



Digital transformation at the Royal Free London: Introducing our new electronic patient record (EPR)

We all use the latest technology every day in our personal lives, from mobile devices, apps, online shopping and banking, to alert systems and voice recognition.

But healthcare has often been slow to harness these new advances and the opportunities they offer. We are changing that.

The roll out of our new electronic patient record (EPR) will bring many benefits to our staff and patients. Replacing many of the systems we currently use, it will reduce the need for staff to access multiple applications through different log ins by introducing a single, integrated patient record.

EPR will not just be quicker and more convenient. Crucially, having one single patient record – available to all the staff who need to access it, when and where they need it – means we can be confident care is as safe as possible for our patients.

In addition, EPR will help us deliver our ambitions as the Royal Free London group by supporting the implementation of our clinical practice group (CPG) pathways. When patients come to our hospitals with certain symptoms, new digital CPG pathways will prompt their healthcare team to the right course of treatment, based on the latest clinical best practice.



Sir David Sloman
Royal Free London group
Chief Executive

The move to EPR is an exciting innovation, heralding the end of paper records over the next 12 months. We are proud to be taking this important step on our journey to becoming the most digitally advanced trust in the NHS.

What is EPR?

EPR is a single patient record that will be accessible across all our hospitals and will replace paper records over the next 12 months. It combines the best of what our current systems do – and more – improving communication, documentation and care.

Staff will be able to enter data and documents straight into EPR. Integrated medical devices, such as blood pressure monitors, will upload information automatically to the patient's record, reducing potential errors and freeing up clinicians' time. If a patient's observations and assessments are outside expected ranges, staff will be alerted and prompted with appropriate care plans to give the best treatment.

EPR will provide an accurate and real-time view of a patient's care, using live data to create documents for clinical records and correspondence to GPs and patients. It means we will no longer have paper records at the patient's bedside. Instead, there will be computers or laptops to input information directly.

The roll out is being underpinned with new IT infrastructure and is supported with funding from the national Global Digital Exemplar (GDE) programme. The RFL was one of 16 digitally advanced acute trusts chosen by NHS England to pioneer IT projects and received £10m, matched by the trust, bringing total funds to £20m.

What does EPR mean for patients?

EPR will enable us to offer our patients safer care and a much better experience.

Patients often complain that they are asked to give their details multiple times and that will become a thing of the past.

With all information in one record, patients will no longer face delays or inconvenience because diagnostic results or medication histories are inaccessible.

Patients will be able to view their medical records through a patient portal, ensuring they are fully involved in their health and care.

In addition, patients can be confident that they are receiving the safest and most effective care in line with the latest clinically-evidenced pathways.

Developed and tested by clinicians

To help us meet our ambition of being the most digitally advanced trust in the NHS by 2020, we have a team of clinical staff from a breadth of specialties leading the strategy, design, development and implementation of new clinical IT solutions.

We are implementing a new version of the Cerner Millennium EPR. It uses Cerner's model content, which has been developed based on the experience of other NHS trusts, in line with national and local standards.

Over 400 staff attended a series of EPR future state validation events in May 2018 to review and sign off the new clinical workflows. Subsequently, over 200 staff have been involved in two cycles of end to end user acceptance testing (UAT) to check the functionality and workflows in the new EPR.

Preparing for go live

Patient safety remains our priority

Introducing EPR is a significant change. We have been running a major programme to ensure that at least 90% of staff are trained to use the new EPR before it goes live.

Intensive support is being provided for staff in the four weeks immediately after go live, with access to electronic quick guides, floor walkers, super-users, EPR champions and the clinical informatics team.

Departments have been reviewing rosters, staff leave and non-EPR training requests in order to ensure that additional staff are available to provide support on the frontline.

Keeping patients informed

During the weeks immediately after implementation, our staff will be getting used to the new system. Patient appointments could take a little longer than usual and there may be some delays to our schedules.

We will be communicating with our patients to apologise for any delays and will explain why they may be experiencing them.



Digital transformation at the RFL

EPR is just one part of our joined-up journey to become the most digitally advanced trust in the NHS by 2020



Electronic patient record (EPR)

A single EPR across all our hospital sites will guide clinicians to provide evidence-based treatment to each patient.

Staff will be able to enter documentation straight onto EPR and patients will be able to access their records through a patient portal. Clinicians will also be alerted in real time to a change in a patient's condition. Integrated medical devices will help to reduce error and free up clinical time.



Digital pathways

Clinical practice groups (CPGs) are clinically-led ways of working across several hospital sites. They aim to reduce variation and ensure patients receive the best standards of care, wherever they are treated. CPGs act as the glue that binds our hospital group together.

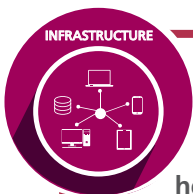
Multidisciplinary teams are working together with patients to design pathways for specific conditions based on the latest clinical evidence of what works. These will be digitised in the EPR so that when patients present with certain symptoms the EPR will prompt clinicians to the best course of treatment.



Out-patient flow

Patients who visit our hospitals will be able to check in for their appointments at the touch of a button using kiosks.

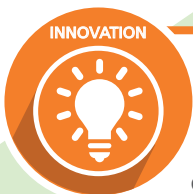
The system will allow patients to view appointments and be called to their appointment from a mobile device. Clinical teams will be able to manage patient appointments more easily, with all information available on a dashboard.



Infrastructure

We are equipping clinicians and healthcare staff with the tools and technology to transform healthcare.

New medical equipment is being integrated into clinical workflows and will automatically feed information to EPR wherever possible. New PCs, mobile devices and enhanced WiFi will provide fast and reliable IT access for staff. And we're working with leading data security experts to make sure hospital data is safeguarded.



Innovation

We're developing new digital technologies. For example the Streams app, created by our clinicians alongside digital experts from Deep Mind, to improve outcomes for patients with acute kidney injury.

Other new technologies include e-Docs and e-Forms to replace paper archives with searchable storage for clinical and admin teams; the Ascom mobile handset nurse call system; voice recognition for dictating notes; and the Health Information Exchange (HIE) to share patient records across NCL STP.

Contact

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