

*What are the experiences of service users, carers and health and social care professionals regarding the introduction and use of telehealth and telecare?*

This qualitative evaluation is intended to complement as well as provide additional evidence to the cluster randomised trial as recommended by the MRC Framework for evaluation of complex interventions [47]. The main focus is to assess the impact of telehealth and telecare packages on the views and experiences of patients and service users (including carers) and the interaction between service users, carers and professionals. An additional focus is the professional perspective on the use and implementation of telecare and telehealth.

Theme 4 draws on two conceptual frameworks in the areas of telecare and self-management for long-term conditions. Firstly, the normalization process model [48] has been developed from existing evaluation studies of telecare interventions and has focused on how technologies come to be adapted and used (or factors involved in their failure) in routine care. Secondly, the WISE (Whole System Informing Self-management Engagement) model has been developed from mixed methods research to investigate when patient-centred self-management is likely to be most effective [49].

*Aims*

- To explore patient and carer perspectives and experiences of existing services for chronic disease management
- To explore patient and carer attitudes to and engagement with telehealth and telecare
- To examine changes in management and care arrangements associated with interventions including impact on caring relationships (informal as well as professional) and use of services and resources
- To explore professional attitudes to and engagement with telehealth and telecare including perceptions of the costs and benefits and changes to working practices
- To investigate reasons for refusal of technology and withdrawal from the trial

*Methods*

A 2-year qualitative longitudinal study is being conducted using a multi-method approach:

- Semi-structured in-depth interviews with patients, carers and professionals at multiple time-points through the trial
- Observation to document technology use within patients' homes in the context of other management practices, caring relationships and interactions with professionals
- Semi-structured in-depth interviews with patients and carers who declined to take part in the trial following eligibility assessment

*Sampling*

In recruiting patients and carers entering the trial, a purposeful maximum variation sampling strategy is being used to select people from across the different sites to include a range of long-term conditions, ages, socioeconomic status, locale, gender and illness severity. Health and social care staff involved in the care of people within the trial are being recruited, ensuring a mixture of grades of staff with various roles across all 3 sites. An opportunistic sample of patients who do not enter the trial following initial eligibility assessment are also invited to be interviewed to discuss their views about telehealth and telecare and their past and current care.