

Staff at Kent Community Health document the critical role RITA plays in supporting staff and patients alike, both clinically and environmentally

RITA was purchased by the Hospital's League of Friends in July 2018; this was the first RITA Software in the Trust. Since then, there have been RITA's introduced to 9 other Community Hospitals.

Sevenoaks Community Hospital offers Rehabilitation to patients transferred from the Acute Hospital for further Treatment and rehabilitation, prior to returning home. There are also patients living with Dementia and cognitive impairments. The Multi-disciplinary Team consists of Medical staff, Nursing and Therapy staff, integrated with a new Stroke pathway introduced this year by staff from our local NHS Trust, working together in partnership. There are 3 Dementia Link Workers to promote awareness, Training and support to patients living with Dementia and their families' completing audits, questionnaires and spending quality time engaging with patients. Currently in the Trust, the Mandatory Training Compliance for Dementia Training Tier 1 is at 99% (results from the Dementia Steering Group – September 2021) The philosophy of using RITA is embedded in the care system, using the large RITA for Groups and small RITA's for individual therapy on a one-to-one or patients who remain in their beds, **RITA is definitely seen as being part of the Team and family there.**

Sevenoaks Community Hospital has 3 Open Wards and 4 Single Rooms for Rehabilitation. The Main Community Hospital also has an Urgent Treatment Centre, X-ray, Outpatient Services, Physiotherapy, Hydrotherapy and Neuropsychology Services.

By using RITA with patients who have experienced a Stroke, it is used for visual assessment following a stroke, increasing their field of vision, scanning and acuity, also for speech therapy tasks, Cognitive rehabilitation and monitoring progression with processing. In addition, RITA is used to support the patient as an outcome measure.

By bringing the patients together in a group activity using RITA, one of the most popular activities is bingo which is attended well and this often leads to reminiscing, story-telling and nostalgia.

One patient, (referred to as 'A' for Confidentiality) in a single room was admitted from the Acute Trust for a programme of Rehabilitation. She presented as being very lethargic, having a low flat mood and spent long periods choosing to be alone and long periods asleep. This resulted in her being non-compliant with her programme, socially withdrawn and with no social integration or stimulation. She would eat and drink very little and was always alone in her room.

The Therapy Team would often ask her if she would like to participate in the RITA Bingo sessions and she would repeatedly reply that she "was not interested, having never played the game", she added that "where I live, they do have regularly bingo sessions which I've never attended" Her speech was flat and monotonous and without depth or meaning owing to her depressive state.

"The tablet and large screen, affectionately known as RITA provided by the League of Friends has been wonderfully received by our patients.

"Patients in our Cottage hospital can feel lonely and bored, but this gift provides the opportunity to interact with other people, bring forward happy memories and test their knowledge with our favourite quiz's."

With time, persuasion, encouragement and support, the Therapy Staff encouraged her to join the staff and eventually other patients to come along just to have a cup of tea and a change of scenery, she finally agreed to this.

The Therapy Team introduced RITA to patient A and they used the Bingo app game, patient A found that RITA calling out the numbers was rather humouring and comical. There was an opportunity to play a few games and she was beginning to engage with fellow patients and staff.

Patient A was also beginning to be interact with maintained eye contact, fluent speech and her overall wellbeing was increasing. She also helped by handing out prizes to those who had won.

Patient A then decided to also play the Bingo game, at this point, there was also now nursing staff present who decided to join in as well.

As to her surprise and joy, patient A had won her first game, and what was increasingly comical was that where she was once participating handing out the prizes, she had to then choose hers and pick her own winning prize. She was laughing, smiling and engaging and interacting with staff, therapists and fellow patients.

After a period of time, RITA was used in a Group Therapy and individual format with a selection of games, watching some videos and in particular, patient A began reminiscing about the 'twin tub and mangles' she had seen on RITA with excitement and nostalgia to staff and patients.

Patient A asked to have lunch and to eat together with her fellow patients, this was arranged and Patient A remained at the Dining Table and was observed to be interacting, engaging and eating a nutritional meal and fluids. During mealtimes, the Therapy staff would put the relaxation music on low using RITA.

It was documented on one occasion that after lunch whilst taking Patient A back to her room she said, "I thoroughly enjoyed myself", and asked "when are you holding more sessions with RITA?"

The documented Benefits to Patient A:

It was documented with this case that it improves mood and well-being with stimulation and social contact, it was noted that it increased her social skills and inclusion. It's also found that patients were not calling for the toilet, meaning the nursing staff were able to complete their jobs and roles and manage to find time to join in with the group therapy with RITA.

RITA develops hand/eye co-ordination and at times patients were helping each other, mobilising to/from the group.

It's of particular note that RITA enhances the environment and can reduce tiredness, fatigue and stress in the environment all round for patients, visitors and the staff workforce. It is also a talking point when family/friends visit.

When patient A was discharged home, before she left the Hospital, she told the Therapy Team that she "enjoyed Bingo and was planning to be going to other Bingo sessions where she lives".

Sharon Wells - Therapy Assistant, Sevenoaks Hospital
Grahame Hardy – Specialist Nurse for Dementia
September 2021

"We are so happy to have RITA on our ward" was a quote from one of our patients.

"Thank you to all the generous people who made this happen."



'The powerful affect and impact RITA has allows the patient to engage, interact and feel valued, RITA is like another member of staff on the Ward, part of the Sevenoaks Family'
Grahame Hardy – Specialist Nurse for Dementia