

## **New NHS proposals put digital-first primary care at centre stage, are protective of patient's choice and solve legacy funding issues**

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- **Proposals would make the NHS digital-first ready**
- **Proposals protect a patient's right to choose their practice and digital-first healthcare**
- **Changes will solve legacy funding issues and improve the integration of digital-first practices with local services**
- **Commitment to enable digital suppliers to offer their platforms to other GP practices**

Under the consultation “Digital-first Primary Care”<sup>1</sup> NHS England is proposing to update the NHS’ policies in a way that protects patient rights to choose a truly digital-first healthcare experience, where patients can speak to a doctor over their phone or computer, rather than having to book an in-person consultation. The NHS proposals enable greater patient choice, solve funding issues and, by allowing GP practices to fully embrace digital-first systems, can cut GP waiting times.

The consultation makes it clear that “the current GP contract rules weren’t designed for digital-first services”<sup>1</sup> and these plans will ensure that funding follows the patient and that digital-first practices work with the NHS as intended. The proposed system would mean the funding issues faced by Hammersmith & Fulham CCG won’t be experienced again.

Digital-first practices are key to the future of the NHS. This will both embed digital-first practices in primary care and ensure that patients can get access to their local services, regardless of where they choose to register with their GP.

Our response to the consultation suggests changes to the IT infrastructure that would allow Babylon’s technology to work seamlessly with existing NHS systems. This would make it easier for other healthcare providers to use Babylon’s technology, either with or

without our GPs, to run their own digital-first service. We have had numerous discussions with groups of GP practices to do just this and enable more patients to have the option of choosing fast access to a GP, 24 hours a day, 365 days per year.

Paul Bate, Managing Director of NHS Services, Babylon, said:

“This really is a transformative opportunity for the NHS to ensure patients can access digital-first primary care, in line with the aims of the NHS Long Term Plan. We have shown what can be done with our technology and have 60,000 patients and hundreds of GPs who are overwhelmingly positive about the benefits of a digital-first service. These proposals can enable the NHS’s vision of digital-first services to become a reality.”

“Babylon’s technology means that patients can go from waiting times of weeks to appointments within hours. These new plans would mean more patients could choose the type of service they want, whenever they want.”

#### **References:**

1. “Digital-First Primary Care Policy consultation on patient registration, funding and contracting rules”: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/digital-first-primary-care-consultation.pdf>

# About Babylon

## Our aim

Babylon's mission is to put an accessible and affordable healthcare service in the hands of every person on earth.

## What we do

Using a combination of unique technology and medical expertise, Babylon is able to deliver digital health tools in multiple languages and localised for multiple countries. In some countries we offer 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week access to a health professional through virtual consultations. Our current technology allows users to instantly learn more about their symptoms through our Symptom Checker and to assess and improve their future health with our Healthcheck.

## Who we work with

We now serve more than 4.3 million members worldwide and have partnered with government health authorities, leading insurers and businesses, to provide top quality care for patients. Over 1.2 million digital consultations have been completed, and we have received more than 160,000 five-star ratings for our appointments.

To make all this possible, we have partnered with over 160 organisations across the world. We work with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rwandan Government to provide telephone consultations, prescriptions and health information for people in Rwanda via their feature phones. Babylon's technology means two million people - 30% of the country's adult population - can now use their phone to book appointments, have consultations and receive prescriptions from doctors and nurses.

In the UK we run Babylon GP at Hand, a family doctor service which offers free-to-patient care for over 60,000 people and four-in-five users give the service a 5-star rating. In Canada we partner with TELUS Health to offer clinical services. In Malaysia we are partnered with Prudential as part of their *Pulse by Prudential* app.

## Where we operate

We run clinical services in the UK, Rwanda and Canada

Our AI services are available in Malaysia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

We have plans to serve patients in many more countries in the very near future

## Our quality

As we grow, we continue to put an emphasis on testing and reviewing the safety and efficacy of our service. In May 2019, both Babylon's private UK service and GP at Hand, our NHS GP practice, were reviewed by the UK's Care Quality Commission (CQC). GP at hand was [rated as "Good" by the CQC](#), while Babylon was found to be [safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led](#).