

The Connect Me team use Inhealthcare to expand remote monitoring across Scotland

The challenge

NHS Scotland needed a technology provider to support the scaling up and mainstreaming of remote patient monitoring across Scotland.

The solution

NHS Scotland has partnered with Inhealthcare to develop and expand a range of remote monitoring pathways to help patients safely manage their health needs at home.

A growing number of patients are being offered Connect Me, the remote monitoring programme for Scotland, as a means to interact and communicate with their healthcare professionals. The programme enables people to have more choice and greater flexibility on how and where they manage their health and wellbeing.

The nationally funded programme is being used to monitor the effects of starting or stopping

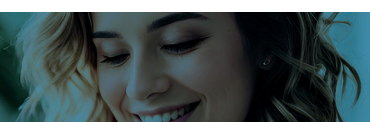
Digitally inclusive technology

Inhealthcare's technology offers patients choices for sharing readings, including mobile app, web browser, text message, or automated call. Depending on the pathway, patients may be able

treatments, issue reminders or encourage and enable clinicians to spot flare-ups so treatment can be delivered sooner. The programme also supports healthcare professionals to identify changes in health and offer advice and support during treatment plans.

Connect Me offers a number of pathways including Heart Failure, Prostate Cancer, Urogynaecology, and Core Home Monitoring (multi physiological readings) across primary and secondary care services. One of the pathways is a national primary care blood pressure monitoring service, which to date has monitored more than 100,000 patients.

to choose what method of technology suits them best, meaning it's inclusive of all, regardless of WiFi connectivity or technical skills.



A snapshot into the Connect Me blood pressure remote monitoring service

High blood pressure affects an estimated 1.3 million Scots and is the leading preventable risk factor for heart and circulatory disease, associated with around half of all strokes and heart attacks.

The blood pressure remote monitoring service is empowering patients to take control of their blood pressure, reducing the risk of heart attacks and strokes while easing the burden on the NHS.

Connect Me enables primary care patients to share their blood pressure readings with healthcare professionals without attending

General Practice appointments and promotes self-management to help control the condition.

The programme allows clinicians to monitor patient trends and change medication as required, whether levels improve from healthy habits or start increasing over time.

The initiative has reached a major milestone, with over 100,000 patients, using the service within all its iterations, making it one of the largest programmes of its kind globally.

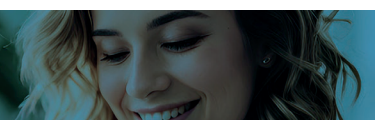


Working with Inhealthcare, The Connect Me remote monitoring programme has expanded across the 12 health boards in Scotland. Inhealthcare's inclusive digital health services mean we reach everyone, even those who lack digital skills or those living in rural locations. This is in line with Scotland's overriding aim to achieve world-leading levels of digital inclusion. Inhealthcare's collaborative approach has been welcomed throughout.

Morag Hearty, Connect Me Lead

Connect Me is another example of how we're embracing technology to help tackle the challenges facing health and social care. It's extremely encouraging to see that over 100,000 patients have benefitted from the platform to date, saving an estimated 400,000 appointments. I would encourage health boards to increase the roll out of Connect Me and for people who have hypertension to ask their GPs if they might be eligible for the programme. By empowering patients to take control of their wellbeing we are not only improving health outcomes but also significantly reducing pressure on primary care services.

Neil Gray, Health Secretary



Results

- The blood pressure programme has reached a major milestone, with over 104,000 patients having used the service, both on a previous system and now expanding even further using Inhealthcare.
- It is estimated the programme has enabled more than 400,000 face-to-face BP checks to be avoided. The provision of better quality and accuracy of BP readings data, demonstrating trends and averages enables informed clinical decisions on diagnosis and treatment.

Building on its success, Connect Me has expanded the blood pressure pathway into secondary care to help patients attending clinics for dietary problems, heart failure, hypertension, kidney disease, and stroke. (Core Monitoring pathway).

Patients will provide blood pressure readings alongside other measurements like heart rate, oxygen levels, and weight according to their clinical needs.

Other live pathways provide monitoring for long term condition management, digitalised bloods results and clinical triage questionnaires.

The Connect Me programme was named as Digital Service Transformation winner at the Holyrood Digital Health and Care Awards earlier this year.

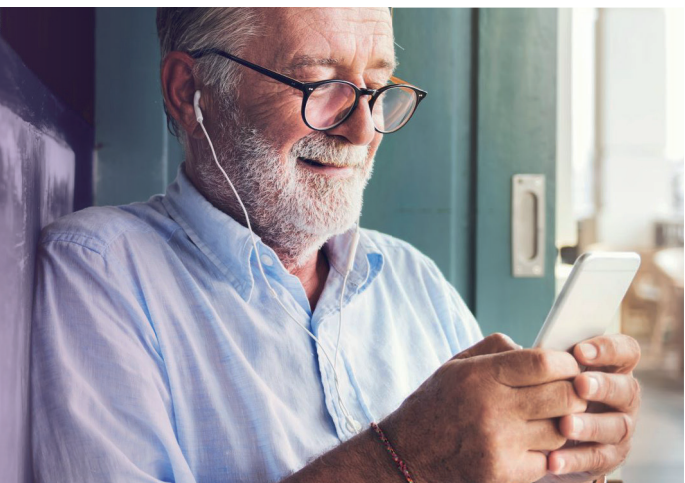
A snapshot into the national prostate cancer pathway

A national digital prostate cancer pathway has reduced the waiting time for blood test results from 2-3 weeks to just 48 hours.

A digital prostate cancer pathway was developed by NHS Ayrshire and Arran's urology and digital teams to communicate blood test results to people who required routine monitoring following prostatectomy or radiotherapy treatment.

A treatment summary is also shared digitally with primary care teams and patients, as well as sign-posting to self-management resources.

The service is accessible via an app or online portal, SMS or automated telephone call, meaning the service can be used by all, including those with low technical skills or in areas of poor mobile phone signal.



2300

patients registered

Live

across 4 Health Boards

48hrs

test result wait time reduced from 2-3 weeks

500

specialist nurse hours saved annually*

18 weeks

reduction in diagnosis wait time for new patients

*data taken from a pilot at Ayrshire and Arran

Results

- The pathway which launched in July 2023, now has a total of 2300 patients registered from four Health Boards (Ayrshire and Arran, Forth Valley, Greater Glasgow & Clyde and Lanarkshire). Lothian and Grampian are engaged in discussions with plans to offer the service to all Scottish Health Boards.
- Historically a patient would have waited 2-3 weeks for test results. Test results are now received within 48 hours - reducing the anxiety for patients of lengthy waits.
- Those with unsatisfactory results now receive earlier intervention, typically contacted by the support worker the same day. Those keeping well no longer have interruption to their lives and can carry on as normal, avoiding unnecessary travel and time away from other commitments.
- The Ayrshire Urology team reviewed blood results at twenty-minute clinic appointment (bi-annually) which are no longer required with the digital pathway notifications, therefore releasing approximately 500 specialist nurse hours annually.
- There's been a reduction in phone calls from anxious patients, as the pathway signposts people to validated resources based on symptoms.
- This released capacity enables specialist nurses to re-focus their time on other priorities such as new patients now receiving quicker diagnosis (reduction of 18 weeks) or patients with unsatisfactory results or who are unwell.
- There is now improved data sharing with Primary Care as the treatment summary is transferred electronically via EDT to Docman to the patient's GP practice, whereas before inconsistencies existed in availability of data from Urology service due to time pressures.



I think that the introduction of digital follow up has been an excellent step forward. Clinicians often underestimate the understandable anxiety that patients experience while waiting for test results. With this digital follow up, patients are usually being informed of their results within 48 hours. This provides reassurance to many. For those with abnormal results, they are fast tracked to CNS appointments and there is now space to see these patients at clinic which was always a struggle before digital follow up existed. Marie and Maureen do a fantastic job at running this really important service and is yet another example of how Ayrshire and Arran are leading the way when it comes to prostate cancer services in Scotland.

Dr Nick MacLeod, Consultant Clinical Oncologist, Beatson WoSCC



I monitor over a thousand patients, ensuring PSA results are received timeously and quickly addressing patients' concerns. Apart from the savings - both financially and clinical time - we have made a huge difference to the waiting times for results. Patients now have bloods done and results back within 48 hours, and continue as normal rather than weeks of anxious waiting. Knowing that stable patients are reassured by receiving their result digitally, we focus more of our time now on patients with concerns or unsatisfactory results. I assist with routine concerns, however should someone require CNS input this is now often same day by telephone or in-person within a couple of days. The success of this initiative encouraged us to seek other ways to improve patient experience with digital, and helping patients through diagnosis as quickly as possible with a dedicated support worker to help with any concerns or questions.

Marie Baillie, Urology-Oncology Support Worker, NHS Ayrshire and Arran



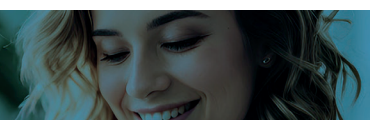
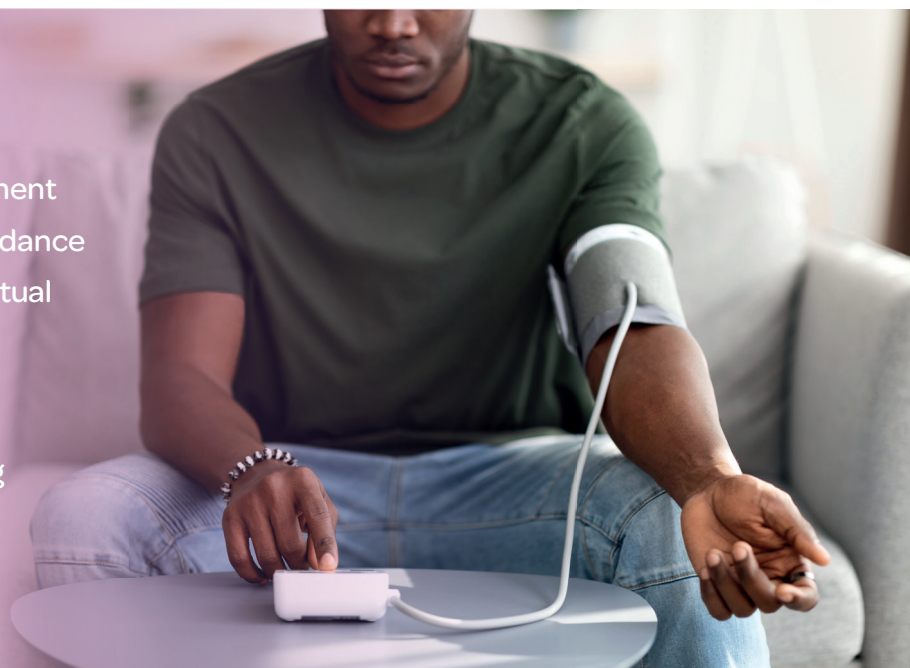
We are proud to be working alongside the team at NHS Scotland to help Scotland become an international leader in technology-enabled care, supporting more people to live longer, healthier lives at home or in community settings.

There are more than one million General Practice appointments per year in Scotland just for measuring blood pressure. By rolling out remote monitoring pathways for conditions such as hypertension, we are helping to create significant extra capacity within the healthcare system.

Bryn Sage, chief executive of Inhealthcare

Benefits for patients

- Reduced waiting times/access to treatment
- Easy access to additional resources/guidance
- More informed awareness to enable mutual care planning
- Increased confidence to self-manage conditions effectively
- Less time spent attending and travelling to appointments
- Reducing family/carer burden
- Less exposure to infection



The services are also loved by patients



I understand when to seek help at the right time.

I have changed my lifestyle now.

I like knowing my nurse can see my readings.

Its so easy to use – it takes about two minutes.

98%

liked using the service

98%

found it easy to use

94%

would use it again

The Connect Me team listed these benefits of the services for clinical teams

- Better availability of data to assist early intervention
- Greater adherence to treatment
- Standardised quality of care provision
- Net zero and productivity gains from less travel
- More timely face-to-face contact with patients
- More efficient use of resources
- Reduced avoidable hospital admissions



The ability for patients to monitor their blood pressure and send averaged results to the practice has been invaluable.

GP

Lets patients give feedback and highlight any issues prior to review. This allows time to assess future management plans.

Practice nurse

Patients come with more information about treatment options including non-surgical ones so they become more willing to try them before considering surgery.

Urogynaecology service

It does mean we regularly get updates on patients BP and can continue monitoring even after correct medication titration has been reached.

Healthcare Support Worker

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