

Patient observations streamlined in England's 2nd largest mental health Trust



Midlands Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust
A Keele University Teaching Trust

With a low-code mobile app solution, Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (MPFT) reduced admin overheads by 15 days per mental health patient observation - allowing clinicians to deliver more consistent and congruous checks to further ensure patient wellbeing.

MPFT is the second largest mental health Trust in England. As the Trust cares for a large number of mental health patients with variable needs, regular observation checks are essential - but were often challenging, due to the paper-based system originally in place.

The Challenge

MPFT is commissioned to deliver mental health and forensic in-patient services across both St Georges Hospital and The Redwoods Centre. In order to provide the best possible care, these observations take place round the clock at regular intervals, depending on each patient's individual requirements.

Each ward cares for up to 20 patients at a time, with individual observation intervals as often as every 5 minutes, or as infrequent as every hour. Due to this regularity, clinicians often rotate these checks between them, according to availability.

The original process

The original process was paper based, recorded in handwritten forms on shared clipboards. The completed physical documents would be delivered by hand to the administration team, who would then enter the information into their clinical system. The team at MPFT identified several issues with the original observations process, prompting them to pursue a more streamlined approach:

Key Benefits

Consistent data records

Faster service for patients

GDPR compliance and data loss reduction

Improved decision making with better reporting

Increased data security



It's been amazing to be part of such an innovated project that we are now using across a number of wards. the support from IM&T, NDL and all the clinicians involved has been incredible. Thank you to everyone!



Emma Davies, Inpatient Mental Health Wards Quality Matron





Paper wastage - Numerous sheets of paper would be required for each observation, which could take places as regularly as every 5 minutes for some patients.

Time constraints - Due to the length and manual nature of the original process, it would take 15 days for observation records to arrive in the system, meaning this information would not be readily available to clinicians for two weeks.

Data loss - With the original process relying on written forms, this data could be easily lost in transportation. As these notes could potentially include sensitive personal information about patients, the original process posed a significant GDPR and data loss risk.

Lack of reports - To review a patient's observation history, nurses would often have to sift through written notes to find the information they needed – a highly inefficient and time-consuming process.

The Solution

The Trust's utilise [NDL's Digitise](#) technology to help craft its new eObs app - which provides a detailed overview of each patient's observation requirements in real-time, guiding clinicians through observations paper-free.

Pulling patient information from MPFT's EPR RiO, and recording information into its own SQL database, the app provides a faster, more dynamic observations process for clinicians and patients. Used on handheld devices, it's wide range of features and functionality includes:

- Patient name and bed information
- Patient observation level and interval information
- Observation statuses, including complete, due, and overdue
- Observation records for the previous 72 hours
- Timed syncing to avoid system overloads and connection latency
- Integrated digital observation forms
- Offline recording functionality
- Integrated digital observation forms



eObs has been one of MPFT's key digital innovation projects over the last year. Using mobile applications, and appropriate devices, has helped the Trust digitise observation information and have it available to clinicians almost immediately.



Jack Gould
Senior IM&T Project Manager



The Benefits

The eObs app helped to **streamline the observation process for clinical ward staff.**

With a digital app accessible anywhere at any time, and with patient observation information readily available, clinical staff were able to deliver more consistent checks to their patients with **greatly reduced admin overheads, better workflow visibility and improved data quality.**

What's Next?

After the success of eObs in its pilot wards, the MPFT team then began to deploy it in a further 11 wards – providing even more patients and clinicians with a secure, consistent, and faster observation process. The team also aspire to develop further mobile apps, for use in a number of other service areas within the Trust. As well as this, MPFT continue to deliver innovation by adopting use of [NDL Automate](#).

