

Implementing Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) in Primary Care



Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) was established on 1 July 2022. The board serves a population of more than 800,000 people, with over 50,000 people currently living with diabetes. This means that prevalence of diabetes in this area is 7.5%, higher than the national average for England which is 7.3%.¹

As part of long-term plans for the area, Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB is committed to improving health outcomes and reducing health inequalities.² In October 2022, the ICB was one of the first in the country to align with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines regarding the management of diabetes in adults.

The policy outlined the use of isCGM³ first line, or after six months, the use of real-time continuous glucose monitoring (rtCGM) could also be considered for eligible patients, including all adults living with type 1 diabetes and adults living with type 2 diabetes who used multiple daily insulin injections. Although the FreeStyle Libre 2 system now provides glucose readings in real time on a smartphone⁴, patients are still able to scan their sensor.

Images are for illustrative purposes only. Not real patient or data.

Dr Ritesh Dua, former Diabetes Lead for Herefordshire, said:

“The adoption of this technology locally has been a system-wide success, starting with our ICB colleagues who agreed to adopt NG28⁵ in full, supported by clinical leaders and front-line healthcare professionals.

“The EMIS search template set up by the ICB, and made available on TeamNet, has been vitally important for identifying eligible patients to be offered this technology, and preventing inequality of access. I am extremely proud to have been involved in making this technology more routinely accessible.”

HEREFORD MEDICAL GROUP IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCE

Hereford Medical Group, located within the Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB, took the decision to lead on implementing the NICE guidelines across the practice and PCN.

The group looks after 49,000 patients across four sites, with 2,814 members of the population living with diabetes.

Abbott provided local webinar and in-person training events for healthcare professionals and practice staff to help improve their understanding of the FreeStyle Libre 2 system, and how it could benefit patients and healthcare professionals in the long term.

IDENTIFYING ELIGIBLE PATIENTS

Chris Williams, the Business Intelligence & Long Term Conditions Manager, was the project lead for the Hereford Medical Group. He worked closely with Abbott's Primary Care Territory Manager and Market Access Specialist and used an EMIS search template that was available via the ICS TeamNet diabetes page, to run searches and proactively identify patients who were eligible to be offered the FreeStyle Libre 2 system.

COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS

Following the EMIS search process, the diabetes team reviewed the patient list to ensure people met the eligibility criteria and that no one was missed. The final list included 142 people who were all sent a letter and

Accurx text message inviting them to enrol for online training, which involved ordering a starter kit to be delivered directly from Abbott to their home address, with instructions including watching a training video. Alternatively, patients who needed face-to-face support were booked onto a group training clinic delivered by Abbott representatives. Abbott helped manage the patient initiation and training, which was done either online or in person. This prevented clinical staff having to support this process on their own – something that they would have had to do in the past when starting someone on blood glucose monitoring (finger pricking).

A number of dedicated care coordinators managed the whole process to make the patient journey as smooth as possible. They ensured that the relevant consent forms, sharps bins and training rooms were provided for the new starter clinics and kept track of all patients who had been onboarded either online or in person.

By tailoring the communication, the care coordinators were able to lead on facilitating and encouraging patients to complete the training online, whilst recognising the need to provide additional support for patients who preferred face-to-face training. As a result of this consistent management process, the care coordinators were able to update patient records appropriately so that GPs were able to confidently prescribe the FreeStyle Libre 2 system.

As a result, 142 people were offered it via the primary care process and 217 patients are now using the FreeStyle Libre 2 system within the Hereford Medical Group.

Dr Tristan Jones, GP Partner, Hereford Medical Group, said:

“Working collaboratively with Abbott to train our practice staff on how to implement the use of FreeStyle Libre technology to eligible patients has enabled them to support people living with diabetes to self-manage the condition. Improving our understanding of this technology has played a pivotal role in how we deliver diabetes care for our patients.”

IMPROVING HEALTH OUTCOMES

Introducing the FreeStyle Libre 2 system as a way to manage diabetes in eligible adults can provide long-term benefits^{6,7} for both the patient and the staff supporting them. For patients, it means they have real-time insights⁸ into how their body is responding, and for healthcare professionals, it frees clinical time.

By working closely with ICBs on rolling out this technology in primary care settings, patients can be easily identified and trained in an efficient and effective way that does not create additional workload and brings added benefit to practice and patients.

A Practice Nurse at Hereford Medical Group said:

“When a patient is connected, LibreView allows our teams to advise patients on treatment changes, as we are able to see the glucose profile over 24 hours and identify trends⁹. The use of the FreeStyle Libre 2 system which looks at glucose patterns has helped patients to change their behaviour, delaying intensification of pharmacological treatment.

“We’ve had very positive feedback from patients, who say the technology has been life-changing. It improves their safety, whilst also giving us more information to offer better informed treatment choices.”



Images are for illustrative purposes only. Not real patient.
CGM=continuous glucose monitoring.

1. <https://yourherefordshire.co.uk/all/news/news-the-number-of-people-diagnosed-with-diabetes-in-herefordshire-has-increased-according-to-data-from-diabetes-uk/>. Accessed December 2023. 2. <https://herefordshireandworcestershire.icb.nhs.uk/about-us>. Accessed December 2023. 3. isCGM: intermittently scanned continuous glucose monitoring (isCGM, commonly referred to as ‘flash’). NICE Terms used in NG 17; <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng17>. Accessed December 2023. 4. The FreeStyle LibreLink app is only compatible with certain mobile devices and operating systems. Please check the website for more information about device compatibility before using the app. Use of FreeStyle LibreLink may require registration with LibreView. 5. NICE guideline NG28 (2015, updated 2022) available at <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng28>. Accessed December 2023. 6. Evans M. Diabetes Ther. (2022): <http://doi.org/10.1007/s13300-022-01253-9>. 7. Haak, T. Diabetes Ther (2017): <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13300-016-0223-6>. 8. Glucose readings are automatically displayed in the FreeStyle LibreLink app only when the user’s smartphone and sensor are connected and in range. 9. The LibreView data management software is intended for use by both patients and healthcare professionals to assist people with diabetes and their healthcare professionals in the review, analysis and evaluation of historical glucose device data to support effective diabetes management. The LibreView software is not intended to provide treatment decisions or to be used as a substitute for professional healthcare advice.

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