



Health+ A Story of Change: Megan

A Health+ surgery held in February.

Interview conducted on the 24/2/23.

Practice: Warren Lane.

Name: Megan (Not the patient's real name).

Age: 80 and up.

Method: This case study was selected from patients who attended a Health+ digital session at Warren Lane. Patients were selected for interview, sequentially, in the exact order of the date they gave permission to take part in a case study. The Timeline of the conversation was changed to meet the logic of the three Topic Guide questions. Any items that were off-topic, but considered important, have been included. Quantitative data is included for context.

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1. Transcript

- 1) What are some of the issues faced by yourself and other over 50s when trying to access health information, book appointments online, ordering repeat prescriptions, trying to contact the surgery or using digital tools in general?

I've visited you two times now and I'm due for a third. That tells you something. It takes time to learn something completely new, and it takes longer when you've encountered a bump along the way that I have.

At the moment I am finding it very difficult because I have lost access to my email account, so when I came back for the second time, I had to do a hypothetical walk-through of the NHS App; because I have lost access to my email account, I cannot use it to login to the NHS App. That isn't ideal. I'm much better at 'getting' something when I can do it for real. [Volunteer name] was still able to continue the walkthrough of the app we began the previous visit, albeit in a less practical way.

- 2) Could you describe your experience of taking part in the health+ digital surgery.

The first time I visited [volunteer name], it was for re-ordering prescriptions through the app and [volunteer name] also managed to squeeze in showing me how to find health information, in the app. That was all working well, and I was quite happy with that, until the problem with my email happened. My son is trying to sort it, but they are using words like 'people are trying to use it', so that's a worry. While I've made progress trying to do things online with my GP, this little 'bump' has left me in limbo.

My next visit to [volunteer name] was supposed to be all about booking appointments and vaccinations, and that's important, because finding out you're 39 in line, and by the time they get to you there aren't any appointments, isn't the slightest bit of fun. So, although, practically, I could not book appointments on my own device, using my NHS account, [volunteer name] showed me how to do things hypothetically, using their device and their app.

I've a complex medical condition, and the more independent I can be, the better. So being able to book any appointment online and do a consultation online is more than important to me. Once I get my email back, I'm booking another visit with [volunteer name], as doing things hypothetically is not the same as actually being able to do it yourself.

I'll be honest, I do forget, and I do need another appointment with [Volunteer name]. I've been pleased with both my times with [volunteer name] and 100% satisfied with the first visit. [Volunteer name] writes everything down for me, and I used that guide to help me make all my repeat prescriptions online. That was successful.

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You can feel that things conspire against you; [Volunteer name] has been reassuring and doesn't give up, even when I have.

My son did download the NHS app for me and has taken me through it once, but not as clearly as [Volunteer name], which explains why I returned for a second time. [Volunteer name] took me through all the sections of the NHS app and all that's left is that practical task of doing it myself in the app, once I regain my email account.

3) What are you now able to do with your device that you could not previously?

[Volunteer name] is right, if you don't regularly use something, you forget and then you don't use it. The loss of my email has been a setback, but I have confidence and I'll return to see [volunteer name] for the third time. Only ordering my prescriptions once a month wasn't enough for me to remember how to do things, so the more I learn how to do other things in the app, the more I will remember. That's the plan. I have [volunteer name's] notes here with me, and they do help, but nothing helps more than me doing something with some regularity. But, yes, I can order repeat prescriptions now and I can find my way around the app quite well.

So, although I'm able to, hypothetically, take part in a GP consultation online now, I need to do that with my own app.

[Volunteer name] spent a lot of time on these notes, and I thanked him for that; they have explanations of all the things the app does, how to do things and explanations of what all the symbols do, like the three dots and the three lines. I feel I can navigate myself around with little worry. I wouldn't and didn't explore the App prior to visiting [Volunteer name] because, for some silly reason, I thought I could do some harm and I know that's not the case now.

Although I can find medical information in the App and download information on the flu and COVID and vaccinations, I'm very blinkered and I only want to know what I need to know. And, at the moment, my priority is booking appointments.

I haven't come across a service like this before. That was why it was almost a relief to know that there was that sort of facility available to me. [Volunteer name] was prepared to spend considerable time with me, and I appreciated that level of dedication. I was spoken to in a language I understood, in a manner I respected and that's why I'll return a third time, happily.

2. What did the quantitative data show?

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Q, 'What was your reason for attending today?'

A, 'To learn how to book appointments and consult online'

Q, 'Can you book a GP appointment online or via an App?'

A, 'Today I've learned to book an online appointment'

Q, 'Can you order a repeat prescription online or via an App?'

A, 'I could already order repeat prescriptions online'

Q, 'Can you check your medical records online or via an App?'

A, 'Currently, this is not something I want to do'

Q, 'Can you use the NHS website/app or a GP approved system to decide whether you need to see a GP or go to A&E?'

A, 'I could already find health information online'

Q, 'What else have you learned today to help with using online health services? (you can select as many options as you like)'

A, 'I can take part in an online or video GP consultation'

Q, 'Would the Participant like to take part in the following?'

A, 'Yes, I'd like to attend another Health+ surgery'

Q, 'Do you feel confident passing on what you've learned today to one other person or friend your age?'

A, 'Yes'

Q, 'You feel more confident about finding information online to do with your health and wellbeing'

A, 'Strongly agree'

Q, 'You feel more confident using online health services'

A, 'Strongly agree'

Q, 'Your Digital skills have improved'

A, 'Strongly agree'

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