



A Hot Topic in the NHS: Operational Efficiency through Innovation

In uncertain economic times, NHS organisations are challenged with meeting demand but at the same time realising efficiency savings. In common with other parts of the UK Public Sector, the years of growth are coming to an end and organisations must look at new ways of delivering savings whilst continuing to deliver on services. In preparation for this and as part of the Government's drive to realise £35 billion of savings across UK Public Sector, the Operational Efficiency Programme's (OEP) Final Report (April 2009)¹ examines five areas for potential cost savings; back office operations and IT, collaborative procurement, asset management and sales, property and local incentives and empowerment.

The NHS Operating Framework for England 2010/11² reiterates the need to make savings and align with the output of the OEP. It recognises that whilst '2010/11 will be the last year of significant budget growth for some time, the NHS cannot stand still as the demand for services and patients' expectations will increase'.

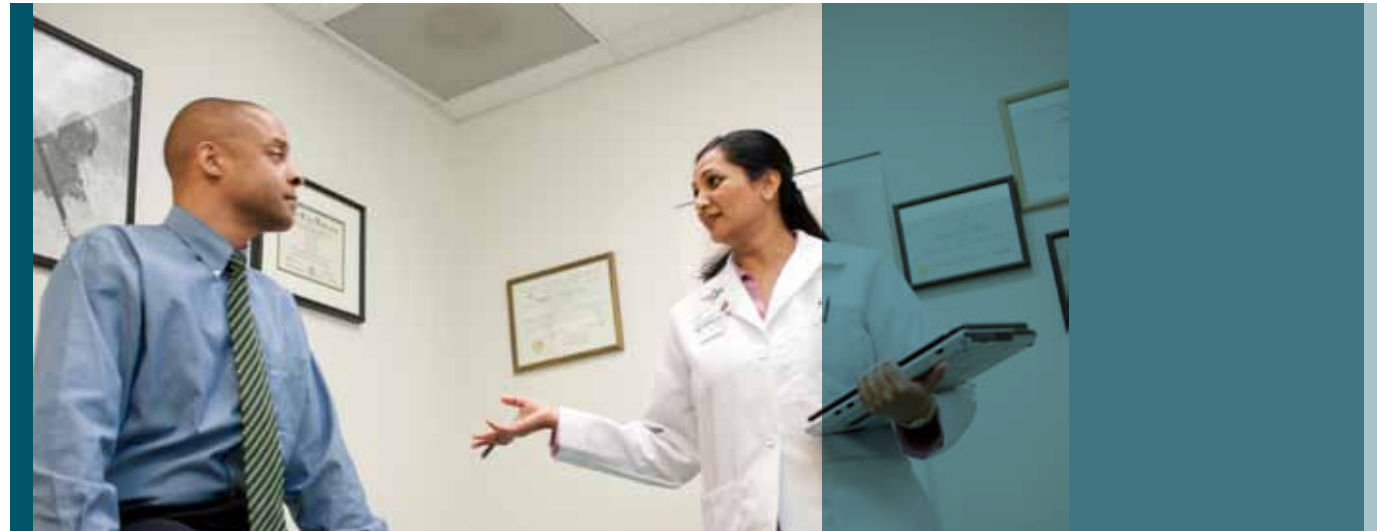
¹ Operational Efficiency Programme: Final Report', HM Treasury, April 2009 http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/oep_final_report_210409_pu728.pdf

² The NHS operating framework for England for 2010/11 http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_110107

Cisco has produced a response to the OEP Final Report for the whole of the UK Public Sector that identifies ten separate opportunities to drive efficiencies and cost savings as a result of ICT investment, where organisations treat ICT as an integral part of their business³. The paper sets out a strategic approach to cost reduction in the four key expenditure areas - workforce, estates, energy and resources, and ICT. This short document supplements that response by identifying different contexts and specific areas for consideration in a Healthcare environment.

³ Operational Efficiency in the Public Sector - Ten Recommendations for Cutting Costs <http://www.cisco.com/go/OEP-ten-recomendations-for-cutting-costs>

ICT as an enabler in the drive for operational efficiency



Operational Efficiency isn't just about making cuts. It is also about doing things smarter and looking at new ways of working and delivering services. In many cases efficiency and quality can be realised by taking an alternative approach driven by innovative ways of working. ICT is key to innovation and as an integral part of the business, offers new opportunities that not only drive efficiencies but can also contribute to improved service delivery.

In a Healthcare environment these opportunities exist beyond back office procedures. Changing the way people work and the way in which healthcare is delivered can mutually offer benefits and savings. Some examples follow:

An Efficient Workforce

- Repeatable, reliable end-to-end processes that have in-built governance
- Manage capital assets; find information and scarce expert resources quickly
- Scale knowledge, information & expertise to locations away from current geographical and physical constraints
- Work seamlessly with other professionals and organisations, blending skills and resources – across healthcare, social care and beyond

Improved Service Delivery

- Provide excellence in patient outcomes, speed up processes, avoid errors and repetition
- Work with patients, families and carers outside of the “controlled” workplace environment
- Interact with Ageing Well and Assisted Living activities across the health/social care divide

An Efficient Workplace

- Energy management capabilities to offer cost and carbon efficiencies
- Knowledge management or information analytics that track activities and care pathways, using this information to re-define business and clinical processes underpinned by technology



How can Cisco Help ?

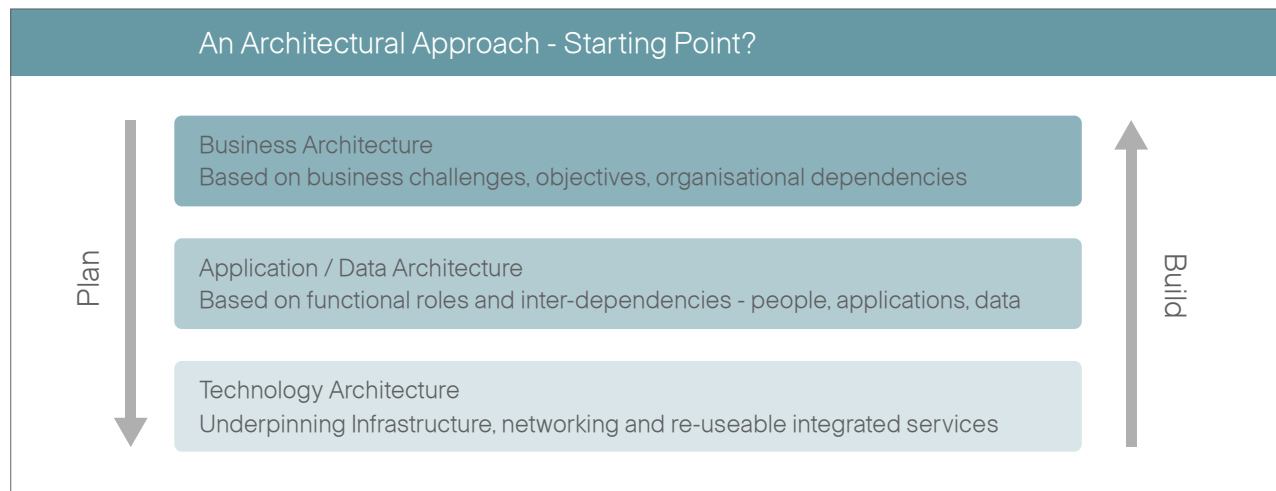
Treating ICT as an integral part of an NHS organisation's business and clinical priorities is key to driving operational efficiency and adopting an architectural approach to deploying technology can best secure this critical linkage. In the model shown below, planning should take place downwards, i.e. by understanding the operational or business requirements and then positioning solutions or applications underpinned by infrastructure. Deploying upwards ensures that the platform is assured thereby increasing the chances of success.

Healthcare Interpreter Network offering the ability to locate translation or signing resources instantaneously, assess their availability and use video and conferencing tools to gain remote assistance.

'Location-independent' Working Solutions – including:

- **Cisco Virtual Office (CVO)** supporting remote and home working solutions. The benefits include travel avoidance, resulting in savings associated with time, cost and travel.
- **Cisco Telepresence** – High Definition conferencing solutions from single person use to room-based systems suitable for Multi-Disciplinary Team environments.

Cisco HealthPresence – combining Telepresence systems with integrated, network connected medical devices offering the ability to locate and deliver clinical services to remote sites. Conversely the solution can be used to call on remote resources delivering expertise to acute and primary care points of presence.



Cisco offers ICT infrastructure and applications that support business requirements in healthcare settings by enabling a modern, flexible workforce, transforming service delivery at the same time as driving operational efficiency. Some examples of Cisco solutions are detailed as follows.

Health Locator – offering the ability to track resources and assets, as well as identifying those that are closest to hand.

EnergyWise – infrastructure based energy management software that provides policy-based control of network connected assets. The solution also offers integration into third party building management systems providing a more granular - but also holistic - view. Along with travel avoidance solutions, EnergyWise can help with carbon reduction ambitions and targets associated with the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRC)⁴.

Communications and Collaboration:

- Offering the ability to share documents, images and video along with audio conferencing. Underpinned by the appropriate governance arrangements, these solutions are suitable for intra and inter-agency working and can be offered via hosted or on-premise configurations.
- A personalised communications platform for mobile care professionals that allows users to drop in to the nearest NHS facility, log in and achieve the same look and feel, for example telephone number, speed dials.

Back Office Efficiency – including:

- **Virtualisation** in the datacentre: working with industry leading partners to deliver out of the box solutions that reduce complexity and offer efficiency savings in power, cooling and space.
- Application optimisation in distributed network environments reducing the need for costly infrastructure upgrades.

Underpinning all of this is the enabling network infrastructure. In ICT terms the network is pervasive because it typically extends its reach to all areas of a building, campus or organisation. Hence, the network has become borderless and the capabilities it offers are the foundational element or platform for delivering ICT related benefits.

⁴ http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what_we_do/lc_uk/crc/crc.aspx



Further Information

Cisco has a long-standing commitment to healthcare and the NHS and, over many years, has been able to offer advice and guidance on how technology can deliver clinical, financial and operational benefits.

With the publication of the Cisco Network Architecture Blueprint for the NHS (C-NAB)⁵, Cisco established the relevance of technology to the business of the NHS Trusts. By first establishing a robust, scalable and secure foundation, NHS organisations can confidently deploy advanced technology solutions to support business outcomes. Now, Cisco’s response to the OEP Final Report further demonstrates the critical need for ICT to be an integral part of an NHS Trust’s business plans, in order to drive operational efficiency savings whilst offering innovative solutions to service delivery.

To discuss how Cisco’s solutions can help drive operational efficiency in your organisation, please contact your Cisco Healthcare Account Manager.

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⁵ Cisco Network Architecture Blueprint (CNAB) <http://www.cisco-nab.com>