

Use of Digital Technology in Care Homes

Aim: Evaluate the impact of a digital app in reducing unplanned emergency care for care home residents

Background

The Health Call Digital Care Homes app aims to **co-ordinate care homes and NHS systems** by training staff to use app-based technology, which is automatically fed to a Single Point of Access. This **system can potentially reduce the need for emergency care** as care home staff and clinicians will be able to work together on health observations of residents, and provide alternatives to things like the use of ambulances and unplanned hospitalisation. **Resident health problems can also potentially be identified earlier.**



Outline of our project

The Health Call Digital Care Homes app was introduced in 123 care homes, with 8702 residents, across the North East from December 2018 to September 2021. We looked for changes in the use of unplanned secondary care in residents before and after the app was introduced, including: number of emergency department attendances, number of emergency admissions, number of 28-day emergency readmissions and length of stay of emergency admissions.

Our findings

- **HealthCall technology in care homes reduces the use of unplanned secondary care.**
- Residents of homes using the HealthCall system typically experience **fewer unplanned secondary care attendances and admissions.**
- The technology also allows for ongoing monitoring of resident health alongside providing **more convenient and timely access to clinical advice that promotes more appropriate and resident-focussed decision making.**

This evidence indicates that digital technology that brings together social care and NHS services has the potential to improve how care homes approach secondary care, **reducing unnecessary trips to hospital, and potentially improving overall health of residents.**

