The Future's here, the future's IT!

In our hearts we know what has to be done, it's not easy, and it's a forever journey. Our health and care system is too important to stay the same; remaining in the paper world. IT - Information _and_ Technology has too much to offer for it to be ignored or sidelined.

Nationally the strategy is set for the English health and care system. Interoperabilty is the buzz word – The ability to capture information once and use it often. There is a plethora of published guidance to underpin this **core principle of Interoperability.** Within it there are three elements which organisations and clinicians must adopt to make progress in this area.

- A Standard single patient identifier – NHS Number p33 paragraph 3
- A standard approach to the way in which we record essential information such as diagnosis and treatment Structured terminology
- Standard treatment guidance for conditions. Clinical, public health and social care guidelines

Applying these principles in how we structure and document care is the key in opening the door to sharing information across technical and organisational boundaries. Enhanced by:

- electronic decision support tools as part of the in the care givers workflow
- the ability to analyse data
- and report in real time at a patient and population level

So with of such exciting potential why is it all proving so difficult? Are we tapping into to what matters to staff delivering care?

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Have we shown the potential to our teams on the front line, what is in it for them. National strategy is focused on delivering a 'paperless' system and achieving digital maturity. Neither; mean anything for those delivering care.

Removing the mystery, showing what is possible in a language that is understood by those who deliver our services. **Shifting the core object** will enable staff to see the value in adopting new tools and ways of working and its benefit to themselves and the patients they care for.

The imperative for organisations and health systems is to invest in their front line – develop clinical and operational expertise which understands the potential to develop IT strategies that underpin local need across services.

All of this is of course set against a backdrop of financial austerity, targets and top down inspection. Investment in IT comes at a price; it is both costly and disruptive, it requires a significant investment in change.

With a clear vision, detailed planning and preparation, including investment in preparing people to engage in and shape change, that investment in IT can become one that elevates the health organisation to the position where it can **transform care**.

Understanding the potential of Information **and** Technology using national standards to underpin local strategy will support healthcare organisations and systems to create a vision for the future in which IT is embedded as a core enabler in the delivery of step changes in outcomes for safer, more effective and efficient care.

Investment in a comprehensive local transformation strategy recognising the vital contribution of front line staff, the way in which they work and the ever improving capabilities of technology, is then essential if we are to realise this vision.

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