

# Spotlight on GP Access



# Contents

Contents.....1

Spotlight on - GP Access.....2

What we heard.....3

Next Steps.....5

# Spotlight on – GP Access

On March 13<sup>th</sup> 2023, Healthwatch Swindon held their first open meeting for both public, voluntary organisations and health and care professionals. These meetings are an opportunity to shine a light on areas of health and care, provide information and gain valuable feedback about how well services are doing in Swindon.

In Autumn 2022, the Brunel Health Group shared their proposed Enhanced Access (EA) service plans to a Patient Participation Group (PPG) forum.

## [Healthwatch Swindon PPG Forum Meeting 27th September](#)

The EA's objective was to provide more appointments, helping to offer a greater range of services to the public. This was to be achieved through the introduction of an online video service via LIVI and Saturday morning clinics.

Following the EA being launched, Healthwatch Swindon wanted to touch base with the public to find out if access to primary care had improved.

During our first Spotlight On meeting, we focussed on 3 core questions:

**Have the additional appointments offered, made accessing primary care easier?**

**Have you found the new LIVI system easy to use?**

**What are your key concerns when trying to access primary care?**

# What we heard

 Eldene practice manager, said LIVI is working well. But it's not well advertised and some patients have reported they've had to go private 

Between January 2023 – March 2023, Healthwatch Swindon received 64 pieces of feedback regarding difficulties accessing primary care. With an emphasis on the difficulties booking appointments.

During our meeting, people reported that GP appointments have been achievable but appointments to get a blood test have been “difficult”, reporting waits of at least 3 weeks.

With others stating they've had to rely on their hospital consultants booking their routine in practice appointments, as they're unable to facilitate the booking through the current system.

 I turned to LIVI, initially against my wishes, however the consultation was exceptional 

People's views of LIVI were mixed. Especially in relation to how well it was advertised in practice, along with how well they are working in conjunction with practices that have subscribed to use LIVI.

Some people noted, Dr's using LIVI had difficulties arranging appointments and accessing medical reports. But everyone who had used LIVI was very complimentary about how well prepared their Dr's were.

Concerns were raised about the direction of travel with regards to LIVI and referrals. Are they able to access the same information as local GP's?

 Smooth service, it's really good 

Key concerns with accessing primary care all revolved around communication. With some noting that when trying to book an appointment over the phone, at no point was LIVI suggested as an alternative when unable to book a routine appointment in practice.

“LIVI was advertised in practice, but where else?”

“Communication from Ashington House is really awful”

“what should patients expect from LIVI?”

“System one has been fabulous”

“LIVI website link is confusing”

6 Due to communication problems, I now have all health appointments at Oxford hospital. They are great at sharing information; the team are brilliant especially their Learning Disability team. I’m never leaving Oxford.



# Next Steps

All feedback received will be shared with Healthwatch England to support the growing concerns of GP access across the country.

With communication being the forefront of the feedback received, we propose to;

- Request to work with Brunel Health Group and LIVI to provide answers to the concerns raised.
- Conduct a number of 'mystery shop' calls to various surgeries to see if staff are actively promoting LIVI to their patients.

Healthwatch Swindon are committed to voicing patient's views to help improve services. Should you wish to share your views or work with us to enhance patient experience, please do get in touch by emailing [info@healthwatchswindon.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchswindon.org.uk).

We would also like to thank everyone who participated and provided feedback about their experience of accessing GP services in Swindon.



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