



Digital Transformation

Context

Digital transformation features strongly in the NHS Long Term Plan. Its implementation has been accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic to guarantee continuity in healthcare provision. Using digital technology in healthcare delivery can:

- 1. Support clinical care:** Remote consultations offer opportunities to meet the rising demand for healthcare and offer patients flexibility.
- 2. Empower patients:** Giving patients access to their own health records and the development of digital tools for patients to manage long-term conditions will strengthen patients' ability for self-care thereby reducing healthcare demand.
- 3. Support clinical efficiency:** Electronic patient records will improve coordination between primary, secondary, and tertiary care and improve communication between health professionals and support services, e.g., laboratory services, thereby reducing misunderstandings and duplication.
- 4. Support healthcare staff:** Online meetings facilitate flexible working and save time travelling to and from face-to-face meetings.
- 5. Improve population health:** Digital technology can support ICSs in better understanding their population's healthcare needs and how to meet them.

Digitally enabled primary and outpatient care can improve the sustainability of models of care by reducing GHG emissions related to travel, and other resource use associated with outpatient and GP appointments. Despite the potential environmental benefits, digital technology needs to be used with care and consideration to avoid compromising clinical outcomes and introducing or exacerbating inequalities in access to care.



Achievements to date

Together with our key partners we have developed a [Digital Strategy](#) for 2021-2025 which recognises digital transformation as a key driver of change. It explains how digital transformation will become an integral part of our clinical, business and population health strategies at ICS system level and at Trust level.

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare providers have conducted many services remotely.

- Oxleas have evaluated their move to video appointments, helping them to decide which appointments should continue to be conducted virtually. Positive feedback concerning Greenwich's mainly online mental health Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) service has supported Oxleas' decision to continue with the service online.
- Ensuring access to digital care has been a priority for the South London Listens programme which has been led by SLaM. South London Listens Action Plan aims to prevent a mental health crisis arising from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Priority 1 in the action plan is to address loneliness, social isolation, and digital exclusion¹⁵.
- In primary care, most general practices are offering online consultations. During December 2021, 49.1% of general practice appointments attended across South East London were face to face, 47.9% were telephone appointments, and 0.4% were home visits (2.6% were unknown).

LGT switched to e-payslips (in January 2022) making considerable savings in paper, printing and postage costs.

Case-study 6



The Mental Health Phone Advice & Guidance Project in Greenwich

The Mental Health Phone Advice & Guidance Project in Greenwich is a service in which health professionals can speak to mental health specialists from Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust via telephone in seconds.

1. This service has improved communication between primary and secondary care
2. It has also reduced unnecessary referrals (with reduced unnecessary staff and patient travel)
3. Each phone call takes 39 seconds on average and can be done with the patient in the consulting room
4. 48% of calls to the service have resulted in a referral being avoided.



Commitment

- **We will continue with digital transformation to improve the sustainability of healthcare without compromising the quality of our care and exacerbating inequalities in access to care**

Actions for Year 1

1. NHS Trusts to conduct outpatient appointments remotely where clinically appropriate and, taking account of patient preferences, aiming for 25% of hospital outpatient appointments to be delivered remotely overall*
2. NHS organisations to evaluate different types of appointments to establish their clinical appropriateness and patient preferences for conducting them remotely
3. CCG/ICB and primary care to continue the digitisation of patient records in general practice across the ICS
4. Primary care to work with CCG/ICB to identify current baseline for digital transformation of primary care, good practice across SEL, and barriers to digitalisation
5. Primary care to work with CCG/ICB to review a digital support package for patients, which could include expansion of remote monitoring to people who would benefit most

Aim 1: To consider the use of digital technology as part of sustainable models of care

Actions for all NHS organisations (coordinated by the CCG/ICB)

- Evaluate different types of appointments to establish their clinical appropriateness and patient preferences for conducting them remotely by March 2023
- Explore and evaluate digital technology options for self-care by March 2024
- Offer digital self-care options to patients by March 2025
- Support options for general practice staff to work from home where appropriate by March 2025

South East London ICS



Digital
Transformation

Actions for NHS Trusts

- Conduct outpatient appointments remotely where clinically appropriate and, taking account of patient preferences, aiming for 25% of hospital outpatient appointments to be delivered remotely overall by March 2023*

Actions for primary care

- Work with ICS Digital Team to identify current baseline for digital transformation of primary care, good practice across SEL, and barriers to digitalisation by March 2023
- Work with ICS Digital Team to review a digital support package for patients, which could include expansion of remote monitoring to people who would benefit most by March 2023
- Offer all patients a Digital First appointment by March 2024

Aim 2: To ensure patients have access to digitally enabled healthcare

Actions for all NHS organisations (coordinated by the CCG/ICB)

- Identify population groups at risk of digital exclusion by March 2024
- Jointly develop options to mitigate digital exclusion by March 2024

Aim 3: To digitalise patient records and communication

Actions for CCG/ICB

- Continue the digitisation of patient records in general practice across the ICS (ongoing)
- Develop a consistent and practical electronic health record which can be shared across primary and secondary care including urgent care by March 2025

Actions for NHS Trusts and primary care

- Move patient communication to digital channels where appropriate considering accessibility requirements by March 2025