



connecting
care



CONNECTING CARE
DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Connecting Care | Different Perspectives 3



This document tells you about some of the stories behind Connecting Care.

These stories describe how Connecting Care is making care better, safer, more joined-up and more efficient.

The quotes we've shared come from some of the many people who are using Connecting Care.

This edition includes –

- out of hours services
- hospital pharmacy
- social care
- safeguarding teams
- general practice
- community services
- A&E
- pre-operative assessment teams
- mental health
- ...and more!



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out of hours services

Out of hours services often have little prior information about the patients who access their services.

If the patient has used out of hours services before, there might be a record. However, frequently there is nothing to guide out of hours clinicians.

Connecting Care provides out of hours with a summary of information about their patient which includes:

- **Information about contacts with social care**
- **Mental health past and future appointments**
- **Information about contacts in hospitals including radiology reports, documents and discharge summaries from University Hospitals Bristol Acute Trust**
- **Patients' timeline which can indicate hospital admissions**
- **Safeguarding alerts and children's safeguarding information**

Information in Connecting Care can be invaluable in an out of hours service and helps the service to provide the right care.

Saves visits / appointments

Out of hours sometimes make home visits. Connecting Care means that visits can be made when they are needed so that unnecessary home visits can be avoided. Connecting Care is accessible on a mobile device which can be useful where further information might be needed when in the patient's home.

"I had a case recently where the patient couldn't remember her medications. Luckily I was able to look at Connecting Care and have the necessary information to help with the assessment. It proved very helpful for the patient and made me feel much more confident in my assessment. I wish we could have it in all areas."

Clinical Advisor, Care UK 111

"All the benefits of Connecting Care are one click away from within the patient's EMIS record... it is a real game-changer!"

Head of the Bristol Homeless Service

Access to information otherwise not available

The range of information from across health and social care presents clinicians with the opportunity to see information they would otherwise not have immediate access to. This has inspired people to say that "being able to use Connecting Care was like someone turning the lights on!"

out of hours services

Saves admissions

Out of hours clinicians can recommend that a patient needs to go to the emergency department or be admitted to hospital. Connecting Care can support this decision where it is needed, and avoid it where it is not.

Safer prescribing

Connecting Care allows out of hours to see what the patient's GP has prescribed. This can result in out of hours services being able to prescribe more safely or more appropriately.

Quality of consultation

Connecting Care may not shorten the length of time taken with a patient, but it can significantly improve the quality, safety and confidence of that consultation.

"I assisted a patient with unravelling her prescription that she had recently received from the dermatologist. It was unclear from the packets what dosage of doxycycline she needed to take. I accessed Connecting Care and quite easily found the letter her consultant sent to her GP where the dosage and instructions were quite clearly outlined for the purpose of a repeat script. As a result, I was able to advise accordingly and close the call without the need to pass it on to another service provider."

Clinical Advisor, Care UK 111

"I've found Connecting Care helpful especially when a patient does not declare all of their mental health history, but their symptoms are complex. It's also been useful when a patient seems confused but I can't get to the bottom of whether it is mental illness or dementia. It wouldn't change the pathway I'd use, as we are assessing symptoms and not a diagnosis and we can only assess what we know or has been declared, but it has been reassuring on occasions to confirm that my instinct has been correct."

Clinical Advisor, Care UK 111

"[Having access to radiology reports is] helpful to bring complete medical investigations into context, less logins needed."

Clinical Coordinator, Brisdoc

hospital pharmacy

Pharmacy services in a hospital do not usually have information about medications that have been prescribed outside of their own hospital setting.

In order to safely prescribe, it is common place for a pharmacist to request medicines information from a patient's GP. This process is usually done by phone or fax.

As well as the time this takes, this process is often delayed or not available if the GP practice is closed.

Connecting Care provides hospital pharmacy departments with a summary of information about their patient which includes:

- **The GP record (including contacts, diagnoses, a history of prescribed medications and drug allergies)**
- **Information about contacts with mental health, community and social care, and notes from any community nurse visits and appointments**

Information in Connecting Care has proven to be invaluable to a hospital pharmacy. Not only are there proven safety benefits, but it also it helps them make more efficient use of their time and reduces the time spent making calls and awaiting faxes.

Getting the medicines right - safer prescribing

Connecting Care allows hospital pharmacists to have instant access to information on GP prescribing and patients' drug allergies. This enables them to prescribe more safely or more appropriately.

"Dramatically decreases the time it takes to undertake a triage."

Care of the Elderly Pharmacist, University Hospitals Bristol

"It was amazing having this resource over the long weekend. I was able to access information about a patient's usual insulin regime when she was severely unwell and not able to communicate with us".

Pharmacist, North Bristol Trust

Access to information otherwise not available

Connecting Care gives immediate access to information from across health and social care that might not otherwise be available at that point in time, especially out of other service's hours.

hospital pharmacy

Saves time

Connecting Care significantly reduces the amount of calls made to GPs and consequently the number of faxes received. Staff that would usually be occupied making those calls are now freed up to carry out other duties. This allows for more timely discharge of patients and patients receiving medications in a more timely fashion.

Getting the medicines right - safer communication

When patients move between care providers or care settings the risk of miscommunication and unintended changes to medications can be a significant problem. For example, between 30% and 70% of patients may have an unintentional change to their medication which can happen because of something like unclear information or lack of information. These unintentional changes can and frequently do, cause the patient harm. Connecting Care removes this risk by providing direct access to real time information on GP prescribed medicines. In evaluating Connecting Care, local pharmacists confirmed this. They identified a number of errors - including some examples of high severity errors which had the potential to cause significant harm (insulin not prescribed, incorrect dose of methadone). Using Connecting Care ensured this error did not happen.

"I was working bank holiday Friday - a patient had been admitted into hospital who normally takes lithium. Connecting Care was the only source available to us in order to confirm their dose (which was charted incorrectly) and brand of lithium (patient did not know, had not brought their medicines to hospital and their GP and chemist were shut). We were able to get the dose changed and supply the correct medication to the patient. Very useful indeed!"

**Pharmacist,
University Hospitals Bristol**

adult social care

Health and social care work closely together to provide many services. However, it's often the case that social care teams have little health related information to hand.

Some social care teams have access to health IT systems, others have to use phone calls and faxes to find information they need to do their job. As well as the time this takes, this process is often delayed or impossible if, for example, the GP practice is closed or the community nurse unavailable.

Connecting Care provides social care teams with a summary of information about their service users which includes:

- **Summary details of the GP record**
- **Information about contacts in hospitals, out of hours and emergency departments**
- **Information about appointments with community teams**
- **Mental health past and future appointments**
- **Discharge summaries from University Hospitals Bristol Acute Trust**

Information in Connecting Care can be invaluable to a variety of social care teams; from occupational therapy to safeguarding teams. It aids them in providing a more **efficient**, more **integrated** and **safer** service.

“Looked up information regarding whether my service user had received physio input since returning home...

Saved me time and also prevented me making an unnecessary referral for physio.”

**Occupational Therapist,
North Somerset Council**

“Looking to see the latest district nursing input about a client - only to find that they had been moved to a residential home on a private basis...gathered information that I would not have been able to get if it were not for Connecting Care as the nurses did not tell me that she was in a respite placement.”

**Social Worker, North
Somerset Council**

adult social care

Safeguarding interventions

Connecting Care includes information on markers which can be valuable in spotting trends that might require a safeguarding intervention - for example attendances to emergency departments and out of hours services. This can help safeguarding teams track progress and improve their ability to manage risk.

Manage referrals better

Connecting Care provides social care teams with information on who else is involved in the circle of care. By seeing that involvement, it is possible to make a well-informed judgement on the course of action required e.g. is a referral into social care required? Is a home visit / call to the client needed?

Customer Service Team

The customer service officers receive calls from other professionals, service users and their families. Accessing information on Connecting Care saves time and provides a clearer picture of what is happening. This can avoid duplication between council and community providers and helps reduce any confusion for service users and their families.

Saves time in triage and assessment

Connecting Care provides the 'background' on the client, which can be invaluable in understanding the broader context of care. This enables better prioritising and triage. It also supports a faster and more streamlined assessment processes. More targeted management of referrals and assessments is not only more efficient and cost effective, it's also better for service users.

"Paramedics reported on a vulnerable lady not known to South Gloucestershire Council (SGC). I was able to see that she was admitted to the BRI. Saving time calling GP and hospital wards. I was also able to view that a referral had been made to Bristol Community Health Service as she had a Bristol GP, avoiding duplication of work by referral to the SGC social worker team. In addition I was able to reassure her daughter that her mother would get the help she required."

**Customer Support Officer,
SGC**

Saves installations and equipment costs

By having access to a broader set of information, social care teams such as occupational therapy services can make better judgement (and save time and money) on whether home aids and equipment are required.

safeguarding

Teams working with vulnerable people are using Connecting Care to support better safeguarding services.

Connecting Care provides staff working across care settings with summary information about their service users including –

- **Safeguarding alerts and End of Life care plan alert**
- **Summary details of the GP record including past and current medications**
- **Information about contacts in hospitals, out of hours and emergency departments**
- **Documents and discharge summaries from University Hospitals Bristol Acute Trust**
- **Information about appointments with community teams**
- **Mental health past and future appointments**

Improving the visibility of emergency department attendances for safeguarding

Connecting Care gives the ability to monitor attendance information for hospitals and walk-in-centres, particularly unplanned emergency admissions. Spotting trends in hospital attendances allows a better assessment of the ‘appropriate level of concern about a case.’ If safeguarding concerns are raised, then this could lead to quicker interventions by appropriate agencies.

Connecting Care enables the sharing of information across health and care – and supports everyone who has a role in safeguarding.

Supporting risk management and safeguarding

“It’s definitely useful information and not available to us on any other database. It means we can find out which social care team are involved with a child which up to now we would only know if a child is subject to a child protection plan.”

Senior Safeguarding Administrator, University Hospitals Bristol

“I am a big fan of Connecting Care! When it comes to complex and challenging calls the wealth of extra information it can bring to our assessments to make a safe, appropriate and informed decision is invaluable. It is easy and quick to use with the patient on the phone once you know your way around the system.”

Safeguarding Lead, North Bristol Acute Trust

Connecting Care allows the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Team (DOLS Team) to check the location of service users to see if they are still in hospital. They have been able to identify service users via Connecting Care who have been discharged to a care home, or passed away. This has saved the time it would have taken calling hospital wards and avoided unnecessary visits for assessments, allowing waiting lists to be managed more efficiently.

safeguarding

Helps manage referrals

Practitioners within access teams view service user's records to check who else is involved in their care, saving time calling the GP practice, community and mental health teams. Connecting Care has helped them identify safeguarding concerns, prioritise referrals and to redirect services to providers. Time saved can be used to make better decisions, allowing them to spend more time on each case.

Assisting investigations

The safeguarding team in North Somerset identified the following case where access to Connecting Care would have assisted in the investigation, *"a recent safeguarding concern in a care home arose as it appeared an inaccurate dose of insulin was given based on care home records. Connecting Care would have helped provide information on this which would have contributed to the investigation."*

Holistic view

Practitioners have a duty of care to service users which includes using information available to make safe and best decisions. Sometimes Connecting Care is the only place information can be accessed making it an invaluable tool for **safeguarding** and avoiding risk.

"I check service users on our waiting list to see if Health are involved and their interventions."

Access and Response Team, South Glos Council

"I have a case under safeguarding and one of the action points is for an incontinence assessment to be completed by the District Nurse. I was able to view the North Somerset Community Partnership case notes on Connecting Care to find what action had been taken. It was much easier to look up the case note instead of ringing the Community Team as it does take some time to get through to the team and speak to the correct person. This saved both myself and the district nurses time".

Care Coordinator, North Somerset Council

general practice

GP practices generally have a very rich patient record which is used for most of the work in general practice. Connecting Care supports practices further and helps ‘bring the world outside the practice into the practice’.

Connecting Care enables the sharing of the GP record to other care providers. It also provides GP practices with summary information about their patients including:

- **Information about contacts in hospitals, out of hours and emergency departments**
- **Patients’ timeline which can indicate hospital admissions**
- **Safeguarding alerts and End of Life care plan alert**
- **Details of social care contacts and assessments**
- **Documents including discharge summaries from University Hospitals Bristol Acute Trust**
- **Radiology reports**
- **Mental health past and future appointments**

Information in Connecting Care can add value to a GP practice providing more information about what is happening to their patients when they are outside of the practice. The use of Connecting Care by other services can significantly reduce the administrative burden on GP practices.

“I use Connecting Care to access progress notes from the community rapid response team. The more information I have available the less that the medical secretaries need to spend time trying to find out information.”

South Bristol GP

Immediate access from GP records

GPs are able to access Connecting Care from within EMIS which means all the benefits of Connecting Care are only one click away from within the patient’s EMIS record. In some cases, Connecting Care provides GP practices with access to other GP records. This can be valuable when a practice has a new registration and the records from the old practice haven’t yet been transferred. Where a practice manages temporary patients (e.g. within the context of a community bed in a nursing ward or a ‘virtual hospital’) then Connecting Care can support this by providing access to the registered GP practice record.

general practice

Practice Inpatient list

The Practice Inpatient in Connecting Care allows GPs to view patients from their practice that are currently in hospital, including the location where the patient is in hospital and the amount of days that patient has been in hospital. This is helpful for supporting discharge as GPs have earlier sight and can start discharge planning.

Supporting risk management and safeguarding

Connecting Care includes information which can be valuable in spotting trends that might require a safeguarding intervention. For example, it shows attendances at the emergency department and out of hours services, and notes from community nursing. Connecting Care can help GP practices track progress and improve their ability to manage risk and safeguarding.

Confidence in patients' care

Knowing that other services are using Connecting Care to make decisions on care plans, prescriptions and treatments and that they are doing so using information from the GP's record as the basis for those decisions means that Connecting Care provides GP practices with more confidence that their patients are being treated safely and appropriately when they go to hospital or are cared for by community or social care teams.

Save administration time

GP practices operate under a huge burden of work that is generated by calls and faxes from other organisations all of whom are requesting (often basic) information about

“Patient with urinary problems who I felt needed urgent review - Connecting Care showed he had an urology review the following week, which meant I did not have to contact the hospital to find out, which could have taken some time.”

GP, Courtside Surgery

their registered patients. When Connecting Care is being used by hospital pharmacy teams, out of hours services, community nursing and social care teams; then together there is a reduced burden on GP practices which means that fewer calls and faxes are received and sent. Staff who would usually undertake this work are now freed up to carry out other duties.

community service

Community services work closely with GP practices, hospitals, social care and out of hours services. Despite this central role, they often have little access to information from those other services to assist them with delivering patient care. Connecting Care can be of particular use to community teams who are dealing with changing caseloads and those managing patients who are at risk or have complex care needs.

Connecting Care provides community services with a summary of information about their patient which includes:

- **Information about contacts in hospitals, out of hours and emergency departments**
- **Safeguarding alerts and end of life alert**
- **Details of social care contacts and assessments**
- **Documents including discharge summaries from University Hospitals Bristol Acute Trust**
- **Radiology reports**
- **Mental health past and future appointments**

Information in Connecting Care can be invaluable to community services and can help provide more efficient, more integrated care.

Immediate access from EMIS

Community staff are able to access Connecting Care from within EMIS which means all the benefits of Connecting Care are one click away from within the patient's EMIS record.

"I use it most days - to check reports for my patients and at times whilst triaging."

MATS Service, Bristol Community Health

"Rapid response notes are also very detailed and help to inform our assessments; this also means our assessments can often be completed in shorter time."

Social Worker, Immediate Response Team, Bristol City Council

"Patients can often be confused about their appointments so can clarify this with them using Connecting Care."

Specialist Occupational Therapist, Sirona Care and Health

community service

Saves time in triage and assessment

Connecting Care significantly reduces the amount of time that is needed to find information about patients. By providing the 'background' on the patient, the broader context of care is understood and this enables better prioritising and triage, and a faster / more streamlined assessment processes. This is not only more efficient and cost effective, it's also better for patients.

Saves time

Connecting Care can significantly reduce the number of calls made - for example to GPs (who should receive fewer calls and faxes); social care teams (the social worker phone number is in Connecting Care). This means staff can be freed up to carry out other duties.

Access on the go - saving unnecessary travel

Connecting Care can be accessed from mobile devices which helps teams who are 'on the go'. Community teams sometimes arrive at a patient's home to find that the patient is not there. Connecting Care can help as it provides 'real time' information on hospital admissions. Less wasted visits saves time and money.

Confidence in patients' care

Other services use community health information in Connecting Care to make decisions on care plans, prescriptions and treatments. This means that Connecting Care provides community services with more confidence that their patients are being treated safely and appropriately when they go to hospital or are being cared for by social care teams.

"Hospital admissions - this is particularly useful to support staff in the evening and weekends that could otherwise make a wasted journey."

Specialist Occupational Therapist, Sirona Care and Health

"Without Connecting Care I would have gone back to office and telephoned to find out information."

Community Matron, Bristol Community Health

Supporting risk management and safeguarding

Connecting Care includes information which can be valuable in spotting trends that might require a safeguarding intervention. For example, it shows attendances at the emergency department and out of hours services. Connecting Care can help community services track progress and improve their ability to manage risk and safeguarding.

patients & service users

Connecting Care can enhance a patient's experience of the care they receive from health and social providers.

Using Connecting Care can help patients receive safer, more appropriate care by -

- **Providing allergy and medication information which can help prevent an adverse incident**
- **Possibly avoiding hospital admissions - (patients often have to be admitted due to limited information being available especially during the night and at weekends. Sometimes these admissions can lead to lengthy hospital stays that may be inappropriate)**
- **Having a better level of care with fewer delays**
- **A timely discharge and receiving medications in a more timely fashion**
- **Improved visibility of emergency and out of hours attendances; supporting safeguarding monitoring which means vulnerable patients are safer**

Information in Connecting Care can be invaluable in making sure that we provide better quality and safer care experience, and that patients and service users are more involved in their care

I only have to tell my story once

Information in Connecting Care comes from across the health and social care spectrum - and because of this, clinicians and practitioners have less need to ask people to 'tell their story.' This means people / patients don't have to keep telling their story over and over again (e.g. explaining medications).

"Can validate the information with the service user rather than them having to have to explain details twice/have previously discussed with others."

Social Worker, Bristol City Council

"Having end of life wishes widely available, in the same page as previous medical history and medications means that when a crisis arises, care can be delivered in accord with patient wishes."

Consultant, Weston Acute Hospital Trust

Respecting an individual's wishes

Connecting Care can help make 'visible' patient's wishes where the information might not otherwise be available. For example it can support better end of life care as it includes information on current care and end of life wishes.

patients & service users

Fewer visits

Patients are sometimes cared for in their own homes by social and health care staff. Staff often have to return to the office from a visit, or call other organisations, due to a lack of information when with a patient. Connecting Care can be accessed on a mobile device in the patient's home which in some cases might save the need for a repeat visit.

More informed, 'richer' consultations

Having access to more information may mean staff are able to have better consultations with their patients which contributes to better care planning (like knowing who else is providing care, seeing GP summaries, hospital documents and pathology results).

Being part of it

Using features like the 'Timeline' in Connecting Care can usefully support conversations with patients / service users. Patients can visually see when 'events' have happened and this can be used to inform discussions – for example, on how further admissions could be prevented.

Understanding the whole picture

Sometimes many agencies are involved in someone's care and multiple appointments can become confusing for patients. Whilst with the patient, staff are able to provide them with information related to other health and social care providers and confirm where their future appointments are scheduled.

“Patients can often be confused about their appointments so can clarify this with them using Connecting Care.”

**Specialist Occupational
Therapist, Sirona Care
and Health**

accident & emergency

Accident and emergency teams often have limited or no information about the people who present at the emergency department. Patients may be unconscious, very unwell, often arrive alone and can be confused about the medications they are taking and the other people involved in their care.

Connecting Care provides A&E staff with a summary of information about their patient which includes -

- **Providing allergy and medication information which can help prevent an adverse incident**
- **A summary from the GP record (this includes appointments, diagnoses, interventions, medications and allergies)**
- **Out of hours contacts**
- **Information about contacts with community services**
- **Details of social care contacts and assessments**
- **Mental health past and future appointments**
- **Safeguarding and End of Life Care Plan alerts**

Information in Connecting Care can be invaluable to emergency department staff and can help the service provide more efficient, safer, more integrated care.

Safer treatment

Connecting Care includes information on GP prescribed medications and alerts and allergies. This information can be useful when providing care and treatment in emergency

“The great benefit of Connecting Care is access to medical history, contacts with GP and medication lists. Although it is possible to get these faxed from GPs, it is very time consuming and not available 24/7. There have been cases when it has been really helpful, such as quickly establishing current insulin dose and even piecing together why patients have presented to the emergency department if they come from GP with no letter.”

Bristol Community Health Service REACT Team, North Bristol Trust

departments - enabling patients to be treated more safely and more effectively. (Before Connecting Care they would have had to request this information from the GP via phone or fax, or ask the individual themselves - who may or may not know).

Only source of information

Sometimes when patients have emergency admissions, the only information staff have is from the patients themselves (if they are able to communicate). Connecting Care is an extremely valuable source of information in these situations, and can be life-saving.

accident & emergency

Supports triage and assessment

Connecting Care significantly reduces the amount of time that is needed to find information about patients. It provides the 'background' on the patient which can be invaluable in understanding the broader context of care. This enables better prioritising and triage.

Supports safeguarding

Connecting Care includes information that can be valuable in spotting trends that might require a safeguarding intervention. For example, it shows any previous attendances – this can help emergency departments improve their ability to manage risk and safeguarding.

Saves admissions

Patients often have to be admitted due to limited information being available, especially during the night and at weekends. Sometimes these admissions can lead to lengthy hospital stays that may be inappropriate. Connecting Care can support a more holistic 'risk assessment' – and a broader understanding of what might be 'normal' for a patient. This means that patients are more likely to be admitted only when it is truly needed.

“Connecting Care provides a better overview for clinicians because often the patients do not reveal all information about themselves that would be helpful in making a diagnosis either because they think the doctor knows anyway, or it is something that they no longer feel is relevant as it is cured e.g. cancer that has been treated and the patient thinks is no longer relevant for this episode of care.”

**Emergency Department
Nurse, University Hospitals
Bristol**

“We find Connecting Care extremely useful... especially useful with emergency admissions of elderly patients who are often unable to give us the information themselves.”

**Consultant
Orthogeriatrician,
North Bristol Trust**

accident & emergency

“In terms of our Psychiatric Liaison team, working within the general hospital, we are often expected to see patients very quickly (especially in A&E), without any referral or contact from the GP or other key services. Historically we would often go into to these assessments with very limited information. In this instance Connecting Care has been critical in viewing key pieces of information prior to assessment in the hospital, such as packages of care, safeguarding procedures and GP interventions, and so results in a better quality of assessment and outcome for the patient. I cannot imagine practising effectively without this level of information now.”

**Team Manager,
Weston Acute Hospital
Trust**

One of the patients I saw recently in the emergency department had come from a nursing home. From Connecting Care we could see that she had been seen several times by her GP recently. She was deteriorating and unable to talk through treatment options. Connecting Care was really useful as it showed that her GP had looked into all reversible causes of decline and that her family had Lasting Power Of Attorney in place for health and welfare. Discussion with her family showed that she wanted to be treated supportively and symptomatically and if possible die out of hospital. Connecting Care gave us very valuable information early in this woman’s management and we were able to get her back to her nursing home with supportive care that day.”

**Chief Clinical Information
Officer Acute and ED Lead,
North Bristol Trust**

pre-operative assessment

Accessing information to identify risk factors and ensuring patients are as fit as they can be before their operation is one of the key challenges faced by the pre-operative teams. This used to involve phoning and faxing information to and from GPs and other health and social care partners – something that is prone to risk and inefficiency.

Information in Connecting Care has proven to be invaluable to pre op assessment. Helping them make more efficient use of their time and reduces the time spent making calls and awaiting faxes. Patient experience is also improved as there are reductions in clinic delays, repeat visits and delays in surgery.

Saves time

Connecting Care enables clinical staff access to information in real time, cutting down on admin and freeing staff up to assess more patients. Analysis by the team at University Hospitals Bristol Acute Trust showed that, before Connecting Care, accessing this information could take in excess of four hours per episode. With Connecting Care this has now reduced to less than two minutes!

Supporting pre-operative video assessments

As the patient isn't in the same room Connecting Care can provide access to relevant information e.g. medication and medical history can support the assessment.

Supports medicines reconciliation

Connecting Care provides instant access to GP medications, supporting more efficient, safer medicines reconciliation by pre-op pharmacists. This information also helps ensure patient safety when pre-populating drug charts.

I must firstly say what a joy Connecting Care is! – Saving us so much time phoning GP surgeries.

I work as a staff nurse in a pre-operative assessment and surgical admission suite. The most common reasons for using this service is to obtain a medication list and health summaries at pre-op. Then on admission to check any medication or health changes, to amend drug charts.

Pre-op Assessment Nurse, North Bristol Trust

Supports medicines reconciliation

Connecting Care provides instant access to GP medications, supporting more efficient, safer medicines reconciliation by pre-op pharmacists. This information also helps ensure patient safety when pre-populating drug charts.

Improved patient experience

Early sight of information held in Connecting Care before the patient attends pre-op means that additional tests can be ordered and an appointment with an anaesthetist made if needed, potentially avoiding a second visit to the pre-op clinic or even a delay to surgery. Clinics are able to run more efficiently and more patients seen on time as delays caused by collection of information are avoided.

mental health

Teams working across mental health services often work with service users who may be unable to give an accurate account of their medical history and treatment. Staff need to access clinical information quickly to ensure that their service users are treated appropriately.

Connecting Care supports staff by giving them access to information such as medication and appointments as well as social care information so that they can keep their service users safe.

Connecting Care provides summary information about the service user drawn from GPs, hospitals, community, mental health and social care records and includes safeguarding alerts.

How mental health teams use Connecting Care -

- **Checking service user medication for prescribing**
- **Checking referrals from hospitals**
- **Getting up to date information from hospitals e.g. medication and appointments**
- **Tracing missing people by checking appointments and prescriptions and contact with other providers**
- **Informing safety plans - to see where (and if) a service user has an appointment so they can ensure they will be suitably placed when discharged from the team's care**
- **Checking appointments, especially if a service user is unsure if they have an appointment and who the appointment is with**

“Connecting Care is really useful for checking medical info prior to detox, medical info where clients have forgotten/misunderstood what the GP has said, what’s happened when clients get admitted to hospital as an emergency and for the Acer Team to make checks prior to admission.”

Staff Grade Doctor, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (AWP)

“I’ve found it so useful. Psychiatrists can feel outside of the loop of physical health investigations and medications, but they are so important to mental health care as they can help safe prescribing and good diagnosis.”

Consultant Psychiatrist, AWP

mental health

Information otherwise not available

Without Connecting Care, often the only way to find the information needed for treatment is to phone other services which can take hours (or days!) to get a response. This helps mental health teams find out more about what has happened and reduces delays in getting hold of key information.

Holistic view

Service users may not always be willing or able to give an accurate account of their medical and prescribing history. Connecting Care gives the practitioner the 'whole picture' so the person can be treated appropriately. This might mean that prescribing is safer, or safeguarding is improved or even that a service user's diagnosis or treatment is faster / improved.

Connecting Care supports service users

Connecting Care can help prevent inappropriate treatment of service users, for example it can stop people enforcing deprivation of liberty without knowing if it is necessary due to a lack of information.

"People's rights and liberties are protected as a result of Connecting Care."

Specialist Practitioner Street Triage Team, AWP

"Connecting Care is a game changer! It negates the need to contact the GP by about 90% re: referral triage. We are more aware of hospital discharge plans and do not have to wait or prompt GP feedback. It's easy to access CT scans, bloods etc..."

Team Leader, Dementia Wellbeing Team

"Connecting Care is our messiah here! Don't think of stopping it!"

Mental Health Staff Nurse, Place Of Safety, AWP

"Connecting Care makes things safer for service users and safer for us. Being able to see some of the information in Connecting Care is really useful as it links you up better with other drug services by stopping delays in getting information as you don't have to waste time requesting it."

Recovery Worker, Rapid Prescribing Team, AWP

children's social care

Connecting Care means social care teams don't have to rely on phone calls and faxes to find the health related information needed to do their job. As well as the time phoning and faxing takes, it doesn't always produce results, especially if the health care provider is unavailable or if it's outside of service hours.

Connecting Care provides social care teams with a summary of information about their service users from health and social care providers across primary care, acute care, out of hours, emergency, mental health and community.

Information in Connecting Care can be invaluable to a variety of social care teams; from occupational therapy to safeguarding teams. It aids them in providing a more efficient, more integrated and safer service.

Supporting safeguarding

Connecting Care includes information on markers which can be valuable in spotting trends that might require a safeguarding intervention. For example, it shows attendances at emergency departments and out of hours services. Connecting Care can help safeguarding teams track progress and improve their ability to manage risk.

Manage referrals better

Connecting Care provides social care teams with information on who else is involved in the circle of care. By seeing that involvement, it is possible to make a more well-informed judgement on the course of action required e.g. is a referral into social care required? Is a home visit needed? Do I need to call the client?

Saves time in triage and assessment

Connecting Care significantly reduces the amount of time that is needed to find information about service users. Connecting Care provides the 'background' on the service user, which can be invaluable in understanding the broader context of care. This enables better prioritising and triage. It also supports faster and more streamlined assessment processes. More targeted management of referrals and assessments is not only more efficient and cost effective, it's also better for the service users.

"In our area of work, services users might not be entirely honest about the contact they have with any children. Recently there was a case where a service user with substance misuse and mental health issues (inc. anger management) only mentioned in passing that he had a baby daughter he cared for once a week. Fortunately the children were listed on Connecting Care with their mother along with her full details. A referral was made to the First Response Safeguarding team at the local authority."

**Specialist Social Work
Practitioner, ROADS
Safeguarding Lead, AWP**

children's social care

Access to information otherwise not available

Connecting Care is proving helpful across our geography particularly where North Somerset and South Gloucestershire have limited information from Bristol for Children and Young People's Services.

Prescribing information is very useful when there are concerns regarding possible poor compliance with the management of illnesses requiring repeat medication (e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy).

The information on GP attendances within Connecting Care can help where there may be poor compliance particularly where 'Did Not Attend' shows.

Some staff use Connecting Care to share health visitor/school health nurse service provision. Sometimes it is helpful for staff in hospitals to know that health visitors are providing an enhanced level of service where there are safeguarding concerns.

“Social workers trying to get information about children's social care involvement for a safeguarding concern we received...we put in the child's details and it came up showing there was an allocated worker...he could make a quick telephone call to confirm the situation and close down the concern. This situation might have needed an urgent response and it was only an hour prior to our close of service...having the information available that there was someone involved focused our effort to get the quickest outcome to our enquiry with the information available. This meant we could focus our efforts more appropriately on other work and resulted in reducing the stress levels of staff involved in this potentially high risk situation.”

**Integrated Care Team
Manager, North Somerset
Council**

If you would like more information on Connecting Care,
please contact connectingcare.info@nhs.net

