

Critical Evaluation of the NHS App

Digital innovation in health and social care

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Digital Transformation in the Health and Care Professions

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The NHS App moves routine care into patients' hands



ACCESS

View medical records, test results and trusted health information.



MANAGE

Book appointments and request repeat prescriptions at any time.



PARTICIPATE

Support self-management, communication and shared decisions.

Implementation succeeds when systems, people and access align

SYSTEMS

PEOPLE

EQUITY

Secure infrastructure

Interoperability, identity checks, reliable technology and cybersecurity.

Workforce readiness

Training, leadership and collaboration across clinical, administrative and digital teams.

Inclusive access

Digital skills, suitable devices, internet access and non-digital alternatives.

The workforce gains efficiency—but also new responsibilities

Digital tools redistribute work rather than remove it.

Routine tasks can decrease, while digital support, information governance and complex enquiries become more important.

BENEFITS

Less routine administration and faster access to accurate information.

- More time for complex enquiries
- Better-informed decisions
- More coordinated working

CHALLENGES

Training needs, data security duties and support for digitally excluded patients.

- Continuous digital development
- Information governance
- Human support remains essential

Digital access should expand care—not become the only door

WHAT IMPROVES

- 24/7 access to routine services
- Fewer telephone and reception demands
- Faster communication and self-service
- More responsive use of limited resources

WHAT MUST REMAIN

- Face-to-face and telephone options
- Support for complex or urgent needs
- Reliable local system integration
- Choice, accessibility and personalised care

Patient autonomy grows only when access is genuinely inclusive

AUTONOMY

Records and results can support shared decisions and self-management.

CONVENIENCE

Any-time access may help people managing long-term conditions.

TRUST

Privacy, confidentiality and secure identity checks shape engagement.

EXCLUSION RISK

Older, disabled, low-income or digitally inexperienced users may face barriers.

Community value extends beyond individual convenience

Digital access can support earlier action and reduce avoidable pressure on services.

Its wider value depends on whether families and communities can use it safely and equally.



PREVENTION

Trusted information and easier access may support earlier intervention.



FAMILIES

Less travel and simpler routine access may reduce practical pressure.



EQUITY

Community support and digital skills are needed to avoid widening inequalities.

The central finding is a balance between innovation and equity

VALUE DEMONSTRATED

Access: routine services become easier to reach.

Efficiency: some administrative pressure can decrease.

Participation: patients can engage more actively with care.

CONDITIONS AND RISKS

Inclusion: devices, skills and connectivity are not equal.

Trust: privacy and security shape adoption.

Human care: digital routes cannot meet every need.

Five priorities can protect the NHS App's long-term value

The NHS App should complement—not replace—personal care. Its strongest future is inclusive, supported and continuously evaluated.

CONCLUSION

Digital transformation creates value when it improves care for the whole population.

- ✓ **Maintain non-digital routes**
- ✓ **Invest in digital inclusion**
- ✓ **Train and support the workforce**
- ✓ **Strengthen integration and security**
- ✓ **Measure quality and equity—not downloads**

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