

## **NHS Fife works with Buddy Healthcare to improve pre-op processes**

### **Scottish health board uses a mobile app and digital platform to improve communication between patients and clinical teams and make the best possible use of clinic and theatre capacity**

NHS Fife is working with Buddy Healthcare on a digital pre-op pathway, so orthopaedic patients can complete assessments on an app and clinicians can use the data to make the best possible use of outpatient clinic and theatre time.

The Scottish health board has adopted the digital platform, which it calls ELSIE (the Electronic Pre-Operative Assessment App).

The pre-operative team can review information submitted by patients via the app and respond to questions and queries. They can also use a timeline feature to automatically send patients advice on how to prepare for surgery.

In some cases, patients will be able to carry out their pre-operative assessments via the app and may not have to attend hospital until the date of the surgery, avoiding the need for multiple hospital visits. For those who do need to attend in-person, appointment times can be shorter.

Neil Shaw, an anaesthetic consultant at NHS Fife, said: "We cover a huge area, so some of our patients have to make long journeys to reach us.

"Despite this, our traditional way of working was to offer every patient the same pre-assessment appointment, whether they needed longer, because they were high-risk, or they didn't need it at all, because they were fit and well.

"The ELSIE electronic pre-operative assessment app means we can focus appointments on the patients who may be at higher risk of complications. This allows us to address health issues before their operation, making surgery safer, which should help to reduce short-notice cancellations.

"We also aim to create a list of people who are ready for their operations who can be called in at short notice to fill empty slots."

As well as running hospitals throughout Fife, the health board hosts a National Treatment Centre for orthopaedics. National Treatment Centres have been set up by the Scottish Government to provide extra capacity to support patients.

Buddy Healthcare is a Finnish company that works with leading hospitals in northern Europe. Unlike other pre-assessment providers, it offers a full, digital, pre-operative solution that can also be used to support waiting list management, post-op follow-up, PROMS collection, and clinical trials.

Scott Gibson, delivery and operations director for Buddy Healthcare UK, said: "We all know that the NHS is under enormous pressure as it looks to recover waiting lists and deal with unprecedented demand.

“That means trusts, health boards, and clinical teams need to make the best possible use of outpatient clinics and theatre slots; and NHS Fife has recognised that it needs good, digital technology to do this.

“We are delighted to be working with the health board on a project that is changing the way clinicians interact with patients. Individuals can use the ELSIE mobile app to prepare for surgery in the comfort of their own homes, while clinicians can collect more holistic information about their health and wellbeing.

“Then, they can use that information to make the best use of the capacity that is available and to deliver the best possible outcomes for them. The potential is huge.”

Patients who are scheduled for an orthopaedic procedure receive a text message with a link to download the app; which can also be used by nominated relatives and carers.

Patients who don't have access to a phone, or don't feel confident with technology, can still carry out their pre-assessment questionnaire over the phone or in person at an outpatient appointment.

#### **Notes for editors:**

**About Buddy Healthcare:** Buddy Healthcare was established in 2016 and works with leading hospitals across Finland and northern Europe.

The Buddy Healthcare platform and BuddyCare app streamline the traditional surgical pathway and automate manual, paper-heavy processes so clinical teams can optimise waiting list management, save time for patients, and improve pre- and post-op procedures.

**Buddy Healthcare at NHS Lanarkshire:** NHS Fife is the second Scottish health board to adopt the ELSIE platform and app. Its deployment follows a successful roll-out at NHS Lanarkshire.

The health board has seen a substantial reduction in phone calls related to treatment: 89% of digitally guided pre-op patients didn't need to contact their clinical team by phone. In addition, 91% of patients said they would recommend the app to someone in a similar position.

**Webinar:** Buddy Healthcare is supporting a webinar on 'Digitising the perioperative pathway' on 19 September 2023 at 2pm.

The webinar will be an opportunity to hear from Dr Neil Shaw about the ELSIE deployment at NHS Fife, as well as from Buddy Healthcare founder and chief executive Jussi Maatta, and Dr Tuomas Rissanen, a consultant cardiologist using the platform at one of Finland's leading hospitals.