Public Policy Projects and Tech4CV19 launch a Digital White Paper at the Conservative Party Conference

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Accelerating Digital Healthcare

How the rapid uptake of digital services as a result of the pandemic can transform UK healthcare

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Headlines:

- As a result of Covid-19 the NHS has shown a capacity to respond to urgent need that would previously have been unthinkable. We must recognise these gains.
- However, integration failures, resource pressures, failure of vision and barriers to interoperability have been highlighted, along with reluctance to fund digital transformation.
- There should be minimum digital functionality for all health and care providers, to be set out by NHSX.
- The patient or citizen should be the data controller and give permission for their information to be used and shared where appropriate.
- Technology needs to be designed with patients and users in mind and in consultation with clinicians wherever possible.
- ICSs should drive integration via digital investment, funding and overseeing delivery by provider organisations.

Healthcare has undergone a rapid digital progression in 2020. The unforeseen pandemic has primary care providers to instigate telehealth in a remarkably short period of time, while acute providers have become even more aware of the need for integration and interoperability to function efficiently in difficult circumstances.

This has opened up debate once again about the most effective way to join the dots in a fragmented health service. It is incumbent upon government and healthcare providers to create the most efficient service possible, which puts the patient first and centre.

Digital health providers and innovators, from SMEs to PLCs, have joined forces in this White Paper to put a series of recommendations to government to accelerate digital healthcare. By building on the rapid changes brought about by Covid-19 that prove the NHS has the ability to move swiftly when the need is great, it sets out the process by which digital transformation can become a reality in the NHS and across the UK healthcare sector.

In consultation with Chief Information Officers from NHS Foundation Trusts, the Paper sets out a vision for an effective roadmap for implementation. Most important of these is the recognition that digital transformation is critical to integration. Lack of digital awareness and reluctance to fund digital solutions lie at the heart of current stagnation, yet the value of digital tools for the NHS is immense.

From data gathering that is vital for both public health and research to acknowledgement that solutions should be designed with the users and patients in mind, and acceptance that change management has to be incorporated into any uptake, this White Paper looks at all aspects of implementing digital solutions across a huge and disparate organisation.

It starts with the recognition that the patient or citizen is the data controller. By putting the patient at the centre with responsibility for maintaining their own health record, they can be supported with relevant apps that are approved by the NHS and easily accessible. In this way all citizens will become digital

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citizens and will value the benefits that data sharing can bring for managing their health.

But there is no single standard for data sharing within the NHS, so a minimum digital functionality should be overseen by NHSX for any healthcare provider. But to maximise data for reinvestment and research there has to be a co-ordinated approach at local and national level to support Trusts. Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) have a remit for digital so it would seem logical for them to drive integration for digital investment, while integration to drive interoperability should be the responsibility of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

Rt Hon Stephen Dorrell, Chair of PPP says: “We can all agree that we must “build back better”; this White Paper makes some clear recommendations, based on real-world evidence, about how to do that.”

https://publicpolicyprojects.com/blog/publications/accelerating-digital-healthcare/

To read more about these recommendations to enable the healthcare sector to improve patient outcome and bring increased public health benefits, the report can be downloaded from www.publicpolicyprojects.com.

Notes for Editors

Rt Hon Stephen Dorrell Chair of PPP is available for interview to discuss these recommendations.

For interview requests and further information, please contact

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