



## All systems go for Telehealth

The Alston Healthcare telehealth is now live, which allows patients with long-term conditions to be remotely monitored from the comfort of their own home. This has proved invaluable in the recent cold weather. Both NHS Cumbria and Alston Healthcare have been trialling the telehealth monitoring service with patients in Carlisle and Eden who have conditions such as heart failure or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

The Telehealth solution, 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.



*A patient with a Tunstall RTX monitor*

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.

The pilot is only open to patients referred by specialist nurses at the moment. In April it will be evaluated with by NHS Cumbria to assess the impact it has had on admissions to hospital before a decision is made about continuing.

The project now has two groups. The Stakeholder Group looks at how the project is delivering overall and ensures that all of the right people know what is happening. The Operations Group sorts out any technical issues with Careline, Tunstall, Clinicians and ourselves.

## Telecare Services Association Conference

Jan and Daniel delivered 2 workshops at the Telecare Association's November conference. While it was a relief to see so many other e-health projects facing the same challenges, it brought it home to us how much we can offer other organisations who are struggling to get projects off the ground. We are now discussing tailored consultancy support with some of these.

### 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 have expressed an interest in using the service to support Minor Injuries Units at Alston, Penrith and Keswick. It is hoped that the existing broadband link into Alston hospital would be sufficient for this, as video calls would take place when the network is relatively quiet. Cumbria Wide Informatics has decided not to upgrade the link into Alston at the moment, as the quote from Connecting for Health was way beyond the planned budget. However, Cybermoor is in discussion with Informatics and Virginmedia to see if a service can be delivered via the new Cybermoor high capacity broadband link to the North East.

## Social Enterprise in the 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. All the major political parties are keen on greater choice and favour social enterprises in delivering that choice, but financial cutbacks could see the private sector step in. Just to confuse things further, the Secretary of State supports existing NHS providers and in some cases there are protected three year contracts for new social enterprises. 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, give us a call

## E-health and Carbon Saving

The telehealth and video-conferencing projects being developed by Alston Healthcare do more than help patients; they are reducing the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> produced by saving journeys. Research we have carried out has shown that the telehealth units could save 348 tonnes of carbon over the equipment's lifetime. With 5% of the country's transport CO<sub>2</sub> coming from the NHS, telehealth has a definite future role in delivering greener healthcare.

## EVENTS

**Social Enterprise Coalition - Health and Care Forum** – London, 16 March 2010. This one day conference will explore the opportunities and challenges the current climate presents. It will provide overviews of this Government's and the other parties' visions for health and social care, while providing a range of very practical workshops for those interested in either establishing or expanding a social enterprise, or commissioning services from them.

[www.socialenterprise.org.uk/pages/health-conference.html](http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/pages/health-conference.html)

## DoH Social Enterprise Unit – regular seminars

Contact [Nicole.Chapman@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Nicole.Chapman@dh.gsi.gov.uk), Tel. 0113 254 5049 for more details about Social Enterprise workshops run by the Department of Health.

**Cumbria Social Enterprise Partnership's Health and Social Care Group** will be running an event in the spring to promote better links between the NHS and social enterprise. More details from <http://www.socialenterpriseincumbria.org>.

## 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

## What is Alston Healthcare?

Alston Healthcare (a social enterprise) 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 Department of Health.

Keep up to date with the project at [www.alstonhealthcare.co.uk](http://www.alstonhealthcare.co.uk)