

Make the NHS great again whilst saving money

The NHS is unique in the world. Several nations have tried to imitate it and it certainly is one of Britains greatest achievements. Given the current state of affairs with Brexit the problems the NHS faces daily will only increase. The biggest one is staffing and cost. My proposal is designed to tackle both of these problems across the UK. Saving the NHS will create a massive boost to the public confidence in politics.

Currently each hospital trust is using their own system to administrate, book, pay, monitor, examine patients. This means each Trust, Dentist or GP has to spend time and money to establish software and to maintain it. The security of that system is paramount and needs to be impenetrable, yet we all know that most trusts use windows based computers that are vulnerable to cyber attacks. Some trusts still use a paper based system for the recording of clinical notes, tests and other data. This is even more costly, time wasting and carries a high risk of loss of data and breach of security.

Almost every person has a smartphone now so the technology is widespread available. Every health care professional (HCP) will be familiar with the use of smart phones. Most of that technology is intuitive and very easy to use, yet Apple have managed to keep their devices protected. Transferring the patient data into apps and giving each employee a handheld device to record and access that data will dramatically reduce administration time for all HCP's and reduce the cost of administration and management across the whole organisation. Establishing one system to be used by every HCP across the UK will be efficient and safer. It will allow the HCP to focus on the job they are trained to do and spend less time with administration. At the same time a universal system would allow the Department of Health (DH) access to all the data instantly. It would enable them to centrally administer the software and the resources. Universal patient software will also improve patient safety and communication.

Creating an app is beyond my knowledge. But I imagine that it would be possible to create one that is secure. Every HCP, Manager and Secretary could use a unique tablet with fingerprint and face recognition as security. Access to the patient data would be limited to these devices apart from a small number of computers for each hospital that would require a strong firewall. The handheld devices would not cost more than a month salary of each employee. Yet the universal system will be much faster, safer and easier to use. Less administration need will drive down the cost of staffing for trusts and practices. The current remuneration, contract system the NHS uses is also inefficient, expensive and favours companies not the patient. There are four different systems in place across the UK. Each of them is flawed but having different systems only drives up the cost but does not improve safety or quality. Having a universal system would allow the NHS to directly employ HCP's to deliver the care. Instantly the administration could be centralised. It would omit the risk of fraud and capital gain for third companies. This would dramatically drive down the cost whilst being equal and fair across the whole country in the best interest of the patients.

The possibilities of such a universal system are limitless. I do not claim to fully appreciate the complexity of this. But I believe that the energy wasted on administration is directly proportional to the level of frustration of staff and indirectly proportional to quality and safety of patient care. It is time to revolutionise the NHS and make it greater than it has ever been.