

Anywhere Care mobile telecare package for supporting patients who require assistance (in terms of independence, freedom and reassurance) after hospital discharge.

Innovative Medical Technology Overview



Key points

- Anywhere Care is a mobile telecare package that offers support to patients following hospital discharge. Anywhere Care functions include an assistance button, GPS tracking, pre-programmed phone numbers and text messages.
- Anywhere Care is intended to replace the installation of telecare to patients' landlines. The installation of telecare to landlines can delay discharge from hospital. Anywhere Care supports earlier hospital discharge and use of fewer resources due to reductions in landline installation and rental costs.
- There was no available evidence assessing Anywhere Care. There were two ongoing service evaluations in England at the time of publication.
- Anywhere Care is currently being used in some NHSScotland boards and councils with a high rural population.
- It is unclear at present if Anywhere Care will be cost saving but potential savings could be made due to earlier discharge and reduction in installation of fixed telecare services.

The technology

The Anywhere Care mobile telecare package consists of:

1. OwnFone: a pre-programmed mobile device with an Anywhere SIM card and simple to use customisable buttons tailored to the specific needs of the individual patient; it can store up to twelve pre-programmed numbers. The buttons can be numbers, words (in different languages) or pictures.
2. Footprint: a GPS enabled mobile-assistive device. Footprint has an SOS button which can be linked to a telecare helpline, GPS tracking, fall and motion sensors, and geo-fencing boundaries for users that may wander or need assistance outside the home.

Both devices are manufactured by Anywhere Care Ltd. The devices can be used separately or as a combined package, to support hospital discharge for a wide range of vulnerable people requiring care in the community. Once an individual no longer needs them, the devices can be re-programmed and re-used by other patients.

The devices are currently in use within health and care authorities in Scotland such as NHS Orkney, Angus Council, Shetland Council, Blackwood Group and Hillcrest Housing Association.

Innovative aspect

Unlike traditional telecare devices, landlines are not needed to support use of the Anywhere Care mobile telecare package as the devices allow seamless roaming of multiple mobile networks in the United Kingdom (UK) via the Anywhere SIM. Anywhere Care also enables patients to receive telecare triage, as opposed to directly calling emergency services or the hospital.

Anywhere Care devices are fully mobile and allow patients to leave home and undertake their usual activities while maintaining their telecare support.

Patient group

Anywhere Care telecare is suitable for patients awaiting discharge from hospital who are deemed to require assistance, in terms of independence, freedom and reassurance, for a short period of time after leaving hospital. The technology is not intended for use by patients who have complex medical requirements.

Current practice: comparators and use in pathway of care

Traditional telecare technologies need to be installed in the patient's home prior to their discharge from hospital. Depending on available resources, installation of a traditional telecare solution and consequently hospital discharge can be delayed for between two and five days. Traditional telecare requires a landline and this confines the mobility of users within the limits of the landline (about 50m from home) in order to benefit from telecare support.

The manufacturer hopes that Anywhere Care will replace traditional analogue telecare solutions which will be redundant after the scheduled digital switchover from analogue in 2025.

Product performance: published data

There are currently no published or ongoing studies relating to the performance of the technologies.

Product performance: local data

No ongoing local Scottish research or projects were identified.

The performance of the OwnFone mobile, when used at the point of hospital discharge, is being evaluated in two cities (Hounslow: n = 200; Dudley: n = 98) in England. The aim of the evaluation is to improve patient discharge and reduce bed blocking and readmission rates by increasing the levels of telecare support for selected patients.

Safety

No evidence relating to the safety of the devices was identified. The OwnFone and Footprint mobile devices are CE marked and are therefore deemed to have satisfied regulatory and safety requirements.

Economic and cost considerations

Ownfone and Footprint cost £130 and £155 respectively, including one-year airtime. Both devices can be issued to the user at the hospital once they are ready for discharge. The alternative may involve waiting for a traditional telecare solution to be installed in the home, which typically takes between two and five days, and costs approximately £200 per year.

The immediate issuing of the devices means that there are potential areas of cost saving associated with the devices, in relation to the following:

- Longer hospital stays due to delayed in home installation of traditional devices.
- Installing and de-installing traditional telecare products.
- Installing a landline and line rental costs.

The manufacturer notes that the average length of use per patient is 8 weeks, after which they are recycled back into the hospital for further use. The devices can be issued to up to six different users sequentially within a year, depending on the length of time patients keep them. The devices are cleaned with antibacterial wipes prior to being re-issued and the manufacturer provides programming support to new users remotely, at no extra cost.

User experience and other considerations

No evidence on user experience of using the technologies was identified. It is worth noting that users of the technology will need to be able to use a mobile device.

Conclusions

The evidence surrounding the performance and efficacy of Anywhere Care is still to be developed. There are potential cost benefits that could be achieved, due to the use of the Anywhere Care, by supporting patients who do not have complex medical needs to get home faster and remain independent after hospital discharge.

References

Overview is based on manufacturer submission due to lack of published evidence.

What is an Innovative Medical Technology Overview (IMTO)

An IMTO is a high-level, light-touch summary of the evidence surrounding an innovative technology. An IMTO seeks to offer an early indication of the strengths and weaknesses of the technology, with a view to contributing to local decision-making by NHS health professionals, managers and procurement colleagues.

IMTOs are not peer reviewed and do not contain recommendations. IMTOs should be considered alongside existing guidance applicable to NHSScotland.

All new and innovative technologies need to have been registered on the NHSScotland Health Innovation Assessment Portal (HIAP).