

CASE STUDY



ICU clinicians turn to mobile technology in the fight against COVID-19

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Over 40 intensive care clinicians at a Surrey hospital have been using mobile technology to safeguard staff and patients, maximise the use of limited personal protective equipment (PPE), and save time in the fight against the coronavirus outbreak.

The staff at Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust are using robust smartphones from Ascom that meet strict NHS hygiene guidelines to communicate and carry out 'remote' ward rounds in the 24-bed ICU, where at the early peak of the pandemic there were up to 18 coronavirus patients on ventilators at any one time. The smartphones – enabled with single sign-on (SSO) from Imprivata, and two-way video consultation technology from Attend Anywhere – enable just one doctor linked remotely to colleagues to do ward rounds. The mobile technology is also helping relatives to safely stay in touch with their loved ones in hospital.



A senior doctor at the hospital praised the 'fantastic' integrated technology, which he says has cut, by half, the time spent on ward rounds, saved the ICU's precious stocks of PPE, and reassured anxious relatives.

Consultant Intensivist and Anaesthetist Justin Kirk-Bayley said: "Usually we have four or five doctors on each ward round. That was becoming impractical with coronavirus patients and limited PPE supplies. Now, just one doctor goes into the quarantined sector of ICU and coordinates a ward round via video on the smartphone, which is projected onto a screen to the team in a meeting room. It is a lot slicker, more efficient, and safer. The technology is giving us back the time that we have lost to COVID-19."

Dr Kirk-Bayley said the ICU had already begun using the technology, introduced at the end of April, to talk to relatives. “One patient who was awake and doing well was able to see and talk to her husband for nearly an hour. The technology worked fantastically well. Nurses will be staying in touch with relatives day-to-day using video on the smartphones.”

Clinical nurse specialist Claire Richardson said: “We have introduced virtual visiting on all 14 of our adult in-patient wards and in our departments and community hospitals. The system is ideal for this purpose. A member of staff takes the smartphone to the patient and can quickly and easily sign on to Attend Anywhere for them via SSO with one tap and no need for passwords. It is very easy to use. After the visit, the patient, relative, and staff are confident no data has been saved and the smartphone can be thoroughly cleaned to meet our infection control requirements.

“ Virtual visiting has made a tremendous difference to our patients and relatives and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. A COVID-19 positive patient who had not seen his wife for five weeks was able to see and speak to her. Another patient whose condition was deteriorating had a virtual visit from his son, who told staff it was reassuring to see him so well looked after. The system has been particularly beneficial to our elderly patients who do not have their own devices to have visits with their loved ones and I’m confident it has helped in their recovery. ”

IT infrastructure project manager Andy Dargue said: “We were already looking at using the technology for ‘virtual’ consultations at the Trust, but the COVID-19 outbreak hugely accelerated this. The Imprivata and Attend Anywhere technologies were being successfully used in the outpatient clinics but, in response to the requirement from ICU, we brought in the Ascom devices to allow us to make use of the system in the department. “We had the smartphones on site and tested in two weeks. It has been an incredible team effort between the Trust and the three companies involved.”

Dr Kirk-Bayley added: “The video conferencing software can be used via a web browser, and that is fantastic. You just set and forget. It has a highly reliable quality of connection – no frozen screens, degradation of video, or dropped sound, unlike other systems.”

The Attend Anywhere technology does not retain patient-identifiable information, which means patients using it leave no digital footprint. Each time an individual consultation ends during a shift, the online waiting area is wiped.

Daniel Johnston, Clinical Workflow Specialist from Imprivata said: “A patient’s psychosocial and emotional wellbeing via contact with family and friends plays a hugely significant role in their recovery, especially for those in isolation. Imprivata Mobile Device Access not only enables the use of shared devices for safe and secure communication with loved ones, but also peer and senior medical support for clinical staff. With its fast, badge-tap-enabled access, and ability to clear the device between uses, there is no inappropriate transfer of patient information. The process is as seamless as possible for clinicians, saving time and facilitating a better patient experience.”

Paul Lawrence, managing director of Ascom UK said: “We are proud that our mobile technology is helping frontline NHS clinicians adapt to new ways of working during this terrible pandemic. Our team worked closely with the Trust to understand their needs and roll out the technology speedily and safely.”

About Ascom

[Ascom](#) is a global solutions provider focused on healthcare ICT and mobile workflow solutions. The vision of Ascom is to close digital information gaps allowing for the best possible decisions – anytime and anywhere. Ascom’s mission is to provide mission-critical, real-time solutions for highly mobile, ad hoc, and time-sensitive environments. Ascom uses its unique product and solutions portfolio and software architecture capabilities to devise integration and mobilization solutions that provide truly smooth, complete and efficient workflows for healthcare as well as for industry and retail sectors.

Ascom is headquartered in Baar (Switzerland), has subsidiaries in 15 countries and employs around 1,300 people worldwide. Ascom registered shares (ASCN) are listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange in Zurich.



Imprivata, the digital identity company for healthcare, provides identity, authentication, and access management solutions that are purpose-built to solve healthcare’s unique workflow, security, and compliance challenges.

For more information, please contact us at +44 (0) 208 744 6500 or visit us online at www.imprivata.co.uk

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