

Telemedicine platform powered by intelligent automation delivers remote consultations efficiently at scale.

This allows an Out of Hours provider to optimise clinician productivity and deliver high quality patient-centred care.

Pathway

Out of Hours Primary Care Service

Scenario

Primary Care Out of Hours triage and remote consultation



The Challenge



Background

Unscheduled healthcare delivery such as NHS GP Out of Hours services are experiencing rising demand, staff shortages and financial constraints, leading to increased workforce challenges.

Repetitive administrative tasks such as reviewing patient lists to identify the next case, searching for contact numbers, dialling patient phone numbers, waiting for a response, checking and redialling unanswered calls are inefficient and reduce the time each clinician has available to spend with patients.

Situation

The Out of Hours (OOH) provider wished to reduce patient waiting times and maximise 'time to care', while maintaining clinical prioritisation to ensure patient safety within the context of a strained healthcare system and financial pressures.

Aspiration

To improve the process of delivering teleconsultations by using intelligent automation technology. The provider's ambition was that by automating the process and adding a virtual waiting room, it would speed up the flow of patients through the OOH service, while optimising their experience and safety.

Offering a virtual equivalent to a face-to-face clinic with enhanced workforce processes would ensure that clinicians had a steady flow of work, uninterrupted by non-clinical tasks, enabling more time to be spent on patient care and ultimately improving employee morale.



Solution and Impact



Badger Group is a leading social enterprise provider of GP Out of Hours and Urgent Primary Care in Birmingham & Solihull. Badger delivers services to a population of approximately 1.4m with 400 clinical and operational personnel.

In February 2022, Badger partnered with Ummanu, one of the leading tech companies in the telehealth automation space, implementing the Ummanu platform to streamline its Unscheduled Care operations.

The platform includes a virtual waiting room with an underlying predictive dialler that automates the queue management system.

Ummanu collaborated closely with Badger to customise the system configuration to their specific process flow. That made for a successful implementation and allowed benefits in efficiency, productivity, user experience and clinical safety to be rapidly realised.

More than 200 staff members were trained to use the Ummanu system within a few weeks, including more than 100 clinicians.

How it works

In the Badger configuration, the system intercepts incoming dispositions from NHS 111.

Based on the availability and productivity of the clinicians on shift and the incoming flow of cases, the Ummanu platform uses an intelligent queue management system to manage and optimise the flow of patients.

When the patient enters the queue, the system sends a customised SMS notification (from a local dialling code to encourage pick up), which tells them to expect a call from Badger.

The predictive dialler automatically calls each patient shortly before they are expected to be seen by the clinician.

When the patient answers the call, they are placed in the virtual waiting room.

The clinician is alerted to patients waiting and simply clicks 'next appointment' to connect to the next waiting patient and bring them into a virtual consultation room. This is similar to the way that in a traditional face-to-face environment a doctor would call a patient into the consultation room.

The patient's information is available on the Ummanu platform for the clinician to access before or during the audio/video session.

Automating the queue removes the administrative burden for the clinician of having to review the patient lists to identify the next case and then looking for contact numbers, dialling a patient and waiting for them to answer (or redialling patients if the call is unanswered).



Key Figures & Quotes



In the first year since implementation, the Ummanu platform has handled more than 74,000 consultations for Badger.

Productivity

Using an autonomous predictive dialler with a smart virtual waiting room reduced the administrative call-handling task for clinicians and improved their productivity, thus freeing up 'time to care' for patients.

NO. OF CONSULTATIONS HANDLED ON AVERAGE (BY EACH CLINICIAN PER HOUR)

↑26% Weekday ↑50% Weekend

Badger's staff were able to handle more consultations on average per clinician hour.

Experience

User feedback evidences that automated communications increased satisfaction and confidence with waiting patients and improved their experience.

PATIENT SCORE SATISFACTION

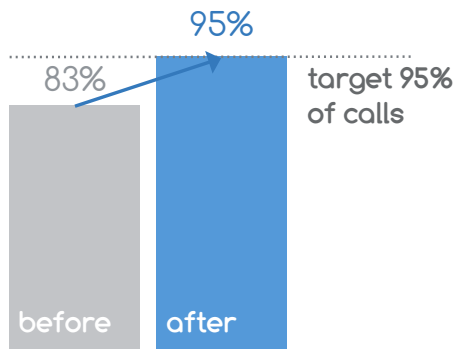
98%
Good/excellent rating



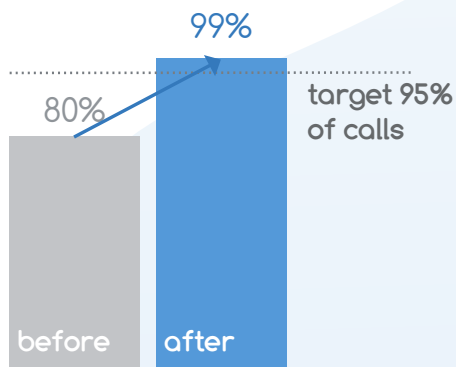
Safety

Within weeks of going live with Ummanu, Badger began more easily hitting its quality requirements.

CALL RESPONSE ASSESSMENT TIMES (% OF ALL CALLS)



Urgent calls assessed within 20 minutes



Routine calls assessed within 60 minutes



Meeting & exceeding Integrated Urgent Care (IUC) Service regulatory targets by the ADC

The Ummanu System



Capabilities

- Supports efficient healthcare delivery
- Eliminates case picking time
- Improves patient experience
- Easy to understand and use tool for clinicians and shift managers
- Improves patient safety for urgent cases by ensuring they are seen first
- Creates a calm, clinical environment with a steady flow of patients ordered by clinical priority
- Maximises clinician productivity through intelligent automation of administrative tasks to free up clinicians to provide more 'time to care' for patients
- More consistent approach for urgent cases based on the inability of clinicians to override the automation of the agreed clinical priorities

Scope

- It is used in a remote clinical setting such as GP OOH, clinical assessment service, or virtual elective. It helps to reduce waiting lists using clinical prioritisation, autonomous predictive dialling and a virtual waiting room
- The platform is used by Badger in a call centre, satellite call centre, other clinical environments and by home working clinicians

Functionality

- Advanced enterprise SaaS telemedicine platform
- Facilitates remote, on-demand clinical consultations
- Virtual waiting room
- Autonomous predictive dialler with automated queue management system
- Automated communication management for comfort (welfare) calls and notifications to inform the patient journey
- Smart management of case urgency streaming, based on agreed organisational disposition



Learnings & Testimonials



Key Learning Points

- It's important that the partners collaborate closely on all elements: to scope and design the set-up, configuring and implementing the platform, staff training, and establishing KPIs to monitor and measure the impact of the platform
- Regular feedback from patients through the use of telephone questionnaires and digital feedback routes will help track patient experience and lead to further improvements
- Continual user feedback from clinicians, managers and administrators enables progressive improvement and promotes user acceptance and eagerness to use the platform
- Frequent status meetings help to monitor progress throughout the implementation process

Testimonials

"It's giving us hope that we can actually go forward into the future in an environment of workforce shortages, increasing expectations from the public and financial constraints.

The impact on patients has been fantastic, they love it, and we seem to be getting more work done with the same number of clinicians, so that means if we can't fill the shift or if someone's sick, we're still making it.

The rotas seem easier to fill. It's not such an effort to hit targets, we're doing it all within the budget envelope, which for us is very tight."

Dr Fay Wilson, Medical Director, Badger Group

"An easy to understand and use tool for shift managers and clinicians."

"It's fair, everyone is doing their share of the work."

"You can't overlook an urgent patient."

Staff feedback



Looking to the Future



At the time of writing Ummanu are looking to extend the service delivered with Badger to provide a comprehensive case management system.

They are also partnering with some of the largest providers of OOH and Urgent Primary Care in the UK and internationally.

Key Contacts

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Additional Useful Resources

<https://www.digitalhealth.net/2022/11/birmingham-and-district-use-virtual-waiting-room-to-maintain-patient-safety/>

<https://chamberuk.com/maverick-why-top-class-pilots-matter-in-the-nhs/>

<https://www.healthstatejournal.com/story/39417/disaster-as-opportunity-a-brighter-pathway-when-the-lights-go-out>

