

EPR and Mobile Working Help Improve Mental Health Service Delivery

By Andrea Fraser - IM&T Project Manager



On 1st November 2010, NHS Blackpool Primary Intermediate Mental Health Team (PIMH) implemented SystemOne Community Electronic Patient Record (EPR) system.

The main driver for implementing a full EPR in to the service was to enable them to capture data required for the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme.

IAPT is an NHS programme which aims to relieve distress and transform lives of people with depression and anxiety disorders by offering NICE-approved interventions and treatment choice. This initiative also aims to improve the collection, recording and measurement of patients' health outcomes.

Blackpool Community Health Services (CHS) deliver psychology therapies through the Intermediate Mental Health (IMH) team which consists of 45 clinical and five

administration staff.

Prior to SystemOne being implemented, the service were updating paper case notes and recording basic contact information on i.PM. i.PM does not support IAPT methodology in terms of care plans, graphical displays or alerts and warnings throughout the episode of care. There are no graphical displays to show the patient how they are progressing - the graphs have proven to be a key part of a patients care plan as they can make decisions based on their own progress.

If the patient can see a trend of high or low scores, they can identify why they scored so high or low and either avoid situations that make them score high or indeed, do more of the same if they score low.

These key functionalities are an essential requirement to helping a patient into recovery.

“Being able to access records electronically has been a big help with regards to supervising other staff and answering telephone queries, provided the records are kept up to date by all staff. Having a laptop has greatly improved safety and security around transporting of notes. I would normally have taken my client records with me to wherever I was working to update them there. It also means I can do much more at home and in non NHS buildings, and keep up to date with emails, access info re policies and procedures and other trust information.”

Team Manager

Psychological Therapies

Graph below shows a comparison of patients waiting for their first contact over a 16 month period:



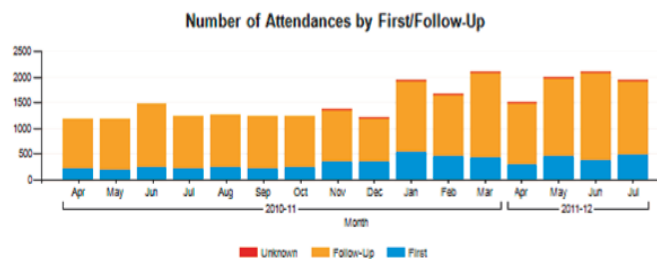
The IMH clinical staff are spending less time performing administration tasks and more time treating patients which has increased productivity.

The majority of patients are being seen within 6 weeks from date of referral, waiting times are vastly reduced and as a direct result of becoming more productive, the service have managed to reduce their waiting times by approximately 66% between November 2010 and July 2011.

In addition to reduced waiting times, the number of first attendances has improved month by month with figures showing an increase of more than 120% from November 2010 to July 2011.

More patients are being seen and they are being seen much quicker than ever before.

Graph below shows a comparison of patients first contact and follow up contacts over a 16 month period:



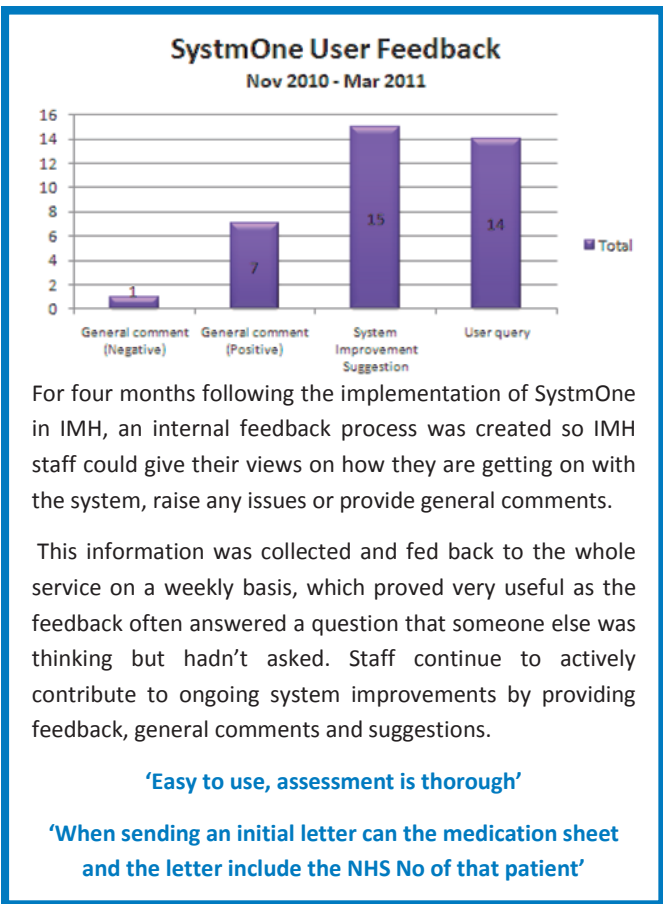
The IMH service has realized many benefits from migrating their patient records on to SystemOne such as:

- Integrated administrative and clinical functionality;
- More efficient access to records which improves shared decision making;
- Patient's can chart their own progress towards recovery by viewing psychometric scores;
- Outcomes feedback to clinicians helps improve the quality of their interventions;
- Collected outcomes data helps managers monitor and improve overall service performance;
- Availability of performance information enables future service development;
- Reduced administration costs due to becoming paper light

Running parallel to the SystmOne deployment, laptops were issued to staff to enable them to access patient records remotely. Being able to access SystmOne remotely gives clinicians access to up to date information at the point of contact and reduces the 'back to base' travel which directly contributes to reducing costs and the organisation's carbon footprint. Staff have been able to access patient records from GP surgeries, Outreach centers and other convenient locations such as the car and at home. During the extreme weather conditions early 2010, clinicians across the country were forced to stay at home as they could not travel due to unsafe road conditions.

If we were faced with the same extreme weather conditions in the future, NHS Blackpool IMH clinicians who are unable to travel, will have access to their patient records via their laptop and will be able to contact their patients to provide care over the telephone, if appropriate.

Initially, some staff experienced issues with connectivity over Wi-Fi and 3G which was due to certain black spots in the area, however, those issues have mainly been resolved. Options are currently being explored to underpin any connectivity issues. SystmOne are due to release their 'Briefcase' functionality before the end of the year, which enables clinicians to work off line. Data entered in the patient record while offline will be saved and uploaded to the live record when it is possible to connect to the network.



Over the past nine months, the IMH staff have learnt how to use a new electronic patient record system whilst getting to grips with a completely new way of working. They have moved forward with technology, have become a paper light service and are supported by mobile working.

"Moving to an EPR is probably the best thing PIMH ever did. Far easier system than the paper, more accurate record keeping and the SystmOne data inputting is far more efficient. Using SystmOne on a laptop has been troublesome as it didn't seem to work when I tried to use it out in the car and when at home it turned off a few times when I was writing up assessments, so I was not best pleased. Then there was the issue of having to remember about three passwords to get the thing to work in the first place"

PIMH Team Leader

"Our transition to electronic records from paper notes was pretty straightforward and practical to do. Working as a practitioner, primarily in surgery, it is important to be able to access our patient notes to keep up to date records, now we can do this through laptops, and by having SystmOne on PC's in our GP surgery clinic rooms.

One way in which up to date electronic patient notes has helped is to communicate with my colleagues and ask advice. I am able to fill in a record and then task a senior colleague to read it and give advice. Entering outcome rating scales onto computers means that we can monitor our patients progress, and hopeful improvement over time"

PIMH Practitioner

"Initially the process of transferring to paper records was a great upheaval in the team and it was quite daunting, however the flexibility and benefits this has brought has by far outweighed any disadvantages it may have brought with it. The ability to access a clients record from an admin point of view is wonderful. It means we can assist clients with queries i.e. name of clinician, date of appointment, log messages and task clinicians without having to ring and leave messages (which have the potential to be lost), save on storage (no discharge files) and clinicians are able to task admin with their requests. We all work with one patient record (if client is being seen by a number of clinicians) and track their progress and of course not have to carry a large number of client files around with them. Mobile working is invaluable! It means that everyone can work unhindered from any location and thus a great time saving measure. However the most important feature this enables is that the clients records are up-to-date".

Deputy Admin Lead

The implementation of SystmOne and deployment of laptops to enable mobile access to patient records has been key to helping improve service delivery but these are only the tools used to aid the staff in their work.

Hard work, patience and the enthusiasm and engagement from the staff are what made this implementation a success.