Local Investment Programme

Essex County Council –
Using video communication in care

CASE STUDY

April 2018

Care and Health Improvement Programme

Local Investment Programme

Local Investment Programme is overseen by the Local Government Association on behalf of the funders NHS Digital

OPM Group and the Bayswater Institute were commissioned to evaluate the Local Investment Programme producing an interim evaluation report and case studies.

Essex County Council was one of 19 local authorities to be funded in 2017/18 under the theme – **enabling people to interact with care services through digital channels**

The Local Investment Programme full interim evaluation can be found at www.local.gov.uk/scdip

Essex County Council

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Project Summary: Piloting video calls as part of care packages amongst individuals in the short-term support and reablement service

Partners: Essex Cares Limited, Breezie, SpeakSet

Outcomes: Improved health and medicine management and better access to community support

Projected Savings: 40% reduction in physical visits projected (saving dependent on scalability).

- This project is a pilot study into use of video calls as part of care delivery package.

- It aims to establish whether a cohort of individuals in the short-term support and reablement services would engage with a secure system (SpeakSet) which allows them to use existing television sets to make video calls with friends, family and health and social care providers.

- It will test whether video calls can replace physical visits by a care worker and support wellbeing by providing services such as reassurance checks and medication prompts.

- It will also establish whether these solutions are effective / financially viable in the short term reablement packages (maximum of 6 weeks).

- This project fits in with ECC's prevention strategy and supports the Local Digital Roadmaps that Essex are part of.

- • Planned to partner with SpeakSet system to deliver the project as they offer a simple and secure system which can be used with any TV set so users will not need to learn how to use a new piece of technology. Breezie tablet devices also added to the pilot at point of mobilisation.

- SpeakSet and Breezie is currently used by a number of health providers, including CCGs to provide 'virtual' GP services, and is therefore considered 'fit for purpose' and requires no further development for the purposes of this pilot.

The Challenge

- There are various video conferencing solutions on the market but they are yet to be used consistently in replacement of traditionally delivered care. This pilot aims to challenge the need to be physically present for certain support activities.

The Solution

- The pilot will identify 40 individual who are at the point of referral and assessment in a reablement or short term support service. They will receive the device and they along with their carers will be trained how to use it.

- The rationale for medication prompt and wellness/reassurance checks is that these types of activities are well suited to a more remote form of interaction. However, users and care workers will be encouraged to identify other scenarios where this solution could be appropriate.

- For the service user the use of video communication should be a more convenient and less intrusive method of interacting with a care worker.

- Outside of the care interactions they will be free to use the device to contact friends and family, strengthening access to their support n

The following Key Performance Indicators will be used to measure the benefits that the cohort gains from using the system:

- Outcome of personal goals for 'health and medication management', 'accessing the community' and 'support networks' as appropriate to the individual and defined in their care plan.

- Number of physical visits replaced by a video call, the time saved by a virtual interaction and the associated cost reduction.

- How many individuals use SpeakSet and Breezie, how often, how long for, how they use it.

- How many individuals would be willing to pay for the system or a similar technology after the package ends.

Each user will be interviewed twice during the pilot: when they are receiving their training and at the end.

There will be a workshop at the end of the pilot to disseminate findings.

If pilot proves qualitative and quantitative benefits the solutions could be mainstreamed into short term care services and then considered for longer term services.

Impact for clients:

- This project supports aspirations for patient-facing digital services and anticipates that people will become empowered to manage their health and social care needs, promote their wellbeing and also communicate with professionals.

- Exposure to new technology should raise the digital capabilities of individuals, who are likely to be older people.

- It should increase independent living and enable citizens to stay at home for longer, as well as reduce loneliness and social isolation

Impact for professionals:

- For care workers this will lead to a more efficient use of time, as there will be significant reduction in travel time, and workers will be able to manage calls to service users in multiple locations from one place.

- Cost savings:
  - As this project is a proof of concept the financial benefits are modest. The more significant opportunity is in the scalability of the method.
  - Financial modelling indicates that the cost of a visit could be reduced by 40% if undertaken via a video call rather than physical visit.

Challenges to delivery:

- There were initial technological issues with SpeakSet which reduced confidence in the device. Although resolved early in the pilot, Breezie devices have been used as an alternative solution where SpeakSet is not suitable.

- It has been slower to identify suitable customers than anticipated, as a high number of those in short-term services have complex needs and are therefore unsuitable for the project.

- It has taken care professionals a considerable amount of time to become confident introducing and using the technology.

Learning to date:

- Using the video for reablement is not having the anticipated impact on replacing physical calls. It may be that a different use case would be more appropriate.

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The final evaluation report will be published by March 2019