



North East London

# Delivery Plan for Recovering Access to Primary Care

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Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 September 2023

# Background

The Delivery Plan for Recovering Access to Primary Care was launched in May 2023 and sets out an ambitious package of measures to help improve access to primary care. The two-year programme covers four key areas: implementing modern general practice access, empowering patients to manage their own health, building capacity and cutting bureaucracy.

The plan has two central ambitions:





- 1. To tackle the 8am rush and reduce the number of people struggling to contact their practice.** Patients should no longer be asked to call back another day to book an appointment
- 2. For patients to know on the day they contact their practice how their request will be managed.**

Despite the number of GP appointments increasing over the past year in North East London, the 2023 GP Patient survey indicated that patients' overall experience of primary care and making an appointment has decreased.

Through implementation of this plan, we will be supporting practices to make it easier for our local residents to contact them when they are open and get a timely response.

# Delivery Plan for Recovering Access To Primary Care: Four Commitments

- **Empowering patients** - *Tools for patients to manage own health using NHS App and community pharmacy expansion*
- **Implementing ‘modern general practice access** – *Tackling the 8am rush so patients know on the day how request will be handled, respecting appointment type preferences*
- **Building Capacity** - *Practices can offer more appointments & add flexibility to the types of staff recruited and how they are deployed*
- **Cutting bureaucracy** - *Reducing workload across interface between primary and secondary care & medical evidence requests, so there is more time to focus on patients’ clinical needs*

1		<b>Empower patients</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving NHS App functionality</li> <li>• Increasing self-referral pathways</li> <li>• Expanding community pharmacy</li> </ul>
2		<b>Implement new Modern General Practice Access approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll-out of digital telephony</li> <li>• Easier digital access to help tackle 8am rush</li> <li>• Care navigation and continuity</li> <li>• Rapid assessment and response</li> </ul>
3		<b>Build capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing multi-disciplinary teams</li> <li>• More new doctors</li> <li>• Retention and return of experienced GPs</li> <li>• Priority of primary care in new housing developments</li> </ul>
4		<b>Cut bureaucracy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the primary-secondary care interface</li> <li>• Building on the ‘Bureaucracy Busting Concordat’</li> <li>• Reducing IIF indicators and freeing up resources</li> </ul>

# Improving Access to Primary Care: Now and in the Future

**Access by telephone** - The majority of appointments are currently made by telephone. All NEL practices will be moved to modern digital phone systems by March 2024 with better queuing systems and call management

**Modes of appointment** - Between January and July 2023, 61% of encounters were conducted face-to-face compared to 33% telephone appointments

**Online consultations** - Patients complete an online form and get a response such as advice on what to do next through an electronic message or phone call – PCNs have put plans in place to increase online consultations to ensure patients at all practices have access to this – On average, 700,000 online forms are submitted in NEL per month

**Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS)** - Patients contacting their practice for a minor illness can be referred to get a same day appointment with their community pharmacist. The roll out of this service has been a big success with the highest number of referrals in the country with 82,000 referrals since March 2022 with 96% of practices referring

**Tackling the 8am rush** – New contractual changes being phased in across practices mean that local residents will not be asked to phone the practice back but will know on the day how their request will be handled, based on clinical need – NEL practices are being supported to move to this model through training, digital tools and cloud based telephony

**Improving access** - The plan will make it easier for patients to contact their practice on the phone; speed up assessment and navigation and make on-line requests simpler through the NHS App for example.

# Access Recovery Plan: Key Highlights

## Empowering Patients

**Prospective Records Access:** People aged 16 and over with an online account, such as through the NHSE app, NHS website or another online primary care service, will now be able to see all future notes and health records from their GP practice. We are working to ensure this is in place across NEL from 31 October 23

**Self-referral pathways** Patients will be able to self refer for seven nationally specified community services e.g. audiology, weight management, podiatry. Work is underway to implement this with the multiple providers who are responsible for supplying these services across NEL.

**Community pharmacies** will be able to supply prescription only medicines for seven common conditions by end of 2023. This is currently being worked through nationally and is pending appropriate governance and IT solutions being in place.

## Cutting Bureaucracy

Plans are being put in place for improving the primary-secondary care interface to give practice teams more time to focus on patients' clinical needs. This will involve establishing an overarching Interface Steering Group, linking to the Clinical Advisory Group and acute and provider collaboratives. Local interface groups will feed into it.

## Implementation of Modern General Practice Access

Primary Care Networks are working to deliver action plans outlining how they will improve patient experience through feedback from the GP Patient Survey and other sources, taking into account equity of patient experience of access for all patient groups in order to address health inequalities

Through development of a local toolkit, all practices are considering:

- how they will offer an outcome to patients at first point of contact with a practice
- how patients requiring non-urgent appointments can be offered them within two weeks
- Feedback on their website and ways in which they can make it as user-friendly for patients as possible

## Building Capacity

A number of recruitment and retention initiatives are in place. A **Fellowship scheme** offers a two-year programme of support, available to all newly qualified GPs and nurses, and new to practice nurses working substantively in general practice. A **mentoring scheme** creates a portfolio working opportunity for experienced GPs to support GP colleagues.

Primary Care Networks are continuing to work to recruit to their multidisciplinary teams working across practices including pharmacists, physiotherapists, mental health practitioners and social prescribers

# Engagement and communication

Implementation of the access recovery plan will only be successful through appropriate levels of engagement and partnership with practices and communities.

For example last year our **enhanced access engagement** exercise provided feedback that is still being used by PCNs and individual practices to inform and shape improvements or new initiatives at practice, locality, Places and NEL level. The focus is on improving access, but also on what other support can be provided through a practice e.g. additional roles, opening hours, special clinics.

Over 1,500 residents from north east London shared feedback in a London-wide engagement exercise over the summer on **digital tools**. The feedback will be used to inform work across the capital on how we improve local people's understanding and take-up of digital tools to access primary care. This includes the e-consult service and the NHS App, as well as building greater awareness of how you can access your own health record. NHSE is due to publish its report by the end of October which contains feedback from our residents with some follow up online workshop with local residents planned.

Resident insight gathered from a range of local engagement work by the ICB, Healthwatch and other local partners has informed our **Right Care campaign**, aimed at supporting local people to access care when they need urgent same-day care. This will build on our previous winter and urgent care campaigns, and is a NEL ICBs campaign supported by all local partners including Councils and Healthwatch.

Looking ahead, there will be more ongoing patient engagement, focusing on access to appointments and understanding of digital tools.