

Richard Driscoll Award Finalist 2025



Enhancing Inflammatory Bowel Disease Management Through Digital Solutions



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INTRODUCTION

This project evaluated the integration of iOWNA, a co-designed digital support platform for healthcare professionals and patients into the inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) care pathway from 2023. Unlike pre-designed systems, iOWNA was developed to address specific challenges within the IBD service, targeting inefficiencies and gaps in care. The initiative aimed to enhance communication, streamline delivery and improve efficiency, aligning with NHS digital transformation goals.

Sustainable healthcare depends on affordability, environmental responsibility and equitable access.¹ Patient portals advance these aims by enhancing access, care quality and efficiency through digital innovation. They increase appointment capacity, standardise communication and improve satisfaction, supporting financial sustainability. Evaluating such platforms requires assessing their efficiency, productivity and service quality.

Digital consent lets patients review information remotely, improving understanding and supporting informed decisions. Optimising service capacity enhances care quality and patient experience, monitored via feedback and audits.

METHODOLOGY

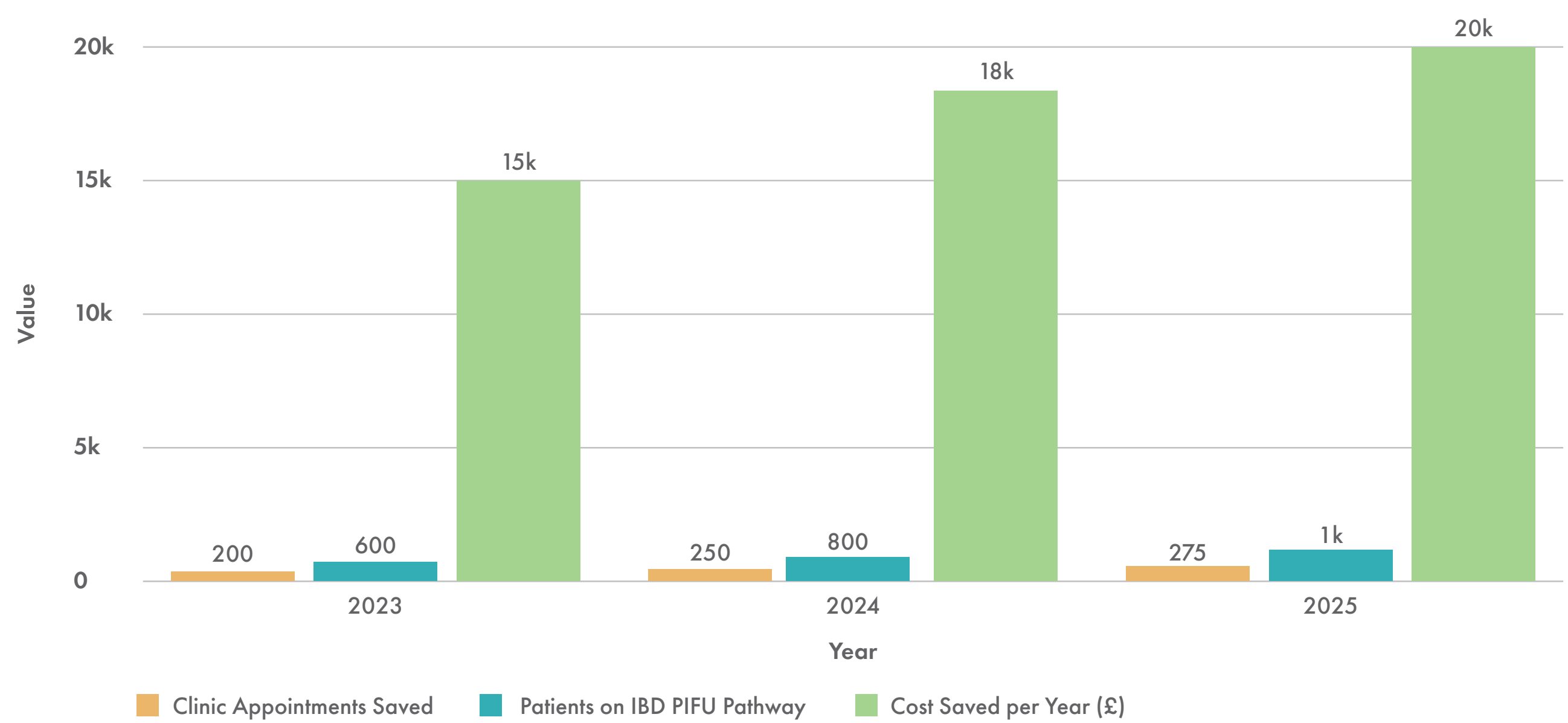
The project deployed iOWNA in the IBD service from early 2023, aiming to replace outdated patient care pathways.

- Quantitative data showed reductions in outpatient appointments, savings in nursing time and increased patient-initiated follow-up (PIFU).
- Qualitative feedback was collected via a patient survey to assess user experience.
- Clinician feedback was also obtained to evaluate the impact on service delivery and staff experience.



RESULTS (2023 to 2025)

- Patient experience:** Improved access to educational materials and greater self-management, reducing reliance on telephone helplines.
- Costs:** Cost savings increased from £13.5k to around £19k.
- Outpatient appointments:** Saved appointments rose from 187 to 268, a 43% increase, reflecting improved workflow efficiency.
- Patient-initiated follow-up (PIFU):** Numbers doubled from just over 500 to more than 1,000 (a 100% increase), indicating higher patient engagement and autonomy.



EVALUATION

The deployment of iOWNA demonstrates the potential of digital tools to transform chronic disease management, improving appointment efficiency, reducing nursing workload and enhancing patient communication. Audit results support broader adoption of digital-first outpatient care. Findings have been shared at conferences and disseminated within the specialty. Future work will explore scaling across specialties and adding features to further enhance the patient and clinician experience.



Reference: 1. Hameed, K., Naha, R. and Hameed, F. (2024) 'Digital Transformation for Sustainable Health and well-being: A review and Future Research Directions', Discover Sustainability, 5(1). Available (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s43621-024-00273-8>). Accessed October 2025.

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