

15 million Brits opt for digital GP appointments; two million go private

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The days of the face-to-face GP appointment appear to be numbered, as patients move online and to private GPs.

With 7.46 million NHS appointments delayed, GP access topping the list of concerns about the NHS, and nearly two in three (64%) Brits frustrated by long waiting times for GP appointments, new data from digital healthcare platform [ZAVA](#) finds that millions are looking online for more accessible healthcare.

The findings show growing demand for digital healthcare services amid NHS waiting lists. 28% – 15 million people – have had an online GP consultation in the past year, while more than 29 million people now rely on online repeat prescriptions. Meanwhile, two million Brits have had a digital private GP consultation, with Gen Z and Millennials (15%) leading the charge towards on-demand private healthcare.

Among those surveyed, half (51%) think virtual consultations save time over in-person visits and 45% believe online services make it easier to access treatment when they need it. However, NHS GPs have raised concerns about a new contract change requiring them to keep online consultation tools open during working hours, underscoring the tension between patient demand for convenience and what GPs feel is sustainable.

This new data comes as the government strikes a £889m deal with GPs to ease NHS pressures, but critics argue it falls short of addressing the fundamental issue – millions of patients are already seeking alternatives as they struggle to access timely care.

However, while the demand is clear, ZAVA's data also finds that many feel private digital healthcare remains out of their reach. While two in five (40%) would consider using online healthcare if it were more affordable, just 27% are currently willing to pay for a virtual GP appointment, showing that under the current system, perceived cost remains a major barrier to access.

David Meinertz, CEO and Co-Founder of ZAVA, highlights a fundamental flaw in the current system: patients are trapped between long NHS waits and private care they can't afford. He explains: *"Innovation is democratising healthcare, but many see digital services as an expensive luxury rather than a viable option. The future of healthcare isn't just about giving people another option. It's about making sure that option actually works for them: on-demand, doctor-led digital care which is affordable, accessible, and transparent."*

The new report finds that cost isn't the only thing keeping patients from switching – trust is also an issue. Today, only a quarter (25%) of patients believe an online GP can match the care of a doctor they see in person, showing that for virtual healthcare to be a real alternative, it must prove it can deliver safe, accessible, and transparent care – integrating consultations, prescriptions and follow-up support.

ZAVA's data shows that AI-driven healthcare hasn't solved the trust or accessibility problem. 61% of Brits fear AI is replacing doctors too quickly, and just 18% would feel comfortable receiving a diagnosis from an AI system.

David continues: *"AI has huge potential to remove bureaucracy and improve diagnostics, but a rush into this technology has elevated expectations and burned trust. People need doctors they can trust, treatments they can afford, and access that actually works. That's what we're building at ZAVA. The future of healthcare isn't AI replacing doctors – it's making sure people can actually access one when they need to."*

ZAVA, one of Europe's leading digital healthcare platforms, has delivered over 12 million consultations across the UK, Ireland, France, and Germany, delivering on-demand, transparent, affordable and safe treatment pathways. Unlike traditional private healthcare, which locks patients into costly subscriptions or employer-backed insurance plans, ZAVA provides on-demand access to doctors, prescriptions, and testing - without unnecessary costs or complexity. And, unlike AI-driven startups that put technology before care, ZAVA's model is doctor-led.

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