



Access to Primary Care in North Kent

A closer look at the 2022 NHS GP Patient Survey

February
2023

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Foreword

It is rare for a week to pass without there being a story in the national press about one challenge or another affecting this country's health services. This is particularly the case in the winter of 2022/23, as the NHS grapples with multiple pressures. There is no magic wand to solve the complex web of issues involved. But in the midst of headlines about struggling hospitals and queuing ambulances, the ongoing crisis in primary care is perhaps not getting the attention it deserves. And crisis is not too strong a word.

The front line in the battle to improve the nation's health starts a long way from the door of GP surgeries. It's influenced by individual behaviours and life choices, environmental factors, income and other social determinants of health. But when people do need healthcare, ready access to a GP Practice is essential. Online services, NHS 111 and local pharmacists also each have a role to play, but the GP Practice is both the mainstay of primary care and the gateway to other levels of care where needed.

In 2021, Greater North Kent (GNK) looked at the results of the annual NHS GP Patient Survey to see what it told us about patients' experience of accessing primary care in North Kent. The picture it painted was that on key measures the experience of North Kent patients was appreciably worse than at either national level or for Kent & Medway as a whole. We held back publication of that report in recognition of the changes happening nationally with the introduction of Integrated Care Systems replacing Clinical Commissioning Groups. But we shared our findings and suggestions with the incoming Integrated Care Board (ICB) as the start of a constructive dialogue about improving both access and quality of primary care.

We decided to look at the results of the 2022 Survey to see how they compared with 2021. The results examined in this report make sobering reading. They show a decline nationally in patient satisfaction with their GP services, and that decline has been steeper in North Kent than both the national average and for Kent & Medway as a whole.

We recognize that both the 2021 and 2022 Surveys were carried out prior to the Integrated Care System coming into statutory force. So this is looking at how things have been, not necessarily how they are now. But we feel the time is now right to publish both these reports to mark the baseline against which we will hold our NHS partners to account to deliver improvements, especially in primary care and at general practice level.

Our dialogue with the ICB has already shown that they understand our concerns and steps are being taken to lead and deliver improvements. But much remains to be done and, as the ICB acknowledges, it needs to be done in partnership. We therefore look forward to working more closely with the ICB, both as Greater North Kent and through partners' roles in the Integrated Care System, to help drive improvement in the primary care services that our residents rightly expect.

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Cllr Roger Gough
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February 2023

Summary of findings¹

- Overall, the 2022 GP patient survey shows nationally that on virtually every indicator patient satisfaction with their GP service is lower than in previous years and with a marked decline since 2021. The results for North Kent are strikingly lower than the results for England as a whole, and on most measures the decline in North Kent since 2021 is even steeper than both the England and Kent & Medway ICS results.
- Only 62% of North Kent patients described their overall experience of their GP practice as good, 10% below the national result; and around one in five North Kent patients (21%) described their experience of their GP practice as poor compared with one in seven nationally (14%).
- Compared with the England average, a much smaller proportion of North Kent patients found it easy to contact their GP practice by phone, considered practice receptionists to be helpful, or reported a good experience of making an appointment. Similarly, a smaller percentage were satisfied with the appointment times available to them, and when they had a preference to see a particular GP they were less likely to be able to do so.
- A higher than average percentage made no use of their practice's online services and did not find their GP practice's websites easy to use. The local authority areas were split with either significantly greater or significantly less use of their practice's online tools.
- Overall North Kent patients explored fewer alternative actions than the England average when they could not get the appointment they wanted, and had to wait longer for appointments to happen.
- Worry about catching Covid-19 figured less amongst North Kent patients' reasons for not making appointments, but the difficulty of the appointments process seemed to be a more significant hurdle.
- Fewer North Kent patients were given a set time for an appointment and where a set time was given it more frequently actually happened later than the time given. The distribution of appointments across different types of healthcare professionals was similar overall in North Kent to England but with some marked variations between authorities.
- Compared to the England results, a lower percentage of North Kent patients thought the healthcare professional they saw was good at giving them time, listening to them or treating them with care and concern. Where patients had mental health needs the decline in that being understood or recognized by the healthcare professionals seen was greater in North Kent than England since 2021. Confidence in the healthcare professionals seen has also declined, with slightly lower satisfaction that needs were being met than in 2021.
- The gap between well and less well performing practices seems to be widening. In 2021 the gap between the top and bottom five averages was 20%, but in 2022 this had widened to 29%.
- There appears to be some association between GP to patient ratios and patient satisfaction ratings.
- The percentage of patients reporting recent adverse health conditions was similar in North Kent to England. The pattern and prevalence of long-term conditions was similar to England, with Dartford having the lowest rate and Swale the highest. Arthritis and high blood pressure stand out as the most reported conditions, with both particularly high in Swale.
- Marginally fewer North Kent patients than in England felt their condition impaired their ability to carry out day to day activities. But fewer patients felt they'd had enough support in managing their conditions. Where plans had been agreed with a healthcare professional for managing their conditions these were found helpful, though North Kent lags behind England for the percentage of patients with such plans in place. On smoking, the North Kent-level results are not radically different from England, but marginally fewer patients had never smoked or were occasional smokers and marginally more were former or regular smokers.

¹ The comparisons 'less', 'more', 'fewer' and so on are with reference to the national (England) average unless otherwise indicated.

- When GP Practices were closed, North Kent patients' actions followed a similar pattern to England, but with a few marked shifts between the 2021 and 2022 results in some authority areas, particularly the increased percentage of Swale patients going to A&E. A smaller proportion of North Kent patients reported a good experience of other NHS services in these circumstances (42%, England 50%) and the decline since 2021 was steeper in North Kent (-18%) than England (-15%). This indicates some of the wider pressure on NHS services rather than patients' experience of their own practice.
- Patients registered with a GP practice don't necessarily live in the same local authority as the practice. This means that the deprivation score for a practice can be different to the deprivation score for the area in which the practice is located. This results in quite a different impression of relative deprivation of practices compared to local population. But the results indicate some association between deprivation and patients' satisfaction with their overall experience of their GP practice, with a trend for lower levels of satisfaction in areas of higher deprivation.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

- 1.1.1. Greater North Kent (GNK) was constituted in its present form in 2021 and in late summer of that year identified four streams for its work programme – health, skills, culture and infrastructure – with climate action as a cross-cutting dimension of the whole programme.
- 1.1.2. For the health work stream, the GNK Board’s initial priority focused on patients’ experience of accessing primary care. To get behind the kinds of accounts being reported to local councillors by their constituents, GNK analysed the results of the 2021 GP Patient Survey, carried out on behalf of the NHS by Ipsos MORI. A report on this analysis was revised in early 2022 and shared with the incoming Kent & Medway Integrated Care System (K&M ICS).
- 1.1.3. In summary, the GNK report highlighted respects in which North Kent patients’ recorded a significantly lower level of satisfaction with their experience of accessing primary care compared with England as a whole and, for the most part, with Kent & Medway². The purpose in assembling this evidence was to make the case for targeted improvements. In part the audience for the report was the K&M ICS, but there were also issues where action to support improvement lies outside the gift of the K&M ICS. GNK’s aim is therefore to use our findings to reinforce messages to central Government and other decision-makers about the need for investment and change – whether in policy, programmes or institutions – to help deliver improvements.
- 1.1.4. Continuing this focus on primary care, GNK has analysed the results of the 2022 GP Patient Survey published on 14 July 2022. This report draws out the key messages from the latest survey and comparisons with the previous year. It broadly follows the structure of the survey (and the previous report), followed by a conclusion and recommendations.

1.2. GNK’s approach

- 1.2.1. The range of reports and materials available covering the 2022 results and previous years are described in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2.2. The institutional architecture of the NHS does not map directly onto local authority boundaries that shape the delivery of other services to residents, including many that have a role in the preventative agenda for residents’ health and wellbeing, and that are used for reporting various other relevant public statistics. Below ICS level, the structure of GP practices and Primary Care Networks (PCNs) has its own logic but is similarly not aligned to local authority structures. The K&M ICS area (the whole of Kent & Medway) is also sub-divided into four Health & Care Partnership areas, and PCNs are aligned with these. Some PCNs straddle boundaries and include GP practices that are not in North Kent. There are 93 practices³ based in North Kent, all but two of which are arranged into 21 Primary Care Networks (out of 41 in Kent & Medway). North Kent has an interest in all four Health & Care Partnership areas (though not representation on each of the Partnership boards) on the basis that there are GP practices covered by each within North Kent.
- 1.2.3. In order to understand the picture as it applies to North Kent, and reflecting the experience of North Kent patients, we have therefore taken the approach of focusing on the GP practices that have an address in North Kent, arranged by local authority, and also looking at the aggregate or average results for North Kent as a whole. We recognize that any particular GP practice will have patients registered whose home address is outside the North Kent boundary (and vice versa). As explained further in section 3, patients are not necessarily registered with a GP practice in their “home” borough.

² The Kent & Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (succeeded from 1 July 2022 by the K&M ICS).

³ From April 2022 the Maple Practice (G82639) merged with the Orchard Practice (G82056) to become the Wellcome Practice (retaining code G82056). At the time of the GP Patient Survey they were separate practices and are treated as such for this analysis. The Iwade Medical Centre has been taken over by the MPA Group Practice based in Medway: it appears in this analysis but does not appear independently in the May 2022 list of GP Practices.

1.3. Headline findings from the national report

- 1.3.1. The pressure on general practice and primary care services is widely recognised and reported. This arises from a number of supply side and demand factors, some with roots going back many years. On the supply side, there is a national shortage of General Practitioners (GPs) as recruitment fails to keep pace with the numbers leaving the profession or reducing their workload in the interests of their own health and life-work balance. Inevitably, that shortfall is not evenly distributed and some areas are more challenged to attract GPs either to existing vacancies or to establish new provision.
- 1.3.2. In England the ratio of GPs per 1000 patients is currently around 0.75 (0.58 FTE). In Kent, excluding North Kent, the ratio is 0.66 (0.49 FTE)⁴, but in North Kent (which includes Medway) the average is 0.58 (0.43 FTE)⁵, ranging from 0.53 (0.39 FTE) in Swale to 0.68 (0.57 FTE) in Dartford⁶. This focuses purely on GPs. It is not to detract from or devalue other primary care roles, particularly as part of multi-disciplinary teams in GP practices or Primary Care Networks. But to the extent that GPs have the central role, particularly in diagnosis and referral, the GP-patient ratio is a strong indicator of relative pressure on access to services. In Kent and Medway, full-time equivalent (FTE) totals average around 75% of the headcount, compared with England as a whole where FTE is nearer 80% of the GP headcount. See Appendix 2 for detail in North Kent.
- 1.3.3. On the demand side there is a wide range of issues, notably arising from an ageing population presenting multiple health conditions and, in some areas, multiple deprivation and poverty contributing to health inequalities. On top of these, of course, the Covid-19 pandemic has increased demand on services and deflected service provision and resources resulting in other conditions getting less or delayed attention, and at the same time has impacted the supply side as it has taken its toll on the NHS workforce.
- 1.3.4. These paragraphs are a drastic over-simplification of a complex picture. The general point is recognizing that these pressures are felt to some degree across the whole country and are not unique to Kent & Medway nor to North Kent. These pressures inevitably translate into people's reported satisfaction with GP services. The GP patient survey focuses on patients' experience of accessing primary care: it is not about patient outcomes. Rightly the K&M ICS needs to look at both. This analysis, as the previous one, focuses only on access so is only part of the story.
- 1.3.5. Overall, the 2022 GP patient survey shows nationally that on virtually every indicator patient satisfaction with their GP service is lower than in previous years and with a marked decline since 2021. The results for North Kent are strikingly lower than the results for England as a whole, and on most measures the decline in North Kent since 2021 is even steeper than both the England and Kent & Medway ICS results.**
- 1.3.6. Page 7 of the national report gives a flavour of this based on selected indicators with the North Kent average displayed alongside (Table 1):

⁴ Based on GP Practices participating in the GP Patient Survey (i.e. excluding those based in hospitals, prisons etc.) – source General Practice Workforce, September 2022. The overall ratio for Kent & Medway including North Kent and all providers is 0.62. Some data are missing or fully estimated, which may marginally affect the overall calculations.

⁵ Averages quoted here are for across all practices in North Kent or within each local authority. At practice level ratios range from 0.13 (The Matrix Medical Practice, Medway) to 2.31 (Borstal Village Practice, also Medway).

⁶ As noted in section 4, GP practices' patient lists are not the same as the resident population, but there are some very significant differences between borough aggregate GP patient lists and Census 2021 population figures, notably for Gravesham (where the patient list is 27.4% higher than the resident population).

Table 1: Comparison between England and North Kent 2021 and 2022 results on key indicators⁷

Indicator	England 2022	England 2021	England Change	North Kent 2022	North Kent 2021	North Kent Change*
Reported a good overall experience of their GP practice	72.4%	83.0%	-10.6%	61.7%	76.0	-14.3%
Said they were satisfied with the appointment they were offered the last time they tried to book one	71.9%	81.7%	-9.8%	68.1%	76.8%	-8.7%
At their last appointment, said they had confidence and trust in the healthcare professional	93.1%	95.6%	-2.5%	90.5%	93.5%	-3.0%
At their last appointment, said their needs were met	91.0%	94.0%	-3.0%	89.0%	92.4%	-3.4%
At their last appointment, said the healthcare professional was good at treating them with care and concern	83.5%	88.4%	-4.9%	77.7%	84.4%	-6.7%
Reported a good overall experience of making an appointment	56.2%	70.6%	-14.4%	43.1%	60.9%	-17.8%
Said that they found it easy to get through to their practice by phone	52.7%	67.6%	-14.9%	34.6%	53.0%	-18.4%
Used an online general practice service in the last 12 months	55.1%	44.3%	+10.8%	51.5%	37.5%	+14.0%
Patients who needed an appointment [and] said they had avoided making one in the last 12 months for any reason	55.4%	43.3%	+12.1%	61.3%	45.1%	+16.2%
Patients who needed an appointment [and] said they had avoided making one in the last 12 months as they found it too difficult	26.5%	11.1%	+15.4%	37.3%	15.1%	+22.2%
Reported a good overall experience of NHS services when their GP practice was closed.	50.2%	65.6%	-15.4%	42.0%	59.6%	-17.6%

* Bold type in this column indicates where the change in North Kent is greater than the change nationally.

1.3.7. The overall picture is that patients in North Kent reported lower satisfaction with their GP services than the results for England as a whole and that the change from 2021 results was also greater. Thus, for instance, whilst nationally the percentage of people who found it easy to get through to their GP practice by phone declined by 14.9%, in North Kent that was 18.4%; and nationally the percentage of people who avoided making an appointment because it was too difficult rose by 15.4% but in North Kent it rose by 22.2%. Only on satisfaction with the appointment they were offered was the decline in North Kent less than the decline nationally. The increase in patients using online GP services could be viewed both positively and negatively: it could be seen as extending the options for how patients access services; or it could be seen as a reflection of the actual or

⁷ This table omits one indicator where it is not clear what methodology the researchers have used to derive the figures and the GNK equivalent cannot therefore be calculated.

perceived difficulty in accessing services in person. It should probably be regarded neutrally, but noting that the change was greater in North Kent than nationally.

1.4. How to use the data for improvement

- 1.4.1. The suite of results materials include slide packs for each ICS, which include a slide suggesting how the slide pack can be used and interpreted to help to improve GP services. It contributes to the evidence base to highlight where improvement is most needed and where support programmes developed and implemented by the ICS should be focused. For GNK, this is not a stick with which to beat hard-pressed GP practices. **Our purpose is using the data, with our analysis of 2021 results as a benchmark, to hold the ICS to account for the improvements it delivers, and to look at areas where as a group of local authorities we may be able to help drive change through more effective preventative action, including via Health & Care Partnerships.**
- 1.4.2. As indicated in the previous section, the headline results indicate declining performance on most measures, so the issue becomes one of prioritization. For North Kent, we have not carried out counterpart analysis for the years prior to 2021: our focus is on the realities now rather than how things were in the past. But, whilst recognizing the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had generally, change since 2021 is a strong indicator of where attention should be focused.
- 1.4.3. As a general point it is worth noting that the survey response rate was lower in 2022 than 2021, only 29.1% nationally (35.3% in 2021), 32.8% in North Kent (38.2% in 2021) and 35.1% in K&M ICS (40.7% in 2021). The percentage decrease in response rate was lower in North Kent than England as a whole and K&M ICS. Very low numbers of responses at individual practice level can distort results and Ipsos MORI have a methodology for weighting responses to take this and other factors into account. However, it does mean that practice-level results should be treated with caution. Aggregation to borough and North Kent level, whilst masking variation between practices, provides a larger sample which allows a greater degree of confidence in the results and what they convey.
- 1.4.4. It is also worth noting that some results may be more a reflection of patients than of GP practices: for instance, how good their digital skills are may shape how much they try to use online services, or how easy they find doing so. But there always two sides to that coin too, in terms of how well designed and inclusive those services are. And socio-economic and deprivation factors will also play a direct part: in general, people who live in more deprived areas are more likely to lack the social capital and skills they may need to access services effectively.

2. The results in more detail

- 2.1.1. The approach taken in our report on the 2021 Survey was to highlight areas where results for North Kent varied from national results by +/- 3% percentage points or more. This was chosen to make allowance for variations that might not be statistically significant. This analysis takes the same approach. Unless otherwise indicated, “less/fewer” and “more” mean relative to the results for England as a whole. Each sub-section is prefaced by a summary to bring out main messages and aid navigation.

2.2. Your local GP services

- 2.2.1. **Compared with the England average, a significantly smaller proportion of North Kent patients found it easy to contact their GP practice by phone, considered practice receptionists to be helpful, or reported a good experience of making an appointment. Similarly, a smaller percentage were satisfied with the appointment times available to them, and when they had a preference to see a particular GP they were less likely to be able to do so. A higher than average percentage made no use of their practice’s online services and did not find their GP practice’s websites easy to use. The local authority areas were split with either significantly greater or significantly less use of their practice’s online tools.**

- 2.2.2. As well as scoring low overall on ease of getting through to practices by phone, a much lower percentage (7.4%) of North Kent patients found it very easy (England 14.3%) and a much higher percentage (35.7%) found it not at all easy (England 22.3%). Compared with 2021, those finding it easy declined by 14.9% in England, but by 18.4% in North Kent.
- 2.2.3. A similar pattern, though different percentages, characterized the results for how easy patients found it use their practice's website. Broadly speaking, the profile of what online services North Kent patients accessed was similar to England, and the uplift in using such services compared to 2021 (14.0%, England 10.8%) was greater in North Kent. The area where change since 2021 was most marked was patients accessing their medical records online, which more than doubled (7.1% to 16.5%) for England but more than tripled (3.9% to 13.1%) in North Kent. In terms of patients trying to use their practice's website, North Kent broadly follows the national trend for sustained increase in the percentage who have tried to do so and decrease in those who have not.
- 2.2.4. A lower percentage of North Kent patients (37.2%, 42.1% in 2021) had a preference to see or speak to a particular GP (England 43.4%, 45.8% in 2021), but for those who did there was a slightly bigger drop since 2021 (-9.1%) than in England (-7.0%) or K&M ICS (-8.5%).

Table 2: Comparison between North Kent, K&M ICS and England results for questions 1-4, 6 and 8.

Survey Question	England	North Kent	% variance v England*	Kent & Medway	% variance v England*
Q1. Generally, how easy is it to get through to someone at your GP practice on the phone? (% "Easy")	52.7%	36.4%	-16.3%	41.8%	-10.9%
Q2. How helpful do you find the receptionists at your GP practice? (% "Helpful")	82.1%	76.0%	-6.1%	79.1%	-3.0%
Q3. Which of the following general practice online services have you used in the past 12 months? (% answering "none of these")	44.9%	48.5%	3.6%	47.1%	2.2%
Q4. How easy is it to use your GP practice's website to look for information or access services? (% "Easy")	66.7%	55.2%	-11.5%	60.4%	-6.3%
Q6. How satisfied are you with the general practice appointment times that are available to you? (% "Satisfied")	55.2%	43.3%	-11.9%	48.2%	-7.0%
Q8a. How often do you see or speak to your preferred GP when you would like to? (% "Always / A lot of the time")	38.2%	32.3%	-5.9%	39.7%	1.5%
Q8b. How often do you see or speak to your preferred GP when you would like to? (% "Never or almost never")	17.3%	22.9%	5.6%	18.5%	1.2%

*Results shown in bold where greater than +/- 3%

- 2.2.5. At **local authority level**, on these results Gravesham scored consistently bottom or second from bottom in North Kent whilst Maidstone scored consistently top or second from top. On two measures – helpful receptionists and ability to see their preferred GP – the results for Maidstone were higher than for England and K&M ICS: these were the only instances in this section of the results where this occurred. Medway patients made the least use of their practices' online services.

Table 3: Patients' experience of contacting their GP Practices – local authority level results

Indicator	K&M ICS	England	Dartford	Gravesham	Maidstone	Medway	Swale	North Kent
Easy to get through by phone	41.8%	52.7%	30.3%	29.8%	46.0%	37.3%	33.5%	36.4%
Helpful receptionists	79.1%	82.1%	71.2%	68.7%	83.1%	75.7%	78.4%	76.0%

Indicator	K&M ICS	England	Dartford	Gravesham	Maidstone	Medway	Swale	North Kent
No use of practice's online services	47.1%	44.9%	41.1%	44.6%	50.8%	51.2%	50.2%	48.5%
Easy to use website	60.4%	66.7%	54.3%	47.6%	58.4%	53.7%	62.6%	55.2%
Satisfied with appointment times available	48.2%	55.2%	36.1%	40.0%	49.9%	42.3%	45.8%	43.3%
Able to see preferred GP	39.7%	38.2%	33.9%	22.2%	42.3%	31.6%	26.7%	32.3%

2.2.6. At **individual GP practice level** the range of responses was quite extreme (Table 4). The ability to see a preferred GP may partly reflect the ratio of GPs to patients in that practice, whilst other results may reflect various factors including the quality and training of administrative staff and surgeries' systems:

Table 4: Patients' experience of contacting their GP Practices – individual Practice results (selected)

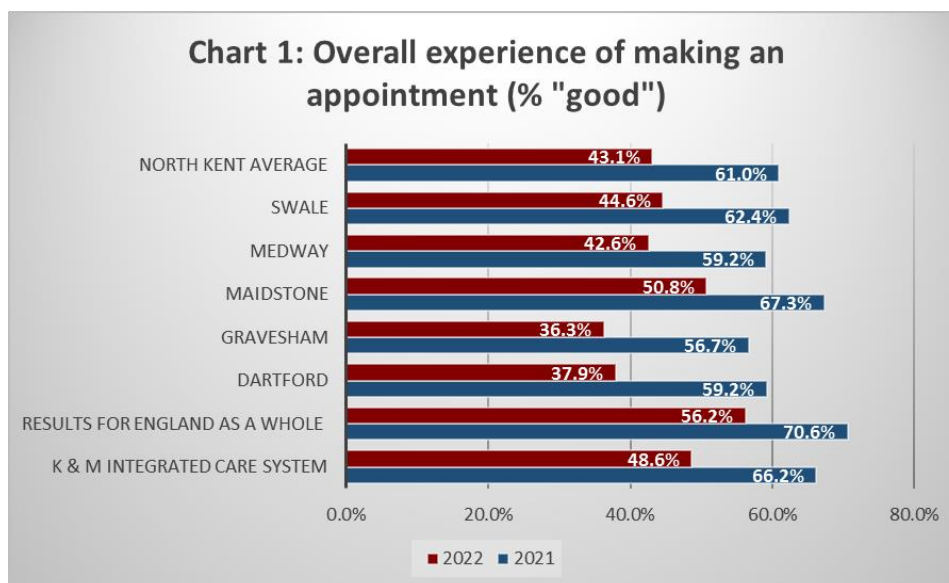
Indicator	Highest Result	Lowest Result
Easy to get through by phone	98.7% (Langley, Maidstone)	5% (Thorndike Partnership, Medway)
Helpful receptionists	100% (Langley, Maidstone)	52.1% (Jubilee Medical Centre, Gravesham)
No use of practice's online services	27.7% (Gravesend Medical Centre)	73.5% (Balmoral Gardens, Medway)
Easy to use website	100% (Pump Lane, Medway)	14.4% (St Werburgh Medical Practice, Medway)
Satisfied with appointment times available	88.0% (Pump Lane, Medway)	8.5% (St Werburgh Medical Practice, Medway)
Able to see preferred GP ⁸	81.5% (Langley, Maidstone)	0.0% (Springhead Health, Gravesham and Long Catlis Road, Medway)

2.3. Making an appointment

2.3.1. Compared to the England average, a smaller proportion of North Kent patients reported a good experience of making an appointment. North Kent patients were offered less choice of appointments and were less satisfied with the appointments offered. Overall North Kent patients explored fewer alternative actions than the England average when they could not get the appointment they wanted, and had to wait longer for appointments to happen.

2.3.2. **Q21. Overall, how would you describe your experience of making an appointment?** The chart (1, below) shows that a lower percentage of patients rated their experience of making an appointment as good than in 2021. Nationally this was a 14.4% decline, but in North Kent it was 17.9% with the steepest decline (21.3%) in Dartford. Overall, the result in North Kent was 13.1% below the England rate and 5.5% below K&M ICS.

⁸ NB For 11 practices (9 in Medway and 2 in Swale) there were insufficient responses to yield publishable results.



- 2.3.3. At practice level, only 29/93 (31%) of GP practices attracted a “good” rating above the national average – a lower figure than 2021 (37%). And 59/92 attracted above average rating of “poor” (with 60/92 giving an above average rating of “very poor”). The lowest “good” rating was for St Werburgh Medical Centre (12.3%) and the highest, also in Medway, was Maidstone Road, Rainham (86.5%).
- 2.3.4. The published results do not enable us to see how practices compare by patient demography but table 5 below compares North Kent’s profile (where +/-3% different from England results) to give an indication of areas where the national findings may be of particular relevance:

Table 5: Overall experience of making an appointment

National variations by patient demographics ⁹	North Kent profile and / or outliers
Patients identifying as female reported a more positive experience than those identifying as male; those self-describing or identifying as non-binary had the least positive experience;	Though not exceeding the +/-3% threshold, fewer respondents in Gravesham identified as female (49% compared with 51.6% in England);
Older patients reported a more positive experience than younger ones;	A higher percentage of Dartford patients were 25-44 year olds (42.9% compared with 34.1% in England) and lower percentage aged 65-74 (8.7% compared to 12.1% in England)
Patients from African and White and Black African reported the most positive overall experience of making an appointment, whereas patients from Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic groups reported the least positive experience;	Dartford (7.0%) had more Black British and Black African patients (England 2.4%) and was the least “White” borough, Gravesham (8.5%) had more Asian or British Asian (Indian) patients (England 3.7%) whilst Swale (0.4%) had far fewer. Overall North Kent patients (87.1%) were “Whiter” than England (81.8%, all “White” categories);
Lesbian, gay and “prefer not to say” patients reported a less positive experience;	Maidstone had a higher percentage of patients identifying as straight/heterosexual (92.6%, England 89%)
Christian and Buddhist patients reported a more positive experience, Muslim and Sikh and “prefer not to say” about their religion reported a less positive experience;	Fewer patients in Gravesham (32.5%) and more Medway (41.9%) and Swale (45.4%) said they had no religion (England 36.1%); more in Maidstone said they were Christian (51.9%, England 48.2%); 6.9% of Gravesham patients were Sikh (England 0.9%) and overall in North Kent less than 2.0% were Muslim (England 6.0%).

⁹ National report, pages 28-31.

National variations by patient demographics ⁹	North Kent profile and / or outliers
Patients who are carers reported a less positive experience;	19.3% of North Kent patients had caring responsibilities compared with 19.6% in K&M ICS and 18.9% in England.
As deprivation increased, the proportion of patients reporting a good overall experience decreased;	No practice, LA or North Kent comparison available – but see separate comments about deprivation in section 3.
Disabled patients and those with two or more long-term health conditions were less likely to report a positive experience.	Dartford (48.8%) had fewer and Swale (60.8%) had more patients stating that they had a disability or long-term health condition (England 55.1%)

- 2.3.5. **Q9. When did you last try to make an appointment?** The profile for North Kent patients is largely similar to England, with only Dartford standing out as having a significantly higher percentage seeking an appointment in the last 3 months (59.3% compared with 55.2% in England). As in 2021, a higher proportion of Dartford patients had tried to make an appointment in the 3 months prior to the survey.
- 2.3.6. **Q10. Before you tried to get this appointment, did you do any of the following?** Generally the responses were close to average with the following exceptions.

Table 6: Action before trying to get an appointment

Actions taken	2022 England	2022 Outliers in North Kent (>+/-3%)	2021 England	2021 Outliers in North Kent (>+/-3%)
Used a non-NHS online service, or looked online for information	14.6%	Gravesham 11.4%, Swale 11.4%	13.7%	Swale 11.1%*
Spoke to a pharmacist	16.6%	Maidstone 13.0%, Medway 20.4%	14.9%	Dartford 18.1%, Medway 18.7%
Tried to treat myself / the person I was making this appointment for (for example with medication)	26.6%	Medway 29.8%	24.0%	-
Tried to get information or advice elsewhere (from a non-NHS service)	11.0%	Swale 7.9%	9.5%	-
I did not try to get information or advice	38.5%	Medway 34.7%	42.0%	-

* Lowest in North Kent but less than 3% variance.

- 2.3.7. **Q11. When would you have liked this appointment to be?** Results similar to average except for Dartford were fewer patients were seeking appointments on the same day (34.6%, England 38.7%).
- 2.3.8. **Q12. How did you try to book the appointment?** Most results were in line with average, but compared with 2021 North Kent patients went from below average for use of online booking to above average in 2022. However, North Kent authorities are split with either significantly greater or significantly less use of online tools. In 2021 the results for booking appointments online were all below England at local authority level, but Dartford and Gravesham patients made greater use of phone booking. Dartford patients stand out in 2022 in making appointments in person. There is also huge variation between practices, indicated in Table 7.

Table 7: Booking an appointment

How did you try to book the appointment?	In person	Online, including on a website or through an app
England	10.0%	16.2%
Outliers in North Kent (>+/-3%)	Dartford 15.2%, Gravesham 13.2%, Swale 13.6%	Dartford 20.4%, Gravesham 19.8%, Medway 19.4%, Maidstone 13.2%, Swale 11.6%

How did you try to book the appointment?	In person	Online, including on a website or through an app
Highest % practice	26.1% (Apex Medical Centre, Medway)	55.0% (Woodlands Family Practice, Medway)
Lowest % practice	0.9% (Bower Mount Medical Practice, Maidstone)	0.7% (Malling Health Four, Maidstone)

2.3.9. **Q13. Were you asked about reasons for making this appointment?** Overall, North Kent was close to the England average but there were some significant variations at LA level (Table 8, variation by >+/-3% shown in bold):

Table 8: Whether and how patients were asked the reason for making an appointment

Method	Dartford	Gravesham	Maidstone	Medway	Swale	England	K&M ICS
% Yes, during a phone call	75.0%	76.5%	82.6%	77.6%	80.7%	81.3%	81.1%
% Yes, in an online form	16.2%	15.4%	7.5%	15.2%	8.1%	11.5%	11.3%

- 2.3.10. **Q14: Who asked you for information about your reasons for making an appointment?** Again the North Kent results were close to average with no evident significance in the variation between authorities.
- 2.3.11. **Q15. Were you offered any of the following choices of appointment?** North Kent patients were offered less choice (44.6%-55.1%, average 48.2%) about appointments than across England (58.7%), particularly a choice of time of day (19.3%-28.9%, average 22.5% compared with 31.2% across England).
- 2.3.12. **Q16. Were you satisfied with the appointment you were offered?** Apart from Maidstone, which was close to average, a higher proportion of patients in North Kent reported not being offered an appointment (16.2%-21.5%, England 12.0%). Nationally, 15.4% of patients either did not get offered an appointment or did not take the appointment offered, but this was the experience for 22.9% of patients in North Kent (Maidstone 17.0% - Gravesham 28.8%). At local authority level and overall, satisfaction level with the appointment offered (58.2%-67.4%, average 63.5%) was below the England result (71.9%). Compared with 2021 this showed a 13.3% decline in North Kent compared with 9.8% nationally.
- 2.3.13. **Q17. If you did not get an appointment, why was that?** As in 2021, these data have to be treated with caution as, with 12 options, the numbers reported for some practices are too low to be included (for disclosure reasons). Whereas in 2021 practices in North Kent authorities differed from average in half those categories, in 2022 there are 8 options showing significant variance though only two ("My practice helped in another way" and "another reason") where North Kent as a whole varied by +/-3% of the England result. As in 2021, except in Maidstone, North Kent patients reported lower levels of other assistance from their GP practices where an appointment was not offered.

Table 9: Reasons for not getting an appointment (selected)

Reasons (% , bold = greater than -3%)	North Kent	K&M ICS	England
There weren't any appointments available for the time or day I wanted	Maidstone 20.2% Swale 31.6%	30.0%	27.6%
The appointment wasn't soon enough	Dartford 13.6% Swale 12.8%	9.4%	9.7%
I couldn't book ahead at my GP practice	Dartford 27.5% Medway 27.2% Swale 18.7%	26.7%	22.7%
There weren't any appointments at the place I wanted	Maidstone 4.6%	6.5%	7.7%
I couldn't see my preferred GP	Dartford 2.0%	4.5%	5.1%
The type of appointment I wanted was not available	Gravesham 4.7%	7.6%	8.1%
I was not offered an appointment	Dartford 50.1%	46.8%	42.1%

Reasons (% , bold = greater than -3%)	North Kent	K&M ICS	England
	Gravesham 46.4% Maidstone 38.8% Medway 45.5% Swale 34.0%		
My practice helped in another way	Dartford 4.2% Gravesham 5.0% Medway 4.9% North Kent 6.7%	9.0%	10.3%
Another reason	Dartford 11.1% Medway 8.7% Swale 9.7% North Kent 12.2%	14.1%	16.6%

- 2.3.14. **Q18. What did you do when you did not get an appointment?** Where patients did not get an appointment, for England as a whole 34.3% (32% in 2021) did not see or speak to anyone; but in North Kent the reported rates are lower at 30.6% (24.2% in 2021), suggesting patients were more willing to see or speak to someone – other than family or friends (North Kent 6.8%, England 9.8%). Dartford (16.5%) and Gravesham (17.4%) patients were more likely to go A&E (England 11.0%). Across all options in the survey (excluding “Didn’t see or speak to anyone”), responses for England total 92.9% but for North Kent the total is 83.8%, with Swale the lowest at 71.1% and Gravesham the highest at 96.8%. This suggests that North Kent patients overall were less likely to explore multiple alternative actions if they could not get the appointment they wanted. In 2021 the corresponding figures were 75.4% (North Kent) and 87.9% (England), so whilst the overall percentages have nudged upwards, suggesting more recourse to a range of options, the fact that North Kent lags behind the England results could, as suggested in last year’s report, point to less awareness of options, or fewer useful alternatives being – or perceived to be – available.
- 2.3.15. **Q19. What type of appointment did you get?** Overall, North Kent patients were more likely (53.1%) to speak to someone on the phone (England 49.0%) and less likely (41.8%) to see someone at their GP practice (England 45.8%). The opposite trend was found in Swale: 44.6% (5.4% below England) for phone appointments and 50.9% (5.1% above England) for in-person appointments. The same pattern was observed in 2021, though with narrower margins between England and local results.
- 2.3.16. **Q20. How long after initially trying to book the appointment did the appointment take place?** Gravesham (30.0%) and particularly Dartford (24.3%) had fewer appointments on the same day (England 33.1%), and North Kent patients had more appointments a week or more later (24.7%, England 21.4%), notably in Dartford (29.8%), Maidstone (27.2%) and Swale (26.5%). Nationally the percentage of appointments a week or more later has increased since 2021 (+5.4%) but in North Kent that trend is marginally greater (+5.5%).
- 2.3.17. The national report offers results showing how the timing of the actual appointment compared with when patients wanted it to happen. We cannot reproduce that analysis for North Kent, but a comparison of results for questions 11 (“When would you have liked this appointment to be”) and 20 (“How long after...did the appointment take place”) suggest that fewer North Kent same-day appointments happened, for whatever reasons, notably in Dartford; and more appointments were a week or more later than expected at the time of booking, again notably in Dartford. Nationally under 3% of appointments were booked for, but over 21% actually took place, a week or more later. The national report highlights that there has been a general decline in the proportion of patients who wanted an appointment at this time. But the data suggest that many more are having to settle for this.

Table 10: % Difference between booking (Q11) and actual appointment happening (Q20)

Geography	On the same day	On the next day	A few days later	A week or more later
Kent & Medway ICS	-6.7	-3.4	6.4	20.2
Results for England as a whole	-5.6	-3.7	6.6	18.5
Dartford	-10.2	-5.0	5.2	25.3

Geography	On the same day	On the next day	A few days later	A week or more later
Gravesham	-9.6	0.7	7.5	19.7
Maidstone	-5.2	-2.1	1.8	23.4
Medway	-8.3	-6.1	10.9	18.2
Swale	-7.3	-3.6	2.9	22.1
North Kent Average	-7.9	-3.6	6.3	21.2

2.4. Your last appointment

2.4.1. Fewer North Kent patients were given a set time for an appointment and where a set time was given it more frequently actually happened later than the time given. The distribution of appointments across different types of healthcare professionals was similar overall in North Kent to England but with some marked variations between authorities. Compared to the England results, a lower percentage of North Kent patients thought the healthcare professional they saw was good at giving them time, listening to them or treating them with care and concern. Where patients had mental health needs the decline in that being understood or recognized by the healthcare professionals seen was greater in North Kent than England since 2021. Confidence in the healthcare professionals seen has also declined, with slightly lower satisfaction that needs were being met than in 2021. The gap between well and less well performing practices seems to be widening. In 2021 the gap between the top and bottom five averages was 20%, but in 2022 this had widened to 29%.

- 2.4.2. **Q22. When was your last general practice appointment?** A lower proportion of North Kent patients had had a GP appointment in the past 6 months (56.2% compared with 60.5% in England).
- 2.4.3. **Q23. 'What type of appointment was your last general practice appointment?** Dartford, Gravesham and Medway (42.8%-44.4%) had a higher percentage of remote appointments (phone or online) than England (39.4%) and fewer in-person appointments (55.6%-57.2%) compared with England (60.6%). Swale showed the opposite trend with below average (35.8%) remote appointments and above average (64.2%) in-person appointments. For North Kent as a whole the changes between 2021 and 2022 were slightly more marked than for England: a bigger drop in patients seeing someone at their GP practice and a bigger increase in speaking to someone on the phone; other changes were below the +/-3% threshold.
- 2.4.4. Fewer North Kent patients (62.8%) were given an appointment at a set time (Q24, England 68.5%) and more were not given a time (13.8% compared with 10.2% in England). This pattern was more pronounced in Gravesham: only 57.8% had a set time and 16.3% had no appointment time given. A lower percentage had an appointment on time (Q25, 65.7% compared with 69.3% in England) and for more it was later than the time given (28.6% compared with 24.7%).
- 2.4.5. A key question would be **Q26. Who was your last GP appointment with?** This year the overall North Kent responses showed little variance from national figures. But more Dartford patients (68.3%) saw a GP (England 63.5%) and fewer saw a nurse (21%, England 26.2%). Fewer patients in Maidstone (59.6%) and Swale (60.1%) saw a GP. Linking responses to this question to earlier ones (e.g. 11, 18 and 20) indicates that possibly Dartford patients were more insistent on seeing a GP, meaning that a higher percentage did so but had to wait longer for their appointments; and yet the percentage of in-person appointments in Dartford (Q23) was the lowest in North Kent.
- 2.4.6. **Q27. Last time you had a general practice appointment, how good was the healthcare professional at each of the following?** Nationally, patients' rating of the healthcare professionals that they had appointments with has declined by an average of 5.0% across the three aspects below. The decline in North Kent was marginally greater (-6.7%) but much more pronounced in Gravesham (-9.4%) and Swale (-9.1%).

Table 11: How good was the healthcare professional at each of the following?

(% "good") and difference from national results (>+/- 3% shown in red)	Q27(a) Giving you enough time				Q27(b) Listening to you				Q27(c) Treating you with care and concern			
	2022		2021		2022		2021		2022		2021	
K & M ICS	80.5	-3.0	86.8	-1.9	82.1	-2.6	87.9	-1.6	80.7	-2.7	86.9	-1.5
England	83.5	-	88.7	-	84.7	-	89.4	-	83.5	-	88.4	-
Dartford	77.5	-6.0	82.6	-6.1	80.0	-4.7	85.1	-4.3	77.5	-6.0	83.9	-4.5
Gravesham	71.6	-11.8	82.3	-6.4	75.1	-9.6	83.2	-6.2	72.9	-10.6	82.2	-6.3
Maidstone	82.4	-1.1	87.3	-1.4	84.0	-0.7	88.1	-1.4	81.7	-1.8	87.6	-0.8
Medway	75.9	-7.5	82.0	-6.7	77.7	-7.0	83.9	-5.6	76.5	-7.0	82.0	-6.4
Swale	78.4	-5.1	88.3	-0.4	79.3	-5.5	88.0	-1.4	79.5	-4.0	88.2	-0.3
North Kent	77.3	-6.2	84.3	-4.4	79.2	-5.5	85.5	-3.9	77.7	-5.8	84.5	-4.0

2.4.7. **Q28. During your last general practice appointment, did you feel that the healthcare professional recognised and/or understood any mental health needs that you might have had?** In 2021 all North Kent authorities except Maidstone were below the England result (86%) though only Medway was overall more than 3% below. In 2022, **all** North Kent authorities are below the England result (80.8%) and all except Maidstone by more than 3%. The 5.2% decline nationally is exceeded by the 7.3% decline in North Kent from 83.5% (2021) to 76.2% (2022).

2.4.8. There was a small drop nationally and in North Kent in the proportion of patients who said they did not have mental health needs, or that this did not apply to their last appointment; but in Dartford, Gravesham and Maidstone results suggest that fewer patients saw themselves as having mental health needs.

Table 12: Total % of patients who said they did not have any mental health needs or that this did not apply to their last appointment

Geography	2022	2021	Change
K&M ICS	54.3%	55.1%	-0.8%
England	51.9%	52.7%	-0.8%
Dartford	54.8%	52.0%	2.8%
Gravesham	54.7%	53.0%	1.7%
Maidstone	57.3%	55.8%	1.5%
Medway	54.0%	58.2%	-4.2%
Swale	50.4%	56.4%	-6.0%
North Kent	54.3%	55.8%	-1.5%

2.4.9. At individual GP practice level the lowest result was 46.2% (Albion Place Medical Practice, Maidstone) and the highest 95.4% (Maidstone Road, Rainham).

2.4.10. **Q29. During your last general practice appointment, were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment?** North Kent patients were generally reasonably positive with results close to the national result (89.9% "yes") except in Dartford (82.8%) and Medway (86.7%). In 2021 the national result was 92.9% with North Kent only 1.8% below overall; in 2022 that gap has grown slightly to 2.6%. At individual GP practice level results ranged from only 67.4% (Albion Place Medical Centre, Maidstone) to 100% (Riverside Medical Practice, Medway). In 2021 the lowest result was 78% (Maritime Health Partnership, which also has the second lowest result in 2022) and there were five results of 100% compared with the single one in 2022.

2.4.11. **Q30. During your last general practice appointment, did you have confidence and trust in the healthcare professional you saw or spoke to?** At local authority level all North Kent results were below the national result (93.1%) with Dartford (88.3% and Medway (89.7%) more than 3% below,

indicating a lower level of confidence. For Dartford this represented a 6.9% decline since 2021; Swale also saw a significant decline (5.1%), and overall North Kent results dropped by 3.4% since 2021 compared with 2.5% nationally. At individual practice level the range is from 74.5% (Maritime Health Partnership, Medway) to 100% (Marden Medical Centre, Maidstone).

2.4.12. **Q31. Thinking about the reason for your last general practice appointment, were your needs met?**

At local authority level all North Kent results were below the England level (91%) but only Medway (87.8%) was more than 3% below. The decline since 2021 was marginally greater (3.4%) in North Kent than nationally (3%). At individual practice level, the results ranged from 72.6% (Stonecross and West Drive Surgery, Medway) to 100% (Marden Medical Centre). This lowest result is 4.1% below the lowest result in 2021.

2.4.13. These last seven questions (treating Q27a, b and c as three separate questions) are quite telling about how well patients felt they were dealt with by medical practitioners, as opposed to by the administrative systems of practices. A number of different practices appear in the top and bottom five results against each question, but taking an average of their results on questions 27 to 31 the following picture emerges:

Table 13: Top and bottom 5 average results on questions 27 to 31

Practice Name	2022	Practice Name	2021 ¹⁰
Bottom 5 average	67.6%	Bottom 5 average	78.2%
Albion Place Medical Practice	60.5%	The Kings Family Practice	76.4%
St. Werburgh Medical Practice	68.1%	St. Werburgh Medical Practice	78.2%
Maritime Health Partnership	68.7%	Wallis Avenue	78.8%
Bryant Street Medical Practice	70.2%	City Way Surgery	78.8%
Stonecross And West Drive Surgery	70.5%	Bryant Street Medical Practice	79.0%
Top 5 average	96.4%	Top 5 average	98.0%
Pump Lane Surgery	94.8%	Sutton Valence Group Practice	96.6%
Langley	95.8%	Riverside Medical Practice	97.0%
Maidstone Rd Rainham Surgery	96.0%	Maidstone Rd Rainham Surgery	98.6%
Thames Ave Surgery	97.4%	Marden Medical Centre	98.8%
Marden Medical Centre	98.2%	Langley	99.0%
Gap between bottom 5 and top 5 averages	28.8%	Gap between bottom 5 and top 5 averages	19.8%

2.4.14. It is striking that, taking this average of results, the top and bottom 5 practices are consistently in either Medway or Maidstone although on the individual components other practices figure in the lists. Two practices (St Werburgh and Bryant Street) appear consistently in the bottom 5 in both 2021 and 2022, and two in the top five (Langley and Marden). However, in 2022 Albion Place Medical Practice (Maidstone) appears in the bottom 5 across all 7 of these questions, Bryant Street Medical Practice (Medway) five times and St Werburgh Medical Practice (Medway) four times. At the other end of the scale, Marden Medical Centre (Maidstone) and Thames Avenue Surgery (Medway) appear in the top five on all seven questions, Maidstone Road Rainham (Medway) six times and Langley (Maidstone) four times.

2.4.15. It is also worth noting from Table 13 above that the average of the bottom five results in 2022 has declined by 10.6% since 2021, whereas the average of the top 5 results has only declined 1.6% over the same period. This indicates a **widening gap**, from 19.8% (2021) to 28.8% (2022), between the best and less well performing GP practices.

2.4.16. As a final point, perhaps illustrating the caution that should be exercised about average results, is that at local authority level the lowest result is for Gravesham (80.2%), followed by Dartford (80.9%). Maidstone has the highest average results (85.9%), with Swale (83.5%) ahead of Medway (81.4%). Only three Gravesham practices make a single appearance in the bottom five results for questions 27 to 31, and one in the top five; and no Dartford practices appear in any of these lists.

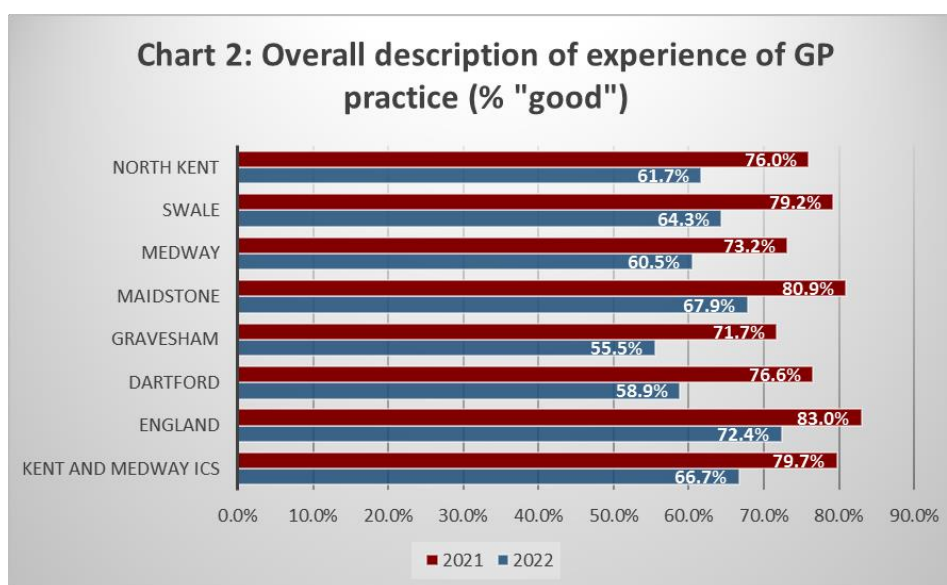
¹⁰ The lowest performing practice in the 2021 analysis was the St Mary's Island Group Practices at 72.7%: these have been re-contracted in autumn 2021 and do not appear in the 2022 GP Patient Survey results.

This indicates that patient experience in these boroughs are less extreme but nonetheless tend towards the lower end of the spectrum.

2.5. Overall experience

2.5.1. Only 62% of North Kent patients described their overall experience of their GP practice as good, 10% below the national result; and around one in five North Kent patients (21%) described their experience of their GP practice as poor compared with one in seven nationally (14%).

2.5.2. **Q32. Overall, how would you describe your experience of your GP practice?** As indicated in Table 1 above, North Kent patients' overall experience of their GP practice is significantly below the national result (-10.7%) and has declined more since 2021 (-14.3%) than either nationally (-10.6%) or across Kent & Medway (-13.0%) (Chart 2).



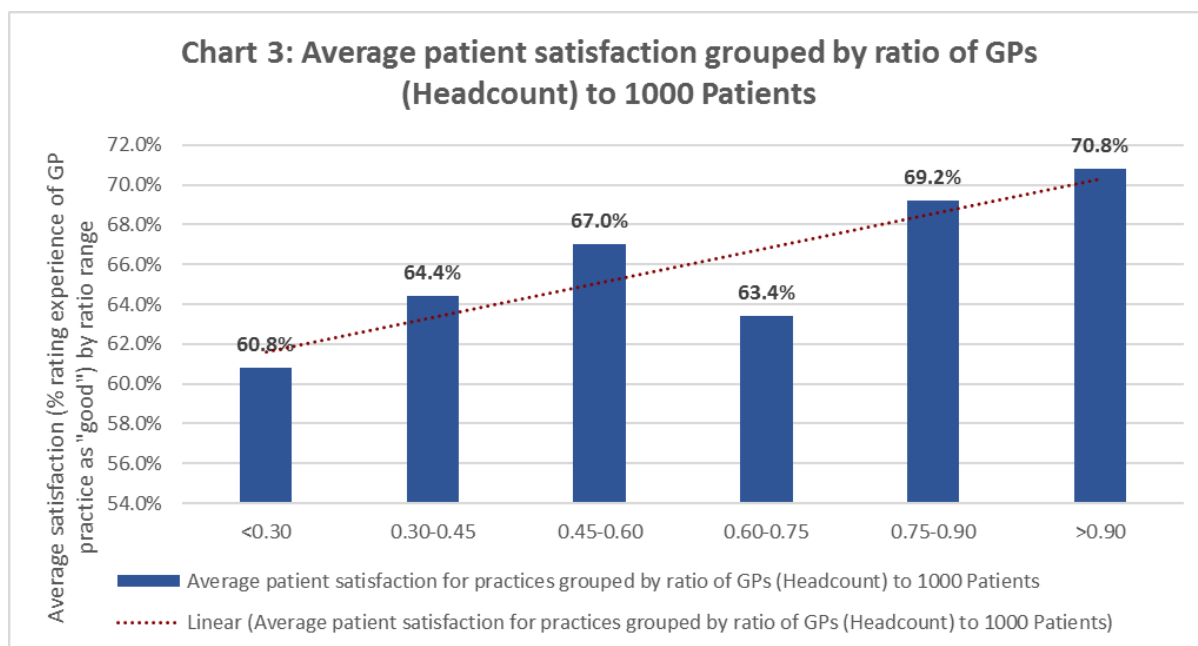
2.5.3. At individual practice level, results range from only 30.0% rating their experience as good to 94.1%, compared to a low of 51.7% and high of 98.3% in 2021. Three practices - Jubilee Medical Centre, Albion Place Medical Practice and Thorndike Partnership – appear in the bottom five results in both years, and four practices - Thames Avenue Surgery, Langley, Maidstone Road Rainham Surgery and Marden Medical Centre – appear in the top five results in both years.

2.5.4. **Around one in five North Kent patients reported a poor experience of their GP practice (20.7%) compared with about one in seven nationally (13.6%).** Maidstone patients reported the lowest rates of poor experience (15.9%) whilst Gravesham (24.4%) were the highest. 2022 marks a doubling of the percentage of patients reporting a poor experience both nationally (6.7% to 13.6%) and at North Kent level (10.7% to 20.7%).

2.5.5. It is possible to trace some broad association between levels of patient satisfaction and the GP-patient ratio¹¹ at practices (whilst recognizing that this section of the survey explores patients' experience of different types of health practitioners). Notwithstanding inevitable outliers and variations, the overall linear trend is that patient satisfaction shows an upward trend tracking the increase in GP-patient ratio (Chart 3)¹².

¹¹ Patient list and GP count data for 30 September 2022. Some practice data is missing and some estimated – see <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/general-and-personal-medical-services/30-september-2022>.

¹² In Chart 3, GP practices are grouped according to their GP-patient ratio; columns represent the average patient satisfaction rating for practices in the group.



2.6. Covid-19

2.6.1. Worry about catching Covid-19 figured less amongst North Kent patients’ reasons for not making appointments, but the difficulty of the appointments process seemed to be a more significant hurdle.

2.6.2. Patients were asked whether they had avoided making an appointment in the last 12 months for any reason, including whether they were worried about Covid-19¹³. Overall a higher percentage of North Kent patients (61.3%) avoided making an appointment for one reason or another compared with England (55.4%). The breakdown of reasons followed the same pattern as nationally, but more North Kent patients stated that they found it (the process) too difficult, notably in Gravesham, and a rather lower percentage than nationally were concerned about either placing a burden on the NHS or worry about the risk of catching Covid-19.

Table 14: reasons for avoiding making a GP appointment (Q33)

Geography	% Yes, because I didn't have time	% Yes, because I was worried about the risk of catching COVID-19	% Yes, because I was worried about the burden on the NHS	% Yes, because I found it too difficult	% Yes, for another reason	% Yes (total)	% No
K&M ICS	7.2	11.0	18.9	32.1	9.3	58.2	41.8
England	8.0	12.0	19.7	26.5	9.1	55.4	44.6
Dartford	6.8	10.2	15.9	39.4	8.5	62.0	38.0
Gravesham	4.1	10.2	14.2	41.6	10.1	63.4	36.6
Maidstone	7.9	10.3	20.5	30.5	8.8	57.8	42.2
Medway	6.3	10.1	14.0	38.5	11.4	62.0	38.0
Swale	8.0	12.0	16.6	37.2	7.8	61.7	38.3
North Kent	6.6	10.5	16.1	37.3	9.7	61.3	38.7

2.6.3. North Kent results on Q37 about whether patients were experiencing “long Covid” symptoms were very similar to the national results (4.8% answered “yes” compared with 4.4% in England).

¹³ The 2021 Survey also included a question about whether anyone in the patient’s household was shielding due to being vulnerable to Covid-19, which has not been repeated in the 2022 Survey.

2.7. Your health

2.7.1. The percentage of patients reporting recent adverse health conditions was similar in North Kent to England. The pattern and prevalence of long-term conditions was also similar to England, with Dartford having the lowest rate and Swale the highest. Arthritis and high blood pressure stand out as the most reported conditions, with both particularly high in Swale. Marginally fewer North Kent patients than in England felt their condition impaired their ability to carry out day to day activities. But fewer patients felt they'd had enough support in managing their conditions. Where plans had been agreed with a healthcare professional for managing their conditions these were found helpful, though North Kent lags behind England for the percentage of patients with such plans in place. On smoking, the North Kent-level results are not radically different from England, but marginally fewer patients had never smoked or were occasional smokers and marginally more were former or regular smokers.

2.7.2. The Survey asked patients (**Q34**) whether they had experienced adverse health conditions in the past 12 months, mentioning: problems with physical mobility, for example, difficulty getting about their home; two or more falls that have needed medical attention; feeling isolated from others; or none of these. North Kent's results were broadly similar (slightly lower) than England and K&M ICS, as they were in 2021, with only Dartford standing out as reporting a much lower rate (9.1%) of physical mobility issues (England 13.0%).

2.7.3. The Survey continued (**Q35**) by asking patients about any long-term health conditions they might have. Again, Dartford reported a lower result (48.8%) for those answering "yes" (England 55.1%) whereas Swale reported a higher result (60.8%, the highest in North Kent). The following questions then explored the experience for those identifying as having long-term conditions.

2.7.4. **Q36. Which, if any, of the following long-term conditions do you have?** The profile of responses about long-term health conditions in North Kent largely tracks the national picture and is never more than +/-1% of the Kent & Medway ICS results. At local authority level, though, Dartford stands out for lower results for arthritis, whereas Swale is higher, and both Medway and Swale have higher results for high blood pressure. More Dartford and Maidstone patients reported that they did not have long-term conditions, but the figure was significantly smaller for Swale patients. Swale's results for this question reflected the same pattern in 2021.

Table 15: Percentage of patients reporting long-term health conditions (selected)

Geography	% Arthritis or ongoing problem with back or joints	% High blood pressure	% I do not have any long-term conditions
England	17.6%	15.9%	43.5%
K&M ICS	18.8%	5.7%	41.9%
Dartford	12.0%	16.2%	49.7%
Gravesham	17.5%	15.2%	46.0%
Maidstone	17.2%	17.2%	46.7%
Medway	18.2%	19.2%	41.4%
Swale	20.9%	19.4%	37.8%
North Kent	17.5%	17.8%	43.7%

2.7.5. **Q38. Do any of these conditions reduce your ability to carry out your day to day activities?** North Kent results were close to the England results, but Dartford, Gravesham and Maidstone results were significantly lower for patients saying their condition affected them a lot, and for Dartford they were lower overall (54.1% compared with 58.5% in England); in 2021 only Maidstone was significantly lower overall. In 2021, patients answered "yes" in 42 out of 96 practices; in 2022 this increased to 44 out of 93 practices.

2.7.6. **Q39. How confident are you that you can manage any issues arising from your condition (or conditions)?** A smaller proportion of Gravesham patients (74.3% compared with 78% in England) were confident that they could manage any issues arising from their health condition(s), a result also seen in 2021. But whereas Dartford and Maidstone patients were more confident than average in 2021, the 2022 results have fallen significantly and are much closer to the England result.

2.7.7. The table (16) below summarises the results for the last four questions in this section exploring what kind of support patients have had from general practices in managing their health condition (presumably the long-term conditions identified above, not necessarily the reason for their contact with GPs over the past 12 months).

Table 16: Type of support received by patients with long-term health conditions (% patients answering yes / helpful)

Type of support	Q40. In the last 12 months, have you had enough support from local services or organisations to help you to manage your condition (or conditions)?			Q41. Have you had a conversation with a healthcare professional from your GP practice to discuss what is important to you when managing your condition (or conditions)?			Q42. Have you agreed a plan with a healthcare professional from your GP practice to manage your condition (or conditions)?			Q43. How helpful have you found this plan in managing your condition (or conditions)?		
	2022	2021	+/-	2022	2021	+/-	2022	2021	+/-	2022	2021	+/-
Geography	2022	2021	+/-	2022	2021	+/-	2022	2021	+/-	2022	2021	+/-
K&M ICS	62.8	72.3	-9.5	31.4	37.3	-5.8	59.6	57.9	1.7	94.7	95.7	-1.0
England	64.7	73.6	-8.8	35.0	41.0	-6.0	61.4	59.5	1.9	93.6	95.1	-1.4
Dartford	56.7	72.2	-15.5	31.2	39.8	-8.5	52.6	48.6	4.0	85.6	92.1	-6.5
Gravesham	54.3	66.3	-12.1	26.1	32.6	-6.5	51.6	47.1	4.5	86.2	98.7	-12.5
Maidstone	61.0	76.2	-15.2	31.7	39.3	-7.5	52.6	57.2	-4.7	100.0	95.9	4.1
Medway	59.2	67.0	-7.8	26.4	33.2	-6.9	42.1	45.1	-3.0	91.6	97.1	-5.6
Swale	61.3	71.8	-10.5	31.3	38.9	-7.6	61.9	54.7	7.2	96.5	93.4	3.1
North Kent average	59.0	70.4	-11.4	28.9	36.2	-7.3	51.0	50.4	0.6	95.0	95.4	-0.3

2.7.8. Across all North Kent authorities a lower percentage felt they'd had enough support in managing their condition, particularly in Gravesham lagging more than 10% below the England result. North Kent has also seen a greater decline since 2021 suggesting that support to patients has been even more stretched in North Kent than is typical in England, especially in Dartford and Maidstone. Discussions about managing their conditions had also declined more in North Kent than in England. At individual practice level only 30/93 practices had a result above the England figure, evenly distributed across the five local authority areas. This compares with 35/96 practices recording a result above the 2021 England result of 41%.

2.7.9. A more positive overall note was struck by a fractional increase in the percentage of people agreeing a plan to manage their condition, though the uplift in North Kent was lower than England or K&M ICS and overall is still over 10% below the national figure. Maidstone and Medway both showed a decline since 2021 with Medway standing out as significantly (-19.3%) below the national figure. There was a small overall decline in North Kent patients finding their management plan helpful – still slightly higher than the England result – but with a sharp decline in the result for Gravesham from well above to well below the England result. These last results should be treated with caution though as the numbers responding to this last question were very small (only 279 out of 799 who said they had agreed a plan responded about whether it was helpful).

2.7.10. **Q61. Which of the following best describes your smoking habits?** This question appears later in the Survey but as it can be a key factor in patients' wider health and wellbeing it makes sense to include here.

Table 17: Smoking habits of North Kent patients

Smoking habits	% Never smoked		% Former smoker		% Occasional smoker		% Regular smoker	
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Geography	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
K&M ICS	57.9%	55.2%	28.9%	29.7%	5.9%	6.7%	7.4%	8.4%
England	59.9%	59.0%	26.3%	26.7%	6.7%	6.6%	7.1%	7.7%
Dartford	62.5%	54.6%	25.9%	27.1%	5.4%	8.9%	6.1%	9.4%

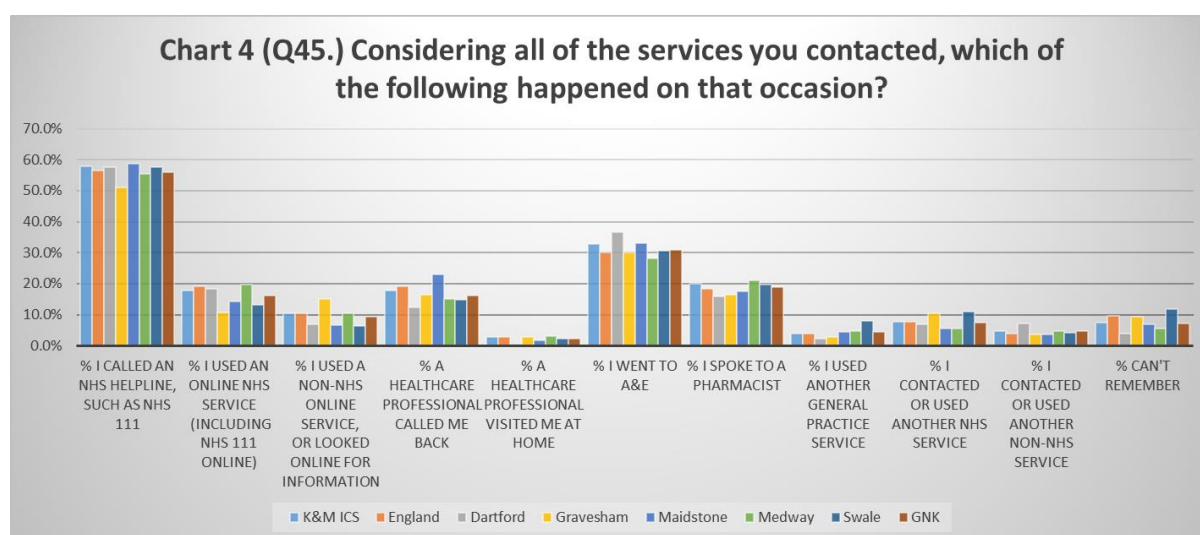
Smoking habits	% Never smoked		% Former smoker		% Occasional smoker		% Regular smoker	
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Gravesham	62.5%	56.0%	24.5%	28.2%	6.0%	7.5%	6.9%	8.3%
Maidstone	57.5%	57.3%	30.1%	27.3%	6.3%	6.5%	6.1%	8.9%
Medway	59.3%	55.9%	28.2%	29.1%	5.3%	6.2%	7.2%	8.9%
Swale	53.8%	52.1%	29.3%	32.1%	7.0%	6.7%	9.9%	9.2%
North Kent	58.9%	55.4%	27.9%	28.8%	5.9%	6.9%	7.2%	8.9%

2.7.11. Change from 2021 to 2022 will not tell us much if anything about individual patients’ behavioural change (or not), recognising that random sampling of patients may mean a largely or totally different cohort responding to the Survey in each year. But the data should give an indication of the prevalence of smoking in the adult population. At North Kent level the results are not radically different from England results, but marginally fewer patients had never smoked or were occasional smokers and marginally more were former or regular smokers. Dartford and Gravesham had a more significantly higher rate of never smoked, and lower rates of former, occasional or regular smokers. Maidstone had significantly more former smokers and Swale had the highest rate of regular smokers. The last result is not surprising given that higher smoking rates often correlate with higher deprivation, reinforced by the result (paragraph 2.7.3) that Swale had the highest percentage of patients saying that they had long-term health conditions.

2.8. When your GP practice is closed

2.8.1. When GP Practices were closed, North Kent patients’ actions followed a similar pattern to England, but with a few marked shifts between the 2021 and 2022 results in some authority areas, particularly the increased percentage of Swale patients going to A&E. A smaller proportion of North Kent patients reported a good experience of other NHS services in these circumstances and the decline since 2021 was steeper in North Kent than England. This indicates some of the wider pressure on NHS services rather than patients’ experience of their own practice.

2.8.2. There has been a general increase in patients’ recourse to other NHS services when their own GP practice is closed (Q 44 & 45). The pattern in North Kent is broadly similar to England, with the highest rates of response on calling an NHS helpline or going to A&E, but with some variations between authorities (chart 4).



2.8.3. Comparison between 2021 and 2022 (Table 18) shows the biggest areas of patient behaviour change in North Kent:

- Significantly fewer patients in Gravesham used an online NHS service whilst more in Dartford did so;
- Medway patients were much less likely to be called back by a healthcare professional;

- In 2021, the most marked differences between North Kent authorities' results and England were the percentage who went to A&E: more patients from Dartford, Gravesham and Maidstone went to A&E, but fewer from Medway and Swale. In 2022 more patients from Dartford and Maidstone went to A&E but other areas were closer to average with Swale jumping from 17.5% (2021) to 30.7% (2022).

Table 18: Q45. Considering all of the services you contacted, which of the following happened on that occasion? (% difference between 2021 and 2022 results)

Options used:	K&M ICS	England	Dartford	Gravesham	Maidstone	Medway	Swale	North Kent
I called an NHS helpline, such as NHS 111	-3.7	0.5	1.6	-5.5	1.1	2.1	2.0	0.6
I used an online NHS service (including NHS 111 online)	1.5	2.7	9.7	-8.7	-2.6	5.1	-6.1	0.3
I used a non-NHS online service, or looked online for information	1.6	1.6	0.5	6.2	-4.2	4.4	-4.4	1.3
A healthcare professional called me back	-4.7	-3.4	-3.6	-3.6	1.6	-9.1	-6.3	-5.2
A healthcare professional visited me at home	-1.1	-0.6	-2.5	-0.6	-1.7	-0.4	-0.3	-1.0
I went to A&E	6.3	4.3	4.2	-1.8	3.1	6.6	13.2	5.3
I spoke to a pharmacist	4.1	3.2	-2.0	0.5	7.0	1.4	6.2	2.5
I used another general practice service	1.1	-0.4	0.1	0.3	1.8	1.6	2.2	1.3
I contacted or used another NHS service	1.2	0.2	0.0	4.2	2.0	-0.5	0.1	0.8
I contacted or used another non-NHS service	2.2	1.2	2.3	1.1	1.3	1.6	2.8	1.8
Can't remember	-0.9	-0.4	-6.1	0.7	-0.8	-2.2	6.5	-0.7

- 2.8.4. Alongside an increase in the percentage of patients accessing other NHS services when their own GP practice is closed (nationally and in North Kent), there has also been a decline in patients feeling that the time taken to receive care or advice was about right (Q46). At -19.1% the decline in North Kent was nearly 3% steeper than in England (-16.3%), making the gap now 9.3%, but was particularly acute in Medway (-27.5%). Overall, the proportion of patients describing their experience as good (Q47) has also declined more steeply in North Kent than England, particularly in Medway (-22%).

Table 19: Experience of other services when patients' own GP Practice is closed

Experience	Q44. In the past 12 months, have you contacted an NHS service when you wanted to see a GP but your GP practice was closed? (% "Yes", for myself or someone else)			Q46. How do you feel about how quickly you received care or advice on that occasion? (% "about right")			Q47. Overall, how would you describe your last experience of NHS services when you wanted to see a GP but your GP practice was closed? (% "good" (very or fairly))		
	2022	2021	+/-	2022	2021	+/-	2022	2021	+/-
Geography	26.3	21.9	4.4	49.2	67.1	-17.9	47.2	62.6	-15.3
K&M ICS	26.3	21.9	4.4	49.2	67.1	-17.9	47.2	62.6	-15.3
England	24.5	21.1	3.4	53.4	69.7	-16.3	50.2	65.6	-15.4
Dartford	31.5	23.3	8.2	45.3	57.0	-11.7	44.8	60.5	-15.7
Gravesham	28.5	27.9	0.6	45.2	55.9	-10.7	42.4	52.2	-9.8
Maidstone	22.8	20.9	1.8	44.7	63.2	-18.4	42.8	62.7	-19.8
Medway	32.5	27.0	5.6	39.4	66.9	-27.5	36.4	58.5	-22.0
Swale	24.3	22.1	2.1	52.3	68.6	-16.3	51.4	66.4	-15.1
North Kent	28.3	24.6	3.7	44.1	63.2	-19.1	42.0	59.6	-17.6

- 2.8.5. As well as fewer patients rating their experience as "good", a much bigger proportion rate their experience as "poor" (very or fairly), up from 21.0% (England 17.1%) in 2021 to 35.7% (England 29.7%) in 2022. These data obviously tell us more about other types of NHS and non-NHS provision than about patients' own GP practices. The limited use made of other GP services (only 4.5% in North Kent and 3.9% in England) must largely reflect the fact that GP surgeries probably have similar

opening times with limited out of hours services perhaps thinly spread across primary care networks (PCNs). The decline in good experience and increase in poor experience no doubt partly reflects the wider pressures NHS services are under; but they may also reflect the pressure that shortcomings in primary care provision can cause for other parts of the system.

- 2.8.6. At individual practice level, only 20/93 GP practices (21.5%) in North Kent reported a better than average score of “good” experience of other NHS services when their own surgery was closed, compared with 28/96 (29.2%) in 2021. Also in 2022 the highest result was 69.8% “good”, whereas in 2021 18 practices recorded results above this level, with a high of 92.8%. Again, some of these data need to be treated with caution as numbers at practice level are quite small, but aggregated to local authority and North Kent level they give a fair indication of overall trends.

2.9. Some questions about you

2.9.1. The demographic profile contains few significant differences from the 2021 results.

- 2.9.2. The final section of the Survey (excluding questions about NHS dentistry where results are only published at ICS level) deals with patients’ demographic characteristics – gender, gender identity, ethnicity, age, what they are doing (employment, retired, etc.), caring responsibilities, whether looking after children, whether deaf and using sign language, sexual orientation, smoking habits (see paragraph 2.7.10 above) and religion. With many options offered under some questions the number of responses at practice level may be below the threshold for disclosure or analysis. The national report is able to present the results in earlier sections differentiating between demographic groups. (Refer to paragraph 2.3.4 regarding experience of making an appointment.) That analysis cannot be replicated here, but it would be useful to know whether the ICS, PCNs or individual GP practices receive more detailed information separate from the publicly-available datasets to complement other intelligence used to target support or tailor services according to different patient demographics.

- 2.9.3. The main observations about patient demography are:

- On **gender and gender identity**, North Kent results were broadly similar to England.
- **Ethnicity:**
 - North Kent (87.1%) is overall much “whiter” than England results (81.8%), covering all categories of White background, notably in Maidstone, Medway and particularly Swale (95.6%). By contrast, Dartford had a smaller percentage of White patients (79.5%) especially White British (68.9%), offset by a larger percentage of “any other White background” (9.7% compared with 5.2% for the rest of North Kent excluding Dartford).
 - Gravesham (12.2%) recorded a much higher percentage of Asian patients than England (9.9%) or North Kent (6.5%), particularly of Indian heritage (8.5%); only 1.7% of patients in Swale identified as being of any Asian background.
 - Dartford (7.5%) recorded a higher percentage of Black patients (all categories) than England (3.9%), particularly those identifying as Black British, African or Caribbean.
 - Overall the 2022 profile is similar to 2021.
- **Age:** the 2022 results continued the pattern seen in 2021. North Kent’s overall patient age profile was similar to England except that Dartford stood out as having a significantly younger patient profile and Swale’s patient profile was significantly older. Dartford had a significantly higher percentage of patients aged 25-44 (44.9% compared with England 34.1%) and lower percentage aged 65-74 (8.7% compared with 12.1% in England and North Kent as a whole). Overall Dartford had far fewer patients aged 55 and over (30.9%) whilst Swale had the most (44%, England 39.2%, North Kent 39.8%).
- **Current occupation etc.:** partly reflecting the age profile more patients in Dartford (52.4%) and Gravesham (49.7%) were in full-time employment (England 45.6%) and fewer Dartford patients were fully retired (14.9%, England and North Kent both 20.7%).

- **Caring responsibilities (friends or family etc. with ill health, disability or age-related problems):** across the different categories North Kent results were never more than +/-0.4% different from the England results, with 19.3% overall saying they had some level of responsibility (England 18.9%).
- **Children:** Both Dartford (33.7%) and Gravesham 28.5%) have a higher percentage of patients who are a parent or legal guardian of children under 16 (England 24.8%, North Kent 27.3%). In Dartford's case this could correlate with its younger patient profile but in Gravesham the proportion of patients in the 'family forming' age group is a fair bit lower.
- **Deafness / using sign language:** the numbers in North Kent are very small and not statistically different from the England result.
- **Sexual orientation:** North Kent results (90.9%) reflected a marginally higher percentage of heterosexual people than England (89.0%, notably in Maidstone (92.6%), with smaller variance of gay, lesbian, bisexual or other patients.
- **Religion:** Fewer patients in Gravesham (32.5%) said they had no religion compared with England (36.1%) and contrasting with more in Medway (41.9%) and Swale (45.4%); more patients in Maidstone (51.9%) identified as Christian (England 48.2%), fewer patients across North Kent identified as Muslim (2% compared with England 6%), whilst Gravesham, which has one of the largest Sikh populations outside London, unsurprisingly had a higher percentage of Sikh patients (6.9% compared with England 0.9%). The results for Muslims and Sikhs mirror the results in 2021, but there are some minor variances across the other categories. There do not seem any particular public health messages to draw from these data, but from a monitoring perspective they suggest that participation does not appear to be distorted to any marked degree by respondents' religion or absence thereof.

3. Deprivation

3.1.1. GP practice deprivation scores are based on the addresses of the patients registered with each practice. Patients can register with a GP in any location, so the registered patients in a practice don't necessarily live in the same local authority as the practice. This means that the deprivation score for a practice can be different to the deprivation score for the area in which the practice is located. This results in quite a different impression of relative deprivation of practices compared to population. But the results indicate some association between deprivation and patients' satisfaction with their overall experience of their GP practice, with a trend for lower levels of satisfaction in areas of higher deprivation.

- 3.1.2. The national report contains some analysis of patients' responses to some questions (Q31 – Last Appointment, Q32 – Overall Experience, and Q61 – Smoking Habits) according to the relative deprivation of the GP practices. How deprivation is assessed is important if it shapes service response, particularly, for example, targeting of additional support and investment.
- 3.1.3. NHS Digital contains many resources for monitoring and presenting the performance of general practice (amongst others via the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, National General Practice Profiles (NGPP))¹⁴. These profiles for individual GP practices cross-refer to the GP Patient Survey results, though currently (November 2022) these refer to the 2021 results. The profiles include the relative deprivation of the practice by reference to the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). For GP deprivation scores the population weighting is based on NHS digital, Patients registered at a GP practice, April 2019 - LSOA¹⁵ (all persons - males - females). Each GP practice is shown in terms of its IMD decile of relative deprivation.
- 3.1.4. However, the decile in which any particular practice is placed will tend to obscure even quite significant concentrations of deprivation. The picture for every GP practice is complex because the

¹⁴ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/general-practice>

¹⁵ Lower Super Output Area

home address of registered patients may not be local to the practice, so patient lists are drawn from multiple LSOAs. It follows that North Kent residents may be registered with practices in other parts of the country, and residents from elsewhere may be registered with North Kent practices. So the relationship between patient lists and other population-related estimates is not precise. In one of North Kent's largest practices (Swanscombe Health Centre), for example, patients' registered addresses cover 317 different LSOAs, though around 80% of patients come from just 20 LSOAs; even one of the smallest practice (Waltham Road Medical Centre) has patients from 75 LSOAs¹⁶.

- 3.1.5. Because the methodology assigns a single deprivation rating to each practice the tendency will be that the very deprived balance against the very affluent so the score will tend to migrate to the 'middle ground'. (The same thing happens at other spatial scales where pockets of deprivation can be masked more affluent areas around them.) Patients may well come from the full spectrum of IMD deciles.
- 3.1.6. The NGPP shows 11 practices (11.8% of total) equating with 77,748 patients (9.2%)¹⁷ in North Kent as being in deciles 1 to 3 (the most deprived 30%). By contrast the IMD indicates that 231,224 (29.4%) of the population in North Kent live in the most deprived 30% LSOAs. Similarly, the NGPP shows 27% of practices (30% of patients) as being in decile 5: but the IMD indicate that only 13% of residents in North Kent actually live in LSOAs in decile 5. The tables below (20a and 20b) summarise the different pictures presented by the NGPP and the IMD:

Table 20a: NHS Patient Lists by decile of deprivation¹⁸

Decile	Patients registered (number)	Patients registered (%)	Cumulative number of patients	Cumulative % of patients	Number of GP Practices	% of GP Practices
1	44,774	5.3	44,774	5.3	6	6.5
2	12,531	1.5	57,305	6.8	2	2.2
3	20,443	2.4	77,748	9.2	3	3.2
4	96,153	11.4	173,901	20.6	14	15.1
5	271,824	32.1	445,725	52.7	25	26.9
6	120,443	14.2	566,168	66.9	11	11.8
7	86,390	10.2	652,558	77.2	11	11.8
8	88,903	10.5	741,461	87.7	11	11.8
9	71,662	8.5	813,123	96.2	7	7.5
10	32,556	3.8	845,679	100	3	3.2
Total	845,679	100	845,679	100	93	100

Table 20b: IMD 2019 - Total Population by decile of deprivation¹⁹

Decile	All ages population, mid-2015 (Number)	All ages population, mid-2015 (%)	Cumulative population (number)	Cumulative population (%)	Number of LSOAs, by decile	% of LSOAs, by decile
1	58,472	7.4	58,472	7.4	35	7.5
2	82,810	10.5	141,282	17.9	49	10.5
3	89,942	11.4	231,224	29.4	53	11.4
4	102,324	13	333,548	42.4	58	12.5
5	104,669	13.3	438,217	55.6	58	12.5

¹⁶ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/patients-registered-at-a-gp-practice/july-2022>

¹⁷ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/quality-and-outcomes-framework-achievement-prevalence-and-exceptions-data/2020-21>

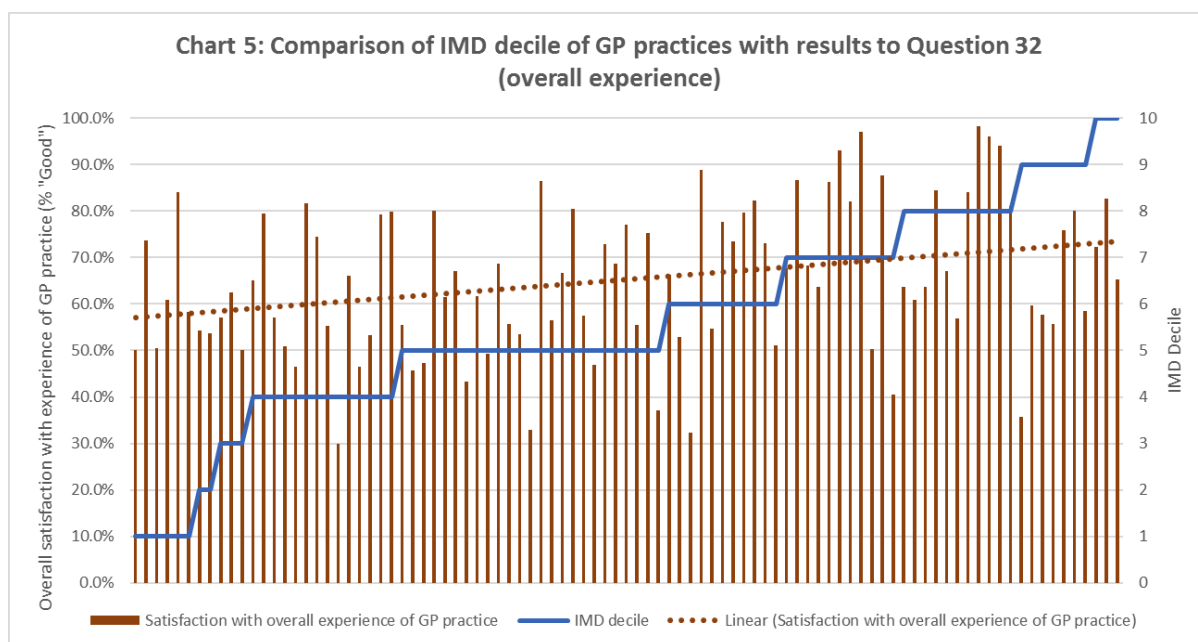
¹⁸ National General Practice Profiles, Patient List 2020-21. More recent patient data are available but the NGPP displays the 2020/21 data so this comparison uses that.

¹⁹ The IMD 2019 use mid-2015 population estimates. More recent mid-year population estimates are available, but the IMD have not been revised since 2019. It should not be assumed that the relative deprivation of LSOAs is unchanged, therefore we have not substituted more recent population estimates.

Decile	All ages population, mid-2015 (Number)	All ages population, mid-2015 (%)	Cumulative population (number)	Cumulative population (%)	Number of LSOAs, by decile	% of LSOAs, by decile
6	80,730	10.2	518,947	65.9	48	10.3
7	88,810	11.3	607,757	77.1	51	11
8	62,177	7.9	669,934	85	40	8.6
9	72,416	9.2	742,350	94.2	44	9.5
10	45,531	5.8	787,881	100	29	6.2
Total	787,881	100	787,881	100	465	100

3.1.7. As acknowledged in paragraph 3.1.4 above, GP patient lists and local resident population are different measures so both sets of figures are correct in their own terms. But at face value the NGPP present a rather different picture of the relative deprivation of the people served by GP practices in North Kent than suggested by IMD data.

3.1.8. There is some broad association between lower levels of patient satisfaction and higher levels of deprivation, according to the deciles shown in the NHPP. There are variations within each decile of deprivation, but the linear trend indicates that satisfaction levels increase as deprivation decreases, and the highest levels of satisfaction are concentrated in the 50% less deprived GP practices (chart 5):



3.1.9. In the context of this report, this is no more than an incidental observation. Clearly many other sources of information and epidemiological data inform strategy and decision-making within NHS and Public Health bodies seeking to address health inequalities. Our general concern is that the extent and distribution of deprived communities across North Kent is appropriately recognised to ensure effective targeting of additional support to the GP practices serving them, as well as alignment with other preventative initiatives.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1.1. Greater North Kent's report on the 2021 GP Patient Survey produced various findings and recommendations, including proposals for areas where local authorities might be able to collaborate more closely with NHS colleagues to support improvements in access to primary care services. We are not going to repeat those here: they remain valid and underpin the ongoing relationship we are looking to build with the evolving architecture of the Integrated Care System.
- 4.1.2. The overall conclusion can be summed up succinctly. The national report highlights a fairly steep decline nationally since 2021 in patients' experience of trying to access primary care. This analysis shows that the decline in North Kent is mostly even steeper than both the England and Kent & Medway ICS results.
- 4.1.3. As a virtual snapshot based on the sentiment of a random sample of patients, we have to be cautious about the weight to attach to results. And as our 2021 report emphasized, access to primary care is only part of the picture: patient outcomes is ultimately what matters most. But as one of the metrics the K&M ICS will be using to monitor health and wellbeing in Kent & Medway these results clearly signal that the challenge is growing in North Kent even more than the ICS area as a whole. Both the Survey results and this analysis reinforce the need for redoubled efforts to strengthen primary care services, including attracting, training and retaining more medical professionals in Kent & Medway and in North Kent in particular. There are systemic issues that need to be addressed, some by the ICS and some that can only be driven at national level. We are keen to play a positive role in helping develop solutions that will work for North Kent and deliver the changes and improvements that patients, residents, authorities and people working across the NHS would wish to see.
- 4.1.4. The report does highlight some additional areas where we suggest attention is needed:
- In the recruitment and allocation of new general practice appointments we would want to see concentrated efforts and initiatives from the K&M ICS to fill existing GP vacancies and to enhance provision prioritizing these areas. GNK partners are keen to collaborate with NHS partners to explore ways of attracting and incentivizing GP recruitment and retention in priority areas.
 - The variable use of online tools (section 2.2) suggests that wider initiatives would be beneficial to raise residents' digital skills and tackle digital exclusion: this is an issue GNK partners will in part be exploring via our Skills Work Stream. For the K&M ICS the results suggest a need to help some GP practices improve their online systems. Similarly, many North Kent patients struggled with their practice's websites: an audit of websites to ensure high standards of accessibility and functionality would help in sharing good practice, along with ensuring that practices (or Primary Care Networks) have access to the necessary expertise and capacity to keep websites up to date.
 - Patients' mental health needs appear to be getting less attention than they should (paragraph 2.4.7). It would be useful for the K&M ICS to track how these results map onto practices and PCNs where support from mental health professionals is available to inform decisions about where additional support might be prioritized.
 - The results in the Survey (paragraph 2.6.2 and Table 14) echo anecdotal evidence reported by GNK partners about the difficulty of appointment systems, especially where online triage arrangements are restricted, for instance, by limited GP capacity to review requests submitted online. Peer-reviewing arrangements and sharing good practice could help to remove some of the barriers patients have encountered.
 - We would like to see better publicity and signposting of information about the most appropriate course of action where patients cannot get through to their GP practice, or when practices are closed, taking account of the need for inclusiveness of people with less access to or skills with digital media.

- It would be helpful to clarify whether the ICS, PCNs or individual GP practices receive more detailed information separate from the publicly-available datasets that would enable them to consider any implications for targeting support or tailoring services according to how different patient demographics responded to the Survey (paragraph 2.9.2).
- We would like to see a clearer narrative around the relative deprivation of GP practices, the communities they serve and how they are being supported (paragraph 3.1.7). This is chiefly about communication and visible alignment with wider public strategies for tackling inequalities.
- GP Practice data are changing all the time but the apparent transparency of data available is slightly undermined by inconsistencies between different sources (e.g. between 2020/21 patient lists, as presented by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities²⁰, and different data published by NHS Digital²¹). It would be helpful to have “one source of truth” which brings together and streamlines the multiple channels that exist currently and enables data to be explored in different ways, including by different geographies.
- Where the apparent inconsistencies in different data are simply indicators of change over time, they appear to highlight significant upward pressure in terms of patient numbers in North Kent. Some of this is likely to need new primary care provision rather than expansion of existing practices.
- There are some significant anomalies between the size of patient lists and resident population based on the most recent Census data, particularly in Gravesham (see footnote 6 on page 7). Whilst recognizing that patients registered with a GP practice may not be local residents, we suggest these anomalies should be investigated by the ICB as part of establishing the “one source of truth” suggested above.

Greater North Kent

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²⁰ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/general-practice>.

²¹ For example, <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/quality-and-outcomes-framework-achievement-prevalence-and-exceptions-data/2020-21> or <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/patients-registered-at-a-gp-practice>.

Appendix 1 - 2022 GP Patient Survey – Reports and Sources

A1. What data are available?

Source: <https://www.gp-patient.co.uk/surveysandreports>

- A.1.1. This annual survey is carried out by Ipsos MORI for the NHS. A random sample of the population (nearly 2.5 million) are sent questionnaires for completion between 10 January and 11 April, with the results published in July. For the 2022 survey the response rate was 29.1% (nearly 720,000 forms), lower than in previous years. The survey examines patients’ experience of general practice.
- A.1.2. The survey results are published at various levels: National, ICS, PCN and GP Practice. There is also an Analysis Tool (<https://www.gp-patient.co.uk/analysistool>) that enables comparisons at sub-group levels (of which more below).
- A.1.3. These are the summary publicly-available data, not the underlying data available to the survey team. It may be that some more detailed data and analytical tools are shared with ICSs and potentially with PCNs/individual GP practices.
- A.1.4. There is no breakdown of the analyses according to the areas covered by Health & Care Partnerships.
- A.1.5. The outline below describes the 2022 results page. The link above also gives access to previous years’ results. But it should be noted that not all tools available for 2022 are available for previous years. For instance, for 2021 and earlier there are no PCN reports, only national, Clinical Commissioning Groups, and GP practices; and prior to 2020, there were multiple CCGs that were reconfigured from 2020 onwards as part of the STP process. This may partly explain why the Analysis Tool is not available for ICS/CCG data.

A.2. National

- A.2.1. There is an infographic, national report, and spreadsheet of national results and trends.
 - The national data are published as a .csv file which requires translation into other more sophisticated software to make sense of it.
 - The national results and trends is an Excel workbook showing the headline results for each question tracing back to the earliest year each question figured in the survey. So some questions go back to 2012, but many do not have comparisons before 2018 (when the survey was substantially reformed) or 2021 (where certain questions e.g. about Covid-19 were asked for the first time)
- A.2.2. Having access to the survey responses, the national report is able to ‘cut’ the data according to different parameters. For example, it can compare how different patient demographics have responded to different questions (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity), and trends over time. Using the Analysis Tool, users can investigate the data by sub-groups as follows:

Gender	Carer	Long-term condition
Age	Deaf using sign language	Long-term condition or disability status
Ethnicity	Smoker	Deprivation quintile (IMD)
Working Status	Sexuality	
Parent or Guardian	Religion	

- A.2.3. Similar sub-group analysis can be created at individual PCN or GP practice level. However, they are not available at ICS level; and it is not feasible to construct a composite analysis at any other level.

A.3. ICS (Integrated Care System, formerly Clinical Commissioning Group)

- A.3.1. There is a slide-pack available for each ICS that presents a selection of the results. These include charts showing the results for each of the Primary Care Networks (PCNs) within the ICS geography. Presentationally these charts can be quite confusing as they are always structured to display results from lowest to highest (left to right) with a number for each PCN within the ICS (41 in the case of Kent & Medway). However, because PCNs perform differently on different measures, the numbering changes for each chart: this makes it hard to track the relative performance of any particular PCNs across a range of measures.
- A.3.2. There is also an Excel workbook giving ICS-level data for all 42 ICSs in England and covering the full range of questions in the survey questionnaire including NHS dentistry, which is not shown at PCN or GP practice level.

A.4. Primary Care Networks (PCNs)

- A.4.1. PCN results are also available as an Excel workbook covering all questions except those on NHS dentistry. As noted above, the Analysis Tool also enables data to be interrogated for sub-groups within an individual PCN.
- A.4.2. There is also a PCN Report which is an interactive tool which presents the results for each PCN individually, the comparison with national results and also displays the summary results for the GP practices that comprise each PCN, which can be explored question by question.
- A.4.3. It should be noted that not all GP practices are aligned with a PCN: in North Kent there are two practices²² which appear not to be aligned with a PCN.

A.5. GP Practice

- A.5.1. The results for all GP practice are available as an Excel workbook covering all questions except NHS dentistry. As noted above, the Analysis Tool also enables data to be interrogated for sub-groups within an individual GP practice. The interactive PCN report enables individual practices to compare their results with other practices within the PCN that they belong to.

A.6. GNK perspective

- A.6.1. As indicated above, the data and analytical tools available are rich but are designed around aspects of NHS architecture. Whilst this makes sense from an NHS perspective, it is less helpful if one is trying to assemble or aggregate data according to different geographies. Part of the reason for looking at the data from a local authority perspective is to build a picture that reflects the broader characteristics across the whole geography of the area that Members collectively represent and that officers are responsible for serving. This also arguably better reflects the experience of patients across those local authority areas. And aggregating and comparing the data at a North Kent level enables us to observe patterns and strategic issues that may not necessarily be readily recognized even from a practice, PCN or ICS perspective. So this analysis is intended to complement other analyses of the Survey results, and potentially offer evidence as a springboard for further investigation.
- A.6.2. From the Greater North Kent perspective, this means that any analysis has to be built upwards from individual GP practice data. The approach, as for 2021, has been to select all GP practices located within the boundaries of the partner authorities. It is recognized that the patients on any particular GP practice's list may live outside the boundary of the authority in which the practice is based. Any practice's patient list includes patients resident across a wide area. Non-alignment between some NHS administrative boundaries and municipal boundaries both complicate the task and mean that analytical results can never be fully consistent.

²² Old Road West Surgery (G82067) in Gravesham, and Princes Park Medical Centre (G82741) in Medway.

Appendix 2: List of North Kent GP Practices, Patient List Size, GP/Patient Ratio and Overall Survey Satisfaction Ratings

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Code	Practice Name	NHS GP Patient Survey - Ipsos MORI Results				General Practice Workforce, September 2022 (note 1)			Ratio GPs to 1000 Patients (H/G)	Ratio FTE GPs to 1000 Patients (I/G)
		Total survey forms distributed	Total completed forms received	Response rate (%)	Q32. Overall experience of GP Practice (% "good")	Total Patients	Total GPs (Headcount)	Total GPs (FTE)		
Dartford										
G82006	Dartford East Health Centre	405	126	31.1%	55.5%	15,091	13	13.16	0.861	0.872
G82048	Horsman's Place Surgery	370	126	34.1%	45.7%	9,590	6	5.69	0.626	0.594
G82056	The Orchard Practice	316	104	32.9%	67.6%	11,524	9	7.28	0.781	0.632
G82088	Devon Road Surgery	343	122	35.6%	63.6%	6,796	4	2.93	0.589	0.431
G82122	Swanscombe Health Centre	384	105	27.3%	47.3%	31,875	23	19.28	0.722	0.605
G82143	Lowfield Medical Centre	368	111	30.2%	80.1%	6,446	4	2.97	0.621	0.460
G82185	Dartford West Health Centre	304	103	33.9%	60.9%	8,983	7	5.45	0.779	0.606
G82212	Pilgrims Way Surgery	349	96	27.5%	61.6%	8,560	3	1.21	0.350	0.141
G82639	Maple Practice (Note 2)	352	102	29.0%	86.8%					
G82647	Temple Hill Surgery	414	122	29.5%	67.1%	19,284	11	9.38	0.570	0.487
Gravesham										
G82021	The Shrubbery Surgery	377	124	32.9%	66.3%	16,556	6	5.32	0.362	0.321
G82032	Pelham Medical Practice	387	119	30.7%	65.0%	13,702	7	5.29	0.511	0.386
G82044	Springhead Health	494	126	25.5%	43.2%	22,485	9	6.41	0.400	0.285
G82062	Parrock Street Surgery	386	113	29.3%	79.5%	2,273	1	1.60	0.440	0.704
G82067	Old Road West Surgery (Note 3)	440	155	35.2%	52.9%	9,180	4	2.85	0.436	0.311
G82073	Meopham Medical Centre	285	111	38.9%	72.3%	10,197	7	6.78	0.686	0.665
G82097	Jubilee Medical Centre	311	135	43.4%	35.8%	15,737	9	6.46	0.572	0.410
G82648	Rochester Road Surgery	656	116	17.7%	61.7%	3,802	1	0.99	0.263	0.260
G82780	Gravesend Medical Centre	471	101	21.4%	57.2%	16,100	11	9.65	0.683	0.600

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
		NHS GP Patient Survey - Ipsos MORI Results				General Practice Workforce, September 2022 (note 1)				
Code	Practice Name	Total survey forms distributed	Total completed forms received	Response rate (%)	Q32. Overall experience of GP Practice (% "good")	Total Patients	Total GPs (Headcount)	Total GPs (FTE)	Ratio GPs to 1000 Patients (H/G)	Ratio FTE GPs to 1000 Patients (I/G)
G82808	Oakfield Health Centre, Practice 2	399	108	27.1%	50.9%	9,706	3	2.17	0.309	0.224
G82809	Downs Way Medical Practice	281	117	41.6%	59.6%	16,475	18	17.95	1.093	1.089
Maidstone										
G82017	Albion Place Medical Practice (Note 4)	314	100	31.8%	32.2%					
G82024	Greensands	266	107	40.2%	57.6%	15,376	6	4.52	0.390	0.294
G82031	Bower Mount Medical Practice	279	109	39.1%	63.7%	11,547	11	7.91	0.953	0.685
G82074	Bearsted	265	123	46.4%	82.7%	15,200	12	10.44	0.789	0.687
G82076	Mote	287	112	39.0%	49.3%	9,584	6	3.96	0.626	0.413
G82089	Brewer Street	316	111	35.1%	88.9%	8,837	5	4.29	0.566	0.486
G82093	Len Valley Practice	262	122	46.6%	68.3%	10,224	9	6.63	0.880	0.648
G82098	Blackthorn	259	96	37.1%	84.4%	8,243	8	4.88	0.971	0.592
G82099	The College Practice	319	117	36.7%	54.7%	30,716	10	5.27	0.326	0.172
G82112	Headcorn Surgery	263	98	37.3%	63.8%	8,994	4	3.15	0.445	0.350
G82141	Yalding	265	110	41.5%	86.3%	6,642	4	4.00	0.602	0.602
G82164	The Vine Medical Centre	350	112	32.0%	67.1%	12,561	6	5.18	0.478	0.412
G82215	Marden Medical Centre	264	95	36.0%	93.0%	7,344	7	5.32	0.953	0.724
G82229	Sutton Valence Group Practice	260	94	36.2%	82.0%	7,366	9	4.84	1.222	0.657
G82604	The Medical Centre Group	323	113	35.0%	77.7%	14,983	13	7.55	0.868	0.504
G82641	Wallis Avenue	374	101	27.0%	57.2%	6,084	3	1.64	0.493	0.270
G82681	Malling Health Four	303	115	38.0%	55.6%	6,528	2	1.74	0.306	0.266
G82691	Langley	254	113	44.5%	97.0%	3,462	3	1.59	0.867	0.460
Medway										
G82014	Woodlands Family Practice	380	116	30.5%	68.6%	20,401	22	15.81	1.078	0.775
G82051	City Way Surgery	320	122	38.1%	55.6%	12,457	10	7.71	0.803	0.619
G82077	The Elms Medical Centre	300	102	34.0%	53.5%	11,489	4	3.35	0.348	0.291

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
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Code	Practice Name	Total survey forms distributed	Total completed forms received	Response rate (%)	Q32. Overall experience of GP Practice (% "good")	Total Patients	Total GPs (Headcount)	Total GPs (FTE)	Ratio GPs to 1000 Patients (H/G)	Ratio FTE GPs to 1000 Patients (I/G)
G82095	Thorndike Partnership	352	144	40.9%	32.9%	12,743	10	6.31	0.785	0.496
G82100	Highparks Medical Practice	274	110	40.1%	56.9%	15,587	13	8.16	0.834	0.523
G82106	Riverside Medical Practice	286	109	38.1%	84.0%	6,937	6	5.00	0.865	0.721
G82108	King George Road Surgery	300	99	33.0%	86.4%	5,474	2	1.69	0.365	0.309
G82113	Stonecross And West Drive Surgery	331	127	38.4%	46.5%	8,539	No data	No data	No data	No data
G82123	Balmoral Gardens	380	98	25.8%	54.3%	4,505	2	0.80	0.444	0.178
G82129	The Glebe Family Practice	273	99	36.3%	81.7%	4,681	2	2.03	0.427	0.433
G82139	Maidstone Road Chatham Surgery	337	102	30.3%	56.5%	3,247	3	1.20	0.924	0.371
G82154	Thames Ave Surgery	263	128	48.7%	98.2%	5,620	2	2.00	0.356	0.356
G82161	Reach Healthcare	340	116	34.1%	50.2%	22,308	14	10.78	0.628	0.483
G82162	Orchard Family Practice	262	117	44.7%	87.6%	4,979	2	1.23	0.402	0.246
G82180	Maidstone Road Rainham Surgery	270	110	40.7%	96.0%	4,723	2	1.64	0.423	0.347
G82184	Waltham Road Medical Centre	280	118	42.1%	74.5%	1,456	1	1.00	0.687	0.687
G82198	Gun Lane Medical Centre	362	104	28.7%	66.8%	5,287	No data	No data	No data	No data
G82203	Court View Surgery	331	102	30.8%	55.3%	10,563	4	2.76	0.379	0.261
G82226	Wigmore Medical Centre	294	106	36.1%	75.8%	4,626	3	1.45	0.649	0.313
G82233	St. Werburgh Medical Practice	399	140	35.1%	30.0%	9,956	3	1.55	0.301	0.155
G82600	Eastcourt Lane Surgery	270	101	37.4%	80.5%	2,092	2	1.11	0.956	0.529
G82631	Bryant Street Medical Practice	550	117	21.3%	53.7%	7,874	3	2.40	0.381	0.305
G82635	Pump Lane Surgery	251	113	45.0%	94.1%	2,216	1	1.03	0.451	0.463
G82653	Castle Medical Practice	324	103	31.8%	66.2%	4,638	2	0.93	0.431	0.200
G82679	Apex Medical Centre	352	110	31.3%	57.4%	6,982	3	3.00	0.430	0.430
G82697	The Churchill Clinic	421	123	29.2%	46.5%	5,976	6	5.13	1.004	0.859
G82704	The Church View Practice	265	111	41.9%	81.1%	-	1	1.00	-	-
G82706	Brompton Medical Centre	404	95	23.5%	62.5%	2,916	No data	No data	No data	No data
G82708	Marlowe Park Medical Centre	394	96	24.4%	53.4%	4,156	3	0.95	0.722	0.228

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G82711	Borstal Village Surgery	311	102	32.8%	73.4%	4,324	10	6.98	2.313	1.614
G82719	Matrix Medical Practice	264	81	30.7%	65.2%	7,863	1	1.00	0.127	0.127
G82721	Parkwood Family Practice	290	114	39.3%	80.1%	3,549	2	1.53	0.564	0.432
G82737	Long Catlis Road Surgery	339	115	33.9%	58.5%	11,313	3	2.55	0.265	0.225
G82741	Princes Park Medical Centre (Note 3)	391	93	23.8%	79.6%	26,689	5	2.56	0.187	0.096
G82744	Maritime Health Partnership (Note 5)	444	125	28.2%	50.0%	34,396	21	9.13	0.611	0.265
G82753	The Kings Family Practice	408	97	23.8%	50.1%	6,682	2	0.92	0.299	0.138
G82762	Upper Canterbury St Surgery	380	99	26.1%	79.4%	2,114	1	1.00	0.473	0.473
G82763	Napier Road Surgery	323	96	29.7%	79.9%	2,569	1	1.00	0.389	0.389
G82775	Medway Medical Centre	370	114	30.8%	47.0%	8,230	2	1.33	0.243	0.162
Swale										
G82023	Sheerness Health Centre	341	100	29.3%	73.6%	6,695	2	2.00	0.299	0.299
G82026	Grovehurst Surgery	273	109	39.9%	82.2%	7,217	5	3.52	0.693	0.488
G82027	Faversham Medical Practice	311	122	39.2%	72.8%	13,924	11	9.04	0.790	0.649
G82035	The Chestnuts Surgery	314	123	39.2%	68.7%	9,906	3	2.45	0.303	0.247
G82039	Newton Place Surgery	343	120	35.0%	73.1%	19,305	17	11.51	0.881	0.596
G82057	St Georges Medical Centre	342	102	29.8%	50.5%	11,405	5	4.25	0.438	0.373
G82231	London Road Medical Centre	268	110	41.0%	51.1%	7,020	1	0.89	0.142	0.127
G82634	The Meads Medical Practice	348	97	27.9%	77.1%	11,654	5	4.71	0.429	0.404
G82671	Iwade Health Centre (Note 6)	401	109	27.2%	40.5%	-	1	0.60	-	-
G82682	The OM Medical Centre	453	122	26.9%	60.8%	6,682	4	3.11	0.599	0.465
G82687	VEL Surgery (Note 7)	356	99	27.8%	84.2%	8,797	7	4.37	0.796	0.497
G82693	Memorial Medical Centre	326	133	40.8%	55.5%	16,749	7	4.59	0.418	0.274
G82698	Dr R B Kumar Practice (Note 8)	309	103	33.3%	75.3%	3,495	2	1.28	0.572	0.366
G82702	Green Porch Medical Partnership	476	138	29.0%	37.1%	8,668	4	1.88	0.461	0.217

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
		NHS GP Patient Survey - Ipsos MORI Results				General Practice Workforce, September 2022 (note 1)				
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G82799	Sheppey Healthy Living Centre	337	111	32.9%	58.2%	13,857	3	2.77	0.216	0.200
Dartford		3,605	1,117	31.0%	58.9%	118,149	80	67.35	0.677	0.570
Gravesham		4,487	1,325	29.5%	55.5%	136,213	76	65.48	0.558	0.481
Maidstone		5,223	1,948	37.3%	67.9%	183,691	118	82.92	0.642	0.451
Medway		13,085	4,274	32.7%	60.5%	320,157	174	118.00	0.543	0.369
Swale		5,198	1,698	32.7%	64.3%	145,374	77	56.97	0.530	0.392
North Kent Total / Average		31,598	10,362	32.8%	61.7%	903,584	525	390.71	0.581	0.432

Notes

- 1 GP Workforce 30 September 2022 (<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/general-and-personal-medical-services/30-september-2022>).
- 2 There have been changes to some practices since 31 March 2022, as noted below.
- 3 Now merged with the Orchard Practice (April 2022) to become the Wellcome Practice
- 4 Not aligned with Primary Care Network
- 5 Albion Place Medical Practice now merged with The College Practice (July 2022)
- 6 Formerly the Halfway Surgery, now also absorbed parts of the St Mary's Island Group Practices and the Iwade Medical Centre (Swale)
- 7 See Note 5
- 8 Formerly the Dr S J Witts Surgery
- 9 Now the Medic Care Surgery

Greater North Kent is the collective voice for an alliance of local authorities who have come together to promote greater prosperity, opportunity, and quality of life in North Kent.

