



CASE STUDY: THE CARDIOWALL AT ROBIN PINTO UNIT, ESSEX NHS

How the CardioWall® is benefitting patients and staff at Robin Pinto, a forensic mental health unit.

OVERVIEW

Robin Pinto Unit is an 18-bed, all male, low secure, forensic mental health unit managed by Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust. They specialise in the provision of services relating to assessment or medical treatment for adults detained under the 1983 Mental Health Act.

Patients' rehabilitation is the Trust's number one priority, and staff are dedicated to helping patients be more independent and motivated to live fulfilling lives.

Aaron Agola, Occupational Therapy Assistant, explains the positive impact the CardioWall has had across the ward, for both patients and staff.

INTRODUCTION

Robin Pinto Unit installed their CardioWall in March 2022. They opted for a portable CardioWall so they can move it between the activity room and the communal area, maximising its use and benefits.

The following case study gives details of how patients are benefitting from using the CardioWall, and also its impact on staff in their working environment.

KEY BENEFITS

PATIENTS

- Reduced boredom levels
- Improved physical and cognitive function
- Improved social skills
- Improved motivation and confidence

STAFF

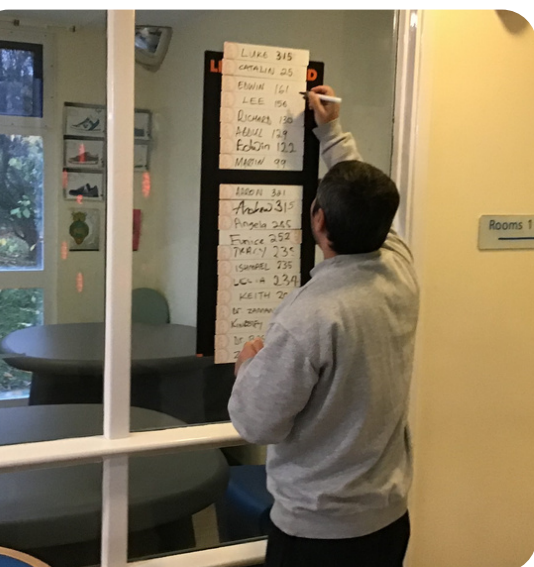
- Improved team morale
- Reduced stress & anxiety
- Provide better patient care
- Effective, informal 1:1's

PATIENT IMPACT

18 physically-able males, aged 20 - 60 years old, are currently residents at Robin Pinto Unit with access to the CardioWall.

The CardioWall is moved into the activity room for staff to run activities and competitions. Friendly competitions encourage patients to get involved with peers and engage with staff in a fun, relaxed environment. Staff award prizes for high scores and most improved scores, which **provides patients with a sense of accomplishment and achievement**. This is extremely important for these patients, as it **keeps them focused and motivated** to stay active and involved.

When the CardioWall is located in the communal area, patients can use it freely throughout the day. This has **increased patients' social interactions**, which staff believe has positively impacted their **confidence, motivation and communication skills** - invaluable for their recovery.





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Furthermore, the CardioWall is helping **patients become healthier and happier**. As it is a fun activity, rather than a monotonous exercise such as running on a treadmill, staff have found that patients are playing on it more than other 'fitness' equipment – it's exercise in disguise! **Patients' cardiovascular fitness, cognition and hand-eye coordination** have all improved since regularly using the CardioWall.

One of the greatest challenges for staff was patients suffering with boredom and a general disinterest in getting involved in activities. The fun and challenge of the **CardioWall has helped to alleviate some of the boredom on the ward**. This has, in turn, helped to free-up staff time, energy and resources, which is invaluable in such an environment.



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It's definitely worth the investment. It has improved the patients' wellbeing and motivation; as well as being a big morale booster for staff. We would definitely recommend the CardioWall to any mental health or rehabilitation ward.

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AARON AGOLA
Occupational Therapy
Assistant, Robin Pinto Unit

PATIENT EXPERIENCE

One patient, a 35-year-old male, used to be quiet, timid and unsociable. He avoided group activities and kept himself separate from others.

He was drawn to the CardioWall from the first day it was installed, and he now uses it daily. Staff believe there is a clear link between his CardioWall use and his **increased confidence, motivation and willingness to socialise**. Consequently, he now participates in the walking group with his peers, and competes with others on the CardioWall.

STAFF IMPACT

Not only has the CardioWall enabled staff to provide better patient care, but they've experienced benefits for themselves, which were mostly unforeseen.

When staff need some time to themselves to **relieve stress and anxiety** from the high-pressure environment in which they work, the CardioWall has been an effective time-out tool to facilitate this. It can be played in just a couple of minutes, and the nature of the activity – hitting light pods – is perfect to relieve elevated emotions. A bit of exercise and a short break is an effective way to **re-energise and focus the mind**.

The staff have their own competition and leaderboard, which they all get involved with. Playing and competing together has **improved team relationships and cohesion**, which ultimately leads to better patient care.

From a care-providing perspective, staff utilise the CardioWall in a number of ways, depending on their objective with individual patients. In addition to the organised challenges and free-play, staff also use the CardioWall for their 1:1 patient check ins. As it's informal and light-hearted, **patients are more inclined to engage with staff and share information about how they're feeling**. The CardioWall removes the formality and seriousness of a 1:1, encouraging patients to express themselves more freely.

In conclusion, the CardioWall, through a combination of the above factors, has **significantly improved staff morale, job satisfaction, and the care** they provide. Patients are happier, healthier and more motivated when the CardioWall is involved.