



Improving review appointments for people with long-term conditions

2024



At least 15 per cent of adults have multiple long-term conditions (MLTCs). About 5 per cent have at least three conditions included in the NHS's Quality & Outcomes Framework (QOF).

People with conditions listed in the QOF are invited to attend regular reviews. However, many repeatedly go to appointments where only one of their conditions is discussed.

We wanted to understand if replacing multiple reviews with a single annual review could improve care for patients living with MLTCs.

What did we do?

We implemented a new review template in 16 general practices. We compared

this to 16 general practices where we provided the template together with additional support.

What did we learn?

Patients appreciated being asked about what matters most to them and having everything dealt with during one visit.

Practices found the new system more efficient and increased the extent to which they assessed a broad range of patient needs e.g., mobility, memory, falls and pain.

However, providing this more personalised care was difficult because of excessive workload, inappropriate incentives and staff lacking relevant skills.



Why replace multiple reviews with a single annual review?

We found that a single review is more efficient and doesn't take more time overall.

This approach lets healthcare professionals review the patient as a whole and addresses problems from their perspective.

A single review:

1. Supports self-management
2. Improves continuity of care
3. Is more satisfying for staff
4. Identifies additional needs

What will an annual review look like?

To start with healthcare professionals will collect information from the patient during an **initial consultation**. They will also perform a **structured medication review** around the same time.

Once the initial consultation and medication review are completed, the patient is given a **preparation document**. This is then discussed during an **annual review consultation**.

What will an annual review include?

The review is aimed at optimising how a patient's chronic conditions are managed. It focuses on what matters to a patient by

assessing their quality of life and well-being, as well as their mental and physical health.

It will include a medication review and provide the patient with support for self-management and social prescribing when appropriate.

If relevant, a carer's needs can also be discussed during the review alongside agreeing shared goals for treatment.

Putting together a personalised management plan and sharing it with the patient is the last step of the review process.

How to do it?

1. Create a small planning group
2. Identify a computerised template (e.g., Ardens multimorbidity template)
3. Identify patients with MLTCs and potentially complex needs
4. Training (clinical, consultation skills, operational)
5. Map processes
6. Make an implementation plan
7. Start small and plan to build up
8. Monitor progress
9. Consider joining a peer-to-peer community of practice

Issues you may need to address

1. Choosing the right template.
2. Efficiently running an appointment system involving multiple steps.
3. Generating and sending preparation documents to patients.
4. Ensuring appointments are long enough.
5. Ensuring staff understand the value of a care and support plan.
6. Ensuring adequate staffing and skill levels and identifying training needs.

7. Managing staff who prefer dealing with only some conditions.
8. Potential negative impact of focussing on QOF conditions over other patient needs.

Find out more

Read our plain language summary <https://arc-w.nihr.ac.uk/research/projects/improving-review-appointments-for-people-with-long-term-conditions/>