



Patients' views about Woodingdean Medical Centre Part 2: Summary July 2025



healthwatch
Brighton and Hove

Patients' views about Woodingdean Medical Centre (WMC) – Summary

As a result of patients raising concerns over making GP appointments at Woodingdean Medical Centre (WMC), Healthwatch Brighton and Hove first undertook a survey of patient's experiences in [April-July 2024](#). This highlighted:

- The practice had recently made some changes, such as adding content to their website informing people of the services available. However, less than one half of patients were aware of the majority of changes.
- There was high knowledge for how to use the NHS App.
- People showed preference for phone appointments and to extend the period of appointments bookable in advance from 2 to 4 weeks.
- E-Consult (online booking system) is rarely used. People with disabilities found e-Consult more difficult to use.
- However, of those who have used e-Consult, a greater proportion found it easy to use compared to those reporting difficulties.
- Once people are able to make an appointment at WMC, people showed that the quality of care is generally excellent.

As a result, the practice told us that they will be implementing changes based on our research, including offering patients the choice of having a telephone appointment and requesting pre-bookable appointments up to two weeks ahead.

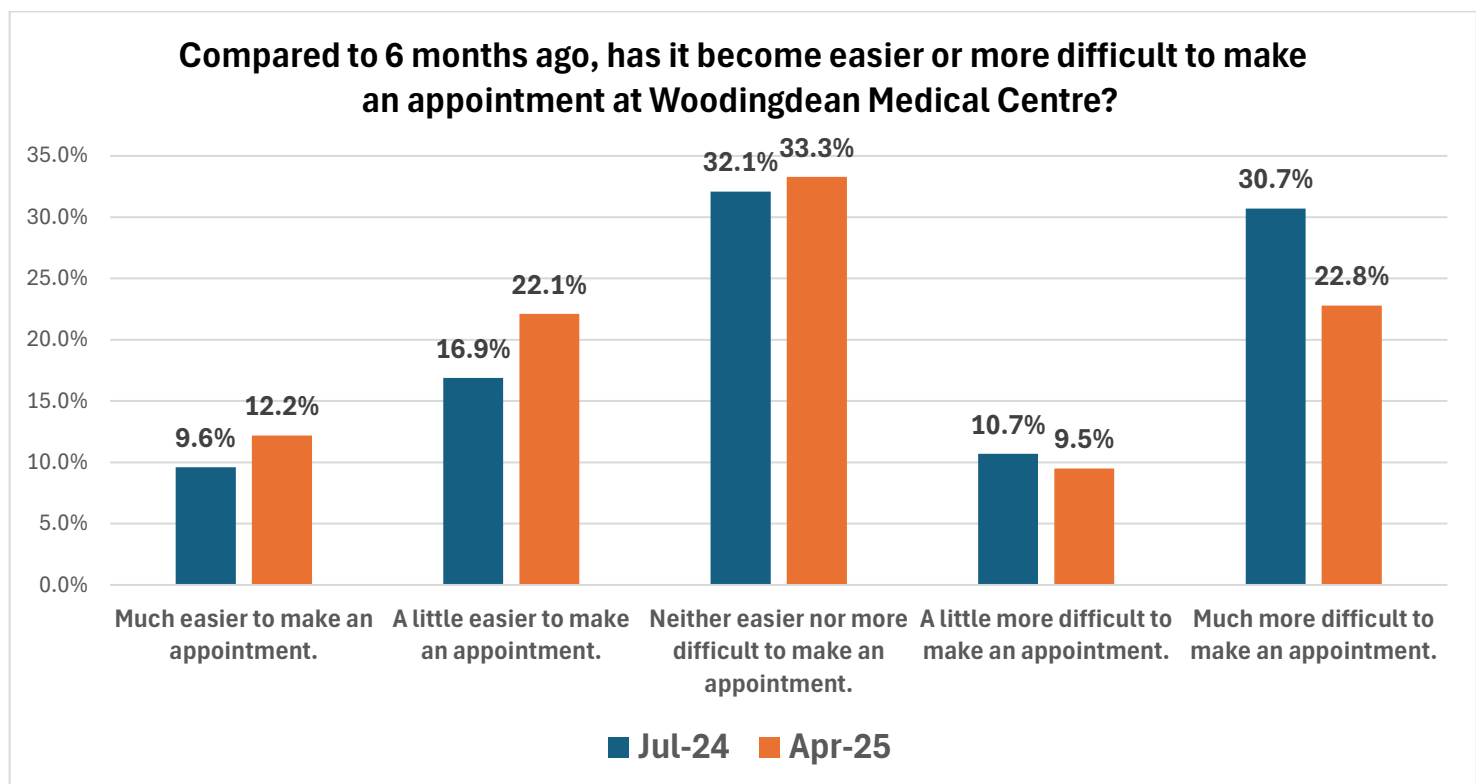
The main purpose of the 2025 survey was to repeat a question asked in 2024, namely: **'Compared to 6 months ago, has it become easier or more difficult to make an appointment at Woodingdean Medical Centre?'** These results can help to show the effectiveness of changes put in place by the practice after the 2024 survey. Several supplementary questions and comment boxes were added.

The survey was launched in April 2025 and a total of 1,612 people responded to the 2025 online survey sent by text from the practice. In terms of those

responding, 60.3% were female and 38.7% were male. Age ranged from 16 to 97 years with an average of 59.8 years. 84.8% were White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British. 78.0% said that they had a long-term health condition and 27.8% said they had a disability.

Overall, our 2025 survey showed that people now found it slightly easier to book an appointment at WMC compared to 6 months ago.

The 2024 survey showed that 26.5% of patients had found it either 'much easier' (9.6%) or a 'little easier' (16.9%) to make an appointment (among those who had made an appointment at WMC within the last 6 months). In comparison, the 2025 survey shows a slight improvement as 34.3% who found it 'much easier' (12.2%) or a 'little easier' (22.1%) to make an appointment. Nonetheless, 33.3% found this a 'little more difficult' or 'much more difficult' to make an appointment compared to 32.1% 6 months ago.



The results show that people from Black and Racially Minoritised (BRM) backgrounds and men found it 'much easier' or a 'little easier' to make an appointment compared to 6 months ago. This is the same pattern for the 2024 survey, although the percentages are higher reflecting the slight improvement in overall ease of getting an appointment. People with disabilities continued to find it a 'little' or 'much more difficult' to make an appointment compared to 6 months ago.

Older people also found it 'much easier' or a 'little easier'¹ which is a different trend from last year. This is encouraging since the 2024 survey suggested older people were more likely to report difficulties in getting appointments.

Further analysis revealed that people with disabilities found it more difficult (almost twice as much) to make an appointment compared to people without disabilities – 59.7% of people with disabilities found it 'difficult' or 'more difficult' to make appointments compared to 6 months ago.

Around one-half of free-text comments expressed challenges in getting appointments. Indeed, some of the free-text comments had shown a preference for an online booking system although some had tried and not managed to complete the process.

Interestingly, the majority of respondents were familiar with the NHS app. 74% of respondents told us that they had used the NHS app, and only 26% had not. Reflecting the digital capability of some individuals, those who had used the NHS App were also more likely to find the website easy to use. For those having used the NHS App, 87.7% who found the website easy to use compared to 74.5% of those not using the NHS App.

However, a sizeable proportion of people (52.2%) had not used the Woodingdean Medical Centre website in the last 12 months. People with disabilities were significantly less likely (approximately 50% less likely) to use the WMC website. These figures may be underestimates considering this was an online survey and naturally excludes people who may not have access or the ability to respond online and least likely to use the WMC website.

Increasing people's access to appointments is still a concern at WMC. The trend is moving in the right direction. Also, among those in receipt of care, a similar number of people who raised concerns about getting an appointment also shared positive comments in relation to the practice, many in relation to the professionalism of the staff.

In conclusion, the recommendations are:

¹ Findings for easier ('much' or a 'little') combined for this part of the analysis.

- **Offer more frequent online booking systems** as some people expressed positive opinions about this. Only 16% had used the website to book an online consultation and it is uncertain whether this reflects digital ability, how often this option is available, or a general preference to make appointments through another means such as phoning reception staff.
- **Support people with disabilities** as they are the least likely to use the website, find it more difficult to use, and disability status showed greatest difference in difficulties in making appointments compared to 6 months ago.
- It appears that **digital capability and familiarity of the WMC website** may be key in improving access to appointments. Those who found it easier to book an appointment relative to 6 months ago were 17 times more likely to find the website easy to use. Of the near one-half of respondents who preferred to telephone the practice to make an appointment, being able to book online may stop the frustration of bookable appointments not always being unavailable, at 8.30am.
- **Help people to use the WMC website** and demonstrate what information could be sourced, including an online booking system. There is a significant proportion of respondents who do not use the website but, among those who do, they find it easy to use.

The planned increase in capacity of GP hours and the ongoing improvements to the WMC website will support these learning points above. The challenge is to reduce the 32.3% of the sample who found making appointments a 'little more difficult' or 'much more difficult' compared to 6 months ago.

Response from Woodingdean Medical Centre

WMC Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Survey response June 2025

We would like to thank Healthwatch for organising the follow up survey on behalf of our patients and the Practice. Thank you to those patients who completed the survey.

We know the challenges that face patients nationally in obtaining GP appointments and we will continue to strive to offer our patients the best care we can within the capacity we work to.

We are pleased there has been positive impact in on our patients experience in making an appointment (see bar chart 'Results compared to 2024 Survey'). From August we will have increased our GP capacity with plans to improve continuity of care for those patients with the greatest need. Once this is embedded, we are hopeful this will go some way to address the concerns regarding GP continuity and repeat prescriptions.

It was useful to understand our patient population use of the NHS App and the Practice Website. We will continue to work on the improvement of both of these.

Thank you again for the feedback.

Woodingdean Medical Centre

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