

Health Secretary sets out ambitious tech agenda

- The Health and Social Care Secretary set out his priorities to focus on personalised care, levelling up and harnessing the power of technology breakthroughs
- Electronic Patient Records to be rolled out to 90% of trusts by December 2023 so NHS staff can access all relevant patient information quickly
- Ambition set for 75% of adults in England to be using the NHS App by March 2024 and commitment to publish Digital Health Plan later this year

Patients and health and care staff across the country will benefit from more personalised, easier to access, digitally delivered health and care as the Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid delivered his first health technology focused speech since his appointment.

Speaking at the HSJ Digital Transformation Summit, Sajid Javid set out his plans for a more inclusive digital health service which better harnesses the power of innovation to drive a new era of recovery and reform, which will include the publication of a Digital Health Plan later this year.

This move puts digital transformation at the heart of health and care reforms and will be instrumental in embedding technologies and processes which will help clear the COVID backlog, in time leading to reductions in waiting lists.

He announced ambitions including:

- for 90% of NHS trusts to have Electronic Patient Records in place or be processing them by December 2023 and for all social care providers to adopt a digital social care record – both of which will save clinicians time, for example freeing-up 23,000 hours of nursing time for care every year. This will also deliver better, safer care for patients as electronic treatment plans increase consistency, reduce risk and can shorten the length of hospital stays.
- for 75% of adults in England to use the NHS App by March 2024, and expand functions on estimated waiting times and personalised advice. This will help people manage their health by having access to their data, including their GP health records, as well as make it easier to order repeat prescriptions, book appointments online and register preferences for services, such as organ donation, which will save lives.

The Health and Social Care Secretary set out his new targets for the roll out of Electronic Patient Records across both health and social care. He said:

We have undeniably seen brilliant progress. But this progress hasn't always been consistent across the board – for example one in five trusts still do not have Electronic Patient Records.

Electronic patient records are the essential prerequisite for a

modern, digital NHS. Without them, we cannot achieve the full potential for reform.

So I want to accelerate the rollout of these vital records, with a new approach so that we hit 90% coverage by the end of next year.

I want to see a particular focus on social care, where around 40% of providers are still grappling entirely with paper-based records. So want to see all social care providers adopt a digital social care record.

Embracing personalised technologies, Sajid Javid will outline his ambition for 75% of the adults in England to use the NHS App by March 2024. He said:

To get there, we need to show people the app is for life, not just for COVID, and that it will be a future front door for interacting with the NHS.

The NHS is already working on new features, including how we can show estimated waiting times and the results of blood tests within the app.

The NHS app has shown how people are receptive to having healthcare literally in their hands – and we have the opportunity to use platforms like apps and websites to access diagnostics and therapies, helping them to manage their own conditions.

The Health and Social Care Secretary will also set out his ambitions to utilise NHS data to drive innovation, building on the pioneering work during the pandemic to develop diagnostics and treatment for COVID-19 – including the RECOVERY trial which led to the discovery of Dexamethasone, the world's first proven treatment for COVID-19 in just 100 days, which has saved at least a million lives across the world. He said:

NHS data is making the whole world safer and healthier.

Thanks to this country's single, national health service, the NHS has a precious resource in the form of data – that can offer so much insight to pioneers in the life sciences – including some of the world's largest genomic datasets.

But we know that there is more to do to build trust in the use of data and reassure the public that the data will be used securely. For instance, making it smoother and safer for researchers to access and use data, through requiring the use of trusted research environments.

By developing a gold-standard security driven environment, researchers will

be encouraged to drive innovation, while ensuring patient data is protected to the highest standard.

Looking to the future, the Health and Social Care Secretary announced his intention to publish a Digital Health Plan later this year which will build on lessons learned from the pandemic and drive change across the digital health space.

- The Health and Social Care Secretary spoke at the HSJ Digital Transformation Summit on Thursday 24 February.
- The speech was live streamed on DHSC social channels.
- A checked against delivery version of the speech is available [here](#)