



Near Me Video Consulting's Role in Efficiency Savings.

Briefing for Service Managers and Clinicians

Introduction:

With services and staff being asked to consider how they can play a role in efficiency saving, Near Me video consulting can help. It has the potential to reduce travel and deliver services differently, creating efficiencies and cost savings. The proposals in this brief are based on learning and evidence from Near Me use since 2020, and the ambition *that where appropriate, all patients are offered the choice of attending by video.*

Why offer a Near Me Video appointment?

- There is a cost to both patients and services attending in-person appointments. Travel, parking and time away from work for patients, and travel time for clinicians.
- Financial assistance for patient travel through both the NHS Highland and Island patient travel scheme and the National Help with Health Costs (HCS1) places a financial burden on Health Boards. Offering Near Me is a viable and effective alternative.
- Patients like it. 97% of patients who use it would use it again with 92% reporting that it is easy to use.
- There is academic research and a wealth of use cases, case studies, videos and speciality guidance documents supporting its implementation. [Near Me Website](#)

How can you expand your Near Me offer?

1. Use Near Me Groups for health education and self-management sessions.

- This functionality has been widely adopted by services including Mental Health, Dietetic, Diabetes and Antenatal.
- There is evidence of an improvement in attendance by switching from in person to Near Me groups.
- Staff time is reduced by removing the need to travel and set up the venue.
- Near Me Groups are not constrained by the size of physical venue, and you don't need to rent or book a venue.
- The functionality supports improved service access with the opportunity to offer cross NHS Board boundary groups, maximising staff and specialist resources.

2. Consider the use of video calling prior to any staff journey or home visit.

- Video calling reduces travel and consequently travel costs and staff time.
- There is established practice of Near Me being used for peripheral clinics, ward rounds in satellite units, visiting specialists and community visits.
- Near Me can also be used for guided home visits, to undertake home assessments. This has the potential to speed up the discharge process where patients may need adaptations or equipment to use at home. Contact nss.nearme@nhs.scot for more information.

3. Use Near Me / Phone for appointments deemed suitable to reduce spend on patient travel.

- Patients should be offered the choice of attending their appointment by video. Mandating that a video appointment is offered (where appropriate and providing patient choice) will reduce travel spend and supports the practice of realistic medicine.

- [Feedback](#) from over patients describes the advantages of using Near Me. There are also Near Me Hubs in community spaces and libraries where patients can assess support to make a call, the equipment and Wi-Fi. A directory of Hubs can be found at nearme.scot.

What to do.

1. **Near Me Groups** - Establish what group activity is delivered by your service and decide whether all or elements of it can be transferred to a Near Me group.
2. **Advice and Supported Self-Management** - These services lend themselves to a group approach, with the added benefit of supporting multidisciplinary working and providing peer support. Consider establishing group sessions to free up capacity and reduce waiting times. See the [Near Me Website](#) for more information about setting up a Near Me Group.
3. **Appointment Booking** - Decide what conditions or presentations should NOT be managed via Near Me video and agree as a service to offer it as a choice for all other appointments. The example below was developed by a medical practice and is used by staff responsible for appointment booking. This may be reception, booking or triaging staff. Conditions usually managed by telephone can also benefit from a Near Me call as it provides greater reassurance to the patient plus an opportunity to communicate on a more person centred level.

Telephone (or Near Me)	Near Me	In Person
Mental Health	Mental Health	Cancer (initial presentation)
Medication Advice	Skin/Nail Problems	Abdo Pelvic – new onset
Results (X Ray/Bloods)	Cellulitis	Type 1 Diabetes - unwell
Review medication changes	Back pain if seen within last 2 weeks needs Face to Face	Headache – new onset
Contraception	Gout	Rectal bleeding
BP if have BP monitor	Foot pain	Breast lump
Menstrual problems	Joint pain	Prostate/Testicular
Thyroid issues	Sore throat	Altered bowel habit
Ear pain – onset. If a returning issue/worsening book face to face	Allergies	Post Coital Bleeding
Post Natal – contraception advice	Leg swelling	Abnormal weight loss
D&V – onset. If returning issues/worsening book face to face	Throat symptoms	
Blood in Urine	Long Term Condition Review	
Vaginal discharge	Rashes	
Abdo pains – ongoing chronic	Cough	
Pelvic pains – ongoing chronic		

From a secondary care perspective the [Digital Consulting in Neurology](#) guidance contains a similar example with regards to Near Me consulting and specific neurological conditions.

4. **Training** - Ensure staff involved in booking appointments are comfortable and confident describing and offering Near Me. This short animated [Near Me video](#) can support this as can this series of [training videos](#).
5. **Electronic Patient Record** - Ensure your patient management system e.g. TrakCare is set up to allocate Near Me appointments and generate the Near Me link on the appointment letter.
6. **Clinical Training** - Explore the new Turas training resources for clinicians which supports the development of video consulting skills: [Near Me : video consultation skills eLearning](#).

- For more information please visit [Near Me Website](#)
- For further information or advice, please contact nss.nearme@nhs.scot
- For technical help or support setting up new waiting areas please contact vc.support@nhs.scot