

Empowering Non-Clinical Staff in Adult Social Care with Whzan Blue Boxes Across Surrey Heartlands

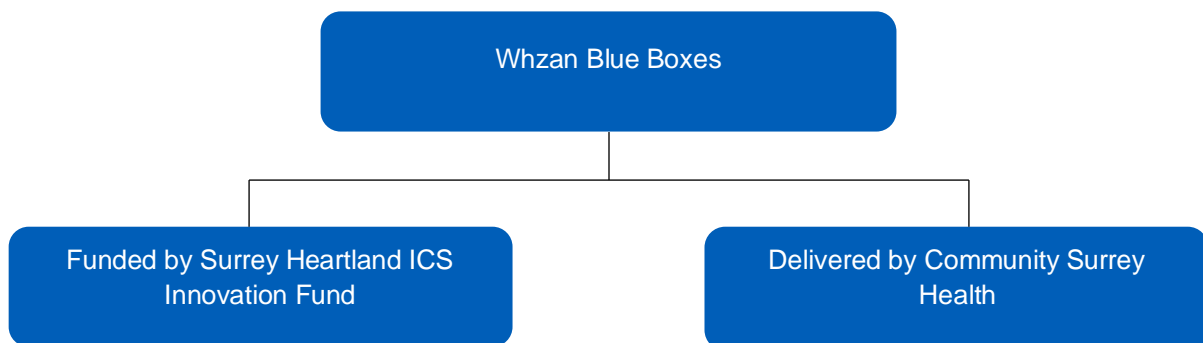
The Whzan Blue Box is an all-in-one telehealth solution comprised of a portable case that includes all the equipment necessary to enable non-clinical care staff to measure vital signs. It can also be used to record photos, and perform multiple assessments and questionnaires, including National Early Warning Score (NEWS2) on social care recipients. Following a highly successful pilot project that involved the deployment of 50 Blue Boxes across care homes in the Surrey Heartlands ICS, the project has now been extended (January 2024) to deploy ten Blue Boxes to domiciliary care agencies.

This case study shows:

- the importance of empowering non-clinical staff in adult social care settings, and how they can support wider healthcare system goals
- the importance of using digital technology to support integration between health and social care settings
- the role of local Registered Managers' Networks in disseminating best practice and supporting further innovation.

Where this fits in the system

- Funding for the Blue Box trial has been provided by the Surrey Heartland ICS Innovation Fund.
- The ICB supports the funding and delivery of the Blue Box trial, including its expansion to home care settings, and implementations of the Blue Box within care settings and funds training via Community Surrey Health.



Whzan Blue Boxes

The Whzan Blue Box is an all-in-one telehealth solution. Containing a pulse oximeter, thermometer, blood pressure monitor, and tablet computer, they enable users to measure and report temperature, oxygen saturation, heart rate, blood pressure. Through these readings, and Whzan automatically calculating NEWS2 scores, the boxes can support analysis of illness, nutrition, hydration, frailty, and many other conditions.

By deploying the Blue Boxes in care home settings, the original pilot aimed to increase the early identification of health conditions and enable early escalation and intervention through clinical reviews or additional social care support. In turn, this would reduce unnecessary or unplanned hospital admissions and empower adult social care staff to correctly assess and manage the health of the people they support.

Expanding the Whzan Blue Box pilot

Surrey Heartlands ICS funded an initial pilot project involving the deployment of 50 Blue Boxes to care homes across their system area. The registered manager of one of the participating homes, Woking Homes, then approached Skills for Care and offered to present to the local Registered Managers' Network on the impact of the project at their home.

The presentation highlighted the impressive results achieved at Woking Homes, which generated significant interest amongst the other register managers in having access to the Blue Box scheme.

From this presentation, Central Surrey Health (CSH) – a not-for-profit community health services provider that is part of the Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership – approached Surrey Heartlands ICS and requested funding to expand the Blue Box initiative to domiciliary care settings.

It was agreed that Surrey Heartlands ICS would fund five Blue Boxes for domiciliary care settings. Skills for Care organised an expression of interest exercise across their domiciliary care network within the system area and identified five providers to participate in the pilot project.

Given the success of the previous care home pilot, and the strong demand from domiciliary care providers, CSH secured system funding for a further five Blue Boxes (ten boxes in total), meaning the five participating agencies would have two boxes each. CSH then arranged training for frontline carers at each participating agency, with the pilot formally commencing in January 2024.

Impact of the Whzan Blue Box pilot

The implementation of the initial 50 Whzan Blue Boxes across care homes in the system area has proven to be highly successful.

At Woking Homes, over a six-month period, the registered manager reported a 41% reduction in 999 calls, a 53% reduction in hospital admissions, and a 36% reduction in unplanned GP visits.

These results clearly demonstrate how the Blue Boxes can reduce unplanned pressures on primary and secondary care services, which supports delivery of system's wider aim of reducing unnecessary hospital admission for individuals receiving adult social care services.

Next steps

The domiciliary care provider pilot launched in mid-January with data collection underway and a full evaluation due in Summer 2024.

“The initial pilot project has shown the importance of empower adult social care teams across the system, and how they can play a vital role in improving the health of the people they support. This is reducing strain on the wider healthcare system, and supporting delivery of the ICB’s system goals.”

- Marianne Davis, Skills for Care