Power Platform Automation

'Using Power Platform has allowed the Service to assess clients presenting for mental health support in a timely manner, reducing the time from referral to assessment from 90 days to within the target of 42 days. The Platform flags risk to self or others meaning clinicians can prioritise contact as necessary. On at least two occasions this has led to the recognition and safe resolution of an immediate crisis situation. It has also provided an opportunity to better manage staff wellbeing by allowing informed decisions on the choice of assessing practitioner, particularly for more complex presentations.

Amanda Comer, Interim Head of Talking Therapies

the project

Background

Mental Health Matters (MHM) is a national charity with over 35 years of experience in delivering high-quality mental health and social care services. MHM has a hugely positive impact on the lives of people living with mental health needs in local communities.

MHM approached Smartdesc to help improve IT at a new service they had taken over, that was struggling with a very large legacy waiting list of patients in urgent need of support and using manual, paper-based processes.

Situation

The service had a waiting list of over 1,000 patients, stretching to 11 weeks and growing. The charity was also dealing with a resourcing challenge due to ongoing TUPE from the previous provider.

They inherited a very manual, paper process to service referrals, which tied up a lot of valuable clinician and back office time on basic administration - printing, posting and inputting data, at the risk of human error and the expense of seeing more patients.

Solution

Within the first week Microsoft Forms was implemented to digitise the data capture process, instantly removing the need to print and post documents to service users.

That was extended to integrating with Microsoft Planner and Teams, which standardised the workflow and allowed the team to see the state of referrals in real time on a single system, instead of relying on emails and memory.

The processes were enriched further with the development of a PowerApp, which allowed the team and service users to populate referrals directly from a smart phone or tablet, without the need for a laptop or PC, and including data validation so that entries conformed to the NHS IAPTUS platform at the point of initial entry.

We are now finalising an API to allow for data to go directly and securely from the PowerApp straight into IAPTUS, without the need for any manual intervention from the back-office team.

Outcomes

The MS Form, Planner workflow management, and PowerApp were all delivered in record time – in less than 3 weeks the team had hugely streamlined and improved a very manual and clunky process and modernized the patient experience.

Clinicians and Support teams have been able to process nearly 4 times as many patients and are spending far less time on admin and more on actual clinical support.

The waiting list has dropped by over 60% and falling.

Benefits

➢ **A 2-hour workflow has reduced to 30 minutes, greatly improving efficiency**

➢ **The throughput of appointments has more than doubled as a result**

➢ **The waiting list has dropped from 11 weeks to 4.5 weeks, better than the NHS SLA and will be totally cleared within 6 weeks**

➢ **Clinicians spend more time on clinical work, less time on administration**

➢ **Very low cost due to use of existing Microsoft 365 tools already licensed**