

Near Me in the “new normal” health and care service



Vision

To deliver safe, person-centred and sustainable care through video consulting

Introduction

Near Me is transforming the way people are engaging with health and care services. As part of the immediate response to COVID-19, the Near Me programme, working with local boards, has enabled video consulting to be available in nearly every GP practice and many secondary care teams in Scotland.

Prior to March, there were around 300 Near Me consultations a week in Scotland: by mid May, that figure had risen to over 13,000 a week. An external evaluation has been positive. But there is still much work to do. This paper describes the vision for how Near Me can be embedded within the new norm.

Rationale for use

The key reasons for maximising use of Near Me across Scotland are:

- **Enables physical distancing:** Near Me enables services to continue to be provided without potential exposure to COVID-19 and reduces footfall in NHS and social care premises.
- **Delivers person centred and convenient care:** Near Me enables people to attend appointments from the location of their choice. This can reduce travel, minimise time taken off work or school, or avoid the need for carers to support.
- **Addresses environmental imperatives:** by reducing travel, Near Me improves the move towards net zero and the carbon footprint of services.

Aim

All health and care consultations are provided by Near Me whenever it is clinically appropriate

Policy context

Protecting Scotland's Future: the Government's Programme for Scotland 2019-2020:

“Attend Anywhere [which powers Near Me] ...will now roll out to primary care and social care services so more services can be delivered closer to people’s homes.”

Personalising Realistic Medicine (April 2019):

“NHS Near Me enables us to provide appointments where patients want them, rather than expecting patients to fit their lives around the NHS. It reduces health inequalities related to access and limits the detrimental effects of having to travel for appointments - for frail patients and relatives, it is less exhausting; for others, less time needs to be taken off work or school.”

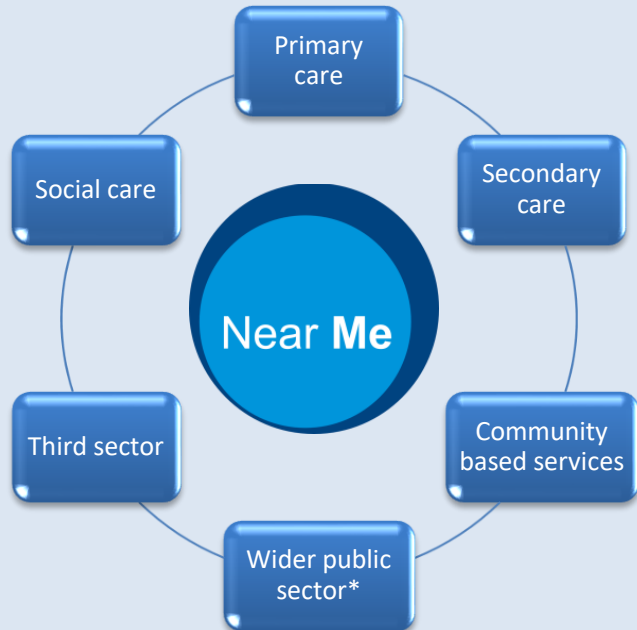
Digital Health and Care Strategy (April 2018):

“Spread the use of video consultations direct from people’s homes (including care homes).”

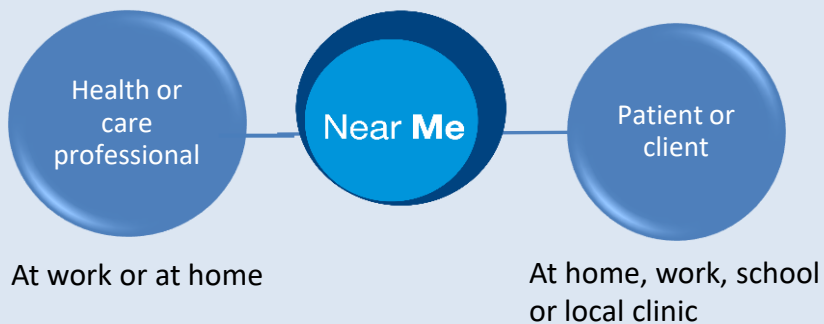


Use of Near Me in the “new normal”

Near Me can be used in any care setting. This may include routine appointments for long-term conditions, delivery of acute care, ward rounds, GP and community services, and home/care home visits. It also enables professionals to work remotely from their base.



*Subject to additional licensing



What is needed to deliver Near Me at scale

Technical set up	Training and engagement	Processes for use
<p>Vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All clinicians and social care staff have a video calling device for using Near Me in their consulting room and sufficient bandwidth The public has access to video calling devices 	<p>Vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All clinicians, health staff and social care staff are trained and able to use Near Me Public perception and acceptability that Near Me is a normal way of consulting 	<p>Vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear infrastructure for use of Near Me is in place in all services, so that Near Me is as easy to use for clinicians, patients, health staff and social care staff as in-person consultations
<p>Enablers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment available for all clinicians (eg, doctors, nurses, AHPs) and social care staff Distribution of equipment prioritised by eHealth in boards Connecting Scotland Programme will contribute to addressing digital exclusion among the public 	<p>Enablers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing resources (via NES Turas portal) are used by all Clinician and social care professionals engagement and support of professional bodies Strategic engagement in NHS boards and HSCPs and third sector Public engagement Political engagement 	<p>Enablers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Near Me platform is set up correctly in all organisations Processes for use (triage, appointment booking etc) are established in all boards/GP practices/organisations Patient management systems (eg, TrakCare, Vision, EMIS) support video consulting Patient entry to Near Me services is clear and easy Arrangements in place for investigations for remote consultations (eg, blood tests) Remote prescribing in place National agreement for cross-board working Data system identifies remote consulting in all care settings Contingency arrangements Evaluation of Near Me programme is extended