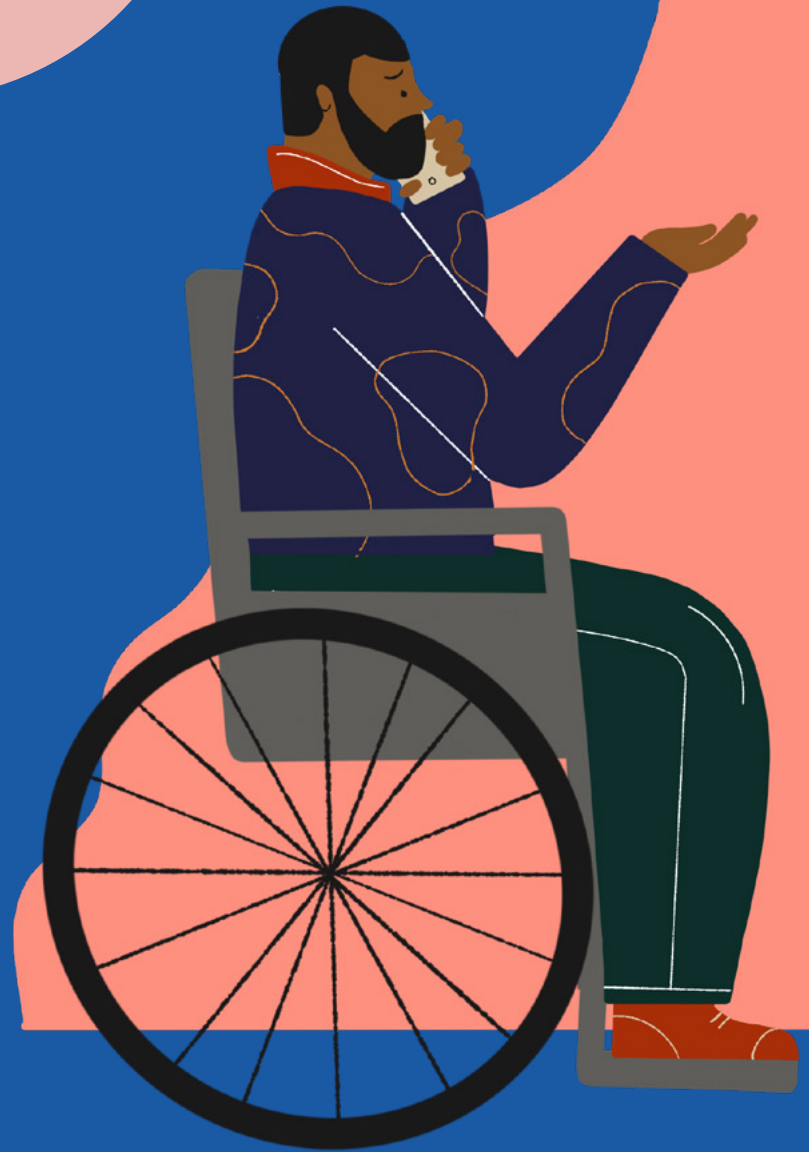


Primary Care Conversations



Purpose

Through an online survey of both patients and support workers we invited people to identify the problems they experience when accessing care through their GP. We elaborated on these problems, in conversations with our online co-creation group, during which we developed concepts based on feedback and showed them back to the group to surface further insights.



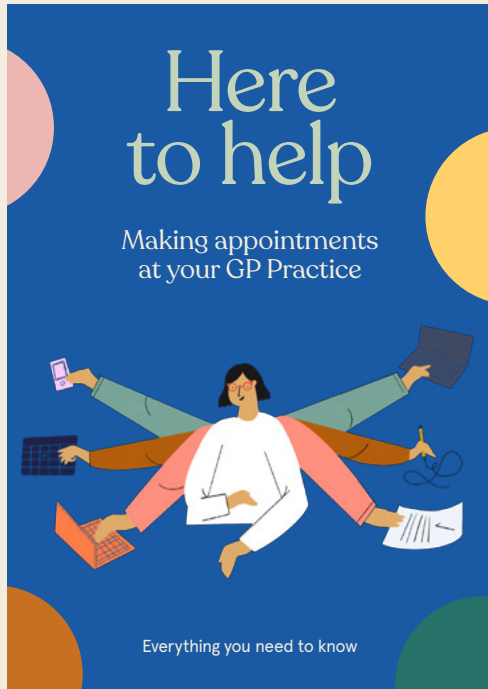
Barriers to GP access

The survey showed that one out of three people feel hesitant to make a GP appointment. This page shows the various hurdles that people experienced, as identified in the survey and discussed in the co-creation group.

Deciding to book	Getting a call	Having the call	Preparing to be seen	The remote visit
Feeling like a burden Some people feel like a burden for wanting to be seen, or don't want to add strain on the NHS	Calling for days Some systems do not allow non-same day appointments in advance. People must call back for days in a row.	Being gatekept It can feel like a battle getting through the "gatekeeper."	Unclear expectations 1 out of 3 people in our survey said it was not at all clear what to expect from an appointment going in.	Uncertain call-back times Some people dislike the uncertainty of not knowing when they will be called back for phone appointments.
Practice inconsistency There is a lack of consistency between practices, with conflicting guidance and information.	Difficulty booking It can be difficult to get appointments, leaving people feeling 'fed up', 'disheartened' and 'anxious'.	Confidence in receptionists Not everyone feels confident in and comfortable with triaging by receptionists.	Who will see me? People often don't know who they will be seen by prior to their appointment.	Being seen remotely Not everyone is confident in remote appointments
Different booking methods Some systems allow people to book appointments online, others only permit booking over the phone.	Long waits People find themselves in long, uncertain phone waits with un-helpful automated messages.	Sharing personal details People may be uncomfortable with or unclear on the purpose of sharing personal details with the receptionist.	Being seen by a non GP Some people worry when they can't see their GP. This can be particularly difficult for those with mental health issues.	
		What is urgent People need to figure out whether a need is urgent or not. What is urgent to patients might not be urgent to the GP.		

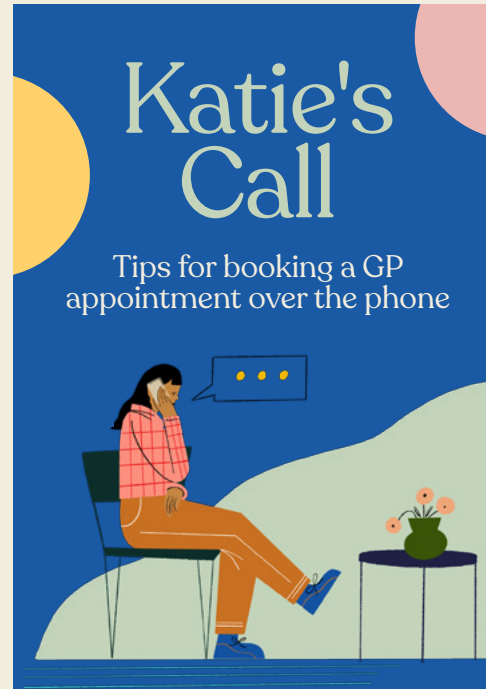
Interventions

After weeks of conversation and iteration with participants in our co-design group (n=17), and after several discarded concepts, here are the materials that we developed with our co-design group that people felt might be most helpful for those accessing GP care.



Here to help: Making appointments at your GP practice

A leaflet that helps set expectations for accessing GP care, while making clear the GP's intention to help. It addresses barriers throughout the patient journey as listed on the previous page.



Katie's Call: tips for booking a GP appointment over the phone

A comic that walks through the narrative of someone calling their practice to book an appointment. The focus here is on addressing common stressors, uncertainties, and questions people may have around getting and having a call.



I'm a Patient Care Advisor

A poster that clarifies the role of the 'GP receptionist' and plays with reframing it as one of a Patient Care Advisor. This responds to patient concerns around being gatekept, sharing personal details and confidence in the phone call.



Postcards

The postcards highlight some of the key messages of the leaflets:

- How do I know if my need is urgent or not?
- If you need help from your GP practice, don't wait
- Get to know the care team
- Talking about sensitive health information

Using these materials

Formats



Here to help: making appointments at your GP practice

Formats:

- Standard A5 leaflet
- Selected messages: postcards
- Leaflet combined with 'Katie's Call'



Katie's Call: tips for booking a GP appointment over the phone

Formats:

- Standard A5 leaflet
- Selected messages: postcards
- Leaflet combined with 'Here to help'
- Animated video



I'm a Patient Care Advisor

Formats:

- Version A 'Patient Care Advisor'
- Version B 'GP receptionist'



Postcards

Formats:

- Postcards
- Social media posts

Distribution channels

Pharmacies

Post and distribute at community pharmacies

Support workers

Distribute through support workers embedded in communities

General practice (GP)

Share within general practices at reception and/or on walls

Homes

Send as mail to people's homes

FB groups

Share on Facebook pages for your practice, NHS Five or others

Other ideas

Other creative ideas that the co-creation group shared included distributing materials within practice newsletters, local newspapers or magazines, or on the outside of buses.

You may also consider posting on local community bulletin boards and other community centres, like libraries.

The leaflets have space for an address label. This personal touch from your practice can help to make patients feel like they are being made part of the changes that have taken place.

Other Resources

The presented materials are community-generated. However, we have made sure to build upon and align with other valuable resources and existing campaigns. These have also been part of the co-creation discussions.

Resource list:

[NHS24 Guide to GP Services](#)

[Right care, right place](#)

[We'll keep you right](#)

[NHS Pharmacy First Scotland](#)

[NHS website for GP practices in Scotland](#)

[It's OK to Ask](#)

[General Practice Services](#)

[Your community healthcare services](#)

[NHS 24 services](#)

Future Opportunities

Not all of the barriers that people identified can be addressed through communication alone. Here are some of the other opportunities for discussion and reflection that arose from the conversations in the co-creation group.

1. Role of 'receptionist'

Many are not aware of how the role of GP 'receptionists' has developed. Are there opportunities for a name to better reflect this new role?

2. Introducing the care team

Patients can worry about being helped by someone who is not a GP. How could the expertise of practice team members be made visible within the practice?

3. Exchange between practices

Some patients feel they are 'getting a raw deal' compared to others. What opportunities are there to exchange good practice between GP practices?

4. Make patients part of change

There have been some fundamental changes in how GP practices run over the years. How could we more actively reach out to patients to share changes?

5. Avoiding having to call back

It can be a struggle to have to call back every day to get an appointment for a non-urgent issue. Could online booking or a call-back system be offered?

6. Address ambiguous call-back times

Open-ended call back times can be inconvenient and anxiety-inducing. How can we better set and manage expectations around call-backs for telehealth appointments?

Questions? Contact us!

We'd be happy to share more about the process we used , academic writings, and discuss opportunities for collaboration. If you're using these tools, we would love to hear about it.

Please feel free to contact us at mvb4@st-andrews.ac.uk

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