

Oli Cheadle's Skype notes

Oli Cheadle, Wye Valley Trust

Here are some details of how we convinced IG/IT to let us trial telehealth.

We opted for Skype for Business, as many patients already have Skype accounts. I was keen for regular Skype but our Trust states that Skype for Business is more secure. You can still call patients with regular Skype using this software. There is a monthly licence fee of around £4.20 per month for each computer using Skype for Business - although multiple users can access through each licence.

I had a meeting with Information Governance. Some of the arguments I made in favour of telehealth were:

- o Improves access to services for patients in remote areas who would otherwise need to travel long distances to County Hospital (we are in Hereford, which is particularly spread out with poor public transport). Also potential for reduced traffic around hospital site, reduced environmental impact of travel to site.
- o Allows for higher frequency/intensity therapy (particularly in community stroke service as telehealth avoids need to drive to patient), may allow for more community patients to be seen in a day.
- o May allow patients who are working and struggle to attend weekday appointments to be seen (e.g. lunch-time telehealth appointments).
- o Patients who find hospital setting anxiety-inducing or who feel medicalised by attending the hospital may prefer to be seen via telehealth.
- o Used successfully in Airedale Trust (although different software)
- o Had already been used by some management/IT departments in our Trust.

IG were positive from the outset but had a number of concerns that we needed to address before trialing the software. We needed to work with IG to fill out a Data Protection Impact Assessment Form (may be called something else in other Trusts). This form laid out the risks and benefits of using Skype, how we would handle information gathered, how we would inform patients about all of the above and get consent.

A patient consent form was drawn up by IG that outlines the limitations and conditions for using the software. This states that:

- 1) Skype is not a secure communication medium and that our Trust will not be held accountable if any outside party gains access to any of my information stored on Skype. Patients will be made aware that, while encrypted, there is a possibility that Skype communications could be intercepted or accessed by Microsoft.
- 2) If the patient requires urgent clinical advice or attention, they should contact their GP.
- 3) Patients will turn their mobile phones and close any other computer programs during their consultation.
- 4) Technical problems could occur. If the Skype consultation is disrupted the therapist will call back within five minutes. If reconnection cannot be made, the appointment will be rearranged.
- 5) Skype Consultations will not replace the need to have face to face clinical assessments at Trust locations, this service will only be offered for certain treatments for those patients who experience difficulties attending clinic appointments.
- 6) Skype must be downloaded onto a computer and that the patient must set up an account.
- 7) Skype appointments will only be made following a WVT face to face clinic appointment. If I need to change an appointment I will notify the department at least 24 hours beforehand.
- 8) The patient needs to be online at least five minutes prior to the consultation starting, in a quiet room, door closed and that my therapist will call me. If there are others in the room with the patient, the therapist should be made aware at the beginning of the session.
- 9) The patient agrees not to record Skype therapy sessions unless the therapist has given consent.
- 10) I understand that my therapist will record in my patient notes details of the consultation and the advice given.
- 11) Patients understand that if they no longer want to use Skype consultations, this will not affect their treatment or medical care in any way.

As this is being run as a trial, we will need to feed back on patient experiences and outcomes at some stage. We have adapted something called the Telehealth Usability Questionnaire (TUQ) and will send this out as an online questionnaire (a Google Form) to patients who receive telehealth sessions. The TUQ asks users to rate the following statements:

Usefulness

Telehealth improves my access to healthcare services
Telehealth saves me time traveling to a hospital or specialist clinic
Telehealth provides for my healthcare needs

Ease of Use and Learnability

It was simple to use this system
It was easy to learn to use the system
I believe I could become productive quickly using this system

Interface Quality

The way I interact with this system is pleasant
I like using the system
The system is simple and easy to understand
This system is able to do everything I would want it to be able to do

Interaction Quality

I could easily talk to the clinician using the telehealth system
I could hear the clinician clearly using the telehealth system
I felt I was able to express myself effectively
Using the telehealth system, I could see the clinician as well as if we met in person

Reliability

I think the visits provided over the telehealth system are the same as in-person visits
Whenever I made a mistake using the system, I could recover easily and quickly
The system gave error messages that clearly told me how to fix problems

Satisfaction and Future Use

- I feel comfortable communicating with the clinician using the telehealth system
- Telehealth is an acceptable way to receive healthcare services
- I would use telehealth services again
- Overall, I am satisfied with this telehealth system