

Using videoconferencing tools to support assessment



The context

Sefton Local Authority "Moving with dignity team"

The tool

Videoconferencing with Skype/Whatsapp

The challenge

Being able to conduct remote assessments to support informal/formal carers during the COVID-19 lockdown period.

The solution

The occupational therapy team set up a remote video assessment/support process utilising WhatsApp and Skype.

In order to establish if a video call would be appropriate, the team conducted an initial telephone screening.

Video assessments were only offered to individuals who have formal/informal carers visiting on a regular basis and have access to a phone that can support Skype or WhatsApp.

The video calls provide the occupational therapist with a window to observe an individual's function, cognition, environment, transfers and other issues such as inappropriate use of equipment.

The impact

At Sefton we feel that the introduction of video assessment/support calls have enabled our Team to continue to support Sefton residents during the COVID-19 Lockdown period.

The video assessments have provided us with a tool that can be used to assess for the following:

- Low level equipment,
- Identify broken equipment and request repair
- Minor adaptations
- Evaluation of an individual's functional ability
- To conduct an environmental assessment
- To provide more complex moving and handling equipment to support individuals and carers in their home and also in residential care homes.

The team has compiled a video call spread sheet to evaluate the outcomes of video calls

The video calls have provided the team with a window to:

- Observe manual handling practise,
- Conduct virtual environmental visits,
- Offer advice/support and avoid potential injury.
- We also found that by organising a video assessment the response time can be faster than a face to face visit. Additionally, video calls remove travel time, giving therapists time for other tasks.
- Video technology can also be of benefit to other agencies such as Social workers, Home Improvement Agency staff, equipment company representatives and hospital departments, by holding virtual joint meetings.

Feedback from therapist included the following:

- Video assessments were easy to arrange and to invite other team members or cares to participate in an assessment.
- The assessments were more focused as there were fewer distractions.
- There was better opportunity to have access to the persons information and records during the assessment and greater opportunity to make notes during the assessment.

The learning

Initially team members were reluctant to use video technology suggesting that video assessment should not replace face to face visits. But as more and more team members have become involved, they have reported many benefits to video calls, especially during COVID-19.

It has been clarified with the team that video assessments are not expected to replace all face to face visits, but are another tool available to occupational therapists to develop good practice.

It was felt by the occupational therapy team that the continuation of video consultations both during and post COVID-19 was worthy of further exploration.

The team analysed 10 different cases and the evidence was shared with their organisation in support of how videoconferencing has enhanced service delivery.

Video conferencing has proved to be a useful tool for enhancing the assessment process and post COVID the team will explore how these benefits can continue to benefit the service.

The team are also using video conferencing tools to support supervision and meetings and will look at the benefits of these going forward. Other applications such as Attend Anywhere are also being considered.

In summary, the team views video conferencing as a useful tool and are looking to formalise a process for its continued use.

