

# Digital and interoperable medicines

Transforming patient care and clinical services

## Briefing for senior executives

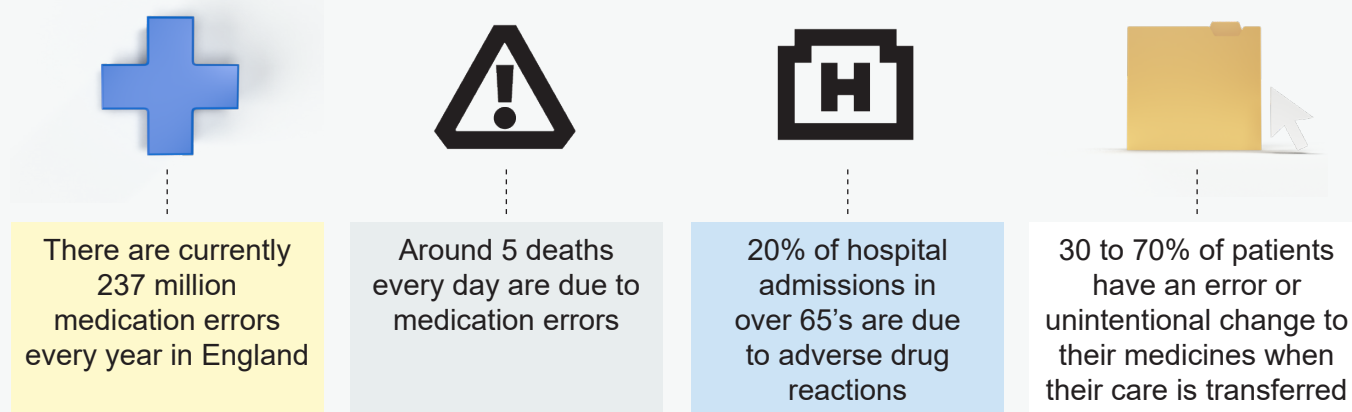
Information about patients' medications, allergies, intolerances and prescriptions held by the NHS can be fragmented.

Data is often recorded in different formats and using different vocabulary. This makes it difficult to share medicines information within and across health and care organisations.

To address this, all medication messages used by different NHS IT systems need to be standardised. Messages need to be interoperable, meaning different IT systems can seamlessly exchange and make use of data and information across system and organisational boundaries. This change will allow information to be transferred electronically, improving safety and efficiency, releasing time for staff to focus on care and providing patients with a better experience.

### Why is this important?

Immediate access to medicines information will improve patient safety by reducing errors and overprescribing:



Annually across England, a large amount of staff time is spent on medicine transcriptions and converting dosage information at the transfer of care:



### Interoperable medicines can contribute to better healthcare by:

- helping to address workforce capacity issues by reducing time to complete administrative tasks e.g. medicines reconciliation, ordering medicines, resolving prescription queries
- reducing the number of omissions, duplications and dosage errors as a result of transferring current medications electronically, therefore improving patient safety



- reducing the time taken to dispense medication as a result of receiving orders electronically which will enable patients to be discharged quicker
- improving data retrieval, reporting and analysis which can be used to inform healthcare planning, commissioning of services, developing policy and aiding research
- analysis of prescribing data with other metrics, quality indicators and outcomes measures, making it easier to assess impacts on patient care
- improving the experience of patients who no longer need to repeat medication details at every new care setting
- supporting the use of systems that provide the foundations for interoperability such as the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS), Electronic Prescribing and Medicines Administration (ePMA) and Closed Loop Medicines Administration (CLMA)

## How will this be achieved?

The Information Standards Notice (DAPB4013: Medicines and Allergy/Intolerance Data Transfer) puts in place the definitions and standards that are to be used when a health professional sends or receives patient medication and allergy/intolerance information, by computer systems, between care locations. The conformance date for this standard is **31 March 2023**. The information standard DAPB4013 is published under section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

## How will this help the wider health and care system?

Adopting the medicines standards from DAPB4013 will:

- lay the foundation for a single consolidated patient medication record, a single source of truth of a patient's medications and allergies/intolerances
- address problems of overprescribing and support medicines optimisation
- improve data analysis to support NHS service delivery, research and patient safety

## What are some of the key national policy drivers for this work?

- The Watcher Review (2016)
- The Future of Healthcare - policy paper (2018)
- HSIB – ePMA systems and safe discharge report (2019)
- NHS Long Term Plan (2019)
- National Overprescribing Review Report (2021)

## How senior executives can support the move to interoperable medicines

Senior executives will play a pivotal role. Among the key areas they should be engaged in are:

- communicating the vision and benefits of interoperable medicines and their place in the wider strategy of the organisation
- keeping all senior staff committed throughout the move to the new standards
- providing visible endorsement of the project and supporting the implementation team
- supporting budgets for a safe and appropriately staffed project
- help to maintain the project timeline by coordinating funding and procurement activities
- explore where use of the standards can transform and improve the delivery of care
- celebrating success

## Further Information

Direct any comments or queries about the briefing sheets to: [interopmeds@nhs.net](mailto:interopmeds@nhs.net)

DAPB4013 requirement specification: **DAPB4013: Medicine and Allergy/Intolerance Data Transfer** - NHS Digital

Access further information, including briefing sheets aimed at other staff groups, case studies, animations and technical guides: **Digital and Interoperable Medicines Programme** - NHS Digital

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