

HEALTH AND WELL BEING BOARD

15 September 2020

Title:	Appt Health Vaccination Uptake project		
Report of the Head of Insight and Innovation			
Open Report		For Information	
Wards Affected: New West Primary Care Network		Key Decision: No	
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Sponsor: Cllr Worby, Chair and Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration			
Summary: New West Primary Care Network is commissioning Appt Health – the social enterprise in partnership with the Council – to deliver on a 2-way SMS booking system for flu vaccinations and childhood immunisations. The project is to be fully funded by Innovate UK (via a successful grant application) between late Sept 2020 to end of March 2021.			
Recommendation(s) The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to: 1. Note timelines for the project 2. inform relevant ward councillors			
Reason(s) Reducing health inequalities in the borough and improve uptake rates for important vaccinations.			

1. Background

- 1.1. Between July 2019 – March 2020, Appt Health have been working with seventeen GP Practices across LBBD to trial a two-way, automated SMS booking system for NHS Health checks. The aim was to increase the uptake of these free Health checks for residents aged 40-74, designed to spot early signs of largely preventable conditions including stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and dementia. It was also intended to reduce the administrative pressure on, and cost to Primary Care providers.
- 1.2. The eligible patient population were considered “hard to reach” – they were aged 40 – 74 without pre-existing health conditions from a population considered one of the most deprived in the country. Appt randomised between the total eligible cohort to create a treatment and control cohort. The control cohort received the status-quo engagement process, whilst the treatment cohort received three rounds of Appt’s SMS invitation process. Appt booked 49.1% of patients reached in round one, 10.4% in round two and 10.2% in round three. COVID-19 has delayed the full analysis of the trial (awaiting data from the CCG), but Appt’s booking rate compares favourably to the national uptake rate of the NHS Health check of 39%.

- 1.3. Appt Health have recently secured funding from Innovate UK to apply their product to promote uptake of seasonal flu vaccinations, childhood immunisations and potentially, a Covid-19 vaccination when it becomes available. This funding is secured for a six-month period running from September 2020 to March 2021. Appt would like to continue its partnership with LBBD by trialling the new vaccination products in the Borough. There are no cost implications for the Council.
- 1.4. The New West Primary Care Network Group has shown a keen interest in extending their use of the Appt Health SMS booking system for flu vaccinations and childhood immunisations. The Group includes:
 - Aurora Med care (recent merge of two practices - formally known as Dr John's King Edwards Medical Group and Dr Kalkat at Thames View)
 - Dr Niranjana Victoria Medical Centre
 - Dr Rashid Shifa Medical Centre
 - Abbey Medical Centre Dr Anju Gupta
- 1.5 All of the above practices except for Dr Rashid Shifa Medical Centre, formed part of the Appt Health trial for NHS Health checks and already have system integration and familiarity with the automated Appt system.
- 1.6 The Government recently announced the need to increase the availability for the seasonal flu vaccination to 30 million nationally, and this potentially could have a resource impact on local GP surgeries, especially if supply and demand is managed through a manual, call and recall process. In the BHR CCG Flu Plan 2020-21, there are plans to increase access to the vaccination by offering more locations where the vaccination is able to be taken up opportunistically by patients such as drive through, pop up clinics in car parks via marquee/tents, libraries and other community buildings.
- 1.7 It will be important to understand user behaviour and attitudes towards vaccinations, as well as the barriers people experience to getting vaccinated to help inform the deployment of the Appt vaccine booking approach. Between December 2019 - March 2020 there was a CCG-backed pilot to improve MMR uptake in B&D. Barriers to local MMR vaccine uptake were explored, building on what was already known from national studies about MMR uptake. The common misconceptions highlighted were '*misleading knowledge*' - beliefs and perception on vaccines, as well as '*misleading information*' – for example, the link between the vaccine and autism, and general negative attitudes and behaviours towards vaccinations.
- 1.8 These perceptions are commonly seen in certain cohorts, such as: minority ethnic communities, low socio-economic groups, single parents and large family sizes. Questions were aimed at clinical and non-clinical staff and some of the barriers identified locally in B&D, and discussed at the Delivery Group were as follows:
 - 2% of people did not get the MMR vaccine due to inaccessible appointments
 - 41% thought information about the MMR vaccine was misleading
 - 22% were unaware of the importance of MMR
 - 7% experienced language barriers
 - 18% knew the vaccine contained gelatine and were unaware that there was one without gelatine available
 - 7% parents just said "no"
 - 68% of clinical staff wanted more training and knowledge on how to discuss topics with patients and their parents.
 - 35% were unsure where to go - health visitor, school nurses - baby checks, maternity are not being discussed
 - 18% GPs don't routinely ask for the 8-week baby check

2. The benefits of increased uptake

- 2.1 Vaccines are the most effective way to prevent infectious diseases and help protect individuals and the wider community through herd immunity. Childhood immunisations are particularly important for the following reasons:
 - a) Immunisations prevent children from becoming ill with serious infectious diseases, which have a risk of complications and long-term side effects.
 - b) Immunisation helps protect all children in the population through herd immunity. This means that children who have lowered resistance to infections, or those too young for a vaccine have a greater level of protection from infectious diseases.
 - c) Immunisation is one of the most effective ways of wiping out as many infectious diseases across the country.
- 2.2 Flu is an unpredictable virus that can cause severe illness and even death among vulnerable groups, including older people, pregnant women, and people with an underlying health condition. The injected flu vaccine is offered free of charge on the NHS to people deemed 'at risk' to help protect them from catching flu and developing serious complications. These include:
 - Those aged 65 and over
 - Pregnant women
 - Those with certain medical conditions
 - Those living in a long stay residential care home or another long stay care facility
 - Those receiving a carer's allowance
 - Some frontline health and social care workers
- 2.3 In the same way that the automated booking system worked for NHS Health checks, residents themselves will be able to choose the appointment for their vaccination or childhood immunisations without having to call the practice, or the practice having to call them.
- 2.4 By removing the administrative burden and expensive postage costs associated with a traditional call and re-call booking process, resources can be redirected to other operational areas of a GP Practice.
- 2.5 There is also the possibility that the Pharmacist who services the New West Primary Care Network could be used to administer vaccinations, particularly in those practices where there is a smaller nursing resource.

3. How the Appt Health Product Works

- 3.1. Appt-Health works by matching eligible patients with available appointments in GP surgeries. The product then sends a personalised text message to the patient's phone to allow them to book an appointment.
- 3.2. There is functionality within the system to offer residents the opportunity to book their flu vaccination, or children's immunisation appointments (and potentially a Covid-19 vaccination appointment when ready) at **any one of the practices** across the New West Primary Care Network. CCG approval will be required to make this functionality operational, as internal governance will need to be agreed.



4. Approach

4.1 Selection of practices

As participators in the previous Appt Health trial to increase the number of NHS Health checks, the New West Primary Care Network were keen to use the system to increase the uptake in vaccination and childhood immunisation bookings and therefore put themselves forward to take part in this project.

4.2 We estimate that eighty percent of eligible residents who are patients at the New West Primary Care Network will be contacted using the Appt system between September 2020 and March 2021.

5. Future commercial model

- 5.1. The company Appt-Health will retain all intellectual property for the development of the product for the lifecycle of this project (which is funded by Innovate UK).
- 5.2. The New West Primary Care Network will be able to use the product at no cost for the duration of the pilot which will run between September 2020 and March 2021. If GP practices want to continue to use the vaccination and immunisations module after the six-month period, there will be an associated cost. This would be commissioned through the PCNs or CCG so there is no cost to the council.

6. Next steps

The following activity is due to start over the coming months:

The project will be broken down into four stages: (1) project set-up, (2) Appt-Health roll-out, (3) vaccinations delivery and (4) evaluation.

1. Project set-up: the Appt-Health service design and delivery team will work with New West PCN practices (stakeholder interviews and commissioning document reviews) to

understand the care pathways for key vaccination programmes (flu jabs and childhood immunisations) and will make the necessary adjustments to their engagement workflow. In this phase we will ensure information governance requirements are in place and all PCN stakeholders are informed and engaged. [Dates: 03/08/20 – 28/08/20]

2. Appt-Health roll-out: the Appt-Health team will implement their integrated system in practices, perform system testing and vaccine target set up activities. [Dates: 31/08/20 – 18/09/20]
3. Vaccinations delivery: Appt-Health's service will be live for flu jabs and childhood immunisations in New West PCN practices. Appt-Health will be carrying out key patient and practice support functions on a BAU basis. [Dates: 21/09/20 – 31/03/21]
4. Evaluation: LBBD and Appt-Health will work with the PCN to carry out a quantitative and qualitative programme of evaluation of the project. This will be carried out while the Appt-Health programme is still live. [Dates: 01/03/21 – 31/03/21]

Please note: Whist this project is live, Appt-Health will be working with NHS England/Institute for Health Protection and other national arms-length bodies as part of its Innovate UK funded project preparing for a COVID-19 vaccine programme. This project plan will be updated to incorporate this programme as and when this programme is scheduled.