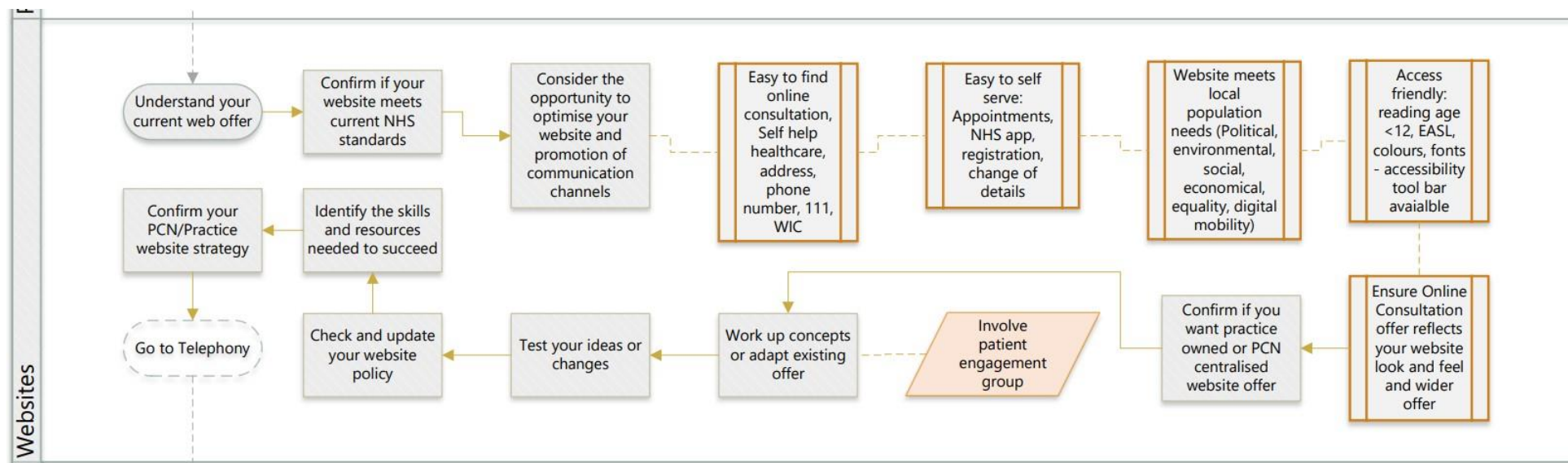Increasingly there are more guidelines from the NHS on the type of websites standards that represent good practice, in terms of patient experience and of meeting contractual requirements (See additional sources above).

Process 5. Website Readiness

Quick Check: Is the website fit for purpose?	Yes	No
Is the patient website clear and easy to use?		
Are NHS accessibility standards being met?		
Are points of access optimised to encourage patients to use self-serve, self-help, alternatives to the GP and delayed demand routes for non-urgent issues?		
Is the website focussed on the information that patients need to transact successfully?		
Does the website explain the benefits of digital and non-GP pathways?		
Answered no to any question? Consider making some changes		

Websites

Tips for successful websites

- ✓ GP/PCN websites are an information zone, users do not seek an experiential visit.
- ✓ Make the things that patients need and want obvious (telephone number, address, opening hours, online consultation, how to get a sick note or test results)
- ✓ Make the favoured channels prominent and easy to find.
- ✓ Think about why patients are "here" – how do they feel, what do they need to do?
- ✓ Use the website to automate as much as possible – registration, change of address, cancelling appointments (see email/webforms)
- ✓ Make use of the tech that others have already set up and are managing such as the NHS App for repeat prescriptions and the 111-symptom checker
- ✓ Encouraging modal shift is helpful – for example, by making the NHS app, online consultation tools and methods of self-help easy.
- ✓ Train staff to talk about the benefits of using online tools.
- ✓ When using a third-party online consultation tool, ask that the tool reflects the look and feel of the parent website
- ✓ Take time to explain each tool and the benefits they bring to the patient experience
- ✓ Cater for access needs – for example, through a translator and accessibility tool bar
- ✓ Language must be aimed at reading age 12, font sizes and colours should be contrasting
- ✓ Consider the time and skill needed to run a website – could a better result be achieved through a centralised PCN solution to content and site management?
- ✓ Check and test everything – links, third-party providers, that the content makes sense to a newcomer
- ✓ Contractual data does not need to be in a prominent position – those who want this will be prepared to find it
- ✓ Less is more, keep it simple, minimise each page to minimise ongoing content management requirements

The Nexer Review of Patient Access found:

"People often seek help from their GP because they have a specific problem in mind. Having their website cluttered with irrelevant information, poor navigation and naming things in ways that don't match the way patients think simply made it harder to use.

Patients looked for shortcuts to what they wanted to do: things like seeing a doctor, booking an appointment, contacting the surgery, ordering repeat prescriptions...

A user should be able to access the content within a service quickly and easily without being constrained by their devices or complex content structures"

Source: Nexer Group Research commissioned by Health Innovation Manchester