

Access to Primary Care Services

Health and Wellbeing Board
Jan 2024

Background

- In March 2021, a task group was set up by members of Brent Council's Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee to contribute to a shared vision on GP access in Brent.
- A report was published '**No One Left Behind' GP Access in Brent** with **recommendations put forward for key partners** including: Brent Council's Cabinet, Brent Integrated Care Partnership (ICP), North West London Integrated Care Board (then Clinical Commissioning Group), North West London Integrated Care System (NWL ICS) and local Primary Care Networks (PCNs).
 - It is recognised that good access to GP led services in Brent is central to ensuring that all residents receive the right healthcare, in the right setting, at the right time. The publication of this report on GP Access in Brent highlighted the inequality in access to GP led services. While GP practices remained open during the pandemic of 2020-2021, the model of consultation was adapted to protect both patients and clinicians, a move to telephone consultation, on-line consultations and remote consultations was adapted.
 - The recovery phase, post the pandemic years focused on 'recovery', where practices attempted to catch up on services which may not have been fully accessed during the pandemic e.g. cancer screening. The adaption to consultation forms (on-line, telephone, remote) has been recognised as introducing increased accessibility to certain patient groups, especially the more digitally savvy population group. The digital innovations introduced during the pandemic era also introduced inequity in access for the more traditional population group.
- In April 2023, North West London ICB, Brent Borough Team provided a **progress report on improving access to primary care services** for patients registered with Brent GP surgeries, based on the recommendations listed in the report above.
- This report, provides further update and progress on the access priorities, the challenges and the planned proposals for further improving access to primary care services in Brent.

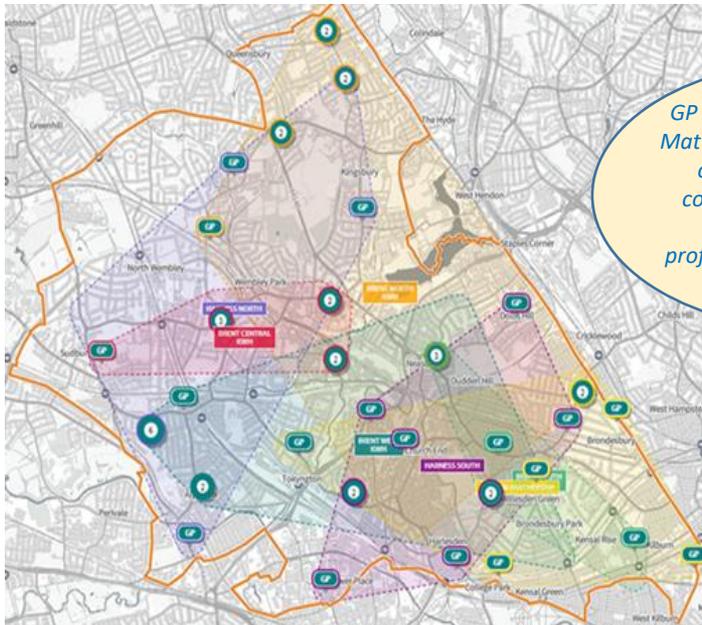
Overview of Access

- GP access refers to the availability and means by which individuals can access the services provided by General Practitioners (GPs)
- Access to GPs is a crucial aspect of primary healthcare, ensuring that individuals can receive timely medical advice, diagnosis, treatment, and ongoing care
- Efficient and effective GP access is essential for promoting preventive care, early intervention, and the management of chronic conditions. It contributes to overall community health and helps address health disparities by ensuring that individuals have timely access to the appropriate level of care.
- The integration of community pharmacy access with GP access is crucial for creating a seamless and patient-centered healthcare system
- This collaboration enhances the efficiency of primary care services, improves patient outcomes, and contributes to a more comprehensive and coordinated healthcare delivery system.

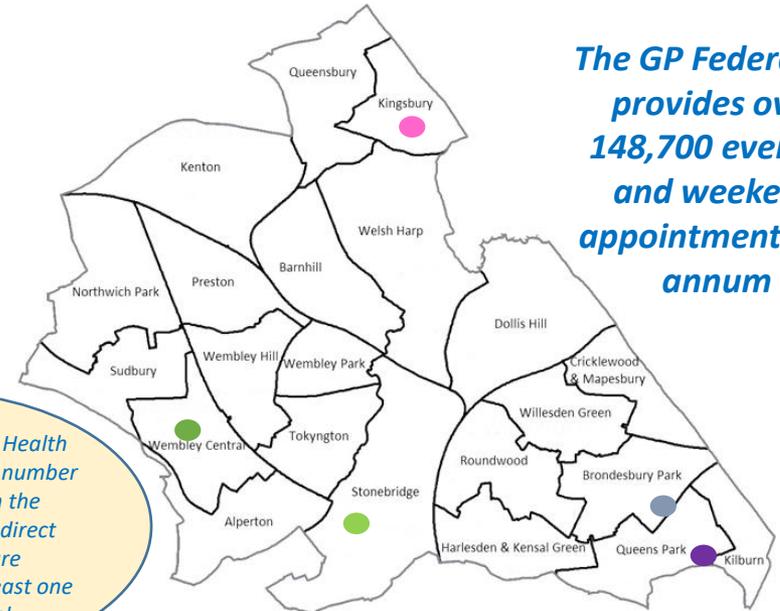
Current Landscape

GP PRACTICES

- ✓ **51 GP practices** in Brent, across 7 PCNs (3 Federations – Harness (x2 PCNs), Kilburn (x1 PCN), Kingsbury & Willesden (x4 PCNs))
- ✓ All practices provide core GP services **Mon-Fri 8.00am – 6.30pm**
- ✓ All practices offer online consultation



GP practices and Brent Health Matters team provide a number of outreach clinics in the community providing direct access to healthcare professionals, with at least one event held per week.



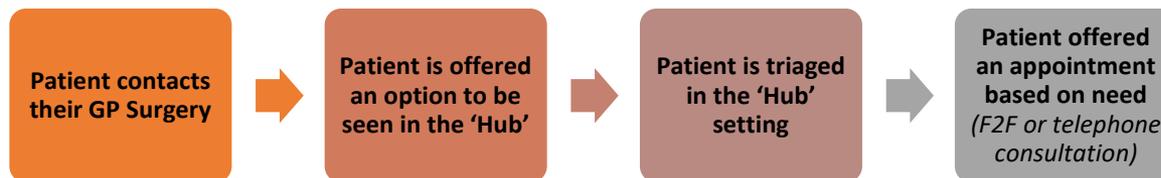
The GP Federation provides over 148,700 evening and weekend appointments per annum

ENHANCED ACCESS HUBS

- ✓ 5 sites for **Enhanced Access Hubs** delivered via PCN groupings
- ✓ Standard opening hours **Mon-Fri 6.30pm – 8.00pm** and **Sat 9.00am – 5.00 pm**
- ✓ Each federation has a direct patient access telephone number

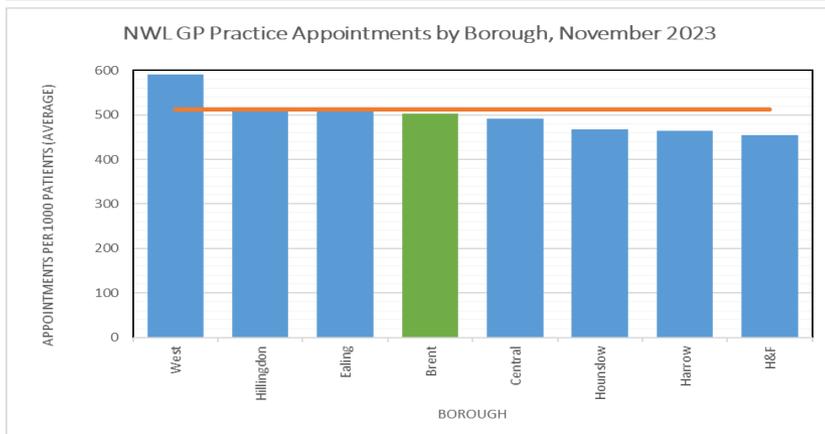
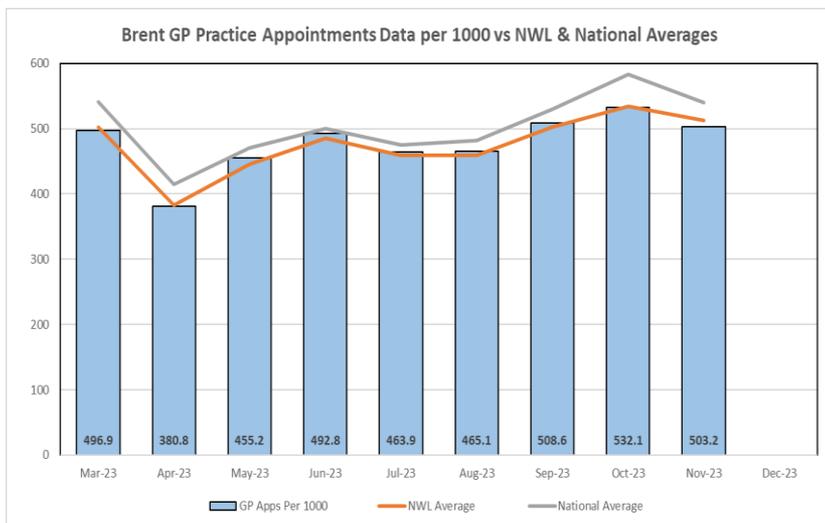
PILOT – Managing on the Day Demand

- The demand for GP led appointments in Brent continues to increase, the higher deprivation factors within the Borough means more patients are reliant on their GP practice as a gateway to access services e.g. social care, social prescribing.
- Demand for GP led appointments are at its highest during core hours, where patients tend to attend Urgent Treatment Centers when they are unable to secure an appointment in general practice.
- The appointment capacity in GP practices and in Enhanced Access Hubs remains high, with Brent being second highest in NW London for practice level appointments. Irrespective of the high level appointment activity, demand continues to outstrip supply.
- The 3 PCN groupings are currently piloting Same Day Access for the period Nov 2023 – Mar 2024



- These additional appointments are provided from the current enhanced access hub sites
 - Harness → Mon to Fri 9.00am – 6.30pm
 - Kilburn → Mon to Fri 3.00pm – 6.00pm
 - K&W → Mon to Fri 9.00am – 6.30pm
- Each hub has a direct access number available to patients

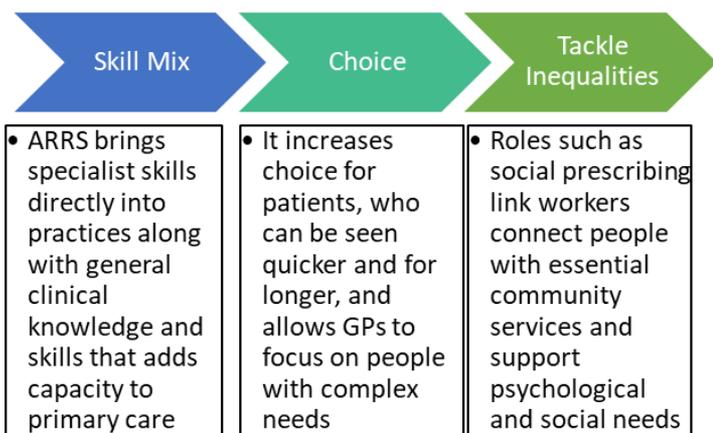
GP Led Appointment Data



- Availability of GP led appointments are at their highest they have ever been since the last five years – the numbers of appointments offered by practices in Brent is the fourth highest in North West London.
- In total, since October 2022, Brent has offered **2.7 million appointments**, working out to be **circa 5 appointments per patient per year**
- Over the past 12 months, Brent has offered an average of 210,000 appointments per calendar month to their patients.
- Upwards of **55% of these appointments offered has been face to face**, with the other appointments split across Telephone, online and home visits

Reference: [Appointments in General Practice - NHS Digital](#)

Advanced and Specialist Roles (ARRS)



The main success story in Brent has been an increase in ARRS recruited into General Practice – an increase of **134% WTE since April 2022** (an increase from 88 WTE to 206 WTE in Oct 2023). Turnover of staff remains high and the capacity for training and development of new recruits remains a challenge.

The additional staffing levels increase capacity in general practice which translate to an improvement in access to primary care (additional appointments).

ARRS in Brent	Role
Care Coordinator	Facilitate and coordinate comprehensive healthcare services for individuals, ensuring continuity of care and collaboration among various healthcare providers
Clinical Pharmacist	Optimise patient medication therapy by collaborating with healthcare teams to ensure safe, effective, and evidence-based use of medications
Social prescribing link worker	Facilitates connections between people and non-medical community-based activities, groups, and services, addressing practical, social, and emotional needs. This includes providing access to specialist advice services, as well as involvement in activities such as the arts, physical activity, and nature. Furthermore, they assist individuals in identifying issues affecting their health and wellbeing while collaboratively creating personalized care and support plans.
First contact physiotherapist	Assesses, diagnoses, treats, and manages musculoskeletal (MSK) problems, prescribes medication within their scope, develops skills in injection therapy, performs diagnostic investigations, signposts/refers to health and care services, conducts audits of health and care practice, and requests/progresses investigations.
Dietitian	Provides advice on dietetics to address various concerns such as diabetes, weight management, food allergies, and conditions like coeliac, gastrointestinal, or metabolic diseases. They prescribe medication within their scope and also play a role in educating and supporting patients.
General Practice Assistant	Arranges clinical support by handling referrals, coordinating tests, and ensuring follow-ups. They conduct simple clinical observations, offer administrative support by preparing letters and completing forms for GPs to sign, and take the time to explain procedures to patients

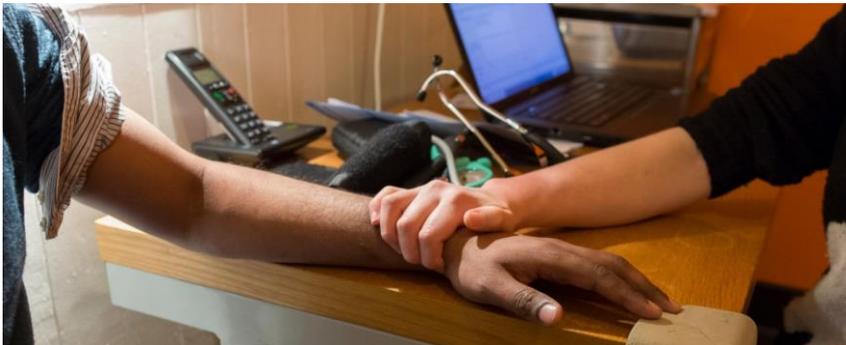


SAFE SURGERIES

A Safe Surgery can be any GP practice which commits to taking steps to tackle the barriers faced by many migrants in accessing healthcare.

This ensures that lack of ID or proof of address, immigration status or language are not barriers to patient registration.

In Brent, all 100% of our GP practices are accredited as a safe surgery. This shows their commitment to recognise the barriers to healthcare access that exist, particularly for migrants in vulnerable circumstances, and believe that small changes in practice can make a difference.



Enhanced Services

These are services that do not form part of the GP core national contract. The aim of these services is:

1. Consistent and equitable access of Primary Care Services across North West London (providing services closer to the patient's home)
2. Increase Primary Care Transformation through out Primary Care Networks and Localities
3. Equalise investment across boroughs, including increasing investment in historical underfunded areas
4. Ensure population coverage. Where a practice is unable to provide a service PCNs are encouraged to facilitate inter-practice referral to another practice or to provide and deliver the service at scale to ensure equity in service provision.

Spirometry

Assess and monitor respiratory function – offered across a few sites in the borough

Anticoagulation

Management and monitoring of anticoagulant therapy

Wound Care

Assessment, treatment, and management of various types of wounds

Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring

Blood pressure monitoring over a 24-hour period

Hypertension Management

Case finding and management, with a particular focus in specific ethnic groups

Medicines Management

Enhance the safe, effective and efficient use of medication

Diabetes

Initiatives aimed at improving the management and outcomes of individuals with diabetes and pre-diabetes

Asylum Seekers

Health screening and support to those in Interim Accommodation Centres (Hotels)

Phlebotomy

Collection of blood sample
(adults and children)

Mental Health

Enhanced Case Management of patients with Serious Mental Illness and Complex Mental Health Needs

Proactive Health Assessment in the homeless, Housebound and Supported Care Living

Atrial Fibrillation

Screening to improve diagnosis

Identifying and Supporting Carers

Near Patient Testing

Safe prescribing and monitoring of DMARD drugs

Electrocardiogram (ECG)

Monitoring for heart conditions

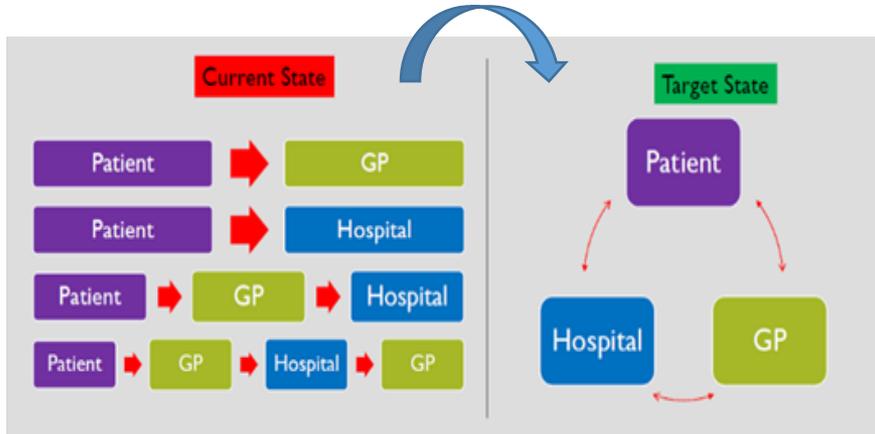
Ring Pessary

Fitting, management and follow-up of women with a ring pessary

Latent Tuberculosis Infection

Initiative focused on the identification, evaluation, and management of individuals with latent tuberculosis infection

Paediatric Hubs



In Brent there are currently FOUR Paediatric hubs, and Multi-Disciplinary Teams have been established with oversight from a paediatric consultant

- K&W South PCN, Gladstone Medical Centre
- Harness South PCN, Brentfield Medical Centre
- K&W West PCN, Stanley Corner Medical Centre
- Harness North PCN, Willow Tree Family Practice

Practices have been identified in the other PCNs to expand the service further

The Paediatric hubs aim to:

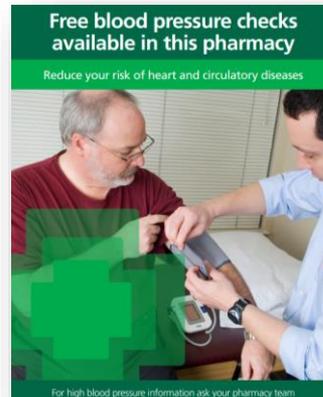
- Improve care pathways for children and their families within the community
- Reduce waiting list/waiting time
- Better joint working across sectors and continuity of care
- Improve parental confidence in local services
- Increase care satisfaction



February 2023 – August 2023

- 68 children seen in the two sites that went live first
- Main presentation: new-born baby concerns, abdominal pains, headaches, dizziness, vomiting, breathing concerns, loss of appetite and behavioural concerns.

Community Pharmacy Services



**Expansion of
Contraception Service
1 Dec 2023**

- Introduction of initiation of oral contraception in community pharmacies
- Continue with the ongoing supply of oral contraception

**Relaunch Blood Pressure
Check Service
1 Dec 2023**

- Blood pressure checks help to identify people with undiagnosed blood pressure at risk of heart attack and stroke

**Launch Pharmacy First
31 Jan 2024**

(subject to the appropriate digital systems being in place)

- New service to include 7 new clinical pathways
- Replace the Community Pharmacy Consultation Service (CPCS)

NHS App

- ✓ The NHS App was launched in January 2019
- ✓ It has evolved over the years proving itself as a crucial tool
- ✓ The NHS App has been designed, built, tested and clinically reviewed with patient safety at its heart
- ✓ The NHS Apps can be downloaded from the app store
- ✓ Once downloaded, patients need to go through the safe registration process
- ✓ The app aims to empower individuals in managing their health and interacting with healthcare services more efficiently
- ✓ Resources to support utilisation of the NHS App available at following link: [NHS App - NHS Digital](#)



Functionalities within the NHS App:

- ✓ Online consultation
- ✓ Messaging service
- ✓ Can reach patients regardless of changed phone numbers
- ✓ Access to patient records, including reading new entries. This applies to prospective record entries and not historic data.
- ✓ Book, view and cancel appointments
- ✓ Interaction with referrals
- ✓ Prescription ordering
- ✓ Get health advice from trusted NHS resources
- ✓ View and manage care plans
- ✓ Patient registration

'No One Left Behind' Recommendations (1 of 4)

	Recommendation	Progress
1	Brent Council's Cabinet works with NWL ICS to ensure fair funding for local health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is a complex process that involves considerations of population needs, service delivery costs, and the equitable distribution of resources. - Substantial investment has been made into Brent for delivery of Enhanced Services, equalising investment across the 8 NW London Boroughs – slide 9 - Significant increase in Additional Roles has improved access to primary care appointments with patients seen by the most suitable, skilled health care professional for their need – slide 7 - A business case is going through due diligence for increased investment into Mental Health services in the Borough
2	Brent PCNs demonstrate a clear career development pathway for health care professionals in order to make best use of professional practice staff that enables greater capacity and more appropriate use of GPs. Brent PCNs should report progress against the development pathway to Brent ICP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An extensive existing training programme is in place for staff within primary care, optimising the use of professional practice staff, enhancing their capacity, and promoting more appropriate utilisation of GPs. - The NW London Training Hub which operates across the eight Boroughs commissions and procures training based on local needs, the economies of scale achieved from this model ensures a more varied and encompassing agenda on training. - Formal career pathways are available to enhance specialist skills e.g. independent prescribers, Salaried Portfolio Innovation schemes for GPs and Nurses - Community Pharmacy services further encourages additional access for patients to be seen in the right setting by the right professional – slide 11

'No One Left Behind' Recommendations (2 of 4)

	Recommendation	Progress
3	<p>Brent PCNs adopt a GP access and treatment standard that all GP practices sign up to and are accountable to. The standard should describe what services are available and what patients can expect from them. All patient participation groups (PPGs) should be involved in setting this standard, and PPGs should be regularly updated on the performance of the standard</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ARRS staff, an increase of 134% WTE since April 2022 – slide 7 - 100% of Brent GP practices are accredited as a safe surgery to ensure that lack of ID or proof of address, immigration status or language are not barriers to patient registration – slide 8 - Care navigators can occupy many roles and play a crucial part in helping people get the right support, at the right time, to help manage a wide range of needs. 53% of practices have enrolled staff on care navigation training, with the aim for all Brent practices and PCNs to have at least one member of staff trained. - Enhanced Access Hubs provide additional; capacity at scale – slide 4
4	<p>Brent PCNs widely communicate the GP access and treatment standard and information on patients' rights to access and treatment including registration, appointments and prescriptions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brent Health Matters continue to improve community awareness of GP access as well as provide regular community outreach health events. There is a large pool of volunteers and staff who are available to support people in community. - PCNs and GP practices share information with patients on access, including the Enhanced Access Hub and the dedicated patient direct telephone line - 100% of Brent GP practices are accredited as a safe surgery – slide 8 - The NHS App includes a number of functionalities, including the recent access to prospective patient records – slide 12 - Enhanced Access Hubs provides additional access at scale, further supported by the PCN same day access pilot – slide 4 and 5 - Availability of GP led appointments are at their highest they have ever been since the last five years. Over the past 12 months, Brent has offered an average of 210,000 appointments per calendar month to their patients – slide 6 - Cloud based telephony - Efforts continue to support all practices with analogue telephony to move to high quality digital telephony. 70% of practices are on cloud based telephony, and the others are planned to move by 31st March 2024.

'No One Left Behind' Recommendations (3 of 4)

	Recommendation	Progress
5	Brent PCNs develop an action plan to ensure that patient participation groups (PPGs) are supported to be actively involved in improving GP services. Brent PCNs should report progress against the action plan to Brent ICP and Brent Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- PCNs are having PPG meetings to discuss their PCN Capacity and Access Plans- Practices are required to hold regular PPG meetings, and this is an area of focus by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections. Practices are required to demonstrate engagement and act upon PPG feedback.
6	Brent PCNs demonstrate that the configuration of their services does not disadvantage patients based on where they live	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Brent Health Matters provide outreach health events, supporting patients to register with a GP, provide a health check and screening

'No One Left Behind' Recommendations (4 of 4)

	Recommendation	Progress
7	<p>Brent PCNs implement a SMART action plan to reduce the barriers experienced by patients when accessing GP services, with a focus on deprivation, ethnicity, disability and other protected characteristics. Brent PCNs should report progress against the action plan to Brent ICP and Brent Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carers are actively being identified and supported by General Practice, with at least 900 carers having been identified between April and Nov 2023 - Housebound patients are being provided with proactive home visits ensuring holistic assessments - People experiencing homelessness and those living in supported accommodation (non CQC registered) are supported through proactive assessments - Brent Heath Matters prioritise addressing health inequalities through outreach events, working alongside PCNs to identify specific population needs - Local intelligence is captured through data and dashboards prioritising health needs e.g. people of Black or Black British ethnicity being actively treated to target for hypertension reducing risk of cardiovascular events, stroke and Myocardial Infarction. - Primary care networks (PCNs) build on the core work of current primary care services and enable greater provision of proactive, personalised, coordinated and more integrated health and social care for our communities. Tackling Health Inequalities is a key priority for PCNs, with a contractual Direct Enhanced Service available.
8	<p>Brent ICP should work alongside Brent Children's Trust to conduct further research into the experience of children and young people in accessing GP services and take any action as identified</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Four paediatric hubs established across the borough – slide 10 - One of the PCNs in Brent is piloting the Child Health Hub (aged 0-5 years) which involves identifying cases with unmet needs (case finding), engagement with community champions, developing service improvements via coproduction and innovation and interface with developing Integrated Neighbourhood Teams - The Borough is rolling out asthma inhaler kits and Epipens for anaphylaxis to schools signed up as 'Asthma friendly', initially to 6 schools by mid Jan 2024 with further expansion in year

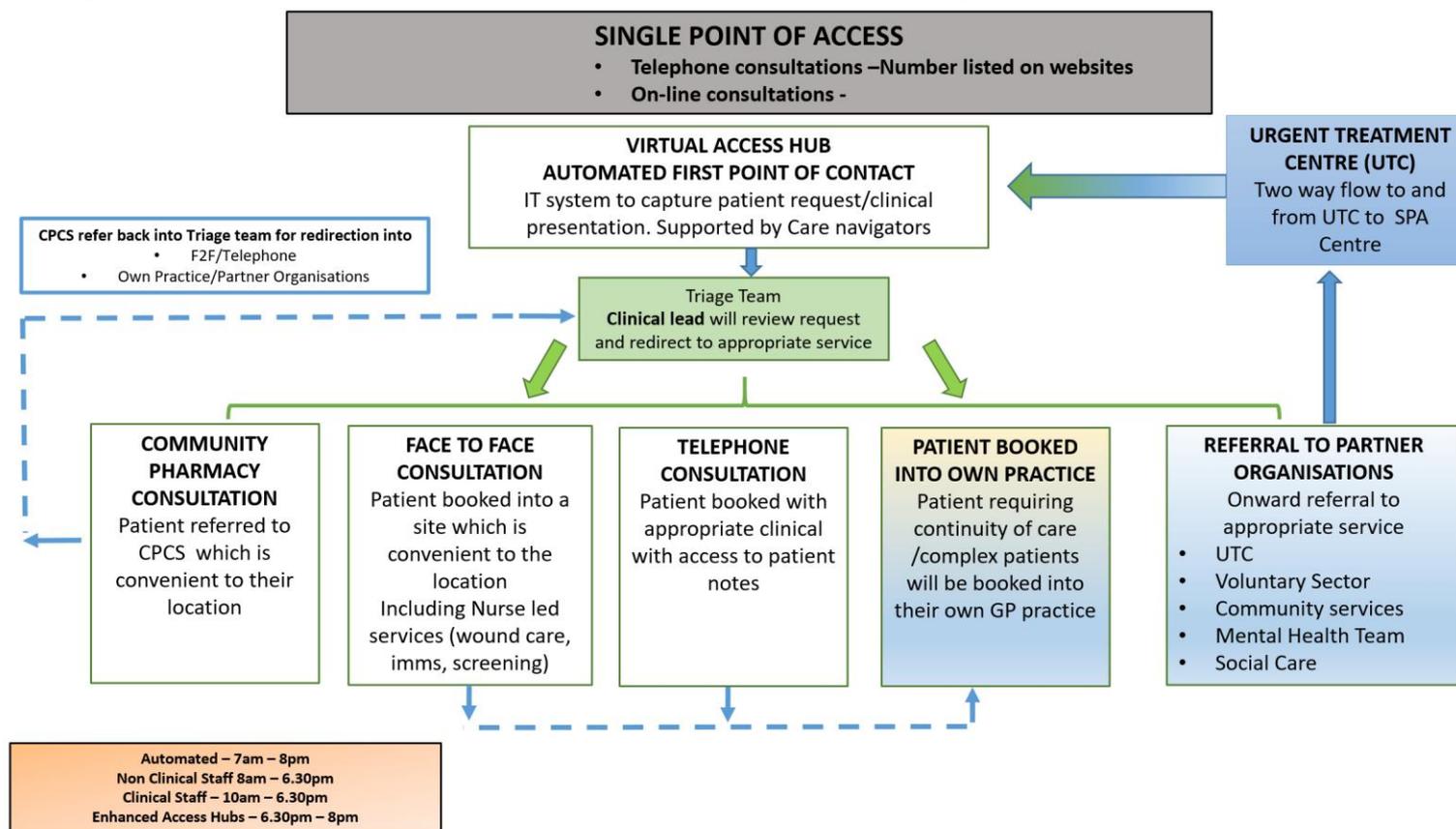
Future Areas of Focus (1 of 3)

- The PCNs have established a direct patient telephone access number across the three groupings of PCNs (Harness, Kilburn and K&W). Patients are able to directly contact the hub if they are unable to obtain an appointment at their own GP surgery or are able to be diverted to the hub by selecting the option on the GP surgery number.
- Next steps is to develop a single point of contact across the borough – vision outlined on the next slide

Future Areas of Focus (2 of 3)

Longer term vision for delivering GP access in Brent

- The aim is to develop a single point of contact – both telephone and on-line consultation access to a virtual Access Hub, which incorporates IT innovation and technology to capture patient requests. This will include a Triage team to direct patients to the most appropriate service.
- The Virtual Access Hub (VAH) will compliment existing GP access in the Borough and work alongside partner organisations (such as UTC) to manage patients to and from each service. The VAH will not replace existing GP practice appointment system, however will support management of routine and non-complex patient needs
- Patients requiring continuity of care (end of Life, LTC conditions) will be booked into own GP surgery



Future Areas of Focus (3 of 3)

- Integration of Community Pharmacy to support management of same day access, with minor ailment conditions being managed at pharmacy level with IT interoperability to ensure continuity of patient care
- Expand utilisation of digital services, with training e.g. NHS App to be utilised which enables two way messaging with GP practices, access to referrals and discharge summaries, ordering repeat prescription etc.
- Improved access to primary care, development of single access point with appropriate triage of patients, with patients being supported by the most appropriate clinician.
- The focus for the coming year will include the following five priorities



- Integration and joint management of patient care which spans across all our system partners including social care, acute care, community, mental health and voluntary sectors to ensure a joint approach to supporting patient care