



Silverdale Practice



Transformation through Digital Total Triage: Silverdale's eConsult story

June 2025

Silverdale Practice in West Sussex share their digital transformation journey using eConsult, leading to:

- Reduced stress for staff across the practice.
- Improved access to care for patients.
- A 59% drop in call volumes.

Practice overview

Organisation: Two-site practice

List size: 13,600

Clinical system: EMIS

Clinical staff: 23

Admin staff: 22

eConsult opening hours: 6am to 3pm, Monday to Friday

Daily cap: 125 clinical, 25 admin

eConsults received per month: 3000+

What was your old model?

Like so many practices across the country, we were really feeling the pressure after COVID. **We were swamped with patient demand and just couldn't keep up.**

A typical Monday morning between 8:30am and 9:30am was absolutely nuts – we'd routinely get over 800 calls! We could never meet that demand, and it left patients feeling frustrated.

“A typical Monday morning between 8:30am and 9:30am was absolutely nuts – we'd routinely get over 800 calls!”

Our appointment system simply wasn't working, our "on the day" triage lists never seemed to end, and **GPs were burning out**, staying until past 8pm. We knew we needed a big change, so we got a project team together, looked at our data, and started exploring new solutions.

What is your new model?

To help address the mismatch between demand and capacity, we decided to adopt eConsult for online consultations. This is a game-changer, as **patients no longer need to call the practice** and wait in a phone queue, they can quickly fill out an online questionnaire instead.

"eConsult opens at 6am – a huge win for patients who commute or are busy with the school run at 8am!"

eConsult opens at 6am – a huge win for patients who commute or are busy with the school run at 8am! Patients know their request will be triaged by one of our GPs and they'll get a response the very same day.

A huge part of this was embracing the eConsult Smart Inbox, and we worked closely with the eConsult team to fine-tune its functionality for our practice. Through the Smart Inbox, **eConsults are automatically split into admin and clinical**, and patients with urgent clinical needs are highlighted so we can make sure they're prioritised.

"By working together and using the Smart Inbox, the Admin GP and GPA are highly efficient."

Our Admin GP now has no traditional clinic - they work in a confidential space, supported by their own GP Assistant (GPA). By working together and using the Smart Inbox, the Admin GP and GPA are highly efficient and the Smart Inbox keeps a clear audit trail of everything.

"Patients now receive a response appropriate to their clinical need"

Patients now receive a response appropriate to their clinical need, which could be an appointment, information, or a prescription via text message, helping **increase appointment capacity** for patients who need them the most.

Has there been a difference in call volumes and wait times?

Absolutely! One of our biggest goals was to reduce the number of incoming calls and give patients a much better experience when calling the practice. Our new process has led to some incredible results. Comparing a week in April 2024 to a similar week in April 2025, we went from 2,190 calls to just 908 calls - **a massive 59% reduction in incoming calls!**

“The quality of triage through eConsult is making a big difference.”

Our average **call wait time has also dropped** from 2.37 minutes to 1.95 minutes. Our overall call duration has slightly increased, because the reception team helps some patients complete eConsults over the phone, but the key takeaway is that patients are waiting less time to be answered, and the quality of triage through eConsult is making a big difference.

How have patients received the change?

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive! On a trial day in June 2024:

- 143 eConsults were completed (128 clinical, 15 admin).
- When asked if they would use eConsult again, 23 out of 26 patients said 'Yes'.
- 88% of patients rated the service as 'excellent' or 'very good'.

“88% of patients rated the service as 'excellent' or 'very good'”

One patient even shared this amazing feedback:

“Just to say thank you very much for a recent very efficient response to a request for help on behalf of elderly parent. Within 2 hours of pressing “send” on eConsult, both matters were sorted out.”

How have staff received the change?

We handle between 130 and 180 eConsults each day. By mid-afternoon, the Admin GP has usually actioned all of them! This frees them up to help with admin, letters, bloods, and prescriptions, taking a huge load off their GP colleagues who are running clinics. This means the entire clinical team benefits from this new process.

“The entire clinical team benefits from this new process.”

Our reception team also told us they **feel so much less stressed** because they're not constantly dealing with frustrated, or even angry, patients.

What's next for Silverdale?

We're not stopping here! We'll keep a close eye on our data and develop robust plans to meet the new requirements of the 25/26 GP Contract, including keeping online consultation tools open during core hours.

We're also planning 'winter access clinics' in the afternoons, using eConsult's prioritisation features to invite patients in for observations and face-to-face consultations.

Silverdale Practice has truly embraced digital innovation. Once overwhelmed with demand we now not only meet, but exceed patient expectations, empowering staff and patients alike!