Virtual care in open plan offices

When delivering care virtually, it is preferable to use a private space, however this may not always be possible. This guide provides practical advice about providing care virtually in open plan spaces.

For additional support, speak to your virtual care or telehealth manager or lead.

Before delivering clinical care in an open plan space, always ensure that it is clinically appropriate for the type of consultation that you will be providing.

When providing care in an open plan space, the following tips may help to ensure your patients’ privacy and to consider the needs of your colleagues.

Room set-up

- If possible, set up a dedicated area in a quieter and less trafficked area of the office for virtual consultations.
- If practical, consider using a room divider or banner to block out the background environment (this should be wide enough to cover the camera angle and have minimal imagery to minimise distractions, e.g. only a simple logo). Position it to avoid creating a trip hazard.
- Consider the use of acoustic partitions or roof mounted partitions.
- Investigate the availability of noise absorbing carpets or ceilings.
- If available, consider using a smaller shared office for appointments rather than a large open plan office.

Desk set-up

- Review the layout of the office. It may be possible to use a different desk or to rearrange desks to reduce the possibility of others walking behind the clinician delivering the consultation, e.g. near a wall/window (see image below).
- If there is a window behind the clinician, ensure there are appropriate blinds/curtains to prevent glare on the camera.
- Remove any clinical information, photographs or other items from the background.

Technology

- Always wear a headset (consider a high-quality headset to minimise background noise).
- Position yourself and your camera with minimal distractions in the background.
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- Webcam in center of screens
- Partitions for privacy and sound
- Multiple screens
- Carpet for sound absorption

- Headset
- Banner background
- Webcam
- Two screens