

Online Consultation and Triage Service Review

May 2025 – May 2026

Executive Summary

This report reviews activity and utilisation trends within the practice's online consultation and triage system over a 12-month period from May 2025 to May 2026. The review demonstrates sustained growth in patient demand, increasing adoption of digital access routes, and a reduction in reliance on reception-based access.

Analysis indicates that the practice has successfully supported patients to access services through online channels while maintaining equitable access for those requiring alternative methods of contact. The findings provide evidence of responsive service planning and ongoing monitoring of demand and capacity.

Background

The practice utilises a digital triage system to manage patient requests for both clinical and administrative support. Requests can be submitted through:

- Practice website
- Mobile application
- Reception-assisted submission

Routine monitoring is undertaken to assess:

- Demand levels
 - Patient access routes
 - Capacity requirements
 - Service efficiency
 - Opportunities for quality improvement
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Activity Overview

Quarterly Demand

Period	Total Requests
May–Aug 2025	12,469
Aug–Nov 2025	13,633

Period	Total Requests
Nov 2025–Feb 2026	14,704
Feb–May 2026	14,539

Total demand increased by approximately 17% between the first and third review periods before stabilising during the final quarter.

The data suggests continued patient confidence in the triage system and reflects wider national trends towards digital-first primary care access.

Monthly Demand Trends

Monthly activity ranged from 3,469 requests in May 2025 to a peak of 5,310 requests in March 2026.

Key observations include:

- Consistent growth during autumn and winter periods.
- Peak activity observed during January and March 2026.
- Sustained demand above 4,500 requests per month from September 2025 onwards.
- No significant reduction in utilisation following implementation, suggesting successful embedding of the service.

These findings support the need for ongoing workforce planning aligned to predictable seasonal demand.

Patient Access Routes

Access Method Distribution

Period	App Reception Website		
May–Aug 2025	11%	22%	67%
Aug–Nov 2025	12%	21%	67%
Nov 2025–Feb 2026	13%	16%	71%
Feb–May 2026	14%	15%	71%

Findings

The review demonstrates a gradual shift towards digital self-service access.

Positive indicators include:

- Mobile application use increased from 11% to 14%.

- Website submissions increased from 67% to 71%.
- Reception-assisted submissions reduced from 22% to 15%.

This trend suggests:

- Improved patient confidence in digital channels.
- Reduced administrative burden on reception teams.
- Increased efficiency in routing patient requests.

Importantly, reception-assisted access remains available, supporting patients who may experience barriers to digital access and helping ensure equitable service provision.

Demand by Day of Week

Across all review periods, Monday consistently represented the highest volume day for both medical and administrative requests.

Average daily medical requests:

- Monday: 185–258
- Tuesday: 154–188
- Wednesday: 137–155
- Thursday: 128–155
- Friday: 116–130

Administrative demand followed a similar pattern.

Operational Implications

The Monday demand surge demonstrates a predictable workload pattern which should be considered when:

- Allocating clinical triage capacity.
- Scheduling reception staffing.
- Planning annual leave.
- Reviewing appointment availability.

Current activity data supports maintaining enhanced capacity at the beginning of the working week.

Quality and Safety Considerations

The data provides evidence that:

- Demand is being monitored proactively.

- Digital access routes are functioning effectively.
- Patients have multiple methods of accessing care.
- Workforce planning can be informed by predictable demand patterns.

No significant fluctuations were identified that would suggest instability within the triage process.

Continued monitoring will ensure that increasing demand does not adversely affect response times or patient experience.

Areas of Good Practice

The practice demonstrates:

Responsive Services

- Regular monitoring of demand and utilisation.
- Adaptation to changing patient access preferences.

Effective Use of Technology

- Increasing uptake of online and app-based access.
- Reduction in administrative burden associated with telephone and reception contacts.

Equity of Access

- Continued availability of assisted access through reception.
- Multiple routes available to accommodate varying patient needs.

Data-Led Decision Making

- Use of activity data to inform capacity planning.
- Identification of seasonal and weekly demand trends.

Recommendations

1. Continue quarterly monitoring of triage activity and access routes.
2. Review staffing and appointment capacity ahead of winter demand periods.
3. Promote mobile application use to further support patient self-service.
4. Monitor response times alongside activity volumes to ensure service quality is maintained.
5. Undertake periodic patient feedback reviews to assess satisfaction with digital access routes.

Conclusion

The online consultation and triage service has demonstrated sustained utilisation and increasing patient engagement throughout the review period. Digital access channels continue to expand while maintaining alternative access options for patients requiring support.

The data indicates that the service is well established, responsive to patient need, and contributing to efficient management of practice demand. Ongoing monitoring and targeted capacity planning will support continued delivery of safe, effective and responsive care.