Video Group Clinics

Maple Healthcare, Lisnaskea

**Patient Frequently Asked Questions**

# **Q: What are video group clinics?**

# **A:** Video group clinics are a way for you to join people with similar health issues and spend more time with your specialist or community doctor, nurse or GP, getting your review and answers to your questions. You may also see specialist nurses and doctors, pharmacists, physiotherapists, dieticians, social prescribing link workers and health coaches in this way. Maple HC is currently trialling this new remote way of offering you healthcare and welcome your feedback.

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# **Q: How will I benefit from a video group clinic?**

# **A:** People who have participated in group clinics say that they enjoy hearing the experiences and getting advice from other people in a similar situation. They also like having longer with the clinician to talk about their concerns and for questions. They enjoy sharing what has worked for them with others and hearing about others’ successes. They report feeling a sense of belonging and that they are no longer feel so alone in managing health conditions such as asthma, diabetes or depression. They also find it very convenient. They don’t need to worry about parking and travel if they have mobility issues or live in a remote area. They also find is easier to join from a place of their choice whether that is at home or elsewhere or if they have caring responsibilities. VGCs are a very engaging remote consultation model for people with a whole range of health care issues. They are not just a response to COVID-19. They are a real and better alternative for many people.

**Q: Can I still have a one to one video or face to face consultation with my doctor or nurse?**

**A:** Yes, practices will always offer face to face appointments and one to one appointments. Video group clinics are just an extra way to support those who want to join in.

**Q: How do I join a video group clinic?**

**A:** You will need an email account or mobile phone with internet access. You will need to join the video group clinics via the internet in a private room. You don’t need any special programme or phone applications. The clinic will send you a link. You click on it and access secure (approved by the Western Trust) video platform (PEXIP). Make sure to access it through Google Chrome. Then the video group clinic begins.

# **Q: What happens in a video group clinic?**

# **A:** Once you’ve clicked the link and joined, a member of the clinic team who is running the video group clinic will greet you. The facilitator’s job is to keep the group together and make sure the clinic stays on track. They will ask you to confirm your identity and check you are happy to take part. Then they will start the session by reminding everyone in the group to keep information confidential and to follow some simple group rules or understandings.

# The facilitator explains how the session will flow and invites each member of the group to introduce themselves. Then there is time to review and understand the results you have agreed to share with the group. Then you come up with questions for your clinician who joins the group after about 15 minutes. When the clinician joins, they discuss and answer common questions with the group. Then they have an one-to-one consultation with each person. During this time everyone listens and people often join in, share ideas and problem-solve together.

# The facilitator wraps up after 60-90 minutes and you get the chance to reflect on what you have learnt and maybe set goals for yourself.

Following the group, if you need it, you may have a one-to-one appointment or your clinician may want to arrange follow-up tests or referrals. In most cases, this is not needed.

**Q: How do I know a video group clinic is for me?**

**A:** You will never know until you give it a go! People tell us they really enjoy the experience. If you have any questions or concerns, talk to the clinic team or to your doctor or nurse to find out more. Video group clinics might not suit everyone. If you are feeling anxious beforehand, let the facilitator know. It is also OK to join a group and just 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 instead.

**Q: Can I have my yearly health check or review in a video group clinic?**

**A:** Yes. Many clinics and practices are offering annual health check and reviews as a group clinic rather than a one-to-one appointment.

**Q: What happens if I change my mind when I’m in a video group clinic?**

**A:** If you feel a group clinic isn’t working for you, let the facilitator know. You can leave at any time and book a one-to-one appointment instead. The team asks for feedback at the end of every video group clinic so let your facilitator know if you think things could be improved.

**Q: Can patients get together and form their own groups after a video group clinic?**

**A:** Yes, some patients find that they get on really well, form friendships and want to carry on meeting to support each other after they meet at video group clinics. Getting involved if this happens is your choice. Being part of a support group outside of the surgery helps some people stick to their goals and keep motivated to exercise and lose weight for example. Your doctors and nurses might be to refer to one that already exists. Ask about this if you are interested.

**Q: Have video group clinics been tried before and what do patients think about them?**

**A:** Yes, video group clinics are up and running all over the UK. They have proved popular with patients. Teams report that patients find them as helpful as face-to-face groups and patients who attend them see their health improving and need to go to hospital less. It is still early days to know exactly how successful video group clinics are. To help us to understand this, researchers are collecting feedback from patients who have participated in a video group clinic.

**Q: Do I need to have any blood tests or checks before I join a video group clinic?**

**A:** Your clinic team will write to you before your video group clinic and let you know if you need any particular tests. They will ask for your permission to share some of your information in the session. Have a note of and share any recent home recordings of weight, blood pressure and blood sugar readings too.

**Q: Can my partner, friend or carer join me in my video group clinic?**

**A:** Yes, with your agreement. It is often very useful for family members, carers or friends who support you to join. The beauty with video group clinics is they can join from their home or workplace and you can join from yours. If your relative lives at a different address or even in a different town or abroad, they can still join in to support you. They need to consent to take part and agree to respect confidentiality, and confirm their identity just like other participants. Ideally you should just invite one person to join you; otherwise 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 is fully respected, you will be asked to sign up to the ‘VGC Patient Agreement’. This means you must not record, share or post any aspect of the session. It’s in everyone’s interest to respect this.

**Q: Can I share my video group clinic link with someone else who wants to join in?**

**A:** You should only share the link with a relative or carer that you wish to join you in the group clinic. You shouldn’t share the link with anyone else. You should let the clinic team know that your relative or carer will be joining and that you have shared the link. They will tell you how to do that.

**Q: What happens if I don’t want to say anything in a video group clinic?**

**A:** Let your facilitator know if you are feeling worried about being in a group. It is OK to join a group to just listen. You will still learn a lot and many people who do this and end up joining in once they feel comfortable.

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

**A:** Your clinic team will tell you their policy. Most likely if you are more than a few minutes late, you will not be allowed to join the group and will have to rebook. This is because it is important that everyone has the chance to confirm their identity, consent and sign up to confidentiality at the start. It also disrupts the group for others when people join late. If you are late, ask to book into another video group clinic or remote consultation.

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

**A:** We assure this in three ways.First, before the group, all participants approve to an agreement to 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 all participants will be sharing personal information, it is in everyone’s interests to respect this.

Second, when you join the session, the facilitator will ask you to consent to share limited and relevant information about your condition with the group. 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 and Body Mass Index. You consent verbally and you might confirm this in the “CHAT box”.

Third, the clinic team makes a record that you have consented and note this in your computer record.

# Clinic teams get training and support in preserving confidentiality and safe information sharing. The video platform PEXIP being used to host the video group clinics meet NHS cyber security quality requirements. NHS England and Information Commissioners Office have advised on the design of the three-step process teams are using to assure confidentiality.

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**Q: Is my personal information is stored on the computer after a video group clinic?**

**A:** The type of information stored on remote consultation or video conferencing platforms differs from system to system. Information is stored before, during and after sessions and normally controlled through the privacy settings of the particular platform. Most platforms provide information on privacy settings, the information they store and how to maintain confidentiality. **The general rule is to ‘log out’ of any accounts you have and enter your VGC sessions as a ‘Guest’. This helps you to avoid sharing personal information like your full name and email.**

**Q: Are under 18s allowed to join or be in the background of a VGC and do they need to consent?**

**A:** As with face to face consultations, young people below the age of 13 years must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Young people between the ages of 13-15 years may attend alone if a clinician has assessed their competence to participate prior to the group and ideally, the young person should be advised to have a parent or guardian present.

If a young person is involved in a video group clinic, they must confirm identity and location, consent and agree to adhere to the confidentiality agreement as an adult would do.

Patients must alert the facilitator to people of any age in the background and within earshot of the VGC. Once alerted, the facilitator will get agreement from the group to progress. Clinicians make the overall decision on the appropriateness of the information being discussed with young people present.

**Any other questions?**

If you have other questions or if you have been to a video group clinic and want to add to this list of questions to help other patients, please get in touch with your clinic team. Thank you.

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[[ii]](https://word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en-GB&rs=en-GB&hid=RJbzlGdh9E2CIlVq5nT3hw.0&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fwopi.onedrive.com%2Fwopi%2Ffiles%2F5D680994D0865084!78238&wdo=1&wde=docx&sc=host%3D%26qt%3DFolders&mscc=1&wdp=0&uih=OneDrive&wdorigin=SDX.Skydrive*Root&wdhostclicktime=1591950956884&jsapi=1&newsession=1&corrid=1ae11465-ca52-4017-92d3-e32908b70488&usid=1ae11465-ca52-4017-92d3-e32908b70488&sftc=1&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush#_ednref2)https://www.keele.ac.uk/media/keeleuniversity/ri/primarycare/GPN%20EBP%20CAT%20Group%20Consultations.pdf