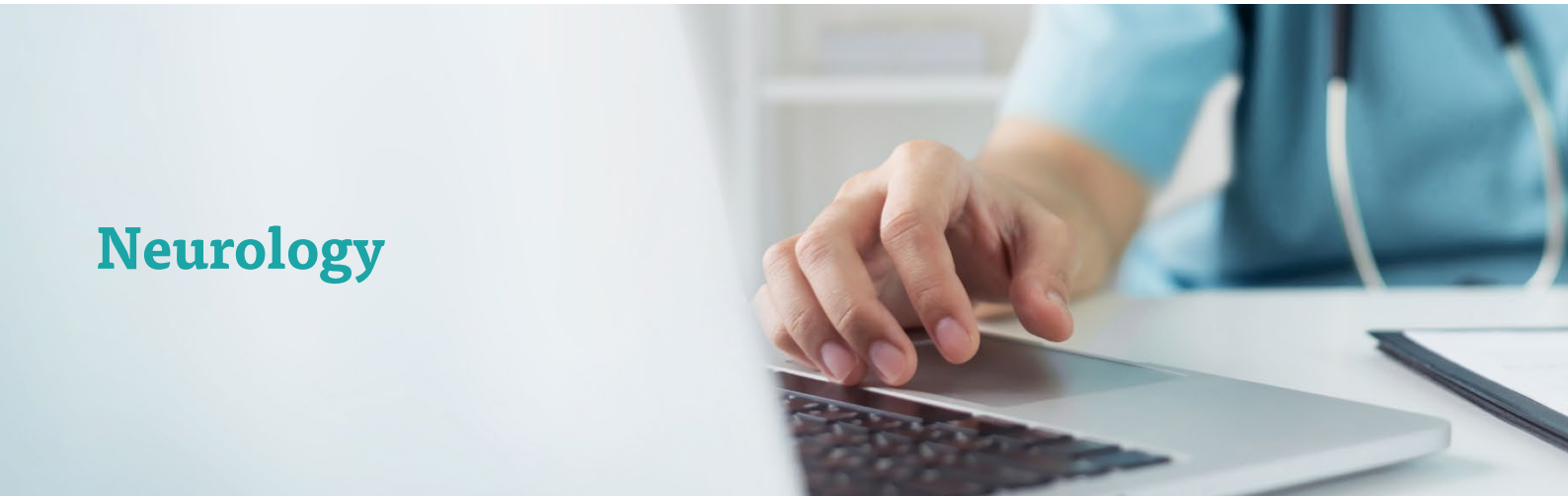




Neurology

Background and drivers for implementing Patient Pass

Originally, LTHTR had an in-house developed system that registered the referrals from other hospitals across the region. These referrals were sent by clinicians in neighbouring hospitals by phone via the Preston Switchboard bleep. The on-call registrar would manually take down all the demographic information for the patient, name of ward and referring consultant etc. This was essential but very time consuming. It was recognised that when registrars see patients in ward rounds, they needed to be able to concentrate and at times bleeps were inconvenient and during Covid, in full PPE, this was even more difficult.

Patient Pass first went into Preston in November 2021 – Neurosurgeons said their system wasn't fit for purpose so that drove the Trust to look into a new system overall. The system was introduced because the previous arrangement had no ongoing support, which meant there were constant errors and there was difficulty updating, changing, and adding to the existing data. The system was starting to fail.

Being able to keep a clear record of the referrals was key and the primary driver. The Trust decided to install Patient Pass across a collaboration of specialties including – Plastics, Neurosurgery, Vascular, Renal, Upper GI and Haematology. All were involved in reviewing and choosing the most appropriate product. There were two options to choose from – Patient Pass and another which was discounted as it was not as user friendly, nor did it have the breadth of functionality.

Initially, there was some resistance, with those who had worked with a bleep system, because they weren't able to discuss a case. However, they are now happier as they can plan the on call.

How has Patient Pass improved outcomes?

Patient Pass now takes 100% of the external referrals. Because Patient Pass either automatically pulls data through from the NHS Spine or data is input by the referring team, all demographic data is already in system and has saved a lot of time for the receiving registrars.

We realised in Neurology that we could constrain the referral, request for certain variables to be checked, and be very specific about certain immediate requirements. For example, for sudden onset thunderclap headaches we are able to specify that a certain protocol must be followed. Where we need to exclude the possibility of a bleed we have a mandatory field for referring teams to check the patients eyes, which gives us important information. Most of our assessments now have these in place.

With Patient Pass, we were able to adapt the referral forms to give us the exact information required, with Neurology we tend to have more free text boxes than other specialties that have mandatory fields which are very specific. Neurology will accept a "don't know" if the referrer does not have the information readily to hand. This flexibility of design has been very useful.

Traditionally the most junior member of the team would make a referral and they may not know the answer to "on the spot" questions whereas now the requested information is standard and consistent. This means the referrer knows what will be requested next time and they can be ready. Having clear information available from the source results in specific and timely advice and guidance being given for each patient.

Enabling the on-call Registrars to access the system on their terms has resulted in the prevention of distractions that take focus away from the task in hand. Different registrars have different processes for managing the on call. Some registrars want to speak to a consultant first before responding to the referral, or request that the patient is managed locally. If a case is urgent then they still request a bleep, for all other patients, Patient Pass can be reviewed as and when they feel they are ready.

The audit and governance functionality stops "he said, she said" and enables the team to defend decisions and advice in medico legal situations, if required.

Having Patient Pass has stopped the 3am calls asking for the Urology registrar rather than Neurology registrar! We used to receive referrals to "Neuro", rather than specifically Neurology or Neurosurgery, meaning some referrals were inappropriate for us. So, this stops inappropriate bleeps and stops needlessly being disturbed.

It took time initially to set up the forms but in the long run this has saved a lot of time for clinicians. We have had nothing but positive responses to the implementation of Patient Pass.

Testimonial

"Patient Pass has improved the on call in many ways, we are all glad that we no longer get bleeped at 3am for somebody looking for a Urology registrar rather than Neurology registrar! Also, we used to receive referrals to "Neuro" rather than the referrer specifying Neurology or Neurosurgery. Again, this meant potentially being woken in the middle of the night unnecessarily. Having Patient Pass has enabled us to manage the on call differently and stop inappropriate bleeps and needless disruptions".

— Consultant Neurologist, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS FT