

Special Report

How digital healthcare is helping to put the patient at the centre of care

The right care in the right place at the right time

inhealthcare



“ We must recognise that our hospital service is organised for the service of the patient and not for the purpose of the management board; not even for the good people who give their time and their service to it, and not even for the hospital administrators.”

Aneurin Bevan

As NHS and local government leaders set up the 42 new integrated care systems (ICSs) across England, this message, from the founding father of our national health service, is as important today as it was in 1946.

Every individual should be at the centre of their own care – and new health technology is empowering people to take more control over their own health than at any time in the long and proud history of the NHS.

Access to joined-up care and support is now a priority for the NHS given the growing number of older people and people living with long-term conditions.

In its white paper on joining up care for people, places and populations, the government has promised to put citizens and outcomes at the heart of health and social care as an alternative to the *“endless form-filling, unnavigable processes and a bureaucracy which sees too many people get lost in the system, not receiving the care they need”*.

The government also promises to give professionals access to the right data and technology to make more informed decisions.

Healthy, independent and dignified lives.

The new ICSs are part of a fundamental shift in the way the health and care system is planned and delivered. The Department for Health and Social Care sees successful integration as the planning, commissioning and delivery of coordinated, joined-up and seamless services to support healthy, independent and dignified lives, which improves outcomes for the whole population.

“Everyone should receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time,” declares the DHSC. As a leading provider of virtual healthcare services across the UK, we couldn’t agree more.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the way care was delivered changed quickly. It demonstrated that the best outcomes are achieved when different parts of the health and social care system collaborate and share knowledge. In addition, digital technologies have transformed the delivery of care.

There is now an opportunity for the health and care sector to build on this and use the potential of digital to provide more care in people’s homes and care homes to help the NHS address both its long-term challenges and the immediate task of recovering from the pandemic.

The NHS has committed to supporting health and care systems to ‘level-up’ their digital maturity, and ensure they have a core level of infrastructure, digitisation and skills.

As a leading digital health innovator, we welcome the move towards greater collaboration between health and care providers. Technology is fundamental to achieving this and helps to break down barriers and build links between different providers by enabling them to share learnings and by making the right information available to the right people at the right time.

We also welcome the move towards the provision of more care at home and the expansion of virtual wards.

Read on to find out how digital solutions can help health and care organisations with both the provision of the *“right care in the right place at the time”*, and with the sharing of knowledge and data.

Monitoring conditions at home: virtual healthcare

Virtual healthcare offers support to people in their own homes instead of in hospital, with the aim of increasing capacity in the NHS by reducing pressure on clinicians, and reducing hospital admissions and freeing up beds.



"This has made a considerable difference to my life. I feel that I'm in control of my illness now, rather than my illness being in control of me. It's a brilliant service because I know I have my medical team in the background. If anything goes wrong, they are there to support me and I trust them completely."

Ruth Bean, emphysema patient

Virtual wards can support the safe and earlier discharge of patients from hospital enabling patients to be monitored at home rather than hospital until their treatment is complete.

This helps reduce delayed transfers of care and frees up inpatient capacity which can ease pressure on elective procedures and admissions from A&E.

Many patients are happy to be cared for from the comfort of their own home if they are confident they are being monitored. Caring for patients in their home enables them to take a more active role in the management of their health which can help improve both their quality of life and health outcomes.



"This service was very helpful and it was reassuring that someone was checking on me three times a day because living alone with COVID-19 is very scary and lonely."

COVID-19 patient, Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICS



"The BP@Home team is really helpful, I feel supported and encouraged to make the right decisions, and I know that there's help at the end of the phone if I need it."

**Surrey Heartlands patient,
Mr Gurmit Bhamra**

The concept of virtual wards isn't new but the pandemic has provided an opportunity to think differently about how they're used. Pre-pandemic the majority of remote monitoring in the home was for long-term conditions but increasingly, virtual wards are being expanded and used to monitor patients with short-term conditions, including hypertension and respiratory illnesses.

There are currently more than 53 virtual wards providing over 2,500 'beds' nationwide.

NHS England has ordered the expansion of virtual wards set up during the pandemic to care for people living with COVID and other conditions. By December 2023, NHSE expects ICSs to have completed the comprehensive development of virtual wards towards a national ambition of 40-50 virtual beds per 100,000 population.

Oximetry@Home

Inhealthcare provided the technology for the breakthrough Oximetry@Home programme for the remote monitoring of people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. The service is an excellent example of virtual healthcare and demonstrates how patient care can be transformed in a short space of time, without compromising safety.

The service has unlocked improvements in patient experience, including the ability for patients to enter their own data, and enhancing clinical alert systems to improve the effectiveness of the response when oximetry data suggests a patient may be deteriorating.

The service is fully inclusive, giving patients a choice of communication channels including email, SMS text message or automated telephone call, enabling the delivery of care outside of traditional settings.

The digital platform also demonstrates the value of sharing vital oximetry data more easily across different parts of the health and care system, making it easier and quicker for healthcare teams and services to work together.

To date, more than 10,000 people across southern England have benefitted from the service, which has helped to reduce intensive care admissions and cut the length of hospital stays.



"Having the ability to view all of our COVID-19 patients on a single dashboard has meant patients are safer, they are receiving the right care at the right time and the burden on our clinical teams has reduced; physically and emotionally. We know our patients are receiving optimum remote care 24/7."

Sarah Kearney, Lead Respiratory Clinical Nurse Specialist & Covid Lead, Isle of Wight NHS Trust





Blood Pressure @ Home

In the Home Counties, Surrey Heartlands ICS used our software to roll out the Oximetry@Home remote monitoring service for COVID -19 patients early on in the pandemic. The ICS has now extended the service to deliver remote monitoring of hypertensive patients.



"We have demonstrated that patients are happy to monitor their conditions from home, and when they do, they not only develop a better understanding of their condition, but feel empowered to manage it better through remembering to take their medication and making lifestyle choices."

Dr Jagjit Rai, partner at a family medical practice in Stanwell

Clinicians anticipate it will improve health outcomes for patients and create capacity within the NHS by helping people to manage their conditions, reduce their blood pressure and save millions of pounds in reduced use of NHS services.

Connecting clinicians with patients at home

In the North East of England, Inhealthcare is powering a digital clinic designed by our NHS partner Health Call Solutions to connect clinicians with patients at home and minimise the need to attend hospital appointments in person during the pandemic.

This service is another example of how technology is helping people to receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

More than a video conferencing service, this provides an all-encompassing approach to help hospitals build capacity and meet outpatient demand, catching up on the massive backlog of cancelled or delayed appointments.

It integrates directly with hospital patient administration systems and books appointments, delivers reminders, records attendances, distributes and gathers patient questionnaires and shares outcome forms with electronic patient records.

Joining up health and social care

In London, Inhealthcare is connecting hundreds of care home residents to their family doctors using remote monitoring technology, helping clinicians to identify residents at risk of developing health problems so they can intervene early with treatment.

The service is also being used to help residents recently discharged from hospital to ensure close monitoring and continuity of care.

By delivering effective and efficient care to people living in care homes, the service aims to keep residents safe in their care home and prevent avoidable hospital admissions, cut delays in transfers of care, reduce COVID-19 infections and free up space within hospitals.

The service helps care home workers, who have mixed levels of medical knowledge, to gather observations from residents and gain a greater understanding of individual wellbeing.

The NHS has supplied the care homes with devices for taking measurements including respiration rate, oxygen saturation, systolic blood pressure, pulse rate, level of consciousness or new confusion and temperature.

Carers submit the readings online for automatic triage using the Inhealthcare Professional app and clinicians are alerted if any numbers fall out of range.

This enables doctors to give medical advice, providing a potential lifeline for residents. The readings are integrated into patient records and are accessible to NHS teams including GPs, 111 operators and other authorised health professionals.

This integration enables healthcare professionals to work in partnership with the care homes to respond to the needs of the individual, preventing unnecessary admissions to hospital.

By encouraging collaboration between different health and care providers, this service demonstrates the power of sharing data and helps to deliver the right care, in the right place, at the right time.



“The roll out of remote patient monitoring in care homes is a critical programme of work to connect our primary care networks with care home residents.”

The service will empower care home staff and enable early intervention in the care of vulnerable residents – helping us to closely manage their health and reduce avoidable hospital admissions.”

Osman Bhatti, a GP in Tower Hamlets and Chief Clinical Information Officer for the North East London Health and Care Partnership.

“This new service bridges the gap between care home residents and doctors in a time of reduced face-to-face interactions. This simple and safe technology enables clinicians to spot the early warning signs of health deterioration and take the right steps to support the health and wellbeing of patients at home.”

Bryn Sage, chief executive of Inhealthcare





Coordinated, joined-up and seamless services

To enable the smooth sharing of data, ICSs are being encouraged to use the same digital systems. They will need to develop digital investment plans for bringing all organisations to the same level of maturity, including ensuring data flows seamlessly across all care settings.

To make it quicker and easier for individuals to access NHS services and their health and care information, Inhealthcare has completed the integration of our technology platform with NHS login. NHS login has been created by the NHS and follows industry and government standards for security and identity. It is available on all Inhealthcare's patient-facing applications.

Inhealthcare has also integrated with the Message Exchange for Social Care and Health (MESH), the main secure large file transfer service used across health and social care organisations. Both are vital for coordinated, joined-up and seamless services.

Boosting operational and strategic decision-making

Inhealthcare is also helping providers and commissioners to analyse near real-time NHS data about patients and pathways to boost operational and strategic decision-making.

We have built a 'data lake' to enable new views into the growing amounts of data generated by remote patient monitoring services.

The move is in line with the government's ambitious plans to harness the potential of data, while maintaining the highest standards of privacy and ethics, to help the NHS rebuild from the pandemic and address the long-term challenges facing the health and social care sector.

Data is essential for effective collaboration between different providers and ensuring patients have the best possible experience when accessing care, wherever and whenever they need it.

The power of collaboration

Our work with both Health Call and City Health Care Partnership Hull (CHCP) shows what strong partnerships can achieve and demonstrates that a digital care service designed, built and deployed by one trust can quickly and efficiently be made available to other trusts in the collaboration.

Health Call

Inhealthcare was a co-founder of Health Call Solutions Ltd. Health Call is now a collaboration of seven NHS trusts in the North East and North Cumbria. Inhealthcare provides the infrastructure and technology to the partnership, empowering NHS organisations to design, develop and roll-out digital health services at speed for a population area of three million people.

Content is made available to all trusts for deployment across the region, and by bringing together clinical, technological and commercial expertise, Health Call can provide the best technical solution, at the best price for the region.

The region no longer consumes resources by carrying out the same task multiple times and is able to achieve the best value for money through procuring systems as a group rather than within organisation silos.

These include an NHS-backed self-testing service for patients who take anticoagulation medication, an undernutrition service, and support for people with gestational diabetes, frailty and musculoskeletal disorders.

City Health Care Partnership Hull (CHCP)

Our work with CHCP is further evidence of the power of integration.

Each service has been developed and deployed in one department and then scaled up and shared with other departments/organisations within the region. Services include INR self-testing, telehealth, care homes and immunisation, and we are currently developing an ADT messaging service.

The number of services provided to patients across the region has increased as the power of digital solutions has been proven.



Reduce health inequalities in disadvantaged areas

Our technology is tried and tested: an evaluation of our remote monitoring pathway for people with COVID-19 symptoms confirmed that it improved access to NHS services and can be safely rolled out to help others.

Funded by the Scottish Government, last year's study found that patients had positive experiences of using the system and staff felt supported and engaged.

The evaluation indicated the remote health pathway contributed to increased self-management among patients, improved resource efficiency and reduced health inequalities with more than twice as many people from disadvantaged areas using the system.

These outcomes fully support the policy ambitions of ICSs: improving population health and healthcare, tackling unequal outcomes and access, enhancing productivity and value for money and helping the NHS to support broader social and economic development.

Get in touch

Given that more than two million patients have used our services since the start of the pandemic, it seems that individuals really can be at the heart of the new joined-up approach to health and social care.

To find out how Inhealthcare can help deliver these outcomes for your Integrated Care System, please give us a call on 01423 510 520 or drop us an email at contact@inhealthcare.co.uk.

About Inhealthcare

Inhealthcare is a UK market leader in digital health and remote patient monitoring. More than 20 million people across the UK can now access technologies developed by the company in partnership with the NHS.

The underlying technology platform and its associated patient and clinician-facing applications are registered with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency as a Medical Device. Inhealthcare has integrated the platform with NHS login, making it even quicker and easier for patients to use its digital health services.

Inhealthcare is based in Harrogate, North Yorkshire.



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