

Telehealth trial finishes

The Alston Healthcare telehealth trial completed in April and the evaluation has now been agreed. It has allowed patients with long-term conditions to be remotely monitored from the comfort of their own home. Patients were positive about the support available, simplicity of equipment, additional peace of mind, reassurance and confidence they obtained from the equipment. The full evaluation is awaiting sign off from the PCT and will then be available from the Alston Healthcare website www.alstonhealthcare.co.uk.

Project Objectives

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| 1. Prevent acute exacerbations and reduce acute admissions | ✗ |
| 2. Support early discharge and care at home | ✓ |
| 3. Promote health, independence (self-care) and wellbeing of the service user | ✓ |
| 4. To evaluate the use of resources (staff time) | ✓ |
| 5. Match care to need by creating individual plans and care pathways | ✓ |

The Telehealth equipment, supplied by Tunstall Healthcare, measures the patient's health and records their vital sign data such as blood pressure, blood oxygen and pulse each day when prompted by the device. This information is then sent via phone to Careline's monitoring centre in Carlisle, enabling health care professionals to review the patient's health status and take appropriate action like arranging a visit or altering their medication. The aim of daily home monitoring with telehealth is to improve the quality of life for patients, ensuring timely support when needed whilst also helping patients to better understand and control their own condition. Patients are able to read their own vital signs on the monitor and learn to recognise any serious changes. Now that the pilot is complete, we are negotiating to extend the scheme.

eHealth makes the PCT Strategic Plan

The PCT recognises the role of e-health in its latest strategic plan (page 235) - "We also have several pilots in the localities working with the third sector to trial the use of telemedicine. This is supportive of self management at home. We are establishing with partners, a Support for Self Management Board to oversee the review and implementation of new approaches, including the use of assistive technologies."

Telehealth Testbed

Alston Healthcare is working with Newcastle & Hull Universities on projects to bring benefits of cutting edge telehealth applications to Cumbria. The proposals to the Technology Strategy Board will look at how rural patients can benefit from new telehealth devices and services.

EMIS connections

We have been discussing with Tunstall and EMIS how we can get telehealth devices to automatically feed into patient records. This service is not currently available, but we feel that it would make telehealth monitoring significantly more attractive to GPs. We submitted a proposal to the SHA last year for this but it was declined – hopefully we will have more luck this year!

Contact us

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Video Assessment update

It's been a frustrating few months for the video project. While the equipment has been delivered, we are still awaiting the green light from some of the project partners.

CHOC will use links to connect Minor Injuries Units in Alston and Keswick to a doctor based in Penrith Hospital. The sites have all been surveyed and we are now waiting for informatics to configure the broadband network so we can get the equipment working. We have completed the equality impact assessment, privacy impact assessment and had several meetings with project partners.

Commissioners in Penrith are interested in using the service for dermatology and there has even been interest in how it could be used by neurology consultants.

Video links for GPs

Dr Sam Everington in Bromley by Bow is actively looking at using Skype and other low cost video conferencing tools to see patients more effectively. The cost of going out to see patients and sheer volume of work means that it can make more sense to have a video chat. This also provides more information than a telephone consultation. Sam is part of the Cabinet Office's Social Enterprise Ambassador Programme

<http://socialenterpriseambassadors.org.uk/ambassador/sam-everington>

Social Enterprise in the NHS

The recent announcements about the re-organisation of the NHS have once again thrust Social Enterprise into the limelight. While it is flattering to advocates of social enterprise that it is seen as the main vehicle of reform, at Alston Healthcare we have seen some of the real difficulties in incorporating this approach into the NHS. There is danger that the private sector will step in if social enterprises are unable to step up to the plate to deliver services. 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. However, the new government has yet to flesh out the plans and how issues like pension and conditions will be affected. If you are considering setting up a new social enterprise, give us a call.

Funding

The Social Enterprise Investment Fund offers a mixture of grants and loans for people interested in setting up a social enterprise or growing an existing one to deliver NHS services. More information at <http://www.socialinvestmentbusiness.org/our-funds/social-enterprise-investment-fund/>



Video conferencing equipment

What is Alston Healthcare?

Alston Healthcare is part of the Cybermoor social enterprise based in Alston and 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 community. Cybermoor Services is the accountable body for the

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