

Major reforms to NHS tech agenda accelerated

- Move will streamline data sharing processes across the NHS – benefitting patients while ensuring rigorous data protection safeguards remain in place
- Improved data sharing will ensure patients get more streamlined care and can make more informed choices about how and where they access care

Patients will benefit from more streamlined care and be able to make more informed choices about how and where they access treatment after plans to transform NHS data sharing were brought forward.

The Department for Health and Social Care said the proposed transfer of NHS Digital's functions into NHS England which were due to happen at the end of March 2023 would now happen in early January 2023.

The move will create a single statutory body responsible for data and digital technology for the NHS – meaning patients will benefit from:

- A streamlined experience due to a reduced need to repeatedly share information across the health system
- The ability to make more informed choices about care by providing information about length of wait for treatment, making waiting lists by speciality and by provider, more accessible – a key part of Our Plan for Patients
- Easier access to electronic patient records through accelerated digital transformation services for patients.

The move will build on the huge progress seen on digital transformation during the pandemic, driving efficiencies across the NHS as evidence suggests digitally mature providers are 10% more efficient than their less digitally mature peers.

Accelerating the transfer will lead to faster improvements in co-operation between the key digital bodies of the NHS by bringing them under one roof for the first time. This will ensure the health and care sector is fully equipped to face the future and deliver for patients.

In line with commitments made to Parliament, NHS England will provide the same protections for people's data as NHS Digital, whilst taking advantage of the merger to improve processes where possible. Working closely with partners, including the Information Commissioner and the National Data Guardian, DHSC and NHSE will ensure there continues to be rigorous internal controls to ensure that data is used and shared safely, securely and appropriately to:

- deliver high-quality care
- understand and protect the health of the population
- effectively plan and improve services

- research and develop innovative treatments, vaccines and diagnostics

Making effective use of the data collected by health and social care services is essential to deliver high quality care, and improving the health of the population. The transfer, which is subject to parliamentary approval and agreement with the Devolved Administration, will see the statutory role of NHS Digital move to NHS England.

This is an important change to make sure that all the expertise and activity in relation to data and digital services are together in a single organisation and meets a key recommendation of Laura Wade-Gery's review: [Putting data, digital and tech at the heart of transforming the NHS](#).

The changes will better support the recovery of NHS services, address waiting list backlogs, and support hardworking staff, all while driving forwards an ambitious agenda of digital transformation and progress.

- Following the merger, NHS Digital as a separate arms-length body of the Department for Health and Social Care will cease to exist.
- NHS Digital staff and assets will all transfer to NHS England before going through the wider "Creating a New NHS England" change programme which will ensure we retain the necessary talent and expertise of NHS Digital.
- We set out in [Data Saves Lives](#) how data will be used to improve care for patients and service users, outlining how we will ensure that the benefits and lessons learned from the response to COVID-19 are realised for the longer-term. The strategy including building the right foundations to achieve this – and one key action is to bring together NHS Digital and NHS England, to provide a single statutory body for data, digital and technology.