

How to Increase Engage Consult use with your patients

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, NHS England is advising all GP practices in England to rapidly implement a 'Total Triage' model of care using online consultation tools.

Engage Consult will support practices to manage patients remotely using online consultation, video or telephone. Data shows that two-thirds of demand can be managed remotely and during a period of pandemic this proportion increases to over 90%.

[Engage Consult Total Triage](#) model, captures a patient's history and symptoms asynchronously, allows patients to send in pictures and documents and signposts them to self-help advice. Giving both patients and practice staff greater control of their time and increases access for people with specific information and communication or disability needs.

For patients who cannot access digital consultation, administration staff within the practice can take patients through the same process over the telephone or in person. The online form is then processed in the same way by the practice but is clearly identified as being a 'Telephone Triage' or 'Walk-in Triage' request.

All admin and clinical requests can be directed through Engage Consult ensuring that the practice receives consistent information, a comprehensive medical history, and any red flag alerts are identified for prompt escalation. Messages can be prioritised based upon urgency and directed swiftly to the most appropriate person or 'group' to be responded to.

Using Engage Consult Total Triage gives practices control over their appointment systems improving efficiency, patient access and patient satisfaction.

Promotion & Marketing

Informing patients of the change to your online total triage platform is the most important thing that you can do to ensure Engage Consult is successful. We recommend that you start your promotion campaign 3 weeks prior to implementation. However it is never too late to promote your new system!

The most important thing to get right is the placement of the 'banner & link' to the Engage Consult application on your practice website. We recommend that you place this on your home page, as near to the top as possible. That the 'banner' has some text alongside explaining the process.

If you are trying to embed a total triage model, where your website is the first place patients are directed to complete an online form for medical and admin queries, then consider removing your practice contact telephone number from the home page and place it in a 'contact us' section.



Remember promotion needs to be done regularly and can also be targeted for different audiences, events and seasonal campaigns. Make use of social media, Facebook, twitter and blogs to promote the new way of working.

Posters and leaflet in practice waiting areas are always useful, however a powerful marketing tool is your staff and senior doctors.

Ask a GP in the practice to record your telephone 'welcome' message and 'on hold' message advising patients to go to your website where they will need to submit an Engage Consult online form to request for help. Emphasise that this is quick and simple to use.

Encourage your receptionists to promote Engage Consult with every patient that telephones or walks into the practice.

Think about your target audience, who will need support to use the system? [Engage Consult Practice Guides](#) are available for uploading to Practice Websites or for giving to patients attending appointments.

Make use of social media and SMS text facilities within your practice to not only send out promotional information to all patients directing them to the new service but to give advice about your new way of working, which for Total Triage will be to complete an online form for all contact with the practice.

Make the most of your Patient Participation Group to help design and test out your marketing.

Promote the benefits of online consultation for patients based upon patient pain points

1. **Improved Access** – timely advice, reduced waiting times, convenience, available for patients to send in messages 24/7/365, avoids unnecessary visits to the practice for routine care and advice.
2. **Patient Satisfaction** – higher level of satisfaction, feel more at ease, continuity of care, avoiding the waiting room, saves patients time and cost in travel to the practice. Gives patients time to explain their problem without feeling rushed.
3. **Quality of Care** – Engage Consult picks up conditions that may require an alternative emergency treatment pathway, empowers patients to self-care with links to self-help advice, comprehensive instant medical history triage
4. **Efficient** – right patient, right time, right place, right professional. Optimises practice skill mix, clinicians have access to the triage and medical history before consultation. Improved data capture and 2-way messaging saves clinician time

If you are responsible for patients living in residential care share the Engage Consult Care Home guide with the home and encourage them to submit all requests online.

The more patients you encourage to use Engage Consult the more benefits you will reap. A simple Marketing Plan can help you to manage your promotion and communication strategy.

[Engage Consults Communication & Engagement toolkit](#) can help you with ideas on how you can promote your online platform to patients and carers.

We have produced a Top Ten Tips for promoting Engage Consult guide with practical advice based upon our experience and that of our fantastic practices. This guide will continually evolve as we receive more feedback from you, our customers on what has successfully worked for you. The guide can be found [here](#).