



INNOVATION AGENCY

Academic Health Science Network
for the North West Coast

KEEPING LONE WORKERS SAFE IN COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

Summary

An innovative lone worker system is improving safety for community health workers at an NHS trust in Merseyside – and providing the trust with real time data about the services they provide.

A Liverpool-based developer won a contract with the trust following a successful pilot of a new lone worker service. The service provides community workers with an easy-to-use smartphone app allowing them to quickly notify other staff if they need help in an emergency, and gives managers a live command dashboard showing operations in real time. The service has made staff feel safer and increased operational efficiency.

Following the successful pilot the trust has adopted the service more widely and recognised it as a solution to the management of lone worker safety.

The challenge

NHS staff who work in community healthcare, which includes home support, nursing, physiotherapy and other rehabilitation services, often have to work alone. This can mean being out of contact with other staff for periods of time while visiting service users' homes. Procedures for requesting help in an emergency while working alone can vary from trust to trust, and it can be difficult to ensure that staff comply with set procedures. It can also be difficult to monitor and provide evidence of patient contact, including frequency and duration of home visits.

Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust had previously supplied community healthcare staff with a device that made use of an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) to send an alert during an emergency. However there was often a lack of clarity around who had been issued with a device and there was no accurate database of users.

It was also difficult to know the exact location of community workers at any specific time.



Actions taken

Glow New Media, a Liverpool-based developer with a background in real time transport software, had developed an innovative Rail Commander System for rail worker operations which combined mobile apps with a desktop command dashboard. Through the Innovation Agency's commercial team, Glow repurposed the system for NHS community teams.

In addition to a standardised, easy-to-use app with an SOS function for lone workers, SafeTeam Guardian provides live locations of on duty staff and automatically gathers and reports data such as frequency and duration of visits and staff travel, without the need for input from the user. It also features an 'on duty / off duty' option allowing users to indicate when they are off duty, during which time they are not monitored.

In 2018, Glow's SafeTeam Guardian was deployed in a pilot across four of Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust's community teams.



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Actions taken

The pilot with Alder Hey concluded with all success criteria being met and all tests passed. During the pilot the SOS function was tested with 100 per cent success. Real time management information was derived for community services, demonstrating activity levels including where patients were seen by more than one member of staff. This was data which hadn't previously been available, allowing the trust to understand where services might be duplicated or where services might overlap. This also allowed the trust to evidence any over-performance against contracts or to support business cases for additional resources.

Before	SafeTeam Guardian
Corporate Liability - lone worker risk	Substantially mitigated lone worker risk
Worker location poorly understood	Live and historic locations transparent
On duty status difficult to obtain	On duty status transparent
Return to Base whiteboard	Real time location on live screen
Call to ask for the Red Book	Unobtrusive, standardised SOS
Office phones are busy, often ring out	Multiple recipients, multiple channels
999/Red Book needs network coverage	SOS requires network coverage
Call to base needs password challenge	Hardware SOS works without password
Difficult to demonstrate trust activity such as patient contact	Automatically gathers and reports contact frequency, duration, travel etc.

In a survey of staff who participated in the pilot, 100 per cent of respondents found SafeTeam Guardian easy to use. 70 per cent of staff felt safer. 63 per cent said they would like the app to automate their mileage claims. 100 per cent of users used the 'on duty / off duty' feature.

Following the pilot, Alder Hey Community and Mental Health Divisional Board allocated a budget for 342 SafeTeam Guardian users, and recommended a rollout across the division.

Testimonials

Andy Cairns, Innovation Agency Liverpool City Region Commercial Programme Manager,

said: "The trial at Alder Hey is a perfect example of a challenging need within a healthcare setting being met by an innovative solution which makes best use of digital technology. By repurposing their existing innovation from another sector, Glow have developed an effective solution with wide applications in health and social care."

Phil Blything, Managing Director Glow New Media, said:

"Commercial opportunity in the NHS is extraordinary - it's the fifth largest employer in the world, but it's also one of the most difficult environments to sell into, especially if you're innovating. Ambitious and innovative SMEs face a risky environment and need any support they can get to succeed. Without doubt, Glow would not have been able to commercialise in this market without support from the Innovation Agency."

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