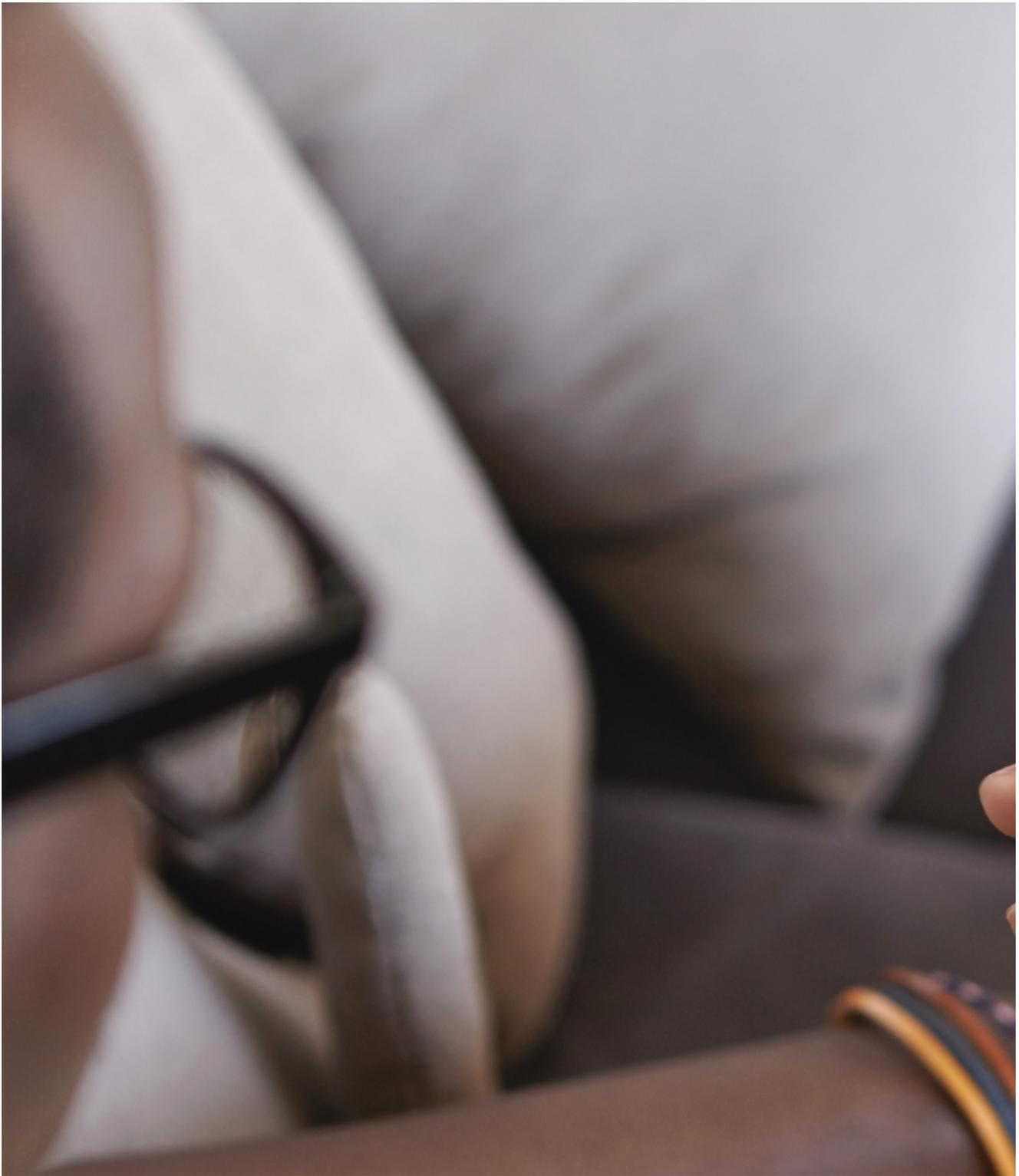


# **NHS hospitals in coronavirus hotspots call on AI company Babylon to free up staff time, as now 8% of the country gets access to digital coronavirus care assistant**

- The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust (RWT) and University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Trust (UHB) in first wave of NHS Trusts using the new service to support and monitor coronavirus patients 24/7 in the community.
- The partnership will deliver comprehensive, remote COVID-19 care for 1.8 million extra NHS patients in coronavirus hotspots in the Midlands
- New COVID-19 Care Assistant helps look after patients at home and detect deterioration freeing up doctors and nurses to focus on the patients most in need
- People can use the service 24/7 to check their symptoms, track their illness, cope with self-isolation, learn more about COVID-19, have live chat (8am-8pm) with trained team members and consult with GPs (24/7) and clinicians by video (8am-10pm)
- 8% of England's population, nearly 4.2 million people, will be served by Babylon's COVID-19 Care Assistant across the NHS and private sector
- Babylon is working with governments and national health organisations everywhere it operates to support the global response to the pandemic

NHS hospitals have partnered with Babylon to provide a comprehensive digital service to help meet extreme levels of COVID-19 demand. The surge in need is exacerbated by staff shortages, with The Royal College of Physicians reporting this week that around 20% of physicians are currently missing work due to illness or self-isolation<sup>1</sup>. To tackle this in one of the worst affected regions of the country, the Midlands, the NHS in Wolverhampton, Birmingham and Solihull have signed partnerships with Babylon to provide a COVID-19 Care Assistant for 1.8m residents and the NHS hospital staff looking after them. This means that the full service will be available to nearly 4.2million people, 7.5% of England's population. Discussions are progressing at pace with NHS organisations across the country and a second wave of partnerships is anticipated shortly.

App-based, free to NHS patients, and available 24/7, this service will support the vast majority of patients likely to have coronavirus with their medical needs and help detect red flags or deteriorating conditions, whilst freeing up clinicians to focus on the patients who are most at need. With an option to speak to clinicians by video for more severe symptoms, the care assistant service will take pressure off A&Es, GP practices, 111 and the Ambulance service at a time when many staff are sick or self-isolating. Hospital doctors in self-isolation will be able to help staff the service when they can't come to work.



*Prof David Rosser, Chief Executive, University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, said:*

“We are bringing in Babylon’s technology to amplify our clinical teams’ capacity and expertise. Our first step was introducing ‘Ask A&E’, a symptom checker that triages our patients, lets them know whether they really need to come to us at hospital, and sends us the information about their symptoms if they do. The second step is the COVID-19 Care

Assistant, which expands our triage to support far more COVID-19 patients than we could before, with reassurance, support and advice throughout their illness. This should have a rapid and profound impact on patients across Birmingham and Solihull, while freeing up our clinicians to focus on the patients who need them most.”

*David Loughton, CBE, Chief Executive, The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, said:*

“The current COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest challenge we have faced since the inception of the NHS. One of the greatest opportunities of the 21st century is the potential to safely harness the power of technology revolution to meet the challenges of improving health. I am delighted to announce that RWT, along with Primary Care Networks in the city, have joined with our technology partner Babylon to provide the COVID-19 Care Assistant service. This app is a free, interactive and helpful way for patients to check their symptoms, chat live to trained professionals, undertake remote consultations and be directed safely to the physical services that Primary Care colleagues and the Trust have set up in response to COVID-19. A digital-first approach is now an expectation from our patient population and I am delighted that we have responded positively to their needs.”

*Dr Ali Parsa, CEO & Founder, Babylon, said:*

“No health system in the world has enough staff in a pandemic situation, but AI and digital advances mean many things that used to take up doctors’ time can now be automated. The whole country is in awe of the dedication and bravery of our NHS staff battling on the frontline: our mission is simply to give them more time and space to do their life-saving work. Patients can be proud that their local hospitals are working round the clock to give each person the most appropriate care possible according to their need by trailblazing the latest technology. We are witnessing an extraordinary challenge, and I couldn’t be prouder of our incredible NHS partners for the work they are doing to serve their populations.”

The COVID-19 Care Assistant, depicted below, is also currently available to existing Babylon users and is built to efficiently support each individual in the population - it reassures, monitors and provides trusted advice **without** wasting any care professional’s time.

- 1. INFORM: High quality information on coronavirus and what to do about it** Simple-to-digest blocks of content - text, videos, and links - help to keep people reassured and up to date with what they can do to reduce their personal risk and keep their communities safe.
- 2. DECIDE: Supporting the decision to self-isolate.** The COVID-19 symptom checker allows people to identify whether they are at risk and decide what they should do under different outcomes. The coronavirus case definition is changing rapidly, and the technology is updated quickly and reliably, based on emerging data. This is the vital step to prevent people taking up health systems’ and clinicians’ time where it is not needed.
- 3. CONNECT: Live chat support.** Those considered to potentially have COVID-19 will be able to have live chat (8am-8pm) with trained professionals, overseen by doctors and nurses. Patients can be transferred automatically to the right member of the RWT and UHB teams, with fast access to nurses and doctors for those who need it, and to other trained professionals wherever appropriate.

**4. MONITOR: Digital in-app monitoring and a care plan for each individual.** Those who have been advised to self-isolate will be provided a comprehensive monitoring service: vital signs can be entered by people in real-time, giving clinicians up-to-date information on who needs intervention and who can be safely left to self-manage. To give people further confidence, a care plan will be automatically uploaded on their device, showing them what to do and when and how to help keep them from infecting others.

**5. CONSULT: 24/7 Virtual consultations for the small percentage who need them.** For those with rising risk of admission, or with severe health anxiety, the ability to have a virtual consultation is essential. The clinical platform, already used by hundreds of clinicians in the UK, allows clinicians of all disciplines to consult virtually with their patients. The easy-to-use app is available for patients via their mobile phone.

**6. REFER: Hospital transfer for those when needed.** With 24/7 support and monitoring of patients, no time is wasted where a patient is deteriorating rapidly, while ensuring that the vast majority are safely cared for outside hospital.

\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\*

#### Notes to Editor

1. [Royal College of Physicians report, 'COVID-19 and its impact on NHS workforce', published 5th April 2020](#)

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The Royal Wolverhampton Trust is one of the largest acute and community providers in the West Midlands having more than 850 beds on the New Cross site, 56 rehabilitation beds at West Park Hospital and 54 beds at Cannock Chase Hospital.

RWT is the largest employer in Wolverhampton, the Trust employs more than 9,400 staff, covering more than 350 different roles.

For more information, please contact Sally Evans, Head of Communications at The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust on +44 (0)1902 447299 or via [sally.evans17@nhs.net](mailto:sally.evans17@nhs.net)

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Babylon is a globally-leading technology company with the ambitious mission to put an accessible and affordable health service in the hands of every person on Earth.

We combine technology and medical expertise to bring doctors and people closer together. Through a range of digital services - such as AI-backed digital health tools and video doctor appointments - we give people round-the-clock access to affordable (often free) holistic healthcare services. We work with governments, health providers and insurers across the globe, and support healthcare facilities from small local practices to large hospitals.

Our AI is designed to empower people with knowledge about their health and help relieve pressure on clinicians. It mimics the way a doctor operates, performing some of the cognitive tasks they carry out, such as interpreting, reasoning, decision-making and learning.

*With a \$2Bn valuation, Babylon covers over 20 million patients and has completed 8 million virtual consultations and AI interactions globally. We have teamed up with 170 impactful worldwide partners — including Mount Sinai Health Partners, the NHS, Telus Health, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Government of Rwanda — to fulfil our vision of accessible and affordable healthcare, for all. For more information, visit <https://www.babylonhealth.com>*

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