

# GP Access: deployment of the NHS App in Bromley

Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee  
30 January 2024



# The framework for improving GP Access

GP practices have been asked to redesign their contact models to handle the increased levels of demand better.

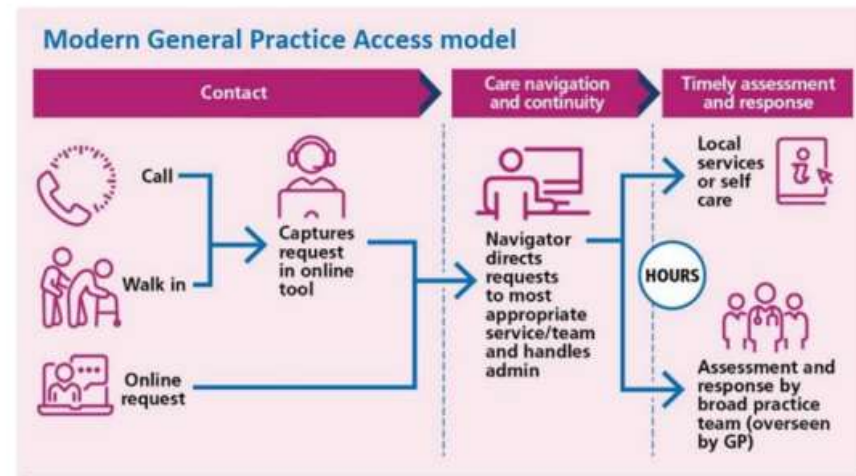
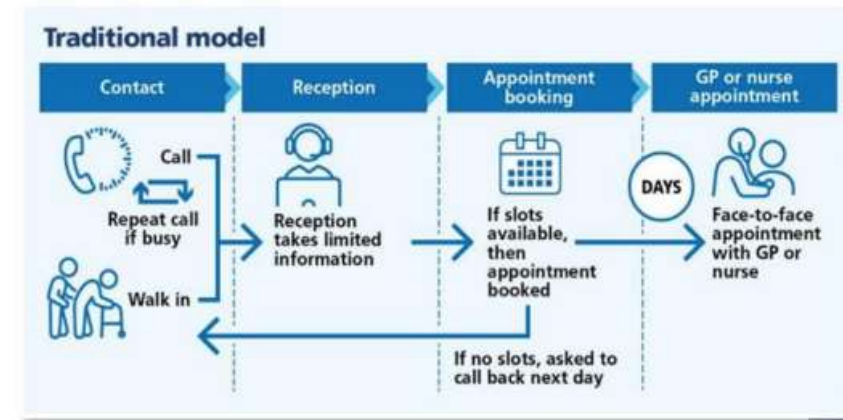
There is a national framework for this redesign defining a range of initiatives, including digital telephony systems, comprehensive triage at initial contact and the broader range of professionals delivering appointments in primary care, dependent on the patient's need.

Expanding use of the NHS App is a key part of the modernising GP access framework.

Providing a convenient means of offering primary care services via the NHS App is designed to reduce phone calls and potentially avoid the need to make an appointment, delivering a range of services quickly and simply for patients.

The NHS App was launched in 2019 and has been downloaded by over 30 million people.

The national target is for 75% of all adults to be registered by March 2024.



# Empowering patients

The NHS App aims to empower patients to manage their care, with easier access to NHS services and their clinical records.

The functions available in the NHS App are extensive and continue to grow. The national development team leads a [programme of work](#) to continue the App's ongoing enhancements.

Across south east London, the NHS App will be integrated with an improved online consultations system to further expand the convenient offer to Bromley patients.

## Functions already available include:



[Order repeat prescriptions](#)



[Nominate a preferred pharmacy](#)



[View GP health record securely](#)



[View test results and care plans](#)



[Book/check/cancel a GP appointment](#)



[Ask GP for advice/request care using an online form](#)



[Receive notifications and messages from your GP](#)



[Linked profiles \(proxy access\)](#)



[Book your COVID vaccine](#)



[Find your NHS number](#)



[Update data sharing preferences](#)



[Get health advice via 111 online](#)



[Register to take part in health research](#)



[Manage your organ donation decision](#)



[Register with a GP surgery](#)



[Find NHS services near you](#)



[Access the Health A-Z for health advice](#)

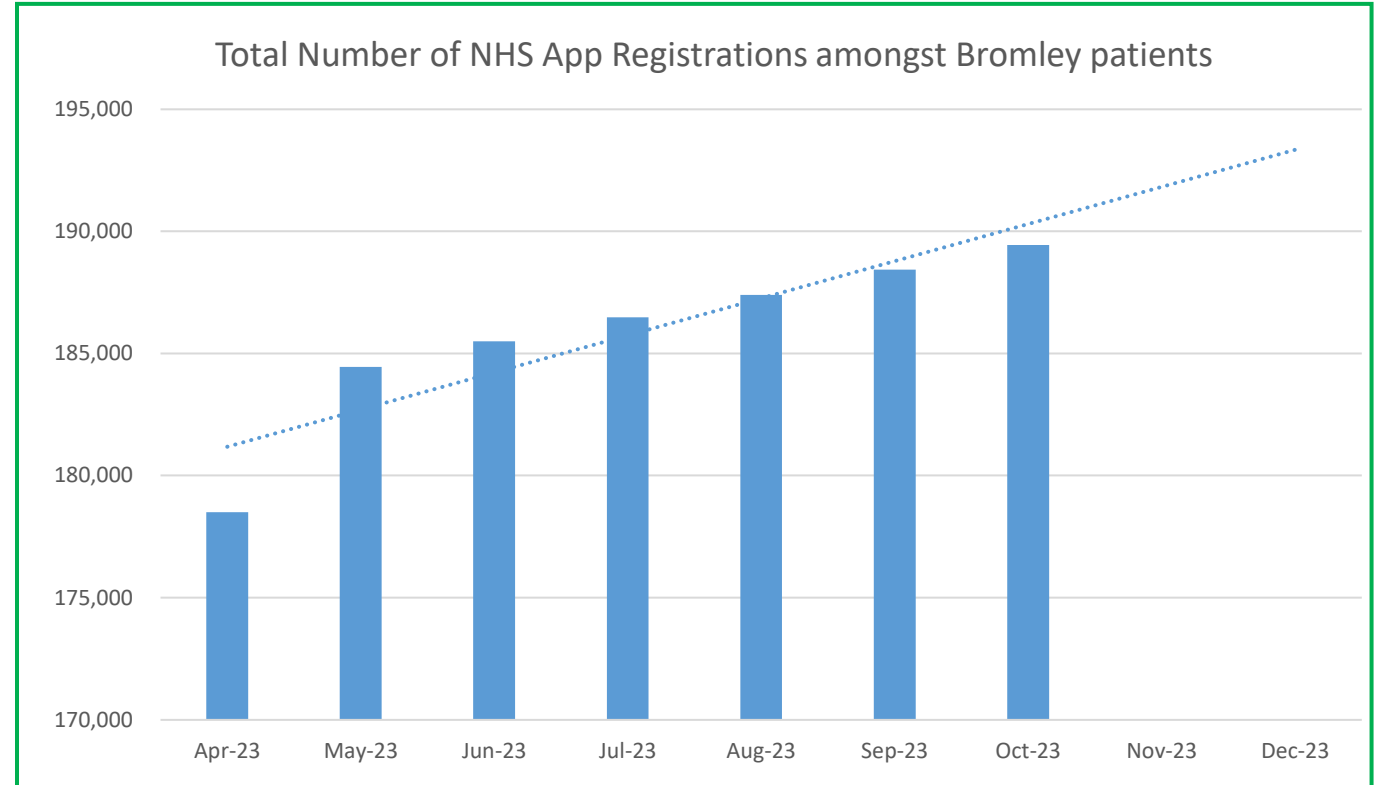
# Bromley uptake is increasing



The NHS App is rapidly establishing itself as the digital front door to the NHS.

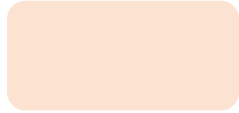
Registration volumes in Bromley have steadily increased. The NHS App is promoted by GP practices, through the Bromley NHS Ambassador, the local [Bromley Primary Care campaign](#) led by the ICB as well as via national media (see links to videos above).

The Bromley registration figures represent 61% of all patients over the age of 13.

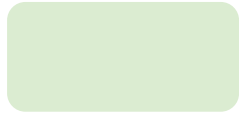


Around 190,000 people in Bromley have downloaded the NHS App.

# Uptake appears variable by geography



Average level of uptake is **between 48%-55%** for the Primary Care Network (PCN)

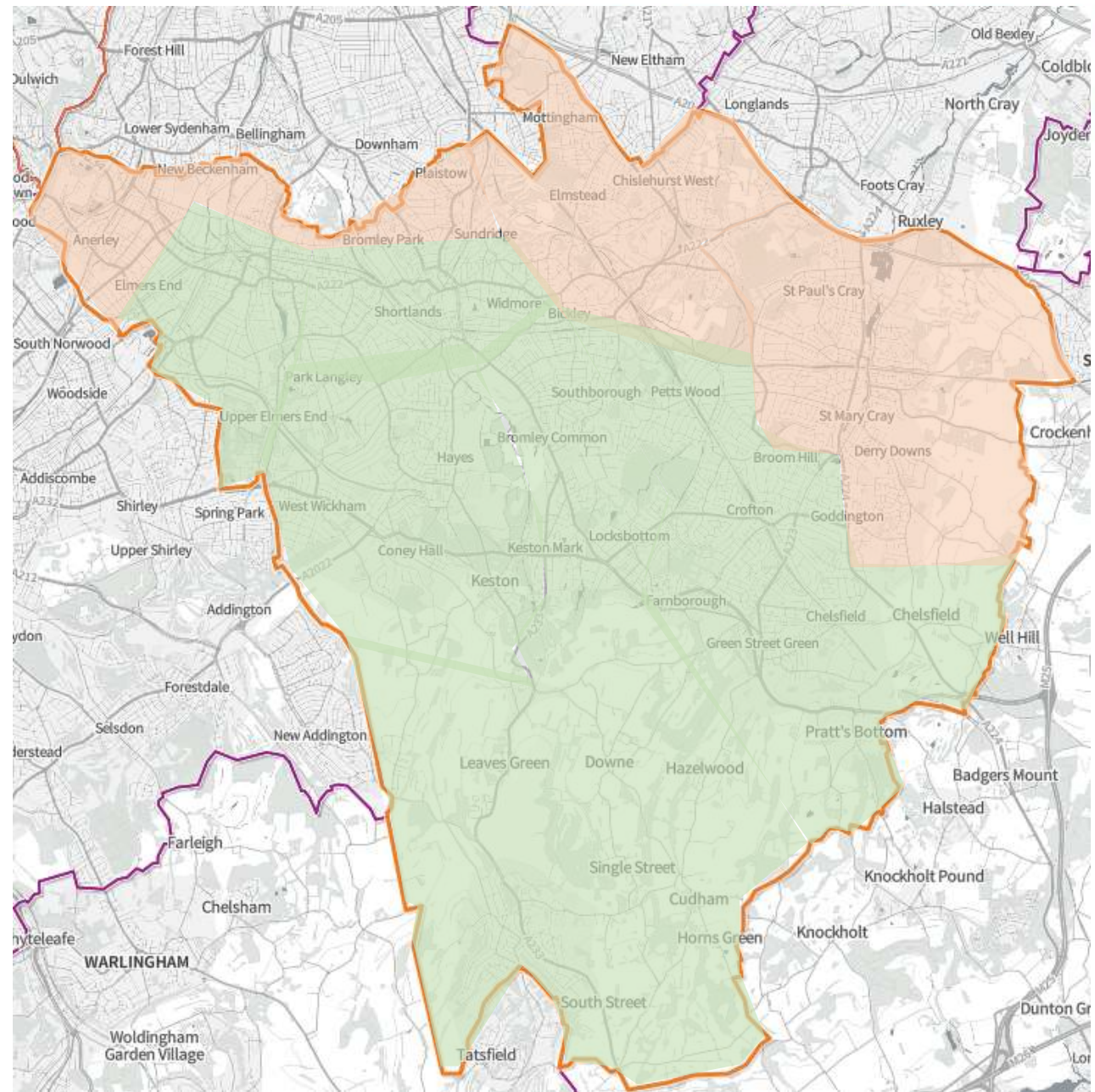


Average level of uptake is **above 66%** for the Primary Care Network (PCN)

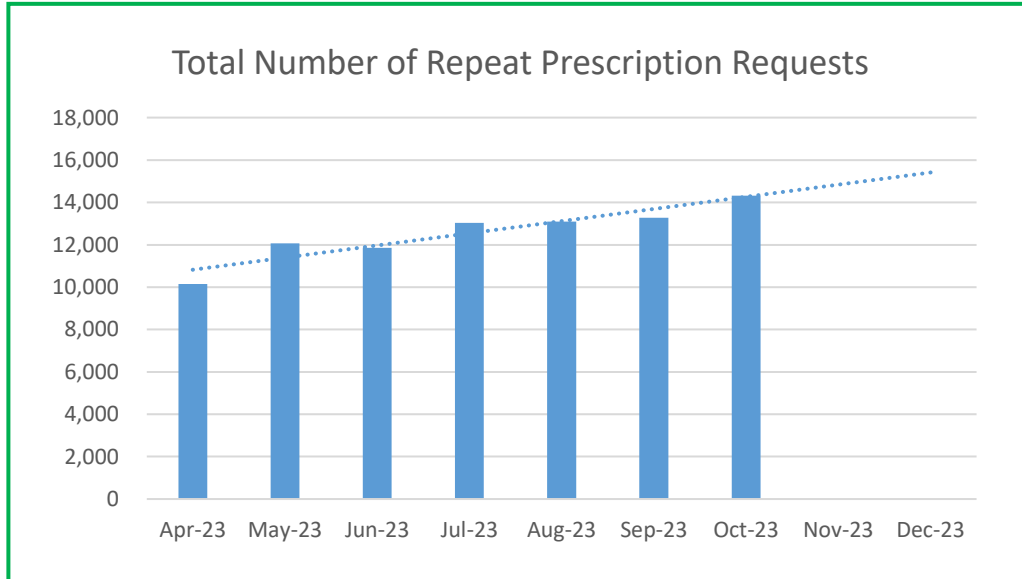
Average uptake for London **54%**

Average uptake for England **54%**

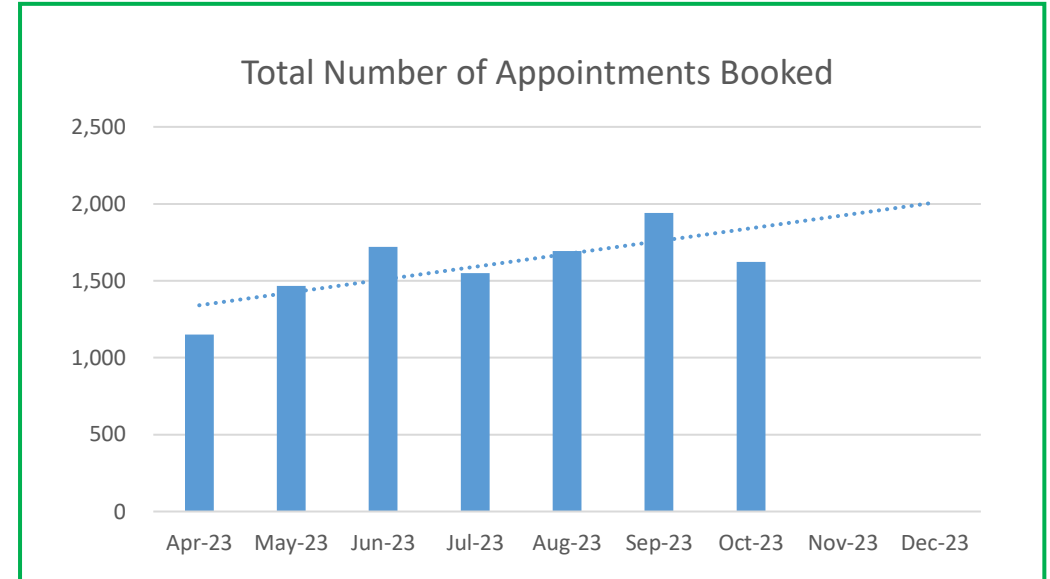
Geographical variability appears to broadly align with the socio-economic map of the borough. This indicates areas where the ICB may need to provide additional support to improve patient uptake.



# Growing utilisation in Bromley



The NHS App is proving increasingly popular as a means of requesting repeat prescriptions. Every request made via the NHS App avoids the need for a visit or phone call to the practice, and is more efficient for the practice too.



Utilisation of the NHS App's ability to book appointments is more mixed. Direct booking is intended for appointments that do not require triage, such as screening or health checks. Some practices have reported difficulty with ensuring the types of appointments available are well understood amongst patients.

The ICB is seeking more information on the demographics of patients using the functions within the NHS App to ascertain whether any patient cohorts may be at risk of being digitally excluded in this way or for particular aspects. Practices are mandated to provide non-digital ways of accessing primary care services for those who are unable or do not wish to use digital routes.

# Promoting the NHS App

**Practices are asking patients to use the NHS App as a means of accessing GP services.**

Practices are promoting the App on their websites and in their voicemail messages. Digital leads in PCNs are responsible for reviewing uptake and providing targeted support to individual practices where registration levels or utilisation amongst their registered patients appears lower.

**PPGs can play a valuable role in encouraging and helping others to download and use the NHS App.**

A number of Patient Participation Groups across Bromley have successfully run 'NHS App workshops' and other promotion events to help fellow patients to download the NHS App and try it out on their smartphone or tablet.

**Digital literacy workshops can help with health technology confidence.**

Clear Community Web has run workshops in Anerley and online to help people become more comfortable with technology, including the NHS App. The ICB is looking to expand digital inclusion initiatives more widely.



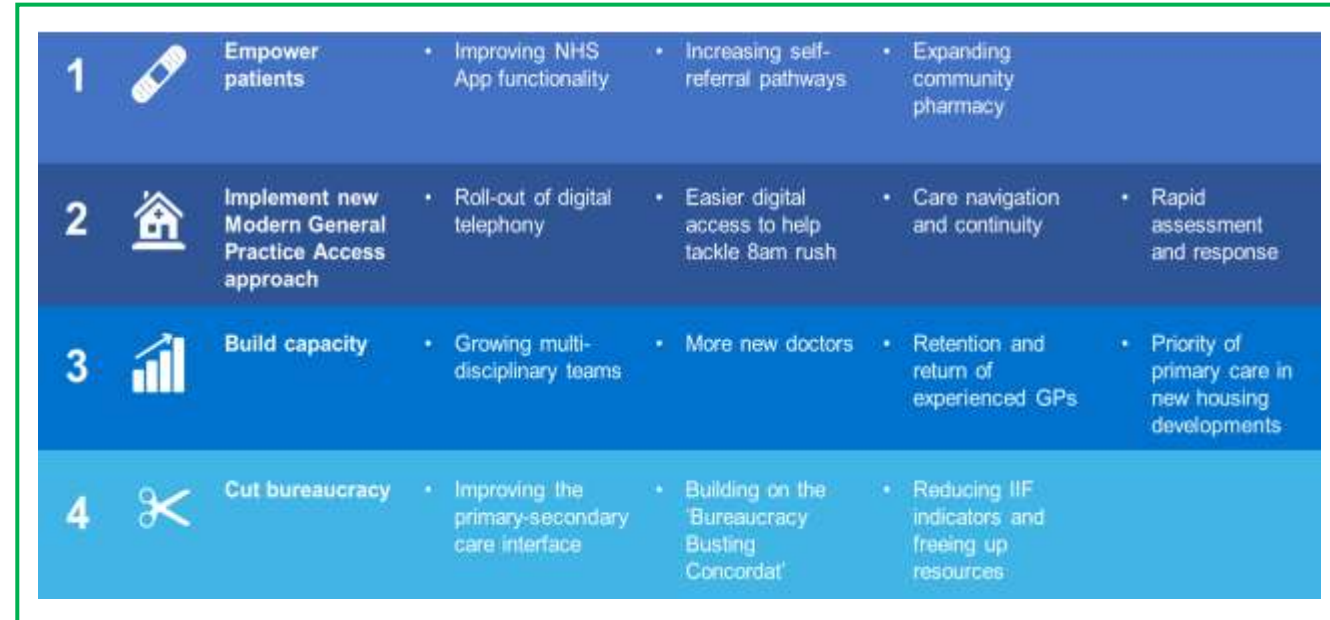
**Inviting the support of our elected representative and other community leaders.**

- Please encourage Bromley residents to download the NHS App – this is a safe and secure application managed and run by a national team.
- Please showcase your own use of the NHS App, eg to register as an organ donor, look up your test results or request your repeat prescription
- Please remind Bromley residents that using the NHS App can help ameliorate pressure on practice telephone lines, especially at peak points of the day.
- Please share any feedback on what works well in the NHS App, and what doesn't, as this can help to improve the experience of primary care services in the borough.



# NHS App sits alongside broader changes

- **Increasing self-referrals:** Patients do not need an appointment for many specialist services – self-referral details are listed on practice websites.
- **Expanding community pharmacy:** ‘Pharmacy First’ due to switch on from 31 January 2024; mobilisation in Bromley underway in collaboration with GP and community pharmacy leaders.
- **Roll-out of digital telephony:** Every Bromley practice due to have digital telephony live by 31 March 2024.
- **Easier digital access:** new online consultation tool going live throughout Spring to enhance management of digital contacts.
- **Care navigation:** Consistent, structured triage at the first point of contact to handle queries and signpost appropriately.



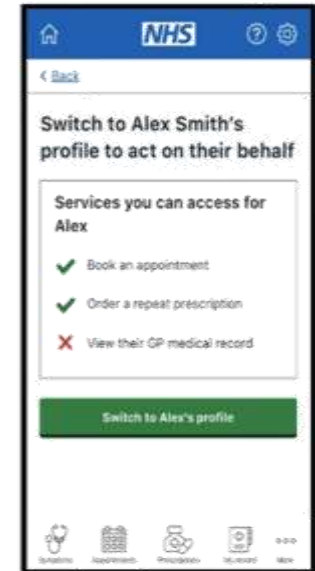
- **Rapid assessment and response:** Quality improvement initiatives to streamline internal processes and deliver care most efficiently in general practice.
- **Growing multi-disciplinary teams:** Over 144 additional new staff have joined practice teams; nearly 30% of these are clinical pharmacists.
- **More new doctors:** Investment in Bromley GP trainers to enable more local GP training places and increase newly qualified GPs staying in the borough.
- **Retention and return of experienced GPs:** Proactive work by Bromley Education & Training Hub to encourage highly knowledgeable GPs to continue to work in the borough.

This suite of developments across primary care are targeting expanding services and improving ways of working within general practice. These aim to help Bromley achieve its core objectives of better access to primary care and improving the experience for patients .



# Useful resources

- [HealthwaveHub](#) – NHS App Bitesize tips
- [Step-by-step guides](#) – Patient leaflets
- [NHS App Ambassadors](#) – 1 minute video



# Appendix: note on the data

- The NHS App data can only be drawn from a national NHS Digital Dashboard
- The ICB has requested more detailed data on usage based on demographics, eg by age, gender, geographical area, ethnicity, health conditions, vulnerability factors, etc.
- The Head of Customer Experience for the NHS App has confirmed that location and age is recorded but not available to ICBs at this present time.
- NHS England has advised this data gap is being escalated.