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## Enhancing NHS Through Digital Health Records: CIPHA's Strategic Support



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The Combined Intelligence for Population Health Action (CIPHA) programme has welcomed the Tony Blair Institute's recent paper, 'Preparing the NHS for the AI Era: A Digital Health Record for Every Citizen.' The paper emphasises the importance of a Digital Health Record (DHR) for every citizen as a pivotal element in NHS reform. CIPHA's stance on the TBI paper highlights the potential benefits of enhancing existing health records to meet the proposed DHR functionality and how a collaborative approach could help achieve this vision.

### Advancing Existing Health Records

CIPHA advocates for further developing existing health records to align with the DHR model proposed by the TBI report. This approach leverages existing infrastructure, governance solutions, and established relationships with clinicians and care providers. Among CIPHA's members, 11 Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) utilising the Graphnet platform already maintain comprehensive longitudinal patient records for over 17 million citizens. For these ICSs, enhancing the current platform is not just logical but essential for advancing healthcare delivery.

The continuity of using an existing system ensures that the investment and efforts made over the years in developing these records are not wasted. It also capitalises on the significant buy-in and momentum garnered from patients, staff, and providers, which is crucial for successful healthcare transformations. CIPHA's support for other ICSs with suitable platforms to build on what they have, provided they meet national standards, underscores its commitment to a cost-effective and timely enhancement of NHS digital capabilities.

### Collaborative Model for National Connectivity

CIPHA's collaborative model drives the enhancements needed to realise the DHR vision outlined in the TBI report. One key initiative includes defining, developing, and deploying APIs to support national connectivity. This would enable seamless integration with the National Record Locator service, ensuring patient records can be easily assembled, even when details are held across multiple ICSs.

Additionally, aligning the Federated Data Platform (FDP) with CIPHA's architecture could further enhance population health use cases, providing a robust foundation for innovative healthcare solutions. Supporting a library of third-party apps for conditions like diabetes and heart failure, which can exchange data with the DHR, would also be a significant step towards a more integrated and patient-centric healthcare system. Moreover, improving access to patient-facing applications, such as the NHS App, is essential for empowering patients to take control of their health information.

### Driving Transformation with Data and AI

Integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into healthcare is a significant focus of the TBI report, and CIPHA is well-positioned to support this transition. With a strong foundation in data-driven healthcare initiatives, CIPHA's member ICSs are already reaping the benefits of AI and data analytics in managing waiting lists, remote monitoring, and identifying candidates for interventions. The data flow for analytical purposes is a critical component of CIPHA's "Data into Action" programme, which aims to translate rich datasets into actionable insights.

By building on existing systems, CIPHA can accelerate the development and deployment of population health-driven transformation programmes, ensuring that the NHS remains at the forefront of healthcare innovation. The platform and data support provided by CIPHA will be instrumental in advancing AI-driven healthcare solutions, offering a fast and efficient pathway for achieving the goals set out in the TBI report.

### Conclusion

CIPHA's endorsement of the TBI report's vision for a Digital Health Record for every citizen highlights the importance of building on existing

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healthcare records to achieve NHS reform. By leveraging current infrastructure and fostering collaboration among ICSs, CIPHA can drive the necessary enhancements to support a more connected, innovative, and patient-centred healthcare system. As the NHS prepares for the AI era, CIPHA's strategic approach will be vital in realising the full potential of digital health records, ultimately improving healthcare outcomes for millions of citizens.

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