

What is Voice Therapy?

Up to a third of the population can experience a voice disorder in their lifetime¹.

In Rotherham we accept referrals for people aged 16 and above with a voice problem and have patients aged 16-95 on our caseload.

Speech and language therapists (SLTs) have a central role in identifying, managing and treating voice disorders² and sessions include:

- Assessment,
- Direct therapy (vocal exercises)
- Indirect therapy (vocal hygiene and voice care advice)
- Management and goal setting
- Therapist evaluation of voice quality
- Patient-reported voice symptoms
- Voice recordings

Voice Therapy and Telehealth

With advances in technology in everyday life and more access to a variety of software, there has been increasing interest in telehealth as a service delivery.

The use of telehealth for delivery of healthcare is documented in a variety of healthcare settings³. Within Adult Speech and Language Therapy studies include the areas of dysphagia, voice treatment for Parkinson's Disease, dysarthria, aphasia, language and dementia, dysfluency, traumatic brain injury and head and neck cancer.

Telehealth studies in voice therapy have focused on therapy outcomes and have demonstrated evidence of comparable perceptual and patient-rated outcomes between face to face and teleconsultation delivery^{4, 5, 6} as well as cost savings⁷.

Although it may be more widely practiced than the research suggests, the pool of evidence for this therapy delivery method in voice is limited.

Virtual Voice Therapy



Microsoft Teams is an platform that provides chat and video conferencing via phone/tablet app or web browser. We used these for our video consultations and contact with the patient.



One Note allowed patients to fill in a voice diary and record their voice.



Youtube allows us to share voice care videos and exercises.



Forms creates outcome measures that patients can fill in via the app.



Files for exercise instructions and information can be shared within Microsoft Teams

6 patients were surveyed after their virtual voice appointment.

100% felt that they received the same quality of therapy as a face to face appointment and would recommend it to friends and family. Use of technology, cost savings and patient comments are as follows:

I can fit the appointment to suit my home life. The quality of the video is good. I would like to continue the service.

My therapist is so helpful and reassures me I'm doing the right thing so when I am practising I know I am doing it properly.

I really recommend the service, my voice has changed so much and is back to normal & I have a toolkit of exercises

I received the same amazing service as I would in person.

I don't have to wear makeup and pretend I'm ok like I do when I go to normal appointments, I can just be myself!

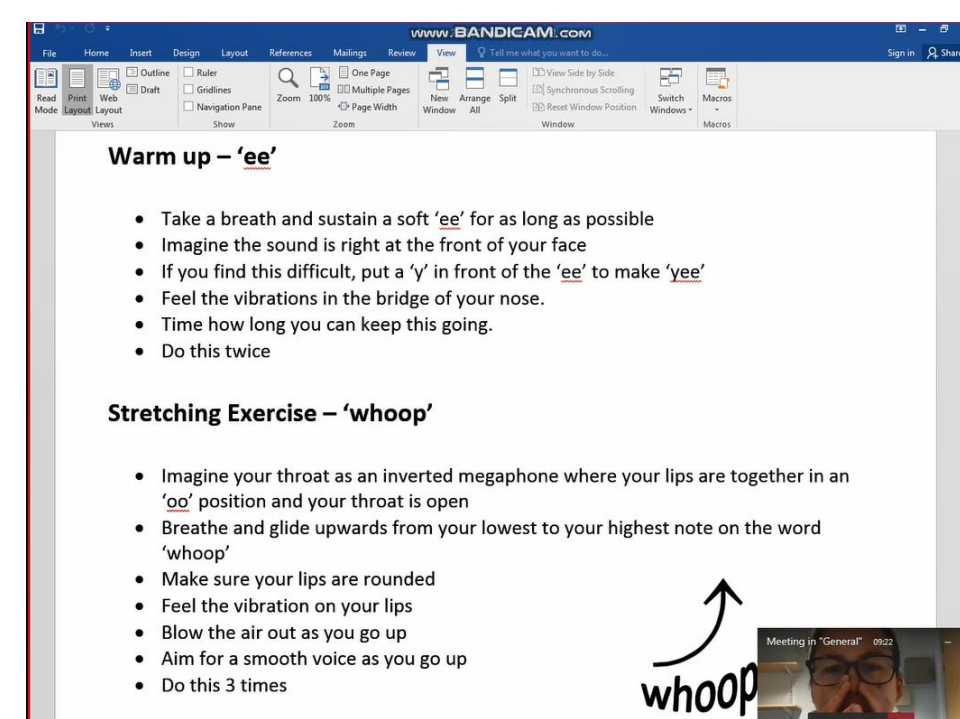
I can have an appointment and still get to work afterwards instead of trying to juggle or be late.

The Future

- We aim to explore the use of further applications within Microsoft Teams to support delivery of therapy and expand to other services.
- We plan to develop in-house YouTube videos of voice therapy exercises to use with Teams.
- Further research is being done to evaluate the patient experience of this delivery method and compare it to face to face appointments.

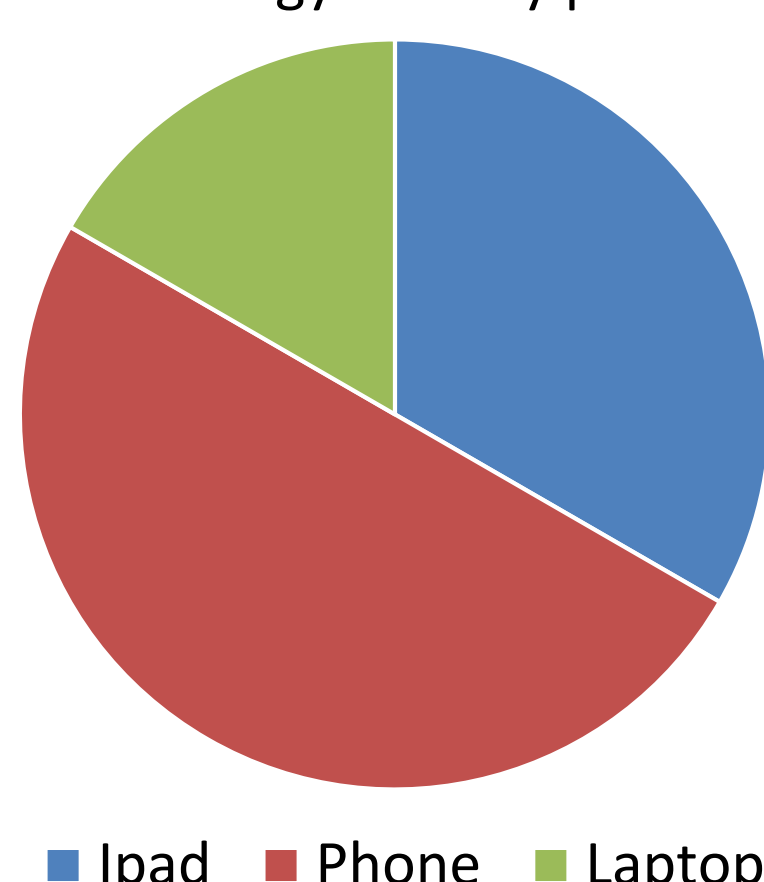


Live voice therapy consultation



Screen sharing during a consultation

Technology used by patients



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