

<b>Reference:</b>	FOI.18474.25
<b>Subject:</b>	Access to GP appointments
<b>Date of Request:</b>	30 September 2025

**Requested:**

I am writing to request information to understand how older adults are accessing GP services within your area.

Please provide the following information in relation to your area:

1. **Booking options:**  
For GP practices in your area, please indicate the total number of practices in your area and the percentage that offer each of the following booking options to patients:
  - a. Online booking
  - b. Telephone booking
  - c. In-person booking
  
2. **Digital by default:**  
The NHS England 10 year plan outlines a shift toward services being “digital by default”. Is this sentiment reflected in your area? If so, how does your area plan to make healthcare more digital?
  
3. **Mitigation measures in your area:**  
Please outline the steps your area has taken to ensure that older adults (particularly those without internet access) are not disadvantaged by the shift to "digital by default".
  
4. **Examples of good practice:**  
Please provide examples of good practice from GP surgeries in your area that specifically support access for older people, including initiatives to maintain or enhance face-to-face access and ensure they are not adversely affected by the move towards "digital by default".
  
5. **Complaints:**  
Data on the number of complaints submitted in relation to difficulties booking appointments in your area between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 and the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025?
  
6. When submitting your response it would be helpful if you could also provide details of the service providers/surgeries/practices covered in your area, and if you know of a GP practice in your area that you believe exemplifies outstanding involvement of older people, we would be grateful if you could share their contact details so we may get in touch with them.

**Our response**

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) is part of NHS Wales and is an integrated Local Health Board responsible for the planning and provision of primary, community and in hospital services, based on the needs of the local community across three (3) counties. Therefore, the information relating to the UHB is provided below.

1. The UHB confirms that it has forty-seven (47) GP Practices within its geographical area and provides the number and percentage of GP Practices that offer each of the specified booking options to patients.

No.	Booking option	Number	Percentage
a.	Online booking	28	60%
b.	Telephone booking	47	100%
c.	In-person booking	47	100%

2. GP Practices in NHS Wales do not work towards the NHS England ten (10) year plan. However, GP Practices in NHS Wales are increasing their use of the NHS App and self-book options via text for the management of chronic disease.
3. The UHB confirms that patients are still able to telephone GP Practices or attend in person to book appointments.
4. The UHB provides below examples of good practice from GP Practices that specifically support access for older people:
  - One (1) GP Practice has employed an Elderly Outreach Nurse, working one (1) day per week to support their elderly population with digital support.
  - Each GP Practice in both the North and South Pembrokeshire clusters have a careers lead and a Learning Disability (LD) champion Lead.
  - There is an Integrated Care Network Cluster Project which has provided support for older adults when visiting patients in their own homes.
  - Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services provides support via their own digital project.
5. & 6. The UHB does not hold the information for all GP Surgeries, as independent contractors they hold their own information, and consequently the UHB does not have access to all of the information requested, except for that which related to the Managed Practices. Managed Practices are directly managed by the UHB and any complaints received would be investigated by the UHB, with related information held by the UHB's Patient Support Service (PSS). Therefore, the UHB can confirm that it received nineteen (19) enquires/concerns relating to difficulties in booking/accessing appointments in GP Practices, during the 2024/25 financial year.

Further information would need to be requested directly from the individual GP Practices.

The names and addresses of the GP Practices within the UHB's geographical area is already within the public domain, therefore, the UHB has applied an exemption under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA), as the information is accessible by another means.

The UHB has answered a similar Freedom of Information request FOI.18211.24 – Diabetes items in GP Surgeries along with Attachment 1 is available on the UHB's disclosure log. A link has been provided below which will take you directly to the UHB's disclosure log webpage:

[Disclosure Log - Hywel Dda University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#)