

## Self-Care Hub Gets Positive Feedback



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The Self-Care Hub, the new online tool that empowers people with long-term health issues to better understand and self-manage their conditions, has received excellent feedback during its preview at the Library of Birmingham. The web-based solution aims to reduce the need for face-to-face consultation with clinicians, reducing reliance on over-stretched primary care, emergency and specialist health services.

Health professionals from across the UK who attended the event gave overwhelmingly positive feedback on the new tool, with attendees describing it as “patient-centred”, “a great tool” that “works really well”, has “huge applicability” and is “an exciting way of involving people in the design of their own health care.”

Presentations and collaborative group sessions generated not only lively discussion, but also valuable input into the Hub's development, as representatives from various areas of the health sector shared their expertise. Participants discussed wide-ranging topics, including how the Hub might be perceived by patients, the use of social media to create a ‘circle of care’, how well the confidence self-assessment tracker worked, and additional features that users would find useful or engaging.

The Self-Care Hub is being built by Kirklees Council-owned technology developer, LookingLocal, working with long-term care clinicians and public health professionals. Underpinned by proven Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques, the Hub encourages behavioural change by supporting users to achieve measurable goals. It takes a ‘whole-person’ approach that promotes independent decision-taking — and users can also engage the support of a circle of formal and informal carers.

“It is clear from the very stimulating discussions at the Library of Birmingham preview that there is clearly a space for the Self-Care Hub in the area of the self-management of long-term conditions,” said LookingLocal Managing Director, Guy Giles, who hosted the event. “The enthusiasm and insight of those who attended will be invaluable in helping us further refine the Self-Care Hub and the many benefits it brings — to both patients and the clinicians responsible for their care.”

Presenters at the Birmingham preview included Sarah Muckle, Public Health Consultant at Kirklees Council, on the Kirklees self-care landscape; Dr. Steve Ollerton, Chair of the North Kirklees Clinical Commissioning Group, on working differently with patients; and LookingLocal's Chief Technology Officer, John Latham, who outlined the challenge of digitising offline healthcare techniques.

The Self-Care Hub is being rolled out by Kirklees Council's Public Health Directorate, working with the Greater Huddersfield and North Kirklees Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) under the title, MyHeathTools. Patient trials took place through March and April focusing on breathing problems and anxiety.

The platform lets users make ongoing assessments of their motivation levels to change their behaviour, and gauges their confidence levels in managing their own health. Improved physical and emotional well-being, reduced isolation through a supportive network, and a sense of empowerment have a positive knock-on effect in patients' family, work and social lives.

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