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# The Cumbria Rural Health Forum and the role of digital technologies

Rural Health Conference  
29<sup>th</sup> January 2016  
House of Lords, London



CH - Community Hospital  
H - Hospital

# Cumbria Rural Health Forum

- A network of professionals from organisations public, private and voluntary/third sectors, initially formed in September 2013.
- Desire to find out what good rural health and social care looks like?
- 149 individual members, 58 organisations (26 public sector, 32 private or third sector).
- Key theme = can digital help as part of the rural solution?
- Funded by Academic Health Science Networks from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 for 2 years. Led and project managed by University of Cumbria.
- Open, sharing, facilitative, co-ordinating, information rich and best practice sharing
- [www.ruralhealthlink.co.uk](http://www.ruralhealthlink.co.uk)

# Digital technologies in Cumbria – strategy and roadmapping project

- Funded by AHSN North East North Cumbria
- From April 2014 to June 2015
  - Mapping use of digital technologies in Cumbria
  - Reviewing best practice and evidence world-wide for digital technologies in rural areas
  - Networking and information exchange
  - Roadmapping workshops to agree priority areas for Cumbria, leading to implementation phase II in 2015-16 (funded by both AHSNs)

# Cumbria Strategy for Digital Technologies in Health and Social Care

## HOME PAGE

Two key questions:

1. What do we mean by good health and social care in a rural setting?
2. How can digital technologies address some of the issues?

What do we mean  
by digital  
technologies in  
care?

What are the  
specific issues for  
care in rural  
communities

What is already  
being done in  
Cumbria or  
elsewhere?

Identified needs and opportunities for digital  
technologies in care within Cumbria

A Roadmap for Implementation of Digital Health and  
Social Care in Cumbria

Authors and acknowledgements

## What do we mean by digital technologies in care?

In this document, the term 'digital health' is defined broadly to include the use of information and communications technologies to replace, augment or complement conventional face to face health and social care delivery.

We include telehealth, telemedicine, telecoaching, telecare, assistive technologies, e-health, mobile apps and wearable telemonitoring. The focus of the discussion has always been on mature, commercially available products and services, seeking to share best practice and understand the benefits and barriers to adoption.

The project excluded services that are used primarily in administrative functions, such as the use of email or SMS messaging for appointment reminders, to focus on those that affect health and care professionals in the delivery of care.

Further reading:

[Briefing on Digital Technologies](#)

[NHS England TECS Resource for Commissioners](#)

# What are the specific issues for care in rural communities

## Identified issues for rural health and social care in Cumbria

Dispersed communities meaning that people have limited access to services and have to travel further to access basic healthcare

Smaller GP practices and other health centres, meaning that staff may feel professionally isolated and removed from opportunities for professional development

A greater reliance on volunteer services

Population demographics that include relatively more older people than in urban centres

Poor quality broadband and mobile infrastructure

Further reading:

[Brief on connectivity](#)

[Report on learning from international projects using digital health in rural areas](#)

[Resources available on website](#)

[A joined up approach to recruitment in Cumbria: public, private and third sector](#)

**Note on terminology:** Whilst much of Cumbria does not meet the approved [DEFRA definition](#) of rural (outside of a settlement of 10,000 or more residents), it was agreed that the whole of Cumbria is affected by rural issues because of the distances of travel between the larger settlements and the fact that there is no large conurbation within the county. A more correct term may be 'dispersed' or 'hard to reach' populations, but comparison with use of terminology elsewhere suggests that 'rural' is widely acceptable.



## What is already being done in Cumbria or elsewhere?

We carried out a mapping project to find out what existing digital health and care projects were happening in or adjacent to Cumbria, between July 2014 and May 2015. Forum members were asked to advise us of projects that are either being piloted, ready for roll out or had been piloted and not adopted. In total 27 projects were identified. Two successful projects that are in service use are described below.



- Out of hours stroke assessment and consultation
- NCUHT with NW Shared Infrastructure Services
- Since July 2012 – over 400 patients have used the service

Further reading:

[Report on Digital Activities in Cumbria](#)

Mapping of current projects at <http://www.ruralhealthlink.co.uk/activities>

[Report on Telecare and Assistive Technologies in the UK](#)

[www.patientmemoirs.com](http://www.patientmemoirs.com)

- A platform for patients, carers and others to maintain video logs of their reflections, learn from their experiences, share tips and ideas.

Knee replacement

By Jennifer Garstang

1296 VIEWS / 124 LIKES



# A Roadmap for Implementation of Digital Health and Social Care in Cumbria

Objective	Activity	Who involved	Next steps
<p>Improve health outcomes for those with long term conditions. Support more to self manage.</p>	<p>Cumbria-wide co-ordinated implementation of digital health and care, for specific services</p>	<p>CCG GPs NHS Trusts CCC Third sector Private sector</p>	<p>'Digital think tanks' workshops with services, departments, GP practices</p>
<p>Explain, clarify, share good (and bad) practice, assess impact and value</p>	<p>Information exchange, portal for what good rural health looks like, sharing experiences and equipment, conferences and events, influencing and advocacy for Cumbria</p>	<p>All partners and associates</p>	<p>Extend, enhance maintain website Networking events Conferences Briefing papers and 'how to' guidance Influencing policy in partner organisations</p>
<p>Develop a digital-health-ready workforce</p>	<p>Training and professional development to support health professionals to use digital health and enhance the 'Cumbrian offer' for recruitment and retention</p>	<p>CLIC UoC Solution providers – private sector Third sector</p>	<p>Training and networking events with CPD groups Materials and programmes NHS England Code4Health community</p>

# Co-ordinated implementation – digital think tanks

- Aim to bring together a range of people all working on a particular pathway, target group, place
  - Range of organisations and perspectives
  - Common goal
- A programme of 4 workshops, followed by a report and action plan for the group
  - End of Life Care October 2015
  - Carlisle Healthy City October 2015
  - Assisted Living for Learning Disabilities December 2015
  - Advanced Nursing Practitioners - February 2016

# Results and outcomes

- Partners in each think tank can use results and implement specific actions as agreed
- All reports will be published and circulated to strategic bodies
- Direct influencing within Cumbria: through our membership, key CCG leaders, Success Regime, Vanguard Programme, Better Care Together Programme
- Input to Cumbria County Council led joint procurement exercise for telehealth and telecare and the Cumbria Local Digital Roadmap

# End of life care digital think tank

- Now linking in to the broader Cumbria Palliative Care Group
- Actively looking at
  - Developing a ‘virtual hospice’ looking at best practice in Highlands and Islands
  - Reviewing and recommending apps for patient self-management of symptoms (and carers)
  - Considering educational needs in digital health

# Creating a digital-health-ready workforce

- See diagram on next slide for the vision of how this could develop.
- Consultations now in progress to work on what this means in Cumbria, working with the Cumbria Learning and Improvement Collaborative (<http://www.thecllc.org.uk/>)
- Initial scoping work also about to begin for North West Coast area with NWC AHSN

Strategic thinking

Telehealth Readiness Tool ([www.ready4telehealth.com](http://www.ready4telehealth.com)) and TECS Resource for Commissioners [http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/TECS\\_FinalDraft\\_0901.pdf](http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/TECS_FinalDraft_0901.pdf)

- Organisational strategy
- Partnership working
- Patient selection and workforce planning
- Technology selection and procurement

Service transformation  
(Level 5-7)

CPD modules for managers, team leaders, advanced practitioners (postgraduate to MSc)

- Overview of digital tools
- Information governance, security, privacy, ethics
- Supporting self management
- Innovation and risk

Service delivery  
(Level 4-6)

Modules embedded in undergraduate provision

- Overview of digital tools
- Best practice case studies
- Clinical practice with digital health

Competency based training and updating (Level 1-3)

- IT skills, social networking, introduction to commonly used equipment

# New postgraduate modules for digital health and social care

- Newly launched at University of Cumbria
- Flexible modular programme linked to our practice development framework – builds to MSc/PgDip/PgCert – or modules can be standalone
- Blended learning, with classroom and distance learning elements and a work-based project
- [www.cumbria.ac.uk/digitalhealth](http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/digitalhealth)
- Funded cohort supported by Health Education North West to start in March 2016



# Future plans for the Cumbria Rural Health Forum

- We hope to continue as a network, co-ordinated by the University of Cumbria
- Develop digital outcomes, now starting to be taken up by the statutory organisations, particularly through the Local Digital Roadmap
- Explore other themes with a similar approach

Cumbria Rural Health Forum: Overarching theme: what does 'good' mean for rural health and social care delivery?

Collaboration

Identifying solutions

Sharing best practice

Influencing and advocacy

Theme 1: Can digital help?

*Theme 2: How do we shape and support the workforce?*

*Theme 3: What is the distinctive role of the third sector?*



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