

COST OF A PRIVATE GP CONSULTATION IS A POSTCODE LOTTERY

- **Patients in Belfast could be paying more than five times (433%) as much for a private GP appointment than those in Luton**
- **Enquiries for private GP consultations in the UK up 43% in past two years**
- **Liverpool sees consultation enquiries triple (202%) in past 12 months**
- **Despite costing nearly £100 on average, appointments in London up by almost a fifth (19%) in past year**
- **Cheapest private GP consultation is Luton at £30, where demand has more than doubled in the past year (103%)**

Wednesday 25 June 2014 – Enquiries for private GP appointments across the UK have risen by 43% in the past two years, according to research by private healthcare search engine WhatClinic.com. With NHS waiting times on the rise and heightened competition for appointments, it seems demand is up across the UK but with huge price variations.

In a survey of 70 clinics across the UK, Belfast topped the list as the most expensive private GP appointment, with a single consultation costing £160. Manchester was the next most expensive city outside of the capital for a private GP consultation, charging £100 at one clinic for a standard appointment.

The same survey found that the cheapest private consultation can be found in Luton for just £30, where demand has more than doubled (103%) in the past year. Gloucester also boasts competitive rates of £34 and has also seen demand more than double (125%) in the same period. Despite a price tag of £80 for a standard appointment, Liverpool has seen the biggest growth in demand, more than tripling (202%) in the past 12 months.

The level of private GP appointment enquiries in London is 16 times higher than that of the country's second largest city, Birmingham, in the past year. Patients in the Capital can expect to pay an average of £96 for a consultation although depending where you are in the city, costs can vary greatly. Although prices start at £80 for a standard appointment, they can range up to £155 for a top Westminster clinic.

Despite the cost, London has seen private GP enquiries increase by almost a fifth (19%) in the past year alone, and demand is expected to rise over the next couple of months as people make urgent pre-holiday appointments. Even in the last month, private GP enquiries in the Capital more than quadrupling (367%) largely due to pre-holiday consultations.

Convenience is key for private GP consultations, which has led to the growth of ‘same day’ practices in London and the rest of the UK – guaranteeing to see patients the very same day but for a cost of around £100. However, for those after the VIP treatment, concierge doctors are available but at an eye watering starting price of £175 per appointment as well as a monthly retainer fee.

The table below shows the results of a price comparison survey for private GP consultation in 15 clinics around the UK:

Rank	Town/City	Price £
1	Belfast	160
2	London	155
3	Manchester	100
4	Basingstoke	100
5	Liverpool	80
6	Birmingham	75
7	Guildford	72
8	Leicester	70
9	Salisbury	60
10	Sheffield	50
11	Nottingham	40
12	Leeds	35
13	Glasgow	35
14	Gloucester	34
15	Luton	30

NB. This is a sample list of towns and cities – Belfast and Luton are the most expensive and cheapest, but the towns/cities listed in between are examples.

Caelen King, CEO of WhatClinic.com, comments: “The UK is home to a fantastic national health service but it’s under increasing pressure from rising patient numbers and funding cuts. Over the past few years we have noticed a steady increase in patients, particularly in London, enquiring about private GP consultations.

“Our data shows there are huge variations in the cost of a general consultation from one surgery to another, especially within the capital. More often than not people opt to go private for the convenience factor as appointments are more readily available, often within the same day, and you can choose a surgery close to your home or work. However, don’t forget that if you visit a private GP, the prescriptions you collect will be charged at market rate, as they are not covered by the NHS, so you could be left with a rather hefty bill.”

Dr Susie Hayter, private GP, comments: “In recent years, NHS waiting times have gone up considerably and for a routine appointment, a patient that might once have waited for a few days, find waiting times can be several weeks. Some people just don't want to wait that long to be seen so are happy to pay to go private.

“Many patients book a private GP appointment for other reasons outside of time constraints – perhaps they want a second opinion, or are too embarrassed to go to their own GP. There are also lots of elective tests and treatments that aren't covered by the NHS that people also source privately, such as fertility tests or vaccinations.”

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About WhatClinic.com

WhatClinic.com is a clinic comparison site that lists over 100,000 clinics globally. In 2013 15.7 million people visited the site to find, compare and book treatments across a wide range of elective, self-pay medical treatments. WhatClinic.com’s mission is to give the patient, as an empowered consumer, access to all the information they need to make an informed choice, including price, availability and reviews. WhatClinic.com was founded in 2007 by tech entrepreneur Caelen King, and is in operation in over 127 countries.