



CASE STUDY EXPLORING EXPERIENCES OF VIRTUAL WARDS STUDY.

ARC NWC Theme: Equitable Place Based Health and Care (EPHC)

Project: EXPERTS Study

NHS Priority Area: Analogue to Digital

KEY FINDINGS

- Showed that some patients prefer virtual ward care over inpatient hospital stays.
- Highlighted that some patients value receiving care at home surrounded by their support network.
- Demonstrated positive impacts of virtual wards across different parts of the NHS.
- Provided insights from staff about their experiences, benefits, and challenges of delivering virtual ward care.
- Informed future rollout and delivery of virtual wards in additional specialities.
- Identified the need to improve the admission process so patients understand what virtual ward care involves.
- Informed discussions about workforce requirements to ensure adequate staffing and avoid burden.
- Raised awareness among member organisations about health equity considerations in virtual ward implementation.
- Emphasised the need for an equity-focused approach to avoid exacerbating health inequalities.
- Identified future research needs, including exploring experiences of staff not engaged, patients who decline virtual ward care, and families/carers of those receiving virtual ward support.

BACKGROUND

The Equitable Place-Based Health and Care (EPHC) Theme collaborated with the Health Innovation Network to understand more about experiences of delivering, and receiving care on, virtual wards. This involved an initial literature review and co-production work, followed by a multi-site qualitative research project to gain further insight into people's experiences of virtual wards.

IMPACT DETAILS

Findings have enabled the local health and care system to understand more about people's experiences and feelings towards virtual wards. In this project we spoke to staff to find out more about their experience of this different way of delivering care, where it works, and where some of the challenges lie.'

Key insights from this work include, looking to develop the admission experience so that patients can be informed of what the virtual ward will involve, what they will be required to do and how this can be adapted if needed. Through the project steering group there have been discussions about the workforce requirements to support this model of care which the qualitative project has informed. For example, there will need to be suitable allocation of staff time for virtual wards to ensure burden is limited. Additionally, a number of our member organisations are understanding the health equity implications for the implementation of virtual wards offer. To ensure inclusive opportunity of access and experiences of this model of care, a health equity lens should be applied to mitigate exacerbating health inequalities within certain population groups.



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IMPACT CONTINUED

Future research needs include looking at experiences of different populations, such as staff who may not be currently engaged with virtual wards, patients who are offered virtual wards and decline and family members, friends and carers of patients who have received care on a virtual ward

NEXT STEPS

Future research needs include looking at experiences of different populations, such as staff who may not be currently engaged with virtual wards, patients who are offered virtual wards and decline and family members, friends and carers of patients who have received care on a virtual ward

PODCAST

Discussion of our work to date and our views on the role of health equity in this emerging area of health care delivery resulted in a podcast - <https://evolutionjobs.com/exchange/evo-nhs-84-benefits-realisation-for-digital-enabled-care-at-home/>

VIDEO

In collaboration with Health Innovation North (formerly Innovation Agency) and NHS Clinical staff, the ARC NWC EPHC team have produced this short video introducing virtual wards. Virtual wards are a new way of providing care and support to people in the place they call home.



LEARN MORE ABOUT ARC NWC'S IMPACT ON OUR WEBSITE HERE:

