**Digital and Interoperable Medicines Programme**

The Digital and Interoperable Medicines Programme has been established to support the development and adoption of IT systems that will enable information about a patient's medication, allergies, intolerances and prescriptions to flow seamlessly across all health and care services.

**About the Programme**

Currently, information about patients' medication, allergies, intolerances and prescriptions held by the NHS is fragmented. The data is often recorded in different formats and using different vocabulary.

This means, for example, that information you share with your GP isn't easily shared with clinicians in hospitals and community care services across England. It frustrates patients who, upon meeting a new clinician, have to repeat the list of medicines they're taking and waste the clinicians time recording.

To address this, the Digital and Interoperable Medicines Programme aims to:

* introduce a single shared standard for recording medicines information across health and care services
* enable health and care services to share patient medicines information digitally
* increase availability of medicines data to support NHS service delivery and improvements to patient safety

**Benefits to patients and services**

These changes mean clinicians within health and care services will be able to access accurate patient medication data at the point of care using a consolidated patient medication record. This saves them the burden of re-recording patient medication histories. It also means patients receive safer care and don't have to dictate their medication history to each clinician they meet.

Using shared recording standards make it easier to extract medicines and prescribing information to support analyses and research. This can then be used, subject to strict controls and governance, for the purpose of informing healthcare planning, commissioning services, developing policy and healthcare research.

The expansion of EPS across health and care services will create a more efficient prescribing and dispensing process for health and care services, and safer, more convenient services for patients.

This programme will:

* lead to safer patient care
* save time for patients and for health and care services
* increase opportunities for research

The Digital and Interoperable Medicines Programme consists of 3 main areas of work.

**Medicines Interoperability**

We are going to define and encourage health and care services to adopt [Medicines Interoperability](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/digital-and-interoperable-medicines/standards) so that medication information can be shared easily within and across health and care.

The first step in this process was the publication in October 2021 of an Information Standard Notice which outlined new common standards for the transfer of medicines information to support patient care. These requirements must be met by 31 March 2023 - please refer to the [Standard’s Requirements Specification](https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/information-standards/information-standards-and-data-collections-including-extractions/publications-and-notifications/standards-and-collections/dapb4013-medicine-and-allergy-intolerance-data-transfer).

The FHIR standard is the global industry standard for passing healthcare data between systems and will enable the transfer of medicines information in the NHS. It includes the content of the messages and the technical details on how the message are sent and received (use of APIs).

The success of this workstream relies on the adoption of the [NHS Dictionary of Medicines and Devices (dm+d)](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/digital-and-interoperable-medicines/standards#dm-d-adoption) and Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR) standards.

dm+d is the NHS interoperability standard that provides a consistent way of identifying information on the medications used in the care of a patient at any point in the care journey, regardless of the healthcare provider’s IT system that was used to record that data.

[Read more about interoperable medicines standards](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/digital-and-interoperable-medicines/standards).

**Electronic Prescription Service - next generation**

The Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) will be upgraded in alignment with national interoperability standards and made available for use across a greater number of care settings, particularly secondary care. This will create a more efficient prescribing and dispensing process for health and care services, and a safer, more convenient services for patients.

Read about the [next generation of developments to the EPS](https://digital.nhs.uk/services/digital-and-interoperable-medicines/eps---next-generation).

**Medicines data for secondary uses**

This area is exploring increased availability of medicines data to support NHS service delivery and improvements to patient safety.

For further information: <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/digital-and-interoperable-medicines>

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