The Royal Pharmaceutical Society

Empowering pharmacists to improve Pharmaceutical Care and Medicines Safety through Information Technology

Information Technology Strategic Principles

September 2011
Information Technology

Foreword and Introduction

Information Technology underpins and supports the delivery of pharmacy services across all sectors of pharmacy.

Effective and robust IT systems are vital to the future development of new clinical and professional roles for pharmacists. IT systems are also crucially important to the delivery of pharmacists’ medicine supply function.

In support of previous Royal Pharmaceutical Society strategic intentions for IT this document seeks to build on the good work already done and demonstrate leadership in taking this important area of work forward both strategically and operationally. This will be achieved through a new set of IT principles which will direct our intentions and aspirations going forward.

The Society recognises the potential for IT to support, develop and transform pharmacy services in the future. The use of IT is vitally important to achieving the clinical ambitions of pharmacists and to improving the quality of pharmacy services and pharmaceutical care.

Pharmacy IT systems should be able to facilitate improved access to pharmaceutical care and improve medicines safety.
Information Technology

Objective

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society is committed to ensuring that Information Technology is developed in the most appropriate way which will help secure the future requirements of pharmacists in their day to day practice on a GB wide basis. We will do this by ensuring that the professional requirements of pharmacists are maintained, supported and developed through the adoption and use of appropriate IT systems.

The Society recognises that there are differences in NHS policy and thereby IT systems across the countries but will work with members, governments and stakeholders to ensure that what is being developed fulfils the needs and aspirations of the membership in each country.

The aim of this document is to ensure that members can feel supported by the Society in ensuring that IT is developed and used to empower pharmacists in their clinical and professional practice.

It is important that the profession embraces new technologies and new IT initiatives to improve the quality of pharmacy services and patient care.

This document will become the cornerstone of the Society’s intention to ensure that future pharmacy IT developments support the profession in its delivery of pharmaceutical care and in improving medicines safety.
The Royal Pharmaceutical Society

Information Technology Strategic Principles

Executive Summary

Patient Care

- Pharmacy IT systems should provide for a robust and efficient system for the Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions
- Pharmacists should have secure and responsible access to the electronic patient record
- Pharmacy IT systems should be developed with improving the care of patients as a priority
- Pharmacy IT system developments should enhance medicines safety
- Pharmacy IT systems should be adequately resourced in order to secure the future development of the pharmacy profession in the delivery of pharmaceutical care
- Pharmacy IT systems should not only produce an effective, efficient and safe dispensing and labelling record system but also provide for a sound clinical system that can be evidence-based
- New developments in IT should support electronic prescribing by pharmacists

Education and Learning

- IT should be used and developed to support the education and training of pharmacists
- Pharmacy education should ensure a basic standard of IT literacy which supports the development of pharmacy with further training supported and facilitated by pharmacy IT systems
- Pharmacy IT system developments should provide for the recording of evidence and research to support pharmacy practice
**Bureaucracy, Accessibility and Extensibility**

- IT developments should in principle be used to decrease the bureaucratic burdens and workforce pressures on pharmacists
- Pharmacists should have full access to the internet and web-based information systems in their daily practice
- Electronic automated processes and robotic dispensing systems should be used to improve medicines safety and reduce pharmacists’ workload enabling more time for the delivery of pharmaceutical care in the pharmacy setting
- Interoperability should be a key ‘built in’ objective in the development of IT systems
- Pharmacy IT system developments should be responsive to the needs of the user and include a future proofing process to ensure the future needs of the user and the pharmacy profession are recognised and enabled

**Information Governance**

- Proper Information Governance is fundamental to the development of any pharmacy IT system or information process and patient information should be stored in a safe and secure manner to ensure patient confidentiality
Information Technology – Strategic Principles

Patient Care

Information Technology should be developed and used to improve the pharmaceutical care of patients and medicines safety.

Pharmacy IT systems should provide for a robust and efficient system for the Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions

The electronic transfer of prescriptions will help to modernise the delivery of pharmacy services, reduce the number of transcribing errors and make for more efficient prescription processing and payment systems.

It should also help in the move to future paperless systems and a reduction in bureaucratic burdens.

It will help to provide the platform for the future sharing of electronic medication records.

Pharmacists should have secure and responsible access to the electronic patient record

Pharmacists should have access to the full electronic patient record and be responsible for making appropriate use of that record. Pharmacists’ access to the electronic patient record is important in ensuring continuity of shared care.

The Society supports the development of a fully integrated patient record across secondary and primary care. Pharmacy IT systems should also seamlessly support the electronic patient discharge process between hospital and community.

Access to the electronic patient record will allow pharmacists to make more informed clinical decisions in the pharmaceutical care of patients, improve medicines safety and concordance and help address some of the drug bill inefficiencies which currently exist within the NHS.

Having access to the electronic patient record will allow pharmacists to quickly and appropriately review the medication information to help improve the quality of pharmaceutical care.

The ability to access the electronic patient record will allow pharmacists to play an even bigger role in the delivery of unscheduled care by improving medicines and patient safety.
Pharmacy IT systems should be developed with improving the care of patients as a priority

Any development of pharmacy IT systems should enhance the dispensing and pharmaceutical care process and not detract from it. IT systems should be designed to enable improved levels of pharmaceutical care. IT should be developed in such a way that it enables pharmacists to be at the forefront of healthcare delivery and be able to support better pharmaceutical care.

Anyone who receives a medicine supply should be able to access a pharmacist whether in person or otherwise by an electronic method.

IT systems should be able to assist the pharmacist with appropriate information that will enable informed clinical decisions to be made and revision of decisions and referral to other healthcare practitioners where appropriate.

IT system developments should support the transfer of care and IT should be used to support patient care in whatever care setting.

Pharmacy IT system developments should enhance medicines safety

IT should be used to enhance patient safety and medicines safety through the use of such things as electronic barcode scanning and electronic Adverse Drug Reaction reporting.

Use of new information technologies should be introduced by the profession to enhance patient safety and medicines safety.

IT used in a safe, effective and appropriate way will enhance the pharmaceutical care of people with long term conditions.

Pharmacy IT systems should be adequately resourced in order to secure the future development of the pharmacy profession in the delivery of pharmaceutical care

The future development of pharmacy IT systems is fundamentally dependent on adequate and appropriate resources being made available. The importance of pharmacy IT to improving patient care, medicines safety and advancing pharmacists’ clinical roles needs to be recognised and funded accordingly.

Investing in future pharmacy IT initiatives and making better use of existing IT systems can bring about quality improvements in pharmacy services and more efficient ways of working.

Supporting better and more effective use of IT will enable service redesign and improved delivery of pharmacy services in the future.

The Society believes that investment in IT is critical to achieving better quality pharmacy services and pharmaceutical care but recognises the requirement for this to be delivered in the most efficient and cost-effective way.
Pharmacy IT systems should not only produce an effective, efficient and safe dispensing and labelling record system but also provide for a sound clinical system that can be evidence based.

Pharmacy electronic systems should not only provide for an accurate dispensing and labelling process but must also deliver from the point of view of supporting clinical roles, decisions and services.

Pharmacy electronic systems should be able to support and enhance the clinical assessment, check and review process.

Pharmacy IT developments need to be able to support improved capacity and capability in the delivery of pharmaceutical care.

They must also be used to make available information, support and guidance which will support the development of pharmacy practice, pharmacy services and the delivery of pharmaceutical care.

**New developments in IT should support electronic prescribing by pharmacists**

Pharmacists are the experts in medicines and supporting pharmacists to prescribe will improve clinical outcomes for patients.

Pharmacist prescribing will help to reduce medicines wastage and pressure on GPs.

Supporting this key developing role with electronic underpinning will go some way towards removing some of the barriers that exist to moving pharmacist prescribing forward.
Education, Learning and Research

Pharmacy IT systems must be used and developed to further the education of pharmacists, support the sharing of best practice and enable the availability of information to inform clinical decisions.

IT should be used and developed to support the education and training of pharmacists

Pharmacy IT developments should be able to provide for and support the education and training of pharmacists in their day to day practice.

All pharmacists should be able to access information tools, education guidance and reference material in a seamless electronic way.

Pharmacy IT systems should support and facilitate pharmacy e-learning, including web-based learning, computer based learning and virtual digital learning and training.

Pharmacists should be able to access e-learning evidence-based information and research and CPD electronically in order to help them with their day to day practice.

Proper information systems are important to the development of pharmacists’ roles and new pharmacy services.

Pharmacy education should ensure a basic standard of IT literacy which supports the development of pharmacy with further training supported and facilitated by pharmacy IT systems

Pharmacy students should be IT literate and be able to read and interpret electronic data in a way which will enhance their practice when they qualify.

Pharmacists should also be able to use these skills and their IT systems to improve the health literacy of their patients and members of the public.

Pharmacy IT system developments should provide for the recording of evidence and research to support pharmacy practice

Pharmacy IT systems should capture a database of information to support the development of future pharmacist roles and enable accreditation where appropriate if that is relevant.

Pharmacy IT systems should be able to provide a robust electronic evidence base of the services which pharmacists deliver and the important role that pharmacists play in the care of patients. This is vitally important to support pharmacy practice and for the development and promotion of new roles for pharmacists in the future.
Bureaucracy, Accessibility and Extensibility

IT systems should be developed in such a way that reduces the bureaucratic burdens on pharmacists, improves accessibility to information and services and ensures the future proofing capability of pharmacy systems.

IT developments should in principle be used to decrease the bureaucratic burdens and workforce pressures on pharmacists

Pharmacy IT developments should relieve workplace pressures by replacing certain processes and tasks rather than creating additional ones.

A key objective in the future should be the delivery of paperless systems, replacing paper systems with digital systems.

IT developments that support pharmacy practice should at the same time reduce other workloads and bureaucratic burdens.

However it is recognised that the speed of processing tasks has to be counterbalanced against the need to provide for a sound, recorded evidence base of pharmacists’ activities. This will ensure that pharmacists’ contribution to improving patient care and medicines safety is recognised and valued.

Pharmacists should have full access to the internet and web-based information systems in their daily practice

Pharmacists should have full electronic access to appropriate information in order to provide for sound and well informed clinical decisions.

Access to broadband, appropriate NHS email systems and electronic care systems enables access to information, improves clinical processes and promotes the sharing of best practice.

Pharmacists should be trusted and empowered as professionals to have full access to the internet and electronic web-based systems.
Electronic automated processes and robotic dispensing systems should be used to improve medicines safety and reduce pharmacists’ workload enabling more time for the delivery of pharmaceutical care in the pharmacy setting.

The use of robotics and automated electronic processes will enable efficiencies in the dispensing process and also free up pharmacist and technician time in order to lead and support new clinical pharmacy services delivered in the pharmacy environment.

Such automated systems should be developed with recognition of the needs and requirements of the profession going forward and the ambition to provide more patient centred care in the future.

Accessibility is one of pharmacy’s key strengths and the use of automated electronic processes will improve that accessibility further by facilitating more opportunities for pharmacist / patient interactions in the pharmacy.

There will also be a requirement for pharmacy to engage in and understand the emerging use of new information technologies such as Telehealth and Telecare and pharmacy’s possible future involvement with such technologies.

Interoperability should be a key ‘built in’ objective in the development of IT systems

Interoperability between different Patient Medication Record IT systems should be an important objective in the development of IT systems in order to ensure continuity of patient care.

Development of a more integrated approach to pharmacy IT that uses common sound coding language will enhance patient care and improve medicine safety.

The Society supports IT initiatives which further the integration of information sharing systems across primary and secondary care and between healthcare professionals.
Pharmacy IT system developments should be responsive to the needs of the user and include a future proofing process to ensure the future needs of the user and the pharmacy profession are recognised and enabled

System providers need to be responsive to the needs of the system user and the needs of the profession in order to facilitate continuing IT system improvements which will enable the future direction for the pharmacy profession to be delivered.

It is vital that pharmacy IT system providers are able to provide the continuing software developments that will be required to further develop and evidence base pharmacy practice for the benefit of patients.

Pharmacy services are becoming increasingly information driven and dependent on IT. The availability, security, quality and integrity of data and stored information is becoming increasingly important and indeed critical to the delivery and continuity of pharmacy services.

The Society believes therefore that there is now a requirement for a 24 hour off-line support service to be provided by the pharmacy system providers to system users to ensure continuity and integrity of pharmacy services. This is increasingly so, as pharmacists deliver on their ever increasing legal and contractual obligations.

The Society has a duty to engage with pharmacy system providers, Governments and commissioners where relevant, in order to ensure consistent IT system improvements and that future pharmacy IT systems are fit for purpose.
Information Governance

In enabling the effective use of information technology to support and develop pharmacy services to improve patient care, pharmacists should ensure that patient information is kept confidential, safe and secure.

Proper Information Governance is fundamental to the development of any pharmacy IT system and information process and patient information should be stored in a safe and secure manner to ensure patient confidentiality.

Proper and appropriate systems of Information Governance need to be developed and put in place to ensure pharmacists are able to demonstrate that they can access data in a responsible and professional way.

Pharmacists have a duty to use patient information with due care and responsibility and should ensure at all times that such patient information is kept confidential and secure in accordance with their professional standards, legal requirements and ethical obligations.

Pharmacy IT systems development should adhere to Information Governance best practice.

The Society is committed to developing IT Information Governance standards guidance for pharmacists.
Summary of Information Technology Ambitions

Pharmacy IT systems should:

- be reliable, secure, fit for purpose, easy to use and have future proofing capability that is ubiquitous in the way they deliver across pharmacy

- support and develop pharmacy practice, enhance the pharmaceutical care of patients and should be aligned in a way that encourages future development of pharmacy services

- support and enhance pharmacy education, learning and research

- contribute to and support the future digital integration of health care services in the NHS.

- deliver quality and excellence in the way they underpin pharmacy practice, pharmacy services and the development of the pharmacy profession.