



NHS

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Walsall

Walsall Service Users Experiences and Views of the NHS App.

Report

July 2026



**Engaging
Communities
Solutions**

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Key Headlines

The NHS App is widely valued by users, with repeat prescription services proving particularly popular.

Digital barriers remain significant, with 42% of respondents not using the NHS App due to accessibility, confidence and technology challenges.

Greater awareness, support and inclusive access are needed to increase uptake while maintaining non-digital NHS services for those who prefer them.

Introduction

More people are using the NHS App than ever before, and it is becoming a key part of the Government's plan to create a modern, efficient health service. However, digital exclusion is still a significant challenge across the UK, particularly for some groups who may struggle to access online services.

In Autumn 2025, the Government announced plans to introduce the NHS's first national "digital-first" online service for planned care. This aims to reduce waiting times and make it easier for people to access high-quality care.

We undertook the project to understand whether Walsall residents are aware of NHS Online for planned care and explore how they think it could help them.

Methodology

Our developed survey enabled us to engage with residents in communities and local events across the Borough. We asked participants whether they used the NHS App and invited them to complete the survey to share their experiences and views.

In addition to face-to-face engagement, we promoted the survey through our social media channels and shared across a range of local community pages. Residents were asked to take part and share the survey with others, enabling us to gather a broad range of experiences, opinions, and feedback.

Who Took Part

A total of **204** responses were received. However, it is important to note that not all participants answered every question.

A demographic breakdown of survey participants is provided in the Appendices (see page 14).

Summary Findings

The following section provides a snapshot of the survey findings and participants' comments. It highlights the three key survey results, alongside a selection of comments that are most relevant to each question. The comments have been included to provide added context and insight into participants' experiences and views.

When asked if people use the NHS App?

- 118 (58%) Yes do use the NHS App.
- 86 (42%) No do not use the NHS App.

When asked why people were not using the NHS App:

- 62 (67%) prefer to speak on the phone
- 52 (57%) prefer to see someone face to face
- 51 (55%) find it too complicated or confusing

The following comments provide further insight into participants' responses:

- ***'Can't book GP appointment on it, can't order prescription, can't get hospital appointments on it, can't see referrals'.***
- ***'Language difficulty. Can't speak English properly'.***
- ***'I don't use technology'.***

When asked, what people use the NHS App for?

- 97 (82%) Viewing your GP health record.
- 89 (75%) Ordering repeat prescriptions.
- 79 (67%) Viewing hospital letters, appointments or referrals.

The following comments provide further insight into participants' responses:

- ***'Use mainly for prescriptions and occasional appointments'.***
- ***'Accessing results from smear and breast screening'.***
- ***'It is not consistent in what is available. Some appts (injections) are easy to book, whereas others are not, and future appointments are not there Similarly, some hospital letters are on the app and others are not'.***

When asked if people knew that you can (or will soon be able to) manage planned care through the NHS App?

- 70 (56%) No.
- 56 (44%) Yes.

When asked 'have you used the NHS App to manage planned care'?

- 81 (65%) No.
- 44 (35%) Yes.

Participants who had used the NHS App for planned care were asked to describe their experience. Their responses were as follows:

34 (69%) Very easy/very good
12 (24%) Easy/good
2 (4%) Poor
1 (2%) Very poor
0 (0%) Mixed

The following comments provide further insight into participants' responses:

- *'I don't understand what I have to do and get mixed up'.*
- *'I have had surgery done at another hospital, but it is still on my NHS App and it shows me all about before and after the surgery'.*
- *'Could not do it'.*

We asked people what would be the barriers for in using the app to arrange planned care?

32 (39%) prefer to speak to someone.
25 (30%) prefer using phone calls or in-person appointments.
22 (27%) prefer to receive a letter in the post.

The following comments provide further insight into participants' responses:

- *'Both my wife & myself have to use this app, however it's never updated despite repeated uninstalls & requests to the GP surgery'.*
- *'All I can see on my appointment is GP appointment I've made via phone'.*

We asked what would encourage people to use the NHS App for managing planned care?

55 (48%) Do not have any difficulties using the App.
25 (22%) Having a leaflet that shows you how to use it.
23 (20%) Being shown by someone how to use it.

The following comments provide further insight into participants' responses:

- *'I'm fine with App and hope to get more access to my records as above'.*
- *'I don't like doing things online as I don't understand and can't remember what to do, as my memory is not good'.*
- *'I would prefer the personal touch of seeing someone'.*

Participants were also given the opportunity to provide any additional comments or feedback regarding their experiences and views.

- *'The information that can be viewed is limited'.*
- *'My GP surgery won't update our app the last data is over 12 months old we are forced by the Surgery to use this app despite being over 70, bring back the old days'.*
- *'Sometimes the app won't work, and I have to uninstall and reinstall'.*
- *'I phone my doctors as I am on an emergency list, but if I used an app it would take too long, plus I really don't understand what I am doing'.*
- *'Once able to use it, saves time and is useful'.*
- *'Wasn't aware but would certainly use it in the future'.*

- *Sometimes difficult to find the menu items.*
- *'Would like all medical history to be on the app. I moved area 17 months ago and had to change GP surgery. Now I only have the history from this surgery not the last 70 years previous'.*
- *'Recent upgrade initially made it difficult to access the app as it kept throwing me out. Sorted now'.*
- *'The patient's history should keep relevant information from past treatment, as this impacts future health and treatment. E.g. Cancers, operations, chemo, RT, SCT.*
- *'I very often have difficulty logging in, it just keeps me going around in circles, so I haven't been able to use it'.*
- *'My GP doesn't provide appointments through the NHS app. I usually call to book my appointments'.*
- *'There is much more information on the app than I previously been aware of. Last week I noticed that my GP had scheduled a couple of appointments for me which I had not known about'.*
- *'Things come through too late. Need to be faster. Plus, seeing what specialists have put on, can't always see what they have said or put on about your appointment'.*

For the full survey results and participants' comments, please refer to the **Appendices** (pages 10–13).

Conclusion

A total of **204** people participated in the survey. Of these, **118** respondents (58%) reported that they use the NHS App. Participants described using the app to access health records, hospital appointments, letters, referrals, messages and repeat prescriptions. Overall, these features appear to be well used and positively received, with many respondents highlighting the convenience of managing repeat prescriptions through the app rather than contacting or visiting their GP practice.

However, 42% of respondents reported that they do not use the NHS App. Participants gave a range of reasons for this, including a preference for face-to-face services, finding the app difficult or confusing to use, or not having access to a smartphone or tablet.

Some respondents also reported technical difficulties, including occasions when the app did not function as expected and needed to be removed and reinstalled. Others felt that some of the language and terminology used within the app was difficult to understand. A small number of participants also found language barriers, while others raised concerns about confidentiality, data security and accessibility, particularly for people living with disabilities.

The findings suggest that while the NHS App is being used successfully for a range of healthcare tasks, awareness and use of its planned care functionality remains limited. This is a relatively new feature, and it is likely that awareness and uptake will increase over time as more people become familiar with its availability. Among the small number of respondents who had used the planned care functionality, the experience was generally reported as being easy or very easy.

The survey also highlights that a significant proportion of people continue to prefer accessing NHS services through face-to-face, telephone or walk-in options rather than digital channels. It is important that these options continue to be available to ensure services remain accessible and inclusive for everyone.

Increasing the use of the NHS App will require ongoing promotion, reassurance and practical support. In particular, people may benefit from clear information, demonstrations and assistance to build confidence in using the app and understanding the benefits it offers, while recognising that digital services will not be the preferred choice for everyone.

The survey identified several factors that are likely to influence future use of the NHS App:

- Access to appropriate technology, such as a smartphone, tablet or computer.
- Reliable access to the internet.
- Clear guidance on how to use and navigate the app.
- Confidence that personal information is secure and protected.
- Access to help and support when users experience difficulties or have questions.

Recommendations

Based on the survey findings, the following recommendations are proposed to improve awareness, confidence and uptake of the NHS App, particularly its planned care functionality.

1. Increase awareness of planned care features

Deliver a targeted communications campaign to raise awareness of the planned care functionality within the NHS App. This should include clear messaging about what the feature does, who it is for and the benefits of using it.

2. Provide community-based digital support

Offer face-to-face support sessions in community venues, libraries, GP practices and community organisations to help people download, register and navigate the NHS App. Practical demonstrations and one-to-one assistance would help build confidence, particularly for those with limited digital skills.

3. Improve accessibility and inclusivity

Ensure information and guidance about the NHS App is available in accessible formats and community languages. Consider the needs of people with disabilities, sensory impairments and those with low digital confidence when developing support materials.

4. Address concerns about privacy and security

Provide clear and accessible information explaining how personal data is protected within the NHS App. This should include reassurance about security measures, confidentiality and where users can obtain further advice if they have concerns.

5. Promote the wider benefits of the NHS App

Continue to promote the range of services available through the NHS App, including viewing health records, appointments, referrals, hospital letters, messages and ordering repeat prescriptions. Sharing examples of how the app can save time and improve access to information may encourage greater uptake.

6. Provide ongoing technical support

Ensure users know where to access help if they experience technical issues or require assistance using the app. This could include signposting to NHS App support, GP practice support where available and local digital inclusion services.

7. Maintain alternative routes to access healthcare

Continue to provide face-to-face, telephone and other non-digital routes to NHS services. While digital services offer many benefits, they should complement rather than replace traditional access methods to ensure services remain inclusive and equitable.

8. **Monitor awareness and uptake**

Repeat the survey in 12–18 months to assess whether awareness and use of the NHS App, particularly the planned care functionality, has increased. This will help measure the impact of promotional activities and identify any ongoing barriers to adoption.

Appendices

The following section presents the full survey results. Please note that some questions allowed participants to select more than one response. In addition, not all participants answered every question, either because the question was not applicable to their circumstances or because they chose not to respond. As a result, the total number of responses may vary between questions.

Full survey results

Q. Do you use the NHS App?

118 (58%) Yes

86 (42%) No

Q. If No, why are you not using the NHS App? (Select all that apply)

62 (67%) Prefer to speak on the phone

52 (57%) Prefer to see someone face to face

51 (55%) Find it too complicated or confusing

49 (53%) Prefer letters

34 (37%) Do not have access to a smartphone or tablet

25 (27%) Concerned about confidentiality

23 (25%) Prefer text messages

13 (14%) Have a disability that makes it difficult to use the app

7 (8%) Other (please specify)

Comments from participants that indicated Other:

- ***'Can't book GP appointment on it, can't order prescription, can't get hospital appointments on it, can't see referrals'.***
- ***'I request repeat prescription on practice web page I can't afford internet and don't want it'.***
- ***'Letters are more security'.***
- ***'I log in through my pc as my phone doesn't have enough memory to download'.***
- ***'I can't read and write English'.***
- ***'Language difficulty. Can't speak English properly'.***
- ***'I don't use technology'.***
- ***'Can't log on to app. daughter tried and can't'.***
- ***'The app doesn't like my name'.***

Q. If you do use the NHS App, what do you use it for? (Select all that apply)

97 (82%)	Viewing GP health record
89 (75%)	Ordering repeat prescriptions
79 (67%)	Viewing hospital letters, appointments or referrals
77 (65%)	Booking and managing appointments
61 (52%)	Reading messages
43 (36%)	Managing health services for others
33 (28%)	Viewing hospital/specialist messages, documents or questionnaires
29 (25%)	Accessing NHS number
17 (14%)	Contacting NHS 111
13 (11%)	Registering with a GP surgery
2 (2%)	Other (please specify)

Comments from participants that indicated Other:

- ***'Use mainly for prescriptions and occasional appointments'.***
- ***'Accessing results from smear and breast screening'.***
- ***'Would use managing health services for others, to use for my wife but cannot make it work'.***
- ***'It is not consistent in what is available. Some appts (injections) are easy to book, whereas others are not, and future appointments are not there Similarly, some hospital letters are on the app and others are not'.***
- ***'Test results'.***

Q. Are you aware that you can (or will soon be able to) manage planned care through the NHS App?

70 (56%) No	56 (44%) Yes
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Q. Have you used the NHS App to manage planned care?

81 (65%) No	44 (35%) Yes
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Q. If yes, how did you find the experience?

34 (69%) Very easy/very good	1 (2%) Very poor
12 (24%) Easy/good	0 (0%) Mixed
2 (4%) Poor	

We asked participants to tell us more about their experience(s)

- ***'I don't understand what I have to do and get mixed up'.***
- ***'I have had surgery done at another hospital, but it is still on my NHS App and it shows me all about before and after the surgery'.***
- ***'Could not do it'.***
- ***'Am techy so OK with it'.***

Q. What would be the barriers for you in using the app to arrange planned care?

32 (39%)	Prefer to speak to someone
25 (30%)	Prefer using phone calls or in-person appointments
22 (27%)	Prefer to receive a letter in the post
16 (20%)	Find it too difficult
15 (18%)	Do not understand the jargon
14 (17%)	Prefer to receive a text message
11 (13%)	Do not use apps
10 (12%)	Do not trust having my information on there
10 (12%)	Find it confusing
10 (12%)	Other
9 (11%)	Do not have a smartphone or tablet
8 (10%)	Cannot afford to pay for internet
5 (6%)	Cannot read the writing
3 (4%)	Have a disability that makes it difficult for me to use it

Comments from participants that indicated Other:

- ***'I get texts also as reminders'.***
- ***'No real barrier. Sounds good idea'.***
- ***'Both my wife & myself have to use this app, however its NEVER UPDATED despite repeated uninstalls & requests to the GP surgery'.***
- ***'All I can see on my app is GP appointment I've made via phone'.***
- ***'I am of an age where we didn't have computer's etc. I'm embracing technology slowly I would not have any barriers'.***
- ***'No probs with it'.***
- ***'I would not have a problem doesn't work'.***
- ***'Not sure available none'.***
- ***'Doesn't like my surname'.***

Q. What would encourage you to use the NHS App for managing your planned care?

55 (48%)	Do not have any difficulties using the App.
25 (22%)	Having a leaflet that shows you how to use it.
23 (20%)	Being shown by someone how to use it.
18 (16%)	If the App was simplified & easier to use.
14 (12%)	Having the technology/device to access it.
13 (11%)	Knowing where free and safe internet access points are in Walsall.
12 (10%)	If signing up and logging in was easier.
8 (7%)	Having funds to be able to have access to the internet.
5 (4%)	Other.

Comments from participants that indicated Other:

- *I'm fine with App and hope to get more access to my records as above!*
- *'I don't like doing things online as I don't understand and can't remember what to do ,as my memory is not good'.*
- *'I would prefer the personal touch of seeing someone'.*
- *'I had an appointment in April 2026 with ENT clinic, I had an ear swab taken, blood test done and booked for a MRI Scan! It is now 6th May? And there are NO results after all this time, very disappointing. And NO follow-up appointment for ENT' .*
- *'Use the app but not available to book appointments on there. don't want to use it being able to log in for my needs'.*

Q. Do you have any other comments about the NHS App or digital healthcare services?

Comments from participants:

- *'The information that can be viewed is limited'.*
- *'My GP surgery won't update our app the last data is over 12 months old we are FORCED BY THE SURGERY to use this app despite being over 70, BRING BACK THE OLD DAYS'.*
- *'Sometimes the app won't work, and I have to uninstall and reinstall'.*
- *'I phone my doctors as I am on an emergency list, but if I used an app it would take too long plus I really don't understand what I am doing' .*
- *'Once able to use it, saves time and is useful'.*
- *'Wasn't aware but would certainly use it in the futures. sometime difficult to find the menu items'.*
- *'It is not easy for me to read it, and some people struggle if they don't have access'.*
- *'Would like all medical history to be on the app I moved area 17 months ago and had to change GP surgery. Now I only have the history from this surgery not the last 70 years previous'.*
- *'The app is helpful, but you should be able to book face to face appointments with GP. I think it's brilliant'.*
- *'Recent upgrade initially made it difficult to access the app as it kept throwing me out. Sorted now'.*
- *'The patient's history should keep relevant information from past treatment, as this impacts future health and treatment. E.g. Cancers, operations, chemo, RT, SCT.*
- *'I very often have difficulty logging in, it just keeps me going around in circles, so I haven't been able to use it'.*
- *'My GP doesn't provide appointments through the NHS app. I usually call to book my appointments'.*
- *'There is much more information on the app than I previously been aware of. Last week I noticed that my GP had scheduled a couple of appointments for me which I not known about'.*
- *'Things come through too late. Need to be faster. Plus, seeing what specialists have put on, can't always see what they have said or put on about your appointment'.*

Demographics

Age

60 (30%)	50 - 64
49 (25%)	65 - 79
41 (21%)	25 - 49
32 (16%)	80+
15 (8%)	18 - 24

Gender

106 (55%)	Female
87 (45%)	Male
1 (1%)	Non-binary

Ethnicity

91 (46%)	White English, Welsh, Scottish, NI or British - White
19 (10%)	Indian - Asian or Asian British
18 (9%)	Pakistani - Asian or Asian British
15 (8%)	Bangladeshi - Asian or Asian British
10 (5%)	Arab - other
8 (4%)	African - Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
8 (4%)	Caribbean - Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
6 (3%)	Irish - White
5 (3%)	Other - white
4 (2%)	White & Asian - Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
3 (2%)	Chinese - Asian or Asian British
3 (2%)	Other - Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
3 (2%)	Other - Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
3 (2%)	White & Black Caribbean - Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
2 (1%)	Other - Asian or Asian British
1 (1%)	White & Black African - Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

Do you have a disability?

136 (70%) No	59 (30%) Yes
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We are committed to the quality of our information. Every three years we perform an in depth audit so that we can be certain of this.



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