The Cumbria Rural Health Forum: is digital part of the solution?

26\textsuperscript{th} November 2014
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Formation

• Formed in late 2013 as a result of various ‘serendipitous’ discussions
  • Led by University of Cumbria and the Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, with Cumbria CCG and later Action for Communities in Cumbria
  • To answer the question **what does good rural health and social care look like?**
  • and **how can digital technologies help?**
Early stages

• Group workshops to identify key ‘rural’ themes in health and social care
• Shared best practice.
• Agreement that there is a common interest in ‘what can digital do for us?’
  – Funding secured from Academic Health Science Network for North East and North Cumbria for 12 month strategy development work programme, starting 1st April 2014
Membership

• Action with Communities in Cumbria, AHSN (North East-North Cumbria Academic Health Science Network), Care Innovations, Carlisle City Council (Healthy Cities), Carlisle College, Closer Care, Copeland Borough Council, Cumbria GPs, Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group, Cumbria County Council, Cumbria CVS, Cumbria Health On Call, Cumbria Healthwatch, Cumbria Neurological Alliance, Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Cumbria Public Health, Cumbria Rural Housing Trust, Cybermoor, Diabetes Complete Care UK, Eden Housing Association, MSD (Merck), Great North Ambulance Services, Impact Housing, Lancashire Care, North Cumbria University Hospitals Trust, NHS Confederation North West Infrastructure Service, Northumbria Trust Director of Health Informatics, NW Ambulance Service, Royal College of General Practitioners Cumbria, Riverside Housing, Penrith & Borders MP (Rory Stewart's office), Settle Townhead GP, Tunstall Healthcare, University of Cumbria, Values Based Commissioning Ltd, Vilistus Ltd, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, Cumbria Health & Wellbeing Board, Better Care Together Programme, Shap Medical Practice
Cumbria Strategy for Digital Technologies in Health and Social Care

• **Aim**
  • To support an integrated approach to adoption of digital technologies to address rural health issues, through sharing of best practice and a systematic approach to demand identification. Through this work, to position the Cumbria Rural Health Forum as a centre of expertise in rural healthcare. Our key theme is ‘what does good rural health look like?’. This study aims to assess how digital technologies can contribute to good rural health.

• **Objectives**
  • O1. Map existing telehealth, telecare, digital health practice within Cumbria and transferable best practice from elsewhere;
  • O2. Gain understanding of issues specific to rural healthcare;
  • O3. Identify needs and opportunities for use of digital technologies (eg. for remote consultations, telehealth and telecare);
  • O4. Develop a roadmap for implementation within Cumbria, including roles of key organisations, training and professional development needs, access to funding sources.

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Digital health – definitions and scope

- Telemedicine:
  - Remote examination of a patient by a health professional

- Telehealth:
  - Remote monitoring to enable patients to monitor and self manage their health at home, data shared electronically with health providers

- Telecare and assistive technologies:
  - Community alarms to enable patients to call for help in an emergency; equipment to enable people to manage independent living in and outside the home.

- eHealth:
  - Sharing of patient records; e-referrals; patient controlled records; social media and related products
Methodology

- Open innovation using the Forum partners to prioritise and shape the research process

- Focus on what can practically be achieved: a roadmap for implementation within Cumbria. EXCLUDE – mature technology already adopted such as SMS appointment reminders; technology still in development.
Identified rural problems 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.

- Strategy Workshop 1 – December 2013
WELCOME TO CUMBRIA RURAL HEALTH FORUM

Rural communities face particular issues in accessing health and social care. The Cumbria Rural Health Forum was formed to help understand and address these issues.

The Forum represents health and social care providers from the public, private and voluntary sectors, health technology companies, health and social care commissioners and policy makers.

The Forum aims to work collaboratively to understand specific rural issues and jointly develop solutions, drawn from and contributing to international best practice.

Looking for something in particular? Search our Site:

www.ruralhealthlink.co.uk
Digital health activities/projects – a searchable repository

BREATHE

BREATHE is a technological platform which provides daily guidance and support for the informal caregiver in the long-term care of elderly people. There are a number of problems that informal caregivers nowadays have to face: lack of experience and formal education in care, limited societal support, shortage of specific tools to manage the whole care cycle, problems coordinating care and other employment for carers (mostly women), stress and depression. This is a well-known problem since family carers provide 80% of long term care to dependent older people in Europe.

BREATHE platform will provide an ICT-based solution for the caregiver and the elderly in order to mitigate these problems and impact at three different levels:

- Personal, by increasing quality of life and care.
- Local and regional, by providing a tool usable by different stakeholders to effectively manage the reality of the informal care as well as by opening opportunities of new business models and employment.
- European, by reducing health system costs as a consequence of an effective management of the informal care.

Location: Alston Moor and North Cumbria

KEY STATISTICS

- Start Date: August 2014
- End Date: March 2016
- Number of people (patients/clients) involved: 30 clients

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Health conditions supported by digital activities in Cumbria

• Telemedicine – pregnancy, stroke, orthopaedic and rheumatology, chronic fatigue syndrome CFS/ME, cancer, emergency and out of hours care

• Telehealth – COPD, heart failure, dietary intake, teledispenser, elderly carer support

• Telecare and assistive technologies – ageing, dementia, mental health

• eHealth – eating disorders webchat, online patient stories, e-referrals and resource management (covering all conditions)
How can we use digital?

• Diary of a long term conditions patient
  – Working with patient support groups
  – Patients asked to analyse their contacts with health and social care professionals
  – What do they think could have been done digitally?

• Workload analysis by clinical professionals
  – A day in the life of a GP
  – What do they think could have been done digitally?
Digital solutions to rural problems

• Emerging themes –

– The big win for rural patients is telemedicine for online consultations (reduced time and cost for travel to specialists, especially when unwell, easier to involve a carer/supporter)

– This also helps rural community health professionals (reduced travel time)

– ‘Supported’ online consultations can also provide professional development and longer term could possibly reduce referrals

– Working with partners in commissioning an delivery to plan for implementation in Cumbria
Membership engagement

- First Roadmapping Workshop in September – evaluation of activities.
- What are the priorities for implementation?
- Interactive functions available on the website
- Members clearly value the networking opportunities through Forum meetings
Next steps

• Second Forum Roadmapping Workshop in early December
• Draft Strategy to be discussed by membership
  – Proposed roadmap themes to be discussed
  – Make plans for implementation
Thank you for listening

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