

The Doccla Virtual Ward: A Clinician's Guide

What is a virtual ward?

A virtual ward is a safe and efficient alternative to NHS bedded care that is enabled by technology.

The NHS is supporting the implementation of virtual wards across the country to support people at the place they call home, including care homes.

One Health Lewisham is working with Doccla, the leading provider of virtual wards to the NHS, to support clinicians with admissions avoidance and facilitated early discharge.

Which pathways are currently live?

The following pathways are live across One Health Lewisham: General Observations, Heart Failure, Respiratory, Frailty and Diabetes. Referrals from primary and secondary care are welcome. A detailed inclusion/exclusion criteria for this pathway is outlined on the next page.

How does the Doccla virtual ward service work?

1. **Refer:** A clinician identifies a patient and refers them to the Doccla virtual ward by phoning 0203 929 4999 (Mon - Fri 09:00-17:00). The patient will receive a Doccla kit box the same day if the referral is made before 3pm.
2. **Onboard:** The Doccla customer service team onboard the patient, who then uses devices from their Doccla box to send clinical data through the Doccla patient app.
3. **Monitor:** This clinical data is monitored by clinicians via a dashboard on their web browser.
4. **Support:** The patient and clinicians receive support throughout from the Doccla customer service team.
5. **Discharge:** When the monitoring is completed, the patient is 'discharged' from the virtual ward and devices are collected by a courier.

Where can I go to find more information?

One Health Lewisham has lots of information about the Virtual Ward on their website (<https://www.onehealthlewisham.co.uk/make-a-referral>).

Alternatively, if you wish to discuss a referral, please call the One Health Lewisham clinical team on 0203 929 4999 (Mon - Fri 09:00-17:00).

Refer: How to refer a patient onto the Doccla virtual ward

1. Identify a patient who would benefit from being cared for at home.
2. Assess appropriateness using the inclusion/exclusion criteria for the pathways below:

INCLUSION	EXCLUSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Any patient requiring regular monitoring at a clinician's discretion following an assessment● Safe and appropriate social situation/package of care● Has dexterity to use the devices OR has carer/NOK who can support with the devices● Registered with Lewisham GP (and address)● >18 years of age● Has capacity to give consent OR a "best interests" decision has been made on their behalf.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Patient requires immediate or urgent lifesaving treatment/ investigations via A+E/secondary care● Patient has dementia or other cognitive impairment or physical disability that prevents engagement● Severe/acute mental health issues or substance abuse issues that are significant enough to greatly impact ability to maintain compliance and contact with clinicians.

3. **Explain the service** to the patient:

"Doccla is a virtual ward service. A virtual ward means we can monitor your health from the comfort of your own home. If you agree to use the service, you will receive a Doccla box which contains monitoring equipment, a mobile phone, and a charger. The Doccla customer support team will then call you on your personal phone number and explain how to use the monitoring equipment and the mobile phone and stay on the call until you are confident you understand how to use it. You will then use the equipment to take your own readings and enter them into the mobile phone so we can monitor your

health. If you have any questions or need help, the Doccla helpline is free to ring and open 7 days a week.

4. **Gain the patient's consent** by asking them if they agree to use Doccla.

5. **Advise the patient that the box will be delivered to their home.** The Doccla customer support team will call them within two working hours of delivery to explain how to use the contents of the box. We also recommend giving them the Doccla helpline: **0808 175 0832** (this is also included on the information leaflet in their box.).

6. **Send the referral to the One Health Lewisham team by calling 0203 929 4999 (Mon - Fri 09:00-17:00) / email ohl.virtualcare@nhs.net.** A senior clinician will discuss the appropriateness of the patient with you. If the referral is accepted, the clinician will refer the patient to Doccla and will arrange for the kit box to be delivered to the patient's home.

Onboard: How it works for a patient

1. The Doccla customer support team will contact the patient on referral.
2. All patients receive a step-by-step explanation of how the devices and the mobile phone application work.
3. All devices come with data - so if the patient doesn't have wifi they can still use the service.

Monitor: How the patient will be monitored

- A care team of Community Matrons will monitor the patient via the Doccla dashboard.
- All monitoring clinicians have received full training on how to use the Doccla dashboard.
- When a patient submits their readings via their Doccla patient app, the readings are transmitted to the dashboard for the monitoring team to view and make clinical assessments.
 - The dashboard operates as a 'traffic light system'.
 - All patients will be put on default vitals thresholds which have been agreed by One Health Lewisham and Doccla.
 - If a patient submits a reading outside of a threshold, a red flag will appear next to their reading on the dashboard.

- There are many features on the dashboard, such as messaging and video calls which the clinician can use to contact their patient.

Support: How Doccla provides support

- The Doccla customer support team operates 365 days a year, 8am-9pm, and can be reached on: *0808 175 0832*.
- If you are referring a patient or need to adjust a patient's thresholds, you can email the customer support team anytime via doccla.support@nhs.net
- The Doccla customer support team strives to be preemptive and will remind patients to submit their vitals ahead of their submission time.
- If a patient fails to submit their vitals on time, the customer support team will call them to remind them to submit.

Discharge: How a patient is discharged from a Doccla virtual ward

- It will be your clinical decision to discharge a patient from the Doccla virtual ward.
- When this decision has been made, the customer support team will offboard the patient: they will take a patient experience survey and arrange for their Doccla box to be collected by a courier.
- The box will then be sent back to the Doccla warehouse where it will be fully decontaminated and ready for use for the next patient.
- Doccla will provide a full discharge summary.

Do not open the box: as this will contaminate the contents.

Do not tell the patient to give manual readings: the customer support team have worked with patients of all ages to help them use the devices and the mobile phone app, so manual readings are only ever a last resort.

Avoid using technical language: try not to use words such as 'bluetooth' or 'application' as this might intimidate some patients. The Doccla customer support are highly trained to explain the service in a simple and accessible way to all patients.

FAQs

Who can stay on a virtual ward?

Anyone experiencing an acute phase of illness who is medically unstable. Please see the Inclusion and Exclusion criteria detailed in the 'Refer' section, for more details. Alternatively, if you wish to discuss making a referral with the One Health Lewisham team, please contact **0203 929 4999** (Mon-Fri 09:00 - 17:00) or email ohl.virtualcare@nhs.net

How will I gain a patient's consent?

You will just need to gain the patient's verbal consent and state that they have consented on the Doccla referral form.

What if my patient's thresholds need to be adjusted?

There is an option to adjust the patient's thresholds on the Doccla referral form. Once completed, the Doccla customer support team will adjust the patient's thresholds on receiving the referral. If the patient's thresholds need to be adjusted later, you can request this by emailing: doccla.support@nhs.net

What comes in the Doccla box?

A Doccla box includes a mobile phone with a charger, a blood pressure monitor, a pulse oximeter and a tympanic thermometer. The box also comes with a patient information leaflet which includes clinician contact details, the Doccla helpline and instructions for each of the devices. As the virtual ward progresses, new pathways may be introduced and the kit may vary depending on the cohort of patients.

How long will a patient be on the virtual ward?

A patient will be on the virtual ward during the acute phase of their illness while they need medical treatment to assist in their recovery. The length of stay will be discussed with them, although we are able to monitor a patient for up to 14 days and they will remain on the virtual ward until they're medically stable

What happens if you send a referral 'out of hours'?

All referrals are sent to the Doccla customer service team for action. Their hours are 8am-9pm, 7 days a week. If a referral is sent outside of these hours, it will not be picked up until the office opens. We aim to create all patient profiles and reach out to the patient for onboarding within 2 working hours of the kit box arriving.

What happens if a patient submits a reading ‘out of hours’?

If readings are submitted out of hours either by request of staff or by the patient's own admission, the system will work as intended and alerts will be created. However, we advise patients to call 111 or 999 if they are feeling unwell, as the system is not used for emergency situations and there won't be anyone monitoring the dashboard.

What happens if a patient is feeling very unwell and calls the Doccla helpline?

The Doccla customer support team will have a direct line to your monitoring hub. If a patient is feeling unwell we will put them through to the monitoring team as a priority. Although all our customer support team have been trained in emergency first aid and safeguarding, they are not clinicians and will escalate in all cases.

What if a patient can't use the devices?

We have a number of ways to support patients, depending on what they find difficult. For example, for readability issues we can replace their phone with a larger tablet. If using a device is tricky, we can take manual readings over the phone or support the patient over the phone for several days to take their own readings. If a patient is unable to use the devices such as the blood pressure machine and they do not have someone who can help them, we will call the monitoring team and explain that they may not be suitable for the virtual ward. We call this a 'failed onboarding'.

What if a patient loses connectivity halfway through the patient questionnaire?

The patient will need to complete the questionnaire again. The Doccla customer service team can help the patient reconnect to wifi if necessary.

What happens if a patient calls the monitoring hub with tech/device issues?

The monitoring team can troubleshoot any small issues for example where a blood pressure cuff tube connects to, but for anything else they can give the patient the Doccla helpline: 0808 175 0832.