

**Royal College of General Practitioners and Warwick Medical School  
Annual Education, Research and Innovation Symposium 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017  
Abstract Submission Form**

<b>PRESENTER'S DETAILS</b>	
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<b>Department or organisation</b> Warwick Medical School, Division of Health Sciences	
<b>Category</b> Audit, <b>Research</b> , Education Project, Innovation Project	
<b>PRESENTATION DETAILS</b>	
<b>Authors</b> Dale, Jeremy Nanton, Veronica Loew, Joelle Grason Smith Gillian	<b>Title of Study</b> The Care Companion Project: Putting co-production into practice working with carers, NHS, local authority and third sector stakeholders to develop a digital resource to support informal carers
<b>What's the problem you are tackling?</b> An increasing reliance on informal carers reflects the ageing population, the rise in long-term illnesses and limited local authority home support. A lack of information and support at crucial points during the caring role has detrimental effect on carers' quality of life and wellbeing and may result in avoidable NHS activity, hospital and care home admissions. Digital technologies have been identified as having the potential to address these issues through empowering patients and carers with more personalised services and enabling people to manage their own health.	
<b>How did/will you do it?</b> We are co-producing an online platform supporting informal carers with a panel of five carer representatives, a stakeholder group with members from NHS, local authority and third sector organisations, an IT company, a team of five medical students and the research team project managing and evaluating the process. In this presentation we describe the experience of carer representatives and medical students. Views about participating in co-production were elicited through focus groups.	

**What did you find?**

The carers valued seeing their views and opinions translated into design and refinement of the intervention, and felt a sense of purpose in working towards improving the caring experience for others. The medical students valued the opportunity to draw on their own personal caring experience and bringing this to the project. They felt working in a team enabled co-learning from each other's experience, and they valued the opportunity to work with the carer panel. Being involved in the project encouraged thinking about aspects of health and social care beyond the hospital setting.

**Why does this matter?**

We have been able to show the importance of engaging with PPI on a meaningful level, and the sense of purpose this can provide for individuals involved as well as the value it adds to the project in terms of usability, quality, and overall relevance to the potential user. The project also shows that involving medical students in all aspects of research, including PPI, may enhance their learning experience as they gain insight into research and practice.