

ADVERTORIAL

IN CONVERSATION WITH  
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Swallow Diagnostics

## IMPROVING FEES ACCESS IN THE COMMUNITY: A GAME CHANGER IN SWALLOW ASSESSMENT

### Ambu® aScope™ 4 Rhinolaryngo Slim

Introducing Swallow Diagnostics Limited - a privately established FEES service, offering a transformative approach to swallow diagnostics. Below, we hear from the founders about what inspired their initiative.

#### WHO ARE SWALLOW DIAGNOSTICS LTD?

We are two therapists, working concurrently within the NHS with extensive FEES experience. Taking the opportunity to work together to build a new innovative service in our free time has been a few years in the pipeline but is a direction we are so pleased we have taken.

#### WHAT IS FEES?

Fibreoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES) is a highly informative procedure to assess swallowing function instrumentally. A nasendoscope, which is a thin flexible tube with a small camera and light on the end, is passed through the nose to visualise the throat (pharynx) and voice box (larynx) whilst patients eat and drink.

#### WHY IS CHANGE NEEDED?

FEES assessments are primarily conducted on inpatients within larger healthcare facilities. Outpatient access, however, is often limited, resulting in long waits for appointments and logistical challenges with travel. For many patients, this is simply not a viable option, yet the evidence regarding the need for increased access to instrumental assessments is very compelling. Our vision is to introduce a new approach for outpatients by bringing objective assessments closer to patients, providing access within smaller clinical settings.

#### HOW DO YOU FEEL SWALLOW DIAGNOSTICS FITS WITH THE EVOLVING HEALTHCARE LANDSCAPE?

We feel our community-based FEES model aligns with the general move towards preventative care, envisioning our service as a key contributor to the Government's push for more accessible, community-driven diagnostics. It's convenient, responsive, and collaborative, and we feel proud to have been able to provide our service to our first cohort of patients over the past 12 months.

#### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

We offer improved access for those with mobility issues or for individuals in a much wider range of clinical settings - providing assessment in more personalised, familiar environments. Diagnosis is often faster, reducing delays that can lead to aspiration pneumonia and enable quicker interventions which often avoid unnecessary hospital admissions.

#### WHO REFERS THE PATIENTS TO YOU?

GPs, Consultants, SLT colleagues and patients themselves! We predominantly see patients in outer London and the South-East, within a two hour radius of Guildford in Surrey.

#### WHAT ENDOSCOPE DO YOU USE?

Collaboration is key! We have teamed up with Ambu® and use their sterile single-use Ambu® aScope™ 4 Rhinolaryngo Slim to ensure we maintain the highest level of hygiene standards. It's a slim endoscope designed with a small 3.0mm outer diameter to help minimise patient discomfort during FEES.



#### SO, WHAT'S NEXT?

We have been overwhelmed by the positive comments we have received.

“ extremely grateful for outstanding support  
...excellent and in-depth assessments ”

It's early days and an exciting time! We both want to remain working in the NHS. We want to continue raising awareness of the value of FEES and expand our reach ensuring more people can potentially take advantage of our service. A priority for us is to be able to work with health insurance companies to offer a fair tariff for FEES assessment to avoid the limitations of being a self pay service. As we grow, we hope to collaborate with others, share our expertise and build strong relationships within our industry, ultimately working towards an adopted ethos of community access to swallow diagnostics within the wider healthcare service.

#### HAVE A QUESTION ON FEES IN THE COMMUNITY?

Submit your questions using the QR code and gain access to our "Scoping the Issues" podcast where Tracie and Brigid answer your questions in a future episode!



#### HAVE A PATIENT TO REFER?

Get in touch with Tracie and Brigid at [admin@swallowdiagnostics.co.uk](mailto:admin@swallowdiagnostics.co.uk)

Or for more information visit [www.swallowdiagnostics.co.uk](http://www.swallowdiagnostics.co.uk)

