

# Our proactive strategy in challenging circumstances

The NHS faced one of the biggest challenges in its 72-year history with the outbreak of Covid-19. Technology played a pivotal role in the response and, as a major IT supplier to the NHS, EMIS Group had the tools to help the NHS front line and the reach to make a difference.

## Guiding principle

It was clear from the outset that Covid-19 would have a huge impact. EMIS Group had one guiding principle to navigate through the pandemic: to do the right thing at all times by both customers and colleagues. The Group was committed to helping NHS front line staff in as many ways as it could, while supporting colleagues to balance work and family life, especially during lockdown periods.

## Protecting colleagues

The health and wellbeing of colleagues was an absolute priority. The Group moved to homeworking in both the UK and India before the first lockdown was announced. Some key workers were required to visit customer sites during lockdown and EMIS supported them by providing full PPE and safety training.

## Supporting the NHS user base

There was a 90% reduction in face-to-face GP appointments during the first lockdown, driving a need for digital alternatives for front line care. EMIS made video consultation capability available free of charge across England for the first three months of the pandemic and then helped customers continue using the service under NHS England funding. Its digital triage system, Online Consult, was free to use in Scotland and was widely used across England.

Behind the scenes, EMIS made rapid changes to core software systems, including new SNOMED-CT codes, shielded patient capability and Covid-19 care pathways in EMIS Web, allowing fast and accurate recording of Covid-19 patient consultation data. EMIS assisted in setting up "Covid hubs" to support the primary care response and provided essential infrastructure services and hardware to enable clinicians to work from home, as well as developing software to deliver Covid-19 test results automatically into all GP systems across England.

Outside primary care, the EMIS emergency department solution, Symphony, was adapted to support Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 streams throughout A&Es across the UK.

## Innovative technology for community pharmacists

Community pharmacies provide a vital front line service. EMIS Group provided free access to video consultation software and several back-office services to help pharmacies continue to support their customers.

Technology integration was carried out at pace between ProScript Connect and Pinnacle's system, PharmOutcomes, to develop functionality to support shielded patients.

## Helping the UK public

In the first two months of the pandemic, the Covid-19 information on Patient.info had 7.1 million views and the coronavirus symptom checker was used more than 700,000 times.

Patient Access was a vital digital tool for many patients to access healthcare services. Registered users increased from 8.4 million to 11.7 million during 2020, reaching 12 million in February 2021.

## Vital research

EMIS is playing a key role to facilitate critical research into Covid-19. Explorer, from the EMIS-X Analytics suite, was used by:

- a number of NHS organisations for use cases including a Covid-19 data intelligence hub and winter operational planning;
- the NHS England OpenSAFELY Covid-19 research project, a collaboration between the University of Oxford, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and system suppliers operating under direction from the Secretary of State; and
- the Oxford Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Research and Surveillance Centre, to support national surveillance of Covid-19 and for recruitment into the University of Oxford's PRINCIPLE clinical trial.

EMIS continues to support a number of Covid-19 research programmes alongside academic and life science partners.

## Supporting the vaccination programme

From December 2020 Pinnacle's system, Outcomes4Health, has been used by all healthcare professionals delivering vaccinations outside hospital settings to capture immunisation details at the point of care and share this with GPs and the National Immunisation Management Service (NIMS). To date, Outcomes4Health has been deployed in almost 1,400 vaccination centres and has supported 14.9 million vaccinations, as well as underpinning the NHS daily reporting on vaccination take-up.

## The ongoing response

EMIS continues to provide vital support for the NHS as the country transitions to the next stage of managing the pandemic and the wider healthcare needs of the nation. Critical to the NHS is managing the deficit in care caused by the pandemic, such as missed long-term condition checks or late cancer diagnoses from patients staying away from the GP with symptoms that could lead to early detection. The business is developing a series of risk stratification tools to help primary care providers identify those most at risk and take a proactive approach to reducing the deficit as quickly as possible.

EMIS is also focussed on sustaining the digital transformation, providing the tools in key clinical systems to support the digital delivery of healthcare as well as services through Patient Access to enable the UK public to have a digital relationship with their GP or pharmacist.

## Our colleagues

### Keeping our essential workers safe

During the first lockdown, a team of EMIS engineers helped configure more than 1,000 laptops for East London Health and Care Partnership at pace so that GPs could carry on providing essential healthcare from home.

Duncan McCrae, Technical Delivery Manager, was part of the team. He said: "We enabled the GPs to securely access EMIS Web and patient records to carry out remote consultations. The work took place in the CCG office – because of lockdown it was a vacant space that enabled us to maintain social distancing at all times. We were equipped with masks, gloves and hand gel."

Martin Wallis, digital programme manager for East London Health and Care Partnership, said: "The EMIS engineers, working as part of a team with NHS colleagues, provided tremendous help supporting front line staff in the fight against Covid-19. I'm convinced lives will have been saved through this work."

Duncan McCrae



## Our customers

### Supporting the NHS front line

Taurus Healthcare, an out-of-hours provider and federation for all 19 GP practices in Herefordshire, joined forces with nurses and hospital specialists via EMIS Web to provide community care during the pandemic. The technology enabled the federation to set up a telephone or video service for patients with Covid-19, face-to-face clinics and a home visiting service for people with Covid-19 for the whole area, and a dedicated separate clinic for shielded patients. Clinicians also used EMIS Web to trial a "virtual" ward (for non-Covid-19 patients) where GPs and hospital doctors treat patients together using EMIS Web and avoid a hospital admission where possible.

"We could not have done it without EMIS Web", said Dr Mike Hearne, managing director of Taurus Healthcare. "It helped us to break down boundaries across the NHS and improve access to care 24/7."

Dr Mike Hearne



## Our community

### Supporting population health

EMIS Clinical Directors Dr Ian Wood and Dr Sarah Jarvis launched a questionnaire through Patient Access in April to capture patient-reported data about Covid-19 during the early, uncharted stage of the pandemic.

Jointly developed with the Oxford Royal College of General Practitioners Research and Surveillance Centre, the questionnaire was completed by more than 50,000 people.

Dr Wood said: "Crucially, this is patient-reported data, which gives us vital metrics such as subtle differences in symptoms, recovery periods or the wider economic impact on a patient's employment and finances."

The University of Oxford is using this data in Explorer as part of its surveillance of Covid-19. Dr Jarvis said: "Knowledge of the ongoing impact of the condition on a large scale will be invaluable in informing our decisions and treatments, to reduce the impact of the pandemic on the wider population."

Dr Ian Wood



More detail on EMIS's response to Covid-19 can be found online [www.emishealth.com/news-events/news/covid-19-response](http://www.emishealth.com/news-events/news/covid-19-response)