

GP Accessibility Visits reports

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In this Easy Read document difficult words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentences after they have been used.



Some words are pink and underlined. These are links which will go to another website which has more information .

Introduction



We are Healthwatch East Sussex. We work to make care better for everyone.



In October 2022 some people told us that they were struggling with the **physical accessibility** at their GP surgery.



Physical Accessibility looks at how easily people can get to, enter, move round and understand information at the GP surgery.



Eastbourne

We put together a project to visit GP surgeries in Eastbourne and **audit** their physical accessibility.



The **audits** included looking at and checking the physical accessibility of the building, the outside areas and some of the systems used by the surgery.

What we did



In May 2023 we emailed all GP practices in Eastbourne.



We heard back from and visited 7 GP practice sites to carry out audits.

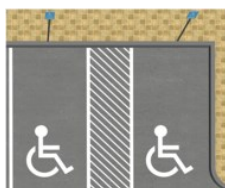


Audits were carried out by teams of 2 and 3 Healthwatch East Sussex staff and volunteers.



Our teams used an audit checklist, to review areas of the practices. You can find this checklist at the end of this document.

What we found out



Only 3 of the 7 GP surgeries had enough disabled parking spaces.



All 7 GP surgeries were close to bus stops and 4 were close to a train station.



At 3 of the 7 GP surgeries the pavements leading the entrance were broken and difficult to walk across.



6 of the 7 GP surgeries had wide entrance doors.



All 7 GP surgeries had clutter free entrances, receptions and waiting areas.



Only 4 of the 7 GP surgeries had hearing loops in place.



4 GP surgeries used a television screen, to call patients to appointments.



6 of the 7 GP surgeries had clear signs for the toilets using images and large font.



Within 3 of the 7 GP Surgeries the soap, light switches and hand dryers, in the disabled toilets were placed too high on the wall.



At 3 of the 7 GP surgeries the disabled toilets had a high colour contrast between hand-rails, light switches, toilet seats and flushes so that they were clear to see.



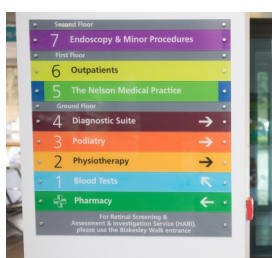
All walls and floors within the 7 GP surgeries were plain colours and materials.



1 of the 7 GP surgeries had public areas that were only accessible by stairs. The other 6 GP Surgeries had lifts.



5 of the 7 GP surgeries played music of a low volume in the waiting area.



Only 2 of the 7 GP surgeries had signage with large font and images.



6 of the 7 GP surgeries had information leaflets available in formats such as braille, translation and audio. If people asked for them at reception.



Patients could ask for **BSL interpreters** at 6 of the 7 GP surgeries.



BSL interpreters help communication between deaf sign language users and hearing people.



At 6 of the 7 GP surgeries staff had uniforms or badges so that people could tell they were staff.



Only 1 of the GP surgeries had a portable hearing loop for staff to use in different rooms in the surgery.



We were pleased to see all the work being done by GP surgeries to make their spaces physically accessible.

What we think should change

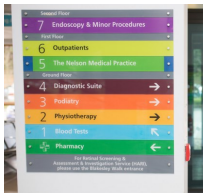
GP surgeries



All GP surgeries should install hearing loops and regularly check they are working.



All GP surgeries should have clear signs to let visitors know there is a hearing loop.



All signage used in GP surgeries should be easy to read, in a large font and use images.



All GP surgeries should tell patients what physical accessibility is at their surgery so that they are prepared for their visit.



When playing music in waiting areas GP surgeries should keep the volume low.

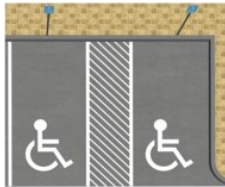


When looking at new locations GP surgeries should conduct an audit to make sure spaces are accessible.

Councils



Eastbourne Borough Council should remove the tree roots from the pavement outside the GP Surgeries and resurface the pavement.



Eastbourne Borough Council should look at providing disabled parking spaces at all GP Surgeries.

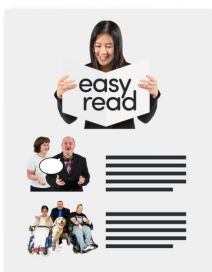
NHS Sussex



NHS Sussex should recognise the positive work taking place and share good ideas between surgeries to encourage improvements.



NHS Sussex should encourage all practice PPGs to conduct GP Accessibility Audits.



NHS Sussex should make guides on making easy read posters, leaflets and signs.

Healthwatch



Healthwatch should keep in touch with the GP surgeries to monitor the changes made, and raise other accessibility needs.



Healthwatch should use the learning from this project to do audits at health and care services across East Sussex.



Healthwatch should add to the audit by looking at treatment rooms within the practices.

What happens after this project



This report will be shared with the public, decision makers and other GP surgeries to encourage other work and discussions.



Healthwatch will work with local practice to raise awareness of physical accessibility and where changes are needed.



Healthwatch will look to carry out more audits at health and care services across East Sussex.

For more information



You can look at our website here:

www.healthwatcheastsussex.co.uk

If you need more information please contact us by:



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