



Evaluation of the integrated wellbeing support (i-support) pathway

**An integrated supported wellbeing pathway for adults with
spina bifida and hydrocephalus**

Funded by:



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

The project's aim:

Through this project we aimed develop a pathway of support for our adult service users. The pathway, enabled by an intuitive online questionnaire, will aid SBH Scotland's staff in triaging our adult service users to services or self-management resources as appropriate. This pathway will support an early intervention approach to help people prepare for ageing and improve their health literacy as a means of having more control over their wellbeing as they age.

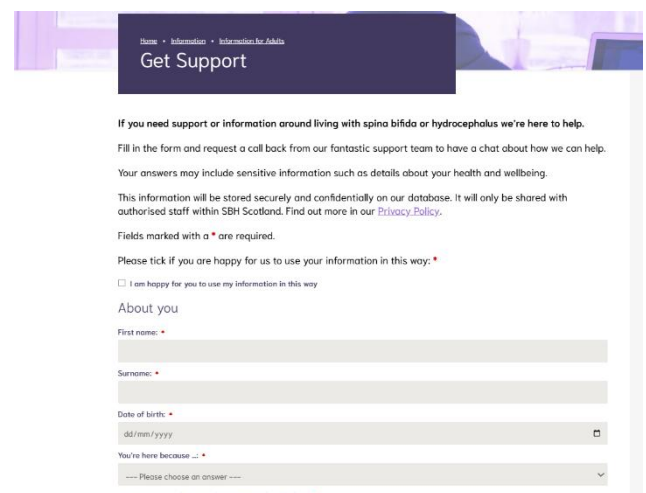
What was delivered:

In partnership with adults with spina bifida and hydrocephalus, services staff and the project group we have developed a secure, intuitive pathway that brings together our services and automatically shares bespoke relevant self-management resources.

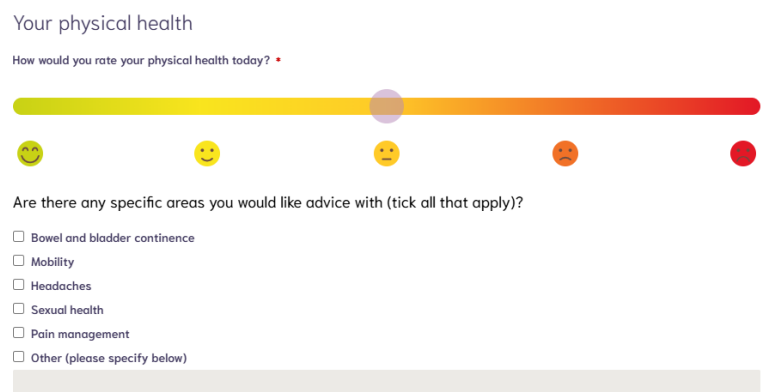
The pathway is improving our approach to service delivery for our adults and is being integrated into our needs assessments with all adults.

The key steps of the pathway are as follows:

- **Step 1 – Data Capture:** A simple, secure [landing page](#) allowing people with spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus (SBH) and their carers to indicate what support and advice they feel they need. The subsequent steps from the landing page are determined by the person's status (ie person with SBH or carer).



Step 2 – Questionnaire: Once the person's details are captured, they are automatically moved on to a short questionnaire covering wellbeing themes. There are two surveys. The survey they access depends on their answers to the initial sign-up form:

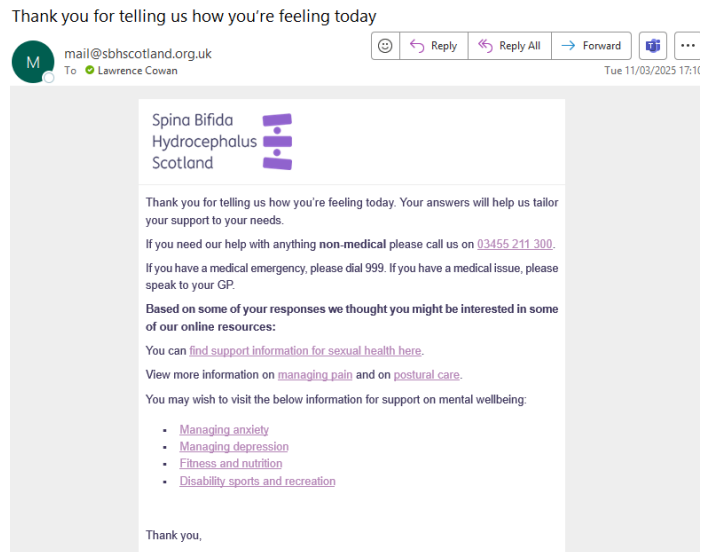


- Person with SBH: <https://www.sbhscotland.org.uk/i-support-survey/>
- Carer of person with SBH: <https://www.sbhscotland.org.uk/i-support-survey-carers/>

Following feedback from service users and the services team, the surveys were developed into smiley face answers for ease and accessibility for our service user group.

Step 3 – Information Sharing

Depending on their answers to those wellbeing themes they are then automatically emailed links to relevant self-management resources.



- **Step 4 – Call Back:** Every person who fills in the landing page will be called back by the services team within 3 working days. If they have not filled in the questionnaire, this will be done with them upon call back as a needs assessment.
- **Step 5 – Regular Follow-up:** The survey will be used as part of a suite of tools to determine service user progress on the key wellbeing themes and identify further areas of support needed.

The process

The project brought together service user insight, service and communications expertise and sophisticated technical web development expertise to create something that has modernised how we offer our services and use resources to best support people with spina bifida and hydrocephalus.

The initial project plan had suggested the questionnaire being the first thing people came to. However, after consultation with service users and services colleagues it became apparent that we would risk service users dropping off after the first action, leaving us with no way of proactively following up with people if they did show signs that they required more focused one-to-one support.

Initial ideas focused on an NHS 24 style symptoms checker, however it was felt that this would open the charity to significant risk, given the complexity of our conditions. It would also duplicate something that already existed and was staffed and regularly updated by clinicians.

The key aims of the project therefore became:

- To improve the service user experience by reducing the steps taken to identify service user need.
- To tailor wellbeing self-management information according to service user need and direct to other services.

- Embed the questionnaire into a continuous evaluation methodology to demonstrate impact.

Key changes

- **Better access to support for adults with spina bifida and hydrocephalus** - Instead of only being invited to email or call SBH Scotland's Support Line, adult service users now have the option to provide clear information on what their needs are directly through our website. Quite often access to support would be delayed, as our services team emailed enquirers back and forth for basic details. This process has now been eliminated for those who contact us through the site.
- **Intuitive self-management advice provision** – Based on the answers to the questionnaire, the person is sent a bespoke email linking to relevant, digestible self-management information on our website.
- **Better support experience** – With a short survey asking key wellbeing questions it has helped our adult service users focus their minds on what they need help with; and over time will shape support plans as the questionnaire is used to track progress. The questionnaire can also be used to take along to a GP or medical professional to indicate how they are feeling.

Evaluation of the project

- **100 service users engaged within year one of launch** – Since launch in December 16 service users have engaged with the system. We are confident that as the pathway continues to be promoted to our adult service users and becomes embedded into regular interaction with them that we will engage 100 within the first year.
- **New and re-engaged service users** – 40% of our new adult service users came through the platform. Albeit these are small numbers at this stage, it shows it has potential to drive new service users to us.
- **Improvements to understanding of adult service user needs** – it offers us a further avenue to be better able to do two things:
 1. Track progress with the service user's wellbeing regularly and form a clear picture of the impact care plans are having.
 2. Generate anonymised data to produce a median wellbeing score for our service user cohort at each stage in their journey with us, informing our service development and impact. For example, through those who have engaged with the pathway already we can see that from the adults with SBH who have come to us through the pathway:
 - General health is poor – a median score of 4 out of 5 (1=best 5= worst)
 - Pain levels are high – a median score of 7 out of 10 (1=best 10=worst)
 - With poor levels of social connection – a median score of 4 out of 5 (1=best 5=worst)

- Low levels of knowledge and confidence around self-management – 7 out of 10 (1=best 10=worst)

This regular information will help us shape how our services respond and will give us valuable insights that can be used to inform wider health and care services for adults with spina bifida and hydrocephalus.

Feedback from service users and staff

“I found [the i-support pathway] to be very informative and helpful...I found useful information on it; it was easy to understand and fill out. I received a follow up call from Debbie Donkin who gave me information about the SBHS Facebook group (North Adults) which I had no idea about and I hope to go to some of the events soon... I now have a contact name and know who to turn to for support/advice if needed. Grateful thanks for the I-Support Pathway.” **Service user**

“It was easy to use, and adult information looked good...There needs to be an option to have follow up or not, follow up wasn’t needed for me I was just looking. I didn’t want to talk to someone.” **Service user**

“The I-Support Pathway has helped to reduce the number of steps required to onboard new service users, making the process quicker and simpler for staff and service users. It has also helped us better understand the needs of service users not only during initial engagement, but at any point where a service user is reaching out for support. The I-Support Pathway allows us to better tailor our approach to meet individual needs and to see patterns in what issues are impacting our service users at different points in time, making it a valuable tool for shaping the way services at SBH Scotland are delivered.” **Jess Flakemore, Adult Services Lead, Central Scotland.**

Additional learning

Key staff changes and illness – The staff member coordinating the project left and the CEO, who took on project management had a stroke. This stretched resources within the wider project delivery team and pushed time scales for the project back significantly. Future projects will have clear “deputy leadership” roles within the project team to minimise disruption.

Earlier consideration of training needs – The new system required training for staff to understand the purpose of the pathway, how data should be analysed from the secure website and how we plan to record data into our secure database. We produced a staff guide to help with this, but that process could have been started earlier.

Next steps

The potential of this integrated pathway model is significant for us at SBH Scotland. Over the coming years we are planning:

- Further marketing of the pathway to new potential service users via social media.
- A presentation promoting the results from the pathway project a year following launch.
- Evaluation of potential to roll out similar model to assess need and support our young people.
- Investigating the integration of an AI chatbot which would provide more fluid conversational communication with the service user and recommend health and

wellbeing related information from trusted sites beyond SBH Scotland (eg. NHS / other charities) while remaining on the SBH Scotland website.

Expenditure

Full Project Financial Report			
2023-24 Wellbeing Pathway	Budget	Actual	Variance
Salary Costs	12731	12732	-1
Staffing Costs	3861	3516	345
Sessional Costs	3000		3000
Project Delivery	11691	15035	-3344
Management & Supervision	1980	1980	0
Project Total	33263	33263	1