

# Bridging the GP Gap



What Older People Are Telling Us About Access to Primary Care – and How GoodOaks Virtual GP Can Help

# Foreword



FOREWORD BY  
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Every week, our teams see the same quiet frustration. Clients waiting days or weeks for a GP appointment. Families stuck on hold, listening to the same recorded message.

Care professionals doing their best to coordinate care, while the system around them groans under the weight of demand.

We started GoodOaks to help people live well at home - not to spend their days chasing appointments. That's why we've looked hard at the growing gap between what people need from primary care and what's available.

This whitepaper brings together the voices of our clients with the national picture. It's a snapshot of how difficult it has become to access primary healthcare - and what we can do about it.

# Key Findings



## AT A GLANCE

**58%**

of GoodOaks Clients **worry** about being able to get a GP appointment when they need one

**64%**

say phoning the GP practice is **stressful** or **very stressful**

**40%**

say delays have **negatively affected** their health or wellbeing

**35%**

wait **more than a week** to see a GP

**15%**

are able to access the GP on the **same day**



# The National Picture



## Primary Care Under Pressure

Access to general practice has become one of the defining issues of modern healthcare in the UK. Although the NHS continues to deliver over 27 million appointments a month, the system is creaking.

According to the BMA, the average GP now looks after 2,247 patients, the highest on record. Since 2015, more than 1,400 GP practices have closed or merged, and recruitment remains a constant struggle.

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While 44% of appointments happen on the same day, that headline hides significant regional and demographic differences. Older adults, those with mobility issues, and people less comfortable with digital systems often face longer waits or greater anxiety.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reports that one in ten people in England still find it “difficult” or “very difficult” to contact their GP, and among over-65s, 28% say waiting times are too long (Age UK, 2025).

Behind the numbers is a human cost. Missed diagnoses. Delayed treatment. Carers and families picking up the slack. The Health Foundation describes this as the “paradox of unmet need” - the system is busy, but the people who most need help often wait the longest.

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**“The system is busy, but the people who most need help often wait the longest.”**

Health Foundation, 2025

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# What our Clients Told Us



To understand how this national challenge plays out in people's lives, we asked nearly 50 GoodOaks clients and families about their experience accessing primary healthcare.

The findings paint a consistent picture: for many, **the hardest part of getting care is getting through.**

- 58% said they worry about being able to see a GP when they need to.
- 64% described the process of phoning for an appointment as stressful or very stressful.
- 35% usually wait more than a week to see a GP, while another 17% wait between 4–7 days.
- 40% say these delays have directly affected their health or wellbeing.
- 53% had never heard of virtual GP services before we asked, showing how new this concept still feels to many older people.

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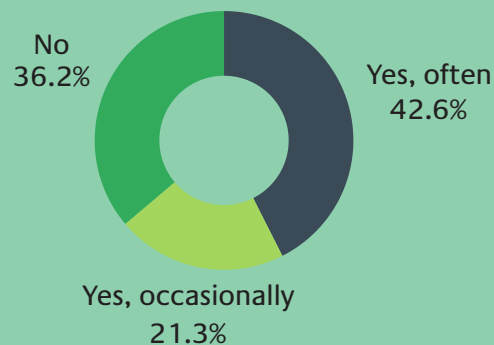
**“I called three times and couldn't get through. By the time I did, my appointment was over a week away.”**

GoodOaks Client respondent

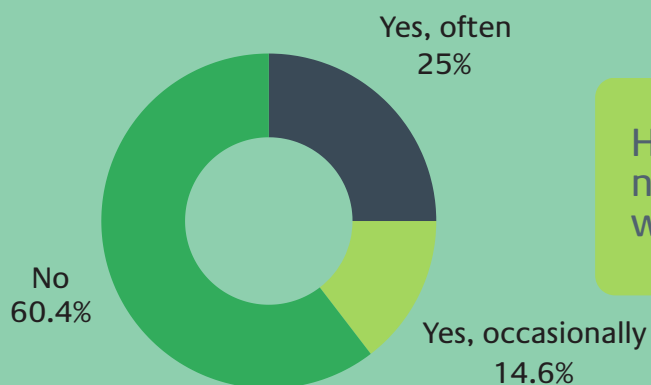
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# Key Findings at a Glance

Is phoning the GP practice for an appointment a stressful experience?



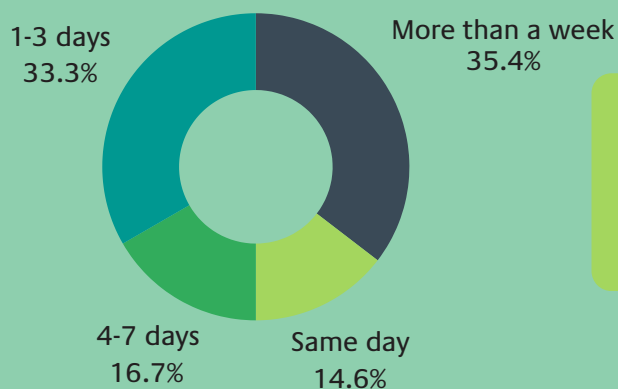
Have delays in GP access ever negatively impacted your health or wellbeing?



Before today, had you heard of virtual GP services (video/phone consultations with doctors)?



On average, how long do you usually wait for a GP appointment?





## The Human Impact

When GP access falters, the effects ripple through every layer of support around a person. Clients lose confidence. Carers lose time. Families lose peace of mind. And the NHS often bears greater costs downstream through avoidable crises.

Our carers report seeing anxiety build as clients wait for call-backs or test results. Small health issues, untreated, become big ones. Isolation increases. Families feel helpless. It's not uncommon for care professionals to spend valuable hours on hold to practices, simply trying to coordinate the help their clients need.

These are avoidable frustrations. They highlight a truth we see every day:  
**good care doesn't just happen in the visit - it happens in the coordination.**

### A Smarter, Kinder Solution: GoodOaks Virtual GP

In response, we've launched GoodOaks Virtual GP, powered by Doctor Care Anywhere, giving clients and families 24/7 access to qualified doctors through video or phone appointments.

But this isn't just about technology. It's about **time**.

Time saved for carers who no longer need to chase appointments.

Time saved for families who gain reassurance with a click.

And time given back to clients, who can get medical advice promptly, safely, and comfortably from home.

The service complements, rather than replaces, the NHS; bridging the gap between scheduled visits and urgent need. Every consultation is recorded securely, with summaries that can be shared (with consent) with GPs and families to keep everyone aligned.



## Key benefits reported by clients

35%

Faster access to care

19%

Reassurance for family members

13%

Easier coordination for care staff

We believe the best care combines compassion and innovation. Technology should enable connection, not replace it. Our approach is simple: keep the human touch, remove the unnecessary friction.



## Conclusion: Bridging the Gap

The challenge of GP access won't vanish overnight, but it demands practical action. Homecare is uniquely placed to help because we see where systems join - and where they break.

Our clients' experiences show that the gap between social care and healthcare can no longer be ignored. Integrating services like Virtual GP into care packages is one way to close it: giving people faster access, better continuity, and a sense of control that's too often lost in later life.

At GoodOaks, we believe a world where age or health doesn't limit where you live starts with access to the care you need, when you need it.





## About GoodOaks Homecare

GoodOaks Homecare is a leading UK homecare provider, founded on the belief that care should be better for everyone: clients, families, and care professionals alike.

We're proud to be supporting families across the UK with high-quality, personalised care that passes the "Mum Test" - care good enough for our own loved ones.

GoodOaks Virtual GP, powered by Doctor Care Anywhere, is part of our ongoing commitment to give clients and families better access, more peace of mind, and the confidence that their wellbeing is always in good hands.



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