

DATE: 23/03/2020

Guidance for Telemedicine within First Contact / MEC Services

Due to an expected increase in the inability for hospital providers and primary care optical practice being able to deliver face to face consultations with patients, there has been a need for Primary Eyecare Services to work closely with CCGs to implement an ability to assess patients within commissioned First Contact Services (e.g. MECS) via telemedicine (telephone or video consultations).

The below sets out guidance on expectations and methods of delivery.

Eligibility

All patients contacting the service should have remote telephone / video contact with an accredited practitioner prior to attendance for a face to face appointment, this ensures that only those patients requiring essential eye care attend the optical practice (See additional triage document to use alongside current triage form, Appendix 1)

Requirements of remote assessment

You are expected to carry out adequate questioning (and visual inspection if video consultation possible) to enable you to come to a conclusion of next steps as you would do in your normal face 2 face MECS assessment, the outcomes from telemedicine consultation will be:

- Advise and Guidance to patient
- Recommendation to purchase OTC medications (purchased by family member, friend, community support group etc)
- Requirement to issue written order (signed order to be collected by family member, friend, community support group etc from optical practice)
- Where you feel a face to face assessment is required:
 - o For a patient without COVID associated symptoms but isolating offered appointment but advised of awareness of increased exposure
 - o For patient with symptoms or those without COVID associated symptoms not wishing to accept increased risk of exposure you should contact the local urgent eye care hospital department to discuss next steps.

Patients that have been offered treatment should be booked for follow up appointment at the end of their isolation period and advised to cancel if the symptom / condition has resolved.

Recording of Telemedicine assessment

It is vital that we record when a telemedicine assessment has been carried out, this is not only so that commissioners are aware that this has been done but also from a medico-legal perspective we are highlighting that the assessment was carried out this was due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Please make sure when you are recording the assessment on OptoManager (Service IT system) that you put TELEMEDICINE ASSESSMENT DUE TO COVID RESTRICTIONS in the comments box at both the assessment and the outcome page.

Video Consultation Guidance

Information Governance

The health and social care system is going to face significant pressures due to the COVID-19 outbreak. We will need to work in different ways from usual and the focus should be what information you share and who you share it with,

rather than how you share it. The following advice sets out some of the tools that you can use to support individual care, share information and communicate with colleagues during this time. This advice is endorsed by the Information Commissioner's Office, the National Data Guardian and NHS Digital.¹

Videoconferencing

We encourage the use of videoconferencing to carry out consultations with patients and service users. This could help to reduce the spread of COVID 19. It is fine to use video conferencing tools such as Skype, WhatsApp, Facetime as well as commercial products designed specifically for this purpose.

The consent of the patient or service user is implied by them accepting the invite and entering the consultation. But you should safeguard personal/confidential patient information in the same way you would with any other consultation.

Using Your Own Device

You can use your own devices to support video conferencing for consultations, mobile messaging and home working where there is no practical alternative. Reasonable steps to ensure this is safe include: setting a strong password; using secure channels to communicate e.g. tools/apps that use encryption; and not storing personal/confidential patient information on the device unless absolutely necessary and appropriate security is in place.

Information should be safely transferred to the appropriate health and care record as soon as it is practical to do so and deleted from the device.

Video Conferencing Tools

Fleming

Fleming is a web based product that can be used by any NHS staff member to conduct a video consultation. You can only register for this if you have an nhs.net email address. You can use it on a mobile, desktop, or any device connected to the internet

Set up an account

Please go to <https://fleming accurx.com/login>

NHS.net registration

- Select nhs.net
- This will take you to the nhs.net log in page log in to your account
- You will be sent a verification email to your inbox

Please reply to this with the following information

- Email – your nhs.net email address
- Organisation – Primary Eyecare Services
- ODS Code - AFW

Your account will be reviewed and you'll be added to the organisation. Once you have received confirmation you will be able to login to [Fleming](#).

¹ <https://www.nhsx.nhs.uk/key-information-and-tools/information-governance-guidance>

Start a video conference

Review the information on the link below before using with live patients

<https://support accurx.com/en/articles/3798737-how-to-do-a-video-consultation-for-secondary-care-services-fleming>

Try this with practice staff to make sure you know how to use the system, this will only work with the following browsers

- Chrome
- Firefox
- Chromium-based browsers: OperaVivaldi
- Latest version of safari

Patients using this for the first time should be advised to use their internet browser and will need to allow access to their camera and microphone

You can use NHS number 7777777777 to set up a call with a test patient and their date of birth to set up a test call. The NHS number above can also be used with patients if you do not have access to the patients NHS number

On the next screen enter the patients telephone number 07xxx xxxxxx, this will send a link to the patient from NHS no reply.

Patient View

Patients need to click on the link to connect them to you for the consultation. It will also send you a link to your email address, this will come in useful if you have booked a videoconference appointment later in the day

If the patient has not received the link then you can email them a link from within the consultation

The following link shows you what the patient will receive

<https://support accurx.com/en/articles/3789312-my-doctor-or-nurse-has-sent-me-a-video-link>

In some cases, a patients smartphone or computer may not allow access to their microphone and camera, if this is the case then you may need to help them update their settings

Instructions for Iphone, android and desktop can be found on the following link

<https://support accurx.com/en/articles/3779266-video-consultations-problems-enabling-camera-or-microphone>

Whats App, Facetime, Skype

If you are unable to use Fleming for a virtual consultation, then you can use Whats App, Facetime or alternative to perform a virtual consultation.

Practices should consider using the practice email address and landline number to set up Facetime, Whats App, Skype or any other commercial products designed specifically for this purpose.

First Contact Services – MECS etc (for use during COVID-19 Restrictions)

Px Name:..... GP:**(Local only)**

Date:..... Surgery:.....

Address: DoB:

Phone:..... Time of call: Taken by:

Section 1		
Are you currently self-isolating?	Yes	Please progress to section 2.
	No	Go to Next Question
Do you have recent onset continuous cough and / or high temperature?	Yes	Please progress to section 4.
	No	Arrange telephone / video consultation to determine if face 2 face appointment required.
Section 2		
Are you self-isolating due to having symptoms or due to living with someone with symptoms??	Yes	Please progress to section 4.
	No	Please progress to section 3.
Section 3		
If you are self-isolating without symptoms, are you happy to come in for appointment, despite the higher risk of exposure to COVID-19?	Yes*	Arrange telephone / video consultation to determine if face to face appointment required.
	No	Please progress to section 4.
Section 4		
Did the initial triage result in the patient requiring urgent or routine assessment?	Routine	Arrange telephone / video consultation to determine if face 2 face appointment required.
	Urgent	Please progress to section 5.
Section 5		
Why is the appointment timeframe determined to be urgent?	Red Eye – Painful and/or Sensitive to Light and/or Vision affected	Arrange telephone / video consultation to determine if can be managed remotely or if need to call urgent eye care department to discuss next steps.
	All other symptoms	Call local urgent eye care department to discuss next steps.

The Optometrists should offer the patient a telephone or video consultation (see additional guidance) so that a detailed remote consultation can be carried out to ascertain next steps in patients care.

*Patient in at risk group **must** be made aware that they will be exposing themselves to an increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 before you arrange an appointment for them.