



NHS Digital

# PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE

A BJSS Case Study

**NHS Spine supports the IT infrastructure for health and social care in England, joining together over 23,000 healthcare IT systems in 20,500 organisations. It allows information to be shared securely through national services such as the Electronic Prescription Service, Summary Care Record, as well as supporting the e-Referral Service and message transfer through MESH.**

**In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, BJSS worked with NHS Digital to provide key information to NHS staff through the Spine linked Summary Care Record application (SCRa). The project looked at how to share data regarding shielded patients, along with information relating to suspected or confirmed cases of Covid-19.**

## **The Challenge**

SCRa is a Spine application located on the platform's portal. It was developed for authorised health and care professionals to view clinical information and amend demographic information. When a patient has a Summary Care Record (SCR), healthcare professionals in both scheduled and unscheduled care settings can view patient details using SCRa.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, NHS Digital recognised a need for a 'flag' to be added to the SCRa. This flag would provide crucial information about patients who are vulnerable and have been recommended to shield.

## **The Solution**

BJSS was selected to add this functionality to the SCRa. We commenced the engagement by carrying out some user research, which allowed us to prioritise use cases. This resulted in us rolling out the functionality on the application to all pharmacies, ambulance services and the Ministry of Defence Reservists.

Having received positive feedback from the initial user base, we started to roll out the new functionality to all users of the SCRa.

## **The Benefits**

### **A positive change to patient care**

The project is having a positive impact on patient care. At the start of the Covid-19 lockdown, community pharmacists were overwhelmed with requests for delivery of medication to patients' homes. With the new flag functionality added to the SCRa, pharmacists can now check whether a patient is on the shielded list and prioritise accordingly. It also allowed them to work through different options, such as asking friends or family to collect the medication instead.

### **Improved patient safety**

The mobile SCRa is currently used by the London Ambulance Service, and the user feedback so far has been invaluable. It means that rather than going in blind, the paramedics can now make reasonable decisions on a care plan for patients. The flag functionality has helped the ambulance service during the pandemic, by easing the decision-making process as to whether a patient should be taken to hospital or not. If there is a grey area around whether to send a patient to the hospital, knowing the patient was shielding would prompt them to contact the GP first and discuss concerns around the patient's risk.

### **Continuous improvement**

We continue to update the SCRa in line with any changes to the master list of vulnerable patients. In delivering this new functionality, we have provided an enterprise-wide approach to highlighting critical information for patient care which can be re-used beyond the Covid-19 crisis. Alongside the development of the SCRa, the combined BJSS and NHS digital team delivered a related project to make additional SCR information available to clinicians by default, unless the patient has opted out. For patients with additional SCR information, suspected and confirmed Covid-19 cases are now signposted by a yellow message box when viewing SCRs.