



Trialling medication management devices in Bridgend

A Value-Based Health Care project with people covered by Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and Bridgend Local Authority is looking to trial a medication device and associated wraparound care to help people in Bridgend remain independent.

- Age UK estimates that almost two million people aged over 65 take at least seven different prescribed medications weekly.
- A new project in Bridgend is evaluating the potential for rollout of a device to remind users to take their medication.
- Life Sciences Hub Wales completed horizon scanning that helped confirm the choice of an innovative digital device provider, and is now project managing the evaluation.



Partners and funding

Partners

- Bridgelink Telecare
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board Value Based Health Care Team
- Bridgend Community Resource Team
- Life Sciences Hub Wales
- YOURmeds

Funders

Value Based Health Care provided a grant of £20k for the project.

Managing medication is a growing challenge

Increasing medication needs are a significant challenge in social care. Age UK estimates that almost two million people aged over 65 take at least seven different prescribed medications weekly. For anyone looking to maintain independence and live in their own home, managing medication is essential. But it's estimated up to 50% of prescribed medicines are not taken as intended.

A number of medication reminder devices are on the market to help people remember when to take their medications. One of the challenges with many of these devices is that they need to be refilled regularly - for example with a week's

supply of medication. This places a strain on families to support the process and can mean the device isn't used if family members aren't available at the right time.

Another issue with many of the devices available is that they're not digital, and therefore have no way of recording data that might help assess issues and trends.

Life Sciences Hub Wales input

- Horizon scanning to support the choice of the best available technology provider.
- Project managing the evaluation project.
- Supporting communications for the project.
- Exploring further applications and rollout opportunities.

Empowering people to remain independent

Telecare services offer support to enable older people, people with disabilities or vulnerable adults and children to remain living independently. Sensors and wearable devices in the home can be triggered to allow people to raise an alert and access help when they need it, for example after a fall. All 22 local authorities in Wales have access to an alarm receiving centre that offers this support. Some also have access to response services that can be deployed when needed, reducing the strain on emergency services, families and carers.

In Bridgend the Pharmacy team and Bridgelink Telecare, both within the Community Resource Team, are now working with Life Sciences Hub Wales to evaluate an innovative device that helps people remember to take their medication, and allows the telecare team to offer greater support when needed. The project will evaluate the tool's impact on people needing support as well as care providers, and will inform both the long-term use of the tool and its potential for a wider rollout in other parts of Wales.

During a previous trial of a device, Bridgelink Telecare and the Pharmacy team had worked together and seen the benefits of a medication device where community pharmacists were supported to supply pre-filled devices.

Following this trial, and with a newly refined requirements list, the two teams approached Life Sciences Hub Wales for project management support to evaluate a new device. Life Science Hub Wales' horizon scanning confirmed **YOURmeds** as the best solution for the evaluation.

£20k of funding from Value Based Health Care is funding the provision of devices to 40 residents in Bridgend, for a nine-month evaluation project. The cost of enhanced wraparound support being offered by the telecare team is being absorbed by the existing service.

Achievements

The establishment of the project included:

- Development of referral pathways via social care and primary care services.
- Development of referral pathways for Emergency Department Pharmacy within Princess of Wales Hospital, to link with Telecare and community pharmacy services.
- Increased integrated working between health and social care teams. rollout opportunities.



What is YOURmeds?

Some of the key requirements the team had identified included:

- A digital device that would remind users when to take their medication.
- The ability for alerts to be sent, with consent, to family members and the alarm receiving centre when medications were missed or taken incorrectly.
- A central data dashboard that would enable the team to track behaviours so they could be more proactive to issues.

YOURmeds met most of the requirements and were willing to work with the stakeholders to develop other additional features - in particular the data dashboard.

The YOURmeds device features a numbered blister pack that slides into a digital device called a tag. The blister pack is filled by community pharmacists and delivered to users, meaning families aren't being called on to support this process. The digital tag reminds users when to take their medication and sensors in the blister pack detect when the medication has been accessed. If medication is missed, an alert can be sent to a family member and/or the alarm receiving centre.

A key benefit of the YOURmeds device is that the device operates with its own SIM card - this means it's not reliant on being connected to another device to work. Other similar devices must be connected to a smartphone (which many users don't have), or a device within the user's home (which means it won't work outside the home).

As well as the user reminders, the ability to send alerts to family members and the alarm receiving centre means that medication issues can be escalated up a chosen group of contacts. If necessary, the telecare service can send a mobile response unit to complete a welfare check on the resident.

“YOURmeds is thrilled to be part of this ground breaking project that joins up health and social care around medication management in the community. We are excited to co-produce the data dashboard that allows supporters to have a virtual unintrusive “window” into a user's home. This means users feel supported and have access to the support when they need it whilst allowing them to maximise their independence.”

Priti Patel, Head of Sales, YOURmeds Limited



Impact for residents

Based on the results of their previous trial of a pre-filled device with support from the mobile response team, the project team expect to see improved outcomes and experiences for users including:

- Improved adherence to medication, leading to better management of health conditions and reduced incidents such as falls.
- Ability to provide 24/7 proactive support, with welfare checks on people that haven't taken their medication.
- More people able to stay at home instead of moving into residential care.
- Reduced strain on families.



Impact for health and care providers

As well as better outcomes for patients, it's envisaged that the project will support:



Reduced numbers of emergency department visits due to medication mistakes (it's thought that around 5-10% of all hospital admissions are medicines-related, with non-adherence accounting for 29% of these admissions).



Ability to discharge patients from hospital earlier due to better community support for medication management.



Reduced medication wastage.



Reduced in-person domiciliary care visits to homes, with visits being targeted to those that need it most. Prior to the project, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board was funding home visits in one area, solely to provide medication reminders.



Improved information sharing between social care and primary care services, such as pharmacists and GPs, thanks to the data dashboards developed by YOURmeds.



“ Being able to provide new innovative ways to support people to take their medication safely will help improve personal health and wellbeing. The remote monitoring aspect is important as it enables families and services to further support individuals and prevent potential hospital admissions. ”

Tom Sauter, Clinical Lead Pharmacist – Integrated community services Bridgend



How Life Sciences Hub Wales has supported the project

Life Sciences Hub Wales completed a horizon scanning exercise to confirm that YOURmeds was the best available solution for the needs of users in Bridgend and Wales.

We're now project managing the process of rolling out and evaluating the approach in Bridgend, with an eye on the potential benefits this could bring if rolled out across Wales. This includes coordinating input from stakeholders, supporting communications and reviewing potential for similar projects in other areas.



“ Project managing an evaluation like this, whilst trying to attend visits and support day-to-day frontline service challenges is really difficult for health and social care teams to manage. This often delays innovation or sometimes makes it impossible to implement. Here in the Hub, we can support health and social care services right from the start of an idea and project management can form part of this support. It helps to take some of the pressure off service leads and allows them more time to consider innovation. Collaborations like this also help us find new opportunities to support wider innovations all across Wales. ”

Louise Baker, Project Lead, Life Sciences Hub Wales



What next?

Once the evaluation project is complete, an independent evaluation will be carried out by Value Based Healthcare, incorporating feedback from all the stakeholders involved, including users, families, pharmacists and domiciliary care and telecare teams.

The success of the project will be assessed with a view to long term adoption of the device and service, rollout to other regions (or nationally), as well as potential for similar support for other types of treatment, for example inhalers and eye drops.

Get in touch

We're here to help drive system-wide transformation! If you want to access support similar to that outlined in this case study, then we want to hear from you.

Submit your enquiry today via our website: lshubwales.com/innovation-enquiry-form



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