

A new heart failure and lung disease service reduces A&E admissions and bed days at Norfolk Community Health and Care Trust



Norfolk Community Health and Care Trust has reported a reduction in A&E admissions and bed days among a group of high-dependency patients following the introduction of a new remote-monitoring service for people with heart and lung disease. 51 patients are currently being monitored on the service.

The service

The remote monitoring service allows patients with heart and lung disease to monitor their vital signs at home and relay readings directly to a clinician. The service was designed to improve quality of life for patients and free up hospital beds and surgery time.

The service enables clinicians to monitor trends and intervene if readings move outside individual thresholds. It encourages patients to recognise changing symptoms and promotes self-management of their conditions. The remote monitoring service complements the work of the trust's heart failure team which attends to patients in clinic, at home and via telephone consultation.

The self-testing service is for patients who have recently experienced heart failure or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and need to be monitored to ensure their vital signs are within safe range.

They are given medical devices and training to monitor their vital signs at home. These include blood pressure, temperature, weight, pulse rate and oxygen saturation.

The patient then sends the readings to clinicians via an online submission form or automated telephone service, depending on how confident they feel using technology.

Outcomes

Analysis by the trust of the six months before and after the service has revealed the following among a cohort of service users:

- Bed days reduced by 88 per cent
- Accident and emergency admissions reduced by 89 per cent
- GP visits reduced by 65 per cent
- Out-of-hours appointments reduced by 65 per cent*.
- The analysis also showed a similar trend for patients who stayed on the normal service, suggesting that nurses were able to spend more time with patients who needed care the most.

The Norfolk Community Health and Care Trust analysis is based on the outcomes of 12 patients using the service



"We have the automated call every day at 11am and I provide readings for weight, blood pressure, oxygen saturation and pulse."

"It provides great peace of mind and lots of people say how well I seem. Some people might be afraid of trying out new technology, but I try to advise them how good it is."

Tony Robinson, 83, a retired transport driver with heart failure

"It is very reassuring for me. If we have a problem, we are straight through to the heart failure nurse - and consultant if necessary - in a very short space of time."

"The problem is sorted out, usually through medication, and we don't have to go back into hospital or see a GP. It saves a lot of waiting for doctors and cuts out a lot of anxiousness."

"My children and grandchildren supported us with the technology when we first started. Now we have mastered it. This is a great way forward."

Jan Robinson, wife of patient Tony Robinson

About Norfolk Community Health and Care (NCH&C)

NCH&C provides community-based NHS health and care to everyone, from babies to the elderly, via more than 70 different service locations across Norfolk. Serving a population of nearly 900,000 people, the trust delivers community dentistry, services for children, young people and families, therapies, community nursing, end of life care and specialist nursing.

We believe that people are better looked after locally and this belief drives us to work hard to bring our expert care to patients in our seven community hospitals, within GP surgeries and in their own homes.

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