NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde district nurses improve patient care with tablets

“Now a district nurse arrives at a patient better equipped and with more confidence about the visit, with all the information they need to hand on their tablet device.”

Linda Brennan, Nurse Team Leader, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde is the largest health board in the UK. It is responsible for improving the health of its local population and delivering healthcare to over 1.2 million people. NHS GGC District Nursing service has around 800 district nurses providing services over a large and geographically diverse area.

Modernising district nursing

NHS GG&C District Nursing service was looking to modernise and develop a service model that would support a strategy to shift care from hospitals to community-based services. Changing demographics, resulting in an expanding elderly population, are expected to lead to an increase in long-term conditions, putting additional strain on the service.

The health board’s ambition was to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the district nursing team who are going out to see patients. Previously, nurses had to go back to base to access patient details and order equipment. The goal was to provide them with mobile access to patient data and electronic scheduling of their visits. A remote working solution was required to deliver safe, effective, person-centred care, improving outcomes for patients and enhancing the district nursing service.

Cloud applications to enhance team working

Dell’s Mobile Application Development team worked with NHS GG&C to transform its web-based CNIS (Community Nursing Information System) application into a Windows 8.1 app so it could run on a Windows tablet, powered by an Intel processor; this provided the performance, battery life, manageability and security that enabled true mobility, while meeting the unique needs of the healthcare environment.
Finlay Craig, IT Account Manager at NHS GG&C, says, “I think Microsoft are great. The Microsoft team have been nothing but helpful, at every stage, as have our partners in Dell. Working with these technology partners has been a refreshing experience and continues to be so.”

**Access to patient information at the point of care**

Now nurses can access all the information they need about a patient via their tablet app. Anne Mitchell, Head of Primary Care and Community Services, says, “This was mainly about making sure the district nurses had access to the tools to do the job more efficiently and more safely.”

The tablet solution means nurses spend less time travelling and more time with patients. “District nurses would previously have to order equipment when they got back to base. Now, with the Microsoft tablet device in the patient’s home, they can complete an order whilst talking with the patient and can provide details of what they should expect, what it will look like and when it will arrive,” says Mitchell.

Timely information is key for district nurses who are often providing services to gravely ill patients and their families. Craig explains, “One example is where a patient had passed away overnight. With mobile access to that latest information, the nurses were able to knock on the door with an entirely different approach than they would otherwise. Typically, they would be of a cheery disposition when asking about the patient, but instead they could see it was a bereavement visit and be supportive of the family. It changed the visit, in a very positive way, for both the nurse and the family.”

**Better patient visit scheduling**

Mobile access to schedules has made allocating patient visits fairer and more transparent. This enables much more efficient resourcing of visits and equips the service to handle unexpected changes. Linda Brennan, Nurse Team Leader, explains, “If on the morning of a patient visit someone phones in sick, visits have to be quickly re-shuffled. It used to be difficult when using pieces of paper, but now I can ‘click-and-drag’ patient visits to other nurses in the team using the tablet device.”

**Agile working boosts patient-centred care**

Brennan describes the impact of the mobile working solution: “It really does reduce the amount of times you have to go back to base and helps with agile working. Also it makes the visit more person centred and we’re improving outcomes for patients.”

Timely record keeping

Documentation is a crucial aspect of the nursing role. District nurses are bound by Nursing and Midwifery Council record keeping guidelines. Previously nurses would have to go back to base to record the visit on the Community Nursing Information System (CNIS), often several hours after it had taken place. “Now, with the tablet device, we have the ability to record a visit more accurately in real time, while we’re still with the patient. Ultimately this helps us to provide better care,” says Linda Brennan, Nurse Team Leader.

The right device

NHS GG&C selected Microsoft because it provides a single device solution with a familiar interface for users. Support is easier than expected also, Finlay Craig, IT Account Manager, NHS GG&C, explains “The key differentiator is that Microsoft delivered a single device solution which made for less resource hungry support compared to other companion device solutions.”
Brennan adds, "I think it’s been amazing how it all came together. The district nurses really like the scheduling and the amount of information they have via the mobile device. It provides a more holistic and transparent view so scheduling is more balanced and shared easily between teams, which is great for working relationships. Better planned time also improves the visit for the patient."

**Collaboration reaps rewards for both patients and staff**

Intel delivers additional value to the mobile platforms working with Dell, Microsoft, the healthcare and ICT ecosystem to optimize solutions so that software, hardware and services work together seamlessly. In addition, Intel offers a range of technologies to ensure healthcare privacy, data security and improved compliance. Intel’s hardware-assisted security features provide increased robustness for fighting malware, gaining resiliency, and protecting data and identity. Furthermore, it is also integrated with key third-party security software solutions and offers specific security technologies to protect patient data on the go and at rest on both mobile devices, and in the cloud.

Glasgow NHS chose the collaboration of Dell, Intel and Microsoft to help move healthcare into a new era of improved quality, affordability and access which is proving to be successful for both their staff and most importantly, for their patients.

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