

Case study

Rolling out access to online consultation.

Dr John Garman is senior partner at Helston Medical Centre. His practice has been using eConsult since May 2017. Spread across two sites, serving nearly 14,000 patients, the practice covers a varied demographic setting. As eConsult has now been implemented across 16 practices in Cornwall, John discusses his own experience of online consulting.



Why did you want to set up online consulting in your practice?

We were keen to set up online consultation to improve access to our doctors for our patients. Online consultation can be accessed any time of the day or night from our website. Because it's an online communication, it feels more personal and centred to their needs and they send it in their own time wherever they are.

What has the reception been like from patients?

eConsult is proving to be very popular with patients. Patients are able to get hold of us more quickly and we can make sure that it is dealt with in the most appropriate way. A good proportion of the online consultation requests we receive, can be dealt with by a telephone consultation, which saves their time of having to come to the surgery. Patients who need a face-to-face appointment have improved access to us because we already know more about someone's problem before they walk through the door. All ages have been embracing eConsult, including a 92 year-old and a lady who was 74 years. She wanted to use eConsult, to self-manage her hypertension and saved her a trek to get to us.

What has the impact been for staff working in the practice?

We started quite quietly until we were happy that all our staff were confident with what was required of them, ensuring that our processes were in place and that we had got a feeling about what our patients felt about eConsult before we went for the big push.

Before eConsult we would arrive in the morning and our receptionists would be inundated with calls. It was often very hard work, coming out of morning surgery, jumping straight into the duty phone list, dashing to get through it while juggling various must-do tasks before the start of afternoon surgery. Now patients can complete an eConsult form online and know either the GP or a member of the practice's staff will get back to them by the end of the next working day – and often on the same day. From the point of view of GP's working at the surgery, eConsult has made a huge difference.

We're loving eConsult at our practice and the patients are loving eConsult. Our consultations are more effective and efficient because the information provided with the request means we are well informed from the start. It has transformed our way of working at the practice.

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

