

Digital Pathfinder for urgent care centres

Case Study | Hurley Group & NHS Oxleas Foundation Trust

The Challenge

Hurley Group, with some 60 GP practices under its management, wants to shift the traditional model of GP delivery into an online channel - allowing a proportion of patients to be triaged online and be managed remotely using their eConsult software solution. If successful, this will open up the choice for the patient, improving access to GPs, help manage demand, and make primary care more efficient. To date, the eConsult solution has been rolled out to 300 practices in the UK, giving access to 2.1 million patients. Socitm Advisory project managed the delivery of this proof-of-concept (POC) project. This included a variant of the eConsult software solution designed for an Urgent Care Centre (UCC) setting for the first time. The newly designed UCC accommodation would help facilitate the public's adoption of technology that enabled a new way for them to interact with centre staff and medical practitioners. By using computer tablets at arrival, patients were able to record their symptoms and then be signposted to where treatment best be provided within the centre such as observation pods, consulting rooms or to external medical services for self-help non-urgent care e.g. pharmacy.

The overall project's objectives were as follows:

- ▶ To set up the Queen Mary's UCC with tablets, observation pods, signage and branding to promote eConsult partnering with Hurley/NHS to engage and communicate the service to visitors of the centre, to create a rapid "see and treat" model within the UCC and also a remote closure model from home;
- ▶ To ensure that eConsult connected with Adastra, the NHS Spine patient identity system to provide the correct GP and Personal Demographics e.g. NHS patient number information, and link seamlessly to the clinical system once data has been submitted;
- ▶ To develop training signage and communicate scripts to centre staff to provide consistent messaging about the project to stakeholders and members of the public visiting the centre;
- ▶ To measure and evaluate the new service by capturing staff and visitor experience of the UCC for review and improvement to be made;
- ▶ To develop a toolkit that will enable the successful roll out of the eConsult service to other UCC's

The Approach

Our project approach was tailored to satisfy the following critical success factors:

- ▶ Active engagement of staff and patients using eConsult to promote the new service;
- ▶ eConsult app and tablet technology made available fully tested with appropriate back-up solutions/ processes in place and all operational staff made aware;
- ▶ Patients successfully diverted to where their healthcare needs are places;
- ▶ 20% of patients successfully diverted to using eConsult online

The Outcome

The following benefits were targeted:

- ▶ Improved patient experience through reduced waiting times, quicker diagnosis and better outcomes/ closures and increased patient satisfaction;
 - ▶ Patients urgent care needs diagnosed quicker, enabling prioritised, signposted medical assistance;
- Consultation times reduced providing a seamless, streamlined service to patients and practitioners;
- ▶ Cost savings to CCG from reduced tariffs due to remote closure e.g. 30% managed from home, with a 70% closure rate, reducing walk-ins i.e. patient self-presenting by 20%;
 - ▶ Meet or exceed the National Quality Indicators for patient experience e.g. capturing patient feedback on the day via smiley face buttons, a text message 24 hours later, week later follow up emails;
 - ▶ Increased Foundation Trust efficiency and productivity savings via an improved integrated service