Guided digital therapies for adults with depression

Guided digital therapies are low intensity interventions for treating or managing mental health problems. They are delivered online or through apps and allow people to self-manage their mental health condition with the support of practitioners. These therapies generally comprise of modules for the patient to work through in their own time. Some of the technologies can also monitor progress such as using PHQ-9 questionnaires. As the treatment is virtual, people can get access sooner than face-to-face options. This might mean that the symptoms are managed sooner and prevent escalation to more intensive treatment options.

Guided digital therapies are one of the treatment options categorised as guided self-help. Guided self-help is recommended by [NICE's clinical guideline on depression in adults: treatment and management](). It states that guided self-help should be considered first for most people with less severe depression. It is also listed as option for more severe depression but is not recommended as the first option in this instance.

This early value assessment focusses on the use of digital therapies as an option for guided self-help. [NICE's guideline on common mental health problems]() defines guided self-help as a self-administered intervention using written or electronic materials with practitioner assistance. This would include therapist review of a person's progress and regular sessions in person or via telephone. It is usually offered at step 2 of the care pathway, after assessment and active monitoring.

Key considerations on the value of guided digital therapies are usability, ability to engage with users and effectiveness when compared to standard care.

NICE will identify and review guided digital therapies providing an early signal to the system on whether they can be recommended for use in the NHS for adults with depression, conditional on further collection of real-world evidence to inform NICE guidance.