

WHITEPAPER

What can a unified digital identity strategy bring to an ICS?

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Enabling ICSs with fast, secure access to shared patient information

How to deliver quick wins throughout your Integrated Care System with collaborative projects focused on benefits to both patients and clinicians

As we pass the milestone of the first year of the Integrated Care System and Integrated Care Board concepts ushered in by April 2022's Health and Care Act, it's time to look at practical ways to reap the envisaged returns from collaboration. Those returns include quick-win projects that focus on benefits for patients and clinicians.

Introduction

April 2022 saw the Royal Assent for the Health and Care Act, which is bringing some of the biggest changes in over 25 years to the way NHS England and the care sector will work together. As The King's Fund notes: ["The main purpose of the Health and Care Act is to establish a legislative framework that supports collaboration and partnership-working to integrate services for patients."](#)

Evolving ICSs are aiming to provide better, more comprehensive services to patients across a region. As well as enabling a more joined up approach to patient care, this will also yield economies of scale, standardisation, and a better experience for people working in the healthcare sector. That all adds up to a better patient experience - the ultimate vision of the ICSs. The first months of this major change in direction have largely been spent assessing the potential impacts of the Act, bedding in ICSs, and considering ways to organise.

What should come next?

MOVING FROM COMPETITION TO COLLABORATION

The government reforms in the 1990s introduced the concept of separation of healthcare purchasers, such as CCGs and National Agencies, from the providers of those services - known as the purchaser provider split. This introduced internal markets and created a relatively competitive environment for funding, coupled with the desire for visibility derived from the successful delivery of high profile projects. The 2022 Act arrived against a backdrop of a decade of austerity, Brexit challenges, and the continuing stresses from COVID-19. The government and NHS are looking towards a new dawn of increased collaboration as a way to make the whole health and care sector work better for patients while tight budget constraints remain.

“ ICSs are partnerships that bring providers and commissioners of NHS services across a geographical area together with local authorities and other local partners to collectively plan health and care services to meet the needs of their local population. This solidifies the move away from the old legislative focus on competition to a new framework that supports collaboration. ”

Source: The King's Fundⁱⁱ



As ICSs start to materialise and take shape, and, as IT departments are wondering how to bring new colleagues from different organisations together, now is an ideal time to look at the options to deliver quick wins to prove the new collaboration concept, while supporting a health and care system under tremendous pressures. It is here that core IT and infrastructure projects, such as streamlining access to patient information for many different systems across the ICSs, offer the greatest chance to bring people together, and provide significant, tangible benefits for patients and clinicians - in addition to meeting financial targets and improving performance.

STAY FOCUSED ON DELIVERING TANGIBLE SUCCESSES

The 2022 Health and Care Act lays out the future direction of health and social care, with a move towards more collaborative approaches. However, in addition to this overarching principle short term issues and targets must also be acknowledged. Despite changes in the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, clinicians will always focus on the patient first and foremost.

For the IT department, the right strategy is to keep a laser focus on improving the experiences of frontline clinicians and enhancing their ability to deliver the best possible care to patients. Keeping this idea front and centre ensures clarity of purpose in the face of conflicting demands. Now, more than ever before, concentrating on clinicians' and patients' real-world needs can lead to rapid and highly visible improvements. Getting back to basics and doing what feels instinctively right may prove the best approach in the long run.

ⁱⁱ [kingsfund.org](https://www.kingsfund.org)

OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED AN ICS



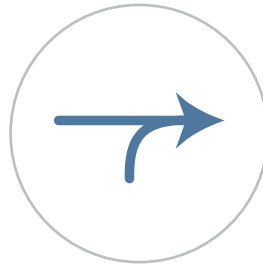
Improved clinician
experience



Collective buying
power



Relevant
standardisation



Appropriate
convergence

“ The proposed merger of NHS England, Health Education England and NHS Digital on 1 April 2023ⁱⁱⁱ, provides a unique opportunity to create a ‘new’ NHS England, putting workforce, data, digital and technology at the heart of our plans to transform the NHS.”

Source: NHS England Operating Framework

The Care Act 2022 reflects the new dawn of a more collaborative version of the NHS, offering opportunities to break away from the locked-in competitive behaviours of the past. In essence, the ICS reforms aim to deliver joined up services around a geography. An ICS is made up of a number of disparate organisations varying in size. It is likely that these will provide differing levels of experience and satisfaction for clinicians and patients.

Avoid “rip and replace”

Across the ICS there will be a range of IT infrastructures and systems purchased by different teams from a range of suppliers. The ICS member organisations will have differing levels of digitisation and technology skills and competences. On the face of it, this complexity presents many areas for rationalisation. However, best value is rarely achieved by a costly and disruptive “rip and replace” strategy, so any projects around convergence need to be appropriate and well thought through. That includes a sharp focus on quick-win projects which retain the RoI from existing IT investments.

Build trust

IT disparities can prove a good starting point for an ICS to start driving collaboration. Core IT and Infrastructure projects offer a great chance to get IT departments across an ICS working together, building trust and speedily delivering real benefits to their users.

ⁱⁱⁱ Now brought forward to 1 January 2023

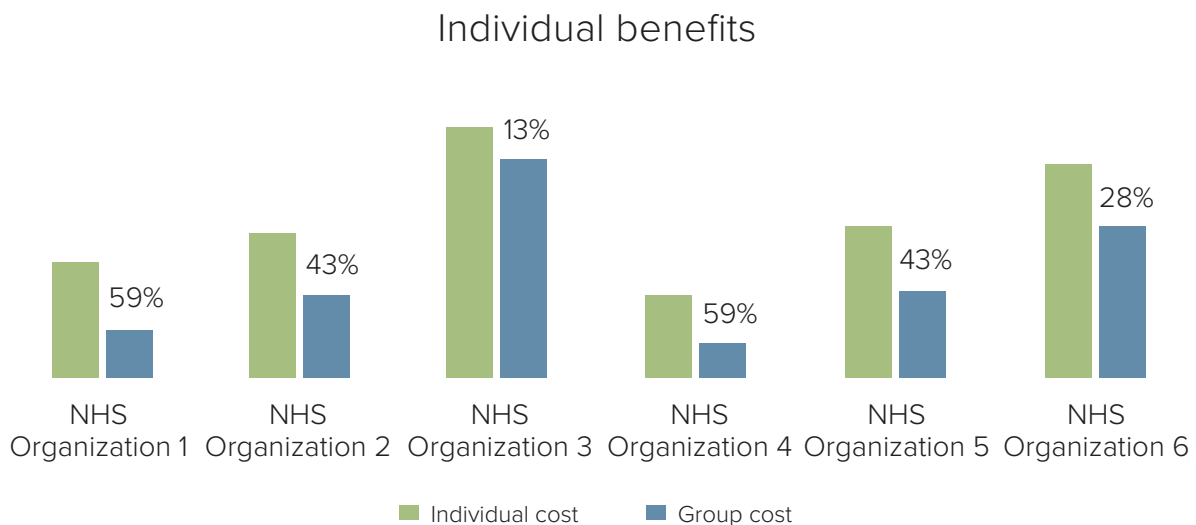
Listen to clinicians

Leadership from an ICS-level Design Board is needed so that the challenges addressed are based on need and potential impact, rather than the size of an organisation's and strength of voice. The requirements of frontline clinicians must be heard, and unfortunately, IT departments can often feel distanced from the frontline. Inviting clinicians to join project boards and, into IT teams by creating real roles and jobs in Informatics enables clinicians to contribute significantly, while also keeping their medical professional registration.

QUICK WINS THROUGH IT COLLABORATION

Look to replicate IT best practice from within the ICS and around the world.

The experience of the “digital pioneer” organisations within an ICS and exemplars from around the world can be used to benefit those less advanced in their digitisation journey. Standardising on systems and rationalising technology suppliers will not only simplify the ICS's IT landscape, but should also provide some quick-win cost savings, which can fund investments in further collaboration projects.



IMPROVED BUYING POWER

Consolidating purchasing can not only drive down costs through increased purchasing volumes. It can also increase the status of the ICS as a customer opening up further “framework agreements” with sizable discounts from suppliers, enhancing support and service levels, and improving access to resources and expertise. One ICB comprising six collaborating organisations was able to reduce procurement costs by 35%. In short, the ICS becomes a more valuable customer to a vendor when it acts as a larger single entity rather than individual, smaller customer organisations.

STANDARDISATION DRIVES BETTER EXPERIENCES

Standardisation of technology and systems, where appropriate, can be used to deliver a better quality experience for clinicians. Examples include fast login, good broadband connection, and WiFi to provide reliable access to systems. A consistent experience will enable clinicians to focus more on patient care, because they can take the tech for granted.

SERVICE MANAGEMENT CONSOLIDATION

For the end users, having one place to go for all kinds of system support - for example, onboarding new staff to systems; resetting passwords; reporting application problems; replacing hardware; notification of cyber threats etc. - has obvious advantages. Support staff across the ICS can support each other and enrich their jobs by moving from fire fighting to value-adding activities such as providing preemptive advice and ongoing training on how to get the best out of systems.

MAKING IT EASIER FOR CLINICIANS TO DELIVER GREAT HEALTHCARE

The Health and Social Care sector, still under pressure from COVID-19, has more than 165,000+ vacancies^{iv}, loading yet more pressures on already embattled staff. Anything which can be done to improve their daily work experiences will enable frontline staff to spend more time providing high-quality care for patients. Minimising frustrations and inefficiencies will increase satisfaction levels and contribute in some small way to keeping clinicians from walking away from the sector. Often, problems come not from adopting new, unfamiliar systems per se. More likely, they stem from associated login delays caused by antiquated hardware, a dearth of appropriate and timely training, and a lack of buy-in. These issues can be avoided through collaborative development of systems by end users working together with IT.



FLEXIBLE, MOBILE WORKFORCE

The workforce across the range of organisations making up the ICS is disparate and fluid, with employees, visiting clinicians, registrars, locums, agency staff, part-time workers, and volunteers changing the user base composition almost daily. The ICS concept will further drive the trend for staff to move around and between organisations; they'll adopt different roles on different shifts or when working in different locations; and enable even more remote and hybrid working.

^{iv}[nursingtimes.net](https://www.nursingtimes.net), [skillsforcare.org](https://www.skillsforcare.org)

REMOVING BARRIERS TO TECHNOLOGY

Creating an improved baseline standard of access to systems and data across the ICS should be the goal. Clinicians' frustration with systems and EPRs is often caused by poor performing hardware and slow login procedures, rather than problems inherent in the solutions themselves. It will be beneficial for end users who may move between organisations and might face remembering tens of user IDs, passwords and login procedures, to have simplified and similar login processes and workflows to access devices and applications across as much of the ICS as possible. Making system access as easy as possible - while maintaining security and auditability - will improve efficiency, remove frustrations, and facilitate collaboration and movement across an ICS.

CASE STUDY



One Imprivata customer reduced 90 second login times requiring different user IDs and passwords to access each system, down to five seconds.

Over a three-month period, 3,200 hours of clinicians' time was saved through more efficient access to systems.

DIGITAL IDENTITY BRINGS IT ALL TOGETHER

Cyber security threats continue to mount year by year. In 2019, 41% of all security breaches occurred in the healthcare industry. Mass mobilisation of healthcare because of the pandemic, hybrid working practices, and the public's increased collection of and access to their own healthcare data via apps and fitness trackers, means cyber security will only continue to grow as an issue.

41%

of all security breaches occurred in the healthcare industry.

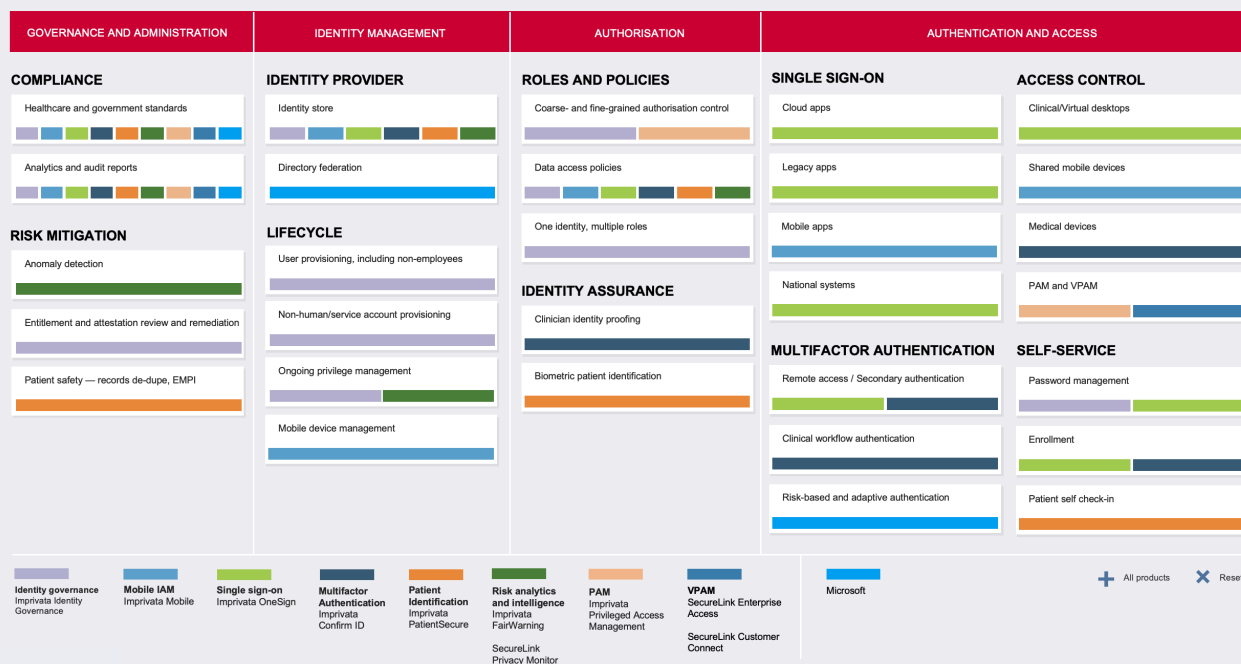
DIGITAL IDENTITY IS THE NEW CONTROL PLANE

The strategic answer is to make digital identity the new control plane, through which all access to clinical and patient data systems is managed. Many healthcare organisations already use identity and access management tools. Yet few integrate them into a holistic digital identity strategy, because in the past this has been hard to do. Now, proven tools such as those offered by Imprivata are available that can empower digital transformation.

PROTECTING SENSITIVE PATIENT DATA

A balanced approach will ensure cybersecurity policies and controls are implemented without creating a barrier for clinicians, while ensuring that only authorised users can access appropriate systems and data. Confidential data must remain protected, and an all-encompassing audit trail needs to be created. To achieve these aims, an easy-to-manage, yet robust approach to identity and access management (IAM) can be enabled by the Imprivata [Digital Identity Framework](#).

Imprivata Digital Identity Framework



SHARED PATIENT RECORDS - RIGHT ACROSS THE ICS

Digital identities enable simplified yet more secure login procedures, while also enabling new digitally enhanced workflows. These digital workflows require strong, effective management of permissions, governance, and patient privacy while providing the right data at the right time to the right person. This has the potential to provide access to shared patient records right across an ICS, with all the benefits that implies for patient care, as well as providing a much easier working environment for clinicians.

DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

Shared records need to be monitored and audited for compliance and governance reasons. Imprivata has a solution that can proactively monitor the access of patient records. This becomes a powerful tool when introduced in a shared care record environment allowing patient records to be available to all at the point of care, whilst ensuring they're appropriately accessed. Any unusual access will be reported to information governance, along with the evidence for further investigation by the identity governance team.

CASE STUDY

The success of taking a strategic approach to digital identity management can be seen at Bolton NHS Foundation Trust. Early in 2020, Bolton instigated a project to introduce Imprivata Identity Governance, to improve the processes for managing access to systems and data for staff joiners, movers, and leavers. Now it takes their line managers just minutes instead of weeks to onboard a new employee, grant temporary access, or process a leaver, without the need for any IT helpdesk involvement or technical knowledge.

In conclusion

QUICK WINS FROM ICB/ICS COLLABORATION PROJECTS

Successful collaboration projects can act as beacons for the way forward, driving new thinking and new behaviours, delivering quick wins that build confidence.

As ICSs and ICBs evolve, their aim is to provide better, more comprehensive, and joined up health and care services to patients across a region. It is hoped that as well as improving patient care, the new approach will also yield economies of scale, standardisation, and a better experience for people working in the healthcare sector.

Ultimately, success will best be seen through the lens of the patients and clinicians. Collaboration projects will start to unlock the benefits expected from the Health and Care Act, 2022 reforms. Quick-win collaboration projects and actions include:

- Consolidation of purchasing to drive down costs and increase standardisation of systems and infrastructure
- Use of an ICS's enhanced customer status from the consolidation of purchasing power to drive additional benefits from suppliers

- Simplified access to system support and amalgamate service desks
- Greater ease for clinicians to access systems and data - simplifying, standardising, and speeding up logons and the switching between systems and devices
- Streamlining employee onboarding, provisioning, and offboarding to speed up processes, remove frustrations, and maintain security

Successful collaboration projects can act as beacons for the way forward. They can drive new behaviours, fresh thinking, and new levels of trust. Collaboration projects will help IT departments learn how to work more closely to drive benefits, to deliver consistent and convenient solutions to end users, and to enable digital leaders to take quick wins to their ICS in a way that will create kudos and confidence, build respect, and make future investments more secure.

HOW IMPRIVATA CAN HELP DELIVER ON THE PROMISE OF ICS COLLABORATION

At Imprivata, our understanding of unique and complex healthcare workflows and IT systems has made us the world leader and trusted partner in digital identity management for healthcare organisations, including over 170 in the NHS.

Imprivata offers enterprise access, multifactor authentication, identity governance, and patient identification solutions. These are developed and approved in collaboration with clinicians to ensure that clinical workflow security and efficiency are always considered.

Imprivata is uniquely positioned to deliver on the promise of ICS collaboration through its range of healthcare solutions:

- Protect shared care records and keep a comprehensive audit trail of who had access to what, where, and when through Imprivata FairWarning and Imprivata Identity Governance.
- Provide fast access to shared care records and healthcare workflows by enabling the onboarding of new staff in minutes rather than days or weeks through Imprivata Identity Governance.
- Enable rapid access to systems, data and workflows at the point of care, and deliver enhanced security by removing the need for "workarounds" like shared logins, smartcards left in readers, passwords written on post-its etc., via Imprivata OneSign®

single sign-on and Imprivata Spine Combined Workflow Plus with Imprivata Virtual Smartcard.

- Support the adoption of EPRs by ensuring they can be easily and speedily accessed through Imprivata OneSign, Imprivata Spine Combined Workflow Plus, and Imprivata Virtual Smartcard.
- Provide role-based rights so employees can access just what they need to see, and no more with access rights managed, per clinician role, through Imprivata Identity Governance.
- Enable access from any location - on premise, mobile, off-site, or in community access with Imprivata Mobile Device Access

All of this can be managed via the Imprivata Digital Identity Framework.

To find out how your organisation measures up on the Imprivata Digital Identity Maturity model, take the [questionnaire here](#)

For more information about Imprivata [visit: www.imprivata.co.uk](http://www.imprivata.co.uk)



Imprivata, the digital identity company for healthcare, provides identity, authentication, and access management solutions that are purpose-built to solve healthcare's unique workflow, security, and compliance challenges.

For more information, please contact us at +44 (0) 208 744 6500
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