

Case study

Perspective of a eConsult handler.

Abi manages the reception team at St Austell Healthcare. The practice has been using eConsult since May 2017. Spread across four sites and serving nearly 31,000 people. The practice embraces the use of innovation and technology. As eConsult has now been implemented across 17 practices in Cornwall, Abi discusses her own experience of working with online consultations.



It is improving access to information and services

I have worked in the surgery for five years and have experienced many trials of systems aiming to make communication more straight forward; some have been more effective than others. The internet is becoming a popular medium for seeking assistance and a convenient way for communicating. Having the eConsult facility to submit medical queries, in the same way you might email an appliance company for help, makes waiting on the telephone in work-time breaks a thing of the past! Phew!

There are many benefits for both patients and receptionists. The eConsult forms are easy to use. They flag entries that may need urgent attention, which enables work flow to be processed promptly with the necessary urgency.

It is helping me to support information flow

As a receptionist who processes the eConsult requests, I've found that they are helping me to better manage telephone queries. The depth of information gathered via the eConsult system is helping me to phrase my questions to obtain useful details to put to the doctors in the first instance, which is assisting workflow.

It is providing an alternative to Text Relay

Thinking about patients that are deaf, when they wanted to contact the surgery in the past, they would have had to text a relay service who would read text messages to us. This may have been embarrassing for the patient. eConsult now enables these patients to send information straight to us without having to first relay it through a third party.

It is enabling service users to express their concerns

Using the eConsult form gives patients a way to describe the problem without the pressure of having to speak to a receptionist. This may be easier for patients with anxiety or who struggle to communicate verbally. Speaking to another person about a private medical problem can sometimes be daunting for patients, especially those living with anxiety and other mental health conditions. The clinical environment can be intimidating and patients may shy away from disclosing details that could be helpful. The eConsult request form allows people to take their time and to answer honestly without feeling pressured.

What are you waiting for?
You can access online GP services
24 hours a day.

