

NHS GATHER Factsheet

NHS GATHER (www.nhsgather.net) is an NHS online service to help manage and replicate health and social care transformation programmes, including those with multiple stakeholder organisations. The core software was developed by the NHS Institute of Innovation and Improvement from 2010-2012, successful large scale trials were conducted by the Department of Health via the 3millionlives programme in 2013, it was adopted by the NHS England Innovation Team for use with High Impact Innovations in 2014, and the current Web site front end was developed with the aid of a RIF grant by KSS AHSN in 2015.

At the heart of NHS GATHER is a new light touch approach to managing transformational change. Each programme has its own “collaboration plan”, which helps managers to focus on the aspects of change critical to success: building effective teams in which everyone understands who has which responsibilities, ensuring communications lead to corresponding actions, sharing knowledge with people that need it, targeting effort towards agreed goals, and re-planning collaboratively whenever necessary. This revolutionary approach to planning means that outcomes, benefits, risks and issues are integrated into the structure of the work automatically and become simpler to manage.

An NHS GATHER collaboration plan has flexible security controls that are easy to understand. The plan is divided into Stages, each of which corresponds to a specific goal. Each stakeholder organisation takes one or more Roles (assigned to email addresses), and each Role is added to the specific Stages that it has an interest in. All Roles can see the structure of the whole plan, but only the Roles in a Stage have access to the documents and other information created in that Stage. External stakeholders (such as funding organisations) can be provided with a read-only view of the plan, either including or excluding documents and other information.

A successful collaboration plan can be turned into a template for use by other organisations in replicating the original change. Each new collaboration plan made from the template can be adjusted to meet local needs as required. This meets a key challenge for the NHS, as identified in “Lining Up: How do improvement programmes work?” (The Health Foundation, August 2013):

"Replicating a promising change programme from one organisation to another often falls short of the original's success... One of the strengths of the NHS is that, with the right learning and support systems, it has the potential to spread good practice across the system to the universal benefit of patients. However, realising this potential is not straightforward... Where efforts are made to replicate programmes in new settings, the chances of success will be increased when all the components, mechanisms and contextual influences of the original programme are identified and taken into account." (<http://m.hsj.co.uk/5062893.article>)

The design of NHS GATHER is based on the GOV.UK Digital by Default standard, is modular for simple addition of new “apps” as required, and is hosted on Amazon Web Services for scalability.

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