



Royal College of  
General Practitioners

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# Summary findings and topline from remote working survey

Fieldwork from 10th to 21st September 2020

## Method

- Self-selecting sample of RCGP members from direct email
- Online survey
- 622 responses from GPs across the UK

## Topline tables

# Consultation types and quality:

### 1. Which of the following types of consultation do you currently use?

	%
Face to face consultations	92%
Telephone consultations	98%
Video consultations	75%
Online consultations such as email or chat	46%

### 2. How often would you say you are able to do each of the following using different consultation types?

#### a) Face to face

	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't know	Not applicable
Be effective in delivering the best health outcome for my patients	29%	61%	8%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Be efficient and deliver appointments without unnecessary subsequent follow-up	17%	64%	17%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Be sure that my patients are safe	43%	52%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Ensure that no patient is excluded from care	33%	51%	10%	2%	1%	3%	1%
Build and maintain trusting relationships with my patients	41%	54%	4%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Provide accessible appointments for patients	14%	52%	27%	5%	0%	1%	1%

**b) Telephone**

	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't know	Not applicable
Be effective in delivering the best health outcome for my patients	3%	71%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Be efficient and deliver appointments without unnecessary subsequent follow-up	8%	54%	36%	2%	0%	1%	0%
Be sure that my patients are safe	12%	67%	18%	2%	0%	1%	0%
Ensure that no patient is excluded from care	18%	59%	17%	2%	1%	2%	0%
Build and maintain trusting relationships with my patients	8%	60%	28%	2%	1%	1%	0%
Provide accessible appointments for patients	26%	64%	9%	1%	0%	1%	0%

**c) Video**

	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't know	Not applicable
Be effective in delivering the best health outcome for my patients	2%	43%	35%	6%	1%	1%	11%
Be efficient and deliver appointments without unnecessary subsequent follow-up	4%	43%	36%	3%	0%	3%	11%
Be sure that my patients are safe	10%	57%	16%	2%	0%	3%	11%
Ensure that no patient is excluded from care	8%	27%	39%	9%	3%	3%	11%
Build and maintain trusting relationships with my patients	7%	51%	27%	2%	0%	3%	11%
Provide accessible appointments for patients	9%	40%	34%	4%	0%	2%	11%

**d) Online (email/chat)**

	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't know	Not applicable
Be effective in delivering the best health outcome for my patients	2%	16%	33%	13%	3%	4%	29%
Be efficient and deliver appointments without unnecessary subsequent follow-up	4%	12%	31%	16%	3%	4%	30%
Be sure that my patients are safe	7%	22%	22%	9%	3%	7%	31%
Ensure that no patient is excluded from care	7%	12%	29%	10%	4%	7%	31%
Build and maintain trusting relationships with my patients	3%	12%	20%	19%	6%	9%	30%
Provide accessible appointments for patients	16%	26%	16%	4%	1%	7%	31%

**Question 2 net “always/most of the time”**

	Face to face	Telephone	Video	Online
Effectiveness	90%	75%	46%	18%
Efficiency	81%	61%	46%	16%
Safety	96%	79%	67%	28%
Equity	84%	77%	35%	19%
Relationships	95%	69%	58%	16%
Access	66%	90%	49%	42%

### Question 2 “rarely/never”

	Face to face	Telephone	Video	Online
Effectiveness	1%	0%	7%	16%
Efficiency	1%	2%	4%	19%
Safety	0%	2%	2%	12%
Equity	2%	3%	11%	14%
Relationships	0%	3%	2%	25%
Access	5%	1%	4%	5%

## Face-to-face consultations

3. Thinking about the current mix of remote and face to face consultations you are using, to what extent do you agree or disagree that in order to best meet your patients' needs you need to be able to do a higher proportion of face to face consultations?

	%
Strongly agree	28%
Agree	30%
Neither agree nor disagree	13%
Disagree	21%
Strongly disagree	8%
Don't know	1%
<b>Net agree</b>	<b>58%</b>
<b>Net disagree</b>	<b>29%</b>

4. As general practice moves back toward 'normal' after peak-pandemic, Government is keen that the sector continues to make use of remote appointments unless it is clinically necessary to use face to face. Approximately what proportion of appointments would you estimate need to be face-to-face for.

	Average	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	91-100
Your General Practitioner appointments	37%	11%	20%	22%	12%	16%	6%	7%	5%	2%	1%
Your non-GP clinical team's appointments	59%	8%	5%	7%	5%	16%	9%	10%	26%	12%	2%

5. Which of the following best describes your view of what should be taken into account when assessing whether a face-to-face appointment is clinically necessary?

	%
Biomedical factors only	8%
Biomedical and psychosocial factors	92%

**6. How important, if at all, would you say face-to-face appointments are in enabling each of the following for you?**

	Very important	Quite important	Not very important	Not important at all	Don't know	Net important	Net not important
Building and maintaining trusting patient relationships	57%	32%	10%	2%	0%	88%	11%
Being accessible to all my patients	34%	39%	19%	7%	1%	74%	26%
Being able to work with other clinicians to improve the care I give	24%	38%	27%	7%	3%	63%	34%
Better monitoring and follow up with patients	25%	42%	26%	5%	1%	67%	32%

## Remote consultations

**7. How would you say your confidence using remote consultations has changed since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic?**

	Much more confident	Somewhat more confident	About the same	Somewhat less confident	Much less confident	Don't know	Net more confident	Net less confident
Telephone consultations	43%	31%	23%	1%	0%	1%	74%	2%
Video consultations	39%	35%	12%	2%	1%	12%	73%	3%
Online consultations (email/chat)	15%	25%	18%	1%	1%	39%	40%	3%
Triage	29%	31%	35%	1%	0%	4%	61%	1%



**8. Which of the following do you need to ensure general practice can get the most out of remote consultations?**

	<b>Net very or somewhat important</b>	<b>Net not very or not important at all</b>	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important at all	Don't know
More training to deliver remote consultations well	<b>81%</b>	<b>18%</b>	39%	42%	16%	3%	1%
More guidance on how to use remote consulting technology	<b>80%</b>	<b>19%</b>	40%	40%	17%	2%	0%
A regulatory framework to ensure patient safety in remote consultations	<b>73%</b>	<b>25%</b>	42%	31%	19%	5%	3%
A method to quickly identify patients that should not be given a remote consultation	<b>90%</b>	<b>9%</b>	57%	33%	8%	1%	1%
Better broadband and VPN infrastructure	<b>94%</b>	<b>5%</b>	77%	17%	4%	1%	1%
Better hardware such as laptops, headsets etc	<b>94%</b>	<b>5%</b>	77%	17%	4%	1%	0%
Better usability of remote appointment software	<b>90%</b>	<b>7%</b>	66%	24%	6%	1%	3%
Better quality video images in video consulting	<b>92%</b>	<b>6%</b>	71%	21%	5%	1%	3%
Better interoperability of software between secondary and primary care	<b>91%</b>	<b>6%</b>	71%	20%	5%	1%	3%

9. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements about remote working and your role as a GP?

	Net agree	Net disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Remote patient consultations make me anxious about delivering a good patient experience and health outcome	52%	30%	16%	36%	17%	21%	9%	1%
Doing a high proportion or all of my patient consultations remotely reduces my job satisfaction	63%	22%	37%	26%	15%	15%	8%	1%
Remote working is making the nature of the role of the GP more transactional	61%	15%	27%	34%	20%	11%	4%	3%
Using remote consultations for new patients enables me to build trusting relationships needed to care for effective care	19%	50%	3%	17%	28%	31%	19%	3%
Remote consultations are more effective in treating existing patients than new patients	60%	14%	12%	48%	24%	10%	4%	2%
Remote consulting gives me greater autonomy and control over my workload	52%	28%	18%	34%	19%	18%	10%	1%

**10. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements about remote care and patient satisfaction?**

	<b>Net agree</b>	<b>Net disagree</b>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My patients are satisfied with remote consultations	<b>48%</b>	<b>19%</b>	5%	42%	27%	15%	4%	7%
My patients would prefer to go back to face-to-face consultations	<b>57%</b>	<b>9%</b>	17%	40%	27%	8%	1%	7%
My patients are more satisfied with remote consultations when they are used as a follow-up to face-to-face appointments	<b>53%</b>	<b>11%</b>	12%	41%	26%	9%	2%	11%

# Triage

11. Thinking about your experience of total triage, to what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Net agree	Net disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Patients always get to where they need to	52%	26%	11%	42%	18%	22%	4%	4%
It is problematic for patients to have to wait for call backs	54%	24%	12%	42%	19%	20%	4%	3%
Having an extra layer of process to access appointments reduces accessibility	46%	35%	11%	34%	17%	28%	6%	3%
It ensures patients' needs are better met	58%	17%	14%	44%	23%	13%	3%	3%
It should take into account patient choice on appointment types	59%	19%	10%	49%	20%	14%	5%	2%
It saves time for clinicians in General Practice	35%	42%	12%	23%	20%	25%	17%	3%

**12. Please rate the different types of triage in terms of how effective you think they are in meeting patient needs.**

	1	2	3	4	5
GP telephone triage	76%	11%	3%	4%	6%
GP online (email/form/chat) triage	7%	53%	26%	12%	2%
Receptionist telephone triage	8%	27%	44%	16%	4%
Receptionist online (email/form/chat) triage	3%	7%	14%	59%	17%
Online automated	5%	3%	13%	10%	68%

**13. Please rate the different types of triage in terms of how effective you think they are in managing appointments and staff resource.**

	1	2	3	4	5
GP telephone triage	50%	20%	8%	10%	13%
GP online (email/form/chat) triage	10%	39%	26%	19%	6%
Receptionist telephone triage	23%	22%	37%	14%	4%
Receptionist online (email/form/chat) triage	4%	17%	18%	49%	12%
Online automated	13%	6%	12%	7%	62%

# About you

## Which region do you usually work in?

	%
East of England	9%
East Midlands	5%
London	9%
North East and Yorkshire	11%
North West	10%
South East	11%
South West	11%
West Midlands	10%
Northern Ireland	4%
Scotland	15%
Wales	6%

## Which of the following best describes your role?

	%
GP Partner	55%
Salaried GP	26%
Locum GP	10%
GP Registrar/trainee	9%

### What is your gender

	%
Female	62%
Male	37%
Other	0%
Prefer not to say	1%

### What is your age?

	%
18-24	0%
25-34	8%
35-44	25%
45-54	38%
55-64	26%
65+	3%

### What is your ethnicity

	%
White	76%
Black / African / Caribbean / British	5%
Asian / Asian British	14%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnicity	3%
Other	3%