The ORCHA Project
The Organisation for the Review of Care and Health Applications

Innovation

ORCHA

PROJECT TEAM – Crystal Dennis, Christian Telfer, Dr William Mc Connell, Peter Thorpe

BACKGROUND

NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board (ICB), Our Dorset and Dorset HealthCare have collaborated with the Integrated Care System (ICS) to bring you the Dorset App Library. This was to show everyone what a good health and care app looks like and increase choice as well as recognise the app and online culture of citizens in modern day society. Outsourcing what was an internal resource heavy review of health & care apps for efficiency, recognising how the ecosystem of digital health & care technology was changing and updating all the time. This helped understand what was being searched for and understand insights for unmet need.

The library was deployed in April 2020 and the project team ran a series of 30 onboarding sessions across the Integrated Care System (ICS).

The health app programme also saw the emergence of a Community of Practice promoting people to share learnings, tips and good practice.

ADOPTION JOURNEY

Alongside training staff, the app library was launched to the public, forming part of its #HereForYou campaign which reassures Dorset residents that their health services are still available should they need them.

The work continues with mental health, education, assistive technology, primary care, public health and social prescribing teams in the adoption and embedding of the app library into services. The earliest adopters of the technology within the workforce were LiveWell Dorset, who quickly recognised the value of the resource.


Active Monitoring teams in Dorset Mind have found that introducing apps when triaging is helpful to many of the people whom they are helping, particularly when referring them on to another service.

WHAT IS THE INNOVATION

A partnership of health and social care organisations working together, Our Dorset holds the ambition for its 750,000 residents to lead healthier, fulfilling lives and support the Five Year Forward Plan five Pillars. The challenges across Dorset are the population is ageing, bringing more long-term conditions, which places a growing demand on services. Its funding cannot keep pace with this growth in demand and without changing its services, in five years it would face an annual shortage of £229 million a year.

The Integrated Care System has identified a clear plan, in which digital plays an enabling role. To help health professionals in the awareness, accessibility, and trust to recommend the use health apps to the population for supported self-management we partnered with the Organisation for the Review of Care and Health Applications (ORCHA). An app is nominated, it will first be reviewed by ORCHA before being used by Our Dorset https://ourdorset.orcha.co.uk/.
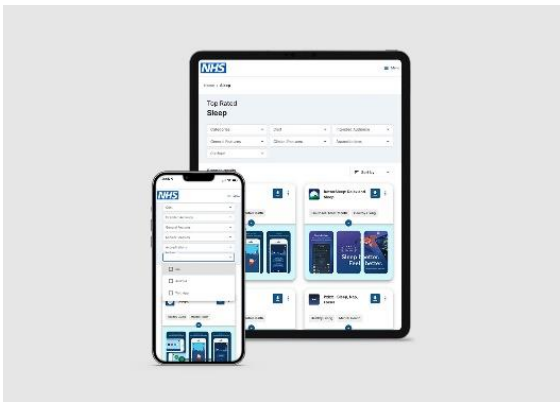

Our Dorset also opted to include a feature to enable staff to recommend apps via email or text message from the app library directly to residents and patients. This eliminated human error and enabled recommendations to be monitored for uptake.

HOW HAS IT SCALED AND WHAT WERE THE ENABLERS

Since deployment we have grown to:

- Over 62k site visits and over 165k page views
- 5,400 apps recommended to date and 33% of recommended apps downloaded, which is a very good engagement rate, especially compared with other services.
- In excess of 3,850 proven downloads through recommendations in addition to citizens independently downloading apps without recommendations
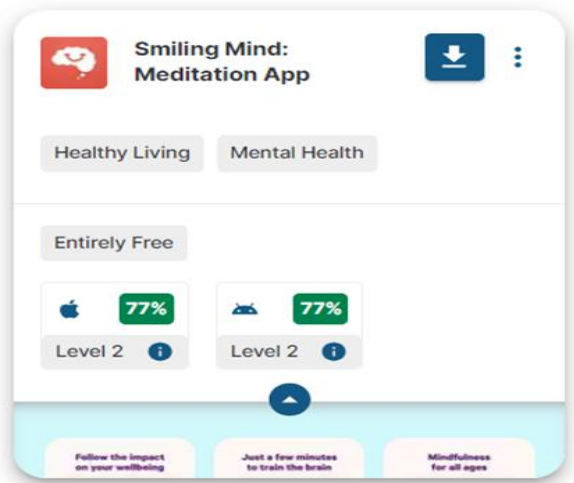
- Over 260 professionals / teams using the library as part of their day to day working including LiveWell Dorset, both local authorities, Primary Care and the voluntary sector and increasing monthly.

- The app library has been embedded into ICS websites such as maternity matters, Our Dorset care record, the Dorset mental health forum, Dorset Council and Live Well Dorset.

Our app library is accessed not just by Dorset but in London, Cornwall, Devon, France, Germany, Singapore, Canada and many other countries

KEY CHALLENGES & LEARNING

The culture challenges in building a new capability has been around awareness/digital readiness of the workforce. We have worked with the workforce teams in the onboarding/education sessions for the app library to include:

- Why utilise digital health technologies as part of our supported self-management
- Not all digital health technologies are the same and the difference in the four levels
- Up to date digital health regulations
- Evaluation criteria themes
- How to get the best out of the app library
- Having a good integration experience and aligned with clinical behaviour
- Barriers to adoption or change in culture including digital skills and managing unconscious bias/policy at organisational levels saying not to recommend apps at all

Crystal Dennis, Interim Lead for Digital Access to Service @Home, Our Dorset Digital, said:

"After Transformation Boards learned of what had been achieved in Dorset, everyone was unanimous in the view that it was a no-brainer to roll out an app library powered by ORCHA across the seven ICS organisations."

We continue to work with our communications and engagement teams in the inclusion of the app library for all as part of choice.

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT

The analytics found the most popular searches and downloads were for mental health apps and it is the top search each month.

The rapid rate at which LiveWell Dorset have been able to embed the use of the App Library in practice shows the huge role for apps in supporting lifestyle changes, and subsequently the prevention of health issues.

The Active Monitoring teams at Dorset Mind, who hold a contract with some of the Primary Care Networks to provide a triaging service, have also found the resource very useful particularly offering an app to support people during the 'whilst waiting' period and makes people feel supported.

There have been six App Library webinars on a range of topics to support the workforce, and these have been well received. The most recent was focused on apps to support children and young people's mental health, and was attended by over 100 people, most of whom were clinicians working in the CAMHS service.

The YouTube video below with Dr Tom Micklewright highlights the importance of trustworthy NHS Apps as well as an overview of finding Apps:

https://youtu.be/Rc9K06nHWPM

NEXT STEPS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The NHS app already enabled patients with smartphones to check symptoms, book appointments, order repeat prescriptions, and access their medical records as well as show vaccination status and recent test results.

There's been a page added to the site to support Primary Care in promoting Keeping Well at Winter.

The commitment to mobile first approaches is ongoing. The webinars and training will continue providing updates on what has changed, evidence generation and things to consider when embedding mobile first approaches or digital interventions as part of hybrid models of care.

Recommendations include:
- Undertake further review of impact including what was being searched for and understand insights for unmet need.
- Raising awareness of the NHS Dorset app library.

REFERENCES

There is a growing library of research evidence to support the development of NHS apps and the references below support this:

Chapman R, Haroon S, Simms-Williams N, et al. (2022) Socioeconomic deprivation, age and language are barriers to accessing personal health records: a cross-sectional study of a large hospital-based personal health record system. *BMJ Open*.

Mohammed MA, Montague J, Faisal M, Lamming L (2020) The value of a patient access portal in primary care: a cross-sectional survey of 62,486 registered users in the UK. *Univers Access Inf Soc*, DOI:

Szinay D, Jones A, Chadborn T, Brown J, Naughton F. (2020) Influences on the Uptake of and Engagement With Health and Well-Being Smartphone Apps: Systematic Review. J Med Internet Res. 2020 May 29;22(5):e17572. doi: 10.2196/17572. PMID: 32348255; PMCID: PMC7293059.

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