




# Digital Inclusion report

## Survey Appendices

February 2024

Appendix 1: Examples of social media posts promoting the survey -



Do you find using a smartphone, tablet or laptop easy or hard?

We want to know how this affects going to the doctor or getting help when you're not feeling well.

**healthwatch** **healthwatch**  
Cambridgeshire Peterborough

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We're running a survey about how much people are able to use computers and the internet to get help when they're sick or need care.

Can you help us by answering some questions?

**healthwatch** **healthwatch**  
Cambridgeshire Peterborough

Appendix 2: Example of poster to promote the survey –



## Tell us about your experience of using technology to access health and care services

We are looking for people of all ages and backgrounds to share their views and ideas on barriers to using healthcare digital service via our survey. Data will remain anonymous.

**Your voice matters and we're here to make sure it's heard.**



**healthwatch**  
Cambridgeshire

**healthwatch**  
Peterborough

## Appendix 3: Digital Inclusion survey



### Healthwatch Community Research Survey:

#### Digital Inclusion in Health and Care Services NHS

Hello! We're doing a survey about how much people are able to use computers and the internet to get help when they're sick or need care. Some people have access to computers, tablets, smartphones and the internet and can use them easily, but others find it hard. We want to know how this affects going to the doctor or getting help when you're not feeling well.

*Can you help us by answering some questions? Taking part is totally up to you.*

*Thank you for helping!*

*All information will be collected without revealing anyone's identity and stored in accordance with the rules for handling personal data (GDP).*

#### **1. Which of the following devices do you own or have regular access to?**

- Personal or work computer (desktop/laptop)
- Tablet (e.g., iPad or similar)
- Smartphone
- Smart TV
- Games console (e.g., Nintendo, PlayStation, Xbox)
- Basic phone
- None of the above

#### **2. Do you have access to the internet on a regular basis?**

- Yes, on home wi-fi/ broadband
- Yes, on public wi-fi (e.g., in a café)
- Yes, at work
- Yes, on a mobile network (e.g., smartphone, tablet) with a SIM
- No, I have no access to the internet
- Other (please specify)
- None of the above

#### **3. Have you ever used online systems to interact with Health & Social Care Services (e.g., booking appointments, accessing medical records)?**

- Yes
- No

**4. To what level do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

	Disagree completely	Disagree slightly	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree slightly	Agree completely	Unsure or don't know
I am confident in using apps to carry out day-to-day tasks (e.g., banking, booking travel)						
I am confident in using online search tools to look for information (e.g., Google)						
I am confident using written communication such as email, WhatsApp, text						
I am confident using on-screen/video communication such as Facetime, Zoom, Teams or Skype						

**5. If you've used online services, what were the primary reasons for doing so?**

(e.g., shopping, travel, banking) (free text answer)

**6. Have you ever experienced any challenges/ accessibility issues whilst using digital services?**

(e.g., language/text size/unavailability) (free text answer)

**7. If you wanted help using digital services where would you go to get it?**

- Family/friends
- Library
- Medical practice
- Community hub/group
- Wouldn't ask for help
- Wouldn't know where to ask for help
- I don't need help
- Other

**8. In your opinion, what measures could be taken to improve digital inclusion for all users?** (Free text answer)

**9. How satisfied are you with current digital health services?**

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Unsatisfied
- Very Unsatisfied
- I don't use digital services

**10. Can you tell why you answered question 9 in the way you did?** (Free text answer)

**11. What do you think are the strengths of the current digital health services?** (Free text answer)

**12. What would improve your digital health experience?** (Free text answer)

**13. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with digital inclusion and Health and Social Care?** (Free text answer)

**We appreciate you sharing your experiences with us. Your responses will contribute to making health and social care services more accessible and user-friendly for everyone.**

**This survey collects information anonymously and helps us ensure that we are collecting feedback from a variety of people from across our area. You do not have to answer the following questions, but doing so will help us find out which groups of people need the most help to access computers and the internet when they are sick or need care.**

**14. Where do you live?**

- Fenland
- Huntingdonshire
- Peterborough

**15. Which GP practice are you registered with? (Free text answer)**

**16. What is your age range?**

- 16-17 years
- 18-24 years
- 25-49 years
- 50-64 years
- 65-79 years
- 79-85 years
- 85 plus
- Prefer not to say

**17. Please tell us your gender**

- A Woman
- A Man
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe (please specify)

**18. Please tell us which sexual orientation you identify with**

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Heterosexual / Straight
- Lesbian / Gay woman
- Pansexual
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe (please specify)

**19. How would you describe your marital or partnership status?**

- Single
- Cohabiting
- In a civil partnership

- Married
- Separated
- Divorced / Dissolved civil partnership
- Widowed
- Prefer not to say

**20. How would you describe your ethnic background?**

- Arab
- Asian / Asian British: Bangladeshi
- Asian / Asian British: Chinese
- Asian / Asian British: Indian
- Asian / Asian British: Pakistani
- Asian / Asian British: Any other Asian / Asian British background (please specify)
- Black / Black British: African
- Black / Black British: Caribbean
- Black / Black British: Any other Black / Black British background (please specify)
- Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups: Asian and White
- Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups: Black African and White
- Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups: Black Caribbean and White
- Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups: Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups background (please specify)
- White: British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh
- White: Irish
- White: Gypsy, Traveller, or Irish Traveller
- White: Roma
- White: Any other White background (please specify)
- Any other ethnic group (please specify)
- Prefer not to say
- Not known

**21. Please select any of the following that apply to you**

- I have a disability
- I have a long term condition
- I am a carer
- None of the above
- I prefer not to say
- 

**22. What is your first language?(free text)**

**23. How well can you understand, speak, read and write English?**

	Not at all well	Not well	Well	Very well
I understand spoken English				
I speak English				
I read English				



I write English				
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**24. From which of the following sources do you receive income?**

- Wages/salary
- Income from self-employment
- Disability benefits (e.g., Attendance Allowance or Personal Independence Payment)
- Means-tested benefits (e.g., Universal Credit, Tax Credits, Housing Benefit, Pension Credit)
- State retirement pension
- Occupational/private pension
- Student loan
- Other benefits

**Finally...**

**25. Which of the following statements apply to you?**

- I belong to the LGBTQ+ community
- I don't have a support network (friends and/or family)
- I consider myself to be neuro-diverse (e.g., autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, Tourette's etc.)
- I am a veteran (have been in the armed forces)
- I am homeless
- I live in a rural/isolated setting
- I am an ex-offender
- I am a refugee or asylum seeker
- I am a serving member of the armed forces
- I have experienced domestic abuse (e.g., violence, psychological or financial)
- I am a sex worker
- None of the above
- Prefer not to say

## Appendix 4: Appreciative Inquiry report -



Report, 06.02.24

Written by Karen Igho from notes from AI sessions with Chris Swarbrick, Charlotte Homent and Clair Slade.

### **Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry Report: Unveiling Voices, Sharing Stories**

To capture the vibrant narratives within our community, we are delighted to present this report stemming from an enriching Appreciative Inquiry initiative conducted between August and December 2023. Focusing on the topic of digital inclusion and the healthcare system, trained colleagues from Healthwatch and Cambridgeshire County Council embarked on a journey to gather stories that illuminate aspects of individuals' experiences. This initiative was designed to complement and support the data collected by Healthwatch Community Researchers through their comprehensive survey.

The stories in this report, gathered from Huntingdon, St. Ives, and St. Neots town centres, serve as windows into moments of resilience, connection, and engagement with healthcare services and new digital experiences following the pandemic. After the data collection phase, a sense-making session was convened to distil the emerging themes from these narratives. This collaborative process allowed for a deeper understanding of the shared values, strengths, and aspirations that weave through our community's fabric.

As you delve into the pages that follow, we invite you to join us in celebrating the richness of these stories and exploring the themes that emerged during the sense-making session. Our hope is that these narratives and insights will not only inspire but also inform our collective efforts to foster a more inclusive and supportive community.

### **Brief Overview of Appreciative Inquiry Process**

For further insight into the methodology employed in this initiative, a brief overview of the Appreciative Inquiry process is provided in the attached appendix. This outlines the key steps taken by the team from Healthwatch and Cambridgeshire County Council during the period of August to December 2023.

## **Story Transcripts and Sense-Making Conclusions: A Learning Journey**

Within the subsequent sections, you will find the unfiltered transcripts of the stories collected during this pioneering Appreciative Inquiry effort. This marks the team's initial practical application of their training, resulting in a collective learning curve for all involved. Notably, participants occasionally diverged from the set questions, leading to some of the most intriguing and revealing narratives. The diversity and depth of these stories contribute to the unique richness of this report.

We invite you to delve into these transcripts and the conclusions drawn during the sense-making session, reflecting the authentic experiences and insights shared by our community. This learning journey serves as a testament to the power of embracing unpredictability in the pursuit of understanding and celebrating the positive aspects of digital inclusion and healthcare experiences.

### **The questions asked were:**

Where do you live? What is the name of your doctor's surgery?

1. Have you used your GP in any other way than face to face? (them or family)
2. How do you like to access your GP?
3. What would help you to access digital services? (give examples)
4. Is there anything else you could do to help your community use digital services?

### **The stories:**

#### **Huntingdon Library – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023**

##### **1. Male aged 40-50, Roman Gate Surgery**

I prefer to make appointments via a telephone call. I know a lot of people struggle to even register if they're not online. Otherwise, you have to go when they're open, which is difficult. It would be good if GPs had longer opening hours to help this. We can help people access online and printing off forms. We've had a lot of young people, teenagers, coming in this summer and they can't use a mouse or keyboard which was a surprise. We've had to show them. It would help if GPs all used the same system and you could access them through one site.

##### **2. Female aged 15-16, Roman Gate Surgery**

I get really frustrated when I have a blood test and can't see the results online and they don't tell you if they're fine. I think it's important to have

some face-to-face appointments in the first instance at least. But if it's just a follow up then they could be online. My parents tend to phone up and make my appointments for me. It's annoying because they have to phone up really early, and there's usually a queue. I could help people learn how to use things like QR codes. A lot of people don't know how to use them if they're older.

### **3. Female aged 92, Alconbury Surgery**

I only use online for repeat prescriptions. If I want an appointment then there's a two to three week wait, but if I go in then I usually get it on the day. I can't use the phone due to my hearing not being so good. I'm not on the internet, I can't see the keys. We moved here to be closer to our children, but they've now moved elsewhere, which is annoying. I've heard we're going to lose the main phone line in the village at some point. Our village surgery know us very well and will find us an appointment if we need one. We need any forms to be on paper. I could do online, but it would need to be predictable. The thing is they move things and they're never where they were the last time. We have more doctors now at the surgery but we realise they're under pressure. The surgery needs more specialist nurses. Especially for the elderly. We can't always get there especially when we live in a rural village. We've found nurses aren't accessible. We've had house calls. We're really worried about the impact of having 3000 new houses built in Alconbury. Sometimes the surgery is shut for training days. I think this is wrong. Their training shouldn't impact on the public. They should do their training after hours.

### **4. Female aged 65-70, Papworth Surgery**

I was at Acorn. I worked for 40 years in the health service. I was a senior midwife and my family never saw me. I see the children and their mums in town, still they know who I am. I worked hard. If I wasn't happy with a baby's progress I wouldn't leave until I knew they were improving. I was in the states and my husband was ill here. My daughter called the GP but they wouldn't do anything. I came home and he died of sepsis. All he needed was antibiotics. They blamed me for his death saying, "but you had medical knowledge". After that I went to Papworth. I've been at a few surgeries and Papworth is the best. You see Papworth is built on disabilities. I can drive but I choose to get the bus. Because if I don't and if people don't, they will take it away from them who need it. I won't talk to the surgery, only face to face. Because there are people who need face to face, if we don't use it they will take it away. We have to fight for others. I'll turn up in rugged clothes and I won't speak properly so they don't know me there, not really. Godmanchester is a difficult place to live if you're not born there. I go to the Baptist church and people wait a long time to use NHS but they don't know the system. The worst thing about the NHS is that people don't talk to each other. They don't know what each other are doing. I think the lack of education is the biggest issue in this country. People aren't educated in how to use the system. None of it is fair.

## **Huntingdon Library - 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023**

### **5. Female with grandchild, Northcote Surgery**

I live in a village near St Ives. Used to be with the surgery by the Co Op in St Ives... Riverport Medical Practice. I use text with my GP for blood pressure - to send readings or answer a questionnaire. It's great for me but not so much for my parents who can't use the technology. They would prefer to access face-to-face.

I book things (with the surgery) online. My parents can't though. We need to have services accessible to everybody. Some can't access through text! It needs to be for all. (Some need) the traditional way - phone call - to access a service. Might inundate but they could identify e.g. by PIN number that a person is elderly. Face-to-face service. It needs to be.

I can help those who can't (use digital services). I help them. Get on my phone and help. They would be struggling to access GP, covid vaccination... they wouldn't be able! Frustrated by phone, frustrated by e-mail. Have contributed to NHS whole life, now can't even get a letter!

(There was a brief additional conversation about letters and knowing they're genuine. The respondent said they have a large family who are happy to check. She repeated that the communication should be accessible to all).

### **6. Mother with child, Roman Gate GP, Godmanchester**

I have had some over-the-phone appointments. One for the little one, then had to go in anyway. Was a good first interaction. My husband had an appointment which ended up with a prescription over the phone.

We call (to access GP). Bit long. Not tend to do online yet, don't think the surgery has that.

(Using digital) it depends how quickly would make things. Not sure. I appreciate people could struggle but I'm not sure.

I could set up 1:1s to help show people. Volunteer at weekends.

## **Huntingdon Library 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023**

**7.** My doctor's surgery is Godmanchester – Roman Gate. I can contact my doctor's quite easily. I've got the app on my phone where I can order my prescriptions, look at my results, that sort of thing. It's the NHS App, not one just for the doctor's surgery. You can't book appointments through that, you have to ring at 8.30 in the morning to get an appointment. It hasn't been too bad to be honest.

I was talking about this with my daughter, who lives in Wetherby, they fill out a

form instead of calling. That sounds like a good idea to me. You just fill out a form saying what's wrong and they can then get someone to contact you. It wouldn't bother me who would read it, or who it is that contacts me. They've heard and seen it all.

I know a lot of people I know don't use the app. I'll say, 'I'll show you how to download the app', but they don't want to. It's a generation thing. Most people don't want to go to the doctor's either if they know it's just a throat thing. But I don't mind. They do check your notes when you get in touch. At Roman Gate they text you after you give a sample or something, it'll say it's all clear or whatever. They might get a letter from a different department and they'll text you to tell you that. The only confusing thing was when I got the text I thought I had to ring them immediately but they said, no, it's a routine thing so that means you do the routine appointment and call in the morning at 8.30am, which is fine. You can't argue with the system, and I'm just glad to see someone.

**8.** It's an age thing, I live in a residential park home with 14 other people and they're all older and don't want to do it. They use kindles and Facebook but maybe it's about health. I'll ask if they have the app but maybe they don't want to know about their health. Me, I want to know. You can look at your notes and I like to look back at blood test results as they explain what they should be and what they've tested for. I used to work at a doctor's surgery, so I like to be nosey.

Older people aren't very app friendly. I think the letter or form idea is a good idea as older people don't like computers. I think it might help the system as they can read through faster and give it to the right person so that should make it run smoother. I've had quite good service.

## **St. Ives – 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

### **9. Females 40-50 years – Grove surgery and Fenland**

The Dr's are coming into the Library soon to give digital support. I don't get to see my doctor face to face too often. I speak to them mostly over the phone. It's different in Fens. I had to go in and take my own blood pressure using their machine. I normally go in to make an appointment. I keep forgetting my passwords for the online systems they use. Fenland have a really good online system. I suppose it's just different in the Fens. If I can't call at 8am and get an appointment. It seems 8am hits and they're out of appointments. The whole experience feels different from before Covid. I can't understand or pinpoint what exactly has changed. They seem to triage differently or more. The practice approached the library to ask if we can provide a space for them to do sessions with people on how to use the online system. Also, there are so many different systems between surgeries you can't

possibly learn all of them to help people. Clearly, they know people are struggling to book online otherwise they wouldn't be doing these sessions.

### **10. Female 50's- Spinney**

Our GP has Clinic where you can message them directly. They'll ask you to send a photo if it's a rash or something, but they almost always say it's too blurry and that you need to come in anyway. It seems pointless. Even over the phone it leads to an appointment anyway. If I'm with my daughter I need to just go in because she has mental health problems. Even with Clinic they'll only accept messages between certain times and if you try to message them outside those times your message is just deleted. You can't make any appointments in advance. My daughter used to get a 3 month follow up automatically but now she has to wait 3 months and then attempt to make her own appointment. It can take her weeks to get an appointment. I'd prefer that they see someone and make a follow up appointment there and then. It's important to have both options of online and the phone. A lot of older people can't cope and need a lot of help from the library with computers anyway. A gentleman was going through radiotherapy and clearly not well was referred to P3. He turned up and they weren't here. He made an appointment to see them a few weeks later. Turned up and they weren't here again. He had come directly from his radiotherapy. It does nothing for a person or the service if the service is unreliable.

### **11. Older female with sister in marketplace St Ives, Grove Medical Practice**

Haven't seen a GP in the three years since I got (moved) here. Normally you'd have a new patient interview. Didn't happen. I see a nurse once a year for a blood test but no GP appointment.

I was knocked down by a car on my way to one of those (blood test) appointments and the doctor didn't see me! Went to hospital, had a hip X-ray then tried to see GP but wouldn't see me because I went to hospital. I said I need to see someone about my knee. Referred for physio at Doddington. The doctors had said I didn't need an appointment. I'm not/I wasn't happy but there's not much choice.

Tried to phone 111. Tell her if she really wants an X ray to go to Doddington. It was on the way to the surgery for a blood test when I was knocked down. I should have contacted the Police.

I can use online access. Get repeat prescriptions online. I don't know. Surgery always full.

What would happen if you collapsed with a stroke? Neighbours took me to Hinchingbrooke when I was bleeding from a foot injury with the dishwasher. Had called 111. Was told ambulance won't come if you stop bleeding. Ended up with 5 stitches.

## **12. Female in marketplace, Spinney Surgery**

Digital/online doesn't work. Spent ages trying to do online form just to speak to a doctor. The questions aren't all applicable – the form isn't good. It says check (where the problem is) on body map. Check on extra and the first one disappears! Only allows a certain number of characters too. Filled it in. Tried to click. Didn't allow. Went back up the page to check and the whole thing disappeared!

I work before and after school times to provide wrap around care. Phoned (surgery) to say I couldn't do the online form. They said we can't do it for you, you'll have to come to the surgery to do it. They expected me to go when in pain! I don't drive and I live in Hemingford. When I said I have no access to the internet she then said I can do it for you!

How many people are not getting to see a doctor when all they are offering is online? How may struggle with online? Takes ages to sort!

I've only just sorted this now; it's taken from 09.30 to 12.30 to sort! There are only two buses out of the village – one on Monday, one on Friday. Had to get a taxi. £8 one way so will probably be £16 in total. On a limited budget. All I wanted to do was discuss my pain, the options.

Online is fine for those who have the time, can do it at work. But they also need to allow people to talk to a human.

I'm self-taught, not brought up with a computer. People my age and upwards, this is an issue for.

New for us, always had access to a phone. This is a new system, but they've just gone from one to the other (straight in).

I needed to show... to take photos. Of my back! What if I lived on my own?

My son is on the autistic spectrum. He can't do forms. He has a communication issue. I have to go (with him) and explain but I need his input whilst explaining in case I get it wrong.

Everyone in this country is being forced to go down the technical route.

Banking, (something else) and now doctors. Don't necessarily need to see someone, just speak!

## **13. Female outside Grove Medical Practice**

Older people don't like it (digital access). There's a lot of poverty and people can't access digitally. A lot of mistrust too about technology and scams.

Certain age brackets don't like it. There's not a lot of money about so can't afford (devices).

A lot of patients can contact social prescriber directly. Probably not how it should be done but it's a way round. We do have a digital guru in the waiting room who will connect, talk with patients and show them how to use (the website). It's advertised on Facebook which isn't helpful for those who aren't online! Website is rubbish too. Not easy to follow. No obvious 'click here for this'.

Could do with some digital trainers who can show people. Library are good.

We cover vast area of rural communities. Hemingford Hub, parish church.

Certain age bracket are left behind.



It's worrying what's out there. Two people I know were scammed. Lost loads of money. Got it back. £15k. One was a lady who used to work in banking! We're racing ahead with technology at such a speed. Timebank would be good to get younger generation helping older. St Ives and Somersham timebanks. HACT bus. P3 were going into the library but have stopped temporarily.

### **St Neots 20th November 2023**

**14.** I live here in St Neots and I'm 89 years old. You can't see anyone at Lakeside, they're useless. You have to ring up at 8am and by the time you get through there's no appointments so I ask, 'Can you make me an appointment for tomorrow?' and they say you have to ring back in the morning. They don't ring you back if they're meant to call you either. The last time I had an appointment it was on the phone. I haven't had a face-to-face appointment since before covid so probably 4 years. I used to regularly see a Doctor at Eaton Socon Health Clinic every sixth months for a check-up that wouldn't take long.

**15.** I live in St Neots and I'm with Almond Road surgery. I don't do video calls, but I prefer over the phone. I have had face to face recently. The surgery performs reasonably well. The reception part, with prescriptions and such, is not as easy as I'd like it to be. I've had to create my own system for dealing with that. I go to the GP now to pick up a prescription and bring it to the pharmacy myself. I had to do this as prescriptions were either getting lost or taking such a long time to get sent over, or they wouldn't be signed, there was too much back and forth and could sometimes take 3, 4 or 5 days and now it will just take me an hour and half to do it myself.

I wouldn't use digital services online as I don't trust it. I don't trust them to pick up my message. I tried before and there was a delay. Even when I email them about a repeat prescription, I call them to make sure they've received it. Text service doesn't come through – it's just not consistent. Going on holiday is a pain as I need more of my regular medication and have to order it which can be problematic.

I have a few health conditions, which I think helps in getting appointments. I don't have to wait.

We have a lady that comes to the library because the banks have closed to help people do it online. It'll need support to show people how to do that. I think about my aunt who we care for a lot, and it just wouldn't work for her. She can't even open an email safely and is suspicious asking 'why do they need my DOB'? People need handholding. As soon as you stop working you get out of the loop.

Care homes should have part of the training for staff there is to coach people through the online systems. I'd hate for doctor's surgeries to get to the point where they close off from people and it's only online. There's room for community groups to come together to provide the support. The lack of

customer service and rushing everyone through is a problem. I've never had a problem for an appointment, they'll still see me straight away, but as I say, a health condition might help that.

**16.** I live and work in St Neots and go to the Health Centre in Moore's Walk. I've a sore ankle and problem with my other foot and I'm expected to walk to Little Paxton for an appointment (and back again). The buses here are unreliable and I can't miss the appointment as I've waited so long for it – they gave me an appointment on 30th September, but I was working, so the next date is 13th December as they only do the special clinic on a Monday or a Wednesday. I don't think I can call community transport as that's just for old people to use.

Quite often I talk to them on the phone, but I find it a bit odd as I can't understand their foreign accent. I have much more rapport in person with people. I find it hard to understand on the phone.

I've never used the online booking – never even tried it. I don't like anything online. My dad does more online than I do. I don't do anything online. I don't like banking.

I haven't had to do anything hard yet, though I had to send money to my brother and my son had to do it.

I did book my covid jabs all online. I guess if that's all you have as an option then you have to do that. I prefer to talk in person. When you go online I'm worried that you have to give your symptoms. I don't have a laptop now that my son moved out and took it with him so I only have a phone.

### **St. Neots, Priory Centre, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

#### **17. Young male, Little Paxton Surgery**

"I barely go to the doctor's as I'm rarely ill; if I do get unwell, I tend to go to the pharmacist for advice. I've used the NHS app, which has an online booking system, but my doctors don't use it [online booking system]. The NHS app is useful as it can direct me to other services, and I prefer to use online as it is quick and easy, and I don't need help that often.

My family sometimes walks to the surgery as we live close to it but only if we can't get hold of anyone on the phone.

Being deaf is very difficult for people to contact their GP by phone, this happened recently to my brother who had an ear problem, and it could be that people [who are deaf] can't use services. As they [GP surgery] don't have the money they need to think about this, but don't know how to remedy it."

#### **18. Older lady with hearing problem. NHS centre in St. Neots.**

"Phones are no good for me, I wear a hearing aid in one ear and I'm totally deaf in the other, but I also find screens really difficult. I don't do computers. I haven't tried to use online bookings and I don't trust online.

I had a hearing problem; it took two weeks to get a prescription for an ear infection and in the end it was a paramedic who sorted it out for me not GP or pharmacist. I was in a lot of pain and couldn't hear anything. I can't do it [use computers]. The NHS needs to think about older people like me.

My husband goes to the Cedar center, I used to go there but there is no appointments there for up to three weeks so I changed my doctors in surgery but it turns out they're all the same except for Staughton where I've heard they're really good and Kimbolton is good too. It's the big surgeries like mine that aren't working, the ones that are joining together. I feel like I have no support with my hearing problem, people my age aren't up to date with all these gizmos"

### **Huntingdon Library 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023**

#### **19. Female with child. Godmanchester/Roman Gate Surgery**

I can't get access to system one for my child (19 months), he has health conditions, so we have regular contact with the GP. I can use the service [system one] to access my own records but not my sons. This is very frustrating for me and seems ridiculous.

I am also struggling to get the covid jab for my son despite his eligibility because of his health condition. The GP and Hinchinbrooke hospital have both recommended that he has the vaccination, but I have been unable to get this for him despite trying since September.

Hinchinbrook has stopped the vaccination service for children and referred me back to my GP, the GP says they can't do kids and to call 119, when I called 119 I was told he was not eligible so sent back to the GP who passed me to the ICB they said I had to wait till the 16th of October but I can't book this online as I don't have access to system online it's been really frustrating. My son's under three hospitals two of which use my chart and one does not it feels like his care is not joined up and this whole experience is adding to the stress of looking after a sick child.

#### **20. Middle aged man, Huntingdon/Charles Hicks Centre**

I've had phone consultations sometimes, especially during COVID access to my surgery was via the phone. I saw the GP yesterday for blood tests and I can get the results from a QR code but I didn't know how to do this and I'm good with it usually.

An app for the surgery would be good and I wouldn't mind talking to someone on Teams. I'd be really happy to do this if it worked as it would save me time.

One idea I have is to use the computers at the library for training. This would help people with costs as having the Internet on the hardware is expensive.

## **Sense making**

### Challenges in Accessing and Navigating Digital Healthcare Services

#### Overview:

The following insights were gathered from community members during our Appreciative Inquiry initiative, highlighting significant challenges in accessing and navigating digital healthcare services.

#### **1. Complexity and Disconnection:**

- The online service is perceived as complicated and difficult to access.
- Various healthcare systems lack uniformity and fail to connect with each other, leading to a disjointed user experience.
- Lack of linkage and information sharing among hospitals, NHS, and GPs poses a considerable challenge.

#### **2. Accessibility Issues for Older Adults:**

- Older individuals face difficulty accessing online services, not due to a lack of technological familiarity, but because of complexities and non-user-friendly interfaces.
- Some older adults are entirely unwilling or unable to access digital platforms, lacking viable alternatives.

#### **3. Mistrust in Digital Services:**

- Mistrust exists regarding the confidentiality and handling of information when using digital services.

#### **4. Communication Barriers:**

- Hearing issues hinder participation in phone or screen appointments.
- Accents can pose difficulties in understanding during appointments.

#### **5. Patient's Burden and Continuity of Care:**

- Patients feel burdened with the responsibility of making appointments, self-referring, and facing limited booking options.

- Navigation through various platforms for continued care is a common challenge.
- Conflicting advice from different healthcare providers creates confusion.

#### **6. Appointment Challenges:**

- Difficulty in forward planning due to work commitments.
- The current system prioritises urgent care, potentially neglecting regular or easily diagnosed issues.

#### **7. Digital Literacy Support:**

- Offers of help to enhance digital literacy were mentioned, including initiatives at libraries and potential digital guru roles in doctor's surgeries.

#### **Conclusion:**

The report challenges the need for a more user-friendly, interconnected, and patient-centric approach in digital healthcare services. Addressing these issues is pivotal to ensure equitable access and a positive healthcare experience for all community members.