact the Leg Club, call 07954 302498.

Howard and Joyce have benefited not only from the medical care offered, but also from the social aspect of the club.



'I first came to leg ulcer club to get my leg dressed and now I'm a volunteer driver.' - Howard



'I come to the leg ulcer club to get my legs dressed. Now I'm a member for life. I've made new friends and I feel less alone.' - Joyce



Sirona Active Ageing – South Gloucestershire



The Active Ageing team is made up of health visitors and support workers who help people aged over 70 access medical, social, home environment and financial services. You can ask for a referral from your GP to gain support on a number of different things including:

- Falls and accident prevention
- Advice on memory loss and dementia
- Health education
- Connecting to peer support for those who have been recently bereaved
- Advice on managing long-term health conditions
- Signposting to local and national support services
- Financial services and support for carers

Speak to your GP or visit this website: www.sirona-cic.org.uk/nhsservices/services/active-ageing/

The Lennard Surgery – South Bristol

HRTea and Biscuits at the Lennard Surgery offers its patients menopause education and myth-busting sessions, so its patients can come to their doctor armed with knowledge and patients can make informed choices about their menopause care.

If you're registered with Lennard Surgery and are interested in attending an HRTea and Biscuits session, contact the surgery and they will be able to provide you with the group's contact details.



'HRTea and Biscuits offers an opportunity to ask questions about the menopause and not feel silly for doing so. It is also an opportunity to meet other women, and know where to go for further help.' – Jenny

MaxWELL Project – North Somerset

The MaxWELL (Maximising Wellbeing in Everyday Life with Long-term conditions) Project is a way for surgeries to provide personalised care and support planning for people living with several co-existing long-term conditions.

Patients taking part in the initiative receive a yearly review to discuss their health with an appropriate professional, and create a care and support plan based on their needs and clinical recommendations. It aims to avoid multiple, unnecessary appointments by bring the care together.

The original pilot study was trialed at those practices most in need where traditionally people have had less support. Three practices volunteered to be part of the study in order to improve care for their patients with multiple long-term conditions.

The study highlights the potential for improving efficiency by reviewing an individual's long-term conditions all together and look at how they impact on each other in a review annually.



Sirona Health Links Team – Bristol wide / Inner City and East

The Sirona Health Links Team provide advocacy, signposting, translation and support in GP surgeries. They also do home visits, and aim to help patients open up about taboo topics.

The team organise health awareness days. These days offer information and advice in a culturally sensitive way, and connect people with other voluntary and community sector (VCSE) organisations that may be able to support them with their health and wellbeing.



Although the Health Links team are based in the Inner City and East area of Bristol, if you live elsewhere in the city and need their services, you can contact them using the details below.

Website: www.sirona-cic.org.uk/nhsservices/services/health-links/

Telephone number: 0117 902 7115

Mobile number: 07768 773 751



'I feel I can say what is on my mind. I am comfortable talking to my health link worker, Shahnaz, because I trust her. I know the Health Links team will keep my information confidential, so I can open up easier to the GP. I can really say all the problems I am facing in my life.' – Mrs. Begum



Westbourne Pharmacy – South Gloucestershire



Batch prescribing is a way for patients who are on regular medication to get it without contacting their GP first.

The surgery issues a large batch of prescriptions to the pharmacy. When a patient's prescription is due, the pharmacy then dispenses the medication without needing to contact the GP or surgery unless the medication needs to be reviewed.

This lessens the demand on GPs and practice management, and makes the process easier for people who rely on regular medication.



'This system is easy to use and saves both patients and GPs chasing repeat prescriptions and frees up our time. We have found processing, ordering and claiming all of these repeats very easy and efficient' - Jess and Manish from the pharmacy



'It's easy, fast and efficient' - patient feedback



Caafi Health – Bristol

Caafi Health was created to bridge gaps between GPs and communities by providing health clinics, translation services, helping people navigate the healthcare system, and supporting people to learn more about their health. They can also refer people who attend their community clinics to other services for further support.



Caafi Health is based in the Inner City and East area of Bristol, at surgeries such as Broadmead Medical Centre, Charlotte Keel Medical Practice, Lawrence Hill Health Centre, Montpelier Health Centre, The Homeless Health Centre, and Wellspring Surgery.

People across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire can make use of their services and they host community clinics across the city.

Contact Caafi Health

Website: www.caafihealth.org.uk

Telephone: 0117 924 7442

Email: info@caafihealth.com



'Coming to the community clinic made me more confident managing my long-term conditions, such as blood pressure and diabetes, by giving me practical tips around my lifestyle. The clinician also spoke the same language as me and gave me medical advice.' – Hamila



Merrywood Practice – South Bristol

Hari works as a Community Innovation Lead in South Bristol. He bridges gaps between health services, and voluntary and community groups by creating lists and directories for professionals to refer to, and create links between local communities & health services with the public.



His role brings together GP practices with the voluntary and community sector (VCSE), and communities in the area.

Hari works with a range of health professionals, including Mark, a pharmacist at Merrywood Practice.

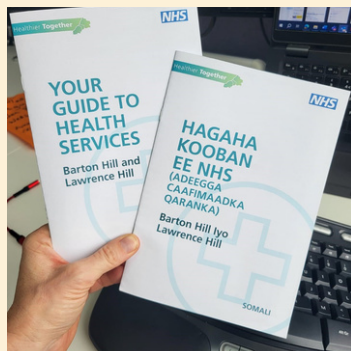


'I've met with Hari and discussed support with healthy eating with some of our patients. Hari emailed the relevant information and politely came to the practice to meet me and discuss further how he could help. I'm looking forward to working with Hari in the future for the benefits of our patients and the community.' – Mark



Communities helping the NHS in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

By actively listening, collaborating, and being led by communities, the local NHS Covid-19 vaccination team began to understand some of the barriers related to trust in government services. It understood the challenges in navigating the health system for some Black and minoritised ethnic groups in the Barton Hill and Lawrence Hill areas of Bristol. These barriers were directly contributing to a lower vaccine uptake.



In partnership with local communities, the NHS team rolled out a cultural awareness video for healthcare staff.

The NHS have produced a printed guide in Somali explaining when and how to contact a GP surgery or a more appropriate healthcare service, dependent on need. This guide is helping communities to better navigate the healthcare system correctly.



'Different communities have different expectations from the healthcare system' – Marta



Registering with a GP: your rights



I have the right to register and receive treatment from a GP practice

I do not need a fixed address.

I do not need identification.

Anyone in England can see a GP.



If I have any problems I can call 0300 311 2233
If I need more information I can visit www.nhs.uk/register

- I may need help filling in forms.
- I may need help reading and understanding.
- I would like to speak to someone confidentially.

A GP surgery can refuse to register you if they're not accepting new patients, if you live outside their area and they only accept patients inside this area, or if you have been removed from that surgery before.

If a GP surgery refuses to register you, they must write to you within 14 days explaining why.