

New report from DAC Beachcroft shows technology and clinicians are leading the way for rapid change in the NHS

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The time is right for change in the NHS, and whilst medical technologies and digital healthcare will pave the way for this progress, clinicians will be the real drivers of change, according to a new report from leading health sector law firm DAC Beachcroft.

Published today, 'Digital Healthcare Technology' examines how digitally enabled healthcare is already becoming a reality, with a mix of technology solutions enabling clinicians and empowering patients.

"Technology is revolutionising NHS care and at the forefront of this are apps, data platforms and AI," explains Hamza Drabu, partner at DAC Beachcroft. "One aspect of this is digital health, and the report cites a number of examples enabling new ways to access healthcare services and offer greater patient choice. There is already a complex technology ecosystem that exists within the NHS, with a number of different purchasers of technology at different scale. Part of the challenge is in understanding how best to fit in with the current landscape, and in some cases, consider whether there are opportunities to shape a new model of care."

Addressing key challenges around historic contracts with suppliers that fragment the landscape and impede progress, application programming interfaces (APIs) are offered up as the new solution to breaking down system siloes: stepping away from the legacy of national programmes and historically expensive failures. However, the report highlights that local solutions must be matched by funding and better clarity over who is in control of purchasing, and at which level. There also needs to be sufficient flexibility in any procurement process, to allow for the dynamic nature of technology solutions.

When it comes to transformative technology, "there is always nervousness from the system about implementation of new technology" said Drabu. "However, it's clear from talking to our expert contributors that it should not be a blocker, and there is a need to ensure proper risk assessment takes place to ensure patient safety, and this should be coupled with open dialogue with regulators." He cites clarity around reimbursement mechanisms and minimum standards for new healthcare technologies as critical for external investment, noting that some parts of this jigsaw are already being addressed nationally.

Whilst there has been clear enthusiasm for the technology itself from Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock, Drabu's view is that the biggest drivers for change will be clinicians. "They will be the implementers of technology, coupled with patients having more active control of their healthcare information than ever before. The sector is very well placed for this digital transformation."

'Digital Healthcare Technology' contains three chapters that focus on information sharing, primary care and mental health, and encompasses examples of current projects from six expert participants, including:

- Paul Bate (Managing Director, NHS Services at Babylon Health);
- Christopher Hilton (Director of Strategy and Clinical Director for Integrated Care, West London NHS Trust);
- Hugh Lloyd-Jukes (Chief Executive of Oxehealth);
- Sam Shah (Director of Digital Development at NHS England);
- Susan Sinclair (Chief Executive at AT Medics); and
- Murat Soncul (Head of Information Governance at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust).

With over 60 years' experience working in healthcare, DAC Beachcroft is regarded as the market leader in the provision of strategic, commercial, regulatory, employment and clinical risk legal advice to providers and commissioners in the sector. Its national team of expert lawyers provide over 300 public sector and independent healthcare providers and commissioners with truly market-leading innovative, practical legal and governance advice to enable organisations to focus on the delivery of high quality, safe patient care.

To read the report in full, [click here](#).

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