

Links Road Surgery

Service address: Links Road Surgery,
27-29 Links Rd, Portslade, Brighton BN41 1XH

Date of surgery visit: 25th August 2017

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove would like to thank the surgery Practice Manager, surgery staff, and patients for their contribution to the 2017 GP review.

What is Healthwatch?

Local Healthwatch were created as part of the Health and Social Care Act (2012) with the intention of giving citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided within their locality. Local Healthwatch also provide or signpost people to information to help them make choices about health and care services. Healthwatch are independent organisations that have a statutory role to review the performance of local health and social care services and suggest improvements.





Headline findings

	Links Road Surgery	Brighton & Hove	
Satisfaction			
Overall surgery rating (1-10)	8.7	7.9	
Would recommend surgery to friend/family member	96%	87%	
Quality of care			
No. patients per doctor	1860	2394	
Overall quality of care - GP	97%	85%	
Overall quality of care - nurse	93%	90%	
Booking appointments			
Wait between booking and attending routine GP appointment	4.1 days	5.4 days	
Wait between booking and attending urgent appointment	0.9 days	0.9 days	
Opening hours			
Satisfaction with opening hours	79%	72%	

Links Road Surgery has 6008 registered patients and has 3.23 FTE doctors, making a ratio of one doctor per 1860 patients. This provision of doctors is lower than the city average of one doctor per 2394 patients.¹

Patients rated the surgery at 8.7 out of 10 which was better than the city average of 7.9.

Results from the patient survey indicated a number of areas of strong performance, including the ease of making appointments, waiting times for appointments and quality of care by both GPs and nurses. However, when compared with the city average, improvements could be made regarding patient awareness of special GP services.

Our visit rated the surgery as good in providing an environment for patients, giving it a score of 7 out of 10. Suggested areas for improvement included increasing confidentiality between patients and medical staff in the reception area, ensuring signage to all toilet facilities and ensuring availability of feedback forms such as friends and family forms.

Overall, the surgery was found to be performing well compared to other surgeries in the city.

¹ NHS Digital data from [General and Personal Medical Services, England As at 30 September 2017](#).



Methodology

The 2017 GP review used three research tools to collect information on the surgery:

- **GP Patient survey**

The survey was available to patients online as well as completed on paper by patients during the surgery visit. The survey covered a range of questions on the patient experience at the surgery.

The survey received 32 submissions from patients using the surgery.

- **GP Practice survey**

This was completed by the Practice Manager and covered details about the services offered by the practice.

- **Observational visit to the surgery**

This was conducted by two or more Healthwatch volunteers. The volunteers used an observation checklist to evaluate key issues relevant to the patient experience at the surgery.

About the surgery

Links Road Surgery has 6008 registered patients and has 3.23 FTE doctors, making a ratio of one doctor per 1860 patients.

The surgery was accepting new patients at date of research.

Surgery opening hours were 8.30am - 1pm and 2-6pm. In addition, every other Saturday the surgery is open from 9am-11.30am and every other Wednesday 6.30-9pm.

The surgery was working within Cluster Four in Brighton and Hove which also includes Mile Oak Medical Centre, Benfield Valley Healthcare Hub - Portslade County Clinic, Portslade Health

Centre, Hove Medical Centre, Benfield Valley Healthcare Hub and Wish Park Surgery.

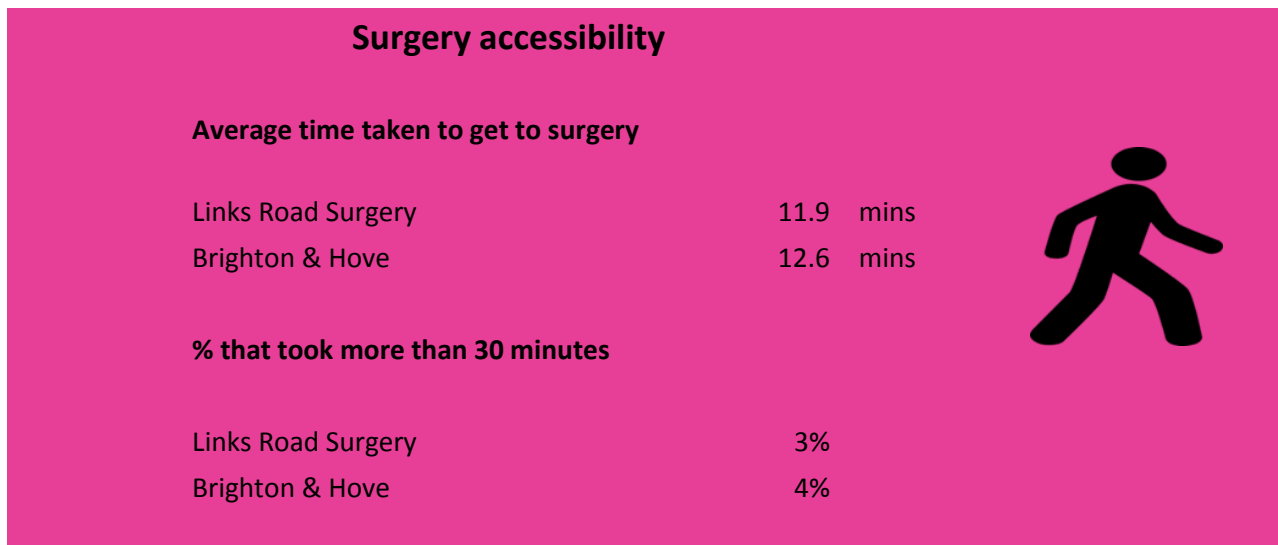
The surgery has a PPG where group members meet in person.

Findings



Accessibility

The average time taken to get to the surgery was 11.9 minutes, which was shorter than the average for Brighton and Hove. Only a small proportion of patients, 3%, had to take more than 30 minutes, marginally less than the city average.

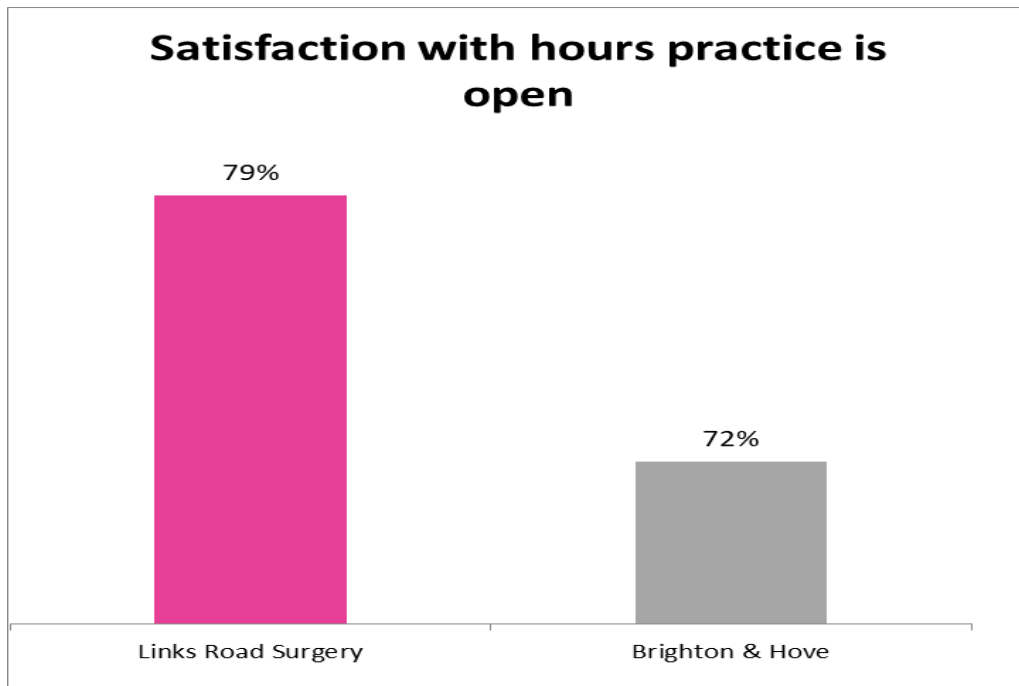


Opening hours

Surgery opening hours were weekdays 8.30am - 1pm and 2-6pm. In addition, every other Saturday the surgery is open from 9am-11.30am and every other Wednesday 6.30-9pm.

Satisfaction with current opening hours

Patients were generally satisfied (79%) with opening hours offered by the surgery.



Preferred additional hours if not satisfied

No suggestions were made for preferred additional hours by those 21% of patients who were not satisfied with existing opening hours. Without further research, it would be difficult to ascertain whether this implies they don't hold a strong opinion or their preference would be for the surgery to regularly open at additional times (for example every Saturday or every Wednesday night as opposed to every other week for these days).

Booking appointments

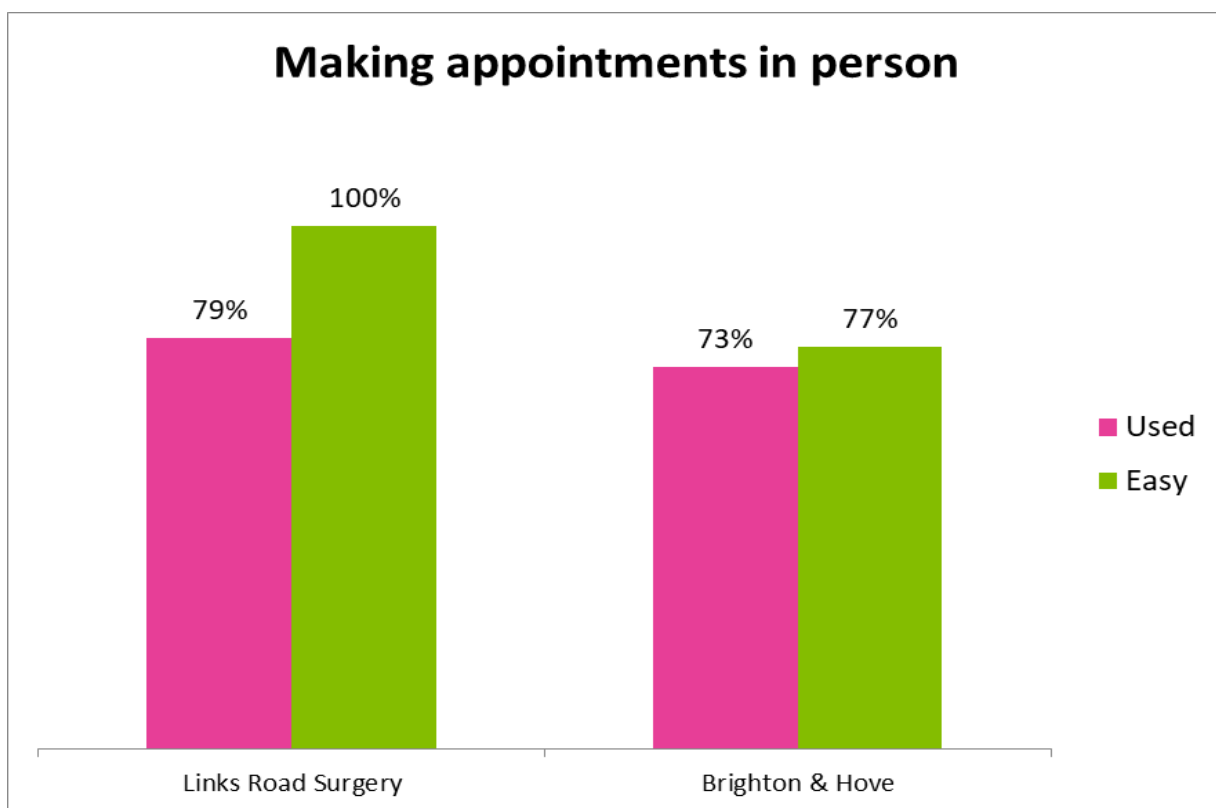
The surgery offered all standard methods of booking an appointment and electronic facilities for making prescriptions.

		used
Online appointment booking	✓	2%
Online repeat prescription	✓	
Electronic prescriptions (sent to pharmacy)	✓	
Link to a pharmacy	✓	

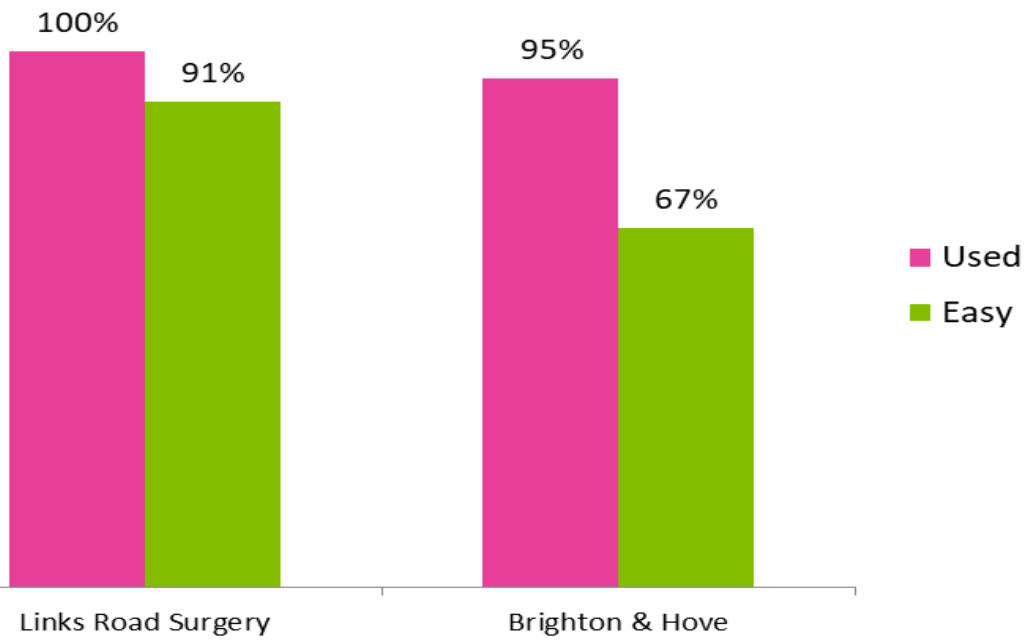
Ease of booking appointments using different methods

Using data from the Patient survey we assessed the proportion of patients who had used and found 'easy' to use different methods of booking appointments.

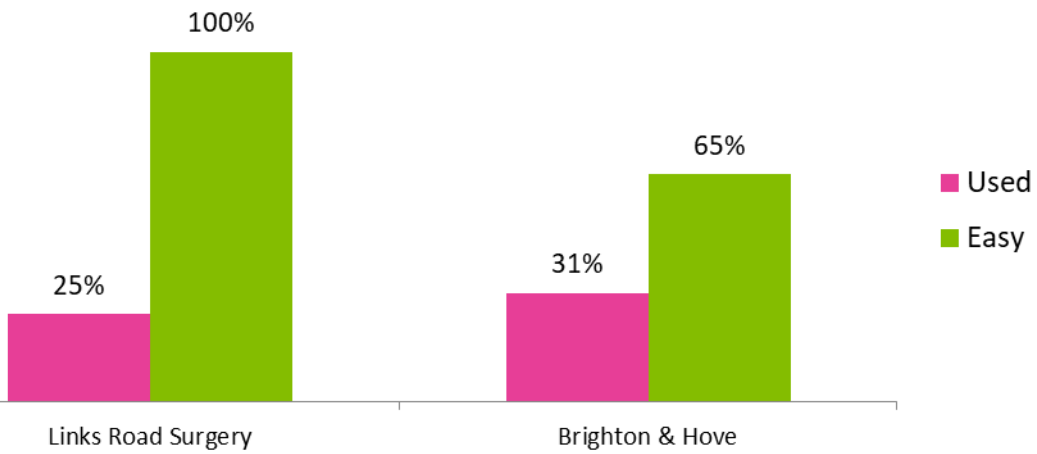
High numbers of patients reported that making appointments in person, by phone or online had been 'easy' and it is worth noting that in two cases (in person and online) this was rated 'easy' by all patients who responded to these questions. These satisfaction rates were all higher than the average for Brighton and Hove. However, only 25% of respondents had used the online booking, and this suggests that the surgery could encourage patients to use this facility, creating efficiency for the surgery as well as increasing patient satisfaction.



Making appointments by phone

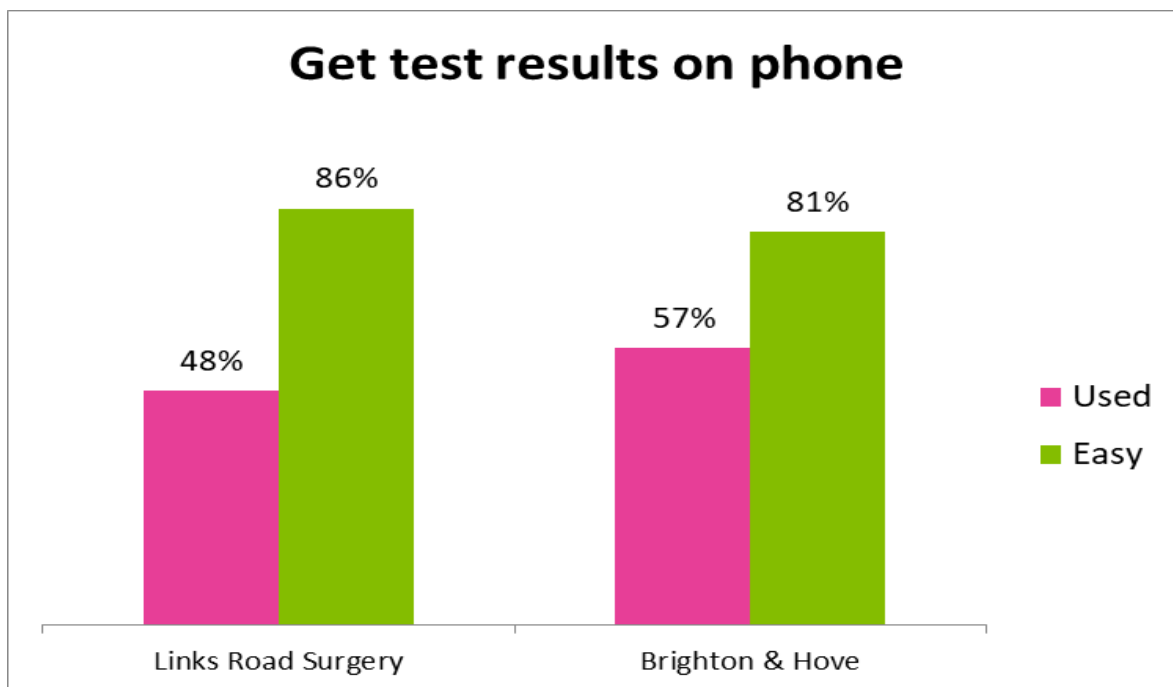
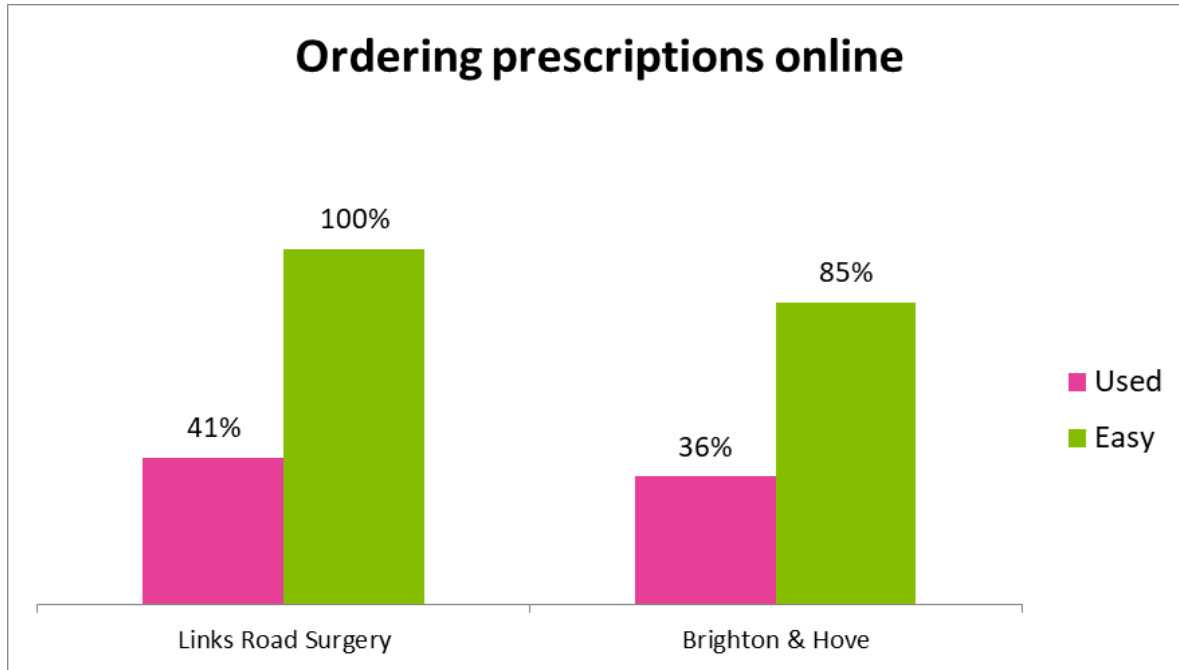


Making appointments online



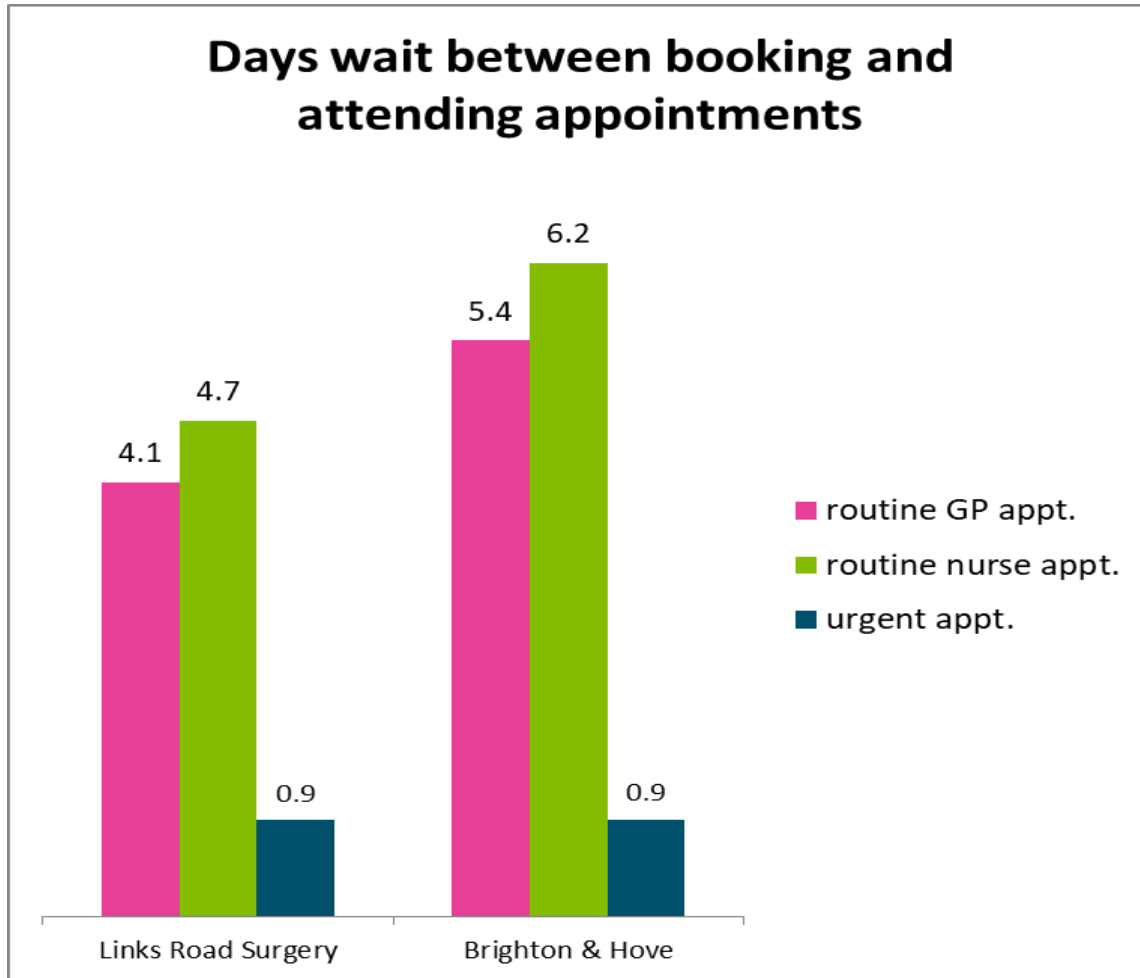
Ordering prescriptions online and getting test results by phone

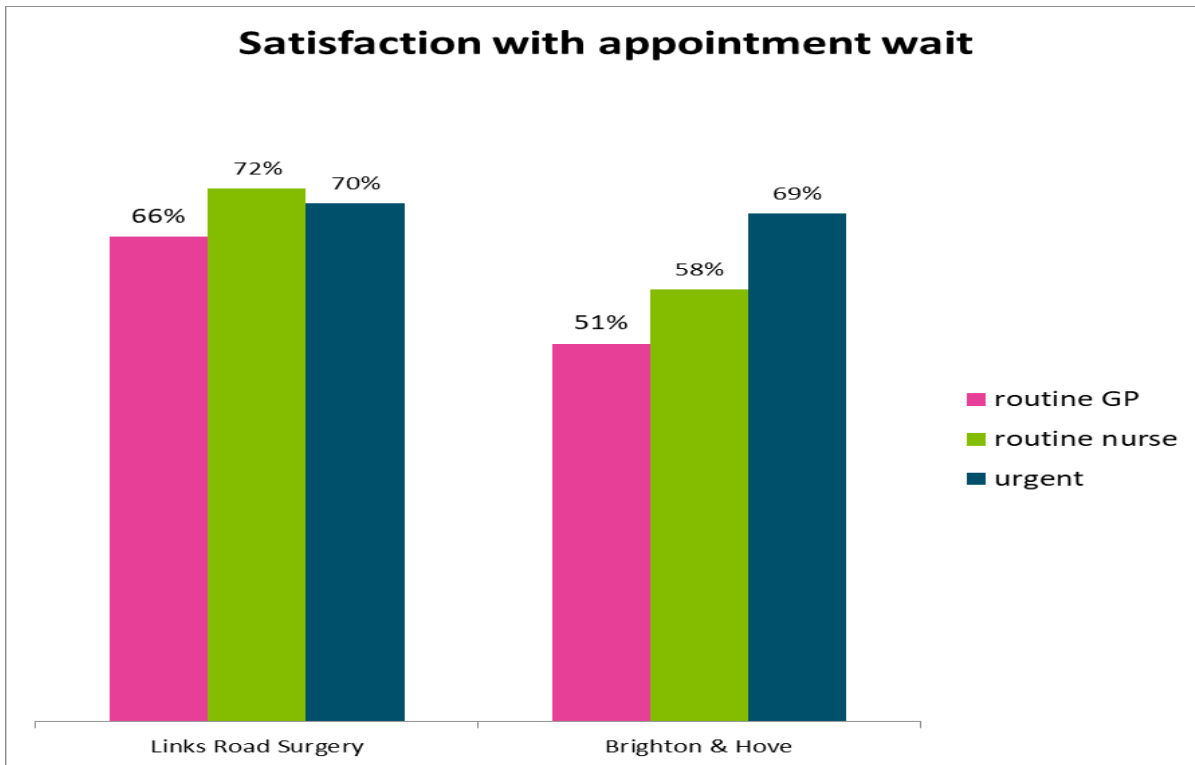
All or most of the patients who had used these services reported the experience had been 'easy'. However, less than 50% had used them. This may suggest that the surgery could better promote these services to its patients.



Wait between booking and attending appointments

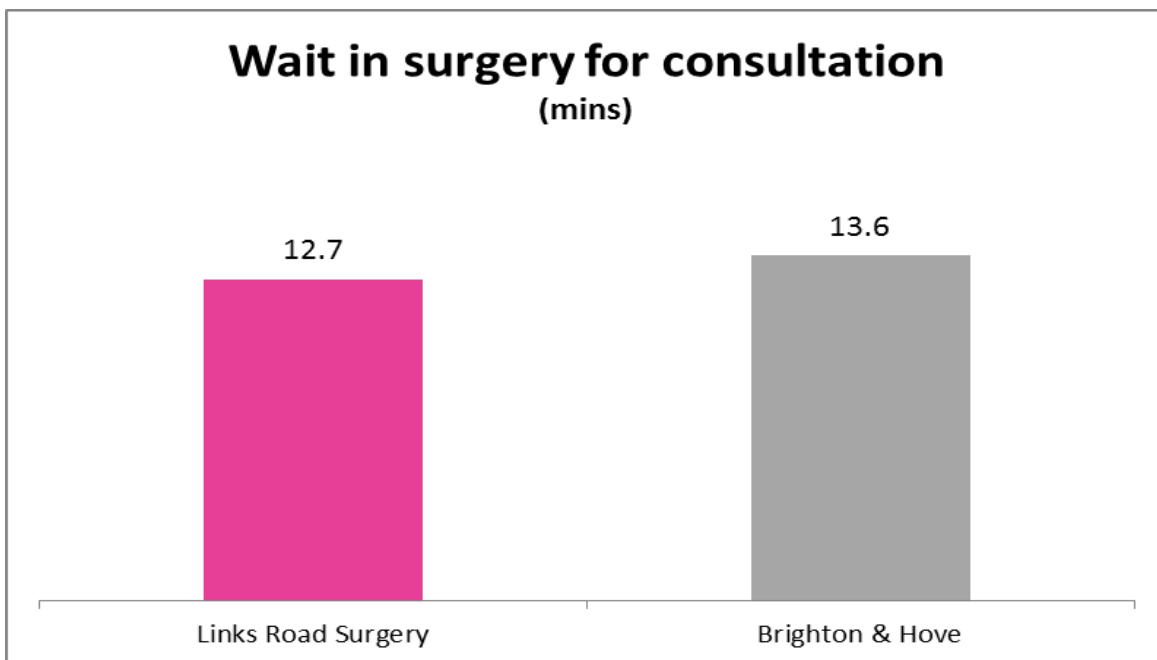
The number of days patients waited between booking and attending appointments was generally less than (or in the case of urgent appointments, the same) as the city average. This strong performance is reflected in satisfaction levels, with higher than average figures for each type of appointment.





Wait at surgery

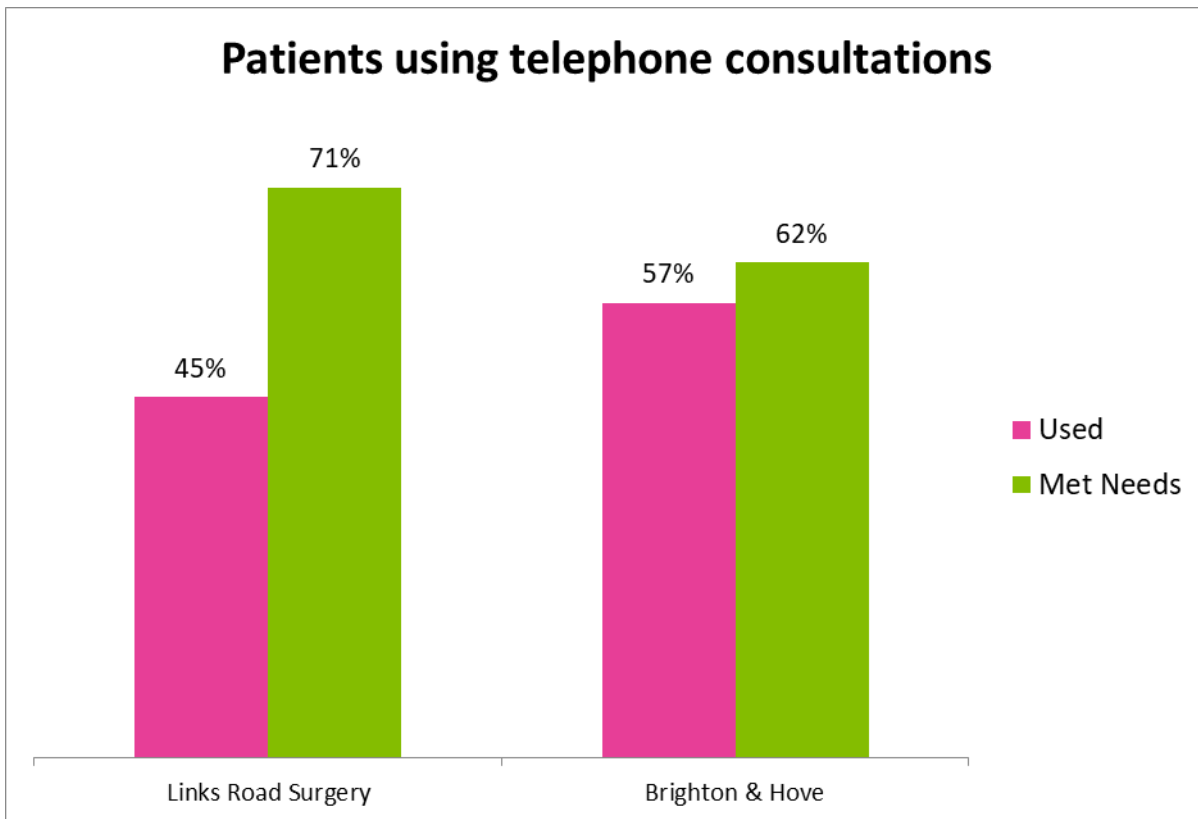
Links Road surgery performed well with the average wait in the surgery for the consultation. Patients reported an average wait of 12.7 minutes compared to the city average of 13.6 minutes.



Quality of care

Telephone consultations

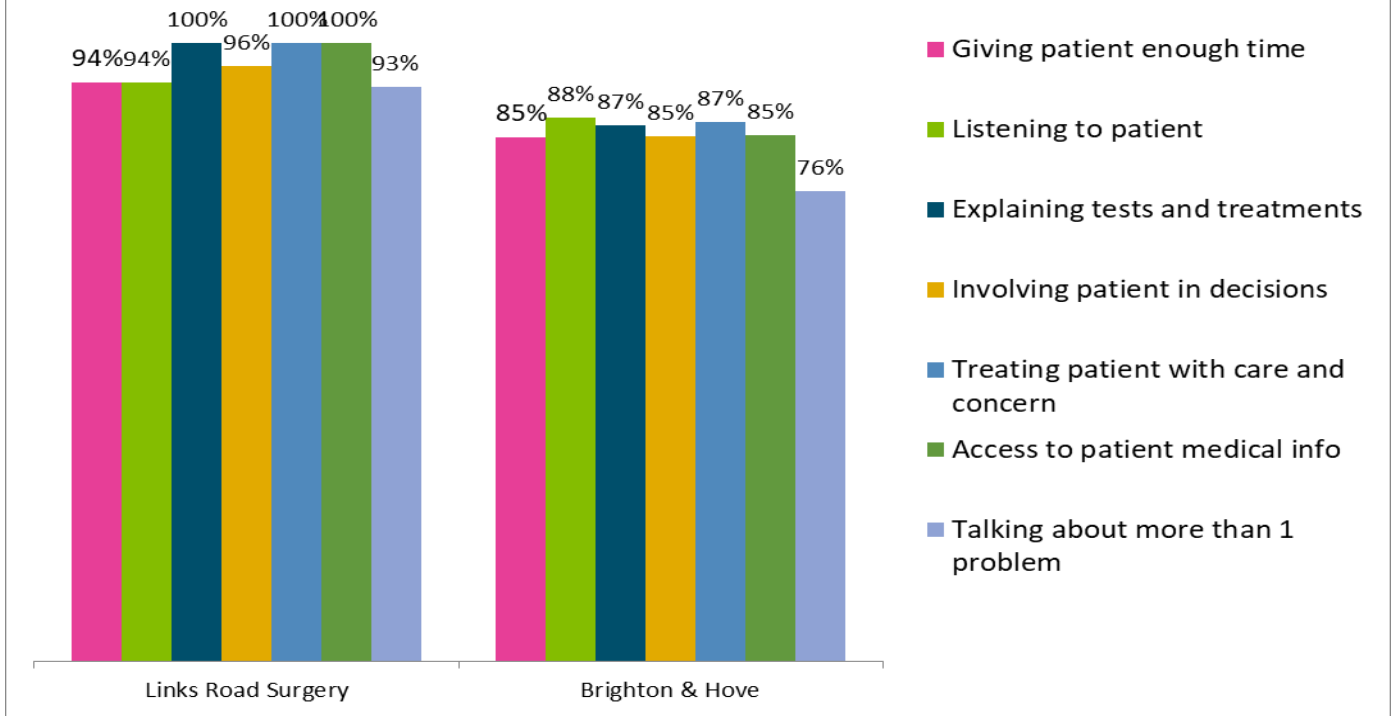
Close to half of patients at the surgery had used telephone consultations in place of face to face consultations. A high proportion of these patients felt that the telephone consultation they had received had been effective in meeting their needs. These figures suggest the surgery is managing this system well and providing effective consultations for patients when these are employed.



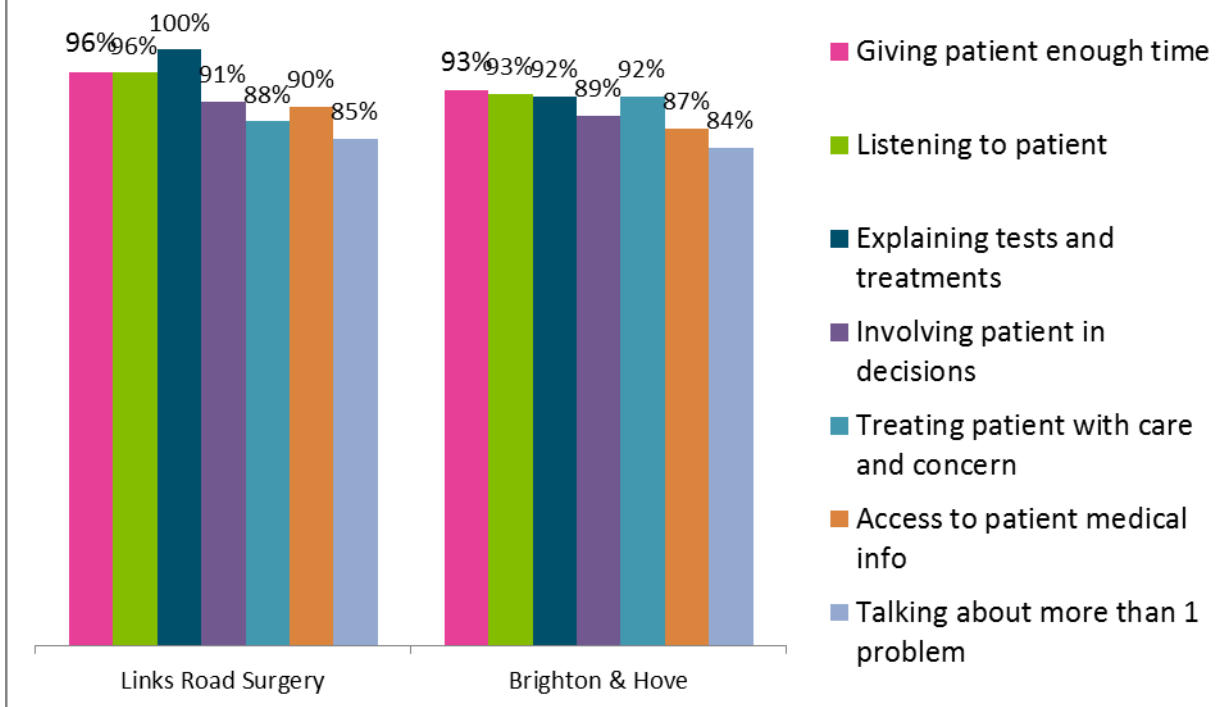
Care provided at consultation

A high proportion of patients reported 'good' quality of care across seven standard criteria. The average quality score for the surgery was 97% for GP consultations and 93% for nurse consultations, both of which were slightly higher than the average for the city.

Quality of care in GP consultation



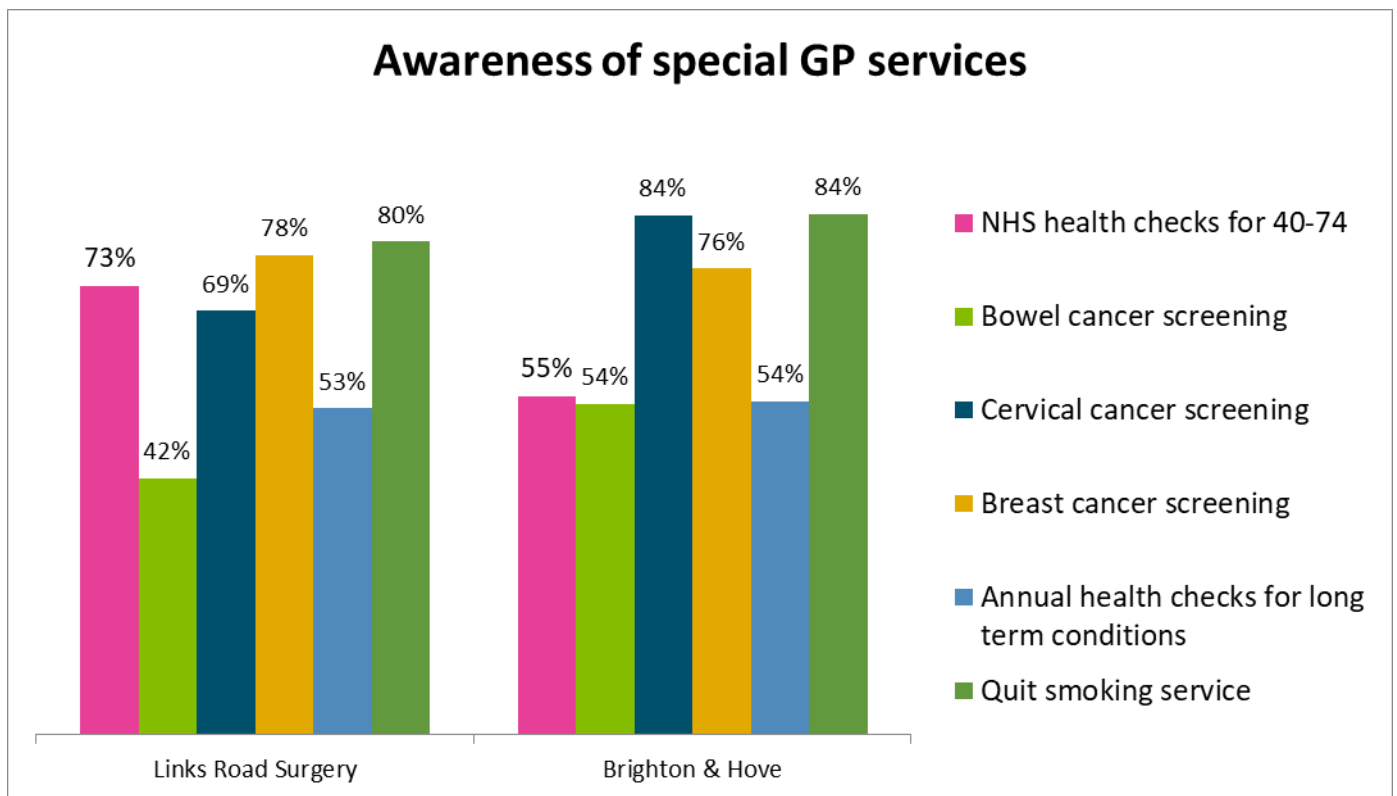
Quality of care in nurse consultation



Special GP services

Awareness of special services

Patient awareness of special services differed when compared to the averages for the city, where Links patients were more aware of NHS health checks for 40-74 year olds, but less aware of bowel cancer screening and cervical cancer screening. Awareness was similar to the city average for breast cancer screening, annual health checks for long term conditions and the quit smoking service.



Environment

Our visit rated the surgery as good in providing an environment for patients with some room for improvement, giving it a score of 7 out of 10.

The information on display was clear and easy to read though not as comprehensive as seen at other surgeries (for example no PPG leaflets or posters). However, the display was up to date and grouped for easy navigation. The facilities were clean and tidy and disabled facilities were available on the ground floor (which due to access was where all disabled patients are seen). However, not all the facilities were signposted and the alarm cord in the disabled toilet needed to be unwrapped from the arm rest to avoid unnecessary triggering.

Staff members were seen to be calm, helpful and welcoming and patients were called in for appointments, in person, by medical staff. Due to the layout of the reception area, patient confidentiality could be compromised when reception staff members were speaking to patients on the phone. However, we were advised that the surgery is looking to re-organise this area. Access into the surgery for disabled patients could be improved as currently the raised wooden strips and metal strip might make it difficult to navigate. However, the PPG had advised the surgery of this prior to our visit and this was being looked into by the Practice manager. While the practice complaint policy was easy and clear to read, there were no family and friends forms available and it was suggested that ensuring easy access to these would be useful.

Overall evaluation of practice

Patients were very positive in their overall evaluation of the surgery, giving it higher ratings to those averages across Brighton and Hove.

Overall rating of surgery	
Rating on 1-10 scale	
Links Road Surgery	8.7
Brighton and Hove	7.9
Satisfaction with GP practice	
Links Road Surgery	93%
Brighton and Hove	79%
Recommend practice to family and friends (FFT)	
Links Road Surgery	96%
Brighton and Hove	86%

“ A patient-oriented practice ”

“ Always helpful and friendly, high standard of staff ”

“ I appreciate the fact that my GP does not restrict consultations to 10 minutes ”

“ I have never had to wait a long time for an appointment ”

“ Some receptionists are helpful - some are not ”

“ Refusal to refer for test recommended for child in consultant letter ”

- Treatment for depression is dealt with by offering repeat prescriptions that do not work

Key Recommendations



1. Improve patient awareness of special GP services.

Response from practice manager:

Our performance is in line with the City average except for NHS Health Checks where we have significantly better awareness/uptake (+18%) and lower for Bowel cancer screening (-12%) and lower for Cervical cancer screening (-15%). We have reviewed our recall process for the screening activities and believe that this has now been improved and is robust.

2. Encourage patients to use online services, such as booking appointments and ordering repeat prescriptions.

Response from practice manager:

We now promote these services with notes attached to prescriptions (for online repeat prescriptions promotion) and have used a texting service to remind patients of our online appointments facility. We hope to see uptake improve.



Suggested facility improvements

3. Improve disabled access into the surgery.

Response from practice manager:

We have waited for some improvements to the front entry door itself so that wheelchair access present less risk (removal of glass). This has been completed and we have instructed our builder to complete alterations to the entry slope to make access easier.

4. Improve patient-personnel confidentiality in the reception area.

Response from practice manager:

We have taken two steps to improve this:

1/ re-instated waiting room music to screen/mask conversations

2/ we have installed additional workspaces at the rear of reception and these are now the primary telephone call answer points.

5. Ensure there is signage to all facilities.

Response from practice manager:

We have purchased new signs for the ground floor and first floor facilities.

6. Ensure the availability of feedback forms such as friends and family.

Response from practice manager:

These are now readily available the Surgery.

