

The Avenue Surgery

Service address: The Avenue Surgery, 1 The Avenue, Brighton BN2 4GF

Date of surgery visit: 24th July 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

	The Avenue Surgery	Brighton & Hove	
Satisfaction			
Overall surgery rating (1-10)	8.8	7.9	
Would recommend surgery to friend/family member	100%	87%	
Quality of care			
No. patients per doctor	2550	2394	
Overall quality of care - GP	95%	85%	
Overall quality of care - nurse	90%	90%	
Booking appointments			
Wait between booking and attending routine GP appointment	2.8 days	5.4 days	
Wait between booking and attending urgent appointment	0.6 days	0.9 days	
Opening hours			
Satisfaction with opening hours	69%	72%	

The Avenue Surgery has 6,717 registered patients and has 2.63 FTE doctors, making a ratio of one doctor per 2,550 patients. This provision of doctors is slightly lower than the city average of one doctor per 2,394 patients.¹

Patients rated the surgery at 8.8 out of 10 which was better than the city average of 7.9.

Specific results from the patient survey indicated that The Avenue Surgery is performing very well compared with other practices in the city. Patients rated the practice highly on ease of booking appointments, making repeat prescription requests and getting test results online, waiting times for routine appointments, time waiting in the surgery for consultations, getting needs met from telephone consultations with the doctors, overall quality of care from the GPs, and awareness of special services.

There were no areas of performance that patients rated badly. The only area patients indicated that they would like to be improved was in providing more opening times weekdays after 18:30 hours and during lunchtimes.

Our visit rated the surgery as very good in providing an environment for patients, giving it a score of 8.2 out of 10.

Healthwatch was impressed with the wide range of topical health information available—particularly on safeguarding, the cleanliness of the toilets, the use of hand gel by the touchscreen, the presence of the Friends and Family Test on the reception counter, and the friendly helpfulness of the receptionists.

We felt there was some room for improvement in the organisation of the health information, a more legible notice about using hand gel, and a more comfortable variety of seating in the waiting area that takes into account the needs of frail and elderly patients and patients with

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

disabilities.

Overall, taking into account the results of the patient survey and our observations, the surgery was found to be performing better than other surgeries in the city.



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 45 submissions from patients using the practice.

- **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

The Avenue had 6,717 registered patients and 2.63 FTE doctors making a ratio of one doctor per 2550 patients.

The surgery was accepting new patients at date of research.

Surgery opening hours were 8:30 -12 noon weekdays, extended hours Monday and Tuesday until 19:30, and alternate Saturdays 8:00 - 11:00.

The Avenue Surgery had wheelchair access.

The practice was a three minute walk from the nearest bus stop.

Free parking was available on side streets adjoining the surgery.

The surgery operated a simple ring and answer telephone system.

The Avenue Surgery worked within a Cluster 2 in Brighton and Hove including the following practices:

- Ship Street Surgery
- St Lukes Surgery
- Saldean & Rottingdean
- School House Surgery
- Regency Surgery
- Woodingdean Surgery

There was no self-monitoring equipment available in the surgery waiting area.

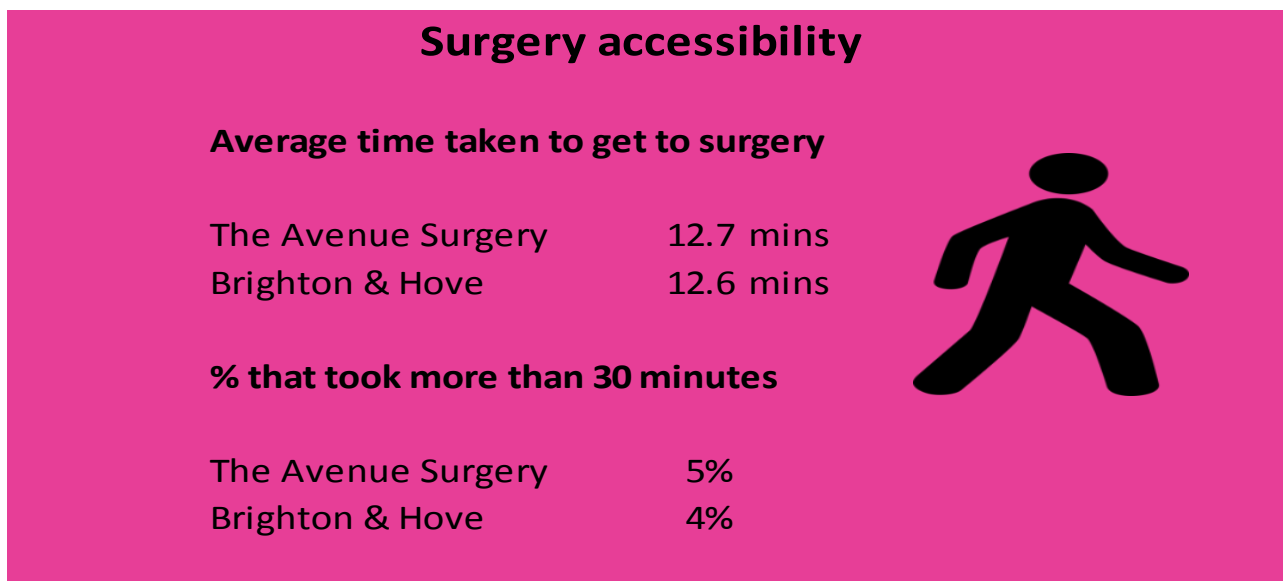
The surgery had a PPG.

Findings



Accessibility

The average time taken to get to the surgery was 12 minutes. Only a small proportion of patients, 5%, had to take more than 30 minutes. Both of these times were in line with the average for Brighton and Hove practices.

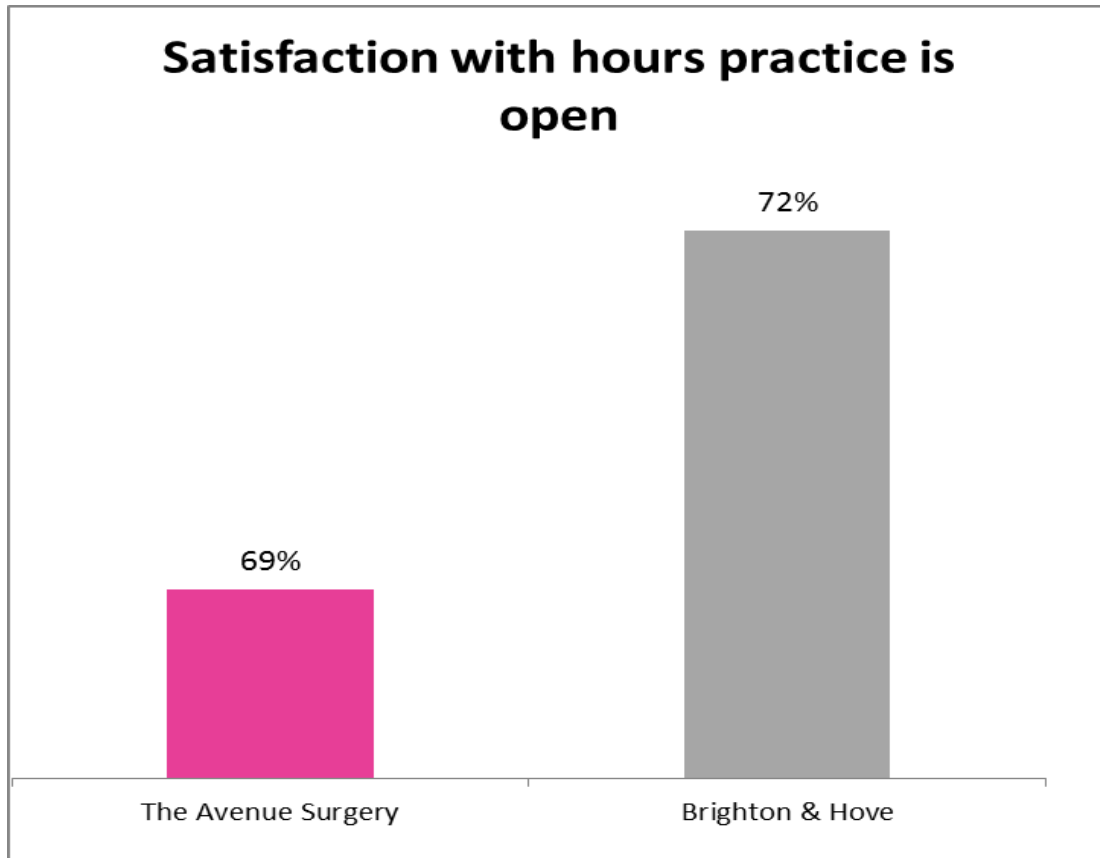


Opening hours

Surgery opening hours were 8:30 -12 noon weekdays, extended hours Monday and Tuesday until 19:30, and alternate Saturdays 8:00 - 11:00.

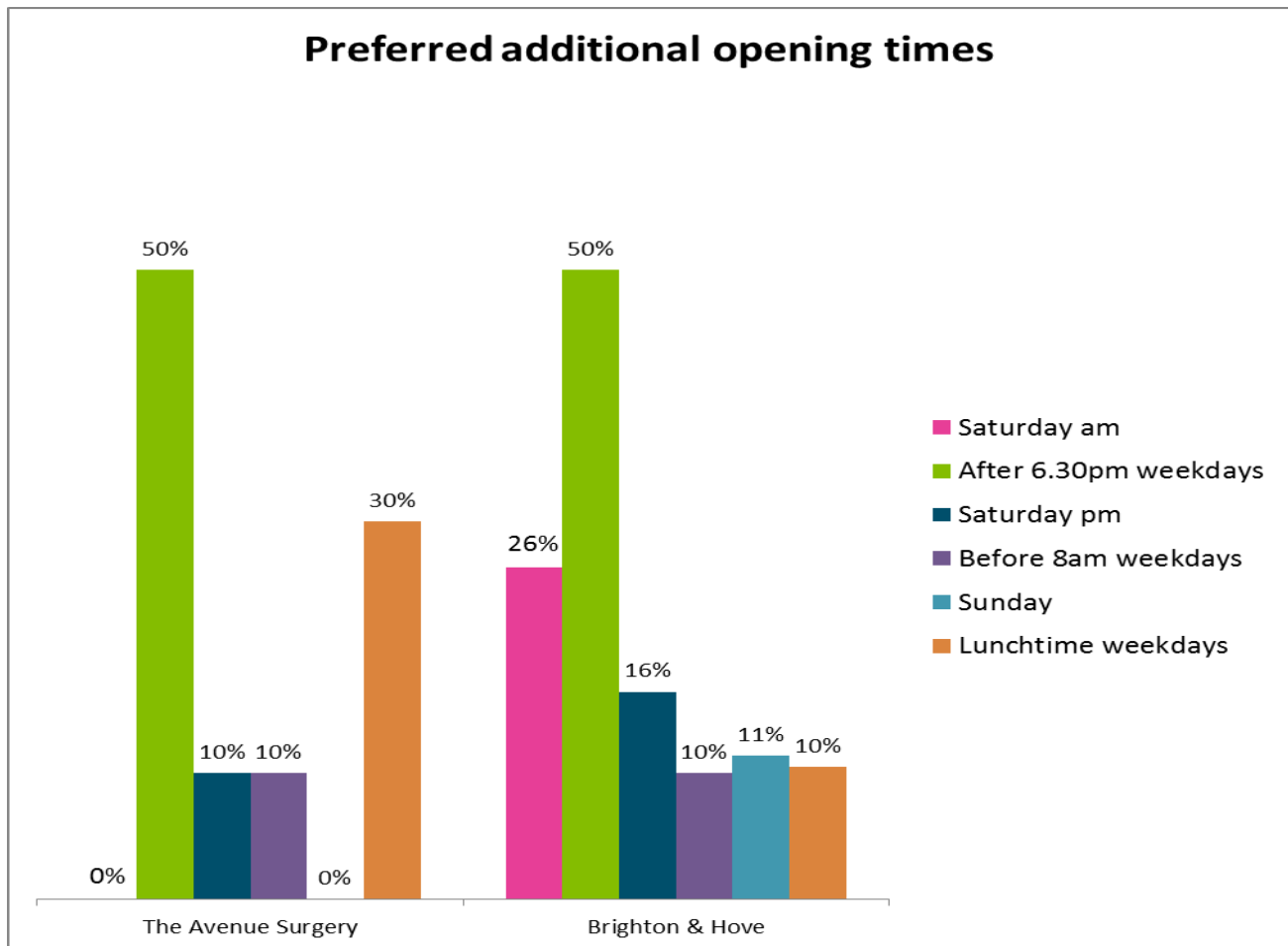
Satisfaction with current opening hours

Sixty-nine percent of patients were satisfied with the opening hours offered by the surgery.



Preferred additional hours if not satisfied

For the 31% of patients who were not satisfied with existing opening hours, 50% wanted extended opening times after 18:30 hours and 30% wanted to be able to book appointments during lunchtime.



Booking appointments

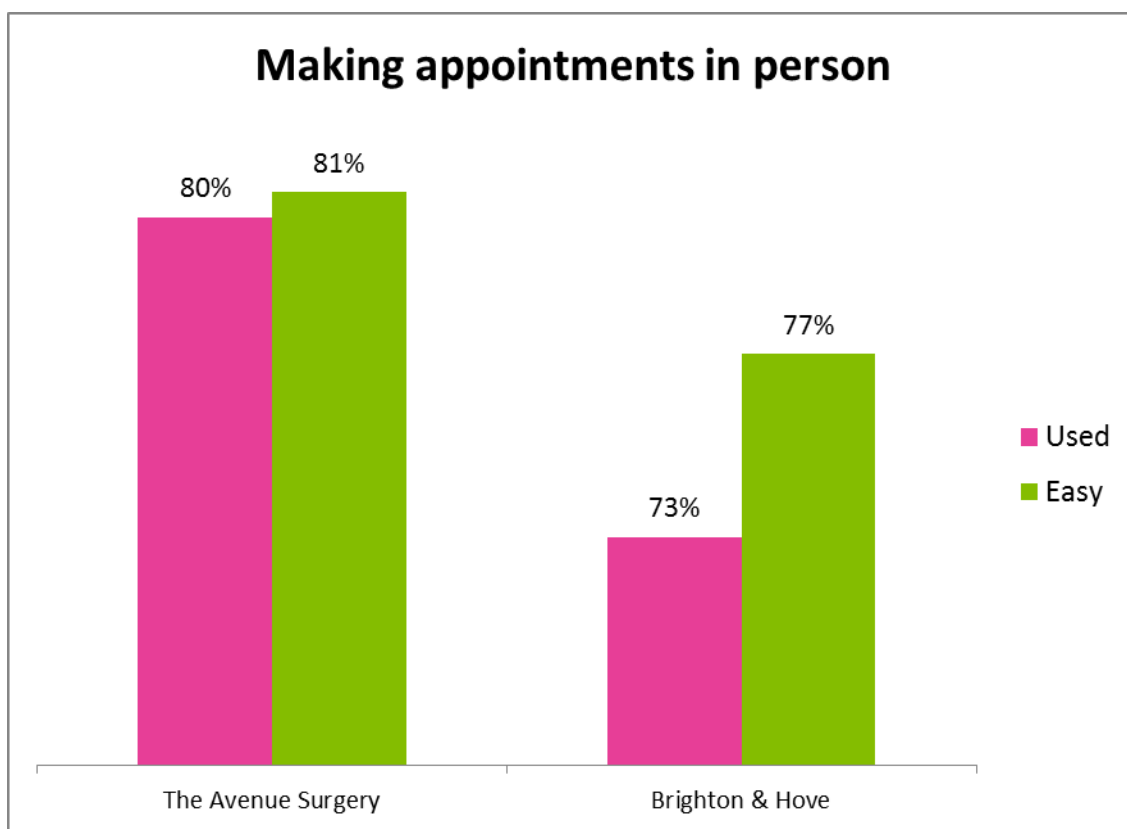
The surgery offered all standard methods of booking an appointment and electronic facilities for making prescriptions.

Online appointment booking	✓
Online repeat prescription	✓
Electronic prescriptions (sent to pharmacy)	✓
Integrated pharmacy	✗

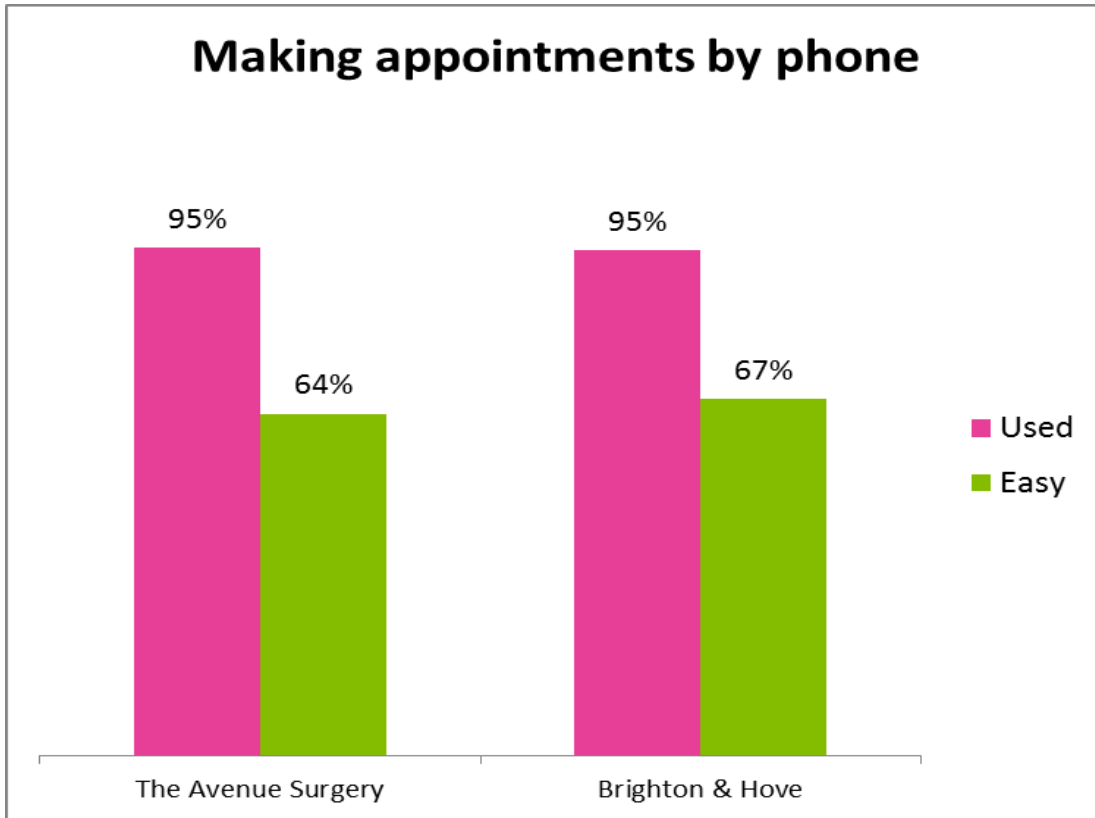
Ease of booking appointments using different methods

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.

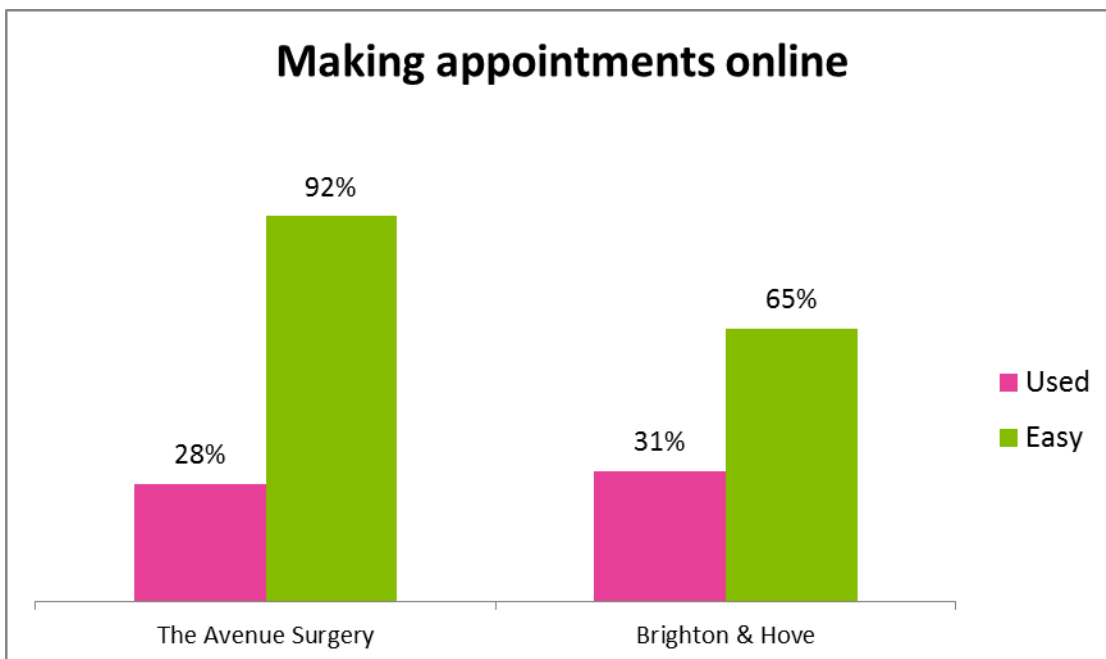
High numbers of patients in The Avenue Surgery made appointments in person or over the telephone. Eighty-one percent reported that making appointments in person was easy, and 64% said it was easy to make appointments by phone. Ninety-two percent felt it was easy to book online. The satisfaction ratings for making appointments in person and online were higher than the satisfaction rates for Brighton and Hove.



Making appointments by phone



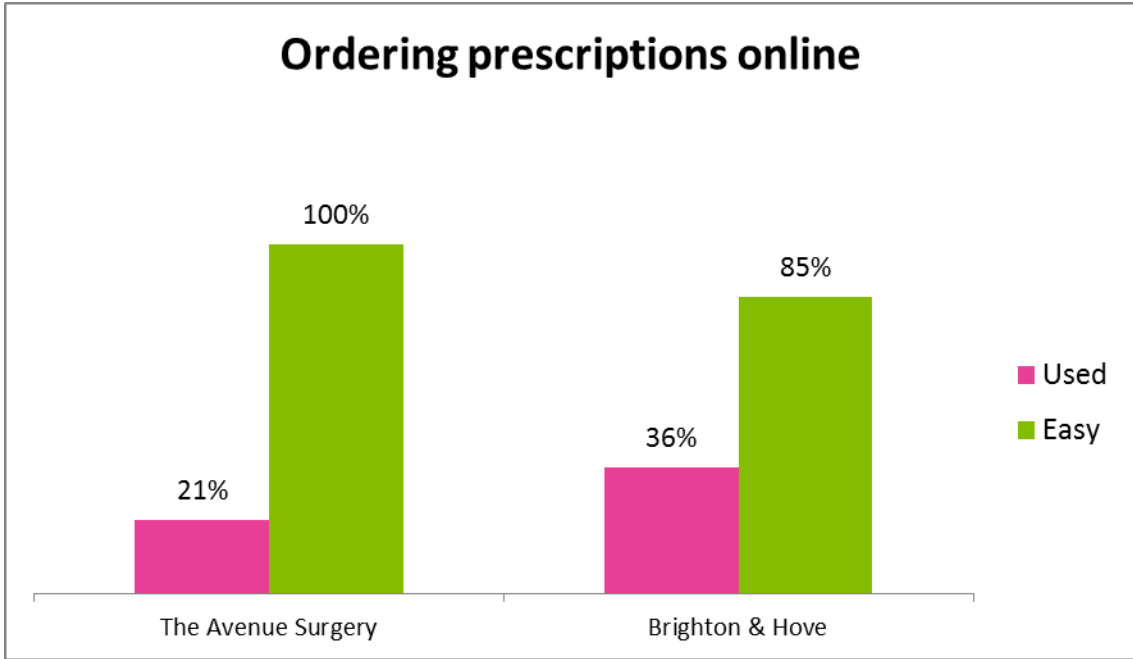
Making appointments online



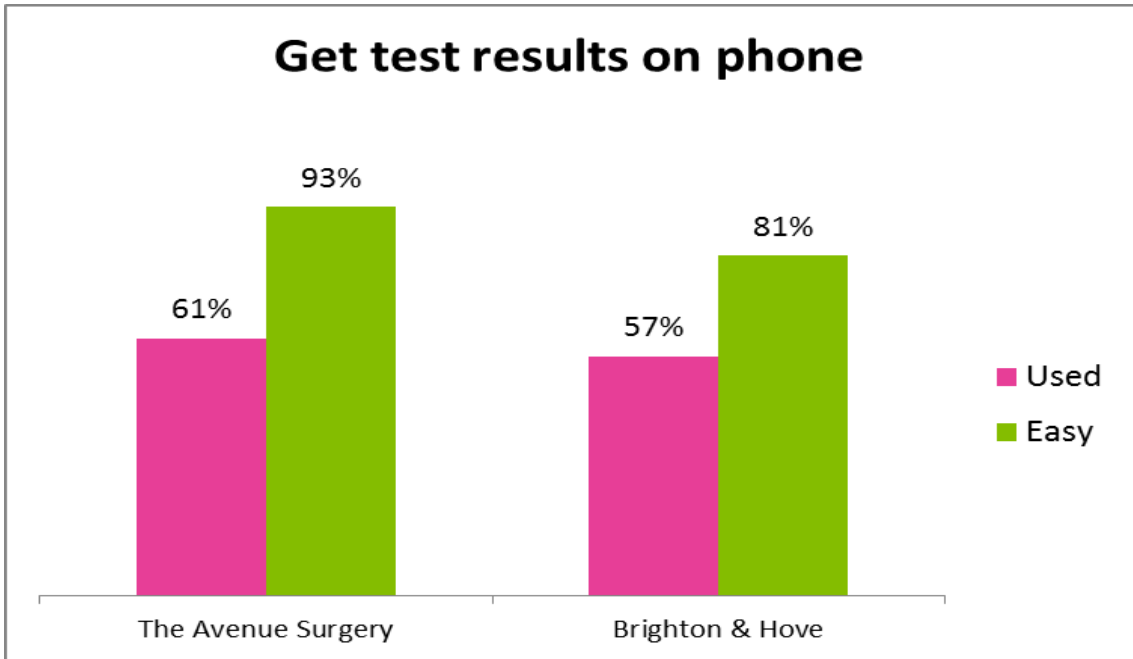
Ordering prescriptions online and getting test results by phone

Patients who had used these services reported the experience had been extremely 'easy'—100% for prescriptions and 93% for test results.

Ordering prescriptions online



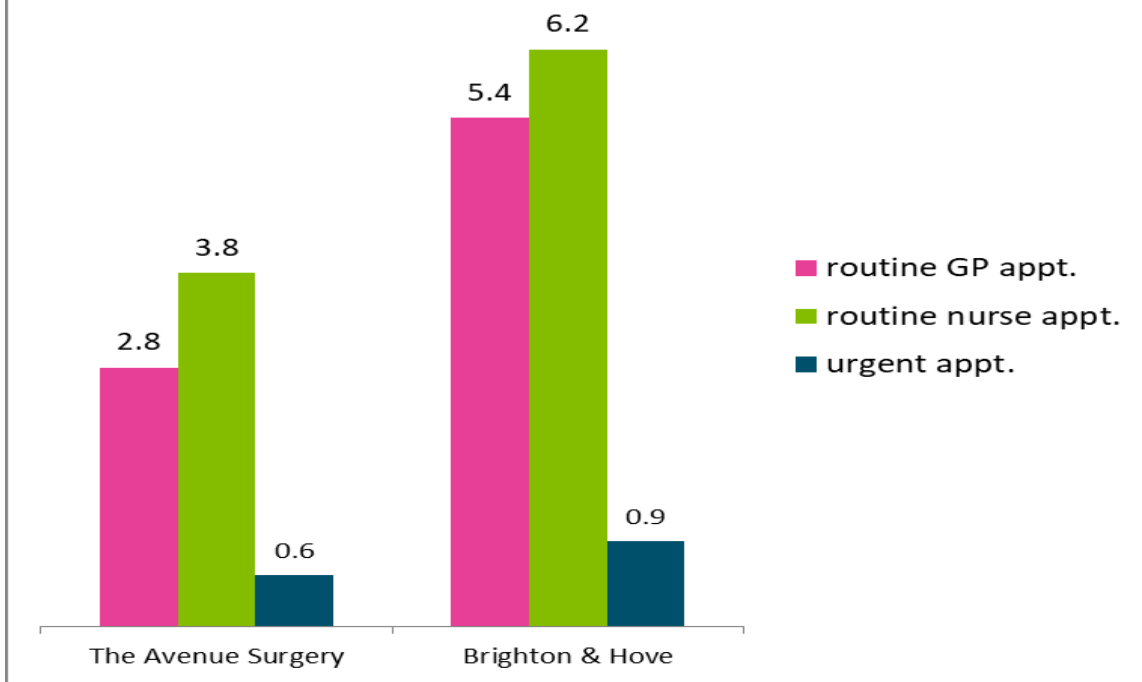
Get test results on phone



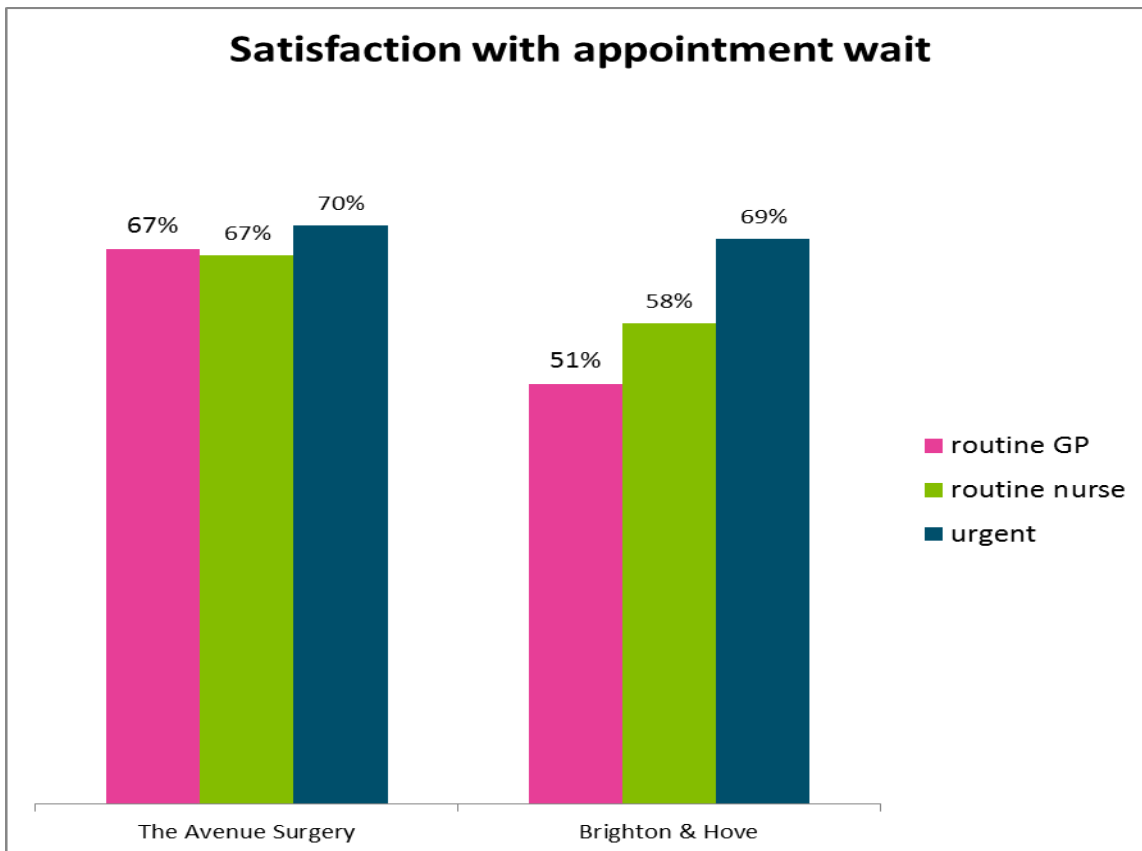
Wait between booking and attending appointments

The days wait between booking and attending routine appointments for GPs and nurses were significantly better than the city average –2.8 and 3.8 days respectively as opposed to the city-wide averages of 5.4 and 6.2 days. The average wait for urgent appointments was also shorter than the city average. This strong performance was reflected in high satisfaction levels for each type of appointment (67%) compared with City averages of 51% for GP appointments and 58% for nurse appointments.

Days wait between booking and attending appointments

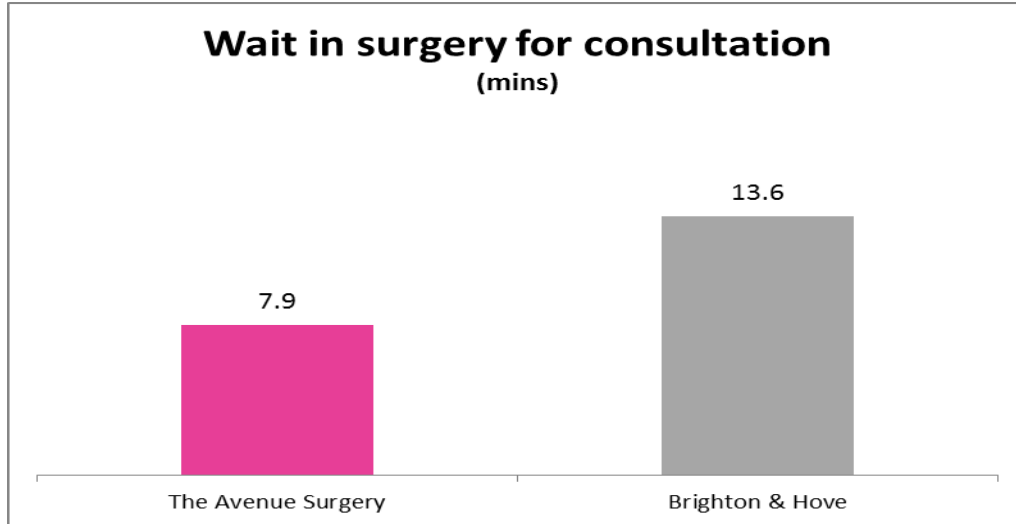


Satisfaction with appointment wait



Wait at surgery

The Avenue Surgery performed very well in the average waiting time in the surgery for a consultation. Patients reported an average wait of 7.9 minutes compared to the city average of 13.6 minutes.

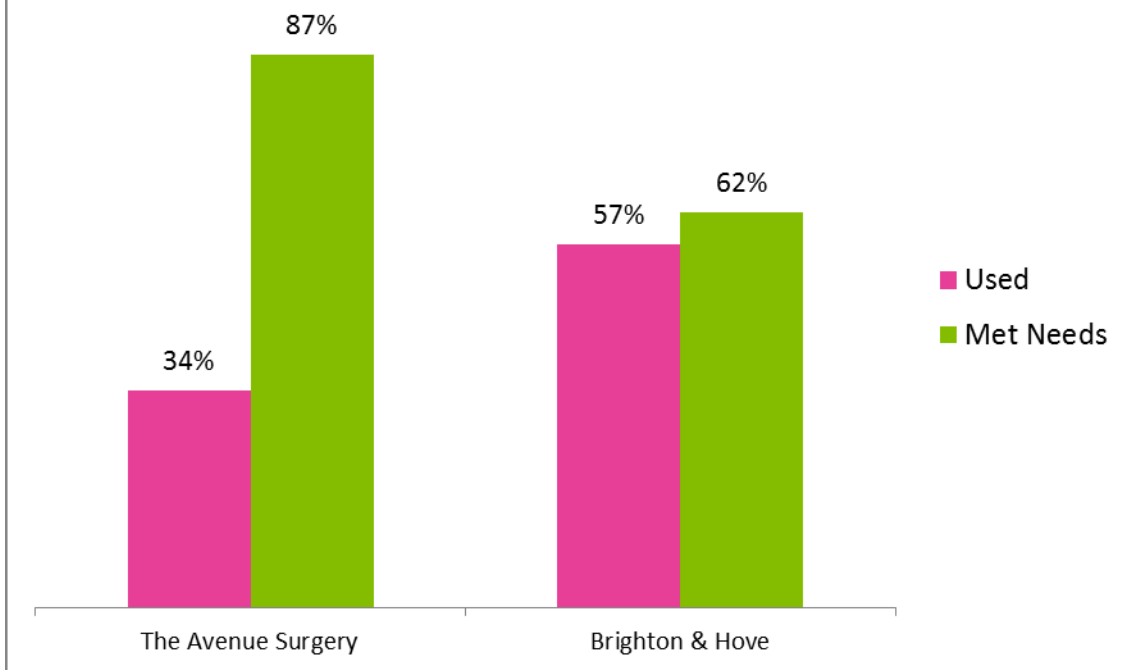


Quality of care

Telephone consultations

Although only 34% of patients at the surgery had used telephone consultations in place of face to face consultations, 87% of these patients felt that the telephone consultation they 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.

Patients using telephone consultations

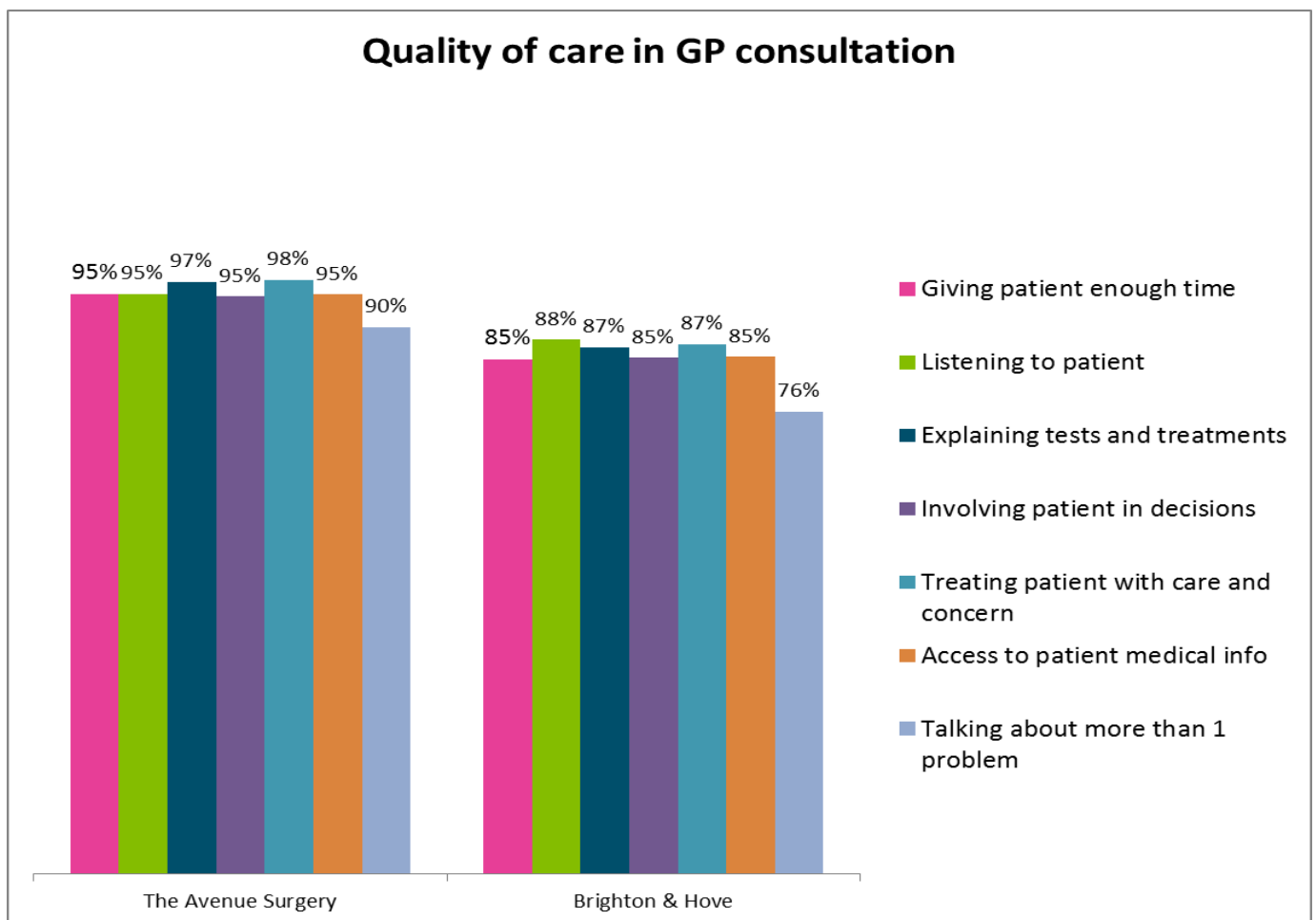


Care provided at consultation

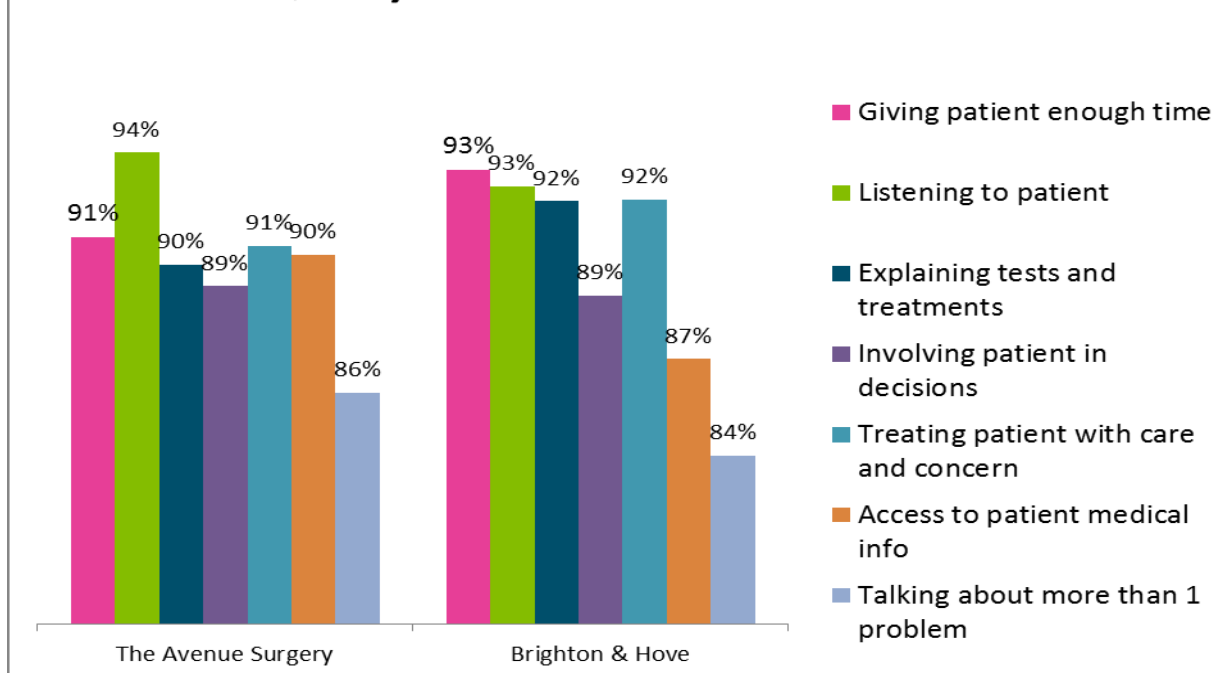
The average quality of care scores for GPs at The Avenue Surgery was 95% which was higher than the city average of 85%.

Moreover, the quality of care provided by GPs at The Avenue Surgery was better than the city average in all seven categories of care—especially in the categories of treating the patient with care and concern and allowing the patient to talk about more than one problem during a consultation.

Conversely, the average quality of care scores for nurses in the practice was 90% which is identical to the city average. There were no significant differences between nurses in The Avenue Surgery and nurses in city in any of the seven categories of care.



Quality of care in nurse consultation

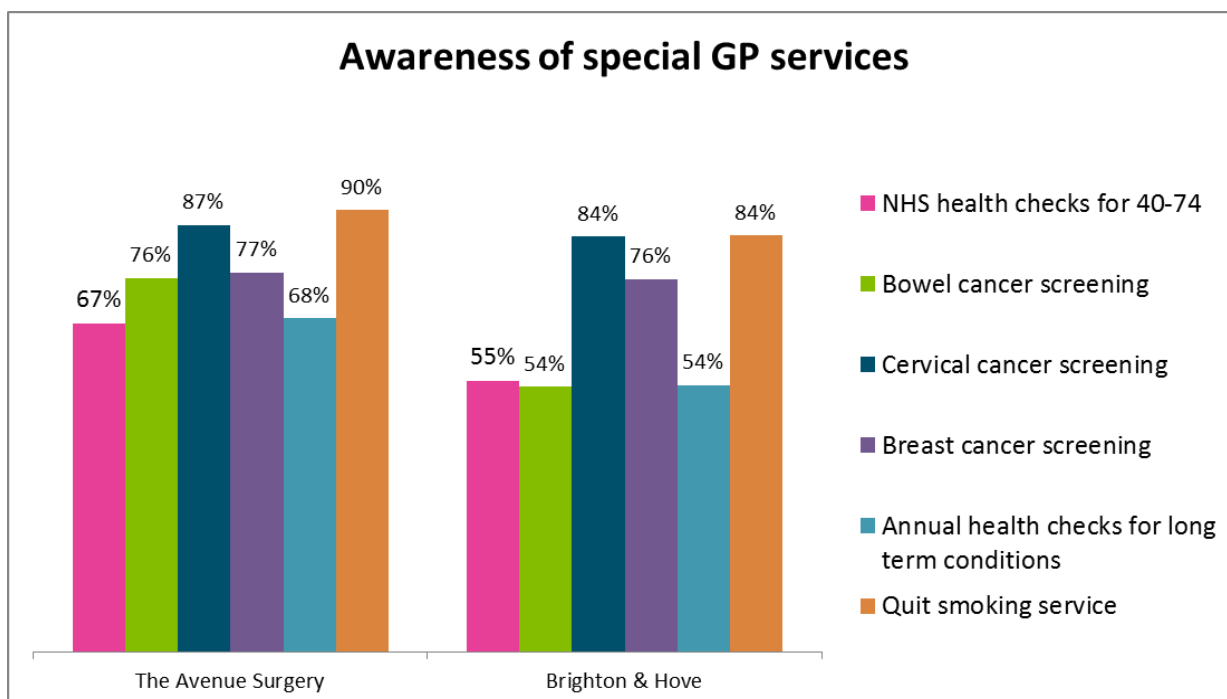


Special GP services

Awareness of special services

The average patient awareness of special services (76%) was higher than the average for the city (67%) with particularly high awareness of health checks for the 40-74 age group, bowel cancer screening, and annual health checks for long-term conditions.

Awareness of special GP services



Environment

Healthwatch visitors gave the surgery environment a rating of 8.2 out of 10 which reflects a very welcoming and user friendly climate.

There was a wide range of topical information in the form of posters and leaflets in the waiting area. We were pleased to see information about safeguarding and abuse prominently displayed. There was a Friends and Family Test box placed on the reception counter with appropriate forms to complete. Hand gel was available beside the touchscreen for checking in. The toilets offered facilities for all patients visiting the surgery and were immaculate. The receptionists were busy, friendly, and helpful to patients throughout our visit.

There is room for improving the organisation of the information available. It tended to be cluttered and lacked headings. The notice about using the hand get was partly hidden behind the touchscreen and the print was too small to be read easily. Seating consists of rows of wooden benches which were clean and tidy, but very uncomfortable. There were no arm rests to offer support for patients with disabilities. Several elderly patients complained to us about the benches during our visit.

Overall evaluation of practice

Patients in The Avenue Surgery were very positive in their overall evaluation of the surgery, giving it significantly higher ratings than other surgeries in Brighton and Hove. The practice was rated as 8.8 on a scale of 10. Ninety-three percent of the patients participating in the survey rated the surgery as satisfactory and 100% said they would recommend the practice to their family and friends.

Overall rating of surgery

Rating on 1-10 scale

The Avenue Surgery	8.8
Brighton and Hove	7.9

Satisfaction with GP practice

The Avenue Surgery	93%
Brighton and Hove	79%

Recommend practice to family and friends (FFT)

The Avenue Surgery	100%
Brighton and Hove	86%

“ The whole staff from reception/through practice Manager to Doctor all up to date and welcoming. The Avenue Surgery copes superbly with the amalgamation of extra areas taken on and normal appointments. ”

“ Can always get a same-day appointment if I need one. Caring efficient service. Offers a wide range of services on-site. ”

“ My GP always listens to me and takes the time to ask how I feel about treatments/referrals etc. ”

“ The surgery only offers limited apps on a Saturday. A full service would be preferred. ”



Key Recommendations

1. Consideration might be given to providing some opening hours for consultations during lunchtime on weekdays.

Response from practice manager:

The problem we face as a small practice with limited space and consulting rooms is that we use the lunchtime period to visit patients, catch up with paperwork, hold training sessions for our staff and run specialist clinics, for example diabetic and nursing clinics. We do not have the clinical or administrative capacity to open for general appointments over the lunch time period. However, should circumstances change and we have more clinical/administrative capacity as well as consulting rooms we would certainly prioritise an earlier start to the afternoon for general appointments.



Suggested facility improvements

1. The organisation and labelling of information on topical health issues should be improved.

Response from practice manager:

We have taken note of the comment that our wide range of posters on the notice board needs some organisation under headings. We are pleased to advise that this work has now been completed and we hope that the notice board is a little clearer for our patients.

2. More comfortable seating for patients with special needs should be provided.

Response from practice manager:

We have over the years explored various options but the current configurations gives us the maximum seating capacity and offers a surface that is easy to keep clean. If we see that patients are struggling to get in or out of a chair we would always offer them a

free standing chair from one of the consulting/treatment rooms and often do. We are aware that some patients find the seating uncomfortable and would prioritise this in any future building development.

3. The notice about using hand gel by the touchscreen ought to be simplified and made more legible.

Response from practice manager:

We have moved the hand gel notice by the touch screen so that it is easier to see.

