

## **Information and communication Technology in Wales**

### **Background**

Back in 2002 The Welsh Assembly Government made the decision to develop an IM&T strategy for Wales and not *buy into* the system being developed in England. This decision was based at a fundamental level for delivering a Welsh solution specific to the Welsh Issue.

The English System is based around "Choice" giving patients the option to choice and book appointments, and to deliver the electronic transfer of prescriptions. In Wales our local problems are waiting lists and delivering a health care system fit for the future and fit for the whole population of Wales. To deal with these issues it was decided to develop a unique Welsh IT solution first and link where needed with the English system at a later date.

However the community Pharmacy Contract was negotiated on an England and Wales basis and included an element on electronic transmission of prescriptions. At the implementation stage of the contact it was deemed that Wales could not link into the English ETP solution due to the differing infrastructures being developed, so to take this forward in Wales the Welsh Assembly Government had to established a separate work stream and programme board .

The outcome for pharmacy from these political decisions in Wales are there are 2 separate work programmes for IT development , Informing Healthcare , and the community pharmacy programme board , these work streams liaise with each other but have differing remits and deliverables.

### **Introduction**

#### **Informing HealthCare – (appendix 1)**

IHC was established in 2003 to produce and deliver on the *big picture strategy*. It soon became apparent that the Single patient record was one problem, but other small issues were equally stifling progress in the NHS and solutions to these smaller issues could be achieved quicker while keeping the overall goal of the single patient record in reach. Health professionals in their everyday work experience delays in obtaining paper- based results, poor access to evidence in the workplace, errors and time wasted through slow communication in discharge and referral summaries, and wasted appointments through mislaid information. To tackle these issues the IHC have developed the philosophy of achieving in a small way first then looking to roll out the work across Wales if appropriate. These have lead to several small phases of working being developed and evaluated and small success in IT which will be rolled out to achieve the big picture strategy.

#### **Primary Care IM&T - Community Pharmacy IM&T Programme (appendix 2)**

In September 2005 the Welsh Assembly Government established a new Primary Care IM&T Programme to set and deliver corporate IM&T policy and strategic direction for all Primary Care contractor professions in Wales. Early priorities for the Programme were supporting the new contractual IM&T requirements for each of the Primary Care Contractor professions. The Programme established a pharmacy project board to ensure a corporate consistent approach to IM&T facilities and services delivered to Community Pharmacists in Wales.

From the outset the pharmacy programme board have taken a pragmatic approach to the deliver of ETP in Wales , developing plans to deliver a solution through a phased programme leading to an interim solution for ETP before moving on to full ETP in the final phase.