



New X-Ray machine for Alston Hospital

The Department of Health pathfinder fund was able to allocate some additional funding to Alston Healthcare in February, which was used to purchase a state of the art ITX 560 Digital X-Ray machine to replace the old machine that broke down in January.

The new machine allows X-rays to be viewed and used far more quickly than the old machine and will ensure that the service remains in use. Jonathan Atkinson from Carestream health that provided the machine said "Carestream Health are delighted to supply the ITX560 unit and workstation to Alston Hospital. Digital X-rays offer many benefits for patients and the NHS, reducing waiting times and reducing time in hospital." Cumbria NHS Trust will cover the additional running costs of the new machine. Malcolm Forster thanked Alston Healthcare for all their hard work and said it was a very encouraging start to installing the infrastructure to enhance the service.



What is Alston Healthcare?

Alston Healthcare has been awarded grant funding from the Department of Health Social Enterprise Pathfinder fund to look at ways of improving health and social care using e-health solutions.

A steering group meets regularly and includes staff from the GP Surgery, Hospital, Age Concern, League of Friends and the community. Cybermoor Services is the accountable body for the Department of Health.

Social Enterprise & NHS

Social Enterprise is a phrase increasingly bandied about as a way to reform the delivery of healthcare. The Government has made it easier for NHS staff to set up their own social enterprises while retaining NHS benefits, such as pension rights. However, there is so much change going on in the NHS in Cumbria at the moment, that doing so is not a priority for many people. The "Right to Request" means that any member of staff can request to set up their own social enterprise and have that request considered. There are many benefits to working in a social enterprise – you can change the way you do things that may be frustrating at the moment. If you are considering setting up a new social enterprise, or you just want more information, give us a call.

Contact us

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Keep up to date with the project at www.alstonhealthcare.co.uk

Telehealth update

We are now liaising with NHS commissioners and clinicians to see how telehealth could fit into the delivery of healthcare in Eden and West Cumbria.

The telehealth service aims to:

- Support early discharge, allowing patients to leave hospital quicker.
- Enable more care to be delivered at home.
- Save patients and nursing staff from having to make unnecessary journeys.
- Make patients and carers more independent.

In order to measure benefits of the telehealth service, we are working with Vincent O'Brien (University of Cumbria) and John Howarth (NHS Cumbria). An application was submitted at the end of May to the National Institute for Health Research (research for patient benefit programme) for funding to evaluate the trial service. A decision is expected in November. Thank you to every one who expressed support for the application.

Video Assessment update

The video project is now linking Penrith and Keswick hospitals with a launch due in early July. The Alston broadband link has insufficient capacity to run the video service at the moment. The Cumbria Wide Informatics group are still considering our proposal to upgrade the broadband link into Alston; pending renewed quotes from BT. When the link is ordered, the line has to be upgraded, which could be a lengthy process. Other sites across the County have expressed an interest in linking into the system.

Digital TV

It's Sunday night and you have been feeling terrible all weekend; you want to go and see the doctor on Monday morning, but you don't know if there are any appointments. Help is at hand... Our DigiTV service will soon enable patients in Alston to book appointments and organise repeat prescriptions from the comfort of their favourite armchair - through their TV. All you need is a Sky box with access to Sky Text. Margie Cooper would like to hear from you if you are aged over 75 and interested in giving your views on the system for a research project we are doing over the summer – please contact the office.

Events

Telehealth Essentials 2009

30/6/09 Leeds - Intel is hosting a seminar aimed at commissioners and providers who are seeking to build the business case for telehealth technology as a way and means of improving the quality and effectiveness of healthcare locally. You can register at www.inteldigitalhealthgroup.co.uk

Social Enterprise Coalition - Health and Care Forum

30/6/09 London - The sixth meeting of the Coalition's Health & Social Care Forum will look at new developments in the health and social care markets and the opportunities these present for existing and new social enterprises.

www.socialenterprise.org.uk/pages/health-events.html

Platform – Fly Higher Launch Event

25/6/09, Liverpool Science Park 6pm to 8pm

Networking, refreshments and 100 very interesting people from NHS organisations.

www.hopestreetcentre.com

DoH Social Enterprise Unit Staff and Patient Engagement

This event covers workforce issues, benefits and cultural change in the NHS. The event will take place on 3rd July in Birmingham running from mid-morning to mid afternoon. For more details and notes & presentations from the workshop on the 1st June contact Nicole.Chapman@dh.gsi.gov.uk, Tel. 0113 2545049.

BBC visit

The BBC visited Alston at the end of May as part of their Broadband Britain series. They linked live from the Market Cross for a series of reports and interviews. "We chose Alston because the community has consistently innovated with new technology and services" said technology correspondent Rory Cellan-Jones. Telehealth services featured strongly throughout the day with mentions on Radio 4's today programme, Radio 5 Live and BBC News 24. The Virtual Wards pilot in Cockermouth was covered on the BBC website.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/8034437.stm>