

Alex Crannis Head of Data & Intelligence Lisbet Rogers Clinical Data & Administration Manager

Embracing interoperability at Demelza: impact on referrals and access to medical data

Over the last 3 years, Demelza have embarked on a digital transformation journey, reviewing all key systems and creating efficiencies / streamlining processes where possible.

One of the most important projects we embarked on was accessing NHS shared records directly through our patient management system. Before this work was completed it would take our referrals team 8-12 weeks to process a new referral, mostly due to waiting for paperwork to arrive in the post, or chasing hospitals and doctors surgeries for important medical records.

Once this key interoperability project was completed, Demelza was able to process a standard referral in 4-6 weeks, and admission of our children is much simpler than before as we now have access to up-to-date medical records through the Kent and Medway Shared Records.

Being based in the South East of England we still have work to do with London and East Sussex shared record providers, but this will only enhance the data we have access to when we're able to work with them.

Connect with third party providers

The first step of interoperability is identifying the NHS data providers that are available in your area.

Reach out to your local contacts to find the solution for you; make notes of key contacts and follow up regularly to see if they're ready to enable shared records for your hospice.

Work with internal teams to implement the solution

Working with patient management users, IT departments and any other key stakeholders in your organisation, work with the third party providing access to test and confirm.

There'll be a lot of testing to make sure everything works as expected.

"Engaging with stakeholders was key to the process, once everyone was on board it was easy to implement!" "Access to NHS records has significantly reduced the time some families have had to wait before accessing Demelza's services."

Complete information governance work

The largest part of this project is to get organisational sign-off to gain access to this data. Data privacy impact assessments, non-disclosure agreements and other legal documents will need to be completed to gain access.

Whilst it might be a lengthy process at the time access to this data will save the families and service users a large amount of time.

Monitor and review – continually improve and look for extra providers

Take a step back and admire all of your hard work, you've just saved your clinicians an inordinate amount of time whilst processing referrals and new admissions to your service, whilst also adding an additional element of patient safety.

Find out about this project



demelza.org.uk

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