

Community Nursing Covid-19 Innovation/Best Practice

CASE STUDY

New Digital Solutions to Community Healthcare



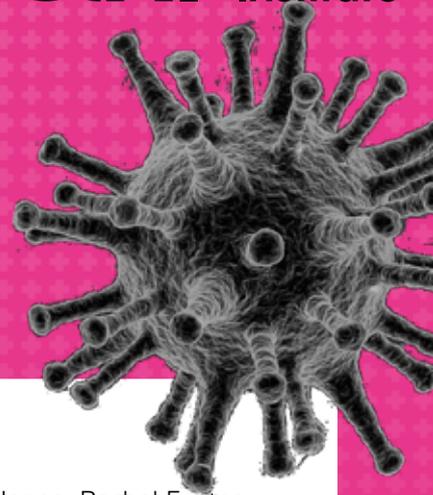
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Personal details

Name: Petra Bryan, Helen Jones, Rachel Foster

Job title: Assistant Directors

Employer: Locala Community Partnership CIC



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Please describe your practice innovation.

Use of digital solutions to provide community services to patients during Covid-19.

Phone appointments and video conferencing appointments were introduced at pace to ensure patients were able to continue to receive care – across most areas of our services. Feedback from clinical colleagues as well as patients has been positive – and in many areas this has highlighted how care can be provided in different ways that we may not have thought was possible previously. A few examples are highlighted below.

- **Motor neurone disease** - patients are being supported by our adult therapy teams using video assessments to monitor symptoms. Being able to interface with these patients is helping reduce crisis.
- **Adult therapy** - are supporting patients who have had a stroke residing in care homes using video.
- **Cardiac rehab** - videos of exercises have been provided to patients to undertake at home and signposting has been provided to on-line apps and websites too.
- **Care Home Support** - initial assessments have been taking place between Locala staff and care home staff via video consultations.
- **Dental** - Video consultations taking place for emergency dental referrals to do initial assessment and to plan treatment options with patients.
- **Diabetes** - Insulin start sessions taking place via video links for patients who choose this option.
- **Podiatry** - triaging of new patients through phone & video consultation. Nail surgery triage has been very successful through this route.
- **Sexual health** - expansion of SH24 (2 way messaging service for younger people) to all areas, and increase in use of telephone appointments.
- **Speech & language therapy** - Patients on dysphagia list now contacted by telephone calls/ video calls. Waiting list has been reduced so patients getting quicker access.
- **TB** - follow up appointments have been provided by virtual consultation.
- **Virtual Walk-In Centre** - new service established for bank holidays and weekends provided through video consultation triage.
- **District nursing** - patients encouraged and enabled to undertake self-care for wound dressings. Use of digital technology with patients photographing wound/dressing to DN for feedback and advice when needed.
- **Breastfeeding** - Support to mums over phone - then sending mum's links to useful videos.
- **Electronic Prescribing (EPS)** - in addition, EPS has been rolled out across our relevant community services, which allows prescribers to send prescriptions electronically to a dispenser (such as a pharmacy) of the patient's choice. This makes the prescribing and dispensing process more efficient and convenient for patients and staff.

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How has this enabled you to treat/support patients/residents/families/carers more effectively and safely?

Video consultations have meant we have been able to continue to provide support and clinical care to many patients in their own homes without them needing to come into care facilities, therefore reducing Covid-19 transmission risks. We have been able to assess patient needs and continue to provide appropriate care – ensuring that those patients who do need face to face interventions receive these. Signposting patients to online resources has increased self-management confidence in many of our patients.

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How has this enabled you to work more effectively with colleagues/partner organisations?

We have worked closely with Care Homes, and used video consultations and contact between clinical colleagues in Locala and Care Home staff to enhance communication and carry out remote assessments. We have also worked closely with Local Authority colleagues in this way

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Do you see this new way of working as a temporary adaptation to current conditions, or a permanent/evolving change?

This is definitely a permanent /evolving change. We have developed a 'Reformation / Transformation' programme to ensure that the positive benefits from using digital solutions continues. All services are now identifying how they will continue to deliver services in the 'new way' – identifying which patient interactions (first appointments, follow up appointments) and particular patient cohorts will be delivered in the new way. Our patient engagement team is working closely with services to continue to gain feedback from patients to inform this work.

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Please describe any particular challenges you had to overcome.

Initially access to video consultation software was a challenge – as a social enterprise some of the NHS applications were not available to us, or functionality was not what we needed. Our current patient system supplier (System One) expanded its offer very quickly in relation to Covid-19 and their video conferencing product was then able to meet our needs.

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Please describe any continuing challenges you would like to address.

Ensuring 'digital inclusivity' – the patient video consultation software is not as easy as some other products (e.g. WhatsApp) so support is needed for patients and carers. We are also beginning to pilot 'remote monitoring' where patients use System One software to be able to enter self-readings against parameters to support self-management.

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Please list any websites, online platforms or apps that have helped you.

We pulled together a resource of apps and websites for self-management to signpost patients to – as we wanted an easy resource for our clinical staff in one place.

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What are the main pieces of IT or other equipment you need (e.g. digital camera, phone, laptop, iPad).

Most of our clinical staff already had laptops – we are a community provided with a good level of digital access already.

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Please give any individual examples, quotes or other information.

Examples of Patient quotes/feedback

Adult Therapy - from carer: 'I just want to say a big thank you for your video calls whilst we have been in lockdown. It was great that I could see what he was doing wrong when you told me. I have been able to continue the exercises with him and he has made great improvements. He is now doing 14 reps of all the exercises and has lost about 3.5 stone in weight. The exercises have given him motivation and it has been with your help that this has been achieved. Without the video calls he would probably stopped doing them or would have done them quickly which wouldn't have achieved anything.'

Speech & Language Therapy - 'Keeping in touch with the speech therapist - she was able to give advice over the video and progress development and treatment plan.'

Sexual Health - 'Quicker more effective service! I was given an appointment based on my needs from the telephone assessment. Which meant I was dealt with a lot quicker than usual.'

Podiatry - 'Initially my appointment was cancelled because of Covid-19 - I was very surprised to get a phone call instead, so we could discuss what I felt was wrong with my foot. ... I am now testing out some insoles for mortons neuroma, a phone call was great and better than waiting until the hospitals are up and running again for podiatry etc.'

Infant feeding - 'I was really shocked at how much help I received over the phone by the infant feeding team. I thought they'd need to see me, but she listened, was empathetic and gave me all the encouragement I needed to continue our breastfeeding journey. Afterwards she followed up with some really useful links to videos and further reading. It wasn't the same as face to face contact so this should definitely not replace it going forward but it would be a good addition to anyone who can't go and wait for an hour or longer at the baby cafe or those with questions that don't require them seeing you feed.'

“ The exercises have given him motivation and it has been with your help that this has been achieved. Without the video calls he would probably stopped doing them or would have done them quickly which wouldn't have achieved anything.’ Patient feedback

