Patient and professional experiences of using digital tools in primary care.

Year two report

healthw**o**tch
Norfolk

Who we are and what we do

Healthwatch Norfolk is the independent voice for patients and service users in the county. We gather people's views of health and social care services in the county and make sure they are heard by the people in charge.

The people who fund and provide services have to listen to you, through us. So, whether you share a good or bad experience with us, your views can help make changes to how services are designed and delivered in Norfolk.

Our work covers all areas of health and social care. This includes GP surgeries, hospitals, dentists, care homes, pharmacies, opticians and more.

We also give out information about the health and care services available in Norfolk and direct people to someone who can help.

At Healthwatch Norfolk we have five main objectives:

1. Gather your views and experiences (good and bad)
2. Pay particular attention to underrepresented groups
3. Show how we contribute to making services better
4. Contribute to better signposting of services
5. Work with national organisations to help create better services

We make sure we have lots of ways to collect feedback from people who use Norfolk's health and social care services. This means that everyone has the same chance to be heard.

Summary

Why we looked at this

This year two report looks at how patients digitally access primary care. Healthwatch Norfolk explored the introduction of the Norfolk and Waveney Shared Care Record and public awareness of the NHS app. Healthwatch Norfolk also looked at innovative uses of digital tools. This report is based on three outcomes:

Outcome One: Raising Awareness of Digital Tools

Raising awareness of the presence of the digital tools available to local people and providing opportunities for patient support and upskilling to be able to digitally access their GP surgery.

Outcome Two: Innovative Use of Digital Tools in Primary Care

The Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board has knowledge and examples of GP Surgeries using digital tools innovatively in Norfolk and Waveney to support digital access for residents.

Outcome Three: Increasing Public Accessibility to Information About Digital Tools

Norfolk and Waveney residents can access information regarding the NHS app and Shared Care Record.

How we did this

Outcome One: Healthwatch Norfolk co-hosted an online event for GP Practice Managers and PPG members about the Digital Health Hub.

Outcome Two: Healthwatch Norfolk researched local GP surgeries that use digital tools in an innovative way to produce five Case Studies.

Outcome Three: Healthwatch Norfolk conducted four focus groups to find out what local people can or have accessed regarding the NHS app and Shared Care Record.

What this means

Utilising digital tools within primary healthcare and promoting their existence has the potential to raise public and healthcare professionals' awareness of the depth and breadth of digital tools available for: accessing primary healthcare services, managing and attending appointments, ordering and managing prescriptions, managing long term health conditions and aiding communication between patients and professionals.

Recommendations

Outcome One: Raising Awareness of Digital Tools

1. The NHS Digital Team should connect with local Primary Care Networks to link in with Peer Support Workers, Social Prescribers and Community Connectors to promote the Digital Health Hub.

2. Explore training and nominating a Digital Champion within each Primary Care Network, GP practice or Patient Participation Group.

Outcome Two: Innovative Use of Digital Tools in Primary Care

3. Encourage Primary Care Networks to share innovative examples of digital tool use.

4. Ensure that all digital innovation is independently evaluated, focusing on patient experience and satisfaction.

Outcome Three: Increasing Public Accessibility to Information About Digital Tools

5. Continuously liaise with Patient Participation Groups for feedback on the accessibility of communication materials

6. PPGs could be utilised more in research and feedback, especially if they are provided with knowledge, understanding and training.

7. Create a straightforward, accessible guide to the NHS app.

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