# Case study

Sharing best practice in primary care innovation and access: the Folkestone, Hythe and Rural PCN Hub Pilot Project

## Background

Ensuring timely access to primary care is essential for supporting patient needs. As demand continues to grow, many primary care networks (PCN) are exploring new ways of triaging patients, creating additional appointment capacity and working across and beyond their geographies to make best use of available resources.

In 2023, Ethical Healthcare worked with the NHS England South East Primary Care Transformation programme team to develop learning resources for an innovative pilot project undertaken by Folkestone, Hythe and Rural PCN.

The project set out to increase the number of available appointments and ensure more equitable access to services across its seven member practices by developing a new federated model for managing online consultations and providing an expanded range of enhanced services delivered by PCN 'hub' teams.

Key to this was the development of an innovative technical solution featuring several 'first of type' innovations that helped support PCN clinicians and support staff to operate seamlessly across practice boundaries. This included:

- **offering a single sign-on process** and the ability to consult from one clinical system to reduce the number of accounts PCN staff had to use.

- **providing capability for cross-organisational tasking** and shared access to service appointment books hosted centrally.

- **developing more efficient referral pathways** and opportunities for better caseload management.

- **building a new data strategy** to support understanding of PCN service utilisation, meet contractual reporting needs and enable population health management.

Ethical Healthcare helped the PCN project team to tell its story across a range of formats while also curating a wide range of additional practical resources. The result is a suite of user-friendly products that are now supporting other PCNs embarking on similar transformation programmes.

# The need

It was vital that the resources were clear, realistic and relatable for other PCNs: they needed to communicate the depth and complexity of the project team's work and the impact the project has had on staff and patients, while showing that the solution was readily deliverable across other networks.

It was particularly important that the content was able to:

- describe how the PCN 'hub' operating model supported national policy (including the Fuller Stocktake vision and the Primary Care Recovery Plan) and enabled it to meet all contractual requirements in a more efficient way.

- explain how the IT solution worked and the value it brought, by highlighting its 'first of kind' elements, outlining the technical specification and workarounds that support the new model, and exploring the wealth of data and intelligence generated.

- share practical advice on how the project team ensured that all clinical safety and information governance standards were met and that the operating model was financially sustainable over the long term.

- communicate the workforce planning, engagement and training elements that underpinned the new approach, showing how the hub operating model was delivered largely with the existing, ARRS-funded PCN workforce.

- demonstrate the human value of the new operating model, by highlighting how it has improved the patient experience, enhanced collaboration across teams, and improved morale and working conditions within the PCN.

# The solution

Through a combination of effective storytelling, impactful design and concise technical copy-writing, Ethical Healthcare produced the following products, which are now being used to support other PCN teams:

## A blueprint guide

Following a series of interviews and discussions with the PCN project team, Ethical Healthcare designed, authored and produced a blueprint document presenting the full picture of how the Folkestone, Hythe and Rural PCN hub operating model works.

Interspersed with illustrative graphics, screenshots and extended quotes and testimonials, the guide includes a project overview, a summary of the financial model, an in-depth technical walk-through, information on clinical safety and data governance, and sections on workforce, data and intelligence, and the patients' perspective.

Available both as an interactive PDF and in html format for the NHS England website, the blueprint guide also acts as a gateway to wider support, with embedded links to a range of frameworks and practical resources the project team has developed.

## The *Perspectives* series

Supporting this blueprint, Ethical Healthcare also developed a four-part *Perspectives* series to focus on specific elements of the design and implementation of the operating model.

Largely written from a first-person perspective, these mini-guides aim to capture the voice of the project team, helping to convey personal experiences and lessons learnt across a range of subjects.

## Video and visual storytelling

Finally, in partnership with video production company Kaleidoscope CFA, Ethical Healthcare developed a long-form video providing a more direct introduction to the project.

Drawing on interviews from the PCN's Clinical Director, Digital Transformation Manager and frontline clinical staff, it helps to tell the human story of how the project was conceived and the difference it is making across the seven practices.
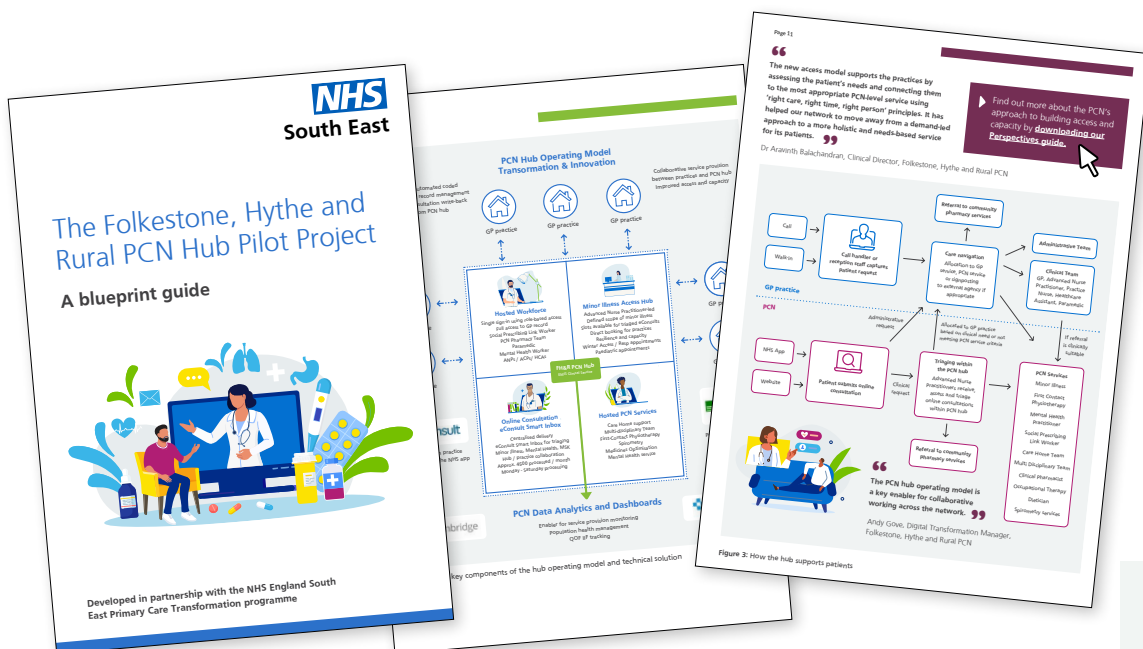
# Impact

The resources are now playing a key role in the communications and engagement work being undertaken by the NHS England South East's primary care transformation programme team to share best practice across the region and beyond.

**Adriana Jimenez,** Senior Primary Care Network Transformation and Access Innovation Lead at NHS England South East, said:

> Ethical Healthcare were a pleasure to work with. They quickly identified the requirements and fully understood the complexity of the brief, creating a powerful and concise set of resources that provide step-by-step guidance to support others that want to work in this way. These are essential tools to help us share best practice more widely across our region and beyond.

**Aravinth Balachandran,** Clinical Director at Folkestone, Hythe and Rural Primary Care Network said:

> We're proud of what we've achieved across our PCN and believe that it can provide a useful template for other parts of the country. By taking the time to understand the detail of what we did and how we did it, Ethical Healthcare has created a clear and effective set of learning resources to guide PCNs embarking on a similar journey.

**Andy Gove,** Digital Transformation Manager at Folkestone, Hythe and Rural Primary Care Network said:

> The hub pilot has fundamentally reshaped our access model for patients and transformed the working environment for our clinical teams. Ethical Healthcare has helped us tell our story with confidence and share the lessons we've learnt effectively with colleagues across the NHS. The feedback we've received about these resources has been excellent.

# Resources

**THE FOLKESTONE HYTHE AND RURAL PCN HUB PILOT PROJECT: A BLUEPRINT GUIDE** ▶

**PERSPECTIVES GUIDE 1: BUILDING ACCESS AND CAPACITY THROUGH A HUB APPROACH** ▶

**PERSPECTIVES GUIDE 2: DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING YOUR HUB WORKFORCE** ▶

**PERSPECTIVES GUIDE 3: INNOVATING AT SCALE: LESSONS FROM THE HUB PILOT** ▶

**PERSPECTIVES GUIDE 4: HARNESSING YOUR HUB'S DATA AND INTELLIGENCE** ▶

**AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FOLKESTONE HYTHE AND RURAL PCN HUB PILOT PROJECT (VIDEO)** ▶

# Contact Us

For more advice on how we can help you communicate and share best practice across the NHS, please contact Chloe Watson, Head of Design and Change: **chloe@ethicalhealthcare.org.uk**