



UHBW
Clinical
Endoscopy
Team

Amplifying The Patient Voice: The Care Navigator Role in Endoscopy

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The Care Navigator role at UHBW

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Who are we?

Trudy Reed

- I qualified as a nurse in 1999. I began my career at UCLH in London within Upper GI surgery before moving to Bristol, where I spent 10 years as a ward manager while completing my MSc in Advanced Practice. I then pursued a career in Advanced Practice and was selected for the HEE accelerated programme to train endoscopists, where I discovered my passion for clinical endoscopy. Supported by inspiring colleagues, I developed a strong interest in improving patient care through service development and training. I designed the Care Navigator role in endoscopy to widen access and deliver high-quality, patient-centred care. I believe that quality care means treating each patient as an individual, listening to them, and ensuring they feel safe, heard, and cared for. I pride myself on my communication and expertise in helping patients have the best possible experience in endoscopy.

Karen Moore

- I qualified as a Registered Nurse in 1991 and have dedicated my career to the NHS. My early experience was in general medicine, followed by many years in Gastroenterology and Hepatology. In 2012, I joined the Endoscopy Unit at the Bristol Royal Infirmary, where I was appointed Clinical Manager in 2019, a role I held for three years. In July 2024, I transitioned into my current position as Care Navigator.

Tess Poynton

- I qualified as a Registered Nurse in 2009 and have since built a diverse career across both acute care and community settings. My journey in Endoscopy began in Bristol over a decade ago and in 2018, I moved to the Endoscopy unit at Weston General Hospital. Here, I developed my ERCP and therapeutic endoscopy nursing skills. In November last year, I advanced to the role of Endoscopy Care Navigator.



How was the role developed?

The Care Navigator Role in Endoscopy was developed to tackle inequalities in access to services. Patients who struggled to self-advocate, were disadvantaged by a “one size fits all” booking model. The role now ensures that every patient receives an individualised, safe and inclusive pathway into endoscopy.

Rationale

- Identified unequal access and barriers for vulnerable patients.
- Standard booking processes risked marginalising those with additional needs (language, learning disability, cultural or physical barriers).
- Aim: create a service that champions patient voice, equity and consent.

Planning

- Secured ICB funding for a dedicated Care Navigator.
- Mapped patient “touch points” where inequalities arose.
- Collaborated with booking teams, nurses, senior leadership, learning disability specialists, patients, and carers.
- Used patient feedback (comment cards, conversations, caregiver insights) to shape solutions.

Barriers to Accessing Care

Patients attending endoscopy may experience a range of challenges, including:

Anxiety

Learning Disability/Autism

Patients requiring mental health support

Communication challenges – unable to speak/understand English and illiteracy.

History of trauma

Complex patients (those under multiple specialities)

Socio-economic barriers

Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

Patients with a history of drug addiction/alcoholism

Patients with no fixed abode

Under 18- transitioning from child to adult services

Breaking Down Barriers to Care

We're committed to making endoscopy more accessible and supportive by:

- ✓ **Emotional & Practical Support:** Offering reassurance and time to discuss concerns before and during appointments.
- ✓ **Tailored Care:** Working with LD/Autism and Mental Health teams, to provide personalised support and reasonable adjustments.
- ✓ **Accessible Information:** Exploring translation of key leaflets into top local languages and developing easy-read formats.
- ✓ **Trauma-Informed Approach:** Supporting patients with past traumatic experiences to feel safe and cared for.
- ✓ **Holistic Coordination:** Liaising with other specialties to ensure complex patients are not lost in the system.
- ✓ **Transport Assistance:** Helping patients access appointments through hospital transport and volunteer drivers.
- ✓ **Dementia/Alzheimer's Care:** Collaborating with carers and relatives to minimise distress and ensure consent is in place.
- ✓ **Community Partnerships:** Supporting patients with addiction and those on the Cirrhosis Surveillance Pathway through trusted relationships.
- ✓ **Creating a safe, welcoming environment** that builds trust and confidence.

What we have achieved so far...

Created and improved the pathway for Oncology patients requiring Flexible Sigmoidoscopy.

Propofol call ahead service commenced in October 2024, to help utilise lists and prevent DNAs.

An in-Trust project which aims to grow the confidence, capability and capacity of our clinical services. To better design and deliver services together with our patients and communities, particularly those impacted by health inequalities.

Worked alongside the Paediatric Gastroenterology team to streamline and improve the transition process for children moving into adult care.

Implementation of a pre-appointment call system for patients who previously have not attended appointments, offering early intervention to identify and overcome potential barriers.

Teaching and promotion of our role far and wide- medical/ surgical teams, nursing teams, specialists, SWETA.

Impact and Outcomes

- **Enhanced patient experience:** Care is now more personalised, proactive, and patient-centred.
- **Inclusive approach:** Every patient is asked about additional needs, enabling timely and appropriate adjustments.
- **Positive feedback:** Patients and carers feel heard, valued, and supported throughout their journey.
- **Cultural transformation:** Staff now routinely advocate for individual needs as part of standard care.
- **Improved efficiency:** Fewer DNAs and last-minute cancellations on high-demand lists, helping reduce waiting times.
- **Knowledge sharing:** Best practices are shared across trust meetings, teaching days, and regional endoscopy groups (SWETA).
- **Cost-effective care:** Supports financial sustainability—especially vital in the current climate.
- **Reducing health inequalities:** Ensuring equitable access and support for all patients.
- **Clinical support:** Consultants and Endoscopists benefit from reduced admin burden—patient queries, complex case coordination, and GP liaison are managed, freeing up clinical time.

Case Study 1

Case Study: Supporting a Patient with Oesophageal Stricture and Complex Mental Health Needs

Background:

- Patient requires regular oesophageal dilatations due to a persistent stricture.
- History of severe mental health issues, including overdoses and hospital admissions.
- Previous non-attendance (DNA) at appointments.

Approach:

- Built a trusting relationship through regular contact and collaboration with the bookings team.
- Provided consistent emotional and logistical support before, during, and after procedures.

Outcomes:

- Four successful OGD procedures with dilatation completed; fifth scheduled in four weeks.
- Stricture now at 20mm, enabling improved dietary intake.
- Reduced DNAs and optimised use of Propofol lists.
- Significant improvement in patient's health and quality of life.

Case Study 2

Case Study: Coordinated Support for a Homeless Patient Referred for Colonoscopy

Background:

- Patient with complex mental and physical healthcare needs, experiencing homelessness.
- High levels of anxiety related to attending appointments due to a history of trauma.

Intervention:

- Established a positive, professional relationship through ongoing emotional support.
- Engaged with the patient's wider support network, including:
 - Mental Health Team
 - Housing Services
 - Drug and Alcohol Services
 - District Nursing Team

Outcome:

- Patient successfully attended their colonoscopy appointment on the first attempt.
- Avoided delays and cancellations through effective coordination and support.

Patient Feedback

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Patient and her mum both said if it hadn't been for me, they would probably have cancelled the appointment today, and that I was very suited to the role. They said they wished all departments were like QDU.

A patient expressed gratitude for the support provided, sharing that it had helped her more than we realised. She noted that the care she received played a significant role in helping her overcome difficult experiences from childhood.

Patients mum said they had dealt with a lot of services recently, but I have been the only person to reach out and meet them and take the time to explain and answer any questions or concerns they had. She really appreciated it and said it meant a lot and they would all sleep that night.

An autistic patient and her mum thanked me for everything. Her mum was extremely grateful to everyone she has spoken to or met. Became tearful when thanking me, said it made a huge difference from when Laura was scoped quite a few years ago and that we had done everything we possibly could to help ensure a safe, successful procedure. Laura asked me to have photo taken with me and thanked me too, to put in her folder.

Endoscopy Care Navigation Service at UHBW
TP/KM 2025

'So helpful and made a difficult time a little easier. Support was amazing, thank you.'

A patient with a very complex social history, successfully attended their appointment first time. They were extremely grateful for all the support and stated without it, they would not have been able to go through with the procedure.

'Excellent staff starting with [care navigator] really reassuring me. I was really worried. Without her I don't think I would have gone through with it.'

"Wanted to say a massive thank you for the incredible support you gave me both prior to and on the day itself. I know it was without the answers we wanted but I couldn't have gotten through yesterday without you so thank you."

Staff Feedback

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"I was celebrating yours and Tess's great work at our Exec review today and they were very impressed with the incredible work you are delivering!"

Divisional Director of Nursing/Assistant Chief Nurse

"[The Care Navigator] and the Endoscopy team have been proactive in supporting our patients with a Learning Disability and/or Autism. The care navigator role has made such a difference in planning admissions for our patients and being able to effectively implement reasonable adjustments. [The Care Navigator] has reached out to us in a timely manner and have been able to discuss, in advance, planning for the appointment. We have had positive feedback on all our attendances to Endoscopy and how prepared the department has been and a smooth experience."

LD and Autism Practitioner

"Working with the care navigation team is a dream come true! The role works very closely with our pre assessment team and enhances the patient experience but also enable us to do our job more efficiently. Whenever there is a patient that needs that extra bit of support - the care navigators - Karen and Tess are there to provide this."

Endoscopy Pre-Assessment Nurse Lead

"I would like to give recognition to our Care Navigators, Tess and Karen, for the outstanding work they do in supporting patients who may struggle with their endoscopy procedure. They take the time to listen, reassure and guide patients through what can often feel like a daunting experience. This not only helps to ease patient anxiety but also ensures that individuals feel more confident and better prepared for their procedure.

Their contribution is invaluable, not only to patients but also to the bookings team, who are reassured knowing Tess and Karen are available to provide support. By bridging the gap between clinical care and patient understanding, they make a meaningful difference to the smooth running of the service.

I am proud that this service is in place, as it plays such an important role in improving the patient journey and ensuring that every individual feels supported, cared for and understood." Performance and Operations Manager, Endoscopy.

"Your role in getting my young lady with learning difficulties through the endoscopy unit was absolutely invaluable.

Without your help to guide the process, especially with several other people involved which can complicate matters, she would have been cancelled a second time prompting unnecessary distress and hassle to her carer."

Consultant Gastroenterologist & Hepatologist

"We have really appreciated Karen's prompt communication, positivity and can-do attitude. She has quickly grasped the urgency for this group of patients and has been instrumental in driving the project forward".

Trainee SACT Advanced Practitioner

"The introduction of the Care Navigator role has had a really positive impact on both the Endoscopy service and our patients at Weston. This role has significantly improved the patient experience, helping to make what can often be a highly stressful time more manageable for patients."

Patients can be referred to the Care Navigator by clinicians, the endoscopy booking team, or the navigators themselves. The primary function of the Endoscopy Care Navigator is to guide and support patients throughout their endoscopy journey. This includes ensuring our services are accessible to all, particularly those who are anxious, have additional or complex needs, or simply require extra support."

Since the implementation of this service, we have had a noticeable reduction in DNAs and late-notice cancellations — a clear indicator of the navigator's effectiveness in improving patient engagement."

Assistant Performance and Operations Manager, Endoscopy.

10/14/2025

Number of patients
supported so far!



The Future



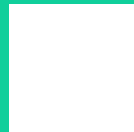
Key Learning Points



Equity requires individualised care, not a single model.



Listening to patients and working with them to understand their needs is vital to meaningful service development



Small adjustments can make a big difference to patient safety and experience.



Embedding cultural change takes persistence but transforms practice.



Thank you

We welcome any questions.

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