

# VC Links for Emergency Psychiatry Services

## Scotland | Norway

### Overview

A videoconferencing (VC) solution provides patients in an acute psychiatric state with access to specialist evaluation as close to their home as possible. In addition, VC can enable a 24-hour system where psychiatrists are available for patients who visit emergency departments at district centres.

The rationale behind a VC solution includes difficulties in recruiting specialists, minimising travel for patients and carers and the provision of specialist services to remote locations. Studies in Norway have shown that there are no differences between telemedicine and conventional face-to-face methods with regard to quality and satisfaction among patients and professionals. Telepsychiatry has also proved to be cost effective. It is important to develop a VC system where it is easy to involve a specialist directly in a consultation, both when the patient is admitted to 24-hour departments or when the patient is consulted by an ambulatory team. In such a system the specialists can be located in different local sites.

"It's a very helpful addition to what we do and to be able to reach the geographically spread areas."  
*Consultant psychiatrist, Scotland*

"Very quickly you tend to forget that there is a camera, that you are in a videoconference and not face to face."  
*Consultant psychiatrist, Norway*

ITTS Scotland have worked to develop the use of mobile VC (laptops) to carry out remote patient psychiatric assessments. This approach will enable flexibility for clinicians, reduce unnecessary admissions for patients and facilitate the delivery of local community care.



The existing VC link between the University Hospital of North Norway (UNN) in Tromsø and Narvik (240km away) is now extended to 2 further satellite sites in Hamarø and Lødingen to widen the reach of the decentralised on-call cooperation for adult mental health service.

Provision of a VC link enhances the degree to which remote doctors can assess the patient – this can then reduce the number of automatic transport and admissions.

In Scotland, VC is used across the service to help deal with the remote geography in South Highland (Argyll and Bute) which has many island communities and limited numbers of ferry connections. These communities are often reliant on helicopters to airlift patients to Inverness which is stressful and extremely costly.

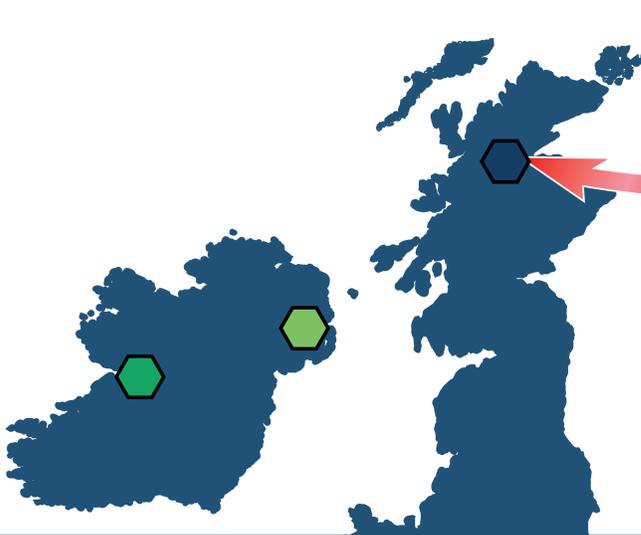
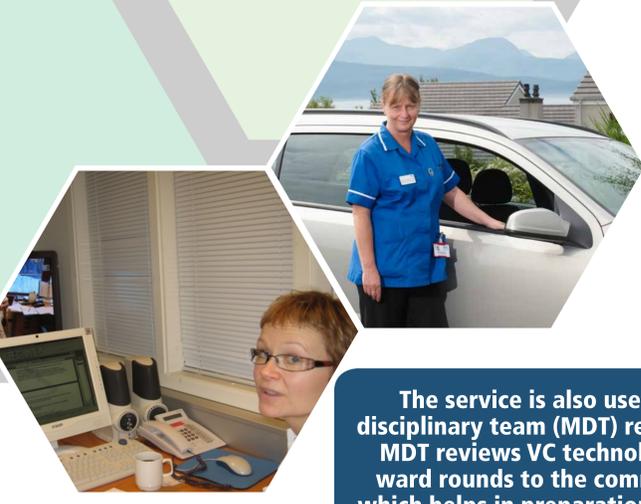
In Norway, the project is addressing the need for a decentralised mental health service for both adults and children/adolescents. Through ITTS, a new VC link has now been established at the decentralised mental health clinic for children and adolescents (BUP) in Ofoten/Narvik with a focus on patients with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The service is also used for multi-disciplinary team (MDT) reviews. In these MDT reviews VC technology links the ward rounds to the community teams which helps in preparation for discharge.

**Expanding**  
**Exporting**

“Patients are remarkably positive, especially younger ones, because they're used to speaking to screens through social media.”  
*Renal nurse, Norway*

“The pathway for the patient is shorter because you are able to do the job more efficiently and have more frequent meetings.”  
*Consultant psychiatrist, Norway*



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