

Improving Accessibility of GP Websites Quality Improvement Guide for General Practice – Croydon

This guide suggests approaches to optimising GP practice websites to enhance accessibility for patients. It reflects recommendations from Primary Care Contract, London General Practice Access Guide, NHS England and Healthwatch Croydon.

“**Good access** is not just about getting an appointment when patients need it. It is also about **access to the right person, providing the right care, in the right place at the right time.**” [\(1\)](#)

Why is this important?

Optimised content and functionality of GP practice websites will facilitate access for patients.

Why do this?

- Contractual obligations e.g. The core digital offer
- Help reduce telephone activity
- Address access complaints
- Enabling better access for those that need it most to ensure equity of access to care and information for all patients (including those with diverse access needs)
- Improve patient experience
- Empower patients with knowledge and self-management tools where appropriate
- Signpost patients to other services where appropriate, facilitating timely access to the right care

The ‘Top Tips’ below were gathered from Croydon practices and South West London

Website Content:

Locate the most important information, or links to it, on the home page e.g.

- Ordering repeat prescription
- Getting test results
- Making an appointment
- Registering with the practice
- GP surgery telephone number and opening hours
- What to do out of hours (promotion of 111 and enhanced hours)
- Translation and accessibility settings of website

Other recommended content elsewhere on website:

- FAQs on access to telephone, video or face to face appointments
- How to book an interpreter/language line
- Chaperone service policy
- Complaint policy
- Physical accessibility provision of GP surgery site
- Patient Participation Group information, including dates, times, previous meeting minutes
- Link to social media sites
- Monthly newsletter

People with No Fixed Address

In 2018 the cost of unregistered patients using Croydon Health Service NHS Trust services was £1 million.

People do not need ID or proof of address to register with a GP practice (2)

Healthwatch Croydon recommends “GPs should **clearly show** that people with temporary or no fixed address can register under their GPs practice address... [and] meet the national standard as defined in the Primary Care Contract in registering people without any ID” (3)

Website functionality:

Optimising website functionality to increase patient engagement with website and reduce pressure on phonline activity.

The **core digital offer** (which all practices must provide to patients) is as follows: (4)

- Offer online consultations
- Ability to hold video consultations
- Two-way secure written communication between patients, carers and practices
- Up to date accessible online presence (website)
- Signposting to validated symptom checker and self-care health information
- Shared record access
- Online appointment booking
- Request and management of prescriptions online

Additionally the following functionality is very helpful:

- Register (or pre-register) with the practice
- Provide feedback via website including Friends and Family test

Website signposting:

To **other services**. E.g. MSK Get U Better App, IAPT Talking Therapy, Community Pharmacy, Social Prescribers.

To **self-management tools**. E.g. voluntary sector resources like Mind [Home - Mind](#), British Heart Foundation [Information for those affected by heart and circulatory diseases](#) | BHF

Think about tapping into **national campaigns** and associated resources e.g.

- National Diabetes week
 - World suicide prevention day
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Patient feedback/engagement on website:

Engage your Patient Participation Group to reflect on the accessibility of your practice website from a patient perspective.

London GP Access Guide (5) describes equity of access to care for registered patients as:

- Availability of appointments
- Availability of clear information
- Access to a professional interpreter
- Ease of the booking system
- Convenience of appointment times
- Staff training
- Responsiveness of practice to diverse needs

How does your practice website contribute to the above?

Display CQC rating:

CQC recommend that practices “display your rating on the main homepage or on appropriate landing pages.” (6)

Named Lead:

We recommend that each practice has a named lead responsible for regularly updating the website to check information on the website and social media is accurate and up to date.

Useful links:

- [NHS England » Improving access to general practice HLP-London-General-Practice-Access-Guide-v6.pdf \(healthylondon.org\)](#)
- [How-do-I-register-March-2019-Healthwatch-Croydon.pdf \(healthwatchcroydon.co.uk\)](#)
- [NHS England » Creating a highly usable and accessible GP website for patients](#)

Useful Contacts:

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