**Primary Care SurgeryPods Program**

**Key Quality Considerations and Recommendations for practices**

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**What are SurgeryPods?**

SurgeryPods are a secure, user-friendly system which operates in 16 different languages and are usually located in the reception or waiting area of a surgery. Patients can use this equipment themselves to take their own clinical measurements typically height, weight, body mass index and blood pressure.

The patient’s results are then transferred directly into the clinical system (EMIS or SystmOne) via the surgerypod. A clinician is then able to review the information where routine monitoring can be undertaken as well as significant changes or concerns being highlighted.

SurgeryPods offer greater freedom and increased access to patients in monitoring their health. The equipment can reduce the need for face-to-face appointments to capture and record clinical observational baseline data.

This enables SurgeryPods to be used in conjunction with clinical consultations, ensuring that data is recorded accurately, shared directly with the patient and available ahead of the consultation to allow informed decision making and bet use of time. It is hoped that SurgeryPods will help form positive habits for personal health management as it supports patients in taking personalised control of their health.

**Support to patients**

Practices require a commitment to support and empower patients in the use of SurgeryPods. Staff within the practice need to be aware of how the SurgeryPods work in order to help patients who may be using it for the first time or require additional support to complete the taking of clinical observations.

Patients with sensory impairment must be offered support within the practice in using the SurgeryPods should they be unable to use it alone.

All patient facing practice staff need to be trained via available online training and guidance to ensure that they are confident in the use of the equipment, that they can provide answers to questions that patients may have and/or they can support with signposting patients as required.

Practice staff will need to be aware of how the equipment works in order to promote its use to patients. Clear communication about the SurgeryPods will need to be shared with patients and staff, so that everyone is fully informed on how to use the equipment and what the benefits are. There are ‘how to guides’ which should be available and accessible to both patients and staff within the Surgerypod environment.

**Training**

It is vital that all practice staff that are patient facing understand how the SurgeryPods work so that they can assist patients if they require support with the equipment. How to guides should be shared with all practice staff. Online training is available which is accessible at any time. The practice can contact [support@microtech-group.co.uk](mailto:support@microtech-group.co.uk) should they require any additional training.

Practices should ensure that competencies are undertaken and documented for any staff member who is likely to be involved with the SurgeryPods and these should be reviewed on a regular basis i.e., annually.

**Infection Control**

Standard infection control precautions (SICPs) are to be used by all staff, in all care settings, at all times, for all patients whether infection is known to be present or not, to ensure the safety of those being cared for, staff and visitors in the care environment.

SICPs are the basic infection prevention and control measures necessary to reduce the risk of transmitting infectious agents from both recognised and unrecognised sources of infection.

Sources of (potential) infection include blood and other body fluids, secretions or excretions (excluding sweat), non-intact skin or mucous membranes and any equipment or items in the care environment that could have become contaminated (Standard infection control precautions (SICPs): National infection prevention and control manual for England 2022 [NHS England » National infection prevention and control](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.england.nhs.uk%2Fpublication%2Fnational-infection-prevention-and-control%2F&data=05%7C02%7Crebecca.cave3%40nhs.net%7C01768375a92446def27b08dc348745f1%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638443002925881266%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=o6DMpLMrDj9nqqa6%2BRwEh4Jruj7fQhOL7cDakR9TPro%3D&reserved=0))

The equipment used should be maintained in good condition and be made of impervious wipeable materials.

**Practices have a responsibility to ensure that the equipment is cleaned, even if cleaning wipes are available for patients to use before and after use. A nominated member of practice staff should be cleaning the equipment twice a day and have this documented somewhere accessible for audit purposes.**

**Universal sanitising or detergent wipes** – Practice staff and posters/signs within the environment should encourage patients to wipe down all surgerypod equipment surfaces with universal sanitising or detergent wipes before and after use. Clinell, PDI or Medipal wipes are recommended. Practice staff should wipe down all surfaces of the Surgerypod at least twice a day with universal sanitising or detergent wipes; any touch screens should be cleaned with alcohol-based wipes. The twice daily clean should be recorded.

**Hand Sanitiser** – Please ensure that hand sanitiser is available directly next to the Surgerypod for patients to use before and after use, and that there is a clear sign requesting that patients do this when using the equipment.

**Disposable Arm Sleeves** – These can be made available to further protect patients and can be purchased from a number of suppliers or by following this link - [Disposable Arm Sleeves](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Disposable-Oversleeves-Sleeves-Waterproof-Cleaning/dp/B086WH2LL4/ref=sr_1_13?dchild=1&keywords=disposable+medical+sleeves&qid=1600255575&sr=8-13). Patients with open skin lesions and wounds on the area of skin which will be in contact with the blood pressure cuff must be offered the disposable arm sleeve and the equipment must be cleaned before and after use.

**Fabric material inside blood pressure cuff -** Inspect the cuff to ensure that it remains visibly clean and whether it may require laundering – as per the manufacturers guidance ore replacement. Give consideration to the use of disposable arm sleeves.

**Feedback**

As part of the practice governance processes compliments, complaints and concerns that are raised about SurgeryPods by the practice population should be recorded and responded to. These should be discussed, and learning shared at practice governance meetings. If any themes or trends become apparent, then these should be raised within the Primary Care Network and Integrated Care System.

The Patient Participation Group within the practice can be involved in discussions around any concerns that arise and overall patient experience with the SurgeryPods in order to help shape and improve the service as required.

**Audit**

Auditing of the use of SurgeryPods should be undertaken as part of the routine audit schedule within the practice. This should include and is not limited to, patient use, feedback by patients (compliments, concerns and complaints) about the service including ease of use and assistance offered/provided by staff and any maintenance issues that have occurred. Audit results should be discussed, and learning shared at practice governance meetings.

Practice records should be audited regularly, to ensure that the surgerypod equipment is sharing the patients’ clinical observations accurately and consistently and that these are available clearly to clinicians on the patient’s clinical record. Any problems that are identified with this must be incident reported, a robust review undertaken and completion of a risk assessment if the surgerypod equipment is to remain accessible to patients during the incident review.

If a clear theme emerges that the patients’ clinical observations are not pulling through correctly into the patient records, then this should be escalated immediately through the appropriate channels. The practice must also consider stopping patient access to the surgerypod until the matter is resolved, in order to ensure patient safety.

The purpose of completing audits is to ensure that the SurgeryPods are providing care in line with the standards expected and to inform the practice and wider external organisations such as the CCG and CQC, that the service being provided to patients is safe and effective. Audits will also identify whether there are any quality improvements that need to be made.

**Maintenance**

Practices must ensure that the SurgeryPods are maintained regularly in line with the manufacture’s information. If any problems occur with the equipment that may impact on a patients use and/or clinical observations these must be reported immediately, and relevant actions taken by the practice.

**References**

NHS England and NHS Improvement (2019) *Standard infection control precautions: national hand hygiene and personal protective equipment policy*