



The future of general practice: Collective healthcare

mjog
by **livi**

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Foresight Overview

Over the past few years, general practice has experienced a seismic transformation. GP practices - already dealing with workforce shortages and rising patient demand - were tasked with delivering care in the context of a global pandemic, placing further pressure on already-stretched services.

The impact of this pressure on frontline workers has been clear to see and shows few signs of abating. From April to June 2020, absences in the NHS relating to mental health increased by 22% compared with the same period in 2019, according to [FirstCare](#), while the UK government's [Health and Social Care Committee](#) forecasts that the NHS workforce gap will exceed 475,000 full-time staff by 2033/2034, doubling over the next five years alone.

Crucially, however, changes brought on by the pandemic are hinting at a new way of doing things. "Everyone has been forced to adapt their services and find innovative ways to deliver care and new experiences," says digital health influencer João Bocas. "The next decade will see the true power of technology realised, empowering GP practices to engage with patients more effectively, provide new levels of support and improve patient outcomes."

Mjog by Livi is one such tool. The UK's largest digital healthcare platform, currently used by more than 70% of UK practices, allows GPs and practice managers to send advice, appointment reminders and health alerts to patients, from everyone registered at the practice to selected groups or even individuals. In doing so, it's contributing to a future when technology will ease the burden on practice staff and empower them to deliver better patient care and collaborate with colleagues in new ways.

"Digital platforms are set to augment human contact in healthcare," says Brendan Martin, managing director of Buurtzorg Britain and Ireland, an organisation that aims to focus health-care around localism and neighbourhood care. "Available to practitioners themselves, these tools can help staff arrive more seamlessly at the right assessment of what needs to be done, monitor the efficacy of care and better determine which interventions need to be made."

Essentially, technology will act as an enabler of better diagnostics, easier access and ultimately better care, welcoming an era of Collective Healthcare. As the GP surgery solidifies its role in the hearts and minds of patients and practice staff alike, it will become an anchor institution for the community where the health and wellbeing of everyone within the healthcare system is catered for.

"Every patient should have access to the right care at the right time, but that shouldn't come at the cost of those people at the heart of the community - the doctors, nurses, receptionists, back office workers and more - who are providing that care," says Jonathan Duffy, head of practices at Mjog by Livi. "Access to better technologies for patients and practice staff alike is what's going to enable the future we all imagine today to become a reality much sooner."

In this report, strategic foresight consultancy The Future Laboratory, in partnership with Mjog by Livi, explores exactly how this future will evolve, including:

- The advancement and growing sophistication of diagnostic tools.
- The impact of wearables and remote monitoring on the delivery of care.
- The rise of healthy homes, able to monitor the health of residents in real time.

- The health-enhancing role of wellness architecture principles in the general practice.
- The expansion of general practice into peripheral services that encourage proactive, healthy lifestyles.
- The empowering role of digital skills training, improving patient access and easing burdens on staff.

Through this exploration, we uncover the trends that will define the UK's general practice landscape in 2030 and beyond, and reveal the new services, platforms and innovations set to rise to the fore.

Drivers of change

A series of macro forces are driving change in the healthcare system, as the pressure placed on the sector by a global pandemic is met with shifting consumer attitudes and all-new technological capabilities.

System under pressure

The global pandemic has placed the NHS under an inordinate amount of stress. General practices are feeling the strain, with overworked staff and patients who are understandably aggrieved by long waiting times and difficulty with access.

"Coming out of the pandemic, there is a huge amount of pressure on GP services in particular," says Brendan Martin from Buurtzorg Britain and Ireland. "The level of demand is exacerbating some of the challenges staff were already facing, and without change it could spiral."

The impact on staff is evident and worrying. According to the [UK Government Health and Social Care Committee](#), 92% of NHS trusts are concerned about staff wellbeing, stress and burnout, while the [British Medical Association](#) reveals that the number of UK doctors considering early retirement more than doubled in the first year of the pandemic.

The impact on patients is equally clear. Overall satisfaction with the NHS fell to 36% in 2021 – an unprecedented 17 percentage point decrease on 2020, and the lowest level of satisfaction recorded since 1997, according to the [British Attitudes Survey](#). Perhaps most significantly, more people (41%) were dissatisfied with the NHS than satisfied, with the struggles of both staff and patients highlighting the need for transformational change.

Proactive Health

In the past few years health has become increasingly important to people, and a mainstream lifestyle pursuit. In the UK, the average consumer will spend £487 per head on wellness in 2022, according to [Global Data](#).

The pandemic has further accelerated proactive approaches to health and wellness. Data from [FMCG Gurus](#), for example, shows that 42% of consumers have adopted a long-term approach to health since the pandemic, while three in 10 consumers say the pandemic has made them more aware of their mental health needs, according to [Mintel](#).

Shifting attitudes are prompting new behaviours, whether it's consumers embracing services like Livi's [online therapy](#) offering to protect their mental health, or the 62% of Britons who made a change to their diet in 2021 to get healthier, according to the [British Nutrition Foundation](#).

Already, these holistic approaches to health are beginning to have an impact on GP practices and expand their role. "GP practices are taking much more interest in supporting people with lifestyle decisions, from diet to exercise, connecting people with resources that they can draw upon to make positive changes," says Buurtzorg's Martin.

Accelerating Tech

According to McKinsey & Co, society experienced five years of digital transformation in the first eight weeks of the pandemic alone. As Martin Raymond, co-founder of The Future Laboratory, states: "Crucially, technology helped people remain connected during the pandemic – both to each other and to key services."

Attitudes to technology were transformed in the process – and the impact in healthcare was particularly significant. Data from [Censuswide](#) reveals that more than three in five UK patients now feel comfortable using wearable tech (72%), telemedicine (69%), applications (69%), video consultations (68%) and remote monitoring (67%), while over half (51%) are considering using remote consultations in the future after their experience during Covid-19.

As well as accelerating acceptance of telemedicine and virtual services, a more technologically driven GP office is also emerging. This is driving change in how patients are processed and how the office itself runs, as technology is seen as a long-term solution to general practices' endemic problems instead of a temporary fix. Remote working is one case in point, with 60% of practice managers saying that remote working has enabled greater transparency and better ways of working, according to research from [Mjog by Livi](#).

When it comes to patients, tech can also help streamline many aspects of patient engagement, such as appointment reminders and seasonal flu campaigns. Practice staff using Mjog tools, for instance, report up to a 70% reduction in do not attends, with staff empowered to quickly warn people about practice closures or website issues, offering peace of mind even when dealing with the unforeseen.

For digital health influencer João Bocas, the combination of these technologies with artificial intelligence represents the next step forward. "The combination of wearables and artificial intelligence will be the game-changer in health-care," he says, "helping clinicians and staff do everything, from more effectively prioritising patients to seamlessly sharing data which, sees patients receive the care they need more quickly."

Digital Gap

As technological acceleration continues, the gap between the digitally literate and illiterate risks becoming a barrier to adoption among patients and practice staff alike, creating a digital divide across demographic lines.

A survey from [The Health Foundation](#) illustrates how this division is already manifesting in health-care. When asked whether they would download a Covid-19 contact-tracing app, 71% of people with a degree said they would download it, falling to only 38% among those with no formal qualifications; while 17% of those aged over 65 reported that they did not have a smartphone.

With research from [Lloyds](#) also revealing that those with long-term conditions are 23% less likely to have the essential digital skills for life, the need for accessibility to be embedded in all digital health platforms is paramount.

Collective healthcare futures

The digital skills gap also encompasses staff, with research from [Coventry University](#) revealing a gap within senior management, frontline practitioners and back office staff. "Digital skills represent a huge barrier to the adoption of tech in practice life," says Bocas. "The training and skills gap needs to be closed so that doctors, administrators, practice receptionists and clinical managers are not only experts in health and medicine, but also in how to utilise the power of digital platforms to deliver care."

Jonathan Duffy from Mjog by Livi agrees. "The challenge that most practices have is that although they're prioritising signposting and dialling up resources to help support better patient outcomes, lack of access to or poor implementation and understanding of digital services in-practice stands in their way," he says. "A surprising amount of websites currently rolled out across GP surgeries don't meet the basic NHS guidelines to do with accessibility and useful content surrounding symptoms and care. But it doesn't have to be that way."

Livi's Practice Websites offering represents one solution leading the way. Built to NHS guidelines and accessibility laws, its NHS-branded websites give practices a site that's easier for people to understand and use, providing consistency across channels, a better user experience and breaking down barriers to care. "Practice Websites allow any practice an easy-to-manage NHS-branded website to be created and delivered within just seven days, giving patients what they need to understand their own health and when to speak to their GP, while freeing up valuable time in-practice to dedicate to urgent and primary care requirements," says Mjog's Jonathan Duffy.

By 2030, the four drivers of change will have transformed general practice, as digital innovations ease the burden on practice staff, create new opportunities for patient engagement, and welcome an era of Collective Healthcare - where the general practice represents an institutional anchor catering for the health and wellbeing of patients and employees alike.

"Digital platforms are crucial to this future, enabling a more collaborative horizon for healthcare," says Buurtzorg's Martin. "They create the right conditions for collective knowledge development and allow new networks of information-sharing at an organisational level to emerge."

What's also important to recognise, however, is that the impact of these changes goes far beyond the general practice and into the community too. "The future general practice will exist beyond the parameters of one building," says The Future Laboratory's Raymond. "The home, for example, will become another front line of health, enabling new behaviours and preventative approaches that ease the burden on staff, empower them with new data and see tech return the soul to healthcare."

We have identified six emerging trends set to define the next decade of Collective Healthcare. To explore them in detail, we have split them into two areas: At Home and In The Office.

Collective healthcare : In the office

The advancement of diagnostic tools and other technologies is enabling non-essential care and monitoring to occur outside the GP surgery, alleviating pressure points.

From at-home tests to increasingly sophisticated smart devices, this shift is also creating new levels of data – both historic and real-time – and, in turn, opportunities for enhanced care.

DIY Diagnostics

By 2030, highly sophisticated at-home diagnostic tests will enable Britons to take their health into their own hands.

At-home testing has become increasingly commonplace over the past few years. Spurred on by the pandemic and changing consumer attitudes, brands such as Everlywell – a company that sells at-home tests for everything from Lyme disease to fertility – experienced over 100% growth in 2021 compared to 2020, as people sought to become more informed about their health at home.

This growth is set to continue. By 2025, [Quest Diagnostics](#) forecasts that the global at-home testing market will be worth more than £1.6bn. And with 70% of all healthcare decisions in the US based on diagnostic testing services, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the rise of at-home diagnostics is set to have a transformative impact on the global healthcare landscape.

"While at-home testing can never replace the GP – nor should it – it's an invaluable future driver in alleviating pressure points in the physical practice by helping patients better understand their own health and any symptoms they may be experiencing," says Mjog's Jonathan Duffy. "Not only does this drive better patient outcomes, but it could help to counteract some of the headlines burdening the healthcare system in today's media landscape, from longer waiting times to patient dissatisfaction."

The ability for patients to access insights at home will prove particularly significant in the UK. Research from [Lenstore](#) reveals that 59% of people in the country Google their health symptoms before seeing a doctor, and almost a third (30%) of these do so to avoid putting pressure on the NHS. With 22% of respondents saying that Googling symptoms has a negative impact on their mental health, a future of DIY Diagnostics can help to alleviate stress too.

As we move through the decade, at-home testing will become increasingly sophisticated, capable of assessing myriad factors. One case in point is the Future Blood Testing Network+, launched in 2021 to build a multi-disciplinary community to develop digital health technologies for remote, rapid, affordable and inclusive monitoring and personalised analytics. The network is investigating blood testing that can pick up multiple biomarkers for long-term monitoring of patients, empowering clinicians in new ways.

By the end of the decade, at-home testing will be combined with personalised advice, enabling patients to take action when it comes to their health. "If at-home testing can not only diagnose, but also provide education about conditions or guidance on what a diabetes programme looks like, for instance, it can prove extremely powerful," says Bocas.

Already, innovative brands are hinting at what this future might look like. UK blood testing company Thruva, for example, launched an app in 2021 giving patients access to personalised home blood tests, easy-to-understand results with GP support and practical, personalised health advice.

For Mjog's Jonathan Duffy, this combination is key. "This shift has to come hand in hand with the right technologies and digital front door provided by practices up and down the country to give better signposting and provision of resources so that patients are empowered to seek medical guidance the moment they know they need it. This helps create a mutually enhanced experience for practices and patients alike, with technology the lever to pull to make it a reality."

Connected GPs

Advances in wearable technologies and remote monitoring are enabling doctors' surgeries to become more connected to their patients, transforming the efficiency and capabilities of the general practice.

The pandemic has transformed the relationship between technology and health – and the next decade of technological innovation is set to shift things even further. "The pandemic reframed technology as a facilitator, rather than an enemy, of our health," says Chris Sanderson, co-founder of The Future Laboratory. "Through to 2030, a new generation of wearables and remote monitoring tech will see this relationship become stronger and stronger."

Take advances in wearable technologies. As smartwatches and fitness trackers have become more sophisticated, so has their place in our lives. Fitbit's EDA app is a prime example, capable of measuring changes in sweat to see how the body might be responding to stress. Fitbit also lets wearers log their mood to accompany those readings, so users can see how they felt when the measurement was taken.

Over time, such tracking capabilities mean wearables can help us understand what bodily changes mean for a person's overall wellness, allowing for more thorough health insights. For Jonah Becker, Fitbit's design director, this lends itself to wearables becoming a partner to a health-care provider. If people only visit their primary care doctor once or twice annually, devices like those made by Fitbit can help monitor bodily changes that occur throughout the rest of the year.

This transformative potential will fuel a decade of growth in the wearables sector, with the global wearable medical device market forecast to reach £114.6bn in value by 2030, up from £18.8bn in 2021, according to [Precedence Research](#).

The true power of wearables and the valuable data they track emerges when combined with remote monitoring capabilities, making the GP surgery more efficient with referrals and keeping tabs on patients with chronic illnesses. Remote monitoring can also give health and care staff access to robust, real-time data to inform their decisions, prevent illnesses and support recovery, which enables the provision of high-quality care to the public at home, freeing up time for doctors to focus on those who need care in clinical settings.

Leading innovators are already paving the way when it comes to next-generation remote monitoring services. In the US, Philips has integrated American Well's telemedicine offer with its range of childcare-focused Avent uGrow smart products, giving parents direct access to video consultations with paediatricians through the Avent uGrow app and providing doctors with seamless access to all the information gathered by the uGrow system.

In the UK, meanwhile, Mjog by Livi has launched a remote monitoring tool that will help GPs support and monitor people with depression through messages sent to their smartphones. Using the system will mean GP practices no longer have to contact every patient they need to monitor by telephone and manually code their responses. This will help save hours of time, freeing up staff to call patients who may not have access to a smartphone.

As Harriet Bradley, medical director at Livi, states: "Mjog by Livi's remote monitoring will help GPs support and monitor patients much more efficiently, and will keep people safer by encouraging them to seek appropriate care at the right time."

Another example is healthcare app Ask NHS, which is partnering with AI company Sensely to offer users access to mental health and physiotherapy services through virtual assistant technology. In a pilot scheme at 18 NHS practices in Lewisham in London, some 50,000 app users were able to book their local physiotherapy services from the app without needing a referral from their GP, saving 150 hours of clinicians' time.

Crucially, for this future to fully flourish, ensuring that such innovations are developed with the involvement of frontline professionals will be key. "It's important that we develop these tools in an iterative way, consulting frontline workers, GPs and practitioners," says Buurtzorg Britain and Ireland's Martin. "In doing so, such tools can be used optimally by staff and eventually yield information and data which could prove transformational at population level too."

Healthy Homes

The home of 2030 will be embedded with smart devices and sensors, helping people to monitor their health in real time and connecting them with their GP surgery when necessary.

In the next decade the home will become the front line of healthcare, as connected infrastructure monitors the health of residents in real time. "At the moment, we only consider personalised interventions at home for chronic patients or those at risk," says digital health influencer Bocas. "Soon we'll expand our thinking, as home technology and connected infrastructure monitor the vital signs of all patients for a truly preventative approach to health."

Indeed, new concepts bringing this future to life are emerging fast. Wellness company CareOS's Poseidon smart mirror concept is an early example. The made-to-measure mirror functions as a private personal care device for total wellbeing, conducting individual skin analysis for teens and adults, and providing tutorials for everything from posture improvement to make-up application.

Google, meanwhile, is exploring an optical sensor that can monitor cardiovascular health. The device, which could be embedded in a bathroom mirror, works by tracking blood flow dynamics in the body. Changes in skin colour, for example, could indicate a problem that might initiate additional monitoring through other sensors or wearable devices.

Such concepts also have significant potential to help those suffering from chronic conditions. Take start-up PainChek. It uses facial analysis and AI to assess and score pain levels, recognising the facial muscle movements that are associated with pain and using this to calculate an overall pain score. According to the company, PainChek can detect pain with over 90% accuracy and more than 180,000 pain assessments have been completed worldwide on over 66,000 people.

Towards the end of the decade, these home monitoring capabilities will be integrated with the GP office, connecting people immediately to a remote consultation when their vital signs change or an issue is identified. Existing technologies like those cited above, combined with remote consultation technology like the Livi app, could fast make this future a reality and have a transformative impact on the healthcare ecosystem in the process.

"We know that preventative approaches to health help ease the burden on doctors and healthcare professionals," says The Future Laboratory's Sanderson. "In future, the home will monitor and track the most subtle changes to people's health, encouraging small shifts in behaviour to combat issues, and seamlessly connecting patients with GPs – who themselves will have new insights and data to work from – in times of need."

Collective healthcare : In the office

As well as the home, the general practice will itself undergo a massive overhaul in the next decade, creating a space that caters both for the needs of its employees – who require flexibility and mental health breaks – and those of its patients.

No longer simply a site of sickness, the surgery will instead be an anchor institution for health and wellbeing. Wellness architecture principles will be embedded throughout, while the wellbeing of the staff will be one of the core tenets of each space, and digital literacy and empowerment a priority.

Wellness Architecture

By 2030, the GP surgery will be re-imagined to nurture the mental wellbeing of patients and staff alike, with wellness architecture principles from biophilia to mood lighting creating a sense of comfort and security.

While architects have long acknowledged the mood-enhancing properties of good design, scientists are starting to back up these claims with hard data, paving the way for a new generation of GP practices. Many future GP office design elements that can enhance health are already being embraced in public spaces, with biophilic design one example.

Biophilic design focuses on humans' innate attraction to nature and natural processes. In the office, it's about mimicking the environments we find in nature – across all five senses – enabling the reduction of stress, blood pressure levels and heart rates, while increasing self-reported rates of wellbeing.

"Biophilic design doesn't just mean adding lots of plant life and shrubbery; it's much more complex than that," says The Future Laboratory's Raymond. "There are myriad possibilities, from maximising natural light to incorporating natural materials and embracing certain colours."

Audio pioneer Plantronics' Habitat Soundscaping concept also reveals the role that technology can play on this front. It uses sound and visual cues to create a biophilic environment, with nature-inspired audio and visuals, coupled with intelligent software, creating an immersive, peaceful experience that leaves people feeling energised – ideal for the GP surgery.

Increasingly, this kind of thinking is entering the healthcare arena – and the benefits are set to be experienced by patients and staff alike. When it comes to the former, American start-up Parsley Health aims to change the feeling of dread when visiting the doctor. As a modern primary care practice that strives to re-invent stereotypically sterile doctor's offices, it is utilising healing biophilic design components proven to produce positive health effects on patients – think plenty of plants, chromotherapy and fluid architecture.

For staff, meanwhile, designer Ab Rogers' vision for a radically rethought hospital could easily be transferred to a doctor's surgery. In it, his team imagined a rooftop space exclusively for staff – where they might relax and eat lunch by an allotment that would be used both as a site of education for the community and a source of food – with the space itself becoming a 'third carer'.

According to Rogers: "The culture of care is incredibly strong throughout the NHS, but this culture needs to be embodied by its physical spaces too, supporting doctors and nurses as a "third carer" and protecting all users from the perils of sick building syndrome."

Design agency Hawkins/Brown has turned a similar concept into reality, working closely with GPs to redesign a surgery in Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, with flexibility and resilience in mind. Crucially delivered on budget, Central Surgery is accessible, spacious and provides modern facilities. Its standardised spaces support

multi-functional uses, maximising space utilisation, and generic layouts familiar to clinicians who may work across multiple healthcare premises aid efficient operations.

Holistic Health Services

By 2030, General Practice will expand to offer peripheral preventative services that encapsulate the proactive healthy lifestyle, such as mindfulness studios, nutrition classes and fitness equipment, available to the community and staff alike.

In order to alleviate growing pressure on GP practices, a shift from medical to social prescribing is on the horizon. Social prescribing involves helping patients to improve their health, wellbeing and social welfare by connecting them to community services or link workers who take a holistic approach to people's health and wellbeing. Since 2019, the NHS has funded 1,470 of these community link workers.

By 2030, expect the influence of General Practice to have expanded, as GPs drive patients towards proactive health lifestyle approaches, from volunteering, arts activities, group learning and gardening to befriending, cookery, healthy eating advice and a range of sports.

"Community-based solutions can help tackle social determinants of health and relieve pressure on GP practices," says Buurtzorg Britain and Ireland's Martin. "GPs can play a catalysing and connecting role, reaching out into the community and doing things like social prescribing."

The positive impact of such schemes is already evident. In Frome, for example, emergency hospital admissions fell by 14% after the Frome Medical Practice launched its social prescribing initiative, compared with a rise of 29% in the broader county of Somerset.

While currently connecting people to community groups and statutory services for practical and emotional support, social prescribing will evolve as GP offices begin to offer peripheral preventative services.

When it comes to fitness, the EXi platform is just one example. Backed by Sport England, the award-winning app provides an automated yet personalised exercise prescription, with no barriers to participation and a digital format that enables people to access it wherever and whenever they want.

"In future, expect prescriptions to these platforms to be joined by physical spaces, as patients and the wider community are prescribed access to gyms or fitness centres to improve health," says The Future Laboratory's Raymond.

Food is another example. GPs of the future will develop a more holistic understanding of food and its connection to our overall wellbeing; Westminster Kingsway College has already launched the UK's first Culinary Medicine course for its GP trainees. By 2030, GPs will be able to prescribe different dietary approaches, augmented by community cooking courses or nutritional education services.

The GP surgery could soon have dedicated spaces for mindfulness and mental health too. Self Space, the UK's first on-demand mental health centre, is already turning therapy into a community pursuit, hoping to make therapy "as everyday as going to the gym, getting a haircut or grabbing a coffee", explains founder Jodie Cariss.

Open seven days a week, Self Space does not require lengthy consultations, strict appointments or waiting lists. The company offers same-day bookings and speedy access to qualified professionals, which is rare in the conventional therapy industry. Self Space's physical locations will also function as places for workshops and group sessions, as well as being a gathering space for like-minded people in the local community.

Importantly, such services could also be made available to staff, representing a perk of working at the office, which could also help employees deal with the pressure they are under. "GP offices should consider creating environments that are focused on human health and wellness," says digital health influencer Bocas. "It could be spaces for relaxation, for yoga, or access to nutritional advice or exercise guidance."

Looking further ahead, Arup imagines that the future of social prescribing could occur all in one building. The principles of Arup's High Street Hospital could easily be applied to doctors' surgeries, from a food hall that provides healthy meals to flexible events spaces that create a platform for health-related discussion, enabling curated series of talks, discussions and demonstrations that engage both staff and visitors.

Digital Empowerment

Throughout the next decade, digital literacy training and peer-to-peer support networks will ensure that new technologies deliver empowerment, improve access for patients and take on the administrative load for back office workers.

The transformative potential of digital innovation is already being felt in general practice. [Mjog by Livi's](#) report, *The Impact of Covid-19 on General Practice*, for example, found that digital technology increased collaborative working between primary care networks, such as implementing group video consultation services across a network, with 40% of practice managers feeling that patient interaction has increased via access to mediums such as website or online triage.

The next decade, then, will revolve around further empowerment through digital tools. "If utilised in the right way, technology can strengthen the human side of general practice, giving GPs a means to personalise their approaches and touch base with more patients in different ways," says Bocas.

Mjog's appointment reminders are a case in point, giving practices the ability to have location-specific appointment reminders customised to the location of the practice or clinic. Particularly helpful for practices with multiple locations for clinics, it can free up time for staff to focus on the more human aspects of their roles. Mjog's auto-responses push things even further, allowing patients to respond to messages with a keyword which in turn will trigger a predetermined reply to the patient. Using this system, practices can create automated conversations with patients via SMS.

While currently rare for student clinicians to learn how to use digital systems during their course, a new training programme at the University of Central Lancashire is addressing that knowledge gap. In a 12-month pilot scheme, students on the physiotherapy, midwifery and return-to-practice courses have access to the healthcare records of virtual patients, learning how to use the system and about the importance of sharing data with other healthcare experts.

Not only can the system be used to share basic information such as medication and appointments, but it can also enable healthcare professionals to understand the work carried out by other specialists. A doctor with access to the notes of a district nurse, for example, can see the huge scope of work they provide and understand that a medical specialist may not always be required.

Promisingly, initiatives designed to help bridge the digital gap among patients are emerging quickly too, enabling significant lessons to be applied to primary care. The Digital Literacy Project in Birmingham is one example, aimed at helping over-50s get online. The project includes a device lending library, giving people access to a digital device that will partly address digital exclusion by providing a laptop, training and ongoing support – and it isn't difficult to imagine GP offices soon doing the same.

Should the general practice embrace this role, helping people to become more digitally literate, further opportunities for care will emerge, with digital options offering a way for people to connect with others who have the same ailments that they do, improving their outcomes together. One recent peer-to-peer mentoring study found that peer mentors improve diabetes outcomes, especially among diverse patients. In this study, they were delivering peer mentoring via remote strategies, highlighting the potential of helping all patients to engage with digital platforms.

Conclusion

Throughout the next decade, general practice will undergo a transformation.

Digital innovations have the potential to ease the burden on GP practice staff, ensuring that each patient can access the right care at the right time – and not at the cost of those at the heart of the community: doctors, nurses, receptionists, back office workers and more.

Promisingly, it's a future that is emerging fast. "We've already seen the beginnings of this with mental health products like our online therapy service, which are aimed at both patients and practice staff, as well as new ways to manage demand and triage patients through digital doorways integrated into practice websites," says George Jones, director of mental health at Livi. "Services and technologies such as these can accelerate the evolution in care that our health-care services so desperately need to counteract the stark figures we see daily."

As explored in this report, an era of Collective Healthcare will emerge in response, with general practice becoming an institutional anchor catering for the health and wellbeing of patients and employees alike. Transformation will occur at home, giving patients access to health information and seamless signposting and provision of resources. In the office, meanwhile, digital literacy will grow in the next decade, new services will be offered and wellness architecture principles applied, benefiting staff and patients alike.

For The Future Laboratory's Raymond, there has never been a better time to embrace such change. "In the UK, we find ourselves in a unique moment," he says. "It's a state of flux, a crossroads. But, crucially, digital tools are emerging that provide an opportunity to build a new extra-ordinary instead of a new normal. In general practice, this means empowering staff and patients, and providing new levels of support."