

Press Release on behalf of Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust

Remote patient technology helps reduce hospital admissions and cares for patients at home

Liverpool, Monday 30th November 2020 - Remote patient technology is helping reduce pressure on hospital beds on Merseyside by offering COVID-19 patients the opportunity to be monitored and cared for in their own homes via a new initiative.

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, one of the leading mental health and community health trusts in the country, launched a pilot of the '**COVID Oximetry@Home**' service in April and began accepting referrals from primary care last month. They plan to soon begin doing the same for patients who have presented to A&E departments.

The innovation, in partnership with digital health company Docobo and part of Mersey Care's Telehealth Service, is expected to be so popular it will monitor up to 500 Liverpool patients a day, safely and securely, either through an app on a smart phone or tablet, or via Careportals®.

"The great thing about this is that it enables patients either with COVID-19 or those suspected of having it, to be cared for in the community rather than adding to the pressure on hospital beds," said Joe Rafferty, Mersey Care's Chief Executive

"It allows the nurse, carer or patient to record vital signs such as blood oxygen levels that can help identify silent hypoxia at home and any signs of deterioration in their condition so we can get appropriate medical care to them."

Since the start of the pandemic, the Telehealth Service has expanded its operation and increased from monitoring 1,700 patients per day to having the capability to offer support to 5,000+ patients per day, including patients from the 'shielded' list and providing COVID-19 screening.

The COVID Oximetry@Home service is currently available to all Liverpool CCG patients but Mersey Care is working with other CCGs from across Cheshire and Merseyside to set up referral pathways to support their patients.

Mr Rafferty, who is also lead Chief Executive and Chairman of the Cheshire and Merseyside Out of Hospital Care Cell, added: "We've been working hard to try and reduce pressure on hospital admissions and this new service will provide real time support for all our vulnerable patients and those who may be shielding throughout the region."

Rob Halhead, Chief Operating Officer at Docobo, said: “For us at Docobo it’s a privilege to work with the NHS team in Liverpool and across the region. This collaboration is delivering better health care and is helping the whole ecosystem to cope with the demands and pressures of the pandemic.

“This technology-enabled service means people stay at home and go to hospital less often. Early signs of deterioration being detected leads to early intervention. Everyone’s winning.”

Ends

Editor’s notes

Information about the Telehealth service during the Pandemic:

The Telehealth hub, which has been operational in Liverpool since 2011/12, can monitor approximately 200 patients per nurse through this system.

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More information: <https://www.mersecare.nhs.uk/our-services/physical-health-services/health-technology-service-telehealth/>

Information about Docobo

Docobo is a UK digital health company which has worked with the NHS since 2001. The company’s patient monitoring and population intelligence platforms enable the health and care system to increase capacity, reduce load on clinicians, monitor patients and help users to better manage their own conditions.

In 2017, Docobo was contracted by Liverpool CCG in a tri-partite partnership with Mersey Care. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, close to 2,000 patients with long-term conditions were being monitored at home each day in Liverpool. During a six week period during April and May 2020, patient numbers were doubled to support those most vulnerable to Covid-19 or shielding.

Docobo’s products and services continue to evolve through close, practical collaboration with NHS partners. Together, we are delivering on the practical aspects of the Long Term Plan with ‘easy adoption technology’ driven by clinical need and patient preferences.

For further information visit www.docobo.co.uk/ or contact: Rob Halhead, COO, tel: 01372 459866, email: info@docobo.co.uk

Mersey Care Fact File

During 2019/20 Mersey Care:

- provided care, treatment and support through its mental health, secure and specialist learning disability services to 40,871 service users and its Community Services Division received 162,814 distinct referrals
- provided services from 130 sites both of its own and premises rented from others
- had 765 inpatient beds as at 31 March 2020
- had 1,933,534 outpatient attendances, community contacts or domiciliary visits.

(Statistics based on audited figures for 2019/20)