#allofusimprove
and be outstanding

NHS
South West
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Claire Girvan, occupational therapy team leader, explains how making the internet available to service users in our forensic settings has driven improvements for service users and staff.

What was the issue?

Within forensic services there has been a consistent request from service users and the forensic service for service user access to the internet for many years, recognising how important this is for everyday life.

On a day to day basis this gap was highlighted. For example, service users were struggling to be able to carry out the process of bidding on social housing as this is all done via the internet, meaning potential delays in them leaving our care. There was also a lack of access to educational provision and a general 'skilling up' of service users for the world we live in today.

Services had also received feedback from some of its partners, the CQC, forensic regional service user involvement group, and the national forensic quality network identifying this as a gap in service provision.

> " One service user explained that access to Facebook has helped him stay in touch with his family and community. Another is feeling less isolated since he can now contact family abroad and speak his native language. A service user with learning difficulties said seeing pictures of his sister's baby helped him feel part of the family. One service user in a medium secure setting has accessed an online education package to aid his recovery and improve literacy. "
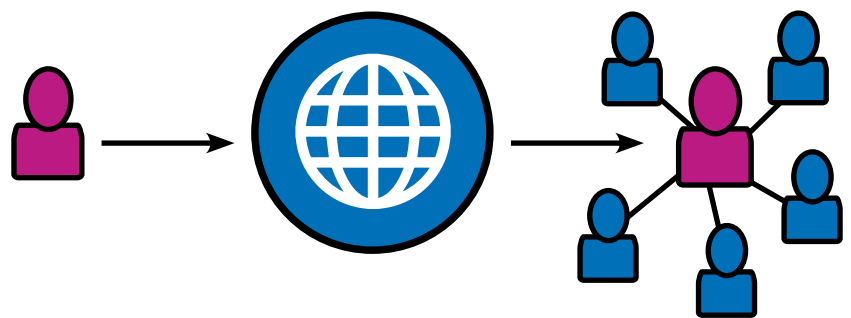
In a nutshell

To improve the experience of our service users we introduced internet access in our forensic services, meaning they can stay connected, in touch and feel less isolated. This helps prepare service users, who may have lived in a secure setting for a long time, for modern day community living.

How was it realised?

Supported by directors, and working alongside our Information Management & Technology (IM&T) team, funding was identified to support the rollout of internet access within Newton Lodge, Newhaven and Bretton Centre. Together with the IM&T team, staff were able to articulate the needs of the service users as well as balance this against ensuring safe and protected use of the internet.

The forensic procedural review group worked on developing a procedure to ensure safe and risk managed rollout of this new resource. Service users make a request to access this resource through their clinical team, who risk assess whether this is appropriate and whether it can be safely managed.

All internet sessions are supervised by staff who have a clear understanding of the procedure. Based on this population, restrictions on which websites can be accessed have been put in place but we still allow access to a wide variety. This supports tasks such as housing, education, online shopping, social media and general topics of interest.

What has it achieved?

The internet is a dominant feature in people's daily lives and the absence of it previously in secure services has been noticeable and left service users feeling social excluded from the general population. We're now helping prepare service users, who may have been detained in a secure hospital setting for a significant period of time, for modern day community living. We have three internet connected computers in Newton Lodge, two in Bretton Centre and one in Newhaven. This means service users in each unit now have access to bid for community housing and visit educational resources via the internet.

This has also led to a reduction in staff time carrying out internet based tasks on behalf of service users.

NHS digital has used this project as a video case study in its new **digital inclusion guide** for health and social care.

With **all of us** in mind.