

Public & private blockchains

The differences explained

Jonas Lundqvist,
Haidrun, p7



Critical comms and 5G

How will 5G help the emergency services?

Jason Johur,
TCCA, p15



Top tips from an expert

What you need to know about IoT security

Keith Glancey,
Infoblox, p15



Budget 2021: NHS gets £2.1bn IT cash injection



Chancellor of the exchequer Rishi Sunak ringfenced £2.1bn in this year's budget, which he said will go toward improving IT and technology in NHS hospitals across the country.

The cash injection covers the introduction of digital systems for healthcare organisations that have not previously used them, restocking and updating antiquated technology, improving cybersecurity and expanding the use of shared digital care records.

This extra investment in IT and data services to create digital patient records is part of the government's larger £5.9bn capital funding to help the NHS clear the record backlog of patients waiting for treatment.

In addition, there will be support for around 100 "one-stop-shop" community diagnostic centres across England, to assist those waiting for clinical tests such as MRIs, ultrasounds and CT scans.

One in 10 trusts still operate on "paper-based systems" according to health and social care secretary, Sajid Javid. NHS trusts have been seeking an additional £1.8bn per year by 2024, which would take the overall NHS capital budget to £10.3bn.

Figures released earlier this month showed GPs were also facing record demand with 24 million appointments taking place – above pre-pandemic levels.

Greater use of technology has meant that a reported 1.25 million text messages and 300,000 emails were sent to parents of toddlers, informing them of booking appointments for Covid jab for their children.

The £2.1bn to improve efficiency and security in the NHS is part of a larger £5.9bn capital funding to help the NHS clear the record high backlog of patients waiting for treatment.

Furthermore, the IT investment has been well-received by the UK's technology sector.

Mike Kiersey, chief technology officer at Boomi, the integration platform as a service (iPaaS) company, told *Networking+* how the UK public sector has been reliant on a multitude of disconnected legacy IT systems for decades "and it is clear that these current systems" cannot meet today's clinical needs. "Long-awaited, the sweeping shift towards digital transformation brought on by Covid-19, has led Sunak to set aside £2.1bn to fund the modernisation of NHS IT," he said. "The UK's public health service

runs on the efficiency of information and accuracy and recency. If, as the report notes, some of the data and technology infrastructures have been unable to keep up with rapid changes, then that is a serious concern, especially given current circumstances where data needs to be consistently managed, integrated, secure and accessible to best serve the public."

Kiersey added that funding being directed to future proof IT systems is promising, "but digital transformation is still a delicate process and one that needs to be carried out over a long period of time". He said: "If the NHS can successfully modernise its data practices in the coming months, it will be able to put a framework in place and become a digitally native system that can start addressing the backlog of people waiting for crucial checks, tests and scans and to help reduce waiting lists. Overall, this will ensure digital systems in hospitals and mental health care settings are entirely robust, connected and efficient."

Prior to the budget, the Chancellor explained how the government is "committed to getting health services back on track" and ensuring no one is left waiting for vital tests or treatment". ■

MobileMark
antenna solutions

**Innovative Antenna Designs
Responsive Manufacturing
Trusted Partner**