



Babylon GP at Hand update June 2019

At the end of May we became aware that Babylon GP at Hand had submitted an application to become a Primary Care Network (PCNs) in Hammersmith and Fulham, with the intention of providing care to their pan-London patient list. This story, and our response to it, was covered by Pulse, GPonline and a number of other media outlets.

As the voice of general practice in the Capital, Londonwide LMCs has also worked with practices, PCNs, LMCs and CCGs to resolve local issues regarding coverage and PCN formation. Where PCN submissions cannot be agreed, there is an escalation process involving NHS England and GPC England. Further details can be seen in the most recent MWord.

Whilst we anticipate escalation occurring in only a handful of areas, it is critical that these escalations are completed effectively, in light of the guidance which states that any delay in the approval of an entire areas PCNs, and the commencement of the network contract DES, will affect the start date of all payments.

National roll-out

On 18 June Hammersmith and Fulham CCG approved Babylon GP at Hand's expansion into Birmingham, with a condition stating they may only register a maximum of 2,600 patients initially.

Independent Evaluation

On 23 May Hammersmith and Fulham CCG published the independent evaluation of Babylon GP at Hand which they had commissioned from Ipsos MORI and York Health Economics Consortium.

The evaluation document did not draw an overall conclusion about the service, but did offer a view on a number of areas. It was broadly positive about:

Clinicians felt that they were less rushed and stressed while working for Babylon GP at Hand, and patients also felt their appointments felt less rushed. Overall patient satisfaction was high and comparable to conventional GP practices.

It raised concerns over:

The lack of capacity for face-to-face appointments and the disjointed nature of booking them in comparison to online consultations.

Patient turnover is high, with over a quarter of Babylon GP at Hand patients have de-registered since July 2017, compared to around a sixth of patients with conventional practices. 60% of those de-registering were women.

Other observations included:

Babylon GP at Hand patients consult more than would be expected for their age and health status, but it is not clear whether this is linked to unmet need or supply-induced demand.

Patients prefer telephone consultations to video, they also feel that the symptom checker did not replace the need to speak to a GP and liked to double check its diagnosis with a clinician.

The service is used by people who are younger and more affluent than the average London practice's patient population.

Patients were above average users of A&E and NHS111 prior to registering with Babylon GP at Hand, with convenience and easier access being their main drivers for joining.