



but costs for the fuller implementation of the service – should practices wish to adopt it – are unknown at this stage.

7. NHS Lothian have made a policy decision not to adopt the Attend Anywhere platform for a number of reasons as set out in the report below. However NHS Lothian do use an alternative software system called Polycom Cloud Axis, which provides similar functionality to Attend Anywhere.
8. One of the issues with NHS Lothian using the Attend Anywhere platform is that it runs off the Google Chrome Browser which is not included on the list of agreed desktop standards for NHS Scotland.

## Main report

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9. Polycom CloudAxis is used by NHS Lothian and works by a clinician arranging an appointment via an online portal in a web browser. Once the appointment is arranged, an email is sent to both the clinician and patient with the meeting details. At the appointment time, both the clinician and patient click on the link included within the email provided access to video conferencing allowing a consultation to take place.
10. Meetings can be set up quickly and easily transferred to the clinician's online calendar and all the relevant links for meetings are available when the appointment is opened in the clinician's calendar. Patients can access the software on any device and is configured to work with mobile technology. The tool is free and there are no costs associated with using the product as it is a web interface which allows the creation of ad-hoc secure video calls.
11. The Polycom Cloud Axis has been used by the midwifery team within NHS Lothian for over five years. The service proved that the solution works and is a realistic model for providing patient consultations using video conferencing.
12. However the system is not widely used beyond the Lothian Breast Feeding Service. A number of clinical staff have been given demonstrations of the system, but there has been no take up on the service. There is clearly an opportunity to promote it more widely across the organisation and within primary care.
13. The Polycom Cloud Axis does not provide waiting room functionality which Attend Anywhere has which is where patients would enter once they press the start video call button and music would play showing they have entered the room. The clinician would know that the patient has signed in and is waiting. NHS Lothian are in discussion with other suppliers who can offer this functionality and it may be that once this is secured, that the system becomes more attractive and functionally more acceptable to clinical teams.
14. Other boards have taken the decision to rollout the Attend Anywhere platform and run with Google Chrome, however, as set out in section 8 above, this does not adhere with the NHS standards for desktop software deployment. NHS Lothian have taken a robust stance to protect the whole of the estate in order to minimise the risk of loss of access to critical clinical systems and its inherent impact on patient safety.

15. NHS Lothian is actively engaged with the other boards across NHS Scotland to determine a new desktop standard, which is likely to be agreed in May 2018. There are also discussions ongoing between NHS Scotland and Microsoft around a large-scale deployment of Office 365. This solution has a module which offers the functionality of Attend Anywhere and would meet the current and future standards set for NHS Scotland IT infrastructure.
16. Most of the General Practices in Edinburgh are independent contractors. As such, they determine the day to day running of their businesses and decide as partners on the possible introduction of new models of care and support. The introduction of a new model such as the use of video based consultation would require the agreement of practices on a voluntary basis.
17. The IJB is responsible, as part of the introduction of the new General Medical Services (GMS) contract, for the production and publication of a Primary Care Improvement Plan (PCIP) and this will be discussed by the Board at today's meeting.
18. The PCIP is a wide ranging document which has been developed following significant engagement and involvement of GPs, and wider partners. It sets out the opportunities for the use of funding toward technological investments within primary care with relevant support for this at a cluster level. It is proposed that this strand of work supports discussion and potential introduction of video consultation within practices.

## Key risks

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19. One of the key risks with NHS Lothian using the Attend Anywhere platform is that it runs off the Google Chrome Browser which is not on the list of agreed desktop standards for NHS Scotland and adhering to these standards are key to ensuring that there are no security vulnerabilities.
20. There is also a risk that by not encouraging and promoting the use of new infrastructure and technological solutions that we miss opportunities that may help to reduce pressures within Primary Care in particular.

## Financial implications

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21. Increasing the take up of the Polycom Cloud Axis would have no additional cost as access to the platform is free.
22. There would be costs associated with delivering a communications and support strategy to increase uptake as well as cost to provide training for staff and patients, however the costs are not clear therefore a full scoping exercise would have to be carried out. It is suggested that this sits as a strand of work within the delivery of the Primary Care Improvement Plan and wider Health and Social Care Partnership transformation and change programme.

## Implications for Directions

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23. There are none arising from this paper.

## Equalities implications

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24. A full integrated equalities assessment would have to be carried out on any software change.

## Sustainability implications

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25. A full sustainability impact assessment would have to be carried out as part of any software change.

## Involving people

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26. A full communications strategy would have to be developed as part of any rollout of software.

## Impact on plans of other parties

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27. The Primary Care Improvement Plan implementation will lead on the potential use of technology to underpin primary care services.

## Background reading/references

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28. The Edinburgh Primary Care Improvement Plan.

## Report author

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**Appendices**

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**None**