It is not generally recommended that patient facing email is a part of the channel mix as there are too many variables to control, most notably the risk of a medical emergency being emailed to a practice who subsequently fails to pick the message up in time.

Specific web-forms, where the design controls the messaging and the fields carefully, are likely to be a better solution. Web forms are a good way to manage non-urgent demand for workflows such as registrations, change of details, insurance requests and feedback.
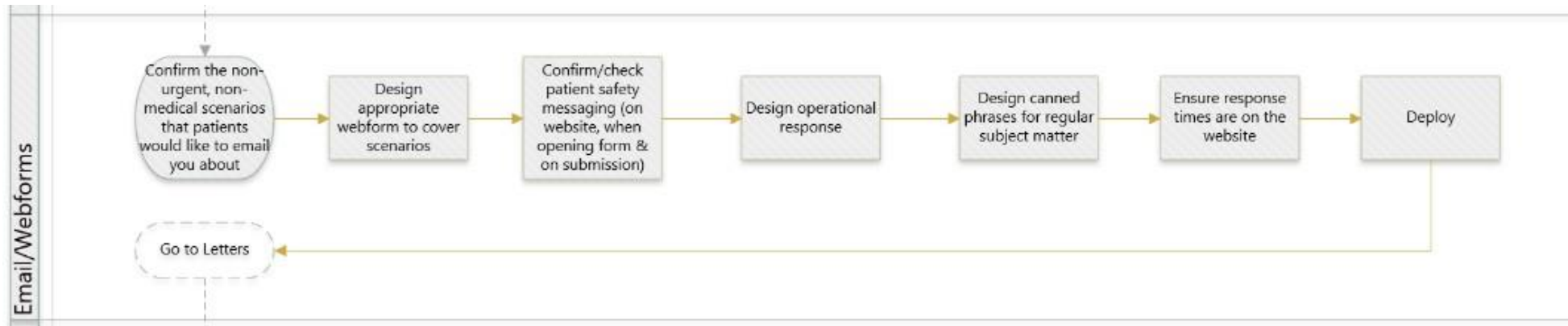
Process 11. Email and Webforms

Quick Check: What role do email and webforms play?	Yes	No
Are email accounts locked down/minimised to prevent non-appropriate (i.e., medically related) traffic?		
Are webforms being used to obtained transactional information (e.g., registration, change of address)?		
Answered no to any question? Consider making some changes		

Email/Webforms

Building webforms

- ✓ Take the time to consider the non-medical scenarios that patients would be likely to send an email about and ask the web team to develop a form that achieve these things.
- ✓ Don't forget to make it clear – at the point of webform opening and submission – that the form is not to be used for medical issues
- ✓ Make timescales for response clear.
- ✓ Be sure to gather contact details, avoiding replying to the patient by email as the web address or channel could later be used by the patient in error
- ✓ Design canned phrases (pre-prepared responses) for the patient-facing team to use when replying to regular issues – this will help to protect quality and reduce time-to-answer