

Britain's GPs reducing the risks of Covid-19 with the latest phone and video tech

GPs are using the latest digital phone and video technology from their own homes, helping them address remotely the huge care demands created by the coronavirus pandemic

GPs and returning healthcare workers can now work remotely from home to minimise the spread of coronavirus through new 'breakthrough' digital telephone and video technology that will help protect the frontline workforce from infection.

Following close collaboration with GPs, cloud communications provider X-on has developed the GP@Home service, which allows doctors to provide patients with the same level of phone and video care from their own home as they would from their surgery. The award-winning technology provider has also developed Video Connect, which enables GPs to switch from phone to video consultation in a single click.

The product suite integrates with major clinical systems such as EMIS and TPP's SystmOne, which are used by doctors' surgeries to hold patient information. Being able to access this directly whilst on a phone call helps save time for GPs and surgery staff, which is vital now as the country is gripped by the Covid-19 pandemic.

GP IT expert Dr Neil Paul, who practises in Cheshire, has been trialling GP@Home, and has been 'really impressed' with how it can help doctors work more safely in light of the pandemic, and allow home workers to answer the phone as if they were sat in the surgery. "It solves the 'I don't want to use my own phone to make hundreds of calls to patients' problem, which is affecting thousands of practices across the country," he said.

GPs across London are some of the first in line for the technology, which has been developed by X-on by listening to the needs of general practice.

Six hundred practices already use X-on's Surgery Connect to rapidly provide the public with access to information about the virus, and many are using the pioneering companion technology Video Connect so they can switch from phone to video call with a simple click on a link. Unlike many other systems, the patient does not need to download an app, and the doctor does not have to schedule when a video consultation will take place.

Dr Barry Sullman, Newham GP and Clinical Commissioning Group clinical lead, said: "This is a game changing piece of software that has allowed my practice to perform normally through the Covid-19 crisis. It's business as usual for me - and Video Connect plays a key role in delivering that.

"Video call quality is extremely high and supports remote diagnosis. By being able to diagnose a diverse range of conditions such as skin rashes reliably, and by being able to assess the clinical condition of a patient confidently through high quality video, face to face appointments at the surgery are saved, which in turn increases the access capacity of the surgery. The technology also records the phone or video call, and links it to the clinical record, so that doctors can refer back to the information if required."

X-on is helping thousands of staff in general practice deliver on the 'digital-first' initiative put forward by NHS England and NHSX in their rapid response to the situation. This encourages GPs to use the phone and digital means for triage and consultation, so as to help manage increased demand and to reduce the risks of infection.

X-on managing director Paul Bensley said: “The digital transformation of your local family doctor is taking place at an incredible pace and scale. It is vital that we leave no-one behind, and so it is essential that we make sure that the phone can meet the current needs of patients and professionals, but also those for the long term as they make the move to ‘digital-first’ primary care. Digital telephony is enabling hundreds of practices to put in an equitable, future proof digital front door to primary care.”

X-on is also offering free teleconferencing services to regional health providers as they collaborate around their response to the pandemic, with multiple primary care networks and commissioning groups having taken up the offer.

Editor’s notes

About X-on

X-on is a pioneer of cloud telephony, and was named as the UK, Technology/ Digital Solution Provider of the Year in the 2019 General Practice Awards for its Surgery Connect product. With over 18 years’ experience, we have worked with thousands of customers across many industries to deliver simple communications choices to benefit their business. We work with healthcare professionals to provide cost-effective communications systems such as Surgery Connect, which is tailored to their needs, and allows them to spend time and money on what matters most - patients.

- Find out more about our services for healthcare: <http://www.x-on.co.uk/healthcare>
- Find out more about Surgery Connect at: <http://www.surgeryconnect.co.uk>