

A health app that empowers parents



An app has been developed which provides parents and carers with NHS-approved information, so they know when their child needs medical treatment or when self-care would be more appropriate.

The app, Common Approach To Children's Health or CATCH, uses information from NHS Choices and is regularly updated. The aim of using the app is to inform and empower parents in caring for their young children; to reduce inappropriate hospital admissions; and to support children's health and improve care.

After a parent enters a baby's due date or date of birth, the app automatically delivers information relevant to every stage of the child's development, as it happens.

catchapp.co.uk

The logo for the CATCH app, featuring the word "catch" in a colorful, lowercase font. The 'c' is blue, 'a' is green, 't' is orange, 'c' is teal, and 'h' is pink. A small blue icon of a person's head is integrated into the 'c'.

SPREADING THE BENEFITS

The Innovation Agency has helped to spread the app into the North West Coast, following evidence of its success in reducing demand on NHS services in the Greater Manchester AHSN region.

THE EVIDENCE

The app was developed by NHS Eastern Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group with NHS South Cheshire CCG and Cheshire East Council. It aims to give parents and carers the confidence to treat their children for a wide range of minor conditions like coughs, colds and sore throats instead of seeing a GP or visiting hospital. It followed a study which found that A&E attendance among 0-4 year olds in Cheshire East was much higher than the national average; and more than 30 per cent of child attendances to accident and emergency departments were discharged with advice only.

Figures from the app's survey suggest that CATCH is working, as 47 per cent of those completing the questionnaire said they had chosen self-care rather than attending A&E with their child since downloading the app.

The findings are in line with statistics for the four months to 31 January 2017, which show that the number of 0 to 5 year olds discharged from A&E with nothing but basic information and advice was 538, or 155 fewer than for the same four months in 2015/16 – before the app was launched.

The figures cover all A&E departments in which Eastern Cheshire children were seen, not just Macclesfield District General Hospital.

In the year since its launch in early 2016, the CATCH app was downloaded 1,662 times. And of the 284 users who completed the app's satisfaction survey, 91 per cent said they would recommend CATCH to a relative or friend.

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HOW WE ARE HELPING

The development company Damibu received funding from the Innovation Agency's Transformation Through Innovation Fund, to implement the app in Halton, Merseyside.

This followed a programme of support from the Innovation Agency which included:

- Advice and review of possible NHS savings from the use of CATCH, for promotion to other NHS organisations
- Introduction to Halton CCG and subsequent funding of £30,000 to implement CATCH across Halton
- Advice on measuring NHS outcomes via app analytics
- Other NHS introductions; showcasing and networking at Innovation Agency events.

For further information:
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PARENT'S FEEDBACK

Rachel Barrett: "It's on my phone and I've looked at it for breastfeeding advice and for information about what to do about a high temperature. There's also advice on how to choose child care – it is very comprehensive and really useful."

A&E CLINICIAN FEEDBACK

A&E Dr Nathan Flanagan: "It's a source of information you can trust; the most important aspect is that it is safe and reliable, with up to date information drawn from NHS Choices about childhood illnesses and accidents; what to do about symptoms such as a high temperature or pain; and pregnancy and caring for a baby. It is a fantastic resource for parents and signposts them to the appropriate support, which means they won't just go straight to A&E."

WHICH NATIONAL CLINICAL OR POLICY PRIORITIES DOES THIS EXAMPLE ADDRESS?

- Care and quality
- Funding and efficiency
- Health and well being
- Driving economic growth