

## Teledermatology in Ipswich and East Suffolk – improving care whilst reducing carbon emissions

### The Issue

The NHS Long Term Plan sets out a commitment to deliver care in new ways for the 21st century. With the NHS contributing to around 5% of the country's carbon emissions, this includes a focus on reducing the NHS carbon footprint and embedding net zero principles into pathway redesign.

In 2019/20, Ipswich Hospital conducted 464,133 face to face appointments, equating to 11,008,815 patient travel miles and 2249.7 tonnes of CO2 emissions. The Covid-19 pandemic provided an opportunity to accelerate outpatient transformation and increase the use of digital technology to improve care for patients, reduce the number of unnecessary outpatient appointments and lower carbon emissions associated with patient travel.

### The Solution

In April 2020, Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG commissioned Vantage's Rego Teledermatology system to provide an innovative technological solution for supporting faster diagnosis and management of patients with skin lesions and reducing unnecessary referrals to secondary care during the pandemic and in the future. The system enables Consultant Dermatologists at Ipswich Hospital to triage patients and provide rapid advice and guidance to general practice by utilising static digital images to assess the skin condition without the patient being physically present.

In one year, almost 1500 routine advice and guidance requests have been sent through Rego. Over 45% of cases have been managed in primary care, saving around 675 outpatient appointments, whilst also providing faster diagnosis and avoiding long waits and uncertainty for patients. A strong collaborative approach between primary and secondary care has been key to the project's success.

### The Impact

Teledermatology has enabled patients with skin lesions to be managed effectively during the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the positive outcomes, the system is being expanded to include two week wait cases and is likely to play an increased role within Ipswich Hospital's Dermatology Service going forwards. The key benefits include:

- **Rapid advice to practices** for patients with skin lesions (response from Consultant Dermatologist within 1-3 working days).
- **Improved care for patients** – over 45% of cases sent through Rego can be managed in primary care, resulting in faster diagnosis and management.

- **Reduction in unnecessary hospital appointments** enabling capacity in secondary care to be freed up for patients who require an appointment.
- **Lower carbon emissions as fewer patients travelling to appointments** – in one year, **16,010** patient travel miles have been saved, equating to **200** car journeys between Ipswich and London.

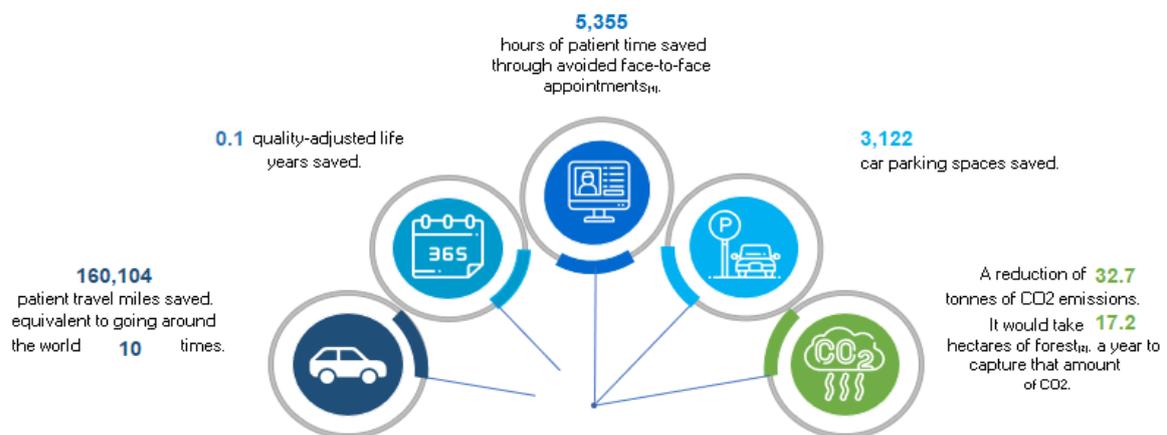
Using the Outpatient Transformation Benefits Calculator and based on the avoidance of 6,750 outpatient appointments over the next 10 years, the following patient and environmental savings have been calculated:

## Outpatient Transformation - Impact of avoided appointments

East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust



Benefits based on the avoidance of 6,750 appointments:



### Methodology & source information

Calculation methodology is based on the Sustainable Development Unit's Health Outcomes of Travel Tool (HOTT).  
 (1) Taken from the Journey Time Statistics publication, 2017 <http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/journey-time-statistics>  
 (2) Taken from methodology used by US Environmental Protection Agency <http://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>  
 (3) Taken from NASA - Solar System Exploration - Earth by the numbers: <http://solarsystem.nasa.gov/planets/earth/by-the-numbers/>

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## Over to you!

The ongoing increase in usage of the Teledermatology service across Ipswich and East Suffolk demonstrates the positive impact it has had within both primary and secondary care, improving care for patients whilst also helping to decarbonise the skin lesion pathway. Similar carbon savings from reducing unnecessary outpatient appointments are likely to be achieved by embracing digital technology and new models of care in other specialties.