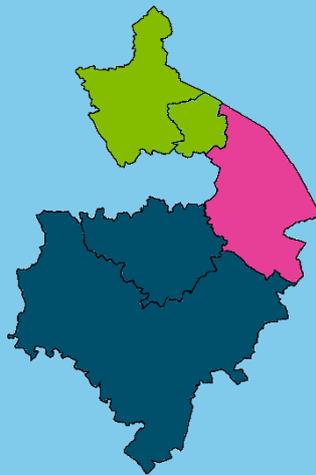


GP Websites Mystery Shopping Report



**Phase 1: Warwickshire North and Rugby
Spring 2022**

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Introduction

Why we decided to visit GP websites

During the COVID-19 Pandemic and lockdowns, the people of Warwickshire told us they were finding it more difficult to access their GP, (Doctor) in person.

As more digital platforms were developed to support contact with GPs, we decided to look at how supported people might be by their GP surgery or medical centre website. We used a 'Mystery Shop' approach, aiming to put ourselves in the position of a patient attempting to navigate each website we visited.

We were aware of work already being undertaken in South Warwickshire to roll out a standardised approach to websites so decided to focus our work on Warwickshire North and Rugby.

Our group

Our group of mystery shoppers was made up of 7 Healthwatch Warwickshire Volunteers and 1 member of Staff.

See Appendix for more information about our group members.

What we did

We visited 34 websites across North Warwickshire, Nuneaton, Bedworth, and Rugby, during February and March 2022. Our aim was for 3 members of our group to visit each website. (102 visits)

In total we have data from 104 website visits.

Where more or less than 3 visits took place, we have taken this into account when comparing our findings.

What we looked at

Collecting information

Following our Pilot Study, we decided to use a webform to collect and record our thoughts on each website visit. Each theme had a multiple-choice response, and some had an additional free text box. The themes from the webform are provided below:

Information gathered by our multiple choice webform	Extra 'Free text' box to gather further opinions
Homepage, look and layout	Yes
Accessibility	Yes
Opening hours	
Out of hour/ extended hours services	
Alternative NHS Services	
Information about ways to contact the surgery	
Information about ways to book an appointment	
Information about how an appointment could take place	
Restrictions and expectations	
Links to local pharmacies	
Feedback, suggestions, or complaints about the surgery	Yes
Staff information	
PPG (Patient Participation Group) information	(See Appendix for a description of PPGs)
	Any further comments about the website

Our findings

How we considered our findings

As a group with different experience, expectations, and abilities, it is not surprising that we had varying opinions on the websites we visited. However, we were able to reach agreement on those websites which lead to the easiest and most difficult visits.

All the multiple-choice responses have been graded and averaged to help with fair comparisons.

All 'free text' responses have been themed.

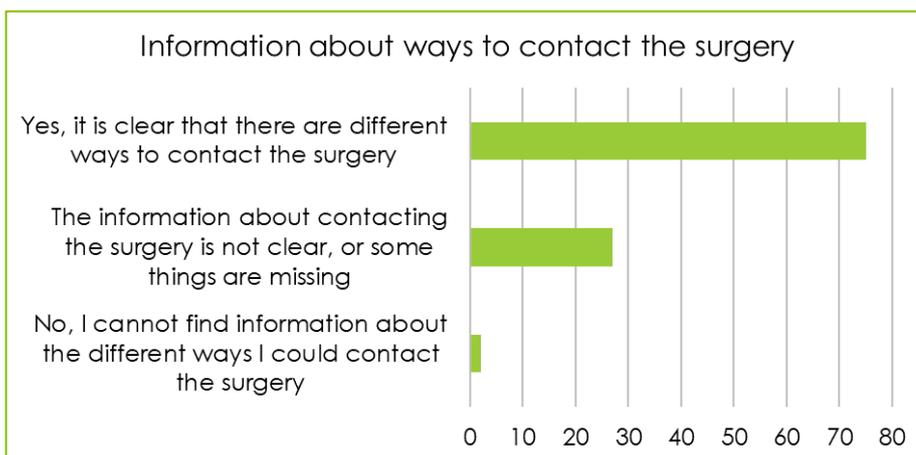
What we found



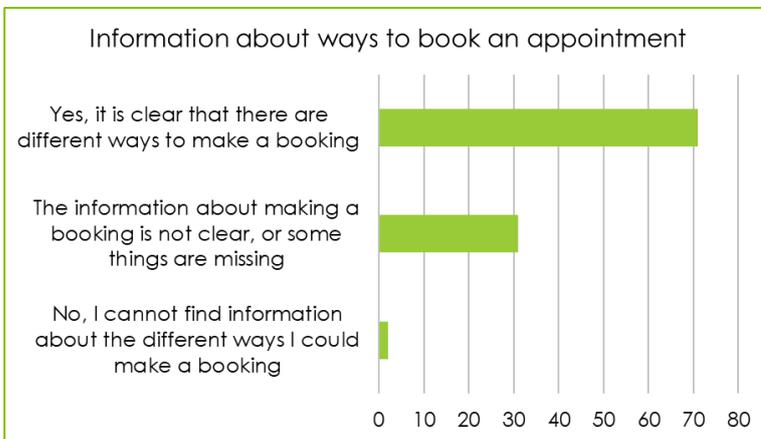
Out of all the visits to websites:

98% found **opening hours** either on the homepage or within a couple of clicks.

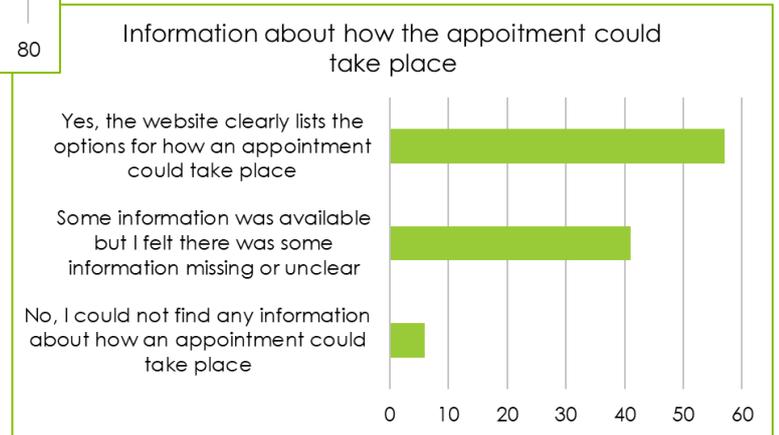
54% stated that we could find guidance on **alternative NHS services**.



The majority (**72%**) of our visits found clear information about the **different ways to contact the surgery**.



The majority (**68%**) of our visits found clear information about **ways you could book an appointment** and (**54%**) found clear information about the **ways an appointment could take place**, for example, in person or by telephone.



Out of all the visits to the websites:

47% could **not** find any way to either change the display, or to change the language, to help with the **digital accessibility** of the website.

52% were **unable** to find any information about **out of hours or extended hours services**, or that the information was not clear enough.

51% found current guidance and expectations **around COVID-19** were **limited**, or not clearly explained.

69% found **no local pharmacy** information.

62% could **not** find any information about **sharing views** (positive or negative) about the surgery, or the process to do so was not clear enough.

79% could only find **limited** information about **staff members**, and in some cases no information at all.

64% could only find **limited** information about a **Patient Participation Group (PPG)**, and in some cases no information at all.

All opinions shared by our group, in open text boxes via the webform, were themed into positive or negative sentiment, and by topic. Comments are about; 'Homepage look and layout', 'Accessibility' and 'Feedback, suggestions or complaints about the surgery'. The comments are listed in order, the most common at the top.

Most common positive comments
Good amount of information/ links on the home page
Colourful/ good use of colours/ images
Good welcome statement/ welcoming homepage
Easy to read
Contact information listed or a webform provided for feedback, suggestions or complaints

A very good website layout, user friendly, hyperlinks, photos through the website guiding the user. (Member of our Mystery Shopping Group on a Rugby Borough website.)

Different to others I've reviewed so far but much more of the information I would routinely need is all on the front page e.g., Opening Hours, online bookings, telephone number, which is good. Great to see the languages option on the main home page banner too. (Member of our Mystery Shopping group on a Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough website.)

Most common negative comments
Accessibility menu hard to find
Couldn't change the language
Complaints accepted via Practice Manager only
Confusing homepage
Unwelcoming homepage
No information about how to make a complaint
Out of date messaging
Poor colour combinations

Wow, this site is too much for me. I found it unfriendly, uninformative, and not useful...Eventually I found a staff page, with no photos, and very little information. (Member of our Mystery Shopping group on a Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough website.)

This website is very confusing and hard to follow through for details such as making appointments. (Member of our Mystery Shopping group commenting on a North Warwickshire Borough website.)

Our suggestions

What we think makes a good GP website for patients: areas for improvement.

Focussing on the positives we saw during our website visits; we would like to share our recommendations for good practice on GP websites.

Structure of the website:

- Opening hours, contact details and appointment information should be clearly visible on the homepage. The homepage is clear, welcoming, and easy to read.
- Menu headings and link button names are labelled clearly, using equivalent descriptions and matching titles. This allows patients to find the information they require quickly, and that information is not hidden from them or missed altogether.
- Accessibility tools are very easy to find and checked to ensure they are working. Anybody with digital accessibility needs will benefit from being able to adjust the appearance of a webpage as soon as they visit.
- A search function is available. Anyone in a rush should be able to find what they need straight away.

Content about the surgery:

- Full Patient Participation Group (PPG) information is available. This should include a description of the purpose of the group, ways to get involved, who to contact and previous successes. Full PPG information should encourage new participants.
- Full and consistent staff information is available, gender, specialisms, and photographs. Patients may prefer to be treated by a GP of a particular gender, or with a particular specialism, in certain circumstances.
- Information and news articles are up to date and any out-of-date notices are removed. An excess of information can be overwhelming and out of date information can be confusing.

Content that may be required when there is no option to telephone or call in to the surgery:

- Extended hours (and alternative services) information is easy to find, clear and concise.
- Links to self-help/library of common ailments are structured in an easy to access format.
- An up-to-date list of local contact numbers for extra support is provided.

- As a minimum there is a clearly visible link to the NHS 'Find a pharmacy' page. Ideally local pharmacy contacts are visible.

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy>

Our next steps

We will publish this report on our website and social media channels. We will share it with Coventry and Warwickshire CCG, and where appropriate other key stakeholders in Warwickshire North and Rugby, as well as South Warwickshire stakeholders to ensure a joined-up approach.

We will be available to discuss individual website feedback on request from Practice Managers at those surgeries, and responses to this report will help determine our focus for future work.

Appendix

Our group

In terms of digital competence, our group members were asked to self-rate as either high, medium, or low digital competence when using websites to find information.

One person felt they had high digital competence.

Five people felt they had medium digital competence.

Two people felt they had low digital competence.

One of our group members is unemployed, 2 are in part time work/study and 5 are retired.

Three of our group are aged between 30-59 years of age and five are aged between 60-79 years.

Our group members live in South Warwickshire (6) and Rugby (2).

Relevant experience of group members	
Volunteer in healthcare setting	4
Employment with NHS	3
Member of PPG (or equivalent)	3
Employment in healthcare setting	2
Volunteer with NHS	2
Need to use accessibility options on computer	1

A Patient Participation Group (PPG) is a group of people who are patients of the surgery and want to help it work as well as it can for patients, doctors, and staff. The NHS requires every practice to have a PPG. (NHS England)



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