

Babylon: app for digital MSK consultations in first contact physiotherapy settings

Quick intro to yourself and any contact details you're happy to share ...

My name is Patrick Roberts and I am a first contact digital physiotherapist. For more information please contact me at Patrick.roberts@babylonhealth.com.

What physio services do you provide? (e.g. specialty, conditions, location, patient demographics)

I provide digital physiotherapy services acting as a musculoskeletal first contact practitioner, including digital and face to face MSK physiotherapy assessment, diagnosis and treatment. The service is available to NHS patient groups across London and Birmingham, in addition to private patient groups.

What tools are you using to deliver your physio services digitally?

The Digital Babylon GP@Hand App is utilised for video and audio consultations.

Patients select the symptoms they are experiencing, and are directed to the most appropriate clinician accordingly, (e.g. dermatology – directed to GP, back pain – directed to Physio).

The Digital “Clinical Portal” information for patients includes advice, education, videos and exercises, and can be accessed on the Babylon app.

How have these services replaced face to face contact?

Video consultations are used for subjective and objective assessments, and for providing subsequent advice and education. Exercise rehabilitation is discussed and demonstrated within the video consultation. This is then documented in the patient’s Babylon app and exercise videos are provided.

Patients are only booked in for face to face appointments if there is a possible suspicion of something more serious or sinister that requires a physical examination to confirm/eliminate.

What is the clinician’s experience of using the digital tools?

There are obvious limitations on performing an objective digital consultation, most obvious being that you cannot physically palpate and assess. However, the assessment does become more interactive and functional, enabling the patient to become immediately proactive in functional movements and exercise. Providing you obtain a thorough subjective assessment, you can effectively assess, diagnose and treat musculoskeletal conditions.

Do you have any patient feedback on digital physio service offer?

Babylon health utilises a 5 star patient rating system (5 being best, 1 being worst). The physiotherapy service has maintained a 4.89 rating, the highest average score across all clinician groups at Babylon health.

There are no patient testimonials at Babylon Health, however on a personal note, the patient feedback has always been positive in relation to accessibility of the service, in addition to feedback and clinical outcomes following initial consultations and follow up appointments.

Any top tips to others exploring using digital tools in physio services?

Good internet connectivity on both ends is crucial for video consultations.

Very clear, succinct instruction is required when asking patients to perform an objective assessment without video connectivity.

Practitioners demonstrating movements, special tests and exercises makes a huge difference in the assessment.