Taking innovative hospital care into the home

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) provides the widest range of mental health and substance misuse services in the UK. With a desire to improve care whilst managing financial challenges, SLaM must innovate to enhance service standards.

In this cost-cutting environment, SLaM continues to lead the way in new kinds of treatment programmes, such as treating more patients out of hospital. Evidence shows that recovery rates and general patient wellbeing are improved by providing care in more familiar surroundings. Also, pressure on hospital capacity and services is reduced.

SLaM asked O2 to help make this a working reality.

Less is more

The underlying challenge was to reduce the number of operational sites from over 100 to fewer than 70, while maintaining high standards of service to patients.

Clinicians and care providers would be given complete access to all the electronic records they needed, as part of a mobile work solution. They could then make the most informed decisions in the best interest of individual patients, at the point of care.

Ricky MacKennon, Deputy Director for ICT and Business Development, was keen to take a collaborative approach with O2 to develop tailored solutions. "We wanted to enable people to capture, input and review information on the move, but not restrict the way that they currently do that," he says.

South London and Maudsley **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

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Record makers

The key was to make sure care providers had mobile devices with a familiar look-and-feel, accessing the same applications and information they used in the clinic.

This was an effective way of extending informed patient treatment out into the community, with easy-to-use mobile technology that didn't cut corners in providing complete information access.

"Many of our services are actually geared towards early intervention and prevention, so that we can keep people out of hospital, rather than getting them into the system of secondary care says Gus Heafield, acting CEO at the Trust. "As a result, it's very important that individual clinicians are always able to capture and use data, with appropriate consent. It also matters in terms of performance and our overall delivery of service."

The technical solution

O₂ worked with SLaM to balance its site rationalisation with the most appropriate mobile technology, integrated and optimised with key back-end applications:

- Delivery of desktop services to a range of mobile devices – including tablets, smartphones and laptops

- Integration of the mobile network with back-end services

- All devices are centrally managed for secure end-to-end delivery

- The solution handles authentication onto the Trust network, so the user experience is as seamless as possible

Always in touch

This approach to mobile working has already improved patient care. Many people no longer need to attend clinics but can receive treatment in the comfort of their homes. This is more efficient too, as clinicians only need to key in patient data once (during the visit) as every care provider is connected to the central records database.

The patient experience is further enhanced as care providers have access to everything they need to make key decisions and provide the best care, on the spot and in the moment.

Ricky MacKennon adds that this investment in technology has removed the need for many care providers to operate primarily from core or satellite sites: "We currently have 58,000 home visits and obviously that's going to increase over time." As a result, SLaM has been able to reduce its community estate by 30% while upping the quality of its patient care. The dream of providing effective home care is fast becoming reality.

"O₂ provided a collaborative approach and provided tailored solutions. We've got the solutions now that enable us to deliver mobile workstations that look and feel very similar to the ones our people previously used in their day-to-day work."

Ricky MacKennon, Deputy Director for ICT and Business Development, SLaM

"As a front-line consultant performing community mental health assessments, it's really useful to have clinical information to hand. The technology means I have access to all the information I need to make prompt, informed clinical judgements."

Dr Steve Church,
Consultant Psychiatrist, SLaM
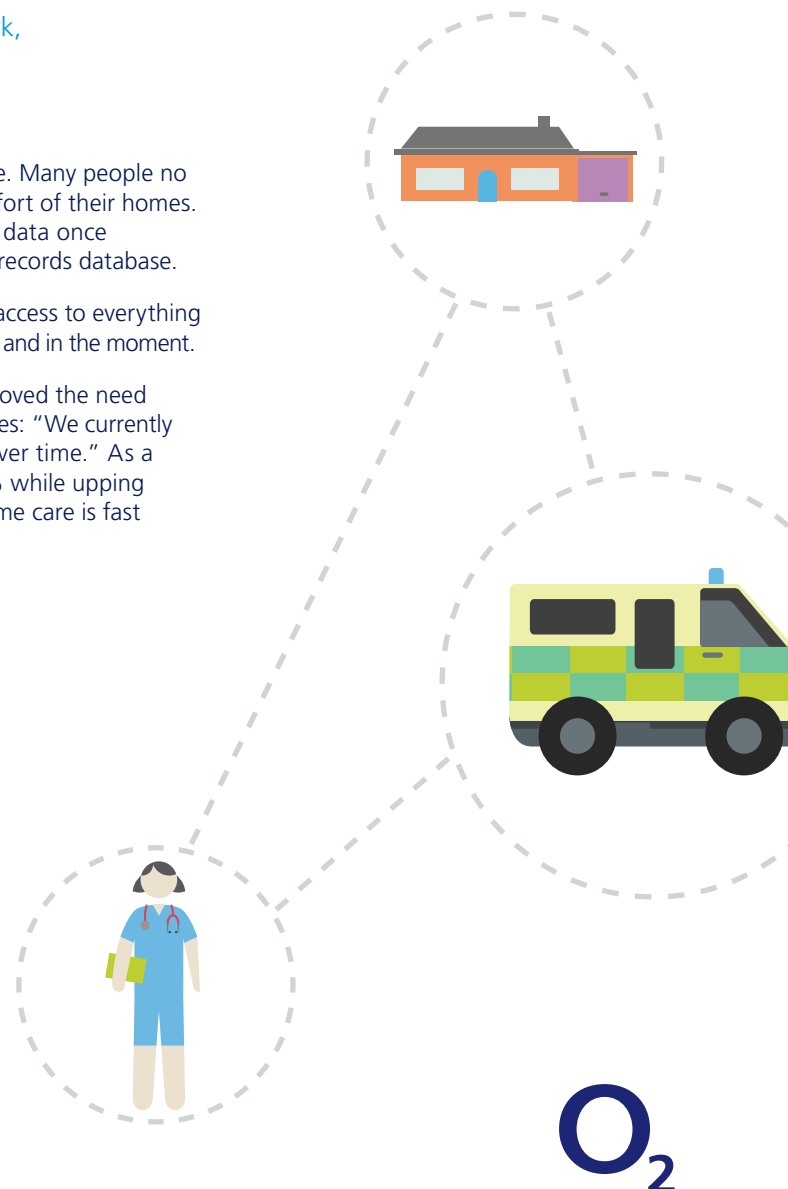
Forward with 4G

"With the coming of 4G," he adds, "We'll definitely be looking at our remote connectivity, whether it be a fixed or a mobile site. There'll be faster throughput in relation to mobile, there'll also be faster throughput in relation to some of the sites.

With a flexible, responsive solution, we'll also see benefits in terms of the response time in relation to business continuity." SLaM is already getting ready to make the most of the next generation of mobile working.

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