

Benefits for Patients

Improved communication and information flow between patients and healthcare providers

The Summary Care Record (SCR) contains details of key health information that health-care staff will have access to when treating a patient. The patient will not have to repeat their medication and allergy information at every time they speak to encounter as their medical history will be available at a glance.

More appropriate care in emergency and out of hours care episodes

Health-care staff will have access to information that is normally held by the GP and currently inaccessible, leading to defensive care of unscheduled patients. SCR will enable them to treat the patient more appropriately and prevent some of the current referrals to Emergency Departments by giving them access to information on which to base their decisions. This also applies to any healthcare professional treating patients when they are away from home and therefore don't have access to their GP.

Fewer delays in treatment

Delays due to the transfer of records will be reduced as the healthcare providers are able to share information through the GP summary and SCR. This increased efficiency will also mean fewer records are at risk of being lost.

Improvements to patient care

Access to information previously unavailable will ensure more accurate clinical decisions are made to improve patient care. E.g. increased prescribing safety – fewer adverse reactions to medication with the availability of allergies and known adverse reactions on SCR.

Patients will also experience more joined up care between a variety of care settings, especially if they suffer from an ongoing condition requiring management from a number of healthcare professionals and have an enriched record. E.g. diabetes patients are often co-managed between the GP and specialist diabetes services whilst also presenting to unscheduled settings more frequently than most of the population. Their care plan can be included on SCR to

enable all these areas to consult a single point of reference and work from the same plans.

Personal access to health records

Patients will be able to access their own SCR through HealthSpace allowing them to have greater control over their health and well being by having access to information about it. They can also add in any special needs they might have to improve their own care. E.g. requesting their health information in Braille.

Better equality of care

Clinicians need to be aware of patient information and rely on patients to give this when attending unscheduled care settings. When communication difficulties exist, such as non English Speakers or the presence of a disability, this can cause delays in treatment while a translator is located. Having access to this information through SCR reduces any inequalities between these patients and those better able to communicate their condition.

BENEFITS FOR NHS STAFF

Increased clinical confidence

For clinicians, access to the information contained within the SCR gives them increased confidence in their clinical decisions either by informing or re-affirming the decision.

Faster access to information and improved communication

Patient information will be available 24 hours a day, reducing waiting times for information from other clinicians. E.g. hospital pharmacists can reconcile patient medications immediately without having to call the GP and wait for the information to be provided which can sometimes be a number of hours.

Better equality of care

This benefit applies to both NHS staff and patients – access to information when a clinician is struggling to obtain the information from the patient can cause delays and frustration in treatment. Having access to this information through SCR reduces any inequalities between these patients and those better able to communicate their condition and enables the clinician to make clinical decisions in a more timely and informed manner.

Enabling clinical priorities to be achieved

Many of the clinical priorities of an SHA or PCT can be enabled by using SCR. E.g. End of Life care is on the priority list of many SHA's and SCR can enable joined up care by enriching these patients' records with their care plans and the clinicians involved in their treatment are therefore able to access a single instance of this record for treatment.

Further information

More information can be found at <http://www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/scr>.

For more specific information on SCR benefits including strategy, profiles, alignment to clinical priorities and case studies, see the SCR Benefits pages at <http://www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/scr/staff/impguidpm/benefits>

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