

Audio conferencing improves care in the community

“BT MeetMe is helping us to get patients back into the community more quickly and that’s good for them and good for the NHS. It’s cost effective too. We only need to unblock one hospital bed for one or two days each month and it pays for itself.”

Jar O’Brien
REACH Intermediate Care Team Manager
Islington PCT



BT MeetMe makes for better intermediate care co-ordination and helps optimise Islington’s use of hospital beds

Client

NHS Islington is the operating name for Islington Primary Care Trust – the NHS organisation responsible for public healthcare in the London Borough of Islington. Delivering all non-hospital aspects of NHS services for Islington residents, NHS Islington has around 900 employees.

The Islington REACH Intermediate Care Team is a multidisciplinary group of staff from both NHS Islington and Islington Council. Team members include physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, rehabilitation assistants, social workers, nurses, psychologists, and a consultant geriatrician.

Challenge

Working collaboratively to support mainly older people – along with their relatives and carers – the Islington REACH Intermediate Care Team is there to promote health and maximise independence. “Our role is largely about intermediate care and community

rehabilitation. An important aspect is facilitating the discharge of people from hospital with the right levels of intermediate care in place,” explains Jar O’Brien, Islington REACH Intermediate Care Team Manager.

Much of the work is carried out in people’s homes, at day centres, or at residential nursing homes. It can involve anything from fitting handrails over the bath, to helping with walking, personal hygiene, and home cleaning. Jar O’Brien continues: “Putting the necessary support infrastructure in place often involves the co-ordination of services from many different departments.”

This time consuming exercise had traditionally meant lots of emails, meetings, and telephone calls – not to mention following up when those initial communications failed. The resulting complexity often led to delays in discharging people from hospital, with hospital beds unnecessarily blocked.

BT Conferencing differentiators

- Market leading fully hosted audio conferencing platform requiring no hardware or software deployment by the customer
- Cost effective pay-as-you-go service with no fixed charges and zero capital outlay
- Attractive calling rates with local access numbers
- Dependable service from a trustworthy brand

BT Conferencing case study

NHS Islington

“BT Meet Me has made a real impact. From historically being way off target, the first two months of using the service saw us consistently beating the benchmark. It’s true to say it’s one of the factors that has helped us improve our performance.”

Jar O’Brien
REACH Intermediate Care Team Manager
Islington PCT

Solution

NHS Islington is constantly searching for new ways of working to improve efficiency and enhance patient care. It also seeks to be a more sustainable business, and has declared a commitment to cut its carbon emissions by at least 80 per cent by 2050, in line with UK government targets.

The potential of collaborative tools like BT MeetMe led to the idea of a trial to assess whether conferencing could improve communication and reduce the need for travel in Islington. BT MeetMe is a hosted audio conferencing service that only requires a fixed or mobile phone for access. It is easy to use and available at any time, every day of the year. Prior booking is unnecessary and with no fixed charges for the BT MeetMe service the commercial terms are very attractive.

Jar O’Brien says: “BT MeetMe looked a perfect way for us to collaborate better, to accelerate the delivery of essential services and enable people to be discharged from hospital more quickly. There was nothing to set up; we started using it right away.”

Offices worldwide

The services described in this publication are subject to availability and may be modified from time to time. Services and equipment are provided subject to British Telecommunications plc’s respective standard conditions of contract. Nothing in this publication forms any part of any contract.

© British Telecommunications plc 2010.
Registered office: 81 Newgate Street, London EC1A 7AJ
Registered in England No: 1800000

Value

A key performance indicator for the Islington REACH Intermediate Care Team is a measure that counts the number of additional days patients stay in hospital because discharge arrangements are not in place. “BT Meet Me has made a real impact,” says Jar O’Brien. “From historically being way off target, the first two months of using the service saw us consistently beating the benchmark. It’s true to say it’s one of the factors that has helped us improve our performance.”

The new approach involves a daily conference call with each hospital and the key stakeholders to discuss the needs of individuals approaching discharge and requiring intermediate care. Jar O’Brien again: “BT MeetMe has some really useful features. I use the participant count and roll call facility, and I have the ability to lock the call for security so that nobody else can join. As chairman, I can also end the call when I hang up. That cuts down idle chat after the business has been concluded.”

Such has been the impact of BT MeetMe that the Islington REACH Intermediate Care Team is now looking to extend its use. Options under consideration include virtual weekly team meetings dealing with work allocation. These are currently conducted face-to-face and involve up to 27 people. Using BT MeetMe will improve efficiency and cut down travel, supporting a more sustainable business model.

Jar O’Brien sums up: “BT MeetMe is helping us to get patients back into the community more quickly and that’s good for them and good for the NHS. It’s cost effective too. We only need to unblock one hospital bed for one or two days each month and it pays for itself.” Following the success of the trial, NHS Islington has increased its number of accounts to a total of 16 and is extending the use of BT MeetMe to other people and departments, including the NHS Islington CEO and the senior management team.

About BT MeetMe

BT MeetMe is a hosted audio conferencing service that enables virtual meetings between up to 40 participants. Prior booking is unnecessary. Each BT MeetMe audio conferencing account has two PIN numbers, one for the chairman – the organiser of the call – and the other for the participants. To use the service delegates simply call the local access number, enter their PIN, and announce their name. Once the chairman dials in all the parties are connected together. There is a wide range of features including the ability for the chairman to request an automated roll call to check who is on the line, or to digitally record the call for replay later. If there are any problems a BT co-ordinator is always on hand at the touch of a button.

For further information visit: www.btconferencing.com/nhs

