

# Transforming Community Occupational Therapy Pathways in Moray:

## Early Development of a Digital Triage and Self-Management Model

### Introduction

Health and social care services across Scotland are facing sustained pressure due to increasing demand, workforce constraints, and demographic change. Within Community Occupational Therapy (OT) services in Moray, rising referral volumes, more complex needs, and reduced workforce capacity have led to extended waiting times, with some individuals waiting up to two years for assessment.

The Rural Centre of Excellence (RCE) is supporting the early development and testing of a redesigned Community OT pathway. This work is exploring how digital tools, including the AskSARA self-assessment platform embedded within Community Connections, can enable earlier intervention, increase opportunities for self-management, streamline referral and triage processes, and improve service efficiency and user experience over time.



### Emerging Insights

- Demand for Community OT services continues to increase, with more complex presentations
- Workforce capacity constraints are impacting response times and service delivery
- Long waiting times are contributing to deterioration in functional ability and increased risk
- A significant proportion of qualified duty Occupational Therapist time is currently spent on administrative duties, including processing, verifying and triaging referrals rather than delivering direct clinical intervention
- Variability in referral quality creates inefficiencies and delays
- Service users report challenges accessing information and understanding available support
- Early testing suggests strong potential for digital tools, including AskSARA, to support self-management
- Stakeholder engagement indicates appetite for a more streamlined, transparent pathway

### Proposed Approach

- Introduce digital triage to support prioritisation and more efficient workflows
- Develop self-assessment and guided self-management using the AskSARA platform for individuals with low to moderate need
- Improve referral quality through structured digital data capture and reuse via the personal data store
- Enhance access to clear, accessible information and signposting
- Enable data sharing across systems to reduce duplication
- Pilot a red / amber / green triage model to support decision-making and access routes

### Conclusions

This work is currently in the development and testing phase, but early insights highlight clear opportunities to improve both service efficiency and user experience. Digital approaches, including the introduction of AskSARA, have the potential to reduce administrative burden, support earlier access to advice and interventions, and enable more effective use of clinical capacity.

Ongoing testing and evaluation will be critical to understanding the impact of these changes, with a focus on safety, usability, and outcomes. The project represents a shift towards a more proactive, person-centred model of care that supports individuals to access the right level of support at the right time.

“

*It would make a big difference to have clear information and support earlier, rather than waiting until things get worse.*

”



### Method

An online survey was distributed to staff across local authority and NHS services generating responses from a broad range of professional groups.

Questions focused on access to digital tools, digital work habits, attitudes to digital transformation, barriers to digital working, and training needs.

To protect anonymity, most findings were presented as a combined dataset, with differences between the two organisations highlighted where they were meaningful.

### Further Information

Connect with DHI – scan the QR code to visit:  
[linktr.ee/dhiscotland](https://linktr.ee/dhiscotland)

