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The use of virtual health and digital technology in the NHS

The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in the rapid adoption of digital technology in the NHS and significant changes in the delivery of services more widely. The Nuffield Trust in The impact of Covid-19 on the use of digital technology in the NHS cautioned that to embed the positive work that has been done during the pandemic and ensure that it is sustainable in the future, it needs to be underpinned by adequate funding, infrastructure and the necessary workforce.

In The Dr Will Zoom You Now: getting the most out of the virtual health and care experience National Voices noted remote consultations and the use of technology offer some great opportunities to make significant improvements to general practice, hospital outpatient and mental health appointments, but making the most of this opportunity means understanding the patient experience. Health and care providers will need to adapt to a more blended approach to communication with patients in order to meet the needs of patients. To do this they need to build on existing good practice, and look beyond healthcare to other industries that are successfully engaging people remotely.

For Health and Care Professionals
• Provide a precise time window for appointments.
• Check that the person is in a confidential and safe place to have the phone or video call.
• Understand the person’s level of confidence using technology and give people a choice of how to communicate.
• Proactively check what the patient needs, clarify what is happening next and who is responsible for the next stages of care.
• Slow down the pace of the consultation, demonstrate active listening.
• Use the chat function in video calls to make the appointment more interactive, share links to information or summarise next steps.
• Don’t ask people to provide information you already have access to.
• Give guidance about how the appointment will work, offer demonstrations, provide an opportunity for a test run/provide some training.
• Seek feedback about peoples’ experiences and use this to improve the service.
NICE – COVID-19 Rapid Guideline
COVID-19 rapid guideline: arranging planned care in hospitals and diagnostic services
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng179
COVID-19 rapid guideline: rheumatological autoimmune, inflammatory and metabolic bone disorders
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng167

NICE – Guideline
Anaphylaxis: assessment and referral after emergency treatment
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg134
Community pharmacies: promoting health and wellbeing
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng102
Surgical site infections: prevention and treatment
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng125
Perioperative care in adults
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng180
Rehabilitation for adults with complex psychosis
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng181

NICE – Quality Standard
Specialist neonatal respiratory care for babies born preterm
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs193
Decision making and mental capacity
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs194
Renal and ureteric stones
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs195
Faltering growth
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs197

NICE – Interventional Procedures
Artificial iris insertion for acquired aniridia
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/hipg674
Artificial iris insertion for congenital aniridia
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/hipg675
Transcranial magnetic stimulation for obsessive-compulsive disorder
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/hipg676
Electrical stimulation to improve muscle strength in chronic respiratory conditions, chronic heart failure and chronic kidney disease
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/hipg677
Deep brain stimulation for refractory epilepsy in adults
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/hipg678
Implanted vagus nerve stimulation for treatment-resistant depression
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/hipg679

NICE - Technology Appraisals
Lorlatinib for previously treated ALK-positive advanced non-small-cell lung cancer
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta628
Obinutuzumab with bendamustine for treating follicular lymphoma after rituximab
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta629
Ramucirumab with erlotinib for untreated EGFR-positive metastatic non-small-cell lung cancer (terminated appraisal)
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta635
Eculizumab for treating refractory myasthenia gravis (terminated appraisal)
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta636
Ranibizumab for treating diabetic retinopathy(terminated appraisal)
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta637
Atezolizumab with carboplatin and etoposide for untreated extensive-stage small-cell lung cancer
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA638
Atezolizumab with nab-paclitaxel for untreated PD-L1-positive, locally advanced or metastatic, triple-negative breast cancer
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA639
Treosulfan with fludarabine for malignant disease before allogeneic stem cell transplant
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta640

All NICE guidance is available from the NICE web site: www.nice.org.uk.
Support and resources to maximise uptake and use of evidence and guidance:
https://www.nice.org.uk/about/what-we-do/into-practice
Brentuximab vedotin in combination for untreated systemic anaplastic large cell lymphoma  
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta641

Gilteritinib for treating relapsed or refractory acute myeloid leukaemia  
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta642

Entrectinib for treating ROS1-positive advanced non-small-cell lung cancer  
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta643

Entrectinib for treating NTRK fusion-positive solid tumours  
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta644

NICE - Diagnostics Guidance

High-sensitivity troponin tests for the early rule out of NSTEMI  
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/dg40

Patient Safety

Guideline

Guidance for tracheostomy  
UK National Tracheostomy Safety Project; 2020.  
https://www.ficm.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08-tracheostomy_care_guidance_final.pdf

[This guidance was produced by the Short-life Standards and Guidelines Working Party of the UK National Tracheostomy Safety Project on behalf of the Intensive Care Society and has been endorsed by the FICM.]

Report

The safer management of controlled drugs: Annual update 2019.  
Care Quality Commission (CQC); 2020.  

[This update report makes three recommendations; reviewing patients clinical needs before prescribing, putting in place local arrangements for rapid mobilisation of medicines for end of life care, and considering the needs of patients and carers on an individual basis.]

Early warning scores used in hospitals must be based on sound science.  
NIHR Evidence; 2020.  
https://evidence.nihr.ac.uk/alert/early-warning-scores-used-in-hospitals-must-be-based-on-sound-science/

[A new study suggests that many early warning scores are based on flawed research. The scores may not be as effective as they are believed to be. This has important implications both in clinical care and for policy makers.]

Managing and Leading People

Guideline

Expanding the primary care workforce in 2020/21.  

[Actions for CCGs, PCNs and STPs resulting from People Plan and Third phase of NHS response to covid-19.]

Financial wellbeing guide.  

[The guide highlights how COVID-19 has amplified inequalities and exacerbated financial worries, particularly among women, young people, black and minority ethnic groups, and people with disabilities..]

How to embed flexible working for nurses.  
NHS Employers; 2020.  

[This guidance signposts to the latest research and thinking concerning flexible working, highlights what nurses look for in a flexible role, and identifies a number of key enablers to successfully embedding flexible working.]

Full instruction to register for an NHS OpenAthens username and password at:  
www.bsuh.nhs.uk/library/accessing-information/registering-for-nhs-openathens/
Report

**Improving performance by improving staff wellbeing: North Bristol NHS Trust.**
NHS Employers; 2020.
[This case study sets out how North Bristol NHS Trust (NBT) improved performance across the board and saved hundreds of thousands of pounds by prioritising and enhancing staff health and wellbeing. Two themes emerged: workload, and staff health and wellbeing.]

**Disability in the medical profession: survey findings 2020.**
British Medical Association (BMA); 2020.
[This report outlines findings about the experiences of people with disabilities and long-term health conditions studying, training and working in the medical profession. It makes recommendations on the priority areas for action to improve support.]

**Workforce race inequalities and inclusion in NHS providers.**
The King's Fund; 2020.
[The NHS has one of the most ethnically diverse workforces in the public sector. However, year after year, ethnic minority staff report worse experiences in terms of their lives and careers, when compared with white staff and people from an ethnic minority background are under-represented in senior positions in the NHS.]

**Professional Development**

*’A long way to go’: ethnic minority NHS staff share their stories.*
The King's Fund; 2020.
[What is it like being a member of staff from an ethnic minority background in the NHS? The King's Fund spoke to 12 people about their experiences.]

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**Using Guidelines and Evidence**

Report

**NICE 'Optimised' Decisions: What is the Recommended Level of Patient Access?**
Office of Health Economics (OHE); 2020.
www.ohe.org/publications/nice-'optimised'-decisions-what-recommended-level-patient-access
[This report quantifies the patient access associated with NICE ‘optimised’ recommendations. While the justification for these restrictions may be well-founded, more granular reporting of recommendations would help paint a more accurate picture of recommended levels of patient access associated with NICE decision outcomes.]

**Professional Development**

Understanding the evidence

Bite-sized sessions showing you how to critically appraise quantitative research and interpret medical statistics to inform patient care or service development. Each 45 minute session is stand-alone and focuses on a specific aspect of the process, allowing you to pick and choose the session most relevant to your needs.
https://www.bsuhs.nhs.uk/library/information-skills/understanding-the-evidence/

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Patient Experience

Report

Being a patient: First report of the Patients Association's patient experience programme.

[This is the first report from the Patients Association programme of work on patient experience. It suggests that it is time for a fresh look at patient experience. While there is considerable activity in the health and care system devoted to measuring patient experience, the approach is quite narrow and doesn't truly capture things from the patient's point of view.]

Co-production and strengths-based practice: Leaders' briefing (2020).

[This briefing will give an overview of co-production from the basic theory to how it can work in organisations on all levels, considering its importance for people who use services, practitioners, service providers and commissioners.]

Making complaints count: supporting complaints handling in the NHS and UK government departments.

[The Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs proposal is to create a Complaint Standards Framework which will provide a consistency and support to frontline staff, as well as assisting senior leaders to promote a positive culture of learning from complaints.]

Education and Professional Practice

Report

Beyond the Bursary: Workforce Supply.
Royal College of Nursing (RCN); 2020. www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications/rcn-beyond-the-bursary-workforce-supply-uk-pub-009319

[get more people into the nursing degree and successfully graduating in England, the Government must provide appropriate support both on entering and throughout the degree. This report details our modelling, undertaken by London Economics, which demonstrates the level of funding required to increase the number of applicants to the nursing degree.]

Future Doctor: A co-created vision for the future clinical team.

[COVID-19 illustrated how multi-professional working and adapting to local and patient needs is essential for providing high quality care. Our vision for the Future Doctor outlines how we can reform medical education so doctors better understand population needs, develop general skills and work effectively in multi-professional teams.]


[Information about what the tariffs cover, how to use the tariffs and in what circumstances the national tariffs may be varied.]

NMC Strategy 2020-2025.
Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC); 2020. https://www.nmc.org.uk/about-us/our-role/our-strategy/

[We have postponed a number of programmes of work outlined in our strategy, with a view to revisiting them later in the year. The three core pillars – regulate, support and influence - that will guide us over the next five years have enabled us to adapt our approach and be confident in our decision making in response to this pandemic.]

UpToDate® Anywhere – mobile access for BSUH NHS Trust staff.
The new remote and mobile access gives you evidence-based guidance when and where you need it.
Principles of preceptorship.
Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC); 2020.
https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/guidance/preceptorship/

We created the principles in collaboration with the four Chief Nursing and Chief Midwifery Officers in the UK in recognition of this important period in a professional's nursing, midwifery or nursing associates career. It was timely to update our previous position on preceptorship and align our principles to our new pre-registration standards.

Professional Development

BMJ Live conference.
[A three day interactive virtual event with live and on-demand sessions, clinical webinars, career advice and keynote presentations.]
Online Event: 15th October, 2020 9:00am to 17th October, 2020 5:00pm https://www.bma.org.uk/events/bmj-live-conference

Blended Learning Nursing Degree.
Health Education England (HEE); 2020.
https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/blended-learning

This innovative, accessible nursing degree programme will start from January 2021 and is designed to create a significantly different offer in nursing education that will support the growth of this digitally expert and professional nurse workforce suited to the demands of care and service now and in the future.

Finance and Procurement

Guideline
National Audit Office (NAO); 2020.

This guide aims to help audit and risk committee members discharge their responsibilities in several different areas, and to examine the impacts on their organisations of the COVID-19 outbreak, including on: annual reports; financial reporting; the control environment; and regularity of expenditure.

Implementing the 2020/21 GP contract changes to personal medical services and alternative provider medical services contracts.

Following the changes to the general medical services (GMS) contract for 2020/21, this document sets out the approach to the funding changes that NHS England will apply to personal medical services (PMS) and alternative provider medical services (APMS) contracts. NHS England teams will update local PMS and APMS contracts as soon as possible, applying the funding changes identified with effect from 1 April 2020.

Report
Does public long-term care expenditure improve care-related quality of life in England?
Centre for Health Economics, University of York; 2020.
https://www.york.ac.uk/che/news/news2020/cheresearchpaper172/

The findings show that increasing public adult social care (ASC) expenditure by £1,000 per user generates 0.0031 additional care-related quality of life (CRQoL). These results suggest that public ASC is effective in increasing users’ quality of life, but only to a relatively small extent.

Financial debts and loans in the NHS.
The King’s Fund; 2020.

The NHS loans scheme was one of the most high-profile examples of using complex financial instruments to affect how NHS organisations operate. The scheme provided much needed financial assistance but was complex to administer and did not result in the provider sector meeting its financial targets or achieving financial balance. The debt write-off is significant and will provide the affected NHS providers with greater financial certainty.
Managing Knowledge and Information

Guideline

More accurate general practice appointment data - guidance.
[This guidance introduces an agreed definition of an appointment, and asks general practice to start applying this now and systematically, as an important first step to improve data quality. The guidance reconfirms that the definition of an appointment includes: All relevant staff; All modes; All settings.]

Report

A new era of digital leadership.
NHS Providers; 2020.
[This guide aims to help trust leaders build on the momentum made during Covid-19 and support NHS boards in leading their organisations into the next stage of digitisation. It includes a number of board-level case studies as well as key Covid-19 reflections and lessons from other sectors.]

Digital health: the changing landscape of how we access GP services.
AXA PPP Healthcare; Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR); 2020.
https://www.axapppphealthcare.co.uk/globalassets/corporate/pdfs/digital-health_the-changing-landscape-of-how-we-access-gp-services.pdf
[This report explores the scope for general practice services to further embrace digitally delivered care and support to patients. It looks at how offering online consultations as a first point of contact could increase efficiencies by reserving face-to-face consultations for those identified as needing them.]

Wessex Academic Health Science Network (AHSN); 2020.
[This guide is aimed at a strategic level, to help develop and implement telemedicine services by collating in one place all the resources and lessons learned from service development in the Hampshire and the Isle of Wight STP.]

The Dr Will Zoom You Now: getting the most out of the virtual health and care experience.
National Voices; 2020.
[Remote consultations and the use of technology offer some great opportunities to make significant improvements to general practice, hospital outpatient and mental health appointments, but making the most of this opportunity means understanding the patient experience.]

The impact of Covid-19 on the use of digital technology in the NHS.
Nuffield Trust; 2020.
[The drive for the NHS to make better use of technology was underway before Covid-19, but the pandemic has accelerated things further. This briefing explores those recent digital changes in the health service, and what enabled them to happen.]

The Impact of Technology in Adult Social Care Provider Services.
Institute of Public Care, Oxford Brookes University; 2020.
https://ipc.brookes.ac.uk/publications/Technology_Action_Research.html
[Digital Social Care set up a helpline to provide technical help and support to providers adapting to digital platforms as Covid-19 took hold. This report of the action research identifies both the challenges but also the benefits for care providers of using technology.]

Coronavirus (COVID-19): remote care through telehealth
Cochrane Special Collections; 2020.
[The measures adopted internationally to curb the spread of COVID-19 have led to significant changes in how health care is accessed and provided. As face-to-face consultations between healthcare workers and patients pose a potential risk to both parties, remote care and telehealth offer alternatives.]
Professional Development

[In this free online event using the orthopaedic pathway in Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust as a case study, we will explore in depth how the adoption and integration of technology can help NHS trusts deliver on elective surgeries that were postponed due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Register on website to attend.]
Online Event: 15th September, 2020, 10:00am-11:00am

Service Design and Commissioning

Report

How Covid-19 has magnified some of social care’s key problems.
[The Covid-19 pandemic has shone an uncompromising light on the social care sector, its staff and the people of all ages who use its services. As the sector emerges slowly into a new normal, fearful of a second wave while still trying to make sense of the first, it’s time to take stock.]

How might COVID-19 affect the number of GPs available to see patients in England?
[The analysis suggests that there are a relatively large number of GPs at high risk of mortality from COVID-19, and there is geographical and socioeconomic variation in the distribution of affected GPs. We do not know how many of these GPs will choose to step away from direct patient contact.]

Learning from lockdown: How can we build a healthier future post-COVID-19?
[As life begins to slowly return to normal, we find ourselves at a turning point. Should we choose, we can learn lessons from the response to the pandemic to create a fairer and healthier society.]

One year on and one pandemic later: what’s happened to primary care networks and other forms of primary and community care collaboration?
[One year has passed since the deadline for all GP practices to form PCNs. The interface between primary and community care has evolved in different ways across the country, and this is all true of the response to COVID-19.]

Rebuilding the NHS: improving medical pathways for acute care
Royal College of Physicians (RCP); 2020. https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/file/23016/download
[As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the public must be confident that they will receive urgent and emergency care in a safe environment.]

Resuming health services during the Covid-19 pandemic: What can the NHS learn from other countries?
[This briefing looks at what approaches other countries around the world have taken to dealing with the pandemic. Covid-19 has tested the resilience of even the most well-prepared health systems, and a lot can be learnt by the NHS in how other countries are approaching their recovery.]

The calm before the storm? How primary care networks and mental health providers can prepare for rising demand for mental health services
[Joint briefing from the NHS Confederation’s Mental Health Network and PCN Network explores how PCNs and mental health service providers can work together to prepare for the expected surge in demand for mental health services.]
The road to renewal: five priorities for health and care.
The King's Fund; 2020.

[Covid-19 is the biggest challenge the health and care system has faced in living memory; it’s essential that lessons are learned from this experience. So how can the system build on this learning to bring about positive change and renewal?]

We are the NHS: People Plan for 2020/2021 - action for us all.
https://www.england.nhs.uk/ournhspeople/

[This plan sets out practical actions for employers and systems, as well as the actions that NHS England and NHS Improvement and Health Education England will take, over the remainder of 2020/21.]

Co-production in adult social care: evaluation report.
Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE); 2020.
https://www.scie.org.uk/co-production/supporting/oxfordshire-county-council/evaluation

[The primary aim of the programme was to embed co-production as the default way of working within Oxfordshire County Council’s Adult Services. There have been over 20 co-produced projects and initiatives under the programme.]

Toolkit

Embedding public health into clinical services elearning programme.
Health Education England (HEE); 2020.
https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/embedding-public-health-into-clinical-services/

[Designed as a 5-step process, the programme provides a practical toolkit of useful resources to help individuals and their multidisciplinary teams identify their unique contribution and then implement quality improvement initiatives to transform services.]

Commissioning for a better future: a starter for ten.
Social Care Innovation Network; 2020.

[A framework for commissioning for the future that sets out how commissioning can practically support the development of asset-based areas. Provides examples (with links) of how better outcomes have been achieved through alternative and positive approaches to commissioning.]

Innovation

Report

The innovation lottery: Upgrading the spread of innovation in the NHS.
Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR); 2020.
https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/the-innovation-lottery

[This report argues that if the NHS were to match the performance of international peers in levels of innovation, it could prevent an estimated 20,000 avoidable deaths per year.]

Measuring Outcomes and Performance

Report

Understanding changes to mortality during the pandemic: Non-COVID-19 excess deaths in England and Wales.
The Health Foundation; 2020.

[Evidence suggests a significant number of unreported deaths with COVID-19, particularly in care homes. Those with dementia and Alzheimer’s have had significantly higher mortality rates, indicating a population particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 under-diagnosis.]
Alert 104

Briefing: Adult social care and COVID-19: Assessing the impact on social care users and staff in England so far.
The Health Foundation; 2020.

[In this briefing the Health Foundation provide an overview of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on social care in England. Since March, there have been more than 30,500 deaths among care home residents than we would normally expect, and a further 4,500 excess deaths among people receiving care in their own homes.]

The Health Foundation; 2020.

[In this briefing, the Health Foundation provide a detailed description and timeline of the government’s social care response. They consider the role that social care has played in the overall policy narrative. They also identify the underlying factors within the social care system, such as its structure and funding, that have shaped its ability to respond.]

How Covid-19 has magnified some of social care’s key problems.
The King’s Fund; 2020.

[The Covid-19 pandemic has shone an uncompromising light on the social care sector, its staff and the people of all ages who use its services. As the sector emerges slowly into a new normal, fearful of a second wave while still trying to make sense of the first, it’s time to take stock.]

Statistics

Quality Watch; 2020.

[The waiting list has fallen to the lowest level in two years, but the reasons behind it are not to be celebrated. Fewer patients are being added due to under half the normal levels of referrals from GPs. Cancer statistics are even more concerning, with a huge drop in patients starting treatment after a screening test in May to less than a third of usual levels.]

NHS Digital; 2020.

[The objective of the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) is to improve the quality of care patients are given by rewarding practices for the quality of care they provide to their patients, based on a number of indicators across a range of key areas of clinical care and public health.]

Conducting Research

Report

Incentives for R&D: Payment Options and Pricing Challenges.
Office of Health Economics (OHE); 2020.

[The issue of rising prescription drug prices is a concern in every country. Dozens of policy initiatives and hundreds of research projects over last the fifty years have attempted to find solutions to pricing that provide an appropriate balance between the cost to health care systems and incentives for R&D.]

Toolkit

A map of resources for co-producing research in health and social care.
https://arc-w.nihr.ac.uk/publications/a-map-of-resources-for-co-producing-research-in-health-and-social-care/

[A map of resources to guide researchers, professionals and public contributors through the different tools and guidance that can help people produce research together – this includes tools to support remote co-production. A guide for researchers, members of the public and health and social care practitioners.]

Request a rapid evidence review at:
https://www.bsuh.nhs.uk/library/accessing-information/request-an-evidence-search/
Professional Development

Finding quality health information
Attend this workshop if you need to search the primary literature for your research project dissertation, or you are required to do any form of literature review, including systematic reviews.
www.bsuh.nhs.uk/library/information-skills/finding-quality-health-information/

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Public Health

Guideline
A guide to WHO’s guidance on COVID-19
World Health Organization (WHO); 2020.
https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/a-guide-to-who-s-guidance
[There’s a lot of information out there about how governments, health professionals and the general public should respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. WHO has published guidance and advice on every step.]

Population screening: applying All Our Health.
Public Health England (PHE); 2020.
[Evidence and guidance to help healthcare professionals raise awareness of NHS population screening. This ‘All Our Health’ population screening information has been created to help health professionals to support people to make an informed choice about screening.]

Report
Local Government Association (LGA); 2020.
[Information and guidance related to public health services, including mental health and isolation.]

Public health transformation seven years on: prevention in neighbourhood, place and system.
Local Government Association (LGA); 2020.
[The LGA’s 2020 public health annual report showcases examples from 10 areas that demonstrate what can be achieved by public health operating across local government and working closely with the NHS and a wide range of local and system partners.]

What a difference a place makes: the growing impact of health and wellbeing boards.
Local Government Association (LGA); 2020.
[This resource captures the achievements, challenges and learning from 22 effective health and wellbeing boards (HWBs) across the country, all of which are making good progress on integrating health and care, improving wellbeing and tackling the wider determinants of health.]

Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR); 2020.
[The report calls for a long-term approach for the health and care service in England, to build resilience for any future crisis and to ensure the system isn’t always ‘running hot’ during normal times.]
KnowledgeShare: Update your knowledge, share your knowledge

What is KnowledgeShare?
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- Request an evidence search Once logged in to KnowledgeShare, click on Evidence on the grey tool bar and then click on Request an Evidence Search. Fill in the form with details of the search.