

Tony Miller – NHS Orkney



I have been a social care worker with the Orkney CMHT for 18 years working with all aspects of our service, specialising in substance misuse, for my sins I have also been involved as a digital champion in the new electronic systems being used today.

Tony Miller – NHS Orkney

Implemented Near Me in Community treatment in Psychology, Psychiatry, CAHMS, Generic mental health, Older age adults, Substance misuse service, Mental Health OT In the assessment, treatment and review processes

What's worked well?

- Maintains contact with patients who are quite isolated at the best of times
- Reducing the risk of transmission of Covid 19 in outlying islands
- Enables good non verbal insight into patient's health.
- Saves travel time and cost for patients and staff particularly in the isles.
- Increases capacity for work and reduces duplication of work
- Lessens time taken to reduce anxieties in patients,
- Near me has reduced the need to attend health care facilities to use VC equipment.
- Excellent links with outer island health practitioners
- Excellent links with specialist services in Grampian
- Psychology still able to offer treatments such as EMDR
- Psychology department are routinely offering near me at initial and subsequent appointments as part of their appointment process

What have been the challenges?

- Not all patients willing to use this platform for contact for various reasons, lack of access to suitable equipment, not being computer literate or are too mentally unwell .
- In recent weeks our broadband infrastructure in the islands has not been sufficient to cope with the sudden increase in public and staff usage at all times of day.
- Picture drop out is an issue due to poor connection speeds across Orkney.

Any top tips?

- Good support for staff and patients in the use of Near Me
- Encourage the use of near me at first and subsequent appointments.

What have been the enablers?

- Patients willing to embrace such a drastic change in how services are delivered to them.
- Excellent commitment from the organisation, providing the equipment, software and support.
- Staff that are motivated and accepting of change, the organisation had previously recruited digital champions from the workplace so good peer support has been invaluable
- Perseverance by patients and practitioners.
- We are offering Near Me as a means of communication at every offer of appointment.
- Overall the system works well within the connectivity restraints locally.
- Additional near me links are available to patients on health board website

We overcame our challenge by

- Being proactive , good positive reinforcement of Near Me
- Providing encouragement and appropriate support to users of Near Me prior to and during use.
- Being creative with IT solutions (such as using telephone alongside near me instead of using mic when internet link is poor)

- Inform and encourage existing patients of the benefits of near me
- Use the refresh button if link is poor.