

Gloucestershire Virtual COVID-19 Ward

Case Study

Delivering a Virtual Ward Solution to Support Patients in Their Own Home, Who Have Tested Positive for COVID-19



The Client

Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, in partnership with GDoc Ltd (GP Provider Company for Gloucestershire)

Service Start Date

November 2020

The Challenge

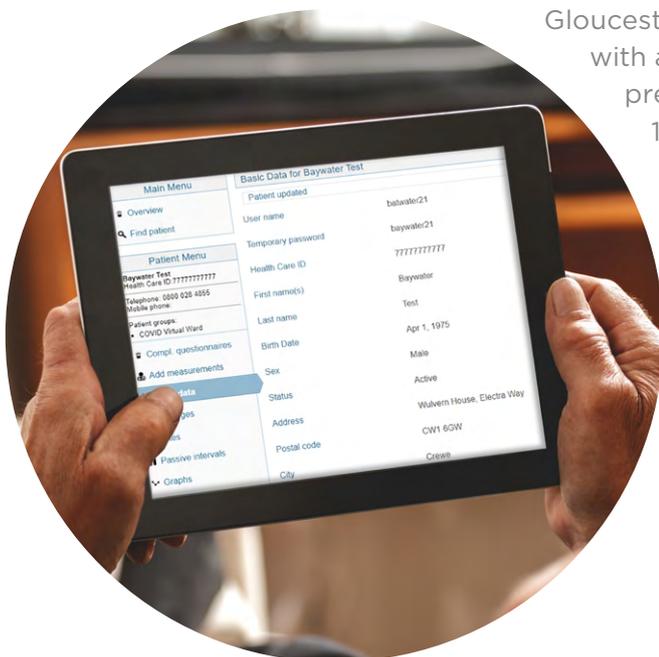
By providing patients with the tools needed to self-manage their health, we offered reassurance to reduce anxieties and ensure help was at hand should their condition deteriorate.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges since March 2020 with exceptional strain placed on the resources of the NHS. The rapid global spread has led to increased pressures throughout the healthcare system and increased mortality rates.

With limited understanding of the disease, it is difficult for the public to recognise when they should seek help with their health and when to treat at home. It is also important to understand the differing disease paths of COVID-19 in an individual, which will cause further anxiety for the public. This has led to an increase in preventable admissions to hospital and preventable delay in COVID-19 positive patients seeking healthcare advice. These patients subsequently present as emergencies with low oxygen saturations, due to silent hypoxia (not experiencing breathlessness). Patients arriving as emergencies will often result in extended hospital admission, sometimes require invasive treatment, admission to Intensive Care Units (ICU) or death.

As a healthcare provider specialising in respiratory care, Baywater Healthcare committed to supporting the CCG to develop a solution to save lives. The challenge was to enable patients to receive support to monitor their condition safely in their own home. By providing patients with the tools needed to self-monitor their condition, we helped give patients the confidence that they were being properly monitored and given the support they needed. Our ambition was to reduce unnecessary hospital admissions for patients who can self-manage their symptoms and remove a delay for seeking help if their condition deteriorated. Our expected outcome was to reduce pressure on the NHS, decrease the number of patients requiring invasive treatment or admission to ICU and reduce mortality.

Gloucestershire CCG covers a wide geographical area with a mix of rural and urban settings. To add to the pressures, Gloucestershire reached a total number of 19,227 COVID-19 cases on 24th January 2021 with 1,078 deaths mentioning COVID-19 that occurred up to the 29th January 2021. This equates to a rate of 169.2 deaths per 100,000 population in Gloucestershire, compared to England's average of 233.6 deaths per 100,000 people in December 2020.





The Solution

As a provider of Telehealth services, Baywater Healthcare were selected to work with Gloucestershire CCG in collaboration with their clinical service provider 'GDoc' to develop and deliver a COVID-19 Virtual Ward solution. Baywater Healthcare's team of Telehealth experts and Clinical Advisers worked within the multi-disciplined project team to develop an innovative digital solution to monitor COVID-19 patients in their own home. Key monitoring needs are identified, including daily monitoring of SPO2 via oximeter and general wellbeing questions to monitor symptoms. To ensure appropriate interventions were completed in a timely manner by the clinical team from GDoc, Baywater Healthcare created tailorable alarms that were raised for patients who enter information that caused concern.

The service required a full infection control audit to ensure COVID-19 safety measures were appropriately implemented, including the full decontamination and quarantine of loan equipment collected from patients once discharged.

The COVID-19 Virtual Ward was developed for patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 who are not unwell enough to require admission to hospital. Referral pathways into the service were designed for patients aged 50 and over and aged 18 years and over with underlying health conditions or risk criteria. Multiple referral pathways were created including those from Primary Care and the Gloucestershire Foundation Trust Emergency Department, who were encouraged to refer patients directly to Baywater Healthcare for them to be set up or 'on-boarded' to the COVID-19 Virtual Ward. The period of monitoring required was recommended to be 14 days from the onset of symptoms as research suggested patients should begin to recover from their symptoms in this timeframe. This is why it was imperative to on-board patients as soon as possible following their positive test result.

The Outcome

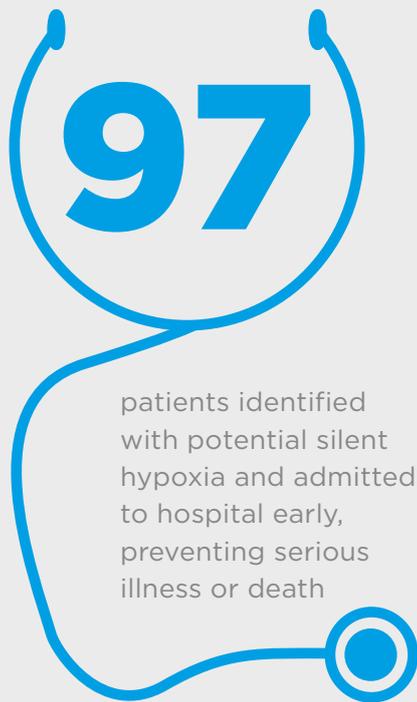
The COVID-19 Virtual Ward has proved a valuable resource throughout its use during the pandemic, with several positive outcomes identified.

- **Reducing pressures on NHS Hospitals:** the COVID-19 Virtual Ward offered clinicians the ability to monitor patients with COVID-19 remotely. By enabling patients to self-manage and monitor their symptoms at home, hospital staff were able to focus on patients who required more serious clinical interventions in hospital.
- **Patients feel more reassured:** each patient experiences a different disease journey. This can cause anxiety for the patient which may result in them seeking help unnecessarily, or not seeking help when needed. By having the reassurance that someone was monitoring their results, patients did not feel the need to contact their GP or NHS 111 unnecessarily. The COVID-19 Virtual Ward enabled patients to monitor their condition with the reassurance that they would be advised when to seek assistance. 68% of patients reported that they felt worried/nervous when they were told they had COVID-19 and 89% reported they felt reassured/supported when offered support from the COVID-19 Virtual Ward.
- **Faster intervention, reducing risk to patient health:** once the patient entered their data, it was assessed against expectations with concerns highlighted for intervention via an alert system. By ensuring these interventions were implemented early, patients received the appropriate care at the right time. This led to a higher chance of survival and quicker recovery time, with an average of 4-5 days in hospital compared to a national average of 15 days between March 2020 and September 2020.
- **Instant visibility of patient readings once uploaded:** data is available to clinicians in real time with alerts flagging concerns which require intervention or escalation. This instant visibility enabled clinicians to offer support to vulnerable patients when needed, reducing the risk of deterioration or serious illness.

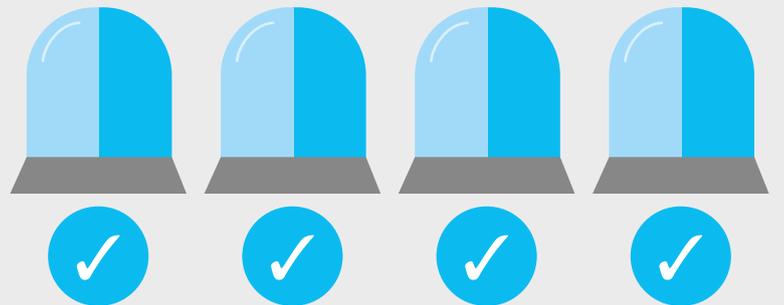


96%

of patients would recommend Baywater Healthcare to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment



patients identified with potential silent hypoxia and admitted to hospital early, preventing serious illness or death



100%

of all urgent alerts escalated as appropriate within agreed timescales

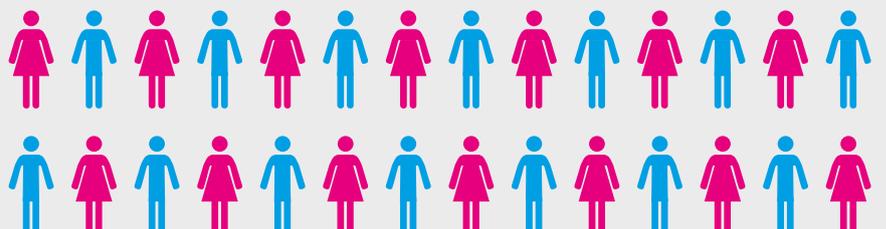
89%

of patients reported they felt reassured/supported about being offered support from the COVID-19 Virtual Ward



Over 1200

COVID-19 patients monitored



Patient Quotes



The fact they contacted me promptly after a low reading. It was reassuring to know someone was monitoring my results so closely.



Feeling reassured by such a caring team, always feeling I wasn't on my own with the virus, that if I became worse they would know and tell me what to do. Thank you very much to everyone for guiding me through a scary few days.



Good to feel monitored and supported without taking up a hospital bed. Gave me confidence and reassurance.



They saved my life as I would not have phoned the ambulance when I should of.



I felt reassured and comforted that there were a team monitoring my progress, I am very grateful for this service and the people at the end of the phone, many thanks.

References

¹ <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/inform/health/latest-data-and-analysis-related-to-covid-19-in-gloucestershire/>

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/articles/coronaviruscovid19weeklyinsights/latesthealthindicatorinengland5february2021>

³ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/supplementary-information/2020/average-length-of-stay-in-hospital-for-patients-with-covid-19-or-suspected-covid-19>

⁴ <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>



Baywater Healthcare

Baywater Healthcare is a leading specialist provider of homecare services to patients with long term conditions. We deliver outstanding patient care and tailor our service to reflect the needs and challenges of our healthcare partners, while driving efficiencies and delivering cost savings.

Our healthcare services include:

- Home Oxygen Services
- Sleep Apnoea Services
- Recovery Oxygen
- Nebuliser Services
- Managed Telehealth Services
- Ventilation Services

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