

Guided digital therapies for adults with anxiety disorder

About 8 million people in the UK have some form of anxiety disorder, with 8% of people in England in any given week meeting the diagnosis of mixed anxiety and depression. Demand for mental health services has increased even further with the COVID-19 pandemic. Digital therapies may ease pressure on services by providing low intensity interventions as part of a stepped-care approach to treatment. They are delivered online or through apps and allow people to self-manage their mental health condition with varying levels of practitioner support. These therapies generally include modules for the person to work through in their own time. Some can also monitor a person's progress through self-report questionnaires. As the treatment is virtual, people can get access sooner than face-to-face care. This may help with quicker management of symptoms and could prevent escalation to more intensive treatment.

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, implementation and adoption, and effectiveness compared with standard care. NICE will identify and review digital therapies for adults with anxiety disorder to determine whether they can be recommended for conditional use in the NHS to further collect real-world evidence and inform NICE guidance.