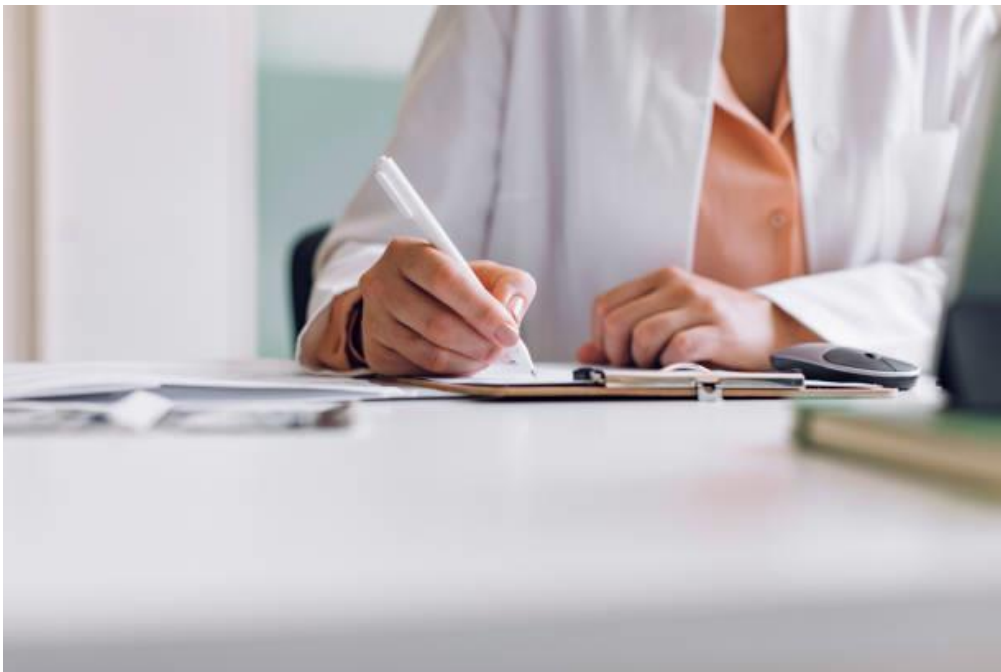


‘The Service, *Online*’

**A review of GP Practice websites in Manchester
regarding their offer of the Enhanced Access
Service**



August 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 This report aims to present the key findings, conclusions and recommendations of an Healthwatch Manchester(HWM) review which assessed 83 GP practice websites in Manchester on the information they published about the Enhanced Access Service (EAS).

1.2 HWM investigated each website to assess the ease with which information about the EAS could be found and then how accessible and comprehensible it was.

1.3 Since 1st October 2022, the EAS requires Primary Care Networks(PCN) to provide enhanced access appointments between the hours of 6.30pm to 8pm Mondays to Fridays and between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays. The changes do not mean that every practice has to be open every evening and weekends, instead local arrangements can be made for PCNs to subcontract some or all of their service to other providers or work with others across a larger footprint, which could include a neighbouring PCN¹.

2. Background & Rationale

2.1 As the independent health and social care champion for Manchester citizens, HWM is at times the go to organisation when a review of a particular service is required.

2.2 HWM enjoy a collaborative relationship with NHS Greater Manchester, Manchester Locality. A proposal to plan, develop and conduct two reviews of the EAS was commissioned by NHS Greater Manchester, Manchester Locality in March 2024.

2.3 This work was commissioned in March 2024 and was planned out to take the form of:

1. Review of GP practice websites to check they included the offer of the Enhanced Access Service.
2. A telephone mystery shopper exercise to determine whether the offer of the Enhanced Access Service is being provided.

2.4 This report is about the former exercise. This required all 83 GP practice websites to be reviewed individually against a set of criteria which focused on:

- An assessment of the ease of navigation to the EAS i.e. how easy was the information to find
- Ease of access in understanding the EAS offer i.e. was the information comprehensible and complete

2.5 The timeframe for this project to be completed was between 1st April - September 2024.

¹ NHS England(2024). Enhanced Access to General Practice services through the network contract DES - Frequently asked questions. Date Accessed 01/08/2024. [Website link](#)

3. Methodology

3.1 In order to ensure that the review process for each GP practice website was consistent, objective and fair, the HWM team agreed to a standard procedure for conducting the review.

3.2 The list of GP Practices was apportioned between four HWM staff members.

3.3 The stages of the procedure were as follows:

1. Find and go onto the Homepage of the GP practice website assigned on your list
2. In the search bar, input the phrase 'Enhanced Access Service'
 - *If there is no EAS page -input the phrase 'Out of Hours' in the search bar and begin stage 3*
 - *If there is not an 'Out of Hours' page - find the **Appointments** page and begin stage 3*
3. Review for 'Pieces of Information'
4. Record findings on your individual scoring sheet

3.4 All reviews were completed in June 2024.

3.5 See below for an example of the 'Search bar' on a GP practice Website.



Search Results for: Enhanced Access Service

Enhanced Access Service

Your GP practice is part of the Higher Blackley, Harpurhey and Charlestown Primary Care Network. This involves a group of practices working together to make sure you can access a range of healthcare services at a time and place that meets your needs. Accessing the Service Enhanced Access Service appointments are available Monday to Friday...

3.6 The following assessment criteria are the details each practice should provide regarding the EAS. They are as follows:

- **Assessment Criteria 1 (AC1): Hours and days of the week that the service is offered** e.g. 6:30pm - 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am - 5pm Saturday
- **Assessment Criteria 2 (AC2): Appointment time** e.g. same day or pre-booked
- **Assessment Criteria 3 (AC3): Method of appointment** e.g. face to face or remote/virtual

3.7 We also reviewed each website for the ease of navigation to the EAS information. We did this by making note of how many 'clicks' were required to reach the information after inputting the phrase 'Enhanced Access Service' into the search bar.

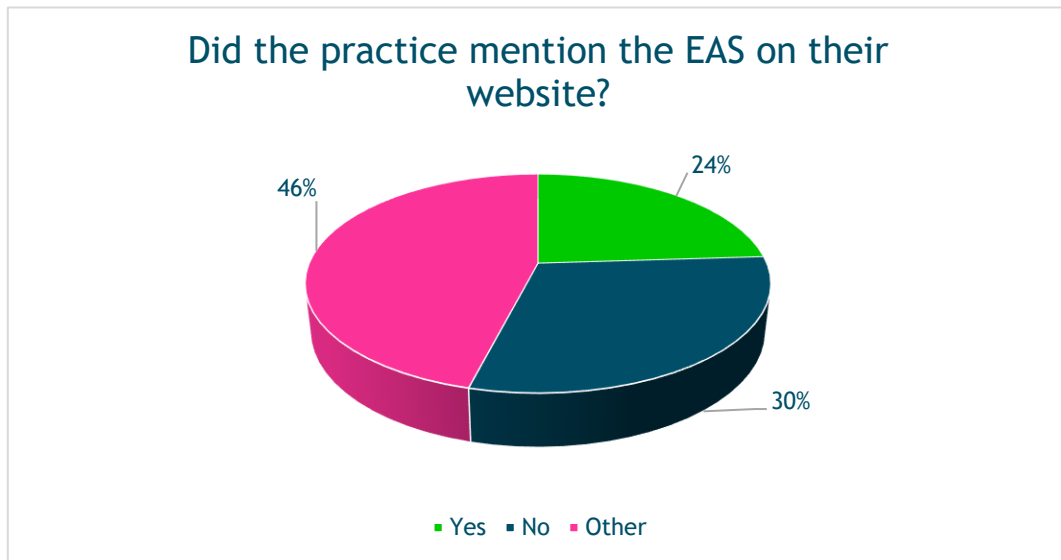
3.8 Once all of the reviews were completed, the data was combined into a spreadsheet and the results were extracted from there.

4. Key Findings

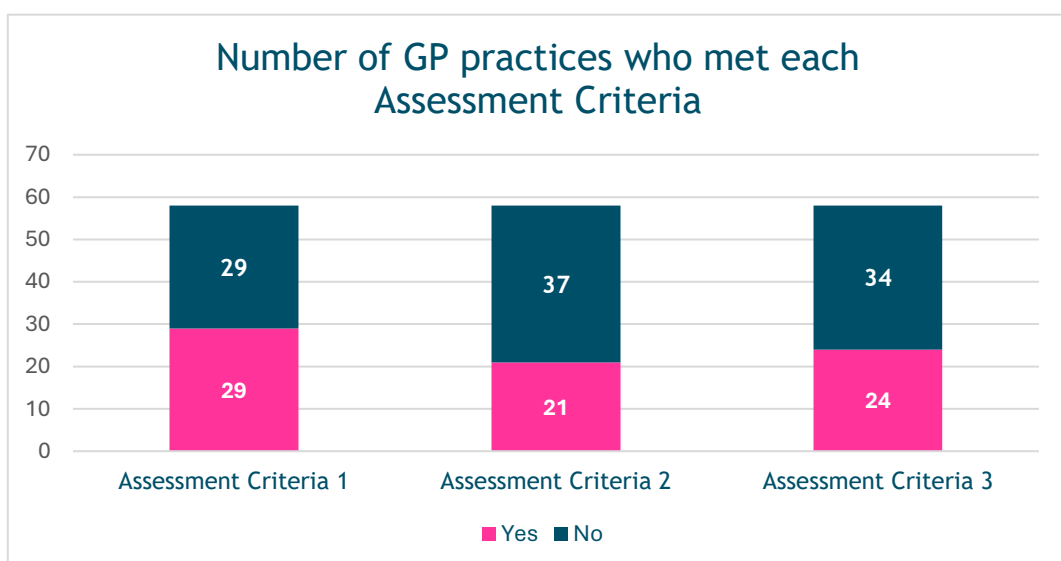
4.1 After completing our website reviews, we found that 20 of the 83 practices directly referenced the 'Enhanced Access Service' on their website.

4.2 However, 38 websites did not use the phrase 'Enhanced Access Service', they did reference a service similar to this, for example the Out of Hours or Extended Access/Hours services.

4.3 We found that 25 practice websites did not reference the 'Enhanced Access Service' nor any other iteration of this.



4.4 On analysing the results, we found that 29 (50%) of the 58 practice websites which mentioned EAS, or another iteration of this service met AC1: Hours and days of the week that the service offered. AC2: Appointment time was found on 21 (36%) of the 58 Websites and 24 (41%) met AC3; Method of appointment.



4.5 When assessing the ease of navigation, we found that 55 (94%) of practices who mentioned the EAS, or any other iteration of the service did so in 2 'clicks' or fewer.

4.6 Therefore, 3 (6%) of practices who mentioned the EAS, or any other iteration of the service did so in 3 or more 'clicks'.

5. Conclusion

5.1 A minority of GP practice websites directly referenced the EAS in its current form (24%).

5.2 A significant proportion of GP practice websites did not mention the EAS or any previously named service (30%).

5.3 The majority of GP practice websites mentioned either the EAS or the service with a previous name (70%).

5.4 A significant proportion of GP practice websites which mentioned the EAS or a service similar to this did not give details about the hours and days of the week that this service is offered (50%).

5.5 A significant proportion of the GP practice websites which mentioned the EAS or a service similar to this did not provide details about the appointment time (67%).

5.6 A significant proportion of the GP practice websites who mentioned the EAS or a service similar to this did not provide details about the method of appointment (59%).

5.7 The majority of GP practice websites who mentioned the EAS or a similar service provided this information in an accessible format.

6. Recommendations

6.1 All GP practice website need to be updated to present information about the EAS accurately using its current nomenclature.

6.2 Time and resources need to be invested in GP practice websites in order to ensure they present accurate and up to date information regarding the EAS. This should include:

- The correct name for the service - 'Enhanced Access Service'
- Full details about the hours + days of the week that the service is offered
- Full details about appointment times
- Full details about the method of appointment

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the members of our Citizens Reading Panel for their support in the production of this report.



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