NHS GP Contract – October 2025 – Digital Access

The new GP contract emphasises digital access for patients. Below, we outline each requirement and how eConsult supports practices in meeting it.

1. **Requirement: Online consultation tools must be open between 8 am and 6:30 pm daily.**
   - **eConsult Support:** eConsult's default settings ensure the online consultation tool is open daily from 8 am to 6:30 pm. We also offer demand management features to handle temporary spikes in activity and manage planned/unplanned absences.
2. **Requirement: Respond to patients within one working day.**
   - **eConsult Support:** eConsult templates are designed with a one-working-day risk threshold in mind. While practices manage response timeliness, our clinical content's risk-profiling aligns with this timeline.
3. **Requirement: Routine (non-urgent), medication, and administration requests must be accessible during these hours.**
   - **eConsult Support:** eConsult is specifically designed for routine, non-urgent demand. Our structured clinical templates, developed by GPs, collect appropriate data for efficient triage/management and ensure suitability for general practice and online contact.
4. **Requirement: Safeguards for urgent requests.**
   - **eConsult Support:** Our unique red-flag functionality triages urgent or emergency clinical requests to a more appropriate, higher-acuity environment. Practices can configure the sensitivity of this red-flagging based on local Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
5. **Requirement: NHS App is the key digital front door; your online consultation provider will therefore need to integrate.**
   - **eConsult Support:** eConsult was the first online consultation provider to integrate with the NHS App. Our partner, iPlato, has industry-leading NHS App integration. This combined offering allows patients to submit eConsult requests via the App (using NHS Login), and benefit from NHS App messaging and appointment booking via iPlato (with attachments, controlled two-way messaging, and keyword reply).
6. **Requirement: Other access points (F2F, telephone) must remain open.**
   - **eConsult Support:** Recognising that not all patients use digital channels, we developed eLite, a front-desk triage template. This allows consistent, structured data capture for synchronous patient presentations, pushing this data into a single digital and non-digital workflow, creating multi-channel patient access with single-channel administration.
7. **Requirement: Clinical system integration.**
   - **eConsult Support:** Via the eConsult Smart Inbox, we offer full write access to EMIS and SystmOne, including patient matching and SNOMED coding. We've also expanded to include a full messaging suite (SMS, email, two-way messaging, and attachments) to support patient management post-online consultation submission.
8. **Requirement: Broader use of Primary Care services.**
   - **eConsult Support:** The Smart Inbox supports collaboration across practices or Primary Care Networks (PCNs). Online consultation requests can be triaged to specific roles or individuals and prioritised based on presenting complaints. We also provide a patient-facing pharmacy redirection service for "Pharmacy First" requests, allowing direct booking into pharmacy consultations. This patient-facing element can be customised at ICB/PCN/Practice level to direct patients to locally commissioned services (e.g., eConsult mental health templates can signpost to local CBT services).

9. **Requirement: Support adoption.**
   - **eConsult Support:** eConsult provides digital marketing support, including digital media for in-practice screens, best practice guidance for social media promotion, training videos, and support articles.
10. **Requirement: Governance.**
    - **eConsult Support:** eConsult meets all national IG and security requirements. Clinically, we excel with a dedicated in-house clinical governance team led by our Chief Medical Officer (a fully trained CSO). We have a Clinical Safety Case Report and Hazard Log available and can support completion of clinical safety documentation (including DCB0160 standards).

The Future

We are researching further customisation areas to meet new GP contract requirements. This list is dynamic and not exhaustive:

- Enhanced customisation of scheduled closures, differentiating clinical and administrative presentations.
- Increased capability for practices to customise open/close messaging for specific pathways.
- Creation of new administrative pathways (e.g., immunisation requests, smears) to prevent inappropriate use of clinical templates.
- Improved visibility of administrative pathways for patients to mitigate incorrect template selection.
- Signposting to the NHS App for repeat prescription requests.
- Creation of a medication query pathway under the "admin" section for existing prescriptions or acute medication follow-ups.
- Enhanced prominence and breadth of pharmacy services available through direct booking.
- Enhanced reporting to enable better resource and skill mix management.

We welcome feedback and encourage discussion on the new GP contract and eConsult generally. Please contact your account manager or reach us at commercial@econsult.health.