

NHS 24



Background

NHS 24 is Scotland's national telehealth and telecare organisation. It provides a range of online and telephone-based health services for people in Scotland. It offers out of hours support and comprehensive up-to-date health information and self-care advice where and when people need it. NHS 24 receives 670,000 visitors to its website each year and 1.5 million calls – equivalent to almost a third of the Scottish population.

The challenge

Launching a new phone and online service required a robust, comprehensive, easy-to-use and flexible patient relationship management (PRM) solution. NHS 24 also needed a system that could support a wide range of activities. This included staff being able to manage calls from patients requiring a broad range of assistance and signposting to locally available services, while also providing accurate clinical information for call handlers.

NHS 24 turned to Capita's Healthcare decisions team to meet these demands owing to its proven track record and ability to meet the stringent requirements of operating a health service on a national scale.

"We wanted a stable solution that remained so even under huge pressure either online or over the phone. We needed it to offer staff the very best in clinical content, supported with complex algorithms allowing patients to be dealt with to a very high standard. It was also vital to capture and securely share patient records. The Capita system met all of these requirements."

Gill Stillie, Chief Operating Officer, NHS 24

What we did

We provided a bespoke PRM solution for NHS 24 in partnership with BT. The solution comprises a number of key elements. These include the ability to capture caller information while prompting staff to ask specific questions, leading to diagnosis via powerful and constantly refined decision support algorithms. These features allowed callers or web visitors to be referred to the appropriate service quickly while also – in the case of the call centre – creating a health record that was forwarded to the patient's GP or other NHS Scotland health providers.

Capita has worked closely with NHS 24 to update the clinical content and align to new guidelines and service experience, as well as embed its own clinical content for use by other skill sets and to deliver specialist services.

Technical development has included links to the CHI record (Scotland's secure central patient record) to enable verification of key patient demographic information. Meanwhile the seamless interface between the PRM and other health records meant information was shared quickly, but securely with the health care professionals.

The implementation was a complex process involving coordination between Capita, Capita partners and NHS 24. To mitigate the potential risks associated with introducing new technology in a clinical setting, the PRM went through an extensive testing and roll-out process to allow fine-tuning and ensure the most effective outcomes and optimum safety for patients.



Benefits

- Within two years of launch, the PRM system had supported the management of one million calls, while consistently delivering high-levels of in and out-of-hours care to the Scottish population
- 98.4 per cent of calls to the service were answered within 30 seconds, against a target of 90 per cent
- 99.98 per cent of GP priority calls and 99.98 per cent of GP routine calls were responded to within the target timescales
- 100 per cent of dental calls were responded to within 45 minutes, against a target of 95 per cent
- 95 per cent of calls to the Health Information Service were answered within 60 seconds against the target of 80 per cent
- An average of 0.003 per cent of calls resulted in a complaint, against a target of less than 0.01 per cent
- Importantly, NHS 24 continued to support the national target to reduce A&E attendances by providing 34 per cent of patients with self-care advice, against a target of 30 per cent. During the same period, NHS 24 also converted 79 per cent of non-serious or life-threatening calls to primary care or home care outcomes against a target of 75 per cent. This is vital if the NHS is to maintain high-quality service at a time when there is greater demand on the service than ever before yet funding is under pressure

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