




Case Study

Improving patient outcomes using virtual appointments

Visionable 

 Southern Health
NHS Foundation Trust



In 2018, Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust received start-up funding from the Health System Led Investment Fund to deliver video appointments. After a detailed procurement process, Visionable were selected as a suitable supplier.

Subsequently, Southern Health worked closely with Visionable to develop a virtual consultation platform. Southern Health first used Visionable's virtual consultation solution primarily for patient consultations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following the expiration of all COVID-19 restrictions, Southern Health continued to see the benefits of virtual consultations, including clinician time management, ability for family input and improved patient outcomes.

In May 2022, Visionable caught up with Southern Health to discover how the solution was facilitating virtual consultations post-COVID-19.



The Challenge

Video appointments give patients a choice in how to receive the care they need while protecting vulnerable patients and those with physical or mental health challenges.

The aim of the project was to enable the delivery of video appointments across the Trust in order to improve patient access to services, improve patient experience, improve patient outcomes, improve the efficiency of the clinical service, and deliver cost savings.

This project was initially started to support the national NHS Digital First programme, which aimed to give all patients the right to virtual consultations by April 2021. From the project's outset, Visionable and Southern Health worked collaboratively to create a user-friendly solution with a joint goal of delivering a platform that meets patient and clinician requirements and fulfils the project objectives.

The Solution

Visionable provided a safe and secure method of delivering clinical care to the patient in the safety of their home. From the project's origin, the following Southern Health services adopted the use of video appointments:

- Children's Services – Health Visiting and School Nursing
- italk
- The Primary Care Psychology Service
- Continence Service
- Physio and Perinatal Services

Southern Health recognised that they needed a cultural shift to delivery patient care differently. Initially, services were slow to integrate video appointments into their service delivery, but then COVID-19 caused a "digital explosion" which enabled rapid cultural change.

Video appointments were instrumental in enabling continuity of care during the crisis. In the week of 11/03/20, total calls were 166. The next week, this was 822, and the week after, 1288 – a daily average of 191 calls. This trend continued with a daily average by mid-August of 157 calls, exceeding project targets by 35%.

Working with clinical services, Southern Health identified the opportunity to rapidly increase availability, ensuring that 50% of lost capacity through COVID-19 could be re-purposed to ensure the most critical cases were

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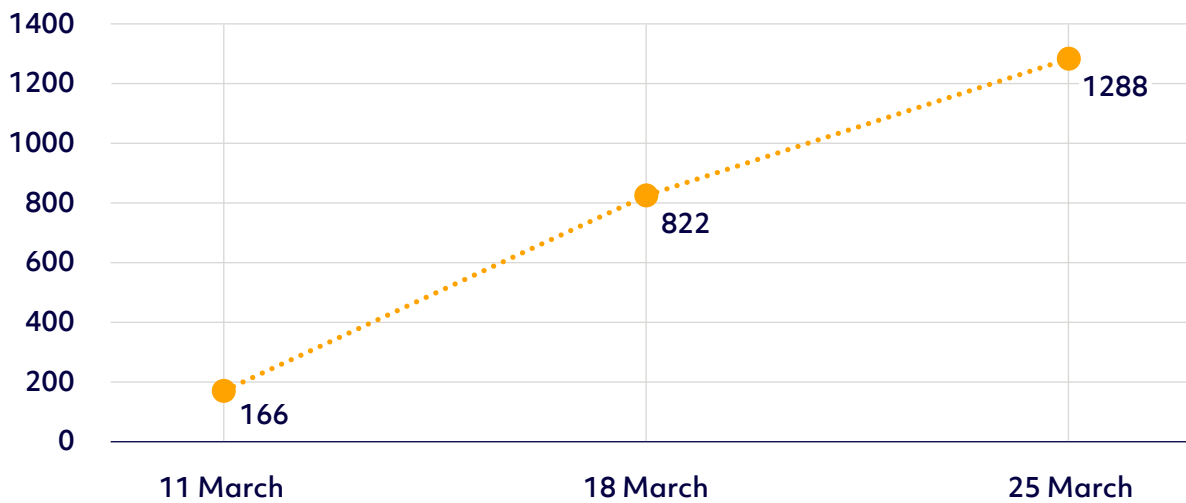
- Clinician feedback

being cared for. The roll-out of video appointments resulted in positive feedback from patients and clinicians.

This quote from a family member epitomises the success of the project:

“This video call has enabled a very distressed relative to talk to his wife and reassure him that she was safe and well whilst in hospital – they were able to wave and kiss through the computer – although no money was saved for the carer, this was a priceless moment which supports him whilst being isolated and not able to visit. Thank you!”

Weekly video appointments carried out - March 2020



Personal feedback from clinicians also demonstrates how video appointments improve care and efficiency:

“At the height of the COVID-19 crisis, it was vital that our clinicians could engage properly with their patients and see them as well. As a division, we have been providing our usual care standards, improving the uptake of appointments, and losing fewer appointments through non-attendance. Patients fed back to us that they find the system easy to use. We have maintained face-to-face presence for those in clinical need.”

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The Impact

Four years since the project's kick-off, and following the lifting of all COVID-19 restrictions, Southern Health has maintained the use of virtual consultations through Visionable and continues to see significant benefits.

Within the wider workforce shortage landscape, clinician time management is a priority for the Trust. Visionable's appointment functionality aids this priority by enabling administrative staff to efficiently send out appointments to clients, reducing duplication and saving clinician time. The function allows administrative staff to prepopulate the video appointment, send out links to clients and reserve the appointment directly into a clinician's diary – an action which also helps with planning and reviewing processes. Previously, this appointment process would require two hours of a clinician's time per week, but this has now been replaced with 15 minutes of administrative staff time.

In addition, the solution supports the service's vision to provide digitally enabled clinical care that is convenient and timely. Using the solution has allowed greater inclusivity for contacts, for example, parents who would have been unable to attend an appointment due to work commitments can now attend. This has been particularly pertinent in the context of ending COVID-19 work from home guidance, which resulted in many parents returning to their place of work.



By using Visionable, Southern Health has enabled parents to connect with clinicians from wherever they are, reducing the number of missed appointments.

The knock-on impact for this can be seen in the example of health review appointments where they have not been able to complete them face-to-face:

“Otherwise, parent or carer might be at work so they would miss the appointment. But it is really beneficial to have both parents on that so we can provide consistency of messaging and ensure the follow up on care plan work. Providing this consistency of evidence-based care is important, and Visionable’s virtual consultation has allowed us to achieve it.”



Visionable in Action - A Case Study from a Specialist Nurse

The Parkinson's team have always been open to new ways of working, so when the chance to be one of the teams to pilot video conferencing came up, we jumped at it.

Our journey began in August with some initial discussions and training on how video appointments could enhance our service. Then the big launch happened on 27th August with our first real patient.

I have to say that both the patient and I were very impressed with how easy it all was. In fact the patient didn't even have to leave work, but was able to use a private room for our discussion using his laptop. The whole experience was much better than the usual phone call we would have had; there was an added quality to our meeting and it felt more personal because we could see each other.

Following this initial foray into the world of video appointment, I was keen to do more as I could see the benefits for both sides; neither of us had to travel anywhere, worrying we wouldn't make it on time, or try to park in overcrowded car parks. We could still have a good

dialogue and carers or partners could participate fully as well, as we were all "in the same room", albeit virtually.

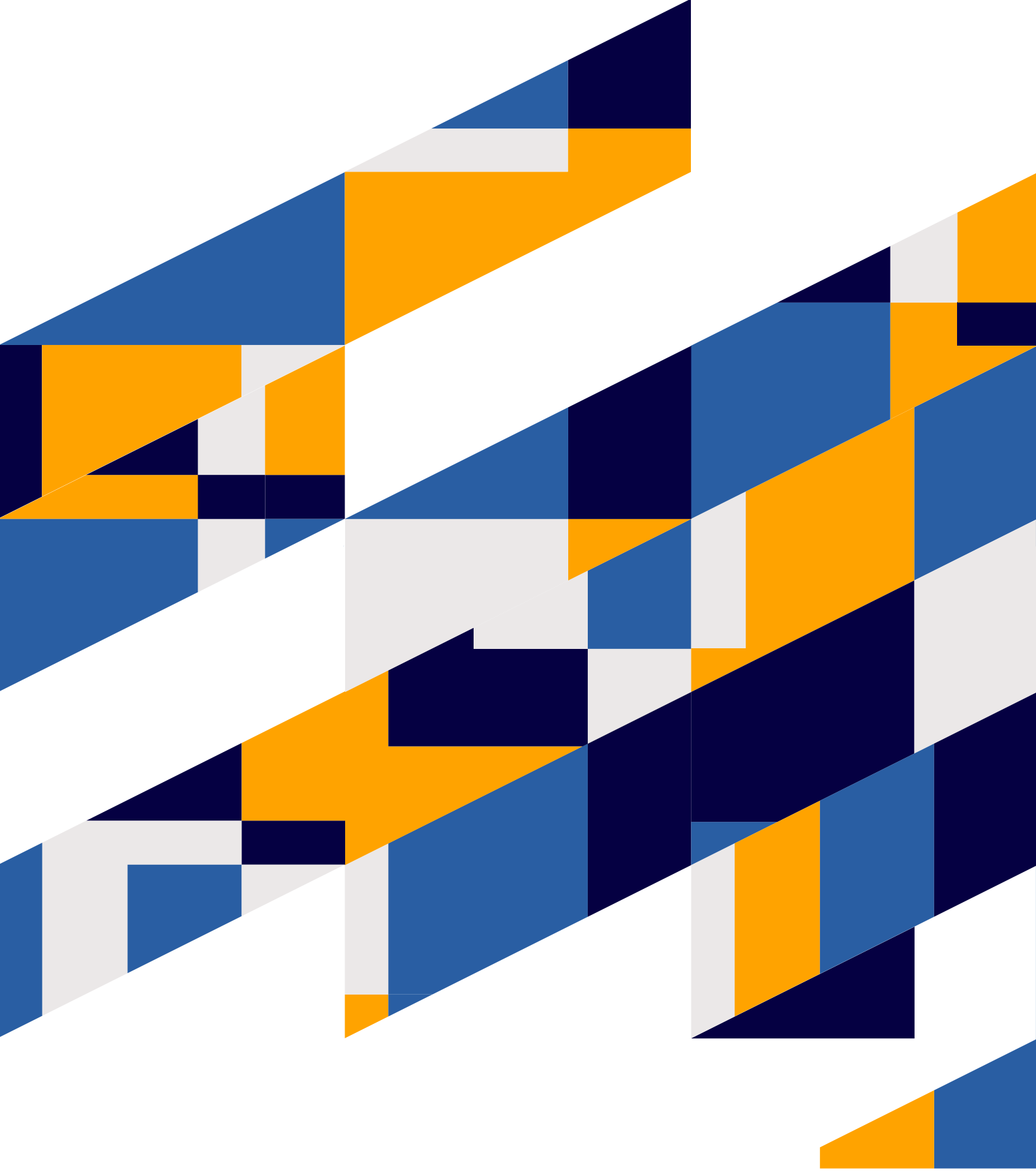
I now use every opportunity to promote video appointments and carry a handful of leaflets with me, giving them out to anyone who is interested to have a go. Several months into the project I am now using these appointments on a weekly basis in place of some of my planned telephone clinic appointments and also instead of some face-to-face clinic reviews.

At first, some people are a little apprehensive, but once I explain how easy it is, most are willing to have a go and feedback has been very positive from both patients, carers and staff.

Going forward, I can see many benefits for the Parkinson's service such as an enhanced experience for the patient and the Health Care Professional (HCP); cost savings for both patient and the Trust in terms of reducing travel and parking expenses and also potential opportunities to provide support and education to patients and other HCPs remotely, such as at Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings."

Click [here](#) to see more about how Southern Health is helping patients.





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