

Routine Consultations Using PKB

Programme/Project Name	Public Facing Digital Services
Functionality	Routine Consultations
GP Practice	Stenhouse Medical Centre, Arnold

Objectives

Reduction in telephone calls and offer quicker appointments

By offering digital routine consultations, GP practices will be able to treat patients remotely; reducing appointment times, the number of telephone calls received and will therefore be able to treat more patients sooner.

Situation

When GP practices first open in the morning, they are often inundated with telephone calls from patients, asking to make an appointment. This is often a busy time in a GP practice which can be quite stressful and resource demanding. Once appointments have been booked, patients are then required to wait before explaining to the clinician the need for their appointment during the telephone consultation. Depending on the result of this, patients may then need to re-contact the practice to arrange a face-to-face appointment.

Solution

To offer patients an alternative method to arranging a routine appointment with the GP practice, Stenhouse MC enabled patients to use digital consultations which provided patients the opportunity to send an appointment request to the practice as well as the ability to include: symptoms, worries, pictures to support the diagnosis and the patient's contact preferences. Since the consultations were made available through PKB, 401 individual consultations have been completed by patients, with 84 of them being sent outside of the normal practice's opening hours.

Since offering patients the option to contact a clinician through PKB the practice has found that time is saved as dealing with an online consultation can take as little as 3-5 minutes, depending on the complexity, compared with a 10 minute standard appointment. A clinician at the practice advised *"Now I can read through the detail and just respond to the patient in PKB or ring the patient if necessary. It's so easy to deal with consultations"*.

Between June 2020 to April 2021 the practice has saved a minimum of 33 hours and 24 minutes in clinical appointment time (based on saving 5 minutes per appointment) and 13 hours 20 minutes in administrative time (based on 2 minutes per phone call).

To arrange the digital consultations at the practice, Stenhouse MC have dedicated e-consult clinician appointments, which the administration team are able to book once a query is received. The clinician stated *"With the e-consult"*

Benefits

From utilising the routine consultations in PKB, Stenhouse MC experienced the following benefits:

Type of Benefit	Topic	Benefit
Non-cash releasing	Time saving	At least 5 minutes saved per appointment slot by being able to read through the patient information and action as necessary or contact the patient for additional detail.
Non-cash releasing	Reduction of phone calls	Stenhouse MC saw a reduction in telephone calls as all of the patients who had completed a routine consultation digitally would have otherwise rung the practice for an appointment.
Non-quantifiable	Patient time	Patients saved time by not having to ring the practice and wait in the call queue and have found benefit in being able to send a consultation request at a time that best suits them.
Non-quantifiable	Appointments	Patients are able to get an appointment quicker through the e-consult slots Stenhouse MC have made available to encourage patients to use the digital offering.