Technology and Innovation in the NHS
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1. How have technological developments in the health sector affected individual patients and their families?

Monthly respiratory consultant / specialist nurse VC clinic consultations between Caithness General Hospital and Raigmore, Inverness mean that people don’t need to travel from Caithness to Inverness. This saves them a return journey of at least 200 miles on a notoriously challenging road. This group are made up of potentially breathless people who often say they need more time to prepare for travel. 54 people had these consultations in 2016 and all were satisfied with it and would recommend to others. VC technology has normally worked well and has been well supported by the VC team.

2. What key opportunities exist for the use of technology in health and social care over the next 10 years?

Seeing the trends of health related data is powerful for people and can help with behaviour change. Individuals and their families would have more control/access to their data.

Being able to use technology to clinically assess i.e electronic stethoscopes, pulse oximeters to have more responsive remote consultations.

There are so many strands of work and development happening locally. It’s difficult to know everything that’s going on. It would be good if there was a map of ideas. There should be potential to share ideas and build on existing programmes. There is a real risk that there is duplication and waste.

3. What actions are needed to improve the accessibility and sharing of the electronic patient record?

Sharing it between primary and secondary care.

4. What are the barriers to innovation in health and social care?

Broadband and connectivity.

Assumptions that the population won’t want to lose the face to face contact with health care professionals. Our work around home health monitoring in NHS Highland has shown that what people like most about it is the feeling that they are connected, even though they know it’s remotely.