



# eConsult at The Pall Mall Surgery

## What is eConsult?

A high quality, safe and reliable online platform system allows patients age 6months + (or a family member or friend) to contact the surgery via the online questionnaire. During working hours you can ask questions or request appointments by clicking the online services tab on our practice website ([www.pallmallsurgery.co.uk](http://www.pallmallsurgery.co.uk)). There is no need to pre-register to use the system. eConsult is already being used in other parts of the country, with recognised improvement in patient and staff satisfaction.

## What about those patients unable to use the system?

We fully appreciate that not all patients will be able to use the system. Any patient who is not able to access the system can telephone our team of dedicated Data Gatherers who will complete the e-Consult for them. This will be via our usual Pall Mall Surgery telephone number (01702 482900). A majority will be able to complete the form online, we will have extra time to help those who need support.

## What happens once submitted?

Once the e-Consult is submitted it is processed by a human being – not artificial intelligence. We have a dedicated daily triage team of Doctors and other clinicians reviewing the eConsults who will decide the outcome. This may be an appointment with an appropriate clinician, a prescription, investigation forms or directing to other local services. They will endeavour to provide an answer no later than the next working day for clinical queries and within 3 working days for admin enquiries.

## What have we done so far?

In January 2022, we "soft launched" our e-Consult system, initially for Sick Note requests then expanding to medication reviews. The early data has been extremely promising. The system usage has increased from 6 e-Consults submitted w/c 24th January 2022 to 288 eConsults submitted w/c 9th May 2022. This has enabled us to increase appointment availability each week by circa 50 GP appointments. We have already seen an improvement in staff satisfaction with less pressure on the telephone and appointment system.

Exclusions (please phone the surgery to book the following: Smear tests, childhood immunisations, dressings, B12's)



## What does the future hold?

On 20th June 2022 we will be opting for a Total Triage model, where all appointment demands will be managed using the e-Consult system. Patients will be asked to complete an e-Consult for all appointment requests (exclusions apply – see below). Our dedicated team of clinicians will then decide how best to deal with the e-Consult and patients will be contacted with an outcome.

The existing system doesn't work for everyone. We know the transition may have hiccups, but we are committed to making it work, and ask you to give us the opportunity to improve things.

## Why are we doing this?

Our practice continues to encounter unprecedented demand for our services, and our staff are exhausted. Patients wanted convenient times to contact us, not at school drop off/ as you are getting on the train/working shifts/sleeping in as feeling unwell. We want to be able to provide better patient care, and we feel this system will allow us to do this. We have liaised with the Patient Participation Group, Healthwatch and our local councillors to ensure everyone is on board with our proposed change.

We have listened to patient feedback regarding our telephone & appointment systems. We sincerely hope this new way of working will prevent the 8am bottleneck of patients wishing to book appointments and reduce the wait times on the phones throughout the day. We feel we can improve all these areas. We want to make your experience within the surgery positive and we want to do the same for our staff.

By allowing access via e-Consult, patients can submit their query online, enabling the phone lines to be accessed by those patients who cannot use the e-Consult system. However, the Data Gatherers will complete an e-Consult for these patients in the same way, therefore ensuring fair access for all. Our aim is to expand our patient access, ensuring that patients are navigated to the most appropriate team. We are still here for our patients and will continue our commitment to the community as we always have.

## Can I use eConsult to order repeat medications?

No - Ordering your repeat medications will remain unchanged, you can still use the NHS App or SystemOnline for this as you do currently.

Exclusions (please phone the surgery to book the following: Smear tests, childhood immunisations, dressings, B12's)