



5 Steps for Health & Social Care Providers To Improve Efficiency And Reduce Costs

Reducing Costs Starts With Increasing Efficiency

There is a much documented whirlwind of external and internal forces battering the foundations of the NHS. To relieve the pressure on hospitals and offset the costs associated with inpatient care, there is growing focus on visiting patients in their homes.

The challenge for the NHS to do more for less is well recognised. The continued funding squeeze, rising demand and the need to safeguard quality, combine to exert pressure across the entire system, with none of these factors likely to abate. There is now wide consensus that health care needs to change to meet these demands.

Action is needed regarding demand, efficiency and funding. To help address these issues Kirona has listed below 5 steps for Health & Social Care Providers to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

£30BN

shortfall by 2020/21
if no efficiencies are
made to the NHS

1. Reduce Paper Based Systems

Expecting health practitioners to use paper based records is fraught with potential disaster and inefficiency.

Paper requires incredibly busy personnel to use notebooks to record patient care information in the field and then input it again when back in the office, often into multiple systems.

After three, four, five, or even more visits per shift, paper can be lost, handwriting can be illegible, and data entry mistakes made. Perhaps the greatest consequence of this unnecessary administration is that skilled employees spend less time treating patients.

Kirona's Tips

- Free up more time to provide care by deploying mobile applications in the field. Employees only have to record information once while in the patients' home. Mobile communication also reduces inefficient back office administration tasks, such as re-keying of data, and eliminates the associated data transcribing errors.
- Use a workflow driven series of checklists and fields on the mobile device to make sure individual health workers follow a standard process. This will ensure continuity of good practice across a region.
- Mobile devices are more secure than paper. If lost then the data is locked-down through encryption, or even remote access and most mobile apps or data forms can be remotely cleared from the devices.



"The ultimate goal is that all patient and care records will be digital, interoperable and real-time"

2. Optimise Appointment Scheduling

Efficiently appointing who visits which patients is so complicated that using a manual scheduling process is a big no.

Patient Expectations vs. Staff Availability vs. Staff Skills is difficult enough to balance, add to that factors like service levels, patient location, patient cancellation, even traffic on the road and efficient scheduling is almost impossible.

Kirona's Tips

- Deploy dynamic scheduling software that can, in real-time, optimise the utilisation of health workers in the field - the right person goes to the right location at the right time. This way they spend less time travelling and organising work and more time caring for patients.
- Scheduling software can be tuned to deploy personnel based upon pre-set 'rules'. Work with your technology vendor to utilise this feature so that services can be optimised; like prioritising workers that have visited the patient before, or restricting distances to be travelled by employees, or scheduling according to patients' age or needs.
- Consider that most mobile working visits will usually need a follow up visit or another appointment made with a different clinician - your scheduling software can allocate new appointments and visits from a clinician's mobile device - there and then.



North Lanarkshire Council experienced a

20%

Increase in productivity of it's Health & Social Care teams

3. Improve Visibility of Front Line Services

By failing to have visibility of operations in the field, health bodies are at serious risk of losing control of services and funding.

- and have little information with which to identify potential improvements for their staff and their service users. It also means that accurately auditing services and care becomes almost impossible.

Kirona's Tips

- Providing mobile devices enables you to track all the factors which impact field performance like: routing of employees, time spent on appointments, missed appointments, lateness etc. This data can be used to analyse operations, fine tune the scheduling engine or to demonstrate ongoing improvements in efficiency.
- A full audit trail of visits are automatically recorded, enabling easy payment by results (PBR) reporting.
- With GPS and two-way communication, mobile also provides good support for lone workers in remote locations or areas where there may be a security problem.



80%

of home care costs are staff costs, we need to maximise their value

4. Use a Digital Appointment System

Arriving at the appointed time to find the patient is not at the property represents a huge expense to the NHS;

it is also time-consuming and frustrating for the professional. The causes are often antiquated and inconvenient appointment systems, and/or human error. Increasingly busy service users may forget appointments or be frustrated by all-day appointment windows.

Kirona's Tips

- Use appointment based scheduling technology that makes it easier for patients to book a narrow time slot that is suitable for them up to weeks in advance.
- Use dynamic scheduling technology that automatically re-allocates those visits in jeopardy of being missed to other colleague clinicians.
- Combine the mobile applications with SMS and Email technology to not only send patients advance appointment reminders but also "clinician on route" messages.
- Allow clinicians to book follow on appointments from their mobile device whilst with the patient, thereby allowing them to choose a convenient time.



North Lanarkshire Council
achieved

£200,000

Savings on First Class Postage

£400,000

Savings on Phone Calls

5. Manage Cultural Change

With advancement in technology comes a huge opportunity for the NHS to make the most of its skilled workforce.

However for many who may not be fully up to speed with the latest technology, it also represents a big change in the 'way things are done'. Not managing their expectations could result in an expensive project failure.

Kirona's Tips

- Involve clinicians, work planners and field staff at the start of the process. By involving them early you can identify issues and address them quickly. You will also build enthusiasm and inertia for a successful project.
- Ensure that the "culture change" is minimised by working with the existing business process – rather than against it.
- Lengthy training can easily be avoided by making the mobile apps simple and similar to the paper based forms currently in use.



The North Lanarkshire workforce favour new software solution, with over 1000 responses rating the solution

4.8/5

About Kirona

Founded in 2003, Kirona has grown to be recognised as the leader in delivering Field Service Automation. We combine innovative software development with an exceptional service organisation to ensure that our technology delivers significant value to every one of our customers.

Our success comes from extensive experience in the social housing sector and our focus on tailoring our approach to guarantee our customers achieve their business goals. Over 30,000 field-based operators rely on a Kirona based solution and we are helping the leading Housing and Contractor organisations to increase the number of jobs they complete each day, reduce overheads such as mileage and administration, and provide better customer service.

We help our customers to improve the way they plan and dynamically schedule work with DRS, we maximise efficiency in the field through our Job Manager mobile working solution and we provide managers with valuable insight and KPI tracking on their operation through InfoSuite.



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