

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

New data shows rise in GP appointments

Over 60,000 more GP appointments were held in September and October this year than before the pandemic, new data for the Black Country and West Birmingham has revealed.

The latest figures for GP access show that 1,403,078 appointments took place in September and October 2021, up from 1,339,677 in September and October 2019.

Of these, 62% of appointments were face to face, while 45% took place on the same day as they were requested (up from 40% in 2019).

Sarb Basi, Director of Primary Care for NHS Black Country and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group, said: “Throughout the pandemic, GP practices across the Black Country and West Birmingham have adapted to provide patients with alternative methods of accessing services via telephone and online consultations, whilst continuing to offer face-to-face appointments when clinically appropriate. These latest figures demonstrate how hard primary care staff are working to ensure patients get the care they need.

“Despite this, we know that some people are still waiting too long on the phone to their practice for their call to be answered and we understand this can be incredibly frustrating. Our staff are working harder than ever and seeing more patients than ever, however demand on our services continues to be higher than we’ve ever seen.

“We are encouraging patients to consider other ways of making contact if they are able, such as completing an e-consult form on the NHS app or the practice’s website, which will be responded to by the practice in a timely manner.”

The new statistics have also revealed that DNAs – where a patient fails to attend an appointment but does not cancel so it can be rebooked by the practice – are slightly down, from 7% of all appointments in 2019 to 6% today.

Sarb Basi added: “The number of missed appointments has started to decline which is great, however over 86,000 appointment slots were missed in September and October this year across the Black Country and West Birmingham.



“These slots are incredibly precious during this time of high demand so we would encourage those who no longer need an appointment to make every effort to cancel so somebody else can have the slot.”

The NHS asks people to help us help you this winter by visiting your pharmacist first for minor ailments, or using 111.nhs.uk as a first step to check your symptoms and find out which service is most appropriate for your needs (those without internet access can call 111).

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- A full breakdown of GP appointment data for September and October can be found here: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/appointments-in-general-practice>

About the CCG

- Black Country and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) was established on 1 April 2021 following the merger of Dudley, Sandwell & West Birmingham, Walsall and Wolverhampton CCGs
- The CCG decides how to spend the NHS budget on the majority of health services, including planned hospital care, urgent and emergency care, community health services, and mental health and learning disability services, as well as delegated responsibility for commissioning general practice services
- We serve a local population of 1.5 million and our vision is for a healthier place with healthier people and healthier futures
- For more information, please email Communications.bcwb@nhs.net
- For the latest local NHS news and health advice, visit our website or follow us on social media:
 - Website: www.blackcountryandwestbirmccg.nhs.uk
 - [Twitter](#)
 - [Facebook](#)
 - [Instagram](#)
 - [YouTube](#)

