



Perinatal goes virtual – balancing remote and office working

Hitting the ground running

The week before the pandemic began, the perinatal team started discussing moving to virtual appointments, after noticing consultant Dr Graham Hill was travelling approximately 1,000 miles per month.

Just one week later, Microsoft Teams was up and running and service users were already having virtual appointments. The service became dependent on remote working very quickly as a safe alternative to seeing mums and babies in their homes.

Being able to design the service in the right way from day one was a huge benefit to the staff and service users themselves, as they were able to make it work for them as a team.

Benefits to staff and service users

Leaving the house with babies and young children isn't always easy, so virtual appointments offer an option which removes a lot of stress and anxieties.

Staff can enter all virtual appointments in the team diary, which all the team has access to. This prevents having to share personal email addresses.

“People are now able to access services very quickly – someone who was referred urgently had their first appointment on the following day.”

Referrals into the team are still high, with the team receiving around 1,500 referrals a year, but remote working meant the team could recruit new staff members by carrying out virtual interviews. Virtual appointments also reduce travel time, freeing up the team for other tasks.

Positive feedback

Working virtually enables the team to be more flexible and work quicker as there is less time travelling when covering a huge area.

With over 25 members of the team, all meeting together was a challenge due to limited space. All the team can now interact and connect using Microsoft Teams.

The team received over 500 feedback forms across 12 months, which was hugely beneficial for staff morale. Reading the service users' positive comments made them feel like they had done something useful for someone and made a difference.

Looking to the future

The team are aiming to balance their offer of face to face and remote working to suit everyone's needs.

The team are aiming to be accredited by the Royal College of Psychiatrists so that they can design and deliver a service that works to national standards. Through this they have ambitions to become a powerful force for change.



If you require a copy of this information in any other format or language please contact your line manager or healthcare worker at the Trust.

With **all of us** in mind.