#digitalhealthcare – beyond the EHR

Anyone who has ever heard the three letters NHS used together could probably recite verbatim the need to save costs, improve efficiencies, undergo transformational change…and deliver better quality patient care.

Much of the focus, albeit driven from media headlines, is on the clinical side – and quite rightly given that's the NHS' job. The push towards a paperless and digital healthcare system and the billions channelled to this is ever present. 'Patient-driven health' and 'EHR' are constant buzzwords.

The latest (and previous) report by Lord Carter, *Operational productivity and performance in English NHS acute hospitals: Unwarranted variations* certainly highlights the need for improvements on the clinical side but also touches on the operational, or behind-the-scenes, aspects that can drive efficiencies and cost-savings. Areas such as procurement, optimising supply chain and inventory management are now seen to have a place in NHS reform. This is similarly echoed in mandates around GS1 Standards, roadmaps from the National Information Board, and the Five Year Forward View.

> "Very few trusts are able to demonstrate even a basic level of control or visibility over total inventory or purchase order compliance that is common practice in other health systems and industrial sectors such as retail.
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> To truly performance manage quality and efficiency on a regular basis, seamless real-time data is needed, which in turn requires investment in inter-operable information technology."
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> *Operational productivity and performance in English NHS acute hospitals: Unwarranted variations*
> An independent report for the Department of Health by Lord Carter of Coles, 2016

Benefits of GS1 standards:
- Enhanced patient safety
- Time savings for staff
- Full visibility of stock
- Automatic tracking and tracing
- Identification and tracking of medical devices
- Improved inventory management

GS1 UK

> "Asset tracking is increasingly regarded as an effective way of addressing inefficiencies…This technology is enabling hospitals to reduce the financial impact of inefficiencies in three key areas – equipment utilisation; patient care and safety, and staff productivity."
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> NIB, *Delivering the Five Year Forward View*, 2015

At Acumentive, the benefits of real-time asset locating and management is well known to us – it's our job after all. We continually hear from Trust managers and staff that they know how important it is to be able to 'find their stuff' or how often high-value equipment is purchased but there's no single source of truth as to where it actually ends up. It seems systems to overcome this were previously deemed a nice to have or beyond scope, despite the evidence showing the significant gains of improved asset visibility. Never mind the power of the data and intelligence gathered and its strategic and financial value within and across Trusts.

A recent article in the HSJ by NHS Supply Chain *Scanning for savings with asset management* further supports these benefits, and highlights the millions of pounds to be saved with better management of capital medical equipment and assets. This understanding and taking control of current stock, assets and equipment before even beginning to streamline eprocurement and purchasing price indexes can have significant impact on expenditure, reducing unnecessary spend in the first place on 'misplaced' or perceived 'lost' items.

And the technology is there to deliver such benefits. GS1 certified systems such as SenseAnyWare take the best fit auto-ID hardware (barcode, RFID, RTLS) and use it to generate real-time locating data. This can then be aggregated in a way that is inter-operable and displays meaningful use to multiple applications and departments within a Trust. New, cost-effective technology, such as Bluetooth Low Energy beacons, also overcome the traditional hurdles surrounding extra infrastructure and infection control.

As Lord Carter states "The best performing hospital systems around the world have real-time data at their fingertips enabling them to make decisions on a daily, weekly, monthly basis to improve performance." The time is ripe for the NHS to understand this means looking beyond a 'paperless EHR' and be seen as performance leaders themselves.

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Acumentive Ltd
Acumentive are industry experts in real-time asset locating and management. Our aim is to deliver smart, innovative solutions for organisations, using the best auto-ID (RFID, Barcode, RTLS, Bluetooth) technologies and SenseAnyWare software.
To date, our products and services have been used daily at over 200 sites, tracking over 800,000 high-value assets and managing £100m of inventory. Acumentive solutions help teams in healthcare, telecommunications, supply chain and logistics, manufacturing, and utilities (and many more) improve identification, visibility and control of their assets and equipment, saving them time and money and improving operational and financial efficiencies.

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