

IMPLEMENTING NEAR ME VIDEO CONSULTING IN URGENT CARE SERVICES

THIS DOCUMENT IS INTENDED FOR FLOW NAVIGATION
CENTRES, EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND MINOR
INJURY UNITS IN NHS SCOTLAND

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This document describes the specific arrangements for using Near Me in urgent care services, including the Flow Navigation Centre (FNC), Emergency Department (ED) and Minor Injury Units (MIU). More detailed guidance and resources for Near Me are available at <https://tec.scot/nearme>.

Near Me uses the video platform developed by Attend Anywhere. Near Me video consulting can be used to enable patients to consult remotely with clinicians.

Near Me is procured for use across Scotland by the Scottish Government's Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Programme and is available free of charge to NHS Scotland and public service organisations.

BACKGROUND

The provision of urgent and emergency care for patients in the future is changing. Attendances at Emergency Departments (ED) have increased over the past three years. Research suggests that approximately 20% of patients can be managed in an alternative way by accessing the most appropriate care available. The introduction of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 resulted in health services making radical changes to manage the crisis.

During the initial phase of the pandemic, ED attendances dropped markedly and for a short period were less than 50% of historical values. Much of the reduction was in activity in Minor Injury Units (MIU) and an increased use of telephone and digital advice via the NHS Inform website and NHS 24 (111).

Ongoing wide scale changes are required to determine where and how patients will be assessed and treated for their care to ensure services are effective and sustainable for the future, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of patients and staff to support the public to access the right care, at the right place, at the right time, first time.

The Redesign of Urgent Care Project was initiated to support the delivery of the identified priorities. A key focus of this project is to support the use of virtual technologies, particularly Near Me, in urgent care settings.

PLACE OF NEAR ME

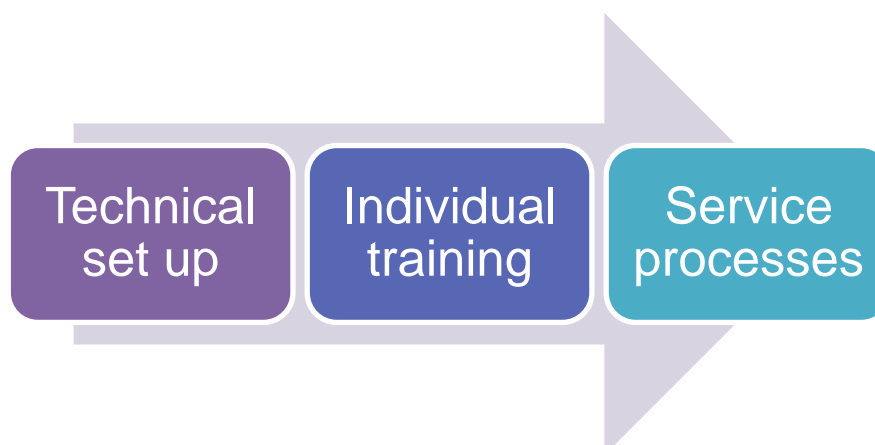
Near Me is a consulting tool, and clinicians should select the appropriate method of consultation including both clinical factors, patient circumstances and patient choice.

- **Phone:** often used first line for triaging, where a visual is not required.
- **Near Me:** provides additional clinical information over phone (eg, pallor, respiratory rate, patient's environment), improves engagement/reassurance, and addresses patient preference to see their clinician.
- **Face to face:** for when phone or video consultations are insufficient or further investigations or tests are required.

KEY REASONS FOR USING NEAR ME

- **Enable physical distancing:** Near Me enables services to continue to be provided without potential exposure to COVID-19 or footfall into premises. It also enables clinicians to work remotely, reduces use of and time to put on PPE, supports multi-disciplinary consultations (i.e. via three-way calling), and enables cross-cover.
- **Deliver person centred and convenient delivery of service:** 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, support worker or family member to join an appointment remotely. It also provides clinicians with insight into the patient's home environment, which can assist with clinical assessment.
- **Address environmental imperatives:** by reducing travel, Near Me improves the move towards net zero and reducing the carbon footprint of services.

SECTION 2: SETTING UP A NEAR ME SERVICE



Technical Set Up

Equipment

If your service is not set up to use Near Me, contact your local Near Me team to get access.

Video consulting equipment should be available for all staffing using Near Me:

- Internet connection (minimum requirement: download 1.1Mbps, upload 0.7 Mbps, ping under 150ms). Check connection at: <https://nhs.attendanywhere.com/webtctest>
- Window or MacOS computer with – webcam, headset or speakers/ microphone (essential), and second screen (optimal). Laptops, tablets or smartphones can also be used.
- Google Chrome, Safari or Microsoft Edge (Chromium only) browser.
- For technical specifications, click [here](#)
- If working remotely, arrange appropriate access to your service's documentation and patient administration systems.

Near Me platform

- Create a Waiting Area for your service, if you do not already have one. Contact your local Near Me team for support.
- Identify your local waiting area administrator who can create accounts for clinicians and staff to access the platform.

Individual Training

Training and Testing

- Clinicians should be confident in their use of the Near Me platform.
- A short video showing how the service is used is available [here](#)
- Live Training sessions are also available from the National VC team, for available dates click [here](#).
- Additional training material is available on the NES Turas platform, click [here](#).
- Providers are also encouraged to also undertake the [NES shared decision making training](#).
- Ensure all providers understand the need to consult from a confidential space with good lighting.
- To build confidence in using Near Me, all clinicians should practice on one another, taking turns to:
 - enter as a caller;
 - set up an appointment;
 - pick up callers from the Waiting Area;
 - and invite a third party into a call.

Service Process

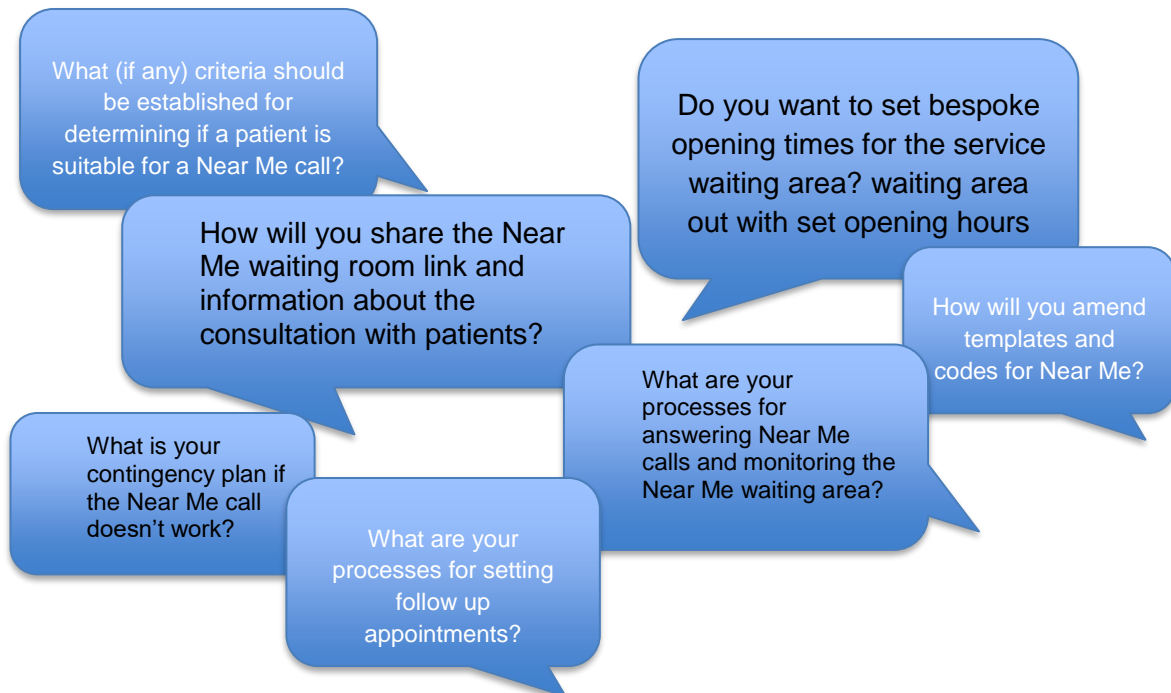
Clinical pathways

- Decide on clinical use of Near Me across urgent care settings.
- Develop service specific pathways for use of Near Me, including administrative and clinical processes. Example pathways are described in Section 3.
- Review the pathway at appropriate intervals.

Core processes

Decide the following:

- What (if any) criteria should be established for determining if a patient is suitable for a Near Me call?
- Do you want to set bespoke opening times for the service waiting area (default setting is 9am-5pm Monday - Friday)? No one will be able to enter the waiting area outwith set opening hours.
- What is the process for providing patients with the Near Me waiting room link and information about the consultation (if required)?
- How will you amend appointment templates and develop codes for Near Me?
- What are your processes for answering Near Me calls and monitoring the Near Me waiting area?
- What are your processes for setting follow up appointments?
- What is your contingency plan if the Near Me call doesn't work?



Further explanation the core processes is contained in section 4.

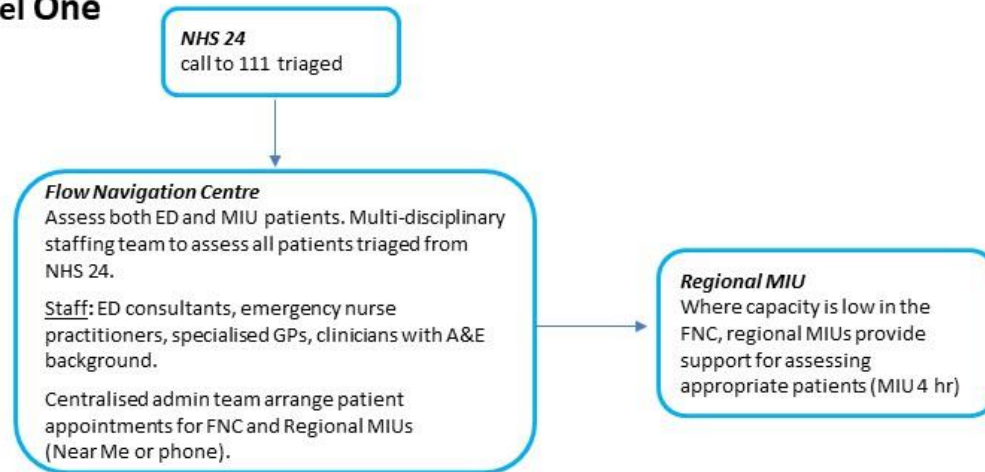
SECTION 3: BEST PRACTICE MODELS AND PROCESSES FOR USING NEAR ME IN URGENT CARE

This section shows how Near Me can be implemented in the flow navigation centre, emergency department and minor injuries unit to facilitate video consultations with patients from their home. These pathways are included here as a guide for the development of a pathway that is appropriate to your local service procedures and systems.

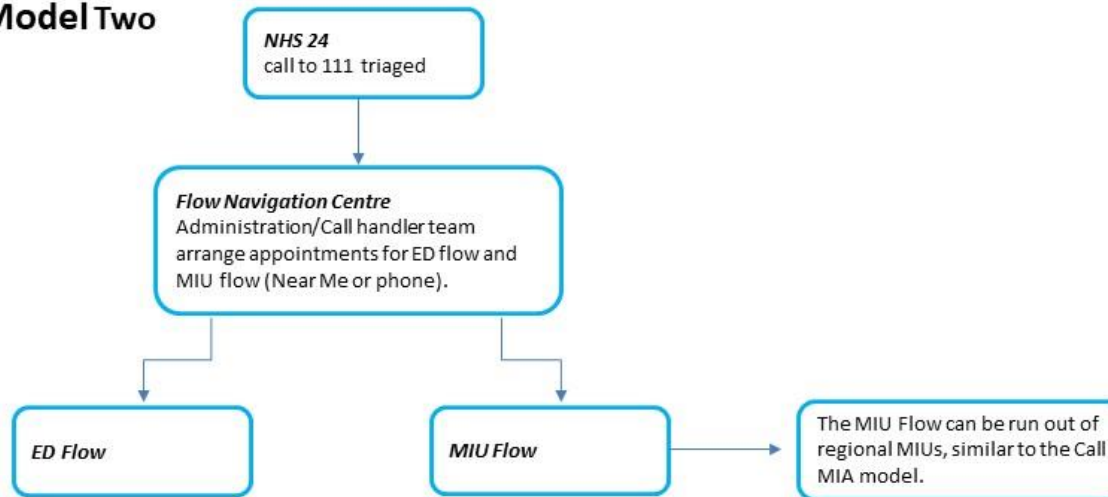
The next iteration of this guidance will include use of Near Me in a professional to professional setting for provision of clinical support and guidance. This includes Scottish Ambulance Service.

URGENT CARE BEST PRACTICE MODELS – WHOLE SYSTEM

Model One

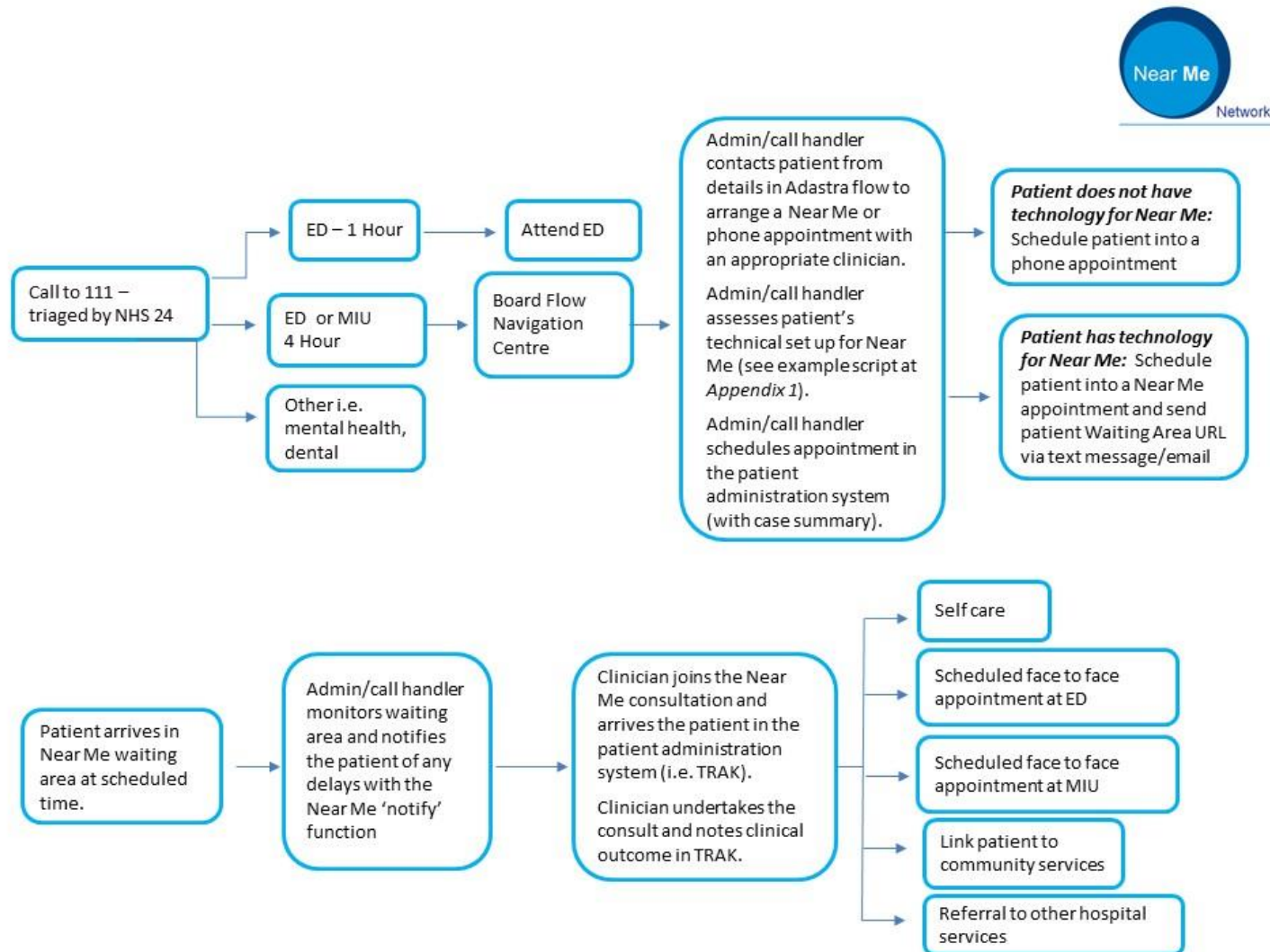


Model Two



ADMINISTRATIVE AND CLINICAL PATHWAY FOR USING NEAR ME

The key administrative and clinical processes for implementing Near Me into urgent care are the same for both models and outlined below.



SECTION 4: CORE PROCESSES FOR USING NEAR ME

Core Processes

Management of Near Me appointments

Services should decide how a Near Me call will be coded to identify a video consultation in patient administration systems (i.e. Adatastra, TracKare, Topaz). Common codes include 'video consultation' or 'Near Me consultation'.

Create codes for clinical outcomes in your patient administration system i.e self-care, refer to community services or attend.

Services may also need to update clinic/appointment templates to show the times that clinicians are available for Near Me consulting. This is only relevant if clinicians want to set specific times of the day to do Near Me appointments.

Identify patients for Near Me

Services should consider the circumstances for use of Near Me.

Near Me has shown a huge benefit in triaging patients, either through the FNC, ED (4 hours) or MIU. In the FNC, Near Me is offered to all patients if they have the technical set up, if not they will be provided a phone consultation. After a Near Me call, many patients are discharged or linked into appropriate services. Near Me may not be suitable for all circumstances, such as when a face to face appointment is required (i.e. for x-ray).

When identifying patients for use of Near Me, it is important to consider the patients' technical set up and IT confidence. This includes ensuring they have a device (smart phone, laptop, tablet/iPad, computer with a web cam), internet connectivity and confidence/IT knowledge to join a Near Me consultation.

Call handlers can identify patient's technical set up and support patients by explaining how Near Me works when setting up the appointment (see example script at [Appendix 1](#)).

Near Me has been successfully used in a wide range of presentations including: sprains, strains, stings/bites, suspected broken bones, wounds, burns, musculo-skeletal conditions (e.g. joints, ligaments, muscles, nerves and tendon).

Decide how patients are provided with 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 local Board's website. A text message or email containing the link to the services' Near Me waiting area can be sent directly from within the Near Me platform using the "Share Entry Point URL" button.

While it is possible to share the link in an appointment letter, in a leaflet or via the phone, experience has shown that callers often mistype the link or the browser tries to auto complete the link with the wrong waiting area.

Admin or call handler staff may undertake this role when setting up an appointment with the patient. A clinician can swap from a phone consultation to a Near Me consultation easily, through emailing or texting the URL to the patient from the Near Me platform.

Define how appointments are made

Define how patients will be offered an appointment by Near Me: this should fit with the existing appointment booking process.

Agree the information patients will be given on booking an appointment. Information leaflets for using Near Me are available directly from the service's waiting areas. Easy read and translated leaflets are available via the Attend Anywhere Resource Centre *
<https://nhs.attendanywhere.com/rc/Content/Home.htm>.

Decide who will check the patient can use Near Me and what support can be offered to build digital skills and confidence in using Near Me for patients. Where services have admin/call handlers, it is recommended that they explain to patients what Near Me is and how to use Near Me when setting up the appointment (an example call handler script is at [Appendix 1](#)).

Once the admin/call handler has made an appointment with the patient, this is scheduled in the patient administration system (i.e. TrackKare) and the case summary is copied from Adastra into TrackKare

*To note: Some resources on the Attend Anywhere Resource Centre require a login.

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 service's normal clinical system to alert the clinician.

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.

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.

If admin staff or clinicians 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.

Use in consultations

For all Near Me consultations, clinicians and/or admin staff will:

Prior to Consultation

- Be logged into Near Me at <https://scot.attendanywhere.com/>
- Check equipment works before starting the call (using “test my equipment” button in the Waiting Area).
- Open the service’s clinical system (i.e. TRAK). It is recommended that clinicians have two monitors to enable use of the clinical system and Near Me during the consultation.

During Consultation

- Open the service’s waiting area.
- Identify caller with the Near Me consultation – either from service’s clinical system, or direct from the waiting area (depending on local process).
- Connect the call and consult as normal.

After Consultation

- Record the consultation in the service’s clinical system as normal.
- Arrange any follow up with patient (if required). This may include organising an appointment with ED or MIU or other community service.

Contingency plans

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 may 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 clinician phoning the patient and swapping to a phone or face to face consultation. Ensure the clinician knows the patient’s phone number.

Where a video consultation is clinically necessary and the patient has technical issues, contact the National VC Team and log a call on the patient’s behalf. Email vc.support@nhs.scot or call on 01224 816666. The VC team will contact the patient directly and provide technical support during working hours 8am-6pm Monday to Friday.

Near Me platform administration

Each service should identify an administrative lead for Near Me. This person should be given “service administrator” rights within the waiting area. Their role is to: Add users (“service providers”) to the Near Me waiting area, eg, new members of the team/locums. Removing users: It is important to remove anyone who should no longer have access (eg, due to leaving the service) 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 service 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 information entry fields.

Administrator training is available via the national VC team website

<https://www.vc.scot.nhs.uk/near-me/training/>

APPENDIX 1: SUGGESTIONS FOR CALL HANDLER/ADMIN STAFF SCRIPT

It is recommended that local boards develop scripts for their administrative teams and call handlers to use when arranging appointments with patients in the Flow Navigation Centre. Below are suggestions for what to include in local call handler scripts.

We recommend you use consistent wording to introduce the call

Include health board name and where you are calling from

- To help with your treatment, we would like to arrange either a phone or a video appointment.

It is recommended that scripts include asking about the patient's ability to use video (confidence, connectivity, access to technology and set up/privacy).

Assess patient's technology set up

Do you have a device like a smartphone or tablet, and access to the internet, you can use for video calling?

Do you have a private space to make the call?

(If yes, offer a Near Me consultation. If no, offer a phone consultation).

If Near Me

Provide information to patients on how to join a Near Me call.

- **What is Near Me?**
 - Near Me is a video call using your phone, tablet or computer, similar to face time or zoom. It is confidential and easy to use.
- **How do I get in to call?**
 - To set you up for your video appointment, I will send you a (text/email) with a web link to the Near Me video consultation. At the time of the consultation you click on the link. If you are using an Android device, you will need to open the link in the Chrome browser.
 - You will be asked to enter your name, address, date of birth and phone number.
 - Once you have done this, you will be held in your own private video waiting room until your clinician joins the call.
 - You can click the link to test that it works on your device prior to the appointment. Although the clinician will only join you at the time of your appointment.
- **What to do if you have any problems getting onto Near Me?**
 - If you have any difficulties, please call back on (insert) and we can provide support.

APPENDIX 2: FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about setting up Near Me is available if required from the following sources:

1. Near Me implementation guidance in multiple care settings (via TEC):
<https://tec.scot/programme-areas/near-me/guidance-notes>
2. Training on Near Me video consulting (via NHS Education for Scotland):
<https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/28943/coronavirus-covid-19/remote-consulting>
3. Training Videos and drop in training sessions on Near Me via National Video Conferencing Team <https://www.vc.scot.nhs.uk/near-me/training/>
4. Patient information: <https://nearme.scot>
5. Resource Centre with information about the underpinning platform (Attend Anywhere):
<https://nhs.attendanywhere.com/resourcecentre/Content/Home.htm>
6. Clinician Near Me user guide: <https://tec.scot/programme-areas/near-me/getting-started/training>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CONTACT DETAILS

Specialty guidance produced by the Near Me Network

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Contact details for Near Me

For process and set-up queries:

In the first instance, please contact the Near Me Lead in your local NHS Board/HSCP

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