



Supporting family communication in care homes: national pilot of secure video technology to connect residents and loved ones

Due to restricted family visiting during the COVID-19 outbreak, care homes across the UK have had to consider new ways to help keep families connected with their loved ones.

Recognising this need, the Scottish Government through the Technology Enabled Care programme is funding a 12-week pilot with ten care homes across the country. The pilot aims to measure the positive impact that short video updates might have for people living in care homes, their families and care home staff.

Live communication (for example phone, video calls) between busy care home staff and families can be challenging.

The vCreate video service provides an alternative approach by enabling staff and residents to create short recorded video updates at convenient times. These can include special moments or activities which residents would like to share with relatives. This secure cloud-based service is accessed from tablet devices and is already in use in hospital settings throughout the UK.

Once care homes have become familiar with the app, several of the homes will also trial an incoming service which family members can use to send short videos back to relatives in the care homes. It is hoped that this will bring positive benefits too.

The 12-week pilot is a collaboration between the Care Inspectorate, Scottish Care, COSLA, and the NHS West of Scotland Innovation Hub. Participating care homes are in locations throughout Scotland. At the end of the pilot, the platform will be assessed and potentially made accessible for more care homes in the future. We will update you when more information becomes available.

You can find out more about vCreate [here](#).

Dr Neil Patel, Consultant Neonatologist at the Royal Hospital for Children, Glasgow, and Clinical Innovation Lead explains the thinking behind the initiative: *“vCreate is an NHS Trusted secure app which is widely used in neonatal, paediatric and adult intensive care units to share video and photo updates with families, to help minimise separation and anxiety. We recognised that the service may also be beneficial in care homes, who have many of the same issues as hospitals in trying to keep families connected with loved ones, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.”*

Yvonne Leathley, Senior Improvement Advisor at the Care Inspectorate said: *“In order to properly assess the impact of this secure video technology we have engaged with a wide range of homes, both public and private, with resident numbers from as few as 8 residents to as many as 89. We are delighted by their enthusiasm to join the pilot and hope they will see benefits for residents, families and staff”.*

Mr Abi Jebbari, Manager at David Cargill House in Glasgow, one of the homes participating in the pilot said: *“As a care home we always strive to give our residents the best possible outcome. vCreate*

has been and will continue to be a powerful tool to enhance residents' health and wellbeing by sharing their day-to-day meaningful activities with their loved ones. We have noticed that our residents are not only sharing their verbal communication with the family but also non-verbal communication especially residents with dementia, and it's also recorded. So this quality of video interaction has generated a positive and personalised outcome."

From Francesca Docherty, also a member of the staff team at Beechwood: *"At times it has been difficult to explain to residents why suddenly they have not had regular contact with their loved ones but now, with vCreate, the ability to send secure videos to family members has had a positive impact on both our residents and families alike. We are absolutely delighted to have been chosen to participate in this pilot"*

From Cathy Togneri Manager at Beechwood Care Home: *"Our relatives have missed visiting their loved ones during the pandemic and vCreate has filled the gap where we are able to share videos of everyday life, sharing joy, laughter and fun. It has been very comforting for relatives."*