Informing Healthcare Strategy

The Informing Healthcare Strategy (IHC) was published by the Welsh Assembly Government in July 2003. This followed the initial Informing Healthcare consultation document prepared by the information task and finish group in October 2002. IHC explains how new information and communication technologies can transform health services in Wales by supporting new ways of working with better information support and access to knowledge.

THE IHC VISION

“IHC is based on a vision of patients, carers and professionals working together, supported by the latest evidence, to reach agreement on appropriate and cost effective healthcare for the patient. It states that the resulting decisions and actions should be transparent and open to evaluation. That outcomes should be recorded and used to improve services and that the whole health transaction should be carried out in a secure and confidential way.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 Benefits</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A Single Record</strong></td>
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<td>Currently there is no holistic patient record: a single record is required</td>
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<td><strong>Benefits</strong>: less time spent searching for information; more time available for patients; sharing of information will provide opportunities for service improvement; patients will be able to play a greater role in their own health maintenance and improvement</td>
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| **Workforce Empowerment** |
| IHC will involve new skills and finding new ways of working: from basic IT and information management skills through to sophisticated critical appraisal techniques and statistical analysis |
| **Benefits**: staff will be able to take advantage of computerised business support services, automated tools and access to the latest evidence and best practice |

| **Patient and Carer Empowerment** |
| Health professionals often make decisions on behalf of patients without explaining why: there is a need to move towards shared decision-making |
| **Benefits**: more interest being shown by people in their own health, more considered access to health services, increased patient satisfaction and reduced patient anxiety |

| **Service Improvement** |
| Modernisation and ICT programmes must be closely aligned: the introduction of technology without changed working practices will have little impact and changed working practices without new technology will be harder to sustain in the long term, |
| **Benefits**: improvements in patient safety, patients’ experience, and the responsiveness and efficiency of care |

| **Knowledge and Information Management** |
| NHS Wales has a large amount of data but is often unable to use it to good purpose, either at the front-line of care or in support of management and planning: better use of the information collected is required. |
| **Benefits**: better understanding of how resources have been used, identification of where health needs are not being met, analysis of clinical performance and caseload, planning of services to best meet patient needs, monitoring of progress on NSFs, analysis of population and community health trends |
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Strategy Implementation Programme

Overview

IHC is a project based strategy: the Programme will identify projects and products and ensure that they are delivered in a coherent way.

The Programme will not undertake ongoing information or IT service provision – that will be the responsibility of health organisations and private sector suppliers.

The responsibility for organisational and professional change remains with chief executives and boards of health organisations.

Strategy Implementation Programme Board

A Strategy Implementation Programme Board will be established; the Chair will be accountable to the Minister and the NHS Director and supported by a Programme Director. The Board will be accountable for the programme, and for supporting and monitoring the delivery of the strategy and its corresponding benefits; membership will include all of the stakeholders in the Welsh health service.

Benefit Groups

Benefit Groups established, each chaired by a director who is highly experienced in that benefit area, and who will also sit on the Programme Board. The groups will:

- work with the board to shape the detail of putting the vision into practice
- contribute to the development of project briefs
- support local delivery and the realisation of benefits
- take a programme-wide view of their benefit area
- provide quality review and user support to projects

Plans and Projects

The strategy will be project-driven and the Board will oversee a number of projects. Each project will be run in accordance with the PRINCE methodology. The Board will agree its programme of projects on an annual basis, based on its funding allocation from the Welsh Assembly Government. This will form the basis of an annual Strategy Implementation Programme Plan (the Plan).

Programme Support Office

A Programme Support Office (PSO) will be established to act as the resource pool for the strategy, and in particular will provide or co-ordinate:

- project management support to the programme
- legal, technical and procurement support to the programme
- resource co-ordination across project staff, NHS secondees and contractors
- change management support to the programme and to local organisations
- publicity and communications services

Early priorities for action are: – legacy management programme – readiness programme.

Strategy Implementation Plan 2003/04

Visible IHC activity in 2003/04 will focus upon the above areas and on establishing work programmes to deliver early objectives within each of the key benefit areas.

The complete Strategy Implementation Plan 2003/04, including fully resourced plans for all of the national and local projects which are being initiated during the next twelve months, will be published following its approval by the Board and will be refreshed annually.

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