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**Your views about GP services 2017:  
Healthwatch Leicestershire says greater awareness of carers is needed**

- The majority of respondents reported that they were aware that their GP practice offers an online booking service, which many had used.
- All but a small minority of respondents said they would not mind seeing a Specialist Nurse instead of a GP.
- A majority of Carers who responded to this survey have not been able to access useful information about support.

During August and September 2017, the health watchdog promoted a quick poll survey, with questions focused on three areas:

1. Online services for registered patients
2. Referrals for support and treatment
3. Support for Carers

Of those that had identified themselves as carers, it was of particular concern that the majority of carers reported that they have not been able to access useful information about support from their GP, with a small number of carers not making their GP aware of their caring role.

Pat Fraser, Healthwatch Board member and a champion for carers said:

“More and more people of all ages are taking on the role of caring for their loved ones, without recognition or the understanding that they are a carer. More needs to be done to make people aware that they are part of the care system and that there is support to help carers navigate the health care environment”.

With the ongoing pressure on the NHS and GPs, particularly with regards to appointments, Healthwatch Leicestershire wanted to understand the patient perspective regarding issues surrounding being seen by a Specialist Nurse instead of a GP. Over 80% of those that responded told Healthwatch, depending on their symptoms, they would not mind seeing a specialist nurse if it meant they could get an appointment.

Respondents were also asked to give their feedback on their satisfaction with their GP practice. Over half of those that responded had said they were ‘extremely or very satisfied’ with their practice.

Rick Moore, Chair of Healthwatch Leicestershire said,

“We recognise that overall, people are happy with the service they receive from their GP practice. However, when we have the conversation about improvements, issues surrounding

appointments continue to be raised. At Healthwatch, we welcome the positive steps taken around online services and ask that these options, amongst others, are further promoted”.

In total, the survey received 240 responses; based on those responses, the report makes the following recommendations to service providers and commissioners:

- Promote online GP services and appointments with a health care professional
- When making referrals, provide information on expected waiting times to manage patient expectations and support the patient on what to do if it takes longer.
- Publicise and make information about support for Carers more accessible in GP practices.

You can read the full report on the Healthwatch Leicestershire website at:

<https://www.healthwatchleicestershire.co.uk/reports>

## **Notes to Editors:**

### **About Healthwatch Leicestershire**

Healthwatch Leicestershire is an independent consumer champion for health and social care in Leicestershire. The organisation helps to shape and improve local health and social care in our community. Healthwatch Leicestershire is part of the Healthwatch national network, established by the Government to ensure local patients and users have a greater input to shaping and designing local services.

<https://www.healthwatchleicestershire.co.uk/>

### **About Healthwatch England**

Healthwatch is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We exist to ensure that people are at the heart of care. We listen to what people like about services, and what could be improved and we share their views with those with the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area.

We have the power to ensure that people’s voices are heard by the government and those running services. As well as seeking the public’s views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them. Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

[www.healthwatch.co.uk](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk)

@HealthwatchE

### **Overall Satisfaction with GP**

**“The reception staff at my surgery are rude and unhelpful” (Female, 35-44, Leicester City)**

**“Excellent service whenever I’ve needed it” (Female, 65-74, Blaby)**

### **Online Services**

**“Rarely any appointments available to book... Online service rarely has appointments to book.” (Female, 25-34, Hinckley & Bosworth).**

“Excellent online booking service. Much quicker than calling... Insufficient same day appointments.” (Female, 35-44, Charnwood)

Referrals for support and treatment

“Excellent experience of physiotherapist following broken humerus” (Female, 55-64, Harborough)

“Waited 6 weeks for physio appointment, ended up going private” (Female, 45-54, Charnwood)

Support for Carers

“No support offered” (Female, Oadby & Wigston)

“I was a Carer... my health did suffer during those times but I didn't receive any particular help from my surgery” (Female, 65-74, Hinckley & Bosworth)