

Making the NHS a world leader in using innovative technology to benefit patients

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Launching the Topol Review on preparing NHS staff for a digital NHS

Internationally renowned expert Dr Eric Topol will deliver his vision of a digital future for the NHS as the world leader in using innovative technology to benefit patients.

Dr Topol will set out the steps needed now to prepare staff to deliver that future, which will see the NHS as the world leader in the revolutionary technologies that will allow the service to continue to provide the best care and treatment possible.

The Topol Review, led by the California based cardiologist, geneticist, and digital medicine expert Dr Eric Topol, is an independent review commissioned by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and produced by Health Education England (HEE).

The review outlines how education and training for staff now can deliver a better future for patients and the staff who care for them by implementing technologies such as genomics, digital medicine, artificial intelligence and robotics at a faster pace and on a greater scale than anywhere else in the world.

The review provides advice on how these technologies and developments will change clinical roles; how staff can be prepared for that change, and therefore the changes required in the education and training of staff.

It sets out how new technologies will be able to speed up processes like diagnostics, for example, providing patients with quicker, better treatment and freeing up additional clinical time to provide further care.

The recommendations aim to support the NHS Long Term Plan and inform the workforce implementation plan designed to improve the NHS over the next decade. DHSC will formally respond to the recommendations in due course.

Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, said:

‘I love the NHS and I’m determined to support the dedicated staff that make it what it is today. Our health service is on the cusp of a technology revolution and our brilliant staff will be in the driving seat when it happens.

Technology must be there to enhance and support clinicians. It has the potential to make working lives easier for dedicated NHS staff and free them up to use their medical expertise and do what they do best: care for patients.

‘Technology will make the NHS the best in the world and I want everyone who works in the health and care system to be empowered to embrace it – from porters to pathologists, surgeons to social care workers.

‘I would like to thank Dr. Topol for his crucial report, which will act as a blueprint as we implement our Tech Vision and Long Term Plan for the NHS, and bring about a brighter future and better NHS for everyone.’

Dr Eric Topol, who leads on the Topol Review, said:

‘Over the next twenty years three changes will inevitably happen: more and more people will have their genome sequenced; patients will generate and interpret much more of their own health data at home; and the speed, accuracy and scalability of medical data interpretation from artificial intelligence will grow exponentially.

These developments will change patients' lives, change how clinicians work and change how healthcare services are delivered. This is happening now and the NHS is ideally placed to take it further, faster and wider if we act to give our staff the skills and knowledge they need to make them the norm across the NHS.

I believe, this revolution has the potential, if grasped, to greatly strengthen patient-doctor relationships, release more professional time to care more, and reduce the burnout we can see in a significant proportion of clinicians today.

Professor Ian Cumming, Chief Executive, Health Education England said:

People deliver healthcare. The relationship between the clinical professional and the person they are helping is the core of our NHS and that will never change. What the Topol Review shows us is how technological advancements can improve the care and treatment hard working NHS staff are able to give if we provide these staff with the support, education and training they need now.

To be ready for this exciting future NHS organisations will need to collaborate in creating a learning environment in which staff can embrace these technological leaps throughout their careers. As part of the NHS Long Term Plan, we will work with partners developing the workforce implementation plan chaired by NHS Improvement Chair Baroness Harding to make these recommendations a reality. A reality that gives the clinician the skills, knowledge, leadership and investment they need to make these changes work for the NHS and the people it serves.

For more info <https://topol.hee.nhs.uk> [8].

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- [1] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work>
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