Staff guidance for remote consultations with patients or clients

Virtual consultations continuing care





Why are remote consultations beneficial?

Patient and Client experience demonstrates telephone and video consultations have a high level of acceptability and that technical issues are important, but can usually be addressed satisfactorily.

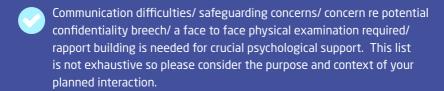
We have found that around 80% of HSC staff in one Trust*, who are involved in Virtual Consultations, would choose to offer this as a future option to their patients or clients.

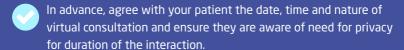
Learning in Northern Ireland has identified Virtual Consultations as a communication tool offering benefits both during the pandemic but also as part of a range of options, that should include face-to-face interactions, where required and when necessary. In this guide we refer to 'patients' to indicate either patients or clients.

Prepare

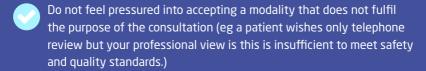
Consider the purpose of the interaction - the needs of the patient guides whether it should be virtual (telephone or video) or face to face. Consult your local organisation or setting's detailed user guides if these are available.

Face to-face, rather than virtual, consultation may be more appropriate in circumstances such as:





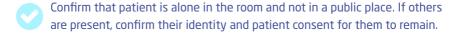




Start the Consultation







Advise the patient that if they are cut off or technical difficulties occur that they should await a phone call within a defined period of time.

During the Consultation





- Inform the patient when you appear otherwise occupied (e.g. taking notes or reading something on another screen).
- Make written records as you would in a standard consultation.
- At the end, summarise the agreed actions from the appointment, ensuring the patient understands these and any timescale, before ending the appointment -remembering to give them a chance to ask any final questions
- To end, tell the patient you are going to close the call now, and say goodbye (before actually closing the connection).

After Consultation

Consider if step up to face-to-face assessment is required.

Ensure patient records are updated, with outcome of assessment and that the plan and communication to GP, patient or other stakeholder is completed as you would with a face to face consultation.

Supporting information

Links to the technical details of the video platform, and more detailed user guides being used in your organisation are available here:

Primary Care Community Care Belfast Trust Northern Trust*

Southern Trust | South Eastern Trust | Western Trust

Thanks to colleagues and patient and client representatives across Northern Ireland's HSC for their help in the production of this HSCQI guidance.