

Component 2 Viva Voce (Oral Presentation)

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(GOV.UK, 2023)



Introduction

Why is Digital Transformation Essential?

The NHS is experiencing unprecedented pressure due to:

- Increasing demand for healthcare services
- An ageing population with complex health needs
- Workforce shortages across primary and secondary care
- Rising healthcare costs and financial constraints

Increasing patient expectations for accessible, personalised care

(Khan, 2023)

Digital Transformation Strategy

Government policy identifies digital innovation as essential to improving:

- Accessibility
- Efficiency
- Quality of care
- Long-term sustainability

(Department of Health and Social Care, 2022)

Policy Drivers

- NHS Long Term Plan (2019)
- A Plan for Digital Health and Social Care (Department of Health and Social Care, 2022)

Presentation Focus

This presentation critically evaluates the NHS App by examining its impact on:

- Workforce
- Service delivery
- Patient experience

Overview of the NHS App

The NHS App

The NHS App is England's national digital healthcare platform, designed to provide secure, convenient access to NHS services through one digital application (NHS England, 2019).

National Adoption

- Over 39 million registered users One of the largest digital transformation programmes in the NHS
- Rapid growth following COVID-19 (NHS England, 2025)

Strategic Purpose

The NHS App supports a shift from provider-centred healthcare towards patient-centred, digitally enabled care, encouraging greater self-management and improving access to routine services (NHS England, 2025)





Context of the Innovation

Why Was the NHS App Introduced?

Theoretical Perspective

According to **Baxter and Sommerville (2011)**, successful digital transformation depends on the interaction between:

- Technology
- People
- Organisational processes

Critical Evaluation

Introducing technology alone does not transform healthcare. Success depends on workforce readiness, organisational culture, digital capability and effective system integration (Greenhalgh et al., 2017).

Strategic Drivers

The NHS App was introduced to:

- Improve access to healthcare
- Increase operational efficiency
- Reduce administrative burden
- Empower patients to manage their own health
- Support integrated, digitally enabled care

(NHS England, 2026)

Impact On Workforce



Positive Workforce Outcomes



Reduced routine telephone enquiries (NHS England, 2015))



Faster prescription processing



Improved digital communication with patients (Kc *et al.*, 2023)



Better access to patient information (Kc *et al.*, 2023)



Reduced paper-based administration

Emerging Workforce Challenges

Evidence suggests digital technologies have also created:



Increased online consultation requests (Fant *et al.*, 2022)



Continuous management of digital messages (Department of Health and Social Care, 2022)



Greater administrative complexity (Novak, *et al.*, 2013)



New responsibilities associated with digital systems (Department of Health and Social Care, 2022)



Ongoing staff training requirements (Department of Health and Social Care, 2022)

Benefits

- 24/7 access to NHS services (NHS England, 2019)
- Faster repeat prescriptions (NHS England, 2019)
- Reduced reliance on telephone services (Department of Health and Social Care, 2022)
- Greater convenience for patients

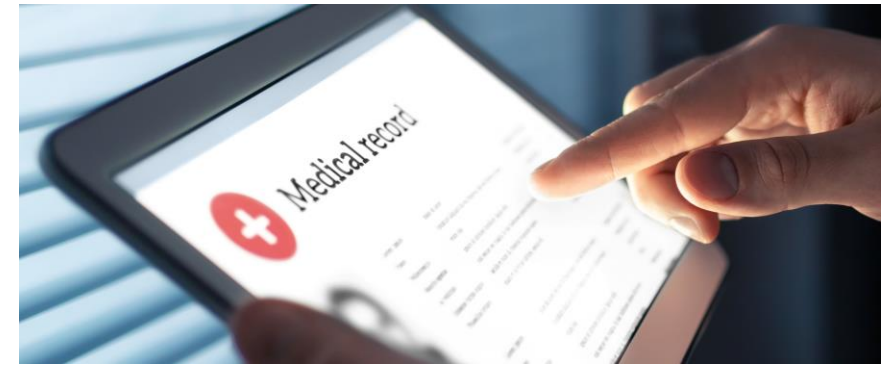
- Access to electronic health records (Fang, *et al.*, 2022)
- Improved communication (Fang, *et al.*, 2022)
- Better support for remote healthcare (Fang, *et al.*, 2022)
- Enhanced continuity during COVID-19 (Fang, *et al.*, 2022)

- Improved workflow
- Greater service flexibility
- Increased patient self-management

Critical Evaluation

A stylized illustration of a man in a green shirt and dark pants loading a light blue moving truck. The truck is filled with various household items, including a sofa with a black cat, a lamp, a ladder, books, a beach ball, and several boxes with shipping labels. A string of green lights is draped over the top of the truck. The background is a light blue sky with white clouds.

Patient Experience and Empowerment



Positive Outcomes

Patient Empowerment

- Greater control over healthcare (Alomar *et al.*, 2024)
- Improved access to medical records (Alomar *et al.*, 2024)
- Increased transparency (Alomar *et al.*, 2024)
- Better shared decision-making (Alomar *et al.*, 2024)

Convenience

- Access services anytime (NHS England, 2022)
- Reduced travel (Fant *et al.*, 2022)
- Faster communication (Fant *et al.*, 2022)
- Improved medication management (Fant *et al.*, 2022)

Patient Engagement

- Encourages self-management
- Supports preventative healthcare
- Improves long-term condition management (Department of Health and Social Care, 2022)

Critical Evaluation

Alomar, D. *et al.*, (2024) state the NHS App reflects the shift towards person-centered care by encouraging patients to become active participants in managing their own health.

Challenges

Digital Exclusion

Groups most affected include:

- Older adults
- People with disabilities
- Low-income households
- Individuals with limited digital literacy
- Rural communities with poor internet access

Health Inequalities

Without adequate support:

- Existing inequalities may increase
- Access to healthcare may become less equitable
- Some patients may experience reduced engagement

Critical Evaluation

Digital innovation should enhance accessibility without disadvantaging patients who remain dependent on traditional methods of accessing healthcare.

(Hardie, *et al.*, 2025)

Conclusion and Recommendations



Conclusion

The NHS App has successfully:

- Improved patient access
- Increased patient empowerment
- Supported NHS digital transformation
- Modernised primary care services

However

- Workload has been redistributed rather than reduced (Novak, *et al.*, 2013)
- Increased accessibility has generated additional demand (Khan, 2023)
- Digital exclusion remains a significant challenge (Hardie, *et al.*, 2025)
- Organisational and technological barriers continue to limit full transformation (Novak, *et al.*, 2013)

Recommendations

Workforce

- Expand digital skills training
- Recognise digital workload within workforce planning

Technology

- Improve interoperability
- Strengthen cybersecurity
- Invest in resilient digital infrastructure

Patients

- Improve digital inclusion programmes
- Maintain face-to-face and telephone alternatives

Technology alone cannot transform healthcare. Successful digital transformation depends on people, processes and organisational readiness.

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