



Digital Access to GP Appointments

What you told us about your experiences of online GP booking systems and where improvements can be made

February 2026




Summary

Many patients in Birmingham and Solihull are struggling to book GP appointments because some practices are only offering online booking. We are working to change that.

Healthwatch Birmingham & Solihull heard from 73 patients who could only book appointments online at their practice. They reported that at least 50 GP practices in Birmingham and Solihull do not offer any alternative to online booking. This made it much harder for people without internet access to get care from their GP. The GP Provider Support Unit (GPPSU), a team set up to support practices in Birmingham & Solihull, have worked with Healthwatch to address this issue; their response is below.

We will continue to share what we learn with the GPPSU, so real improvements can happen. [Leave Feedback Here](#).

GP Provider Support Unit Response




This year Birmingham & Solihull practices have carried out 276,648 appointments, resulting in 127,865 more appointments in 2025 than 2024, achieving Government targets. Your feedback is helping us to ensure patients are able to access their GP practice via telephone, online and in-person as per the Government requirements.

The GPPSU now plans to:

- Make sure patients know their rights so they can get the care they're entitled to, through raising awareness of "You and Your General Practice" – [NHS England » You and your general practice](#).
- Work in collaboration with GP practices in Birmingham & Solihull to see which ones aren't currently meeting requirements and provide support and guidance.

In addition, the GP Provider Support Unit are developing a patient leaflet, a patient experience survey, and are supporting practices to improve their Patient Participation Groups. This approach aims to improve patient understanding of the changes to their practice and strengthen the voice of patients. Allowing patients and practices to understand each other better to improve patient access and experience.



Your Feedback Is Driving Change in GP Services

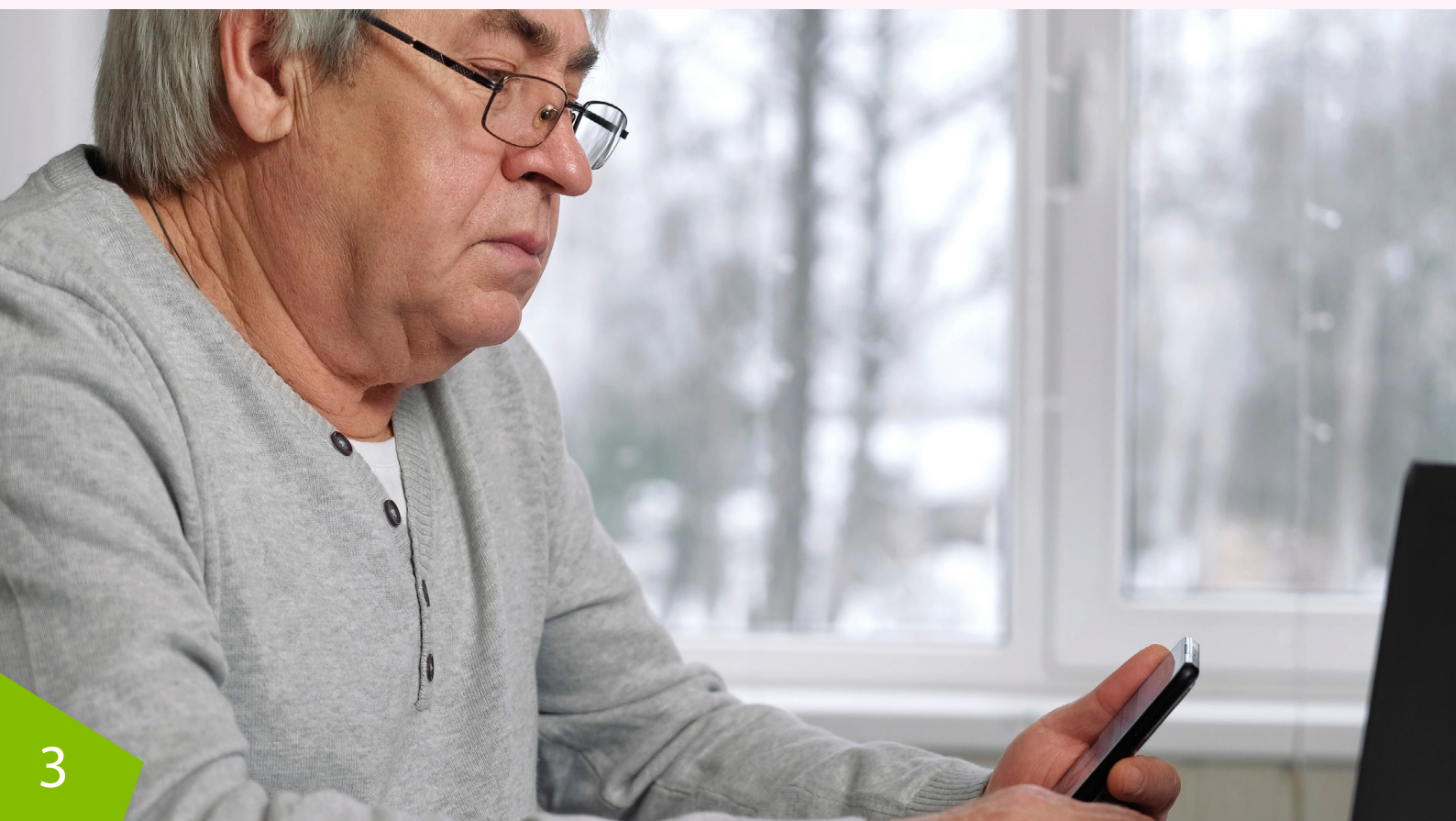
Background: A Growing Digital Barrier to Care

Recently, the NHS has moved towards using online systems as one of the ways to access care. Online booking is easier for some people, but it doesn't work for everyone and can stop others from getting care.

In the past year, 73 patients told us they couldn't book a GP appointment because of online-only booking. Some people also said staff were unhelpful and made them feel ignored when they asked for help. This suggests that patients feel they are being limited to accessing GP appointments only through online booking, with at least 50 practices not making it clear patients can still access their GP practice through more traditional methods such as walk-ins and telephone.

This particularly affects older people, those with learning disabilities, and anyone without internet or tech skills. Instead of making it easier to get appointments, this could make health inequalities worse for people who can't use digital systems. The NHS plans to keep moving towards online systems. These problems need to be fixed to make sure everyone can get the care they need.

We told the GPPSU Unit about these issues, and they're using this feedback to make improvements.



Changes Being Made for Patients

Helping patients understand their rights

The GPPSU will share short videos as part of the “You and Your General Practice” campaign to explain what patients should expect from their GP. The videos will help patients understand their rights and what good GP care looks like. Your feedback helped make sure the videos are clear and easy to understand. This will make it easier for patients to know their rights and use them when getting care.

Making sure GP services match what patients are told to expect

Your feedback showed that GP services need to match what patients are told about their rights. In the next few months, the GPPSU will check GP practices in Birmingham and Solihull to see which ones aren't doing things correctly. They'll focus on practices which don't offer other ways to book appointments, or don't tell patients about them. They'll also visit practices to see how things work and give them help which fits their needs. This will include helping to organise booking systems so everyone can access appointments.

Hearing from patients

Patients' views will help guide this work through the GPPSU's partnership with Community Connexions. They'll keep talking to you to learn about your experiences and any new problems. This feedback will help make GP services better for people in Birmingham and Solihull.

What We're Doing Next

We'd like you to keep telling us about any problems you face when trying to book appointments. This helps us keep working for fair booking systems and equal access to care. We'll also share the videos to help people understand their rights. Any new information from the GPPSU will be used to guide our work with GP practices and other partners. We'll continue to share updates on our website and in newsletters, so you can see change as it happens.

Tell us about your experience.

Your feedback helps us make GP services fair for everyone.

[Leave your feedback here.](#)



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