

April 2023

Data led prioritisation: preventing harm and reducing inequalities

Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

With demand for hospital treatment outstripping capacity even before COVID-19, it is no surprise that the demands of delivering care during a pandemic have led to significant backlogs and longer waits for patients. In January 2023 7.21 million people were waiting for treatment.

At Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, the follow up appointment waiting list totals around 400,000 across all specialties with more than 90,000 patients having no follow up appointment booked. Ensuring better management of vulnerable patients and those with multiple long-term conditions is a key priority for the trust, yet manually prioritising waiting lists to identify those most in need is inconsistent and impractical given the constraints on clinical resource, the size of the lists, and the continued demand on services. The trust has therefore developed a digital approach to completing the prioritisation process, with support from [Factor 50](#).

This digital approach to completing the prioritisation process applies clinical intent through clinical rulesets to routinely held patient level data in order to provide a prioritised view of the waits. Piloted in the diabetes service at Guy's & St Thomas', emerging results have already shown evidence of prevention in harm for high-risk patients as well as enabling the service to identify patients who could be better managed on personalised or self-management pathways. Further evidence also shows that the approach goes some way to tackling health inequalities; 49% of the diabetes patients judged to be high risk and therefore seen sooner than planned were from ethnic minority groups.

Following the success of the prioritisation programme, the trust is now looking to broaden the approach across other specialties including cardiology, rheumatology, renal and ophthalmology.

A copy of the presentation by Dr Daghni Rajasingam, Deputy Medical Director and Consultant Obstetrician - Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust can be [viewed here](#).