

FAQ – Ambient Voice Technology

Stay up to date on AVT news – [sign up to HIN KSS AVT Alerts](#)

What is the purpose of AVT?	2
How does it work?	2
What are the benefits?.....	2
What is the evidence for AVT?.....	2
Is this tool safe and secure?	3
What AVT suppliers are available?.....	3
Does AVT store notes or recordings?.....	3
How can I explain this tool to patients?	3
How can I gain patients informed consent to use this tool?	4
What should I do if a patient says they don't want the tool to be used?	4
How can a patient give feedback or make a complaint about the tool?	4
Who is responsible for accuracy of the notes?	4
Can patients review or check the notes created?	5
How does the tool respond to different accents or when English is not a patient's first language?.....	5
How does the tool respond to people with speech impairments?	5
What happens if there are multiple people in the room talking, such as family members?.....	5
How can I prioritise data protection when implementing and using AVT?.....	6
What equipment do I need to use AVT?.....	6
How can I make sure AVT records clearly and accurately?	6
Where can I find more information about the use of AI in general practice?	6

What is the purpose of AVT?

It helps record what patients or carers say in consultations, by transcribing their words. The tool creates the 'patient notes', that clinicians usually type by hand. It helps clinicians focus on listening to the patient, rather than typing these notes.

How does it work?

It uses AI technology to record conversations between clinicians and patients during consultations and summarise the information into notes, using templates designed by the clinicians. The clinician then checks this and makes any edits before saving it to the patient record.

What are the benefits?

- Increases focus on patients, clinicians better able to listen and understand patients in consultation, as they are less distracted by note taking
- Improved patient experience
- Saved clinician time by reducing the administrative task of typing notes
- Reduced administrative burden on clinicians, helping reduce burnout
- Increases accuracy and completeness of notes and therefore a more accurate patient record
- Improves work life balance, with less typing and administrative work required outside of clinic time

What is the evidence for AVT?

Evidence has shown that AVT:

- Improves efficiency and reduces paperwork
- Increases the quality of conversations in consultations
- Improves staff wellbeing and reduces stress
- Is broadly accepted by patients and staff
- Leads to cost savings

You can find the studies that demonstrate this below:

- [An independent evaluation report of Magic Notes AVT](#)

- [An Independent evaluation report of TORTUS AVT](#)
- [The use of Ambient Voice Technology with Generative Artificial Intelligence in Multiple Clinical Settings Across the NHS – GOSH DRIVE](#)
- [Ambient voice technology in health care: what's the evidence so far? | Nuffield Trust](#)

Is this tool safe and secure?

Some people have concerns about the use of AI technology. It is the responsibility of the health care service providers, such as the GP surgery, to ensure data is stored securely, in line with the current provision for your medical records.

What AVT suppliers are available?

There are over 20 AVT suppliers currently. You can look at [an information grid listing current ambient scribes with Class 1 medical device status](#)

Does AVT store notes or recordings?

It depends on the AVT supplier used. Some suppliers store a temporary recording on the local server for 24 or 48 hours or a time set by the healthcare provider, until the notes are finalised by the clinician. Being saved on the local computer server means the data is only stored within the provider's system and not held by the AVT supplier.

How can I explain this tool to patients?

You can share our 3-minute video explaining AVT to patients.

In appointments you can describe AVT as 'A digital tool that helps me write up the notes from your appointment today'.

You may also wish to explain the benefit to you and the patient such as 'I can spend more time listening to what you are saying and less time typing on the computer' or 'It will save me time, so I can spend more time caring for patients'.

How can I gain patients informed consent to use this tool?

First, it is important both you and the patient understand what AVT is. You can share this informational video with patients before consultations to support their understanding.

You should seek to gain consent when you wish to use AVT.

You could say something such as:

'I'd like to use a digital tool to help write up the notes from today's consultation, as it involves using what you say today, are you happy for me to proceed? Or would you prefer for me to not use it?'

It is important that patients feel able to say 'yes' or 'no' depending on their personal preference.

Having information up in the physical environment of services, on your website and sharing information via text or app could also be useful in raising awareness of AVT.

What should I do if a patient says they don't want the tool to be used?

It is within their right to refuse use of the tool, as it involves using their data (spoken speech). You will have to record patient notes by the existing processes.

How can a patient give feedback or make a complaint about the tool?

Feedback and complaints should be made through the regular channels of your providers. For example, this could be PALS or The NHS Friends and Family Test (FFT).

Who is responsible for accuracy of the notes?

AVT is a tool to support clinicians in recording patient notes, they are still the creator of the notes and hold responsibility for their accuracy. Clinicians should always review medical notes to make sure patient records are accurate.

Can patients review or check the notes created?

The use of AVT does not change the existing process in which patients can access medical records or notes. Patients are always able to make a Freedom of Information request (FOI) to see information that is not currently publicly accessible to them.

How does the tool respond to different accents or when English is not a patient's first language?

Most AVT tools work well transcribing many different accents and English spoken as a second language. The clinician has final oversight over the accuracy of the notes and is responsible for checking and editing it before uploading it to the patient record.

How does the tool respond to people with speech impairments?

The tool will record and transcribe what it is hearing the best it can, it is on a case-by-case basis in terms of how accurate this is. The clinician has final oversight over the accuracy of the notes and is responsible for checking and editing it before uploading it to the patient record.

What happens if there are multiple people in the room talking, such as family members?

If a clinician feels it is important to distinguish between who is speaking, the tool may have the functionality to learn whose voice is who at the beginning of the appointment. This can be done by introducing each person and their voice to help the tool distinguish between them throughout the appointment. Alternatively, they can add this information

in afterwards. Ultimately, the clinician is responsible for checking the drafted notes and editing as needed before uploading to the patient record.

How can I prioritise data protection when implementing and using AVT?

Please see this article which outlines legal and ethical considerations around data protection and use of AI scribes in general practice.

<https://www.mypracticemanager.co.uk/advice/ai-scribes-in-general-practice>

What equipment do I need to use AVT?

The AVT supplier you procure the system on will advise what you need to set AVT up and use it effectively. Generally, good quality microphones are required.

How can I make sure AVT records clearly and accurately?

It is important to spend time training staff and setting your AVT system up carefully. The AVT implementation guide gives useful advice and your AVT supplier will also be able to give guidance.

[AVT Implementation Guide](#)

Where can I find more information about the use of AI in general practice?

For more information about the use of AI (Artificial intelligence) in general practice, see the [CQC mythbuster](#).