Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust launches Allocate eCommunity to flexibly manage community care and prioritise patient needs

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust is one of the UK's leading providers of hospital and community-based healthcare. Much of their care is delivered close to and at home, in the communities, delivering services in GP practices, health centres, schools, community buildings and in patients' homes.

The challenge of managing a dynamic, urgent care service

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust (GSTT) operates their community services in a fast-paced and rapidly changing environment. Operating a zero to two-hour urgent response service means clinician schedules can quickly change throughout the day and with between 30-40 referrals a day, from across Lambeth and Southwark hospitals and community services, the triage team were struggling to manage regularly changing schedules on a shared excel spreadsheet.

The live excel spreadsheet was creating a number of challenges. It would regularly crash or freeze and if there were network problems, no one would be able to access the shared drive, meaning the operational team and most importantly the clinicians, had no record of where or which patients they were supposed to be attending.

Jo Perry, Clinical Triage Lead at GSTT, would spend up to two hours a day managing and coordinating the shared spreadsheet, alongside at least five other people at any given time, making it difficult to keep track of changes. Since implementing the Allocate eCommunity system, all duplication of work has been eliminated and the entire team have a clear view, ensuring all referrals have been allocated.

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"We now also have an immediate view of when a patient has been given an additional visit, meaning the team can quickly allocate to another clinician, ensuring the patient is seen in the quickest time possible."

Jo Perry,
Clinical Triage Lead,
Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

For the clinicians wanting to plan their days, they would have to wait for an email with a link to the shared spreadsheet every morning, searching through to locate their initials to find their list of patients for the day. With Allocate eCommunity, all the team need to do is open the app and they can easily see their personalised schedule for the day. With a mix of in-person and virtual visits, the system supports the team to quickly identify their patients and plan their day according to the types of visits and locations.

Prioritising clinical governance

Ensuring clinical governance compliance is a priority for GSTT. The old live excel spreadsheet offered no audit trail, meaning information could be deleted, with no way of tracking what had been deleted or by who. The Allocate eCommunity system provides the team with a fully transparent view of all changes that are made throughout the day and are assured that all sensitive patient data is safely stored in the system.

The system has also significantly reduced the risk of human error and streamlined processes. By retiring the excel spreadsheet, the team are now confident that all names and NHS numbers are correct and eliminates additional admin time required to rectify incorrect information.

"We have adapted and made the system our own. We have 100% compliance from all our matrons using the system, as they find it very easy to use", said Jo Perry, Clinical Triage Lead at GSTT.

Flexibly managing the needs of the patient

The needs of patients in the community can change minute-by-minute, making it hard for the community team at GSTT to keep on top of where they need to be and with a number of clinicians required to make zero-two hour responses, it's critical that the team have a clear of view of their schedules as things change.

> **"Allocate eCommunity allows the flexibility for patient needs to change. We have complete visibility of all reviews for the day, making planning for the team much easier. It's simple to make changes throughout the day and ensure the clinical team are aware.**
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> **The system is a true reflection of the needs of the patient. We can allocate visits at the end of the day and then re-allocate or increase visits the next day, based on changing patient needs."**
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> **Jo Perry,**
> Clinical Triage Lead,
> GSTT

For GSTT, all referrals are initially made in the nursing rota, but if a doctor is required, the triage team can easily switch units in the system, safe in the knowledge it will automatically switch back the next day. **"The Allocate eCommunity system has given us active control over our patients, allowing us to easily match the skills of the clinician to patient need", commented Jo.**

Allocate eCommunity provides GSTT the assurance that every single patient has been allocated the visits they need to have.

Planning for today and tomorrow

As clinical triage lead, Jo has to calculate capacity and demand for the service on a daily basis. Before introducing the Allocate eCommunity system, she spent at least an hour throughout the day counting numbers on a spreadsheet, repeating the process as and when capacity fluctuated. Now all she has to do is simply run a report and filter, allowing her to easily identify any shortfalls in minutes.

Running reports on the number of patients with COVID or the number of virtual visits, now takes seconds. **"It supports me being able to get the data I need a lot faster and more efficiently", Jo mentioned.**

> **"Allocate eCommunity has so many benefits, it's not just an allocation tool. It's much broader, wider and deeper than that. It's the whole package."**
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> **Jo Perry,**
> Clinical Triage Lead,
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