

Guidance for the involvement of student doctors in remote consultations.

New ways of working during 2020-21 have resulted in a significant amount of healthcare contacts occurring remotely via telephone or video consultations. There is a lot for our student doctors to learn from these experiences and a need for them to develop confidence in these types of consultations to ensure that they are prepared for their future practice. This guidance is intended to support supervisors and clinical staff to engage student doctors in opportunities for learning within remote consultations.

Student doctors may be involved in remote consultations within Hospital Trust or General Practice premises.

If student doctors are joining consultations remotely from their own home, it is particularly important that appropriate consideration of information governance issues have been adequately addressed.

In all situations patient consent and confidentiality must be assured.

The guidance outlined below is based on:

Medical Schools Council Oct 2020 – Students attending remote consultation. Advice to medical schools and students

General Medical Council 2016 - Achieving good medical practise: guidance for students.

Consent:

- Patients must consent to student presence and involvement in a remote consultation, as they would for a face to face consultation.
- Patients must be given time to consider giving their consent, to avoid undue pressure being placed upon them
- Patients can be informed of the potential for student involvement prior to their remote consultation via a number of possible routes:
 1. Statement in appointment letters/ emails / texts to inform patients that students may be present during clinics and that consent would be sought before students join any consultation.
 2. Information on webpages regarding student doctor training in the Practice or Trust.
- Consent could be sought verbally and documented by support staff prior to the consultation and confirmed by the supervising doctor before the consultation starts.

Confidentiality:

- Patient confidentiality must be maintained at all times during remote consultations.
- Students must have completed appropriate data protection training (e-LfH module).
- Students must not access identifiable information about a patient in environments where they could be overheard or interrupted.
- Students should ensure that if joining remote consultations that they are in a quiet, private room. If joining from outside of a Trust or Practice building, headphones should be used to minimise the possibility of content being overheard.
- Students should dress professionally and ensure that any backgrounds in a video consultation are neutral.
- Patient identifiable information should not be recorded outside of secure systems.
 1. Identifiable patient data should not be shared on social media or through a 3rd party eg WhatsApp
 2. Student personal notes must not include identifiable patient data
 3. Video and audio consultations must not be recorded by students
- Concerns regarding maintenance of patient confidentiality must be addressed locally and reported using a “Sharing Concerns” form.

Supervision:

- Student doctors must be appropriately clinically supervised, as they would during face to face consultations. It is essential to ensure that students have appropriate opportunities to debrief patient cases and related learning
- Senior student doctors may benefit from opportunities to lead remote consultations; in this situation supervisors must be available to join the consultation if the student feels they need support.

Awareness of the needs of different patient groups:

- Care should be taken when involving students in remote consultations involving children and adults who lack capacity.
- Intimate clinical history and examinations are not appropriate for remote consultations with student doctors.

Governance:

- Students should access remote consultations using devices provided by the placement provider
- Students should not make private recordings of consultations or any remote clinical activity.

Students consulting remotely from outside of Trust or General Practice Premises:

At times it may be necessary for student doctors to join consultations remotely from University buildings or from their own residence. In this situation it is important to ensure that patients are consented appropriately for this. Particular care should be taken to ensure the maintenance of confidentiality. Information governance issues must be fully addressed:

- Any personal computers or devices must be deemed to be secure before accessing identifiable patient data
- Internet connections must be private and secure. Public networks must not be used.
- Students should ensure they join remote consultations from quiet private rooms where they will not be overheard or interrupted.
- Headphones should be used
- Dress and backgrounds should be professional

References:

[Medical Schools Council. October 2020. Students attending remote consultations: Advice to medical schools and students.](#)

[GMC. 2016. Achieving good medical practise: guidance for students.](#)



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