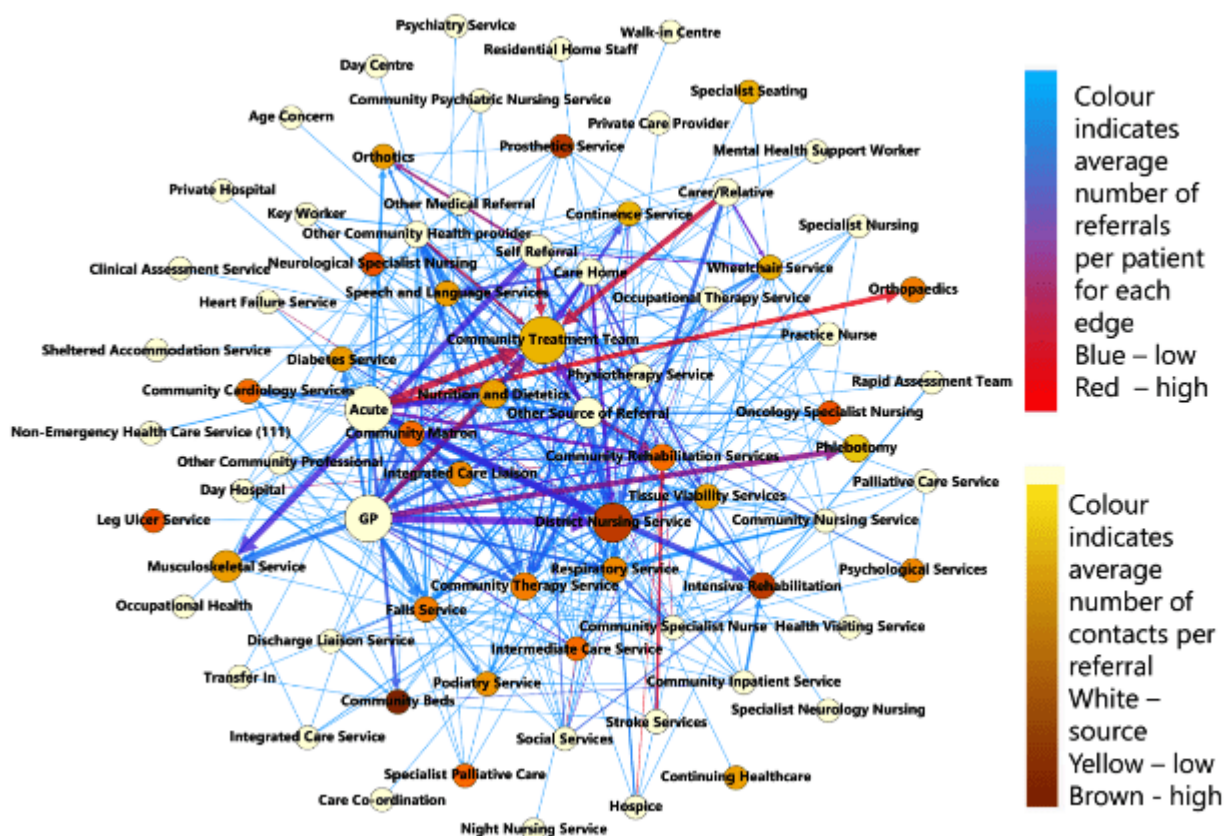


The NHS generates huge amounts of data but using it to track patient flow and pathways of care requires sophisticated mathematical modelling. CLAHRC PhD student, [Ryan Palmer](#), is “embedded” within one of our partner organisations – North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) – where part of his work involves offering support and guidance to managers and staff interested in getting the most out of the data they routinely collect.



An example of Ryan’s visualisation of referral patterns between hospital and community services in a busy NHS Trust.

Ryan ran a successful workshop hosted by our research partners NELFT training healthcare professionals how to use network mapping methods for understanding referral data in community healthcare. Care leads who attended came from a range of healthcare disciplines and services, including paediatrics, adult physical health, mental health services and social care.

The two-hour session involved: how to prepare data, how to create network diagrams and the

beginnings of discussions as to how these methods may be used to inform service planning. Interest was generated during the session, with many realising the benefits of these methods.

Visualising referral data helps researchers and care managers to work together and understand otherwise overwhelming and hard to interpret data for complex systems. These network maps highlight important characteristics of referral activity and can help identify services that exhibit interesting dynamics. Sharing this work with healthcare professionals, they helped to stimulate further conversations around the analysis and organisation of referrals in community healthcare services.

Our collaborators are currently seeking to implement a single point access (SPA) for older adult community services. This session formed part of the ongoing work with our collaborators to help inform their thinking in designing this SPA.