

**Date:** 14 October 2021

**Title:** Primary Care Access in Buckinghamshire

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**Report Sponsor:** Robert Majilton, Deputy Chief Officer Buckinghamshire CCG; Dr Raj Bajwa, Clinical Chair Buckinghamshire CCG

**Purpose of Report:** To provide an update to the Health and Wellbeing Board on Primary Care Access in Buckinghamshire presenting the national activity data collected from GP practices. In addition, clinical members of the Health and Wellbeing Board will be able to provide an update from their perspective.

**Report for information, discussion, decision or approval:** For information

**Recommendations:**

- Note content of the report

**Executive Summary**

The report provides information on primary care (GP Practice) appointments and summary of the recent GP survey in Buckinghamshire.

**Next steps and review**

Primary Care resilience and support is included in the system winter surge plan.

**Background Documents**

Links to relevant information are included in the paper.

## **Primary Care in Buckinghamshire – Access**

This report provides an update to the Health and Wellbeing Board on access to Primary Care in Buckinghamshire. The report uses national data at Buckinghamshire level to give an overview.

### **Background**

Primary Care has continued to be operational during the pandemic and practices have needed to adapt both to delivering national operational model with services to the populations they serve.

Primary Care across Buckinghamshire have continued to offer face to face consultations. The proportion of appointments delivered face to face reduced during the pandemic with more offered, largely by telephone with the addition of on-line and video consultations.

Referrals have continued into other services such as for planned operations and suspected cancers. Practices have offered and increased the % uptake in the flu vaccination and increased the % of people with Learning Disabilities who have had a health check during 2020/21. Since December 2020 Practices, working through PCNs have also delivered over 350,000 COVID vaccinations.

### **Activity - appointments**

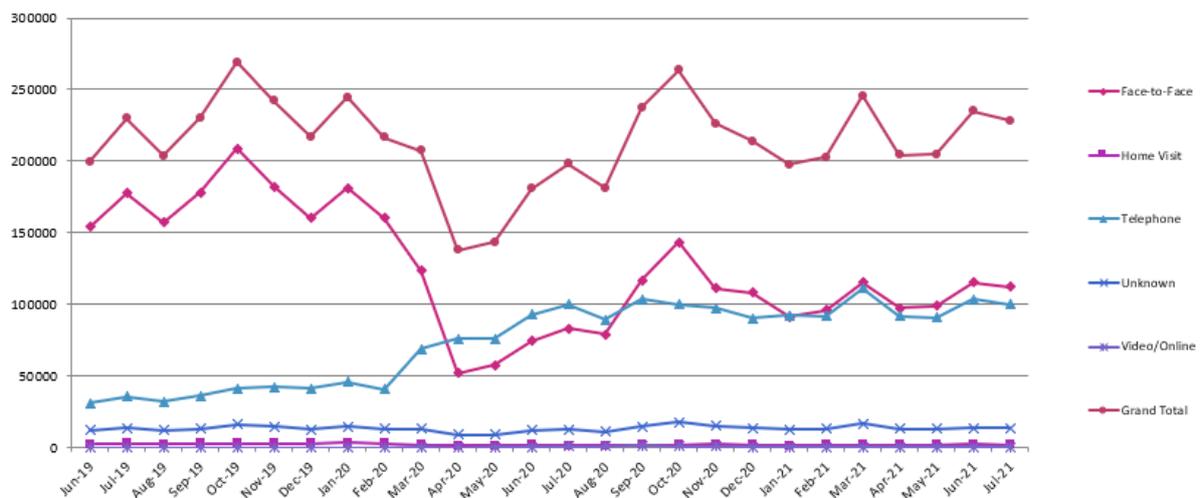
Primary Care appointments information is collected and published nationally<sup>1</sup> with aggregate activity data. There are recognised gaps in this data and it does not fully represent all primary care work as it focuses on direct consultations, it does however provide comparable data and has been increasingly used to look at comparable pre-pandemic activity particularly the return to 2019 levels of activity.

**Activity broadly returned to pre-pandemic (ie 2019) levels since September 2020** (i.e. within 6 months of the first lockdown) and average c 98% since then – excluding the COVID vaccinations undertaken on top.

There are an average of 217,000 appointments per month with practices. Between April and July 2021 there were 872,000 appointments plus 183,000 COVID vaccinations undertaken by Practices in Buckinghamshire. There were 19,000 extra appointments (2%) than in April – July 2019 (where there were 853,000 appointments).

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<sup>1</sup> [Appointments in General Practice - NHS Digital](#)



In July 2021 114,000 (50%) of all appointments were on the same day – in July 2019 this was 106,000 (an increase of 7.5%) – this compares with c 45% nationally. 40% of these same day appointments were face to face (69% in July 2019).

### Face to Face appointments

There have been national concerns on the ability to access face-to-face appointments with practices and Buckinghamshire is not unique in that regard. Practices in Buckinghamshire have continued to offer face to face appointments through the pandemic. **Between April 2020 – July 2021 there were c 1.6m face to face appointments in Buckinghamshire.** The proportion of total appointments that are face to face has reduced nationally and locally since April 2020. Pre-pandemic about three quarters of appointments were face to face, now about half are (compared to c 57% nationally).

A new “Single Operating Procedure” was produced by NHS England in March 2020 as part of the primary care element of the pandemic response and moving to a “Level 4” incident (ie under national direction). This included total triage which increased the proportion of appointments that were undertaken on telephone with an assessment on the requirement for a face-to-face appointment.

### GP Patient Survey

The annual GP survey was published in July 2021<sup>2</sup> (based on surveys of c 6,500 residents). 84% rated their practice as good (in line with the national average), with a range of between 56% - 99%.

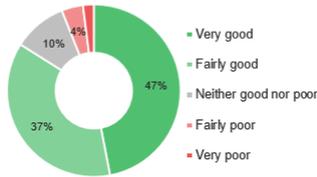
Largely the Buckinghamshire results are in line with previous years and in line with the national average with variability across practices. 9 out of 10 patients tried to book appointments by the telephone with 7 out of 10 finding it easy to do so.

<sup>2</sup> [GP Patient Survey \(gp-patient.co.uk\)](http://gp-patient.co.uk)

## Overall experience of GP practice

### Q30. Overall, how would you describe your experience of your GP practice?

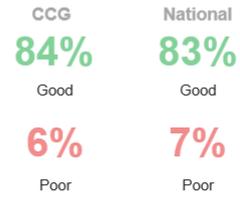
#### CCG's results



#### CCG's results over time



#### Comparison of results



#### Practice range within CCG – % Good



#### CCG range within region – % Good



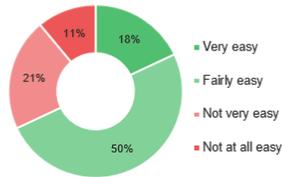
Base: All those completing a questionnaire: National (838,008); CCG 2021 (8,619); CCG 2020 (8,388); CCG 2019 (8,850); CCG 2018 (8,874); Practice bases range from 108 to 162; CCG bases range from 1,631 to 25,714

%Good = %Very good + %Fairly good  
%Poor = %Very poor + %Fairly poor

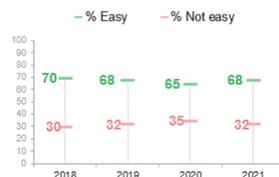
## Ease of getting through to GP practice on the phone

### Q1. Generally, how easy is it to get through to someone at your GP practice on the phone?

#### CCG's results



#### CCG's results over time



#### Comparison of results



#### Practice range within CCG – % Easy



#### CCG range within region – % Easy



Base: All those completing a questionnaire excluding 'Have not tried': National (809,235); CCG 2021 (8,286); CCG 2020 (8,332); CCG 2019 (8,706); CCG 2018 (8,539); Practice bases range from 102 to 148; CCG bases range from 1,547 to 24,349

%Easy = %Very easy + %Fairly easy  
%Not easy = %Not very easy + %Not at all easy