IMPROVING THE USE OF NEAR ME VIDEO CONSULTING IN GP PRACTICES

THIS DOCUMENT IS INTENDED FOR GP PRACTICES IN NHS SCOTLAND
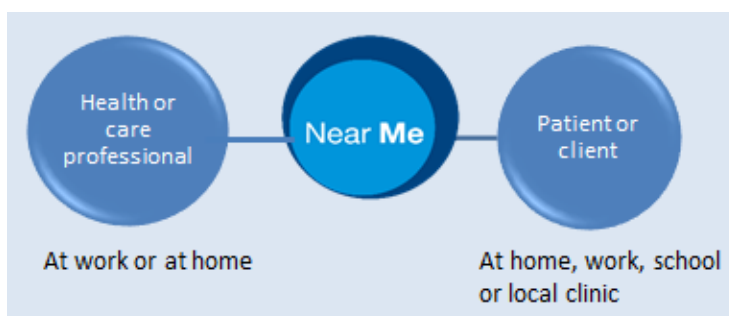
Near Me video consulting (powered by Attend Anywhere®) can be used to enable patients to consult remotely with clinicians.

The key reasons for using Near Me are to:

- **Enable physical distancing:** Near Me enables services to continue to be provided without potential exposure to COVID-19 and reduces footfall in NHS premises. It also enables clinicians to work remotely, reduces use of and time to put on PPE, supports multi-disciplinary consultations (ie, via three-way calling), and enables cross-cover.
- **Deliver 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, and make it easier for people who need carer support. Near Me can enable an interpreter or family member to join a consultation remotely. It also provides clinicians with insight into patients' home environment.
- **Address environmental imperatives:** by reducing travel, Near Me improves the move towards net zero and the carbon footprint of services.

Place of Near Me

Near Me is a consulting tool, and clinicians should select the appropriate method of consultation including both clinical factors and patient choice.
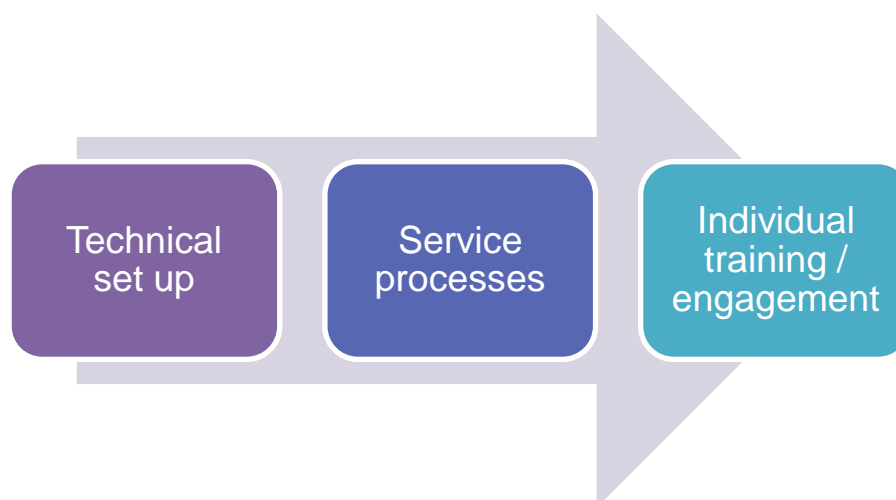
- **Telephone**: often used first line for triaging
- **Near Me**: provides additional clinical information over telephone (eg, pallor, respiratory rate), improves engagement/reassurance, and addresses patient preference to see their clinician
- **Face to face**: for when telephone or video consultations are insufficient.

Near Me may be used as a standalone consultation, or as part of a combined consultation in order to minimise the time spent in physical contact where any physical examination/test takes place in person and the rest of the consultation by Near Me.

Uses of Near Me in Primary Care
Near Me has been successfully used in a wide range of scenarios in primary care including: management of long term conditions, support for care homes, acute triage, follow up appointments, multidisciplinary team reviews and supervision of trainees.
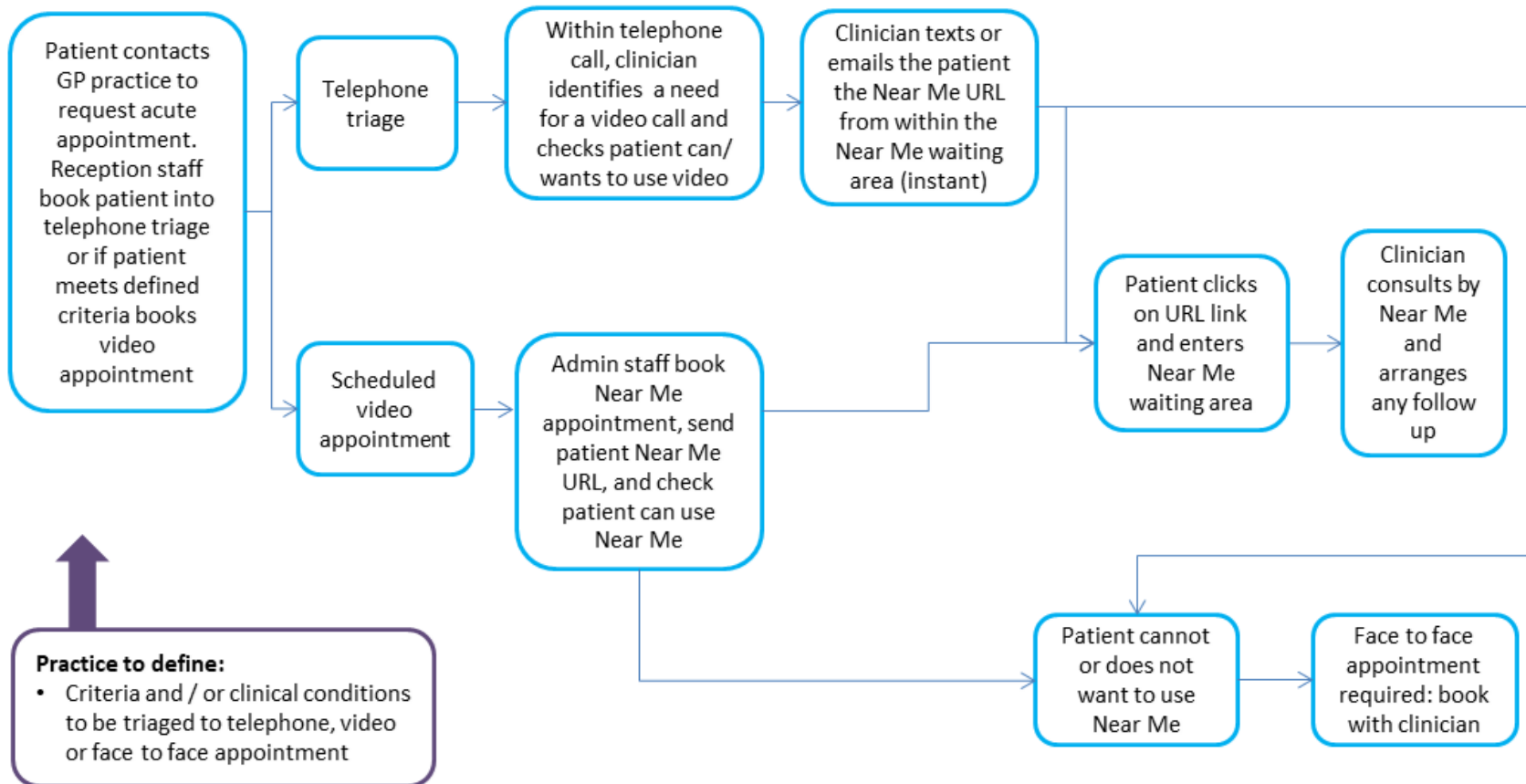
SETTING UP NEAR ME: 3-STEP MODEL

| Technical set up | Service processes | Individual training / engagement |

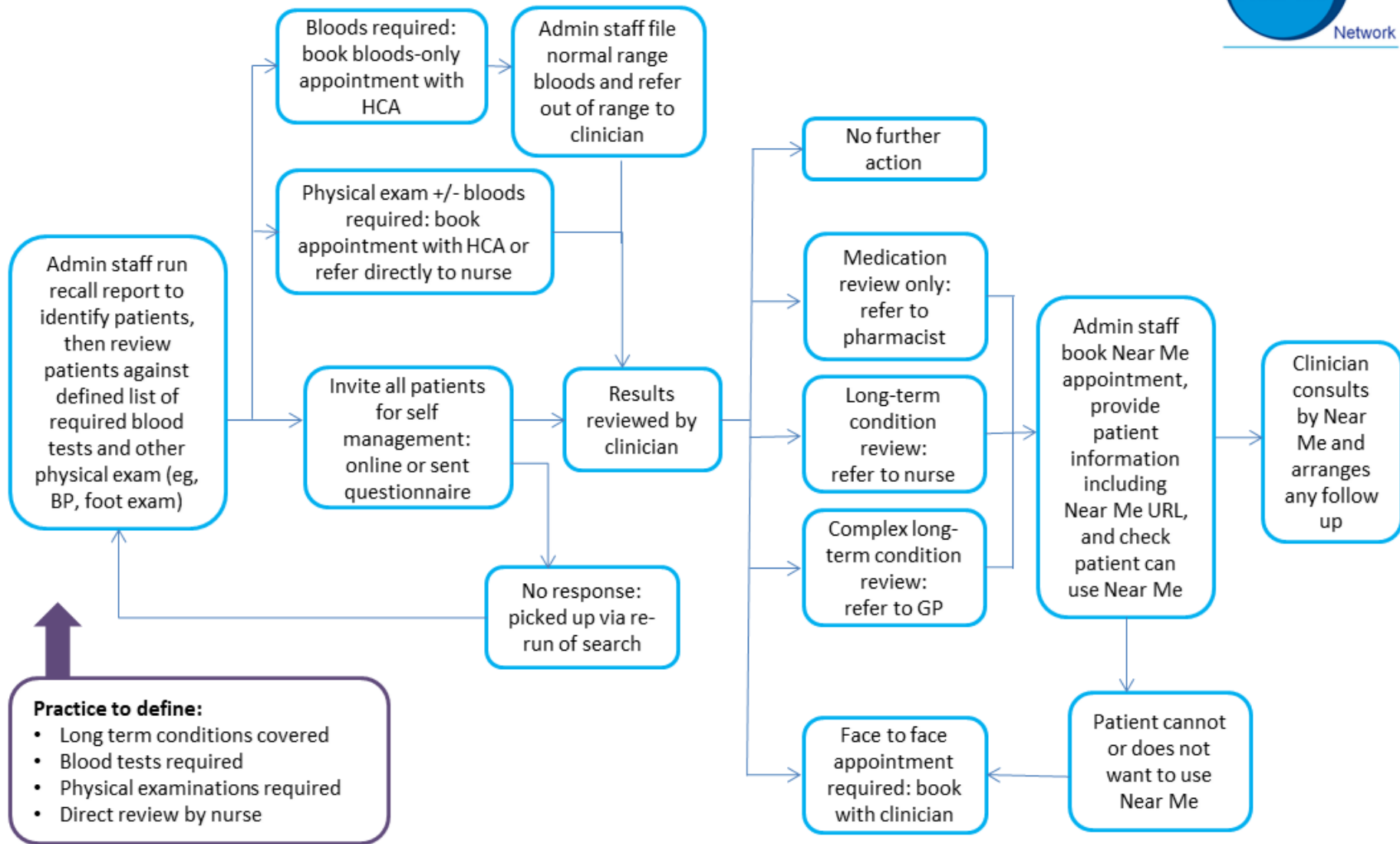| Technical set up	Service processes	Individual preparations
Equipment Video consulting equipment in **all** consulting locations: • Internet connection (minimum requirement: download 1.1Mbps, upload 0.7 Mbps, ping under 150ms). • Check connection at: https://nhs.attendanywhere.com/webrtctest • Hardware – webcam, headset or speakers/ microphone (essential), and second screen (optimal). Laptops, tablets or smart phones can also be used. • Chrome or Safari browser. For technical specifications, click here • If working remotely, arrange appropriate access to clinical systems. **Near Me platform** • Waiting area set up. To request this, click here Over 95% of GP practices in Scotland are set up. • All clinicians and any other relevant staff set up with Near Me user accounts.	**Clinical pathways** • Decide on the clinical use for Near Me. • Define practice-specific pathways for use of Near Me. *See section 2: template pathways for review and adaption at GP practices* **Core processes** Put in place: • Process for identifying patients as suitable for Near Me. • Process for providing patients Near Me waiting room link and information about the consultation. • Appointment templates and codes for Near Me. • Process for answering Near Me calls and monitoring Near Me waiting area. • Follow up arrangements. • Contingency plans. *See Appendix 1 for detailed specifications*	**Training** • Users of Near Me should complete training on both the video consulting platform and on video consulting skills. • Resources are available via the NES Turas platform, click here • Training sessions are also available from the national VC team, for available dates click here • Clinicians should also undertake the NES shared decision making training. • Ensure all users understand the need to consult from a confidential space with good lighting. **Engagement** • Organise test sessions within the practice team (all take turns to enter as a patient and answer calls) to build confidence and understand the patient experience. • Ensure any concerns have been discussed, addressed and that all staff are comfortable with using Near Me.

Primary Care: management of acute conditions using Near Me

Near **Me**
Network

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┌─────────────────┐     ┌──────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐
│ Patient contacts│     │Telephone │     │ Within telephone │     │ Clinician texts  │
│ GP practice to  │────▶│ triage   │────▶│ call, clinician  │────▶│ or emails the    │
│ request acute   │     │          │     │ identifies a need│     │ patient the Near │
│ appointment.    │     └──────────┘     │ for a video call │     │ Me URL from      │
│ Reception staff │                      │ and checks patient│    │ within the Near  │
│ book patient    │                      │ can/wants to use │     │ Me waiting area  │
│ into telephone  │                      │ video            │     │ (instant)        │
│ triage or if    │                      └──────────────────┘     └──────────────────┘
│ patient meets   │
│ defined criteria│     ┌──────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐
│ books video     │────▶│Scheduled │────▶│ Admin staff book │     │ Patient clicks   │──▶ Clinician consults
│ appointment     │     │ video    │     │ Near Me          │     │ on URL link and  │    by Near Me and
└─────────────────┘     │appointment│    │ appointment, send│     │ enters Near Me   │    arranges any
                        └──────────┘     │ patient Near Me  │     │ waiting area     │    follow up
                                         │ URL, and check   │     └──────────────────┘
                                         │ patient can use  │
                                         │ Near Me          │     ┌──────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐
                                         └──────────────────┘     │ Patient cannot or│     │ Face to face     │
                                                                  │ does not want to │────▶│ appointment      │
                                                                  │ use Near Me      │     │ required: book   │
                                                                  └──────────────────┘     │ with clinician   │
                                                                                           └──────────────────┘
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Practice to define:
- Criteria and / or clinical conditions to be triaged to telephone, video or face to face appointment

Near Me appointments have been used for acute / unscheduled appointments for:
Covid-19 symptoms, children, eye conditions, medication issues, mental health conditions (especially anxiety, low mood), skin conditions including skin infections, sore throat. It has also been used in a wide variety of scenarios following initial clinician triage, for patients where there are particular benefits of staying at home (eg, frail), and for patients with home-monitoring equipment such as BP monitors, thermometers.

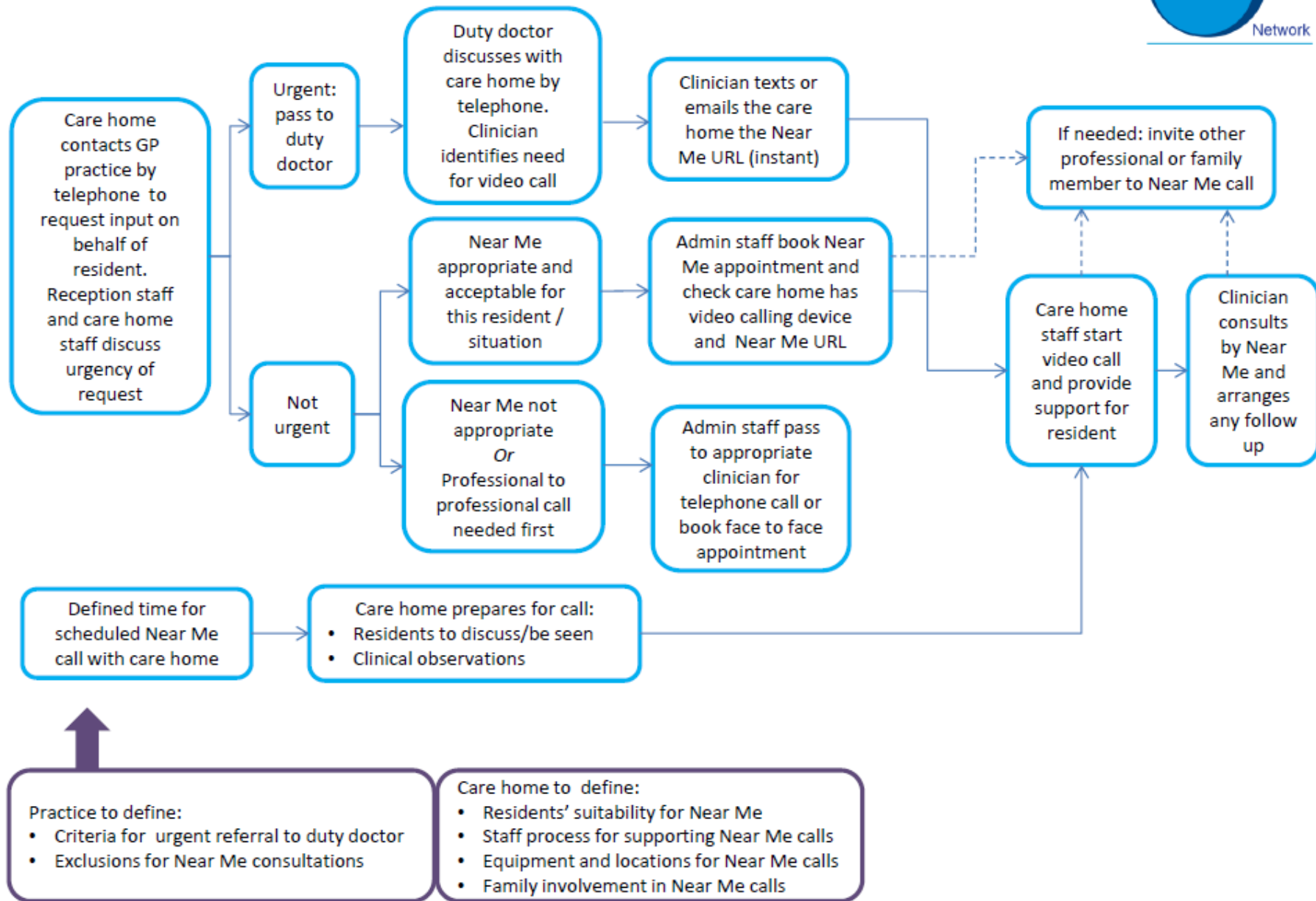# Primary Care: management of long-term conditions using Near Me

Near Me Network

Bloods required: book bloods-only appointment with HCA

Admin staff file normal range bloods and refer out of range to clinician

Physical exam +/- bloods required: book appointment with HCA or refer directly to nurse

Admin staff run recall report to identify patients, then review patients against defined list of required blood tests and other physical exam (eg, BP, foot exam)

Invite all patients for self management: online or sent questionnaire

Results reviewed by clinician

No further action

Medication review only: refer to pharmacist

Long-term condition review: refer to nurse

Complex long-term condition review: refer to GP

Admin staff book Near Me appointment, provide patient information including Near Me URL, and check patient can use Near Me

Clinician consults by Near Me and arranges any follow up

No response: picked up via re-run of search

Patient cannot or does not want to use Near Me

Face to face appointment required: book with clinician

Practice to define:
- Long term conditions covered
- Blood tests required
- Physical examinations required
- Direct review by nurse

Near Me appointments have been used to support long-term management of:
acne, arthritis, asthma, cardio/cerebrovascular disease, CKD, chronic pain, contraception, COPD, diabetes, epilepsy, gout, HRT, hypertension, hypothyroidism, inflammatory bowel disease, medication review, mental health conditions, osteoporosis, pre/post-op review *(list not exhaustive)*

Primary Care: supporting care homes using Near Me

Near Me Network

Care home contacts GP practice by telephone to request input on behalf of resident. Reception staff and care home staff discuss urgency of request

→ **Urgent: pass to duty doctor** → Duty doctor discusses with care home by telephone. Clinician identifies need for video call → Clinician texts or emails the care home the Near Me URL (instant)

→ **Not urgent** →

- Near Me appropriate and acceptable for this resident / situation → Admin staff book Near Me appointment and check care home has video calling device and Near Me URL

- Near Me not appropriate *Or* Professional to professional call needed first → Admin staff pass to appropriate clinician for telephone call or book face to face appointment

If needed: invite other professional or family member to Near Me call

Care home staff start video call and provide support for resident → Clinician consults by Near Me and arranges any follow up

Defined time for scheduled Near Me call with care home → Care home prepares for call:
- Residents to discuss/be seen
- Clinical observations

Practice to define:
- Criteria for urgent referral to duty doctor
- Exclusions for Near Me consultations

Care home to define:
- Residents' suitability for Near Me
- Staff process for supporting Near Me calls
- Equipment and locations for Near Me calls
- Family involvement in Near Me calls

Core processes	
1	**Update appointment templates** Update clinic/appointment templates to show the times that clinicians are available for Near Me consulting. Ensure all clinicians have access to video consulting equipment (all consulting rooms should be equipped).
2	**Decide on the appointment code to identify video consultations** • EMIS. Create a code in location manager called "Near Me video consultation". • Vision. A new "video" consultation type has been added to Vision in the summer 2020 DLM upgrade.
1	**Decide how patients are provided the Near Me link** It is strongly recommended that patients are given the URL to the Near Me system electronically. This can be by text message, email or via the practice website. *Electronic message* A text message or email containing the link to the practice's Near Me waiting area can be sent directly from within the Near Me platform using the "Share Entry Point URL" button. *Practice website* The practice website can be used to provide information about the Near Me service and as a location for the "Start video call" button. Practice website information: • Make your video consultation information clear on the website front page. • Include a page or panel titled "Video consultations by Near Me" with: • Text: "You can attend video consultations from your home or wherever is convenient by clicking on the start call button below using a device that makes video calls (like a smartphone)." • Practice specific information. For example, the statement: "You need to make an appointment as normal to use the video consultation service." Or the times a patient can use the service. • "Start call" button for video calls: to add this to your website, log into your Near Me waiting area as an administrator, go to the Cog button at the top, from the drop down menu select "Waiting Area Entry Points", click on the "send me instructions" icon for adding a waiting area entry point to your website. You will receive an email containing the script for the button. • URL link to national Near Me patient information website www.nearme.scot • Patient information website (available in Near Me waiting room). *Paper and verbal: not recommended* Sending letters, paper leaflets or verbally giving the Near Me start call button URL for patients to manually enter into their device is often associated with typing errors or the auto-complete function on devices taking the patient to the wrong waiting area.

4	**Define how appointments will be made** • Define how patients will be offered or request an appointment by Near Me: this should fit with the existing appointment booking process. • Agree the information patients should be given on booking the appointment: information about what Near Me is and how to use it (eg, a patient information leaflet or the national website www.nearme.scot) and a link to the specific Near Me waiting room (see above). • Ensure any additional information normally given to the patient before a consultation is provided, for example, patient surveys or the [Choosing Wisely](#) four questions to get the most out of consultations. • Decide who will check the patient can use Near Me. Consider offering first-time users the option of making a test call to the practice that admin staff answer, or open days when any patients can try it out.
5	**Process for answering Near Me calls and monitoring waiting area** • Define how Near Me waiting areas will be monitored: directly by the clinician, or by the admin staff who will then mark the patient as having arrived in the practice's normal clinical system to alert the clinician as usual. • Define how patients will be informed if a clinic is running late: there is a "notify" function to enable admin staff to send the patient a message on the Near Me screen. • Define how Near Me calls will be answered: directly by the clinician, or by the admin staff who will then return the patient to the waiting area to wait for the clinician. Admin staff answering calls in this way can identify any technical issues the patient may be having (eg, microphone not switched on) so avoid any delays for clinicians. If admin staff are monitoring the waiting area and/or answering calls, ensure: • Staff are logged into Near Me all day at https://nhs.attendanywhere.com/ selecting the "Keep me logged in" function. • If answering Near Me calls, have video consulting equipment in place.
6	**Use in consultations** For all Near Me consultations, clinicians will: • Have video consulting equipment in place • Be logged into Near Me at https://nhs.attendanywhere.com/ • Check equipment works before starting the clinic (using "test my equipment" button in the waiting area) • Open the practice's clinical system • Identify patient with Near Me consultation – either from clinical system or direct from waiting area (depending on process agreed above) • Connect the call and consult as normal • Record the consultation in the practice's clinical system as normal • Arrange any follow up as normal.

7	**Arrange follow up process** Put in place a process for patients to collect any required forms such as prescriptions or fit notes. For example: - Print the form at the practice and the patient collects from a designated hatch to reduce in-person contact. - If a clinician is working remotely from the practice, another clinician within the practice will be required to sign the form. - Prescriptions could be sent directly to the patient's chosen pharmacy.
8	**Contingency plan** Put in place a contingency plan for Near Me calls not working – either due to patients being unable to work it or an internet failure: - Near Me call failures will happen if a patient is not familiar with video calling technology and do not have a reliable internet connection. Therefore, have a clear plan in place for failures. - This would normally be the patient telephoning the GP practice reception to swap to a telephone or face to face consultation. Ensure the patient knows the telephone number to call. Where a video consultation is clinically necessary (ie, to avoid transmission of the virus) and the patient has technical issues, contact the National VC Team and log a call on the patient's behalf. Email vc.support@nhs.net or call on 01224 816666. The VC team will contact the patient directly and provide best efforts technical support during working hours 8am-6pm Monday to Friday.
9	**Near Me platform administration** The GP practice should identify an administrative lead for Near Me. This person should be given "service administrator" rights within the Near Me waiting area. Their role is to: - Add users ("service providers") to the Near Me waiting area, eg, new members of the practice team, locums working for the practice. - Remove users. It is important to remove anyone who should no longer have access (eg, due to leaving the practice) to ensure confidentiality. Given the possibility of needing to add someone at short notice (eg, change of locum, absence cover), it is sensible to have at least one further person in the practice who has administrative rights. In addition, administrators can manage other functions of the waiting area including: - Change the hours the video system can be accessed - Change waiting room message / information callers see - Change patient entry fields. Administrator training is available via the national VC team website https://www.vc.scot.nhs.uk/attendanywhere/

APPENDIX 2: FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about setting up Near Me is available if required. The aim of this document is to enable fast set up: previous documentation was designed around a slower timescale so is more detailed.

1. Near Me implementation guidance in multiple care settings (via TEC): https://tec.scot/digital-health-and-care-in-scotland/video-enabled-health-and-care/covid-19-implementing-near-me/

2. Training on Near Me video consulting (via NHS Education for Scotland): https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/28943/coronavirus-covid-19/remote-consulting

3. Patient information: https://nearme.scot

4. Resource Centre with information about the underpinning platform (Attend Anywhere): https://nhs.attendanywhere.com/resourcecentre/Content/Home.htm

5. Further resources on video consulting, including links to published evidence: https://tec.scot/covid-19-video-enabled-services/ and https://tec.scot/digital-health-and-care-in-scotland/video-enabled-health-and-care/

6. Clinician Near Me user guide: https://tec.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/How-to-use-Near-Me-clinician-guide.pdf

7. Summary poster for clinician walls: https://tec.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Near-Me-Attend-Anywhere-call-screen-summary.pdf

8. Administrative Lead Near Me user guide: https://tec.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/How-to-use-Near-Me-waiting-area-administrator-role-GP-practices.pdf

Contact details for Near Me:

For process and set-up queries:
In the first instance, please contact the Near Me Lead or GP eHealth facilitator in your local NHS Board/HSCP

For all other queries, please contact:
nss.nearme@nhs.scot