

Digital Access Summary Report

Accessing GP Practices
Digitally: Online and Video
Consultations

October 2020

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Executive Summary

Between 18 September 2020 until 09 October 2020 the engagement team on behalf of Herefordshire and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), ran a survey to engage with the populations of Herefordshire and Worcestershire, with the purpose of gaining the public's views of using digital technology, specifically online and video consultations, to access support and advice from their GP's surgery.

105 people responded to the survey.

Of those who completed the survey, 59% (62) stated that they would consider participating in an online consultation. Over half of the respondents (55% / 56) stated that they had not seen any advertising for online consultations. 52% (52) stated that they would ask GP practice staff to support them to use an online consultation if they needed help. 83% (86) advised they had access to a computer or a laptop. 45% (46) of respondents thought that an explanatory set of frequently asked questions (FAQ's) would help patients to use online consultations. 97% of those responded, reported to have never undertaken a video consultation. 74% advised that they would be able or willing to take part in a video consultation if their GP suggested it. 45% (45) of respondents also thought that a set of explanatory FAQ's would help them to participate in a video consultation.

The top themes raised in the survey were:

Support for online and video consultations

- Think they are good idea
- Would like to use online / video options
- Thought it would work for certain types of appointments or conditions

Do not support online and video consultations

- Did not support due to personal preference and/or circumstances.

Suggestions from respondents

- Make online consultations available for patients whose GP practice do not currently offer them
- Give people an option to use online consultations, but provide other ways to converse with the GP practice
- Promote online consultations more widely

Concerns raised

- The digitally excluded
- Confidentiality of the systems used
- Reliability of technology and the internet

Demographic breakdown

Out of those respondents who provided the name of their GP surgery, there were 34 GP practices represented by people from across Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The

respondents were from a mix of age groups, with those aged between 65 – 74 making up the largest group (37% / 37). There was no representation from children aged below 18. 54% (57) of respondents considered themselves to have a disability. 55% (58) reported to be carers. Respondents reported to visit the GP surgery regularly. The most common frequency was quarterly, 31% (30).

Overview

Herefordshire and Worcestershire CCG were interested to hear the views of people who had not yet used technology to get help, either through an online consultation with a GP or nurse for example, or through a video appointment.

The CCG will use the feedback received to get an understanding of why people may not be using or able to use new ways to access their GP practice, and to make improvements so that more patients are encouraged to try new ways to access their GP services.

Background

The Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) has an ambitious digital programme, with an aspiration to be a global leader in rural digital integrated care.

A key element of this is working with primary care colleagues to increase the digital maturity of practices, patients, services and teams across the two counties.

We have created a strong 'movement' across the STP with colleagues across all organisations wanting to explore new ways of delivering health and care – and we want to be able to harness (and not lose) this enthusiasm and growing commitment.

To that end, the Herefordshire and Worcestershire STP was successful in becoming a designated accelerator site for the programme, which will enable GPs and partners to deliver care more effectively for their population, improve patient experience and outcomes.

The programme is made up of five workstreams:

1. **Empowering Patients** – the development and implementation of an accreditation programme for local health and social care apps and the development of a dedicated website for patients and professionals to signpost to relevant applications
2. **Collaboration** – development and implementation of digital collaboration tools to enable better collaboration between clinical professionals to support patients
3. **Online and video consultation** – to enable and accelerate the use of online video consultations
4. **Increasing digital literacy** – identify and support people who are at risk of digital exclusion and therefore risk poorer health outcomes
5. **Evaluation and blueprints** – evaluation and blueprints to feed back to national accelerator programme

This engagement exercise focuses on the Online and Video consultation workstream.

Exercise Summary

Active Period	18 September 2020 until 09 October 2020
Method	Survey (Survey Monkey)
Reach	Appendix 1
No. of Respondents	105
Results Key	<p>Qualitative Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key themes have been established and listed. • Example verbatim comments are listed within the text. <p>Quantitative Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most prevalent answer has been highlighted in blue.
Interpretation of Results	The results have been reviewed and analysed by the engagement manager. It is acknowledged that this method is subjective and open to interpretation. The full verbatim comments received are available for relevant CCG staff to view.

Survey Results

Question 1 - Would you consider using 'online consultations'?

Answers	Count	Percentage
Yes I would - please tell us why:	62	59%
No I wouldn't – please tell us why:	21	20%
Maybe - please tell us why:	26	25%
	<i>Answered question</i>	105
	<i>Skipped question</i>	0

*Respondents were able to give more than one answer.

There were 109 responses to Question 1, in which most respondents (62 / 59%), answered that they had would consider online consultations.

Responders were also asked to explain their answers. The comments received are summarised below:

Answer – “Yes I would”

Respondents gave mixed reasons to why people would consider using an online consultation. The top five reasons given by people who would consider using an online consultation are listed overleaf (1 most prevalent – 5 least prevalent):

1. Safe
2. Convenient
3. Easy
4. Saves time
5. Saves travelling

Examples of verbatim comments:

“Seems easier and reduces contact risk.”

“Everything else is online, it’s more convenient.”

“Ease of use, don’t have to leave home.”

“It would save time but I wish to retain the option of face to face.”

“I accept safety factor of distancing, also benefits to me of cost/time travelling.”

Answer – “No I wouldn’t”

The top five reasons for people stating that they would not use an online form were (1 most prevalent – 5 least prevalent):

1. Prefer Face-to-face or telephone appointments
2. Felt their issue needed to be seen in person
3. Had issues accessing or using technology
4. Had poor internet connection
5. Raised concerns about being diagnosed / treated correctly

Examples of verbatim comments:

“I would prefer to see and speak to an individual.”

“GP’s can tell so much by seeing a patient in the flesh.”

“I have access to a computer and use it for e-mail and on-line purchases etc. However I have no knowledge of to download apps or set up video calls.”

“The internet connection is not that great where I live, and its much better to diagnose conditions face to face, and you can see the physical and mental state face to face much better.”

“Because you cannot look after a patient online. Face to face consultation are a must when you are ill.”

Answer – “Maybe”

Of those respondents who answered that they would “maybe” use an online consultation, their top five reasons were (1 most prevalent – 5 least prevalent):

1. Would consider for some issues
2. Concern about being diagnosed / treated correctly
3. Issues or concerns about technology and/or internet connection
4. Personal sensory accessibility needs
5. Would consider, but if absolutely necessary

Examples of verbatim comments:

“If the issue was simple I would be happy to. If it was slightly more complex I would not feel this provided the chance for enough detail to be discussed.”

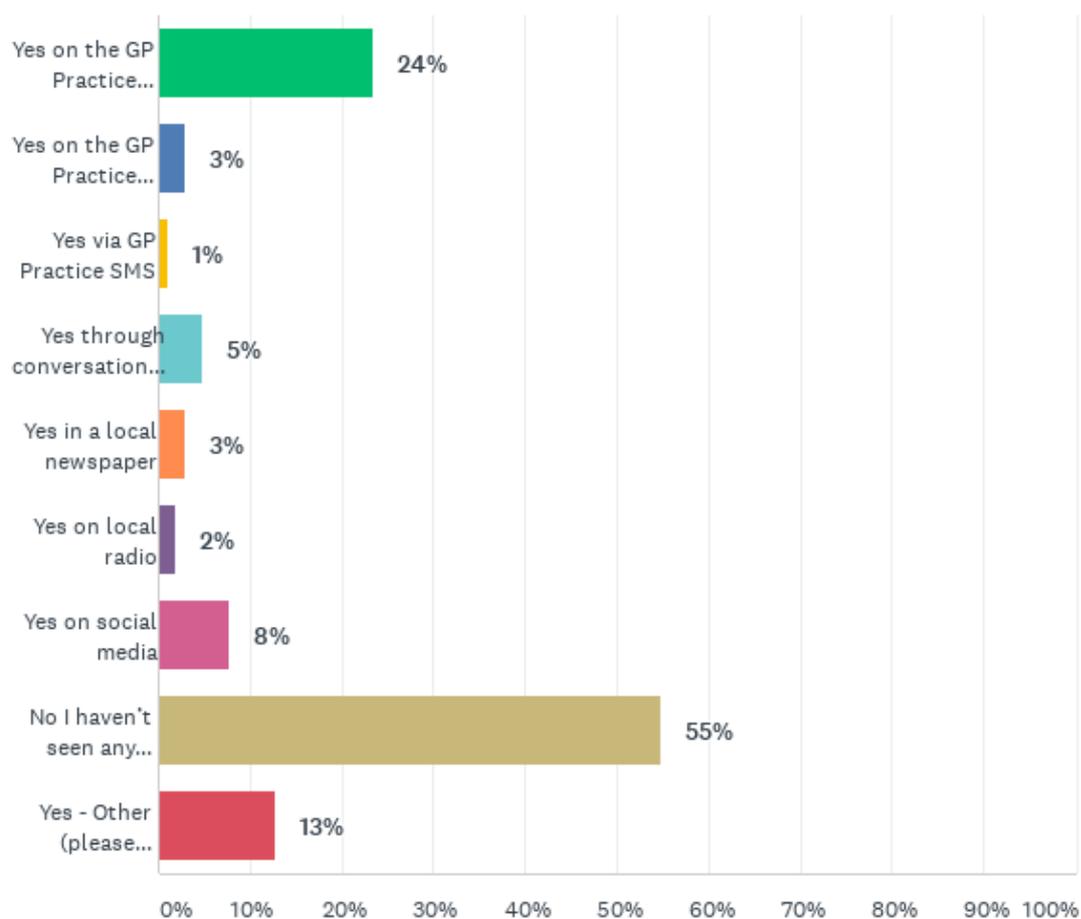
“Not sure this would be effective enough to give a diagnosis.”

“The problem is that I am not personally online - I use my Organisations broadband.”

“I am severely physically disabled and struggle to use IT such as this computer or a phone. I have no support and my carers will not help due to insurance.”

“Only if I really needed to can’t see how they can tell what’s wrong with face to face consultation.”

Question 2 - Have you seen 'online consultations' promoted?



Answers	Count	Percentage
Yes on the GP practice website	24	24%
Yes on the GP practice answerphone message	3	3%
Yes via GP practice SMS	1	1%
Yes through conversation with the GP practice staff	5	5%
Yes in a local news paper	3	3%
Yes on local radio	3	2%
Yes on social media	8	8%
No I haven't seen any advertising	56	55%
Yes – Other (please state)	13	13%
	<i>Answered question</i>	102
	<i>Skipped question</i>	3

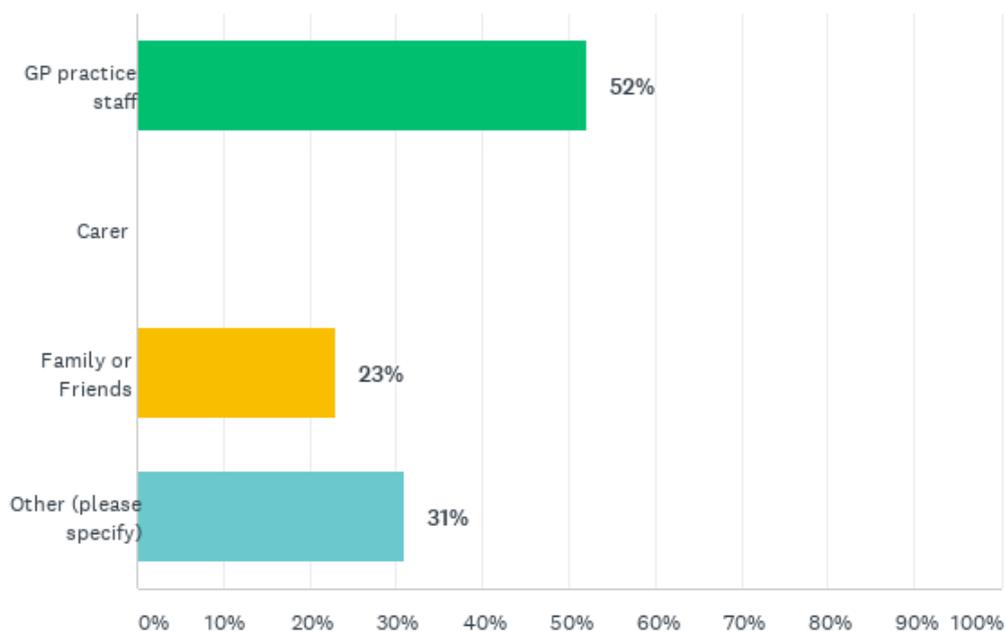
*Respondents were able to give more than one answer.

Over half of the respondents (55% / 56) stated that they had not seen any advertising for online consultations. Of those who had seen some advertising, found the information on the GP practice website (24% / 24).

Other places that people reported to have seen online consultations advertised included:

- Via Worcestershire Association of Carers
- On TV
- Word of mouth
- National media
- Through working in the NHS
- Via politicians

Question 3 - Who would you ask for support in using 'online consultations'?



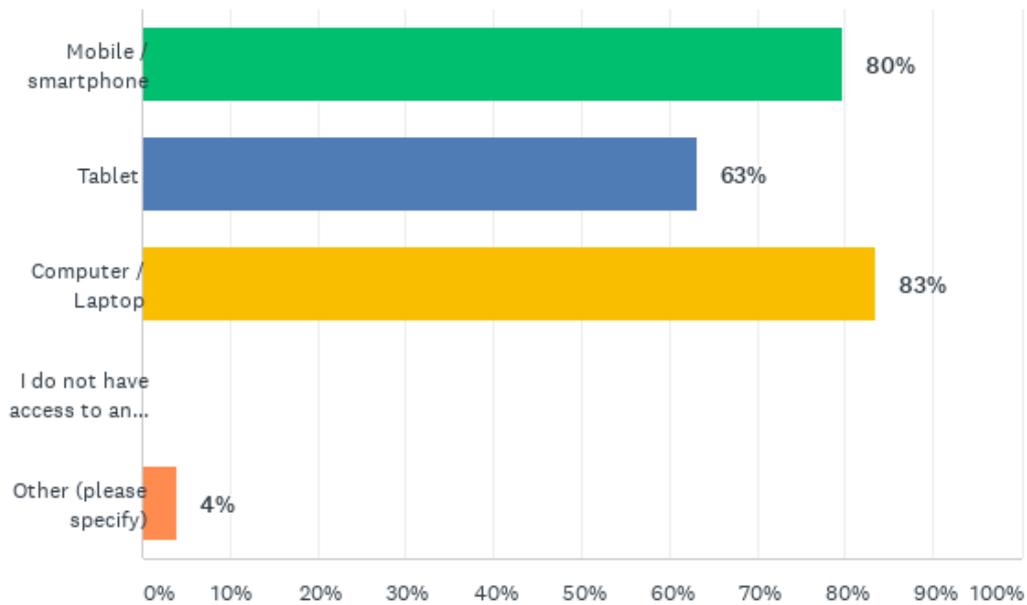
Answers	Count	Percentage
GP practice staff	52	52%
Carer	0	0
Family or friends	23	23%
Other (please specify)	31	31%
<i>Answered question</i>		100
<i>Skipped question</i>		5

Over half (52% / 52) of those who responded to Question 3, stated that they would ask GP practice staff to support them to use an online consultation.

Other sources of support that people reported, included:

- Work colleagues
- Finding the answer online

Question 4 - Do you have access any of these devices?

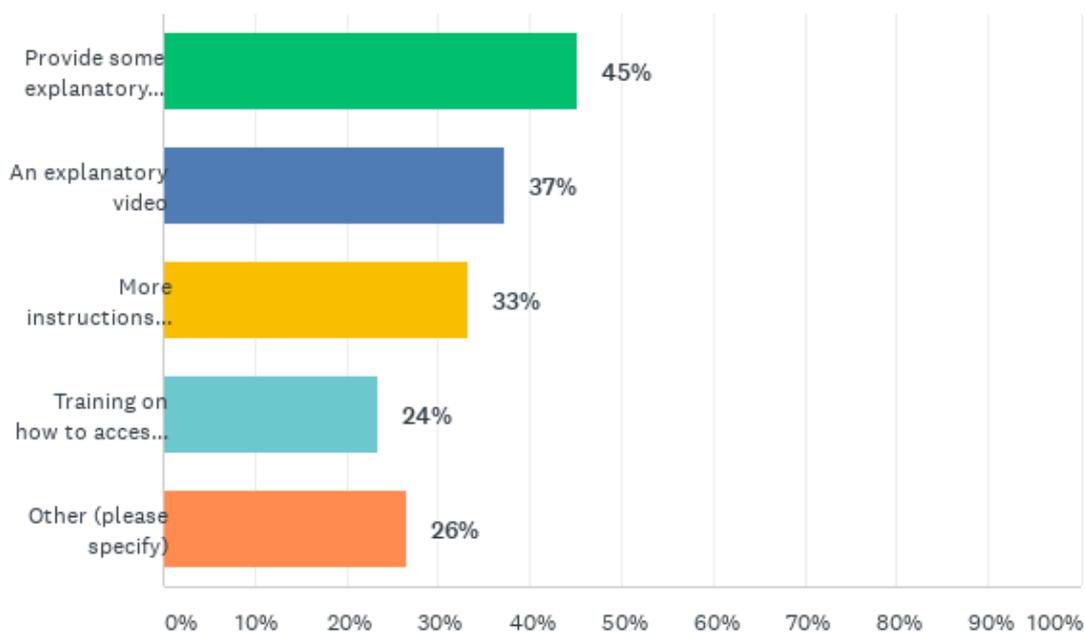


Answers	Count	Percentage
Mobile / smartphone	82	80%
Tablet	65	63%
Computer / laptop	86	83%
I do not have access to any of these devises	0	0
Other (please specify)	4	4%
<i>Answered question</i>		103
<i>Skipped question</i>		2

*Respondents were able to give more than one answer.

103 respondents gave an answer to Question 4. The results indicate that the majority of respondents (83% / 86) have access to a computer or a laptop. In addition, 80% (82) of respondents had access to a mobile / smartphone.

Question 5 - How could we help patients to use 'online consultations'?



Answers	Count	Percentage
Provide some explanatory frequently asked questions (FAQs)	46	45%
An explanatory video	38	37%
More instructions during the process	34	33%
Training on how to access online services on your device	24	24%
Other (please specify)	27	26%
<i>Answered question</i>		102
<i>Skipped question</i>		3

**Respondents were able to give more than one answer.*

45% (46) of respondents thought that an explanatory frequently asked questions would help patients to use online consultations.

Other sources of support that were suggested, include:

- Telephone support from GP practice staff
- Articles in the local and national newspapers
- Volunteers from voluntary and community sector organisations
- Leaflets
- Provide 'troubleshooting' list of common issues and resolutions
- Enable all GP practices to provide online consultations, where this is currently not an option.

Question 6 - Do you have any other comments about 'online consultations'?

80 people provided additional comments. Of the comments that were received, 19 expressed their support of online consultations, 11 did not support, 14 provided suggestions on how these types of appointments could be implemented and 30 people raised concerns.

These are summarised below:

Support

Respondents gave mixed reasons to why people would support using online consultations. The top five reasons were (1 most prevalent – 3 least prevalent):

1. Thought it was a good idea
2. Would like to use themselves
3. Thought it would work for certain types of appointments or conditions.

Examples of verbatim comments:

“I think it is a great idea. And would use it.”

“I am willing to try.”

“I feel they should only be for easy diagnosis of issues, or maybe a review of medication.”

Do not support

The majority of respondents who did not support online consultations, stated it was due to personal preference and/or circumstances.

Examples of verbatim comments:

“I am answering for myself and others. We do not want the changes, it is all too sudden, and possibly "you can't teach an old dog new tricks.”

“I am not in favour of them.”

“For me, telephone is bad enough, but I would be very apprehensive, at least the first time, about video/online consultation(s), exacerbated by mental health issues. Such fears would include device battery failure, inability to achieve the connection & internet service failure, worry about being online at the right time, wasting the medical professional's time through the aforesaid & anything else, functioning & focusing of a camera to show whatever images, using/switching front & rear cameras of tablet or phone proficiently, etc. Some sort of 'prior to need' training/process knowledge/experience would be invaluable to me.

Suggestions

There were a few common themes which emerged from those who gave suggestion. These were (1 most prevalent – 3 least prevalent):

1. Making online consultations available for patients whose GP practice do not currently offer them
2. Giving people an option to use online consultations, but providing other ways to converse with the GP practice
3. Promoting online consultations

Examples of verbatim comments:

“I called my practice during lockdown but was only offered (a very rushed) telephone consultation. I would have preferred if I had been given the option of a virtual consultation. Its put me off calling the GP again so I've avoided it.”

“I believe that they should be available for those who wish to use them but care must be taken to ensure that all patients are catered for if they cannot, or don't want to, use online services.”

“It would be good to be able to have phone or video consultations for routine things, with my own GP, like if needing an obvious medicine for something that is long term (and the patient is their own expert) or for something basic, like for some antibiotics; where the medicine isn't available over the counter. However, other than these times, I only see my GP when I really need to and for things too complex for an online consultation.”

Concerns

The majority of the comments were used to voice concerns about online consultations. The most common themes included (1 most prevalent – 3 least prevalent):

1. The digitally excluded
2. Confidentiality
3. Reliability of technology and the internet

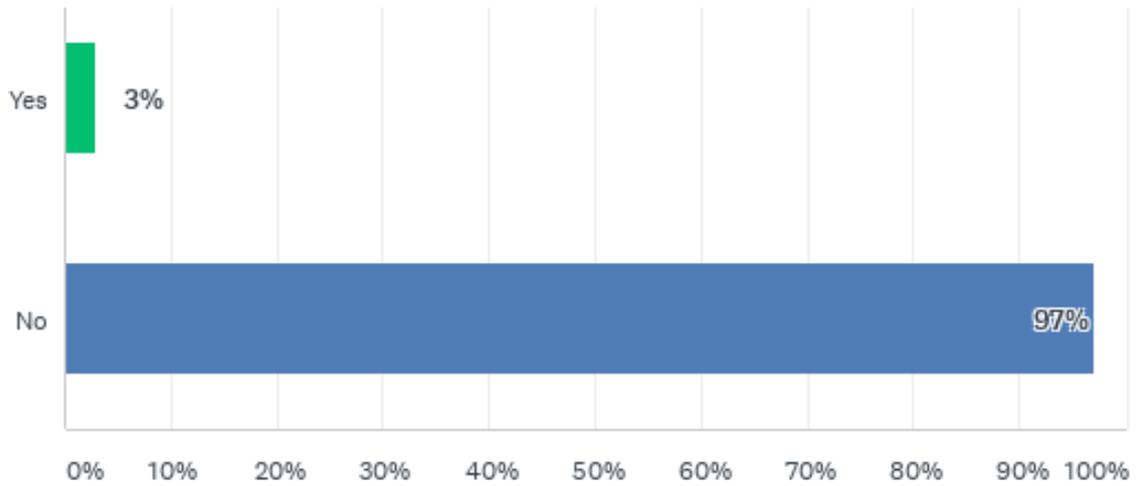
Examples of verbatim comments:

“It concerns me that some elderly people do not have access to I pads etc and they would forego doctor consultations because of their non use of this technology.”

“Showing body parts online not for me.”

“My only thought is how bad internet connection can be at times.”

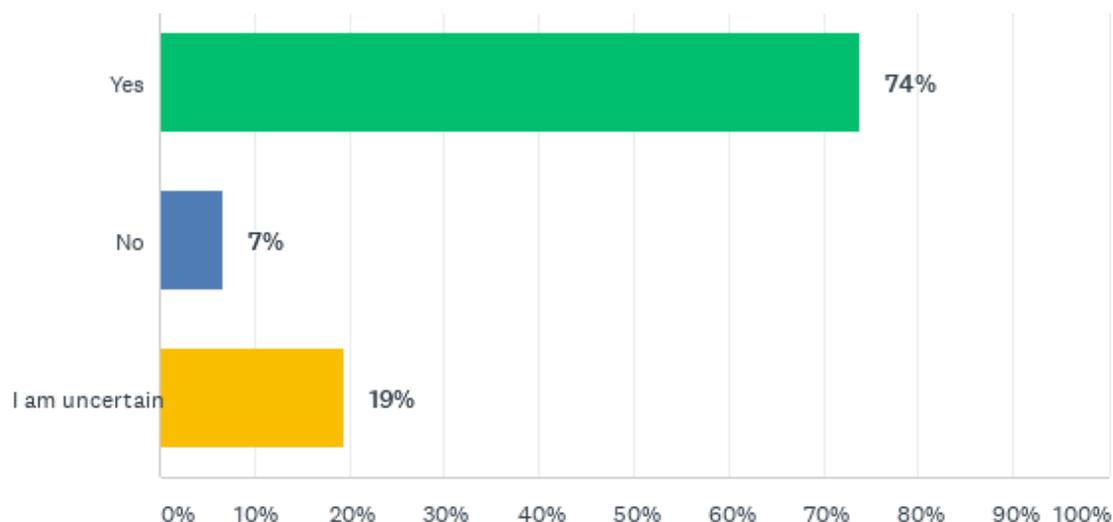
Question 7 - Have you used video consultation with your GP?



Answers	Count	Percentage
Yes	3	3%
No	100	97%
<i>Answered question</i>		103
<i>Skipped question</i>		2

There were 103 responses to Question 7, whereby the majority of respondents (97% / 100), answered that they had not undertaken a video consultation.

Question 8 - Would you be able to / willing to take part in a video consultation if your GP suggested it?



Answers	Count	Percentage
Yes	76	74%
No	7	7%
I am uncertain	20	19%
<i>Answered question</i>		103
<i>Skipped question</i>		2

Most of the respondents (74% / 76) who answered this question, advised that they would be able to or willing to take part in a video consultation if their GP suggested it.

Respondents were also asked to explain their answers. The comments received were varied but did highlight some general themes, which were (1 most prevalent – 5 least prevalent):

1. Would be willing to have a go
2. Would have a good, but also had concerns (confidentiality, internet connection, using technology, wanted reassurance of a face-to-face appoint with the GP if needed)
3. Being digital excluded
4. Concern about being diagnosed / treated correctly if they are not seeing a GP face-to-face
5. Concerns about using technology

Examples of verbatim comments:

“I have used Zoom, Skype etc so I don't expect any problems.”

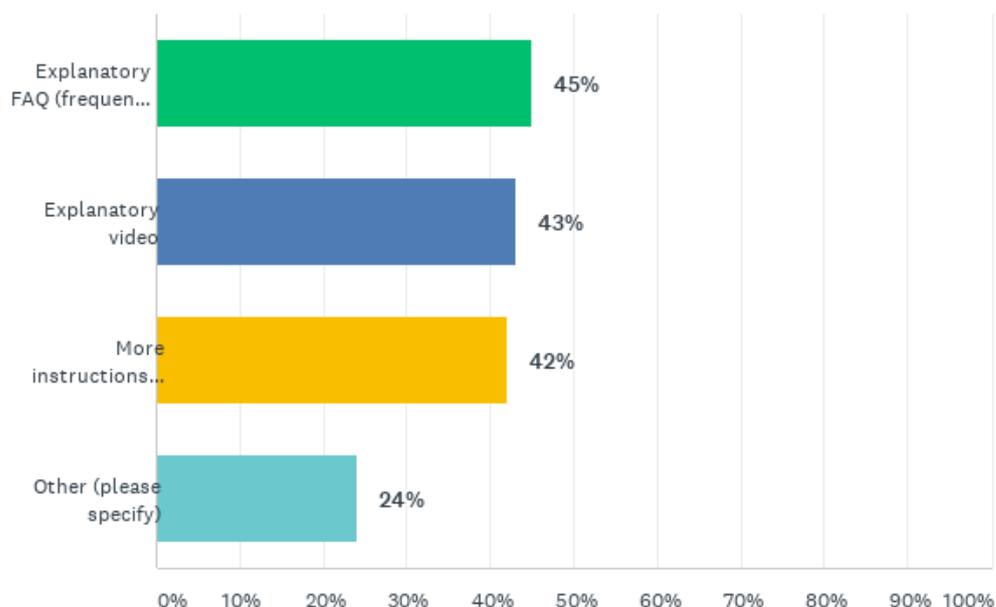
“This would probably be a more effective way of working but I would like the reassurance that if the GP was unsure how to help me and thought I needed a face to face examination this would be arranged”

“I have no video facilities, camera, etc.”

“I know that medicine is dynamic but I do not agree with online consultations as I think by doing this, some important diagnosis could be jeopardized.”

“By the time I had done all the button pressing my blood pressure would have gone up a lot”

Question 9 - How could we help patients to use 'video consultations'?



Answers	Count	Percentage
Explanatory FAQ (Frequently asked questions)	45	45%
Explanatory video	43	43%
More instructions during the process	42	42%
Other (please specify)	24	24%
<i>Answered question</i>		100
<i>Skipped question</i>		5

The results were very close, with slight preference (45% / 45) from respondents for a set of explanatory FAQ's to support them to use a video consultation.

Other suggestions included:

- Providing a web interface
- Financial support
- All GP surgeries to offer video consultations to patients who wanted to use them
- Upskilling people's IT and technology skills
- Support from family or friends
- Allowing a 'test run' before connecting to the GP practice staff

Demographic Questions

Question 10 and 11 – Name and email address.

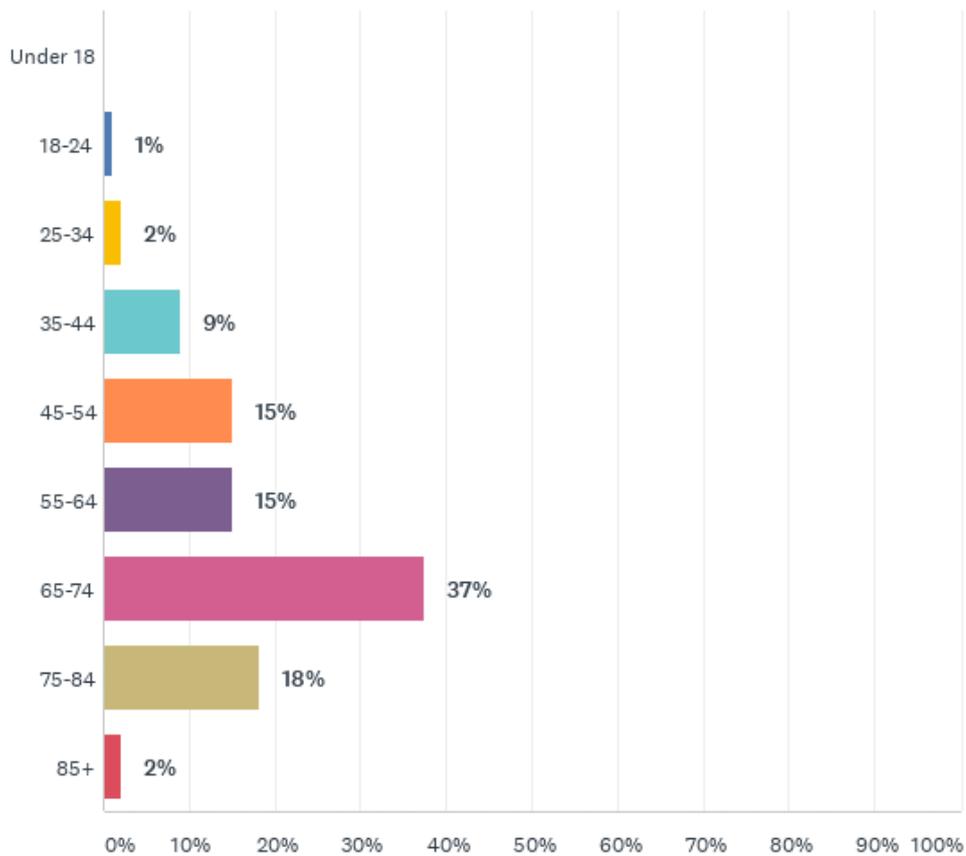
65 respondents provided their contact details. This information will be securely stored by the engagement team and has been omitted from this report.

Question 12 - Which GP Practice are your registered with?

70 respondents provided the name of the GP surgery they are registered with. These were:

GP survey	Count	Percentage
Abbey	1	1%
Aylmer Lodge	1	1%
Barbourne Health Centre	1	1%
Barns Close	1	1%
Barnt Green Surgery	1	1%
Bewdley Medical Centre	1	1%
Bodenham	1	1%
Chaddesley Corbett	1	1%
Davenal House	2	3%
De Montfort Evesham	2	3%
Dow surgery	1	1%
Elbury moor	6	9%
Ewyas Harold	1	1%
Fownhope Medical Practice	2	3%
Hagley	1	1%
Harefield	1	1%
Henwick Halt	2	3%
Hereford Medical Group	1	1%
Lyppard Grange Medical Centre	1	1%
Malvern Health Centre	1	1%
Nunwell	2	3%
Ridgeway	1	1%
Salters medical practice	3	4%
Spa medical	2	3%
Spring Gardens	6	9%
St Johns Bromsgrove	2	3%
St Johns House Surgery	1	1%
St Martins Gate Surgery	2	3%
St Saviors, Malvern	1	1%
St Stephens	4	6%
The Marches	9	13%
Thorneloe lodge	3	4%
Upton upon Severn Surgery	2	3%
Winyates	1	1%
Grand Total	68	100%

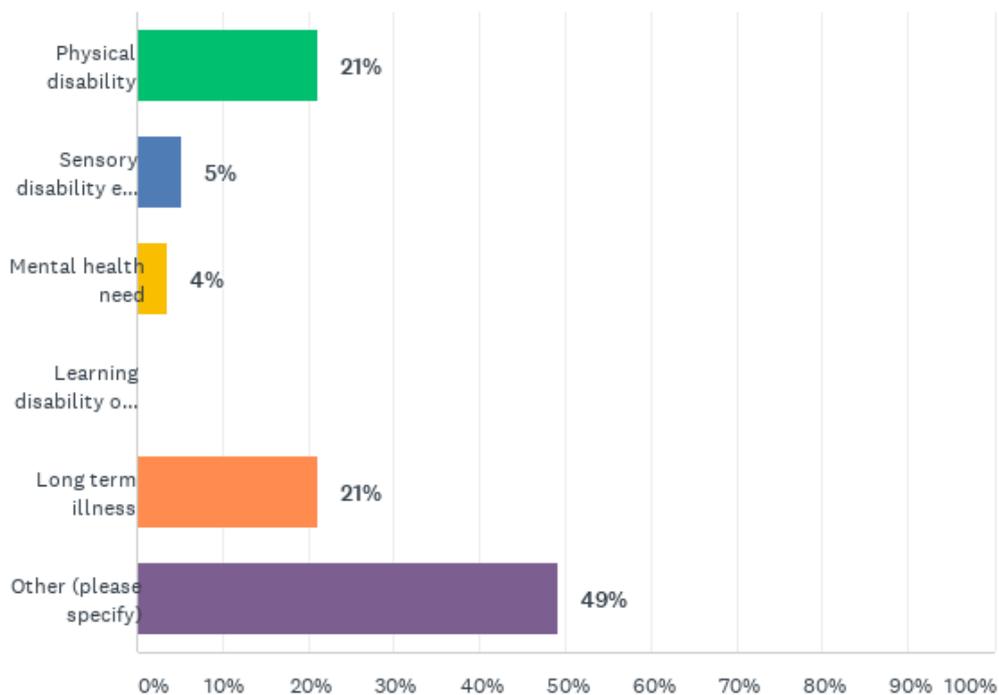
Question 13 - Please tell us your age



Answers	Count	Percentage
Under 18	0	0
18 – 24	1	1%
25 – 34	2	2%
35 – 44	9	9%
45 – 54	15	15%
55 - 64	15	15%
65 - 74	37	37%
75 – 84	18	18%
85+	2	2%
<i>Answered question</i>		99
<i>Skipped question</i>		6

The respondents were from a mix of age groups, with those aged between 65 – 74 making up the largest group (37% / 37). There was no representation from children aged below 18.

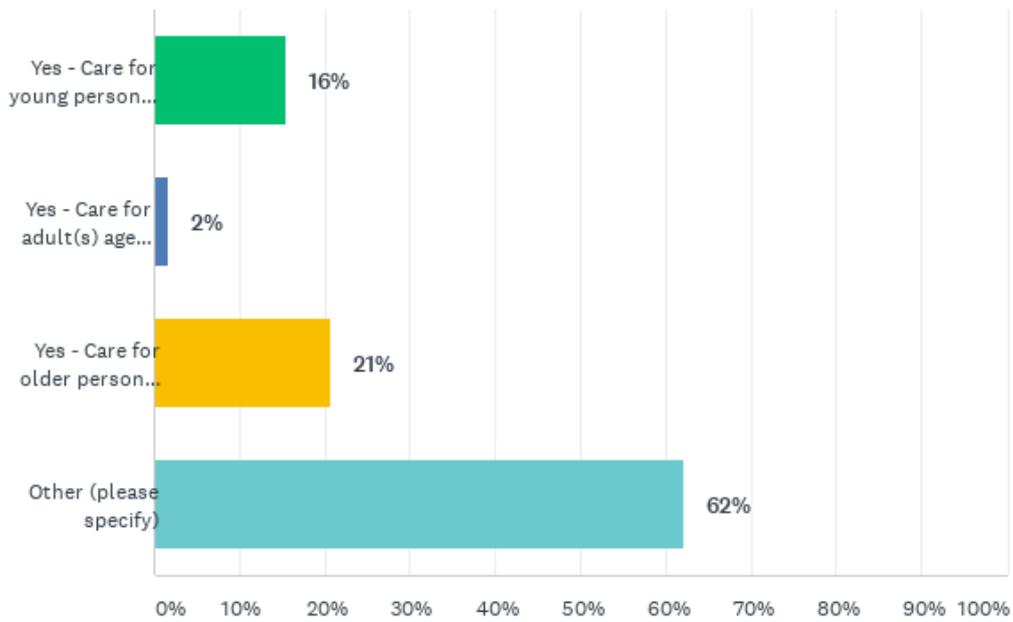
Question 14 - Do you consider yourself to have a disability?



Answers	Count	Percentage
Physical disability	12	21%
Sensory disability eg Deaf, hard of hearing, Blind, visually impaired	3	5%
Mental health need	2	4%
Learning disability or difficulty	0	0
Long term illness	12	21%
Other (please specify)	28	49%
<i>Answered question</i>		57
<i>Skipped question</i>		48

57 (54%) respondents considered themselves to have a disability.

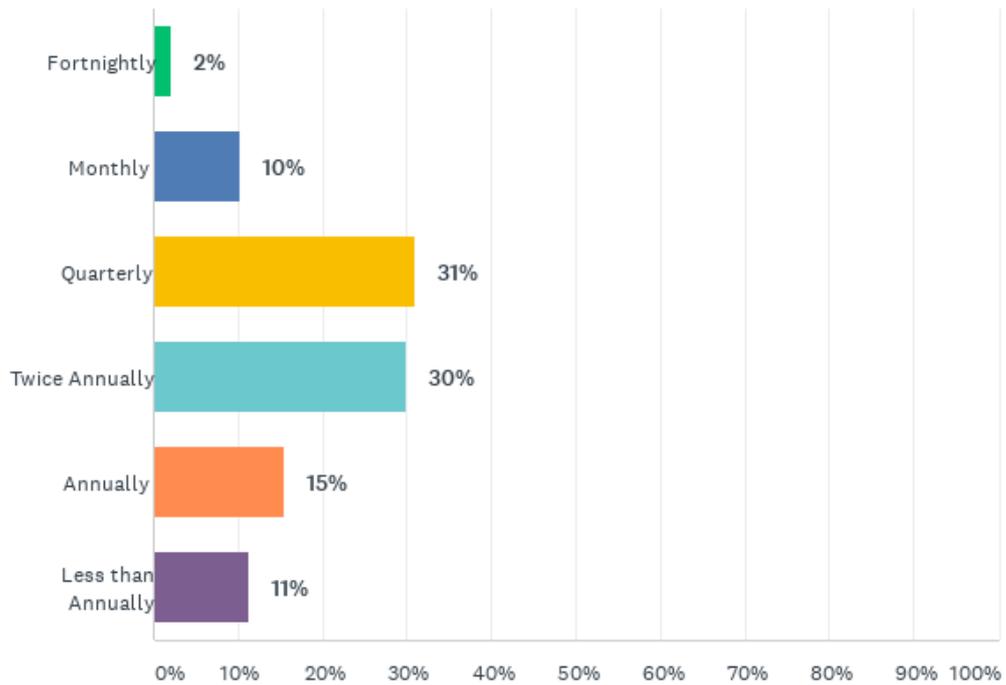
Question 15 - Do you care for someone?



Answers	Count	Percentage
Yes – Care for a young person	9	16%
Yes – Care for adult(s) aged 25 – 49 years	1	2%
Yes – Care for an older person aged over 50 years of age	12	21%
Other (please specify)	36	62%
	<i>Answered question</i>	58
	<i>Skipped question</i>	47

58 of the respondents reported to be a carer.

Question 16 - How often to you contact your GP Practice? (for yourself or someone you care for)



Answers	Count	Percentage
Fortnightly	2	2%
Monthly	10	10%
Quarterly	30	31%
Twice Annually	29	30%
Annually	15	15%
Less than annually	11	11%
<i>Answered question</i>		97
<i>Skipped question</i>		8

Respondents reported to visit the GP surgery regularly. The most common frequency was quarterly, with 31% (30) of respondents providing this answer.

Recommendations

The engagement manager has made the following engagement recommendations:

1. **Continued Engagement** – Ensure that patients, carers, staff and partners can continually engage and give their experiences of accessing primary care services through digital technology. Allow for regular sense checking, feedback and the opportunity to hear people's stories.
2. **Take note and engage deeper on the topics that have arisen** – Many of the themes that have arisen from the feedback are repeated throughout the survey. The engagement manager urges the project leads to take these themes into account within their work, and recommends that further engagement and patient experience is obtained in order to garner a greater understanding of the patient / public view and how these can shape services. The engagement manager urges the project lead to consider further engagement in the following areas:
 - Digital exclusion.
 - Exploring the fears and concerns of those who have queries about being diagnosed and treated correctly via online and video consultations.
 - Discuss and explore concerns raised about using and accessing reliable technology and internet.
 - Explore with members of the public how GP practices could advertise the availability of online and video consultations for those that would like to use them.
3. **Explore the practicalities of adopting / implementing:**
 - A marketing campaign to advertise the availability of online and video consultations for those who would like to use them.
 - Production of online, paper (hardcopy) and video guides on how to use the online and video consultation software.
 - Provide the ability for people to 'test' using equipment and software, before their appointments with staff at their GP surgery.
 - Ensure there is always an alternative to online and video consultations for those that need / would prefer to consult with their GP practices in other ways.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Survey Distribution List

Person or Group	Information Sent
Herefordshire and Worcestershire Involvement Network (HWIN)	Survey Link and Information
Herefordshire and Worcestershire Patient Participation Group (PPG) Network	Survey Link and Information
Herefordshire and Worcestershire CCG Twitter	Survey Link and Information
Herefordshire and Worcestershire CCG staff	Survey Link and Information
Healthwatch Herefordshire	Survey Link and Information
Healthwatch Worcestershire	Survey Link and Information
Herefordshire and Worcestershire CCG website	Survey Link and Information
Wyre Forest Multi Agency Group (WFMAG)	Survey Link and Information
Healthy Worcester	Survey Link and Information
Bromsgrove & Redditch Network (BARN)	Survey Link and Information
Worcestershire Voices	Survey Link and Information
Malvern Health and Wellbeing Partnership	Survey Link and Information
Young People's Engagement Network Group (YENG)	Survey Link and Information
Herefordshire voluntary organisations support service (HVOSS)	Survey Link and Information
CCG Staff	Survey Link and Information
Various GP Practices directly through project lead	Survey Link and Information
Public Health teams in Worcestershire and Herefordshire	Survey Link and Information