

The Economics of a COVID-19 Respiratory Virtual Ward in Leicester



Health economist, **Jim Swift**, explores the resource use implications associated with the management of patients in a virtual ward - in their own homes.

Summary

Our study, published in the British Journal of Healthcare Management, described the safety, capacity enhancement and financial savings associated with the first 65 patients who were discharged from a COVID-19 virtual ward.

As of 13th December 2021, 310 patients had been discharged from a virtual COVID ward across Leicestershire NHS, before the introduction of new medicines to enable faster recovery and less hospitalisations.

Here, we apply the published outcomes from the research paper to examine the economics of a virtual ward service, with significant cost savings for the NHS.

Key Outcomes:



1,267

Estimated bed days saved in total using the virtual ward



50%

Reduction in re-admissions when using a COVID-19 virtual ward



£674,218

Estimated gross savings to Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland ICS

Breakdown of Results:

Oxygen weaned patients

66 patients had a mean reduction in average length of stay of 9.93 days¹.

Estimated gross savings: £347,573

Reduction in re-admissions

50% reduction in re-admissions in patients discharged with CliniTouch Vie¹.

Estimated gross savings: £40,818

Patients not on oxygen

244 patients had a mean reduction in average length of stay of 2.2 days².

Estimated gross savings: £285,827

Costs of Service Provision

The cost of CliniTouch Vie, plus specialist respiratory nurse consultations.

Estimated total costs: £52,041

¹ Data sourced by NHSX on patients using CliniTouch Vie vs controls.

² Data sourced by Professor Sudip Ghosh at Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust on patients on CliniTouch Vie and controls prior to the introduction of the virtual ward

Total Estimated Net Savings to Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland ICS: £622,177



See more in our new Virtual Wards Launch Guide

The expansion and continued rollout of virtual wards is one of the top priorities across the NHS for 2022 and beyond.

Our launch guide compiles advice and real insights learned over 18 months of delivering a virtual ward for a major NHS trust, and will be updated as the rollout of virtual wards continues. It includes:

- ✓ Published case studies and research papers
- ✓ SOP guidelines and tips for evaluating your service
- ✓ Expert advice on engaging both clinicians and patients
- ✓ Patient stories and example pathways

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