
Digital Focus

Joint Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 27/11/2025

Lead director/officer: Peter Burnett/Laura Godtschalk

Useful information

■ Report author: Laura Godtschalk

1. Summary

Digital tools for patients and those supporting them are maturing at pace in LLR, with growing benefits for those using them. They help to simplify and streamline interactions with a care system that is often comprised of many moving parts, and give people greater control over their care. In parallel, vital work is scaling up around digital inclusion, both increasing the digital confidence and skills of members of the public and staff, and ensuring that services remain easily and equally accessible to those who, whether by choice or circumstances, are not users of online tools.

The NHS App continues to expand its functionality, offering patients improved access to both GP and hospital services. This includes features such as appointment management, prescription ordering, and access to medical records.

Integration with the University Hospitals of Leicester (Phase 1) has been completed, enabling patients to manage, cancel and rebook appointments through the app., Integration with the Leicestershire Partnership Trust is pending, awaiting the outcomes of national pilots for clinical system integration.

Digital inclusion initiatives are being scaled up across the region, with more than 60 digital hubs now operating within Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR). These hubs provide support with digital access, device recycling and digital skills training. In addition, both national and local efforts are ongoing to promote digital inclusion and ambassador programmes, ensuring equitable access and digital support for all communities.

2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny:

Joint Scrutiny Commission are invited to:

- Note the progress and benefits of the NHS App rollout and integration.
- Support ongoing digital inclusion initiatives and ambassador programmes.
- Endorse further system integration and funding bids to expand app functionality.
- Encourage continued collaboration with local authorities and VCSE sector to maximise digital access and reduce inequalities.
- Support further development and adoption of digital information sharing tools that support the team around the patient and reduce the coordination burden on individuals and their carers.

3. Detailed report

NHS App Functionality

The NHS App offers a range of core functionalities for patients registered with GP surgeries, including access to detailed medical records, appointment management, prescription ordering, and other essential services. However, access to certain features such as viewing detailed medical records (aka accelerated access) depends on whether individual GP practices have enabled the functionality. This variation means that not all patients currently see the same information within the app. There are 8 practices in LLR who do not enable detailed medical records for all patients, due to the nature of the services they provide and concerns around safeguarding. Patients who do not have detailed medical access can contact their GP surgery to request.

Recent integrations to the NHS App have introduced new features, including the ability for patients to view and manage their acute hospital appointments. Future ambitions include enabling patient-initiated follow-ups, supporting digital care plan management, introducing two-way communication between patients and care teams, and achieving broader integration with clinical systems across health and care settings. The delivery of these developments remains dependent on national funding and the continued enhancement of the NHS App platform at national level.

Alongside additional access and visibility via the NHS App and other digital methods, it is important to note that non-digital methods are still supported. Enablement for c80% to access digitally means more time for the c20% who require non-digital interactions. Further, secure and proportionate information sharing between professionals, including via the LLR Care Record, reduces the reliance on patients memorising their care record to support them in accessing coordinated care that spans across multiple different providers.

Digital Inclusion

There are now more than 60 digital inclusion hubs across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR), supported by the Good Things Foundation. These hubs provide free data, digital devices, and digital skills training to help individuals get online and build confidence in using digital tools.

Device recycling initiatives are also underway, aiming to repurpose retired digital equipment for community use and ensure that more people have access to suitable technology.

Community engagement initiatives include local ambassador programmes and public events that promote the NHS App and encourage digital health management. These efforts focus on supporting both digital-first patients and those who remain digitally excluded, ensuring equitable access to digital health services.

The Digital Inclusion Action Plan aligns closely with national strategies designed to reduce digital exclusion and promote digital wellbeing, ensuring that everyone can benefit from the growing range of digital health and care services.

With the NHS Medium Term Framework Plan's specific focus on "digital as default", we recognise the potential of equity impact and have raised this as a concern nationally.

LLR Care Record

The LLR Care Record is key digital infrastructure supporting coordinated and informed direct care, and an NHS 10 year plan enabler, securely providing a blended view of a

person's recent health and care information. Users of LLR CR across health and social care report significant reductions in time spent seeking information, which frees up staff time for direct care. For example, social care and physiotherapy teams in Leicestershire County Council previously spent an average of 2 hours per day searching for information, while the Discharge Hub spent over an hour and a half daily. LLR CR users in social care report an average time saving of 30 minutes each time they log into the system relative to phoning and emailing. Perhaps more significantly, they are able to accelerate end-to-end processes such as assessment and confirm care needs much sooner as a result of having self-service access to required information.

The LLR Care Record enables holistic, integrated care, and reduces inequity, especially where a person may be less able to convey their own case history. By joining up key information from multiple organisations for direct care purposes, it provides a view of a person's health and care journey supporting better, safer decision-making and coordination, both along streamlined pathways and in the context of neighbourhood working.

LLR CR is designed to be inclusive, quick to learn and easy to use. It is usually accessed via existing systems, avoiding additional passwords and logins. Staff are trained, and there is an audit trail on all uses, ensuring confidentiality and security. Only staff involved in a person's health and care can access the information.

Adult social care colleagues describe the LLR Care Record as a "game changer," highlighting:

- Time saved accessing information
- Reduced need for phone calls to GP practices
- Easier and quicker direction to appropriate support, including to avoid hospital readmission
- Improved understanding of where a person is on their care pathway.

The LLR CR programme has invested in multi-media publicity, including animated videos, radio adverts in multiple languages, Facebook campaigns, and accessible leaflets. This ensures widespread awareness and accessibility, especially among linguistically diverse populations.

The LLR CR has been developed through collaborative user centred design techniques where front-line users help to inform the interface and define and prioritise the datasets required by or available from their services. The programme team actively seeks feedback from users and partners, and shares and collaborates with other Integrated Care Systems to define best practice approaches and broaden impact.

4. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

4.1 Financial Implications

- NHS App appointment functionality is anticipated to deliver financial benefits arising from: reduced missed appointments (£120 per DNA avoided), call centre efficiencies, and reduced postage costs (£2/letter).
- Resource reallocation opportunities from operational efficiencies.

4.2 Equalities Implications

- Digital inclusion initiatives aim to reduce health inequalities by supporting those at risk of digital exclusion.
- Ongoing monitoring to ensure equitable access for all communities.
- Design with digitally excluded in mind.