

Health & Wellbeing



Importance of connectivity to health and wellbeing

Lack of connectivity is linked to social isolation, financial exclusion and poorer health outcomes, with the NHS spending half its budget on people who can't access the internet¹. The ability to source healthcare information and access the services needed to lead a healthier lifestyle is a key indicator of health and wellbeing; being better connected leads to better outcomes.

How will health and wellbeing benefit from the Shared Rural Network?

The Shared Rural Network will deliver 4G coverage, which can assist in improving the health and wellbeing of those in remote areas through better access to healthcare services, as well as increased accessibility to information on how to live healthier lifestyles.

Through improved mobile connectivity, patients can see healthcare professionals quicker and more efficiently via online appointments and prescription services. The ability to access these services from any location will result in cost and resource savings; less time will need to be taken off work to attend appointments and there will be reductions in the amount of time travelling to and from appointments.

Mobile connectivity will allow patients to access information on symptoms and medical conditions, as well as access to support groups and those with similar conditions. Family members and caregivers can benefit from mobile connectivity by providing access to information and support, helping them and those they care for, live more independently and hopefully result in less time spent in medical facilities.

Mobile connectivity can offer access to a range of health apps which can be accessed on the go. These can include functions such as reminders for patients to take their medication, book a recurring appointment with a specialist, or renew prescriptions; and many are a source of information on diet, exercise and ways to live a healthier lifestyle.

Healthcare professionals will have better access to the tools and services they need to treat patients in remote areas away from surgeries, hospitals and care centres. The Shared Rural Network will provide mobile connectivity, which could enable them to access patient data on the go, accelerating response time and treatment decisions. They could instantly access patients' prescriptions and other vital information, allowing them to collaborate with other medical staff and delegate care more effectively.

There are also many safety benefits of having a reliable 4G connection which contribute to a better sense of wellbeing. Knowing there is a connection and the ability to communicate with others in times of need provides reassurance to anyone living or visiting these areas that help is there if needed. When traveling in rural areas, there is comfort in knowing that devices can access online maps and directions providing real time road condition and traffic information. Should difficulties be encountered, there is the reassurance of being able to access helpful information or contact the Emergency Services.

¹<https://www.goodthingsfoundation.org/news-and-blogs/blog/nhs-spends-more-half-its-budget-people-who-cant-access-internet>

