

## **Patients and charities to benefit from additional free media services in Christmas offer to hospitals**

***Hospital radio, interviews with iconic musicians, BBC archives and more than 600 healthcare information videos are among the services that patients will be able to access free of charge in hospitals that are signed up to WiFi services by WiFi SPARK. Hospital charities will also benefit from being supported on the SPARK Media platform, in a drive to help boost funds and raise awareness.***

Patients will be able to access a range of free media services over Christmas and beyond thanks to an offer to hospitals by WiFi provider, WiFi SPARK. The company is offering a bespoke package of its entertainment platform, SPARK Media, to NHS trusts and health boards that already have its WiFi services installed, without any additional costs.

It means that anyone who has to stay in one of these hospitals over Christmas will be able to listen to hospital radio, play sudoku, log on to NHS apps and sites – such as healthy living and education videos, which can help them to better understand their condition and manage their care once they leave hospital – and access dementia support services including BBC Music Memories and BBC Archive. They will also be able to connect to online charity sites, which is hoped will encourage donations so that benevolent services that have suffered due to a downturn in fundraising through the pandemic, can continue.

“We know that being in hospital over Christmas will be a tough time for many patients, so we want to do something that will help keep them entertained and able to access information that might be useful to them even after they are discharged,” said Ian Spark, head of healthcare at WiFi SPARK.

“This Christmas is going to be particularly difficult for anyone in hospital because of a lack of visitors due to Covid-19 restrictions, so we hope that keeping people occupied in a positive way will help, and of course, they will also be able to use our WiFi to contact family and friends, so that might make things a little easier.”

WiFi SPARK is a leading provider of commercial WiFi and media services to the healthcare, retail, transport, sport and exhibition space sectors. The company works with nearly 300 hospitals across more than 80 NHS trusts and health boards in the UK. Its decision to offer its SPARK Media platform to hospital WiFi customers is aimed at benefitting patients, staff and hospital-supporting charities.

“NHS staff have been doing a tremendous job in difficult circumstances this year, so we want to give something back to them,” said Spark. “We know how hard charities have been hit in supporting and funding so much throughout this pandemic and more trusts are turning to them for help now, with the second wave of Covid-19 cases and winter pressures. We are championing the charities by driving visibility up of their activities to try and help them boost the funds they need.

“Our aim is to empower the patients with information at their fingertips and also to put some focus on the charities, as we know that many people and families do want to support these charitable activities as a way of thanking the staff who have provided care.”

Jim Ritchie, consultant renal physician and chief clinical information officer (CCIO) at Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust, said: “We’re thrilled with SPARK Media’s Christmas offering. Supporting patients in hospital by providing them information to help them understand their care benefits everyone. This initiative will help people find the right resources and promote well-being.”

Corinne Bailey, manager of Plymouth Hospitals Charity, said: "It has been really hard for all charities since the first lockdown in March. Every way people have traditionally fundraised for us has been affected by Covid-19 and we have seen a real dip in donations. We would normally use donations to fund specialist equipment and resources, over and above what the NHS pays for, which makes a real difference for patients, their families and staff. Every year we provide lots grants to wards and departments and people can see the difference they have made.

She added: "We are really grateful to WiFi SPARK for offering the media services to our hospital and thankful to anyone who wants to look at our charity page link and see how they might help their hospital. We are looking forward to everything getting back to some sort of normality for everyone in 2021. In the meantime, if you would like to help us continue to make a difference, we would be very, very grateful."

Nicola Haywood-Alexander, chief information officer, Lincolnshire NHS, and co-founder, Tech4CV19, said: "It was wonderful to hear about SPARK Media's Christmas gift to NHS trusts and charities. This service not only helps patients to keep in touch with loved ones, it provides entertainment activities – and, something that's really important – services for patients with dementia through collaboration with the BBC.

"I particularly love the way the service allows charities to promote their cause and interact with patients, family and friends."

The offer is not limited to the Christmas period; any NHS trust or health board that wishes to install the bespoke SPARK Media platform will be able to access the services for the whole length of its WiFi services contract.

**Ends**

## **Notes for editors**

### **About: WiFi SPARK**

WiFi SPARK is the leading provider of guest and patient-access WiFi in the UK. The company is the owner and developer of the unique SPARK® Platform which delivers the most flexible, feature-rich and scalable solution for guest-access WiFi on the market today.

WiFi SPARK specialises in WiFi in the healthcare sector and provides services to over 50% of the NHS Acute Trusts. WiFi SPARK has recently launched SPARK® Media, a revolution in patient entertainment, delivering TV, radio, educational content and more directly to the patients' device of their choice.

No other wireless network provider can offer the same adaptability, span of features, and ultimately, return on investment.