



### **Will the doctor see me now?**

- Over 50s say it's twice as hard to see a doctor now, as it was five years ago
- Half of over 50s have visited their GP for new conditions in the last 12 months
  - One in five wait more than a week to see their GP<sup>1</sup>
- Londoners find it the hardest to book an appointment for the same day

Research by Saga Health Insurance shows that the over 50s say it is twice as hard to book an appointment with their GP at a convenient time as it was five years ago (49%<sup>2</sup> compared to 21%<sup>3</sup>). One in 5 say they have to wait more than a week to see their GP.

The over 50s are some of the most frequent users of the NHS with the average over 50 visiting their GP two times in a year. According to the General Household Survey, the over 50s are a third more likely to see their GP than under 50s. In fact, of the survey of more than 11,000 over 50s, half have visited their GP for an illness or new condition in the last 12 months and 64% have been to the doctors for something relating to a pre-existing condition during the same period<sup>4</sup>.

The over 50s are struggling to see their doctor when they need them most, one in five say they have to wait more than a week to see their GP. In fact, one in 20 over 50s say they had to wait more than a week for the next available appointment with their GP<sup>1</sup>.

Londoners find it the most difficult to book see their GP the same day, just 40% say they get a same day appointment.

Saga Health Insurance has introduced a 24-hour GP helpline that enables customers to speak, in confidence, with a qualified, practising GP at a convenient time about any medical concerns. The over 50s are able to discuss any symptoms they might have, treatment

options, side effects of medication and even after effects of surgical procedures. Customers can also receive advice about vaccinations if they are planning to travel abroad.

**Roger Ramsden, chief executive, Saga Services, commented:** “With the nations over 50s leading busier lives, with many working well into old age, it is important that the health service adapts and doctors work seven days a week. This survey amongst our customers shows that more needs to be done to serve the needs of this age group who are the biggest users of GP services.

We’ve recognised that people are finding it hard to speak to their doctors, which is why we’ve introduced a 24-hour GP telephone consultation service for all our health insurance customers.”

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

- <sup>1</sup>Populus interviewed 11,019 adults, all aged 50 and over, online between 13<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> February 2014. Populus is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.
- <sup>2</sup>Populus interviewed 10,505 adults, all aged 50 and over, online between 18<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013. Populus is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.
- <sup>3</sup>Populus interviewed 16,493 adults, all aged 50 and over, online in November 2008. Populus is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.
- <sup>4</sup>Populus interviewed 11,729 adults, all aged 50 and over, online between 14<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2013. Populus is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.

### **Saga Health Insurance**

- Access to 24 hour GP telephone consultation service
- Comprehensive range of plans at competitive prices
- Prompt access to private medical treatment
- Access to a wide choice of UK private hospitals
- No upper age limit and no medical required
- For more information please visit [www.saga.co.uk/insurance/health-insurance](http://www.saga.co.uk/insurance/health-insurance) or call **0800 015 0226**

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