



Person-Centred Virtual Visiting - Frequently Asked Questions for NHS Board Operational and eHealth Leads

1. What is Person-Centred Virtual Visiting (PCVV)?

PCVV is the ability to connect inpatients with their loved ones using devices such as tablets or smart phones, using platforms like WhatsApp, FaceTime or other similar types of technology.

2. Why is Healthcare Improvement Scotland doing this work?

Person-centred visiting is flexible visiting so people can see their families and loved ones while they are in hospital. This work was being developed nationally and was almost complete when the COVID pandemic occurred. During the initial phase of the pandemic all visiting to hospitals was suspended, except in end-of-life and other exceptional circumstances. This meant that many patients and service users couldn't see their family and friends throughout their stay in hospital. They may also have had no access to mobile phones or other devices to enable them to stay in touch with their families and friends virtually.

From 13 July 2020 hospital visiting has been opened up, but is limited to one visitor per patient. Strict rules are in place around this and guidance is [available](#).

Some NHS boards have been introducing PCVV to help patients to keep in touch with loved ones. There are different ways in which PCVV has been happening across Scotland. However, the picture across NHS boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) is varied and the extent to which PCVV has been systematically rolled out across hospitals in NHSScotland is currently unknown.

Following discussions with Ruth Jays and Shaun Maher, who are the leads for Person-centred visiting at Scottish Government, we have been asked to undertake a scoping exercise to inform further considerations of introducing PCVV across all inpatient facilities in NHS boards and HSCPs.

3. Why Virtual Visiting?

Using PCVV in inpatient areas has benefits for patients and is a crucial part of person-centred visiting. It can also support good mental health and wellbeing, reduce stress and anxiety for the patient and their loved ones, especially if a patient has been admitted in an emergency, and it can reduce social isolation.

PCVV can also reduce the number of calls an area receives from relatives, freeing up staff.

4. Why is this needed when NHS boards are starting to allow hospital visits?

From 13 July 2020 each patient is able to nominate one person to visit them. PCVV will complement the continued roll-out of face to face hospital visiting, allowing more family members and loved ones to make contact with patients during their inpatient stay. Given the ongoing local lockdown requirements, face to face visiting may again be restricted.

5. What will we do with the information gathered via the SMART survey?

We will collate all the information to help build a business case for Scottish Government to consider funding and support NHS boards to further establish your PCVV service.

6. Will iPads be delivered with all the apps pre-installed?

We know that some NHS boards in Scotland have ordered their equipment via XMA and these have come preloaded with the apps required to enable PCVV to take place.

7. Will I need to create a user account for each inpatient area?

Some NHS boards have created a PCVV profile for the device, rather than an area specific profile. In order to use the apps, a generic area email address and user name can be used.

8. Will patients have unlimited internet access when using the device?

Given the feedback from areas that have already implemented PCVV, it is recommended that healthcare professionals will manage the calls placed by patients so there will always be someone present to begin the call. Discussions need to take place between the patient and the member of staff about whether they need to remain for the whole visit.

9. How will I know if family members can use the technology?

Any review of how PCVV is applied in your area should include a review of communication that staff have with patients and families to ensure they understand the support needs to use the technology.

10. Where can I signpost family members who, perhaps, don't have access to technology themselves?

Family members should be directed to their local [third sector interface organisations](#) or [Connecting Scotland](#) to seek support for devices, training and broadband costs.

11. Where do I go for help when English is not a patient's first language?

The Equality and Diversity Officer for your NHS board will be able to advise on the resource that is used within your own area. Family members could be directed to Contact Scotland for BSL users, Deafblind Scotland, Action on Hearing Loss, Relay UK and Who Cares Scotland

12. I'm feeling quite distressed about this work, who can I turn to for support?

We understand that, for some, the COVID-19 pandemic has made many people who are delivering care feel anxious. If you feel, during this work, that you need to speak to someone you can contact [The National Wellbeing Hub](#).

13. Who can I contact if I have other questions?

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