



Tuesday 18th June 2019

Birmingham patients have 24/7 digital access to an NHS GP as Babylon GP at Hand begins national expansion

Birmingham residents and commuters can now access an NHS GP any time or day of the year through their phone, tablet or computer, as well as having face-to-face appointments Monday to Friday 8am-6:30pm. The new digital-first service, which has proved so popular in London, will be launching in Birmingham at 8am on Wednesday 19th June. This means people can switch to an NHS practice¹ that offers GP consultations any time of day, any day of the year, often within 30 minutes' notice². The NHS GP practice is open to everyone, regardless of age or health, and includes all the usual facilities of a traditional practice.

Patients will not only get fast access to a GP 24/7, they can also, for free:

- **replay consultations and see medical records and notes** so they can check what was said or show it to family or friends
- have **prescriptions delivered** to the pharmacist of their choice
- use our **symptom checker**, which is designed by doctors and regularly updated, to access our medical knowledge base and get information on what to do next
- use our **Healthcheck** system to assess their diet, exercise, mood and, with a digital twin, create a report that includes practical insights to stay healthy
- have access to all of Babylon's upcoming technology that will continue to make it easier for patients to have more information about their health and how to stay healthy

Babylon GP at Hand already has more than 52,000 users in London and a recent independent evaluation³ (commissioned by NHS England and Hammersmith & Fulham CCG) reported that:

- 85% of patients rated their overall experience as 'good', 58% 'very good'
- 72% said the quality of care they received was better than their previous practice.
- In the 12 months before joining, people who went on to register with the service were around 20% more likely to attend A&E than expected (after adjusting for age and sex). However, once they had joined GP at hand, they attended A&E around 5-10% less than other newly registered London patients in traditional practices.

Dr. Matthew Noble, UK Medical Director, said:

“Many people have been used to waiting two or more weeks for a GP appointment. Babylon GP at Hand is loved by patients as they can often see a GP within 30 minutes, it’s valued by GPs who can enjoy flexible working, it helps reduce visits to A&E and it doesn’t cost the NHS a penny more, in fact it can save the NHS money.

“The practice is open to everyone - for those with more complex conditions who really struggle with everyday living, we have a care coordination team that has frequent contact to help them manage.”

Registrations with Babylon GP at Hand will be limited to 2,600 people in the first three months as we work with the local NHS authorities to carefully roll out the service. This will ensure the best possible experience for our patients while de-registering from their existing GP practice. Anyone who misses out will remain with their existing GP practice and will have the option to complete their transfer from the beginning of September.

The service will be available to anyone who lives or works within the Birmingham City Council or Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council boundaries. We will keep people updated as the catchment area expands.

The first Birmingham clinic will be based at 121 Glover Street and will open Monday to Friday 8am-6:30pm. We will be announcing further clinics in Birmingham and the surrounding area soon.

<https://www.gpathand.nhs.uk/gp-clinics/birmingham>

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References:

1. Switching to Babylon GP at Hand is subject to a registration period <https://support.gpathand.nhs.uk/hc/en-us/articles/115005502889-How-long-does-the-NHS-registration-process-usually-take->
2. The CQC report from 21st May 2019 stated: “Data showed that in 2018, 89% of patients could book an online appointment with a GP within six hours and 39% within 30 minutes.” [p33 of the Inspection Evidence Table](#)
3. Our [response to the Ipsos Mori report](#), which includes a link to the original report published on 23rd May 2019

Please see the below **Notes to Editors** for further details, or to arrange an interview please contact:

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Notes to Editors

- *What exactly is Babylon GP at Hand?*

Babylon GP at Hand is an NHS GP practice that offers all the services traditionally offered by a GP practice, but is digital-first, which aligns with the NHS Long-Term Plan. Digital-first means that when patients want to have a GP appointment they go into the app and book a video, or phone consultation with the GP. If the GP believes it requires a physical appointment then you are invited into one of our clinics. Nearly 90% of all appointments can be handled with a digital consultation. For some appointments, such as the flu jab, vaccinations or cervical smear test, patients are able to go straight to booking a physical appointment.

- *Why do people have to leave their existing GP practice?*

The NHS system operates through each patient being registered with just one NHS practice. If a patient chooses to join a new GP practice for any reason, whether moving house, convenience, as a student or they simply don't like the service, then joining the new service deregisters them from their previous one and is subject to a registration period. This is the same with Babylon GP at Hand.

- *Is this service only for young or healthy people?*

Babylon GP at Hand does not exclude anyone – it is designed to provide high-quality NHS primary medical services for people of all ages, whether in good health or not. It will be open to anyone who lives or works within the Birmingham City Council or Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council boundaries. We will keep people updated as the catchment area expands.

We have introduced a number of innovations to help care for patients with complex needs, including our Care Coordination Team. Many GP practices pay particular attention to the 1% of people who are at high risk of admission to hospital, such as elderly patients on multiple medications, and produce a care plan for them. We do this and more - our GPs support the 1% who need care plans, but our Care Coordination Team supports an additional group with the very highest needs such as complex mental health issues, multiple medical problems, or addiction, and helps them with everyday living. The team offers daily intensive contact and, with the right care, we hope that they will move from the category of very highest need, to the 1% that need a care plan. We may be the only GP practice with this comprehensive, multidisciplinary team that offers daily intensive contact to support those with the very highest needs.

- *Does Babylon GP at Hand take funding from other GP practices?*

The funding that GP at hand receives when a patient registers with us is calculated in exactly the same way as it would be for any other NHS practice. There is a Carr-Hill formula that is the basis for how NHS GP clinics are funded. It weights payments by age and gender, as well as other factors so that practices are paid depending on who

registers with them. The amount varies from below £35 per 15-44 year old man, to over £190 for each person over the age of 85. This means we receive less funding for younger patients than older people – and we think that’s fair. On average, GP at Hand receives about £90 in funding per patient, compared to the average of around £150 across NHS practices, reflecting our younger than average population.

- *Who runs Babylon GP at Hand?*

Babylon GP at Hand is managed by four partners, with most of the direct care delivered by a healthcare company called Babylon, which is a UK company that offers a range of digital health services across the globe. Babylon’s mission is to put an accessible and affordable healthcare service in the hands of every person on earth. Babylon uses a combination of unique AI technology and the best available medical expertise to deliver 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week access to digital health tools and, in some markets, digital consultations with doctors.

Babylon partners with government health authorities, leading insurers and businesses around the world, from the richest countries like the UK, to its financially poorest ones like Rwanda, where we work with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to serve over 2 million people.

- *Where will Birmingham patients be registered?*

All patients of Babylon GP at Hand are registered through our first practice on Lillie Road, London. This will not have any impact on patients, regardless of where they are when they register or make an appointment. Digital consultations can be made from anywhere with internet access, whilst physical appointments will be offered at our clinic in Birmingham (as well as our London clinics)

- *Can I see a doctor whilst I’m visiting another city to where I live?*

Yes, patients from London or Birmingham will be able to have physical appointments when visiting other city locations where our clinics are based (currently London and Birmingham).

- *Where will my GP be based?*

Our GPs offering digital consultations often do some from their home, which could be anywhere across England.

- *Can I ask to see the same GP again?*

Yes, patients can request to see the same doctor again.

- *Can I request to see a doctor based in Birmingham?*

Yes, for in-person appointments. We cannot currently offer for patients to choose a digital consultation with a GP based in a particular city, however they can choose to see the same doctor again should they wish.