

Appendix 2 – Booking GP appointments survey comments

Q.5 Why people would or would not recommend using an automated telephone booking system:

Not available at GP surgery/removed:

- Not currently used by our surgery.
- Not used. Not available in my practice.
- This system is not currently used by our surgery.
- Never used as not available but would love an automated system.
- For some reason my surgery have discontinued this system.
- Only telephone appointments were available thus at our surgery.
- Yes, but this option has now been removed (Newbridge Surgery, Bath). We now have to call in the morning to book a 'telephone' appt. with a GP who then may or may not give us a face-to-face appt. Not satisfactory. If I am sick I want a face to face appt that day.

Have not used it:

- Have never used same
- I haven't used this service
- I have not come across this system
- Never booked.
- Have not used this option.
- Never used one.
- To date have not used this facility.
- Not used.
- I have never used an automated booking system so can't comment.
- I have not had occasion to use the telephone booking system.
- I haven't used
- I know that my surgery offers online booking, as yet I haven't used it but I feel it's an important & valuable option.

Not sure if offered:

- I have no idea whether the surgery offers this.

System is slow/takes too long:

- It takes time for reception to see request.
- Time consuming
- Takes a time
- Too slow
- Can be a bit slow
- Slow and inaccurate
- Can often take a time going through the options
- Automated is long winded
- You have to have a lot of patience to use these systems which most people don't have when they are unwell.
- Too slow
- Annoying

- Really slow to hear all the options and often you'd get the message that "no GPs available" despite trying a few different options / combinations.

System is not accessible:

- Not much use for patients with hearing problems.
- Total lack of interpretation and flexibility.
- Impaired hearing, elderly clients would find system difficult. Depends on the audience for online facilities, directed to nurses as a default.
- I have poor hearing, so such systems are normally useless.
- Not really good for elderly patients who have issues with hearing and understanding.
- It would depend on the age of the friend and their capabilities.

System is difficult or confusing to use:

- Confusing instructions - made the wrong sort of appointment. Caused problems as I needed a sickness certificate urgently. Reported by staff as a regular occurrence.
- I find the automated telephone booking annoying and time waste.
- These days most 'phones are cable free and by the time you move the 'phone to look at key pad it could be confusing for some.
- Difficult to go back, if wrong choice made.
- Tried to use this but got cut off every time half way through.
- I was ill at the time and got very confused.

Prefer talking to a person:

- There is no substitute to talking with a person
- Prefer to speak with someone
- Would rather speak to a person
- I tried booking in the automated system before and found it frustrating as they could not understand my accent. I would rather speak to person as they can advise what dates are available and it is so much quicker.
- Whilst I have not used such a system, elsewhere I have found you have only to fail answering one question and everything goes into a tail spin. Hard to beat a 'real' person.
- What's happened to being able to speak to a person? The last system of the Receptionist filtering the call was an improvement.
- I prefer to talk to someone when I'm not feeling well and I urgently want to see a doctor so I'm not recommending the system.
- It's really nice to speak to a good receptionist who can marry up a blood apt with a nurse apt then a GP appt. Don't lose the personal touch - for many older people the surgery staff are real friends in a hostile tech driven world.
- do not like this way of contact
- too long winded and not sure if it really works. when things go wrong it's nice to be able to talk to someone

Prefer online system:

- Prefer system online.

System not allowing appointment preferences/too inflexible:

- Having tried to book flu jabs for both my husband and I together This system would not allow this. A call to reception achieved this.

- Having used the system to try and book flu jabs for both myself and my wife we could not do so in one call and ended up with separate days. By speaking to receptionist she was able to rearrange to the same day
- You only get to book a call from the doctor, not an appointment
- Not flexible enough
- Used at previous surgery. You can't tell an automated system new information which will help you book appropriately for you. I'm sure it's convenient for the surgery but it's awful for the patient.
- It can be very frustrating to get through the layers of options and find that there isn't an appointment that is suitable
- Not enough options and frustrating to use.
- Used once but frustrated as I wanted advice before making an appointment
- very frustrating
- You so not get offered the best appointments.
- I have long term conditions so offer have to ask specific information regarding the appointment etc. These systems make it impossible.
- Appointments weeks away
- I haven't been able to do this. Tried it for children's flu clinic but this wasn't possible, also online so I had to phone to book.
- You are more likely to get a 'secret' quicker appointment by speaking with the booking staff than waiting 3 weeks for an appointment that the telephone system thinks is next available!
- I've had a lot of problems with this service telling me 'no GP appointments are available' - yet when I've finally given up and spoken to a receptionist, plenty have been available. I've had this issue three times (the last three appointments I've tried to make). It's been quite infuriating when the service could actually be saving me (and the receptionists) a lot of time. I would recommend the reception team (at the very least) testing this daily to make sure it's working properly.

Fine for routine appointments, but nothing more complicated:

- It is fine for routine appointments but not for anything more complicated
- I've just successfully used the automated app't booking system for the 1st time, but would only recommend it to friends as a last resort or in v. specific circumstances.

Easy to use:

- Very easy to use with clear and useful options
- Very useful option

Q.6 Why people would or would not recommend using an online booking system:

Not online:

- Not online
- Not online

Not used/not available at GP surgery or removed:

- I have not had occasion to use the online booking system
- Never done it

- I have not used it
- I think this service is available but have never been told how to use it - you need a username and password and I've never been given one...bearing in mind I am an extremely tech savvy 30 something old!
- Never used one.
- Not used one but would like to!
- Would have to try it before I can recommend.
- I don't think the surgery has an online booking system.
- Only telephone appointments were available thus at our surgery
- I would recommend it, were it not for the fact that the surgery has withdrawn the facility!

System is slow/takes too long:

- My practice expects me to send an email, go in to see reception and be given a special code to allow me to use their online system, it's so time-consuming, why can't it be automatic?
- Able to see what is available, but sometimes can be long winded when you have to come in and out of sessions
- that actual booking of the appointment was long winded and took a long time to complete. The screens took a long time to load and I was using an ipad which made it hard to read. I imagine it would have been worse if doing it on a phone.
- Because I'm not sure how often they check their mails so wouldn't recommend this

It depends on what the appointment is for:

- It depends on what the appointment would be for.
- Either use on-line system or telephone person-to-person if needs discussion.
- If you can select a date and time from a list showing vacant dates, but not if you have to answer questions first, then a doctor rings before you can get an appointment.

System not allowing appointment preferences/too inflexible:

- Didn't seem to be flexible
- Online booking doesn't work after hours as suggested and is most inconvenient
- Was difficult when all the doctors were booked up over the coming two weeks, but that's not an online issue
- Very few appointments available
- Again, not the flexibility of speaking to a human
- I was asked to select a day of the week, but not a particular date or time. When I might be available on one Wednesday, I may not be available on that day the following week so I need to be able to specify date and time. The online booking form did not allow this, which is OK if you're retired, not working or have enough flexibility to get there, but if you have changing commitments this isn't detailed enough.
- The questions asked are often not relevant

System is difficult or confusing to use:

- I use online booking but your system is too complicated to enrol and I have give up. I asked for assistance at the desk with little response to help, sorry.
- I find I can never get through even giving the password, so I can never make an appointment that way

- The principle is great, but the system (Sysonline) is terrible. The username is very complicated - you can't choose your own, and the app doesn't remember them so you can't quickly go online to do it - it makes it much quicker to call which is not what an online system should do. It also doesn't allow many types of appointments (e.g. asthma)
- Too difficult for this old lady to grasp
- being older I find this difficult to manage
- I haven't used this yet, in part because it's a complicated process to register in the first place.
- Couldn't seem to get it to work or not sure the booking had been made
- I have found my GPs online booking system to be almost unintelligible and I am very computer literate! I tried to book an agreed follow up appointment with a specific clinician and failed to do so. I had to telephone in the end, but the phone number wasn't easy to find on the website and wasn't on the home page. The clinician when I saw them had no idea how it worked either!!
- It's hard to write an email when you are poorly

Not happy with the system/doesn't work:

- Was not happy with the call back.
- The last couple of times I tried to use the SystmOnline method it failed to work
- after booking I was phoned to tell me that the appointment was not available
- Would not recommend system whereby you enter symptoms etc via the web site and doctor calls you

If last resort/only option:

- Only use as a last resort.
- If that's the only option

Not good for triage:

- I like the online system but I can see that it can't filter out a patient who is either time wasting, should see a nurse, health care assistant or even the local pharmacist.
- Easy but not for time wasters

Good for routine appointments:

- Excellent for routine appointments
- It's great for a routine appointment, but not any good if you need an appointment in a few days or even a week's time.

Convenient (for certain people)

- For Patients who are computer literate you can see all available appts, and therefore can choose an appt most convenient to you!
- It works well for me (self-employed, working from home), but not for friends who are for instance teachers or nurses
- So much more convenient as I can see which appts are free and which suit me
- It's important for people like me who work unusual & long hours and are often out of town
- choice of date time and doctor
- Good to see the availability and book a convenient time for me.
- quick and simple

- Really easy & useful
- Easy. you can see the appointments available and make an informed choice
- very straightforward
- I prefer the speed of online services, and the ability to see a range of available appointments.
- It was easy. Leave them a detailed message and get on with your day. They called me back and discussed over the phone before booking an appointment in.
- Easy. No time restriction on when to access it, can choose appointments that suit your timescale
- Find it excellent
- Helpful as it is possible to use out of hours and can give brief reason for needing a consultation.
- Only if it was as it was. Online, looking for your preferred GP plus time that suits you, could not be easier

Good for those who prefer not to use the phone:

- Many people with anxiety like myself struggle to use phones and so online is the only way we can book appointments.
- Much better than the telephone system

Q.9 Why people don't regularly use automated telephone booking system:

Not used/not available at GP surgery:

- I haven't used such a system.
- n/a not used surgery
- I am not aware of its availability
- I have only been registered at this surgery for one month - I have relocated from Kent. I don't even know if this service is available.

System is slow/takes too long:

- I do use it regularly. But it can take a long time to get to the appointments you want.
- Tedious - long winded then no suitable appt to offer
- The whole process sounds too frustrating. Do not want to listen to an automated voice and have to keep pressing buttons for different options.
- Automated system lengthy and restrictive
- Just takes up too much time!
- It takes too long
- Long winded
- I needed an appointment at the end of the day so had to sit and listen to every possible option available before I could select what I wanted. It was taking too long to do so I gave up and called the receptionist.
- Respondents' opinions on automated telephone may be affected by fact that historically they have not worked very well (e.g. slow / feedback not clear) but that may not be case now.

Prefer online system:

- Easier to use online system
- Prefer system online

- Inconvenient - online is cheaper and easier for me. For e.g. I travel abroad for work so phone calls are expensive, wifi isn't!

System is not accessible:

- Deaf so want text or email. Would prefer to go to Surgery website and see list of available doctors and time slots for each day.
- I have poor hearing, so such systems are normally useless. Also, I much prefer online systems where I can see most/all available slots listed in front of me.
- Not all patients have computers to book appts. Having to select from a list of numbers is confusing, especially if you are hard of hearing. To speak to a number rather than a person is too cold and distant. You cannot get away from people contact is nigh on impossible!
- Must be difficult for the elderly and if the patient needs advice about appointments

Prefer talking to a person:

- [Prefer] to speak to a human!
- Prefer speaking to a person
- Would prefer to book an appointment through a person to get my GP not some tom dick or Harry.
- Would be better just for the reception to answer phone. Not always easy to get appointment with my own doctor. Not good enough.
- Mostly book for my wife who is disabled and the staff are usually the best way to do it. I have no objection to online stuff but in our circumstances it does not offer the best option
- Prefer personal contact
- I like to speak to someone and have options as to appointment times
- I like to talk to a person
- Sometime I feel I need to speak to someone
- I prefer to speak to a receptionist.
- Prefer to speak to someone
- Telephone as always please
- I prefer to speak to someone as I need flexibility in my appointments and it is quicker for the receptionist to check availability for me
- Talking to a person is always preferred.
- Prefer to talk to a person.
- Like to talk personally to someone
- I always prefer to speak and book through receptionist so that i feel clarity and comfortable.
- I like to be able to talk to someone or see the avail appointments online

Technical difficulties:

- Too hit and miss. System sometimes isn't working properly - cuts you off or goes round in circles.
- Never seems to connect properly
- Computer not always working or not available
- The booking system has not been working effectively when I've tried it so I've had to revert to calling reception.

System not allowing appointment preferences/too inflexible:

- Female doctors who are not partners didn't have appointments on the telephone booking system.
- Appointment dates too far in the future. Didn't work.
- Appointments rarely available.
- I work and can only come when I get time off so have looked but there are never any times that I can make. I find speaking to a receptionist more convenient and she can usually fit me in to when I can come in.
- Prefer to know appts available more widely available and with which doctor
- Not flexible enough
- Because I often need to arrange a particular time or an appointment with a particular doctor, or discuss needs in a way that automation can't deal with.
- Like everyone I want to be seen asap, but sometime the receptionist offers great alternatives which suit both me and the practice.
- Automated systems don't always let you know who you will see
- Not specific enough to my needs
- When last tried the system was not available so couldn't book.
- As stated above, I work closely with a number of Doctors and have ongoing health needs to usually have lots of questions re. appointment/possible dates/which doctor is in when/urgency of appointment/alternate options e.g. can I speak to nurse, pharmacy etc. This is not available on an automated system.
- I think that I would struggle to make a quick decision on available appointments.
- I've had complicated needs each time I've needed to book since it was introduced (which isn't very many).

Other:

- Don't usually use GP unless it's an urgent issue e.g. one of my children has had a fever for over three days, child with possible broken limb etc. Very rarely book routine appointments.
- It takes too long and I worry about how much it would cost me. Is it one of those expensive numbers?
- Would be good if you could suggest a date or time slot rather than having to go through all options, e.g. I can only do early or late appointments. Also you can't specify what the appointment is for e.g. I needed a smear test so had to ring & check who could see me.
- Very rarely visit the GP
- My address is 5 min away from the surgery.
- No choice
- Pulteney Practice requires us to use an automated telephone system - no alternative
- Often a telephone consultation is all that is needed, or perhaps, a practice or district nurse. If one is not certain about if these are applicable, it takes up the doctor's time unnecessarily.
- I have no difficulty speaking to a receptionist - excellent , accessible service. While this exists, there is no imperative to use another system, but would be happy to use online booking if that helped the surgery manage its resources more efficiently

Q.10 Why people don't regularly use online booking system:

Not used/not available at GP surgery or removed:

- Just haven't used it yet!
- I have not to date, made an appointment to visit the doctors so feel unable to comment on this survey. I have good health and hope it continues.
- Not had time to register to do it
- Haven't registered
- Not sure it's still available at my surgery?
- Don't know enough to comment
- I am a new patient - I don't know if my surgery offers this system.
- N/a not used [at] surgery
- I used online bookings, but now it has been withdrawn.
- Recently withdrawn by our surgery
- I used it when it was available but they stopped it.
- Online booking has been disabled
- This (very convenient) option is now no longer available (Newbridge Surgery, Bath). We now have to call in the morning to book a 'telephone' appt. with a GP who then may or may not give us a face-to-face appt. Not satisfactory. If I am sick I want a face to face appt that day.
- The surgery has withdrawn the facility other than for a VERY restricted range of non-GP appointments - previously I used it a lot!
- Was available then removed for telephoning for same day appointments if necessary.
- Was available but now replaced by online request followed by call back triage by a doctor
- Recently changed to telephone only for an appointments with a GP. However, appointments with other clinicians is still possible on-line.

System is slow/takes too long:

- The system takes too long, I have to go in to get a code from reception, it's very discouraging.
- Do not like the new system, why do we have to tell all in sundries what is wrong with us, then a doctor will phone and decide whether we should have an appointment or not. Do not like!!

System is difficult or confusing to use:

- Do use it, even though it is very difficult to use.

Prefer/easier to talk to a person:

- [Prefer] personal touch
- Very rarely visit the GP. If I need an appointment I would prefer to telephone
- Prefer personal contact
- I prefer to talk to a person
- I try to avoid 'on line'. I prefer to speak to a human being!
- Prefer person to person
- Like to talk personally
- Rarely make appointments and telephone is easier
- Easier to speak to someone

Technical difficulties:

- Never seems to connect properly
- The SystemOnline method failed to work
- Alright to use to complicated to set up
- My PC isn't really up to it- takes too long to start
- Apparently the new system doesn't deal with Apple Macs. So our attempts to use the online system have failed. (Despite my husband working in the software industry).

System not allowing appointment preferences/too inflexible:

- No appointments available.
- Would be better if there was more choice. The appts can be rather limited.
- Our doctor hardly appears on the list.
- Minimal appointments available.
- Not all available appointments are on the online booking system - many are for telephone appointments only.

Does not work for urgent appointments:

- Tends to be emergency appointments needed, which require ringing up.
- My need is usually only for urgent same day consultation.
- It's not possible to make urgent appointments online.
- Only used if I needed not for emergency.
- Only when urgent booking is needed.

No computer/not online

- I have no computer.
- Not online.

Problem with registering or remembering log-in/password

- Forgot log on details.
- Don't have a log in.
- Require new log in details to access online booking.
- Complicated passwords that I need to look up, don't think I can change to something memorable
- Problem remembering password
- I seem to have issues with logging in to the system after having registered
- I've lost my login/password details and would have to visit the surgery in person to have it reissued.
- Complicated password and can't reset it using your email or other means - have to go to surgery to reset and it's not open when I'm not working.
- You need to register via your practice first
- You have to register to use online booking services and I've never time to visit my practice

Other:

- I prefer using online booking because it is convenient for people when they can't make calls or can't go immediately to the GP
- I haven't needed to book an appointment so I don't know if online is an option. It would be a good option if it is. I suspect a key concern with this though would be "user anxiety" about whether or not the right thing has been booked.