

## ADVANCED VIRTUAL TRIAGE OF AUDIOLOGY PATIENTS: THE EFFECT ON ENT SERVICES

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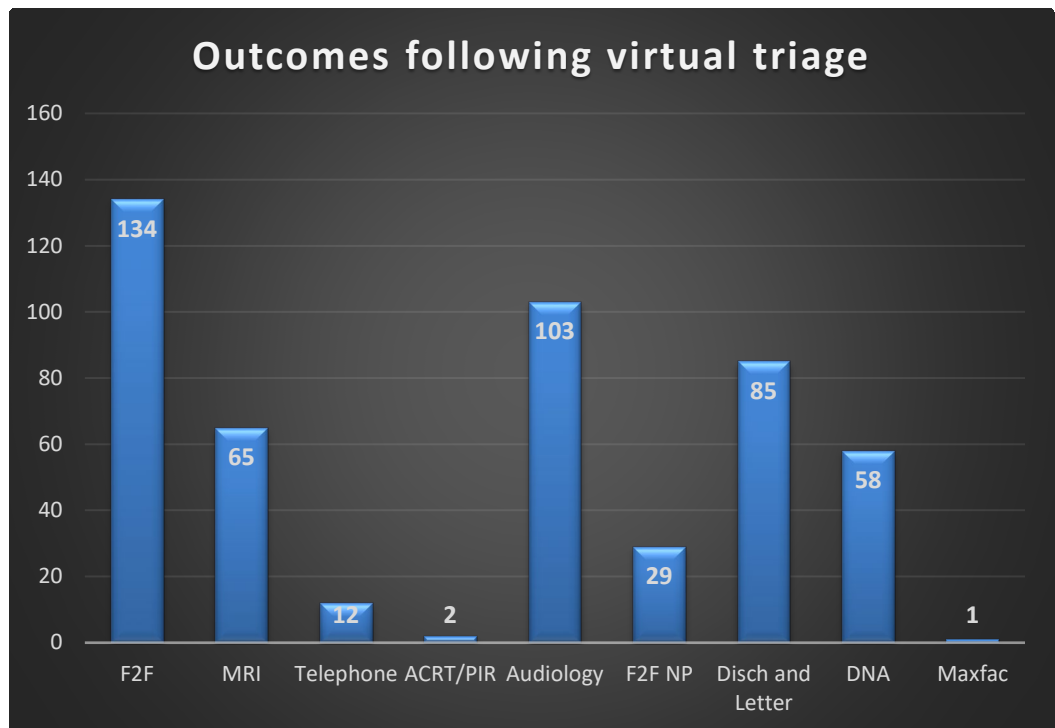
During the COVID19 pandemic, many services were stripped back to allow for the provision of pandemic pathways. This brought a transformational change towards more virtual services for the investigation and management of common conditions.

### **AIMS**

To create virtual pathways for managing common audiological complaints. This would allow referrals to be reviewed and acted on whilst limiting unnecessary face-to-face ENT clinic time

### **METHODS**

From January 2021, over a 12 month period, 489 referrals were received by NHS Fife Audiology Department. The referrals were triaged by the virtual audiology clinic team, and a decision was made whether face-to-face review was of clinical benefit, or if appropriate investigation, management or discharge could be implemented without this.



### **RESULTS**

Of the 489 referrals, only 134 (27.4%) were seen in face-to-face ENT clinic appointments. 65 referrals were sent directly to MRI, 12 had telephone appointments, 2 underwent active clinical referral triage/patient-initiated review, 103 were seen in audiology, 29 were seen in face-to-face clinic review by nurse practitioners, 1 was referred to maxillofacial surgery, 58 did not attend and 85 were discharged with advice.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The virtual audiology clinic reduced face-to-face ENT clinic time, by appropriately triaging referrals directly for investigation, or to the appropriate alternate services. This has streamlined the service, allowing patients to undergo appropriate investigations quicker.