**Group Video Consultations for Diabetic Patients in East Gateshead**

**Patient Frequently Asked Questions**

 **March 2022**

**Q. What are Video Group Consultations?**

A. Video Group Consultations are a way for you to join people with similar health issues and consult with your GP or Nurse. You may also see consultants, pharmacists, social prescribers, and health coaches in this way. They are also known as Video Group Clinics or shared medical appointments. Video Group Consultations provide you with much more time than a routine appointment. In the VGC you will have an opportunity for questions and discussions with our clinicians and other people in the group. There are usually 6-10 people in a group consultation session.

We are currently trialling this new method of offering you healthcare and welcome your feedback.

**Q. How will I benefit from a Video Group Consultations?**

A: People who have participated in Video Group Consultations say that they enjoy hearing from other people in a similar situation and feel they have longer to talk about their worries. They say they enjoy sharing their concerns, what has worked for them and what doesn’t, but also hearing from other people’s success. They report feeling a sense of belonging and that they are no longer alone in trying to manage their condition such as diabetes, asthma or COPD.

**Q: Can I still have a one-to-one consultation with my GP or nurse?**

A: Yes, we will always offer normal appointments. Video Group Consultations are used as an extra way to support those who want to join in.

**Q: How do I join a Video Group Consultation?**

A: You will need an email account and digital tablet ( iPad or similar) or a Computer with internet access and private place to take part. (You can join via a smart phone, but there are some limitations, such as difficulty seeing the Chat function). You don’t need any special programs as you will be sent a link to click on and access the video platform Microsoft Teams. We will also offer a chance for you to have a practice at this, prior to the Video Group session, which can be a good time to work out the technology, including how the Camera and Mute and Chat functions work, with a member of the Team. We will also confirm a phone number, in case you have any tech problems during the session.

**Q: What happens in a Video Group Consultation?**

A: Once you’ve clicked the link to join in, you will be welcomed by a member of your GP practice team who will have been trained to be a Facilitator. The Facilitator will keep the group secure by asking you to confirm your identity and will start the session by reminding everyone in the group to keep information confidential, and some other simple rules.

The Facilitator will explain how the session will flow and each member of the group will introduce themselves. If you have agreed to share some recent result with the Group, such as blood pressure, sugar level ( HbA1c) and /or weight, the Facilitator will share a simple chart with this information. The clinician (usually your Practice Nurse and a colleague) will join the group and have a one-to-one consultation with each member, to discuss how they would like support, or what they are finding difficult, when trying to keep to Healthy Living advice. During this time people often join in and share ideas and problem-solve .

An administrative member of staff will also be present, to help keep notes of what you and the clinician have discussed and decided, and any aims you have made. They will also help with other technical issues.

**Q. How long do the sessions last?**

A. Approximately 45 minutes to an hour, depending on numbers. We are still developing the format of the VCGs, and we are listening to feedback about duration.

**Q: How do I know a Video Group Consultation is for me?**

A: You can talk to your practice facilitator or to your own GP or nurse to find out more and check any concerns you might have. Video Group Consultations might not suit everyone, if you are feeling anxious beforehand, let the facilitator know. It is OK to join a group just to listen and see if it is for you. Some people may even join in and decide to leave if it isn’t right for them. At any point you can leave a group and book a one-to-one appointment later.

**Q: What happens if I change my mind when I’m in a Video Group Consultation?**

A: If you feel a group clinic isn’t working for you, let the facilitator know and you can leave and book a one-to-one appointment later. Feed-back will be collected after every clinic so let your facilitator know if you think things could be improved.

**Q: Have Video Group Consultations been tried before and what do patients think about them?**

A: Yes, Video Group Consultations have been used up and down the country for some time now. The patients find these just as helpful as face-to-face groups and health improvements have been seen.

**Q: Do I need to have any blood tests or checks before I join a Video Group Consultation?**

A: The Practice will write to you before your Video Group Consultation to let you know if you need any tests and ask for your permission to share this information in the session (you can of course refuse!). It may be useful to bring with you any home recordings of weight, blood pressure and blood sugar readings for example.

**Q: Can my partner, friend or carer join me in my Video Group Consultation?**

A: Yes, with your agreement. It is often very useful for carers or family members to join in. They will need to agree to confidentiality and confirm their identity just like other participants. Ideally you should keep to just one extra member or groups can get too large.

**Q: Can I record my Video Group session?**

A: No, to ensure all information shared in the session is kept confidential and your privacy respected, you will be asked to adhere to the ‘VGC Patient Agreement’. This asks you not to record, share or post any aspect of the session. It’s in everyone’s interest to respect this.

**Q: What happens if I don’t want to say anything in a Video Group Consultation?**

A: Let your facilitator know if you are feeling worried about being in a group. It is OK to join a group to listen. Many people do this and end up joining in once they feel comfortable.

**Q: What happens if I am late joining my group?**

A: You may not be allowed to join the group as it is important that everyone has agreed at the start to confidentiality and confirms their identity. It also disrupts the group for others. You may be asked to book into another group clinic or one to one appointment.

**Q: How is my health information kept confidential during a group?**

A: All participants are requested to agree to a behavioural contract and VCG Patient Agreement before they enter a group. This states that they agree not to share any information discussed within the group. Unlike the confidentiality regulations surrounding a doctor’s obligation to keep all information confidential, this is not enforceable by law. However, as a behavioural contract it is repeated throughout the group session and as all participants will be sharing personal information, it is thought that the chances of a confidentiality breach are low.

Your practice will ask your consent to share limited information about your condition that relates to the group topic. This information will be shared with the group in the form of a results board. For example, in a diabetes group this might include blood glucose levels, blood pressure, weight and cholesterol.

Practices have been given training and support in confidentiality and information sharing. Platforms are in used which encrypt and meet the NHS cybersecurity quality requirements. NHS England and Information Commissioners Office advise behavioural contracts are in place to support this.

We hope you have found this information helpful.

If you are interested in joining a VGC, please email **ngccg.a85009@nhs.net**

Please see below for a copy of the Confidentiality Agreement that we use:

**Video Group Consultation Patient Agreement**

By participating in the Video Group Consultation (VGC) I agree that:

1. I am happy to share information about my condition that relates to the group topic. For example, this might include my average blood sugar readings, peak flow meter readings, my blood pressure readings, weight, or blood levels etc. These will be shared with the group to allow for discussion, sharing ideas and learning. I will then have a one-to-one conversation about my concerns observed by other members of the group and in turn will observe others having their own one-to-one conversations.
2. I understand that I am under no obligation to share any more personal information with the group that is not relevant to the topic unless I choose to do so. I understand that If I don't wish to discuss anything as part of the group setting, I may arrange a separate appointment for my concerns to be discussed one-to-one in private.
3. At any time, I can withdraw my consent to participate in the Video Group Consultation and book a one-to-one consultation.
4. I agree to respect all group members at all times.
5. **I agree to keep ALL information discussed and learnt about other participants of the Video Group Consultations confidential. This includes agreeing that I will under no circumstances share or record information about other group participants verbally, on social media such as Facebook, Twitter etc. or any other public forum.**

Name:

Signed:

Date:

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**VCG Documents updated March 2022, Dr S Metcalfe, Longrigg Medical Centre.**