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Healthier people  
Healthier futures



Black Country and  
West Birmingham  
Clinical Commissioning Group

# Primary Care access and transformation

Dr Ian Sykes, Chair, Sandwell Local Commissioning Board  
Black Country and West Birmingham CCG



Dudley | Sandwell | Walsall | West Birmingham | Wolverhampton

[www.blackcountryandwestbirmccg.nhs.uk](http://www.blackcountryandwestbirmccg.nhs.uk)

## Recap: about Primary Care

- Primary care services are usually the first point of access to the healthcare system. For most people this is your local GP.
- Sandwell has 49 GP practices, divided into eight Primary Care Networks. These are groups of closely connected local practices, working together with community, mental health, social care, pharmacy, hospital and the voluntary sector to provide a wide range of services.
- All practices are members of the CCG, but the CCG does not run GP practices as these are individual businesses.
- The CCG commissions (buys) primary care services from GP practices to meet the needs of local people.
- The regulator for GP practices, like other NHS services, is the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

# Primary care challenges

- Demand for services: a growing and ageing population with changing health needs, e.g. more people managing long-term health conditions.
- GP workforce: the NHS cannot train and recruit GPs quickly enough to keep up with growing demand for their services.
- Greater focus on prevention: modern practice roles/responsibilities include screening, vaccination and social prescribing.

**For some time, the NHS has recognised the need to change how things are done in primary care, to make best use of resources and better meet modern healthcare needs.**

# Impact of COVID-19

- Infection prevention and control – practices working differently to keep patients and staff safe
- Vaccination programme – GPs have been at the forefront of delivering this unprecedented-scale vaccination drive. GPs in BCWB have delivered almost half (44%) of the 2.5million jabs given in the area to date.
- Increase in demand post-lockdown – patients seeking help with issues they may have put off during the height of the pandemic

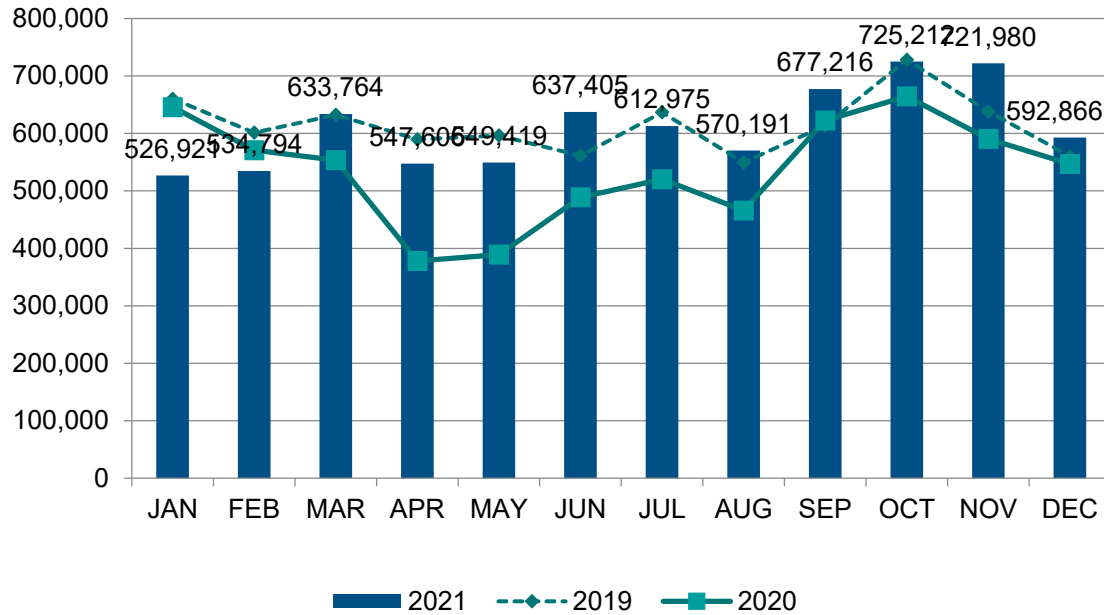
**The pandemic has caused the NHS to accelerate transformation plans – especially in digital technology – that might otherwise have taken years to bring in.**

## Current primary care performance - headlines

- Appointment levels for December 2021 were higher than in December 2019 – before the pandemic.
- Nearly 600,000 GP appointments were carried out in December.
- Almost two thirds (61%) of appointments have been face to face.
- Almost half (48%) of all appointments are same day appointments – up from 44% before the pandemic.
- 59% of appointments are with a GP, which is slightly more than before the pandemic (avg 54%).
- Data shows that supply is greater than pre-pandemic, but it demonstrates that demand is up – many of our practices have been reporting up to 150% of the call volumes experienced pre-pandemic.

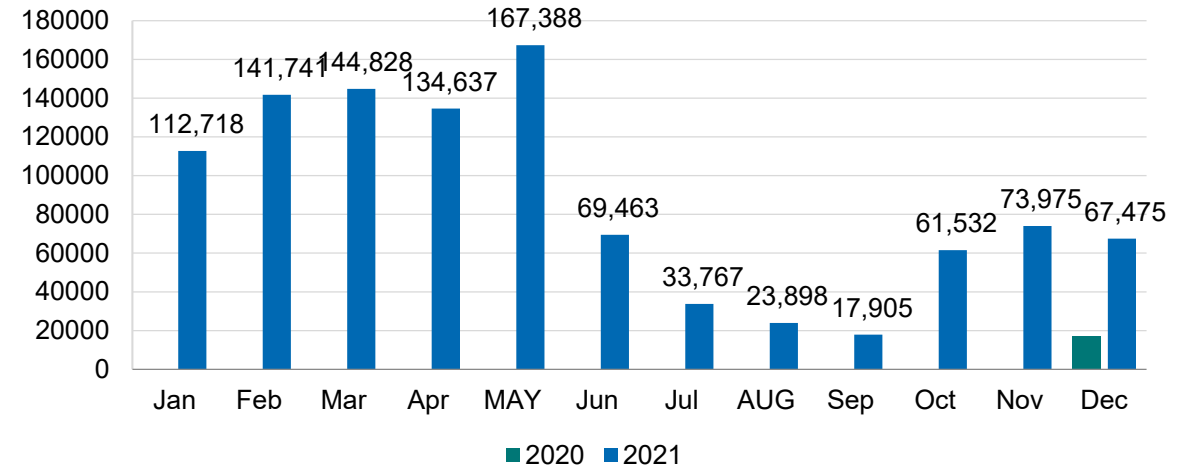
# Position across the CCG

**BCWB CCG- Appointments by month**



The table above shows appointments over the last three years. It shows that since February 2021 the CCG has achieved its pre-COVID levels of appointments (2019)

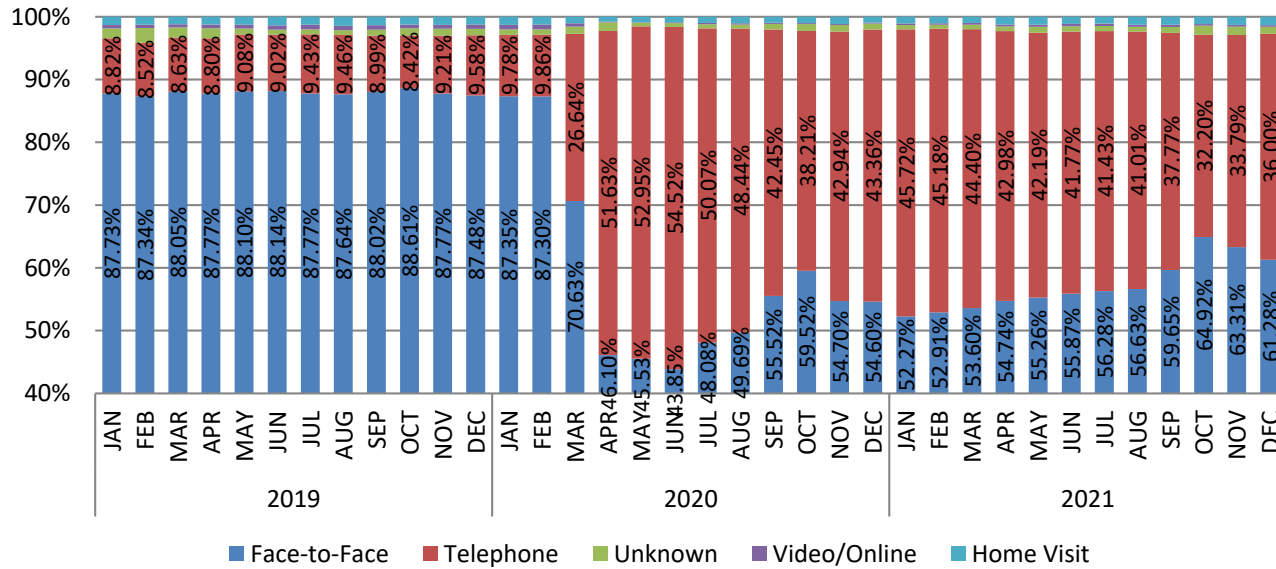
**BWCB CCG- Count of Covid Vaccination Appointment in General Practices from NIMS database**



This table shows the number of appointments used to deliver COVID vaccinations in primary care. These are over and above those identified in the earlier table.

# Type of appointment

**BWCB CCG- Breakdown by Appt type**



**Breakdown by appts booked to seen Time**

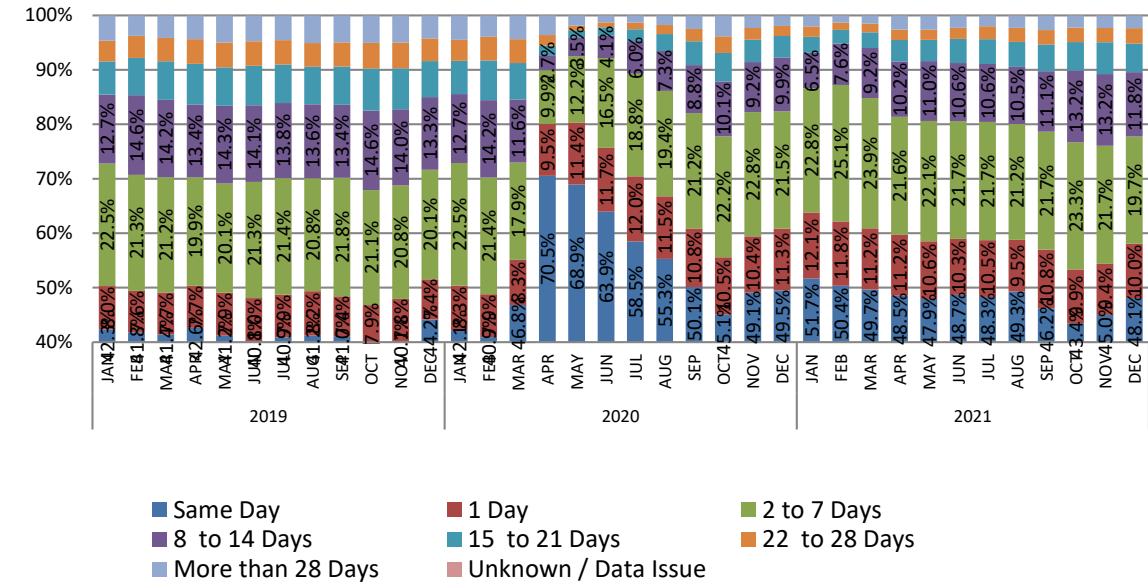
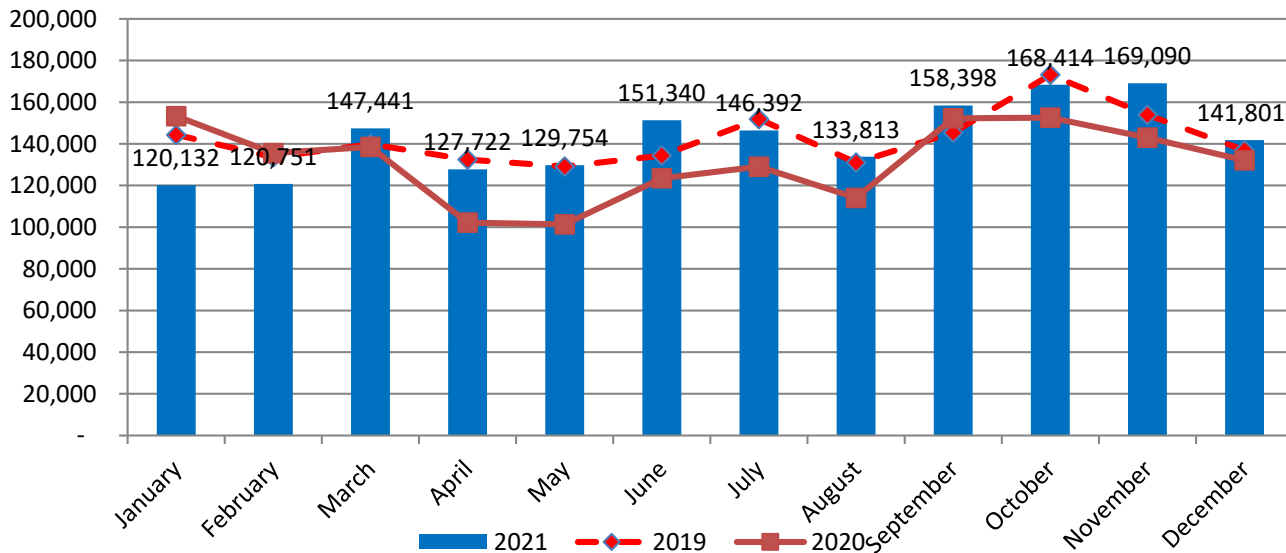


Table shows the total appointments by type. Pre-COVID approx. 88% were face to face. Since April 2020 the number is slowly increasing, with a slight reduction in November and December. In December 61.2% of appointments were face to face.

This table shows the length of time between request and appointment. In December 2021, 77% of appointments were completed within seven days.

# Sandwell Place

Sandwell Place-No of Appointments by month



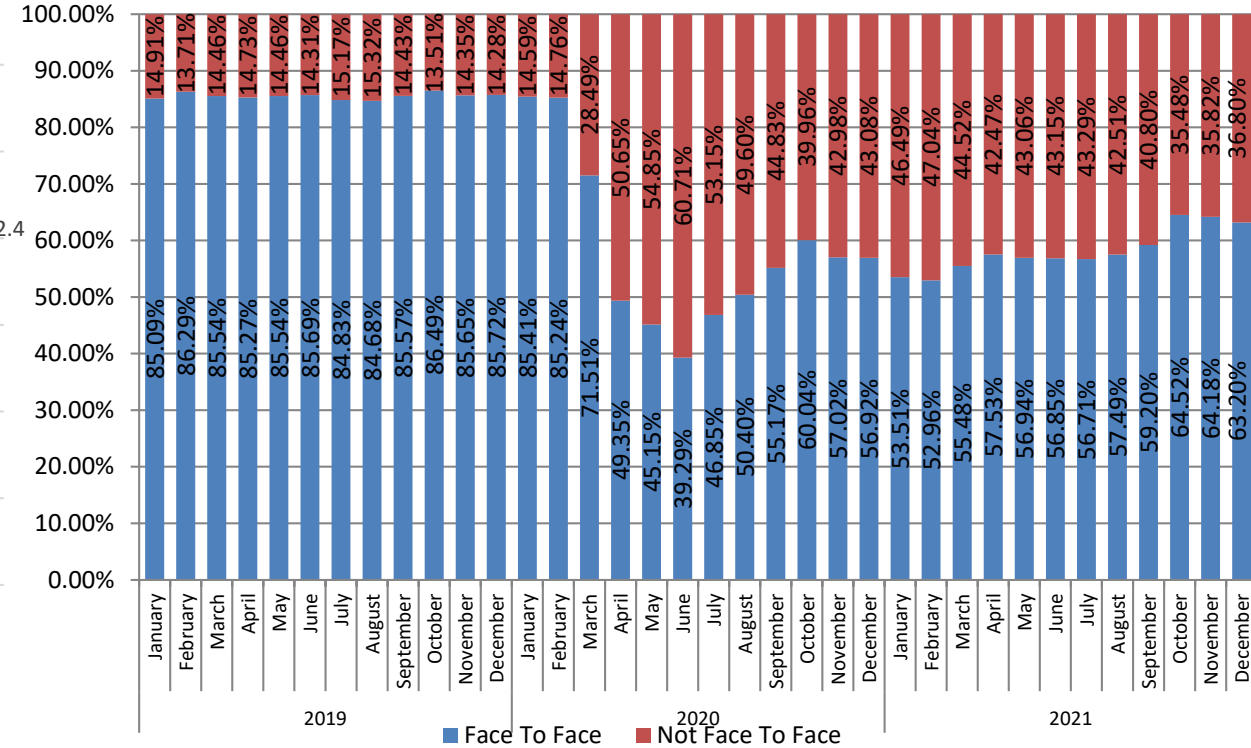
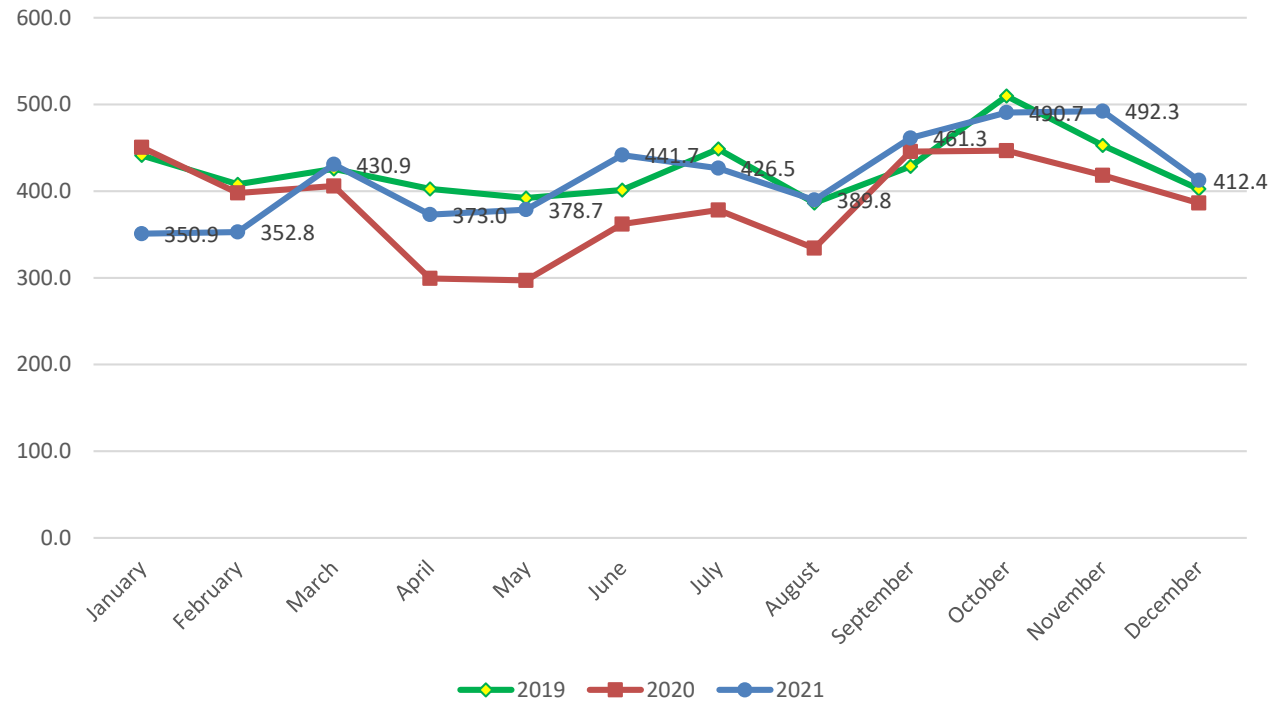
Month	2019	2020	2021	Difference 2021-2019	%	Difference 2021-2020	%
January	144,319	153,313	120,132	-24,187	-16.8%	-33,181	-21.6%
February	133,615	135,588	120,751	-12,864	-9.6%	-14,837	-10.9%
March	139,817	138,533	147,441	7,624	5.5%	8,908	6.4%
April	132,471	102,200	127,722	-4,749	-3.6%	25,522	25.0%
May	129,102	101,362	129,754	652	0.5%	28,392	28.0%
June	134,393	123,490	151,340	16,947	12.6%	27,850	22.6%
July	151,943	129,060	146,392	-5,551	-3.7%	17,332	13.4%
August	130,994	114,068	133,813	2,819	2.2%	19,745	17.3%
September	145,393	152,260	158,398	13,005	8.9%	6,138	4.0%
October	173,180	152,578	168,414	-4,766	-2.8%	15,836	10.4%
November	153,906	142,982	169,090	15,184	9.9%	26,108	18.3%
December	136,899	132,092	141,801	4,902	3.6%	9,709	7.4%

- These tables show the number of appointments completed in Sandwell over the last three years.
- The second table shows that since March 2021 practices have delivered considerably more appointments than in the corresponding month the previous year.
- It also shows that practices achieved their pre-COVID levels of appointments in seven of the last 12 months.
- This does **not** include appointments used for COVID vaccinations.



Sandwell- GP appt breakdown of type by month

Sandwell- GP Appt rate per 1000 by month over a 3 year period



- A useful measure is to consider the number of appointments per 1000 population. This data shows that this rate is higher in December 21 than the same period in the two preceding years.
- The second graph shows how the proportion of face-to-face appointments has gradually increased over the last 18 months.
- 63.2% of appts offered in Sandwell were face to face in Dec 21, slightly higher than the overall CCG value of 61.2%.



## What GPs are doing about this

- Investing in new technologies to support virtual appointments and prescription ordering
- Telephone triage/healthcare navigation: right professional at the right time for your specific healthcare needs
- Using different roles within primary care
- Face-to-face GP appointments are still happening, but depending on levels of demand and the type of concern you have, this may not be the right solution for you.

**Patients who are vulnerable, are unable to use technology, or who clinically need to be examined in person by a doctor, will always be prioritised for in-person appointments.**

# Clinical roles in primary care

- **General Practice Nurses (GPNs):** Qualified nurses who look after patients with long-term diseases such as asthma and diabetes, offer health screening, and hold specialised clinics such as immunisation, wound care, and women's health.
- **Health Care Assistants (HCAs):** They take on routine tasks previously done by practice nurses, to free up nurse time for more specialised support.
- **Physician Associates (PAs):** Healthcare professionals who work under supervision of a doctor to deliver care and treatment. PAs are medically trained and able to diagnose and treat a range of clinical problems, including making referrals and developing treatment plans for long term conditions.
- **Clinical Pharmacists:** Provide expert advice on medicines, including conducting medication reviews and health checks for people with long term conditions. If you are experiencing side effects from your medicines, or you have a common illness such as a cold or hay fever, you may see the clinical pharmacist instead of your GP.
- **Advanced Clinical Practitioners (ACPs):** These are highly trained and experienced clinicians with backgrounds in nursing, physiotherapy, pharmacy or occupational therapy, who have gained advanced qualifications (such as a Master's degree) and have the skills and experience to prescribe medications, order tests and discuss results, make a diagnosis and create a treatment plan.
- *Plus Nursing Associates, Paramedics, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Podiatrists, and many more...*

# Redesigning NHS 111

- GPs are required to identify and hold appointments for 111 to book patients (1:3000)
- 111 outcome dispositions often don't match available appointments
- Historically the system conversion rate is 34/35%
  
- WMAS are planning to change the dispositions to same day/next day (completed governance checks)
  - Increase the proportion of patients booked into a GP appointment
  - Prevents patients being “bounced around the system”
  - Makes optimum use of earmarked GP slots
  - Reduces demand on GP reception /receiving and managing patients



# Help us, help you (1)

- Don't forget: your GP is open and here for you.
- Restrictions have lifted but COVID-19 has not gone away: COVID-safe measures continue in all parts of the NHS.
- Where possible we're asking that people don't attend GP practices unless asked to do so. However the doors are open and anyone who can't access care remotely will be triaged in the same way at the practice. This helps keep you, our staff, and more vulnerable patients safe.
- Go online if you can, or call first, and please be patient if you can't get through right away.
- Thanks to new technology and partnerships with pharmacies, you can get most repeat prescriptions without attending your practice. You should only need to see a clinician at medication review time.
- Remember, seeing a different healthcare professional doesn't mean you're getting a lesser service. You will always see the most appropriate clinician for your needs.

## Help us, help you (2)

- Do you really need to see your GP? For minor ailments, your local pharmacist is an expert in medicines and can provide advice.
- Pharmacy first programme – many medications available OTC for free to eligible people.
- NHS 111 – go online or call for advice. They can book you a GP appointment or a slot in urgent care if you need it. Visit [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk), use the NHS app, or call 111 from any phone.

### **If it's a medical emergency, call 999:**

- Suspected heart attack or stroke
- Major trauma such as serious accident or fall from height
- Loss of consciousness or fits
- Breathing difficulties
- Severe burns, scalds, bleeding
- Severe allergic reactions

## Positive patient journey: example

- David had developed a rash overnight, so he called his GP practice.
- He couldn't get through right away so he called back 20 minutes later.
- The healthcare navigator discussed his symptoms and provided an address for David to send a photo of his rash to.
- A GP reviewed the photo, recognised the rash as shingles, and wrote a prescription.
- The prescription was sent electronically to David's named local pharmacy.
- David went to the pharmacy to pick up his medication and began his treatment right away.
- He did not need to visit his GP and potentially risk vulnerable patients catching what turned out to be highly contagious shingles.

## What to do if your experience is not positive

- We know there is variation between practices. We are working to more fully understand these and identify where we might provide more support.
- No patient should experience poor service. If you are unhappy with your experience, talk to your practice manager in the first instance and follow their complaints process.
- Your practice manager must provide you with information about how to escalate your complaint if you don't feel it has been resolved.
- You can also contact our Time2Talk customer care team:
  - Telephone: 0121 612 4110
  - Email: [swbccg.time2talk@nhs.net](mailto:swbccg.time2talk@nhs.net)
  - Post: Time2Talk, Brierley Hill Health & Social Care Centre, CCG Offices, Venture Way, Brierley Hill DY5 IRU.



# Questions?