

## Medical Director's Notes

We all recognise that digital has a larger part to play in the NHS going forward. In general practice, the pandemic showed how a sizeable portion of patient contact can be managed remotely and a number of our members have based their practice clinical models around Ask My GP or e-Consult. Both of these have significant limitations such as not integrating with SystemOne or Emis.



The story of the tech company Babylon illustrates many of the issues. They operate GP at Hand which is an NHS 24/7 virtual service for patients in London and Birmingham. Before Covid, Babylon seemed a major threat to general practice. It attracted younger, healthier patients, leaving struggling traditional 'analogue' practices to deal with complex cases. However, on the plus side, it did work at a large scale rather than the multitude of small pilots that exist across the NHS.

Roll forward three years and GP at Hand is terminating its NHS contracts because they were heavily loss making. It is focusing on the US but even there it is selling a network of 1,800 physicians that it has found too difficult to digitalise.

The important lessons from Babylon for general practice are two-fold and a dichotomy. Firstly, healthcare is different to other industries and digital needs to be incorporated into existing organisations – GP surgeries in Suffolk. But secondly, it needs lot of investment – financial and time, particularly from clinicians, to understand where benefits can be found, neither practices nor the NHS have the resources currently to make this a reality.

So with Babylon gone where does it leave digital health here? The answer feels like not much further forward than we were in 2019.

Ruth Bushaway – Fed Medical Director

## The Fed run practice Unity Healthcare now rated Good

The Fed took on the management of Unity Healthcare, previously known as Christmas Maltings, back in 2018. The large 19,000 practice had been struggling for many years with very high staff turnover and unrealistic patient expectations. Added to this mix, CQC almost immediately placed it in Special Measures and it had to transition rapidly from a partnership to a salaried GP model of operation.



It has been years of hard work by all the practice team to get it back to a Good rating. A particular thank you to Laura Lyons the practice service manager.

The practice's clinical model now focuses on e-Consult and it uses extensive skills mix. This approach has lots of useful learning for member practices, particularly those looking for innovative ways to respond to workload and staffing pressures.

## Podiatry News

The Fed Podiatry team are hosting a free interactive day that will help local clinicians improve their knowledge and skills in managing patients with diabetes and their foot problems. The session is Wednesday 25th January 2023 at The Holiday Inn, London Road, Ipswich IP2 0UA. Bookings via email to Abbie Ayling - [abbie.ayling@nhs.net](mailto:abbie.ayling@nhs.net).

Our team have produced some great YouTube videos on nail cutting, footcare for people with diabetes and poor blood supply do to peripheral arterial disease. Thank you to Phill Holloway, Andy Barker and Angela Barry from the team. The link is here – feel free to use on practice websites etc <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvo32J-sVacx0WcGiQC3YEw>

## GP Support Hub

### Red Whale event

We hosted another Red Whale virtual event on 5 November. Attended by 180 GPs and Nurses, with the content being from the new Autumn / Winter catalogue. Some of the guidance was focussing on Diabetes, Renal, Mental Health, Respiratory, Cancer, Women's Health and Clinical health – Burnout. Coaching is a real trend at the moment so please don't forget that we are here to support you with anything, confidentially.



It was really great to attend the Trinity Park Shutdown this month and so important to be able to chat to GPs about training and what we can signpost them to." [Info@thegpgub.org](mailto:Info@thegpgub.org)

### We are looking for a First5 lead

We are recruiting two 1 session per month leads for the First5 groups. The role is to build peer support networks, plan the regular meetings and maintain the group WhatsApp. For more info contact [info@thegphub.org](mailto:info@thegphub.org)

## Fed news

- Congratulations Dr Adana Bodean - on her full inclusion on the performers list. Adana joined the Fed at Unity Healthcare on the iGPR (international GP recruitment) programme in September 2020 from Romania. Thank you to Dr Brandon for his supportive training, the GP support hub and everyone at Unity and the Fed who helped Adana on her journey to success – much deserved.
- Thank you Dr Debs Banerjee – Debs has been a director for many years but has now decided to focus on his clinical work. We would like to thank Debs for his contribution. Ipswich practices remain well represented on the Board with James Pawsey, Andrew Hall and Andrea Clarke
- Congratulations to David Brandon – David has been appointed part-time associate medical director for the West Suffolk Alliance. He will remain as clinical lead for Unity Healthcare in Haverhill. It is a great to see a senior member of the Fed in this important leadership role.
- Spirometry – The service's clinical lead, Caroline Ursell, and our Community Services lead, Vinni Mallen, led a positive discussion on spirometry at the last Fed Board meeting. Actions from it are for us to see if we can identify funding for a FeNo machine and integrate testing into the pathway. We will also see if we can use PGDs in the service.