<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Estates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR / Workforce</td>
<td>Commissioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>IM &amp; T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning / Performance</td>
<td>Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical</td>
<td>Social Care / Partnership Working</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Purpose</th>
<th>For Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gateway Reference</td>
<td>14981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>NHS Choices Annual Report 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>NHS Choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication Date</td>
<td>October 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Target Audience**

PCT CEs, NHS Trust CEs, SHA CEs, Care Trust CEs, Foundation Trust CEs, Medical Directors, Directors of FH, Directors of Nursing, Local Authority CEs, Directors of Adult SSs, PCT Chairs, NHS Trust Board Chairs, Special HA CEs, Directors of HR, Directors of Finance, Allied Health Professionals, GPs, Communications Leads, Emergency Care Leads, Directors of Children's SSs, Subscribers to DH bulletins, PCT NHS Choices Champions, PCT Dental Leads, PCT Provider Arm Leads, Voluntary Organisations/NDPBs, NHS Chief Pharmacists / Pharmaceutical Advisers, NHS Choices Syndication Contacts, NHS Choices Web Editors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circulation List</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Description                  | A document reporting on key performance highlights for 2009-10 and summarising future plans for 2010-11 |

| Cross Ref                    | N/A                          |

| Superseded Docs             | NHS Choices Annual Report 2009 |

| Action Required             | N/A                          |

| Timing                      | N/A                          |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Details</th>
<th>NHS Choices Marketing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skipton House, 80 London Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SE1 6LH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>020 7972 6055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Recipient's Use</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

About us

NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk) is the UK’s leading online health information service with 100 million visits in the past year. Originally established to meet the huge public demand for good quality health information, we are the NHS online, providing a gateway to thousands of pages of reliable and comprehensive information.
Nothing is more important than the health and wellbeing of you, your family and your friends. That is why we are passionate about an information revolution to improve the nation’s health. In the digital age, people expect information at their fingertips to help them take decisions that affect their lives. We are here to help people to make the most of their health and make informed choices about their healthcare.

NHS Choices reflects a modern healthcare system in which patients are at the heart of everything and have the knowledge and confidence to take shared decisions with clinicians about their care. By combining information on hundreds of conditions and treatments, healthy lifestyle advice, medicine guides and practical support for carers, with the opportunity to find, choose, and comment on NHS services, NHS Choices encourages citizens to become active consumers, seeking high-quality, safe and effective healthcare.

We strive to bring together the best possible content and data for patients and the public, but we also work to distribute that information by giving it to 150 partner organisations, and also by using innovative techniques and working with groups such as Race Online 2012 to access the most excluded in our society. In doing so, we provide a service which is both highly cost-effective and socially inclusive.

We are proud of our achievements, believing that well-informed citizens will make better use of NHS services and, over their lifetime, achieve better health outcomes.
Foreword

We know that making information publicly available can support patients, clinicians and managers to drive improvements in health and care. Today, technological innovation has, with astonishing speed, spread information and decentralised power in a way not seen for centuries.
NHS Choices is transforming access to healthcare performance data. It has published comparative information to enable patients to compare the risks and benefits of services and treatments. Clear, accurate and trustworthy information is a vital driver for patient choice and service transparency.

The new government has highlighted two key priorities: publishing detailed data about the performance of healthcare providers online, and enabling patients to rate hospitals and consultant-led teams according to the quality of care they receive. NHS Choices is already at the cutting edge of this information revolution in the NHS; in the past 12 months it has published an expanded range of clinical indicators and during the year ahead will focus on publishing data on outcomes – information that really matters to patients.

Meanwhile, the ability for patients to comment on their healthcare experience has been extended to GP practices and by the end of 2010, patients will be able to use NHS Choices to comment on all NHS healthcare services.

In response to user feedback, NHS Choices has introduced detailed information about treatment option choices and simpler technology to allow the local NHS to update its information on the site. The service is also at the forefront of bridging health and social care. Its award-winning Carers Direct service is a model of how technology can transcend traditional divisions to provide coherent information for the public.

I welcome this report on the achievements of the past year and look forward to supporting NHS Choices in the year ahead.

Sir Bruce Keogh
NHS Medical Director
Chair of NHS Choices Clinical Information Advisory Group
Contents

1. Better information, better health
2. Listening to patients
3. Local partnerships
4. Doing more for less
5. The year ahead
Highlights of the year

1. There were 47 million visits to the Health A-Z section, which provides comprehensive and accessible information on more than 800 treatments and conditions.

2. 19 million people turned to NHS Choices for reliable information on swine flu. In support of the National Pandemic Flu Service, we provided the public with the latest information, reassurance and answers to more than 100 questions, helping to reduce the demand on GP practices.

3. For the first time anywhere in Europe, NHS Choices published Hospital Standardised Mortality Ratios to increase transparency and help patients make informed choices about their healthcare.

4. New comparison tools supporting patient choice enabled users to review the services, facilities and performance of several hospitals and GP practices side by side on one page.

5. Patients commented in greater numbers on their NHS care. There are now more than 40,000 published comments providing helpful information for other patients and invaluable feedback for those running hospitals and GP practices.

6. An Information Prescription Service (IPS) launched in early 2010 enables health professionals to provide patients with information tailored to their needs and motivation.
Highlights of the year

7 Designed in response to user feedback, a new Treatment Options feature allows patients to review the treatment choices open to them following diagnosis and see the pros and cons of each.

8 A series of innovative interactive tools, such as the Football Fan Fitness Challenge, encourage traditionally hard-to-reach groups to engage with their health in a light-hearted way. The NHS Choices alcohol tracker became one of the top three health apps in the world and was downloaded 35,000 times.

9 Each month around 2 million people access NHS Choices content on partner websites, including local authorities and local NHS organisations, together with social media organisations such as YouTube and Facebook.

10 Health is a complex topic, so our new tool, Health Explorer, has enhanced the search facility and made it easier for users to find what they are looking for without a need for any medical knowledge.

11 NHS Choices has been certified by The Information Standard as a producer of reliable health and social care information.

12 In the past 12 months, NHS Choices won three awards – for design and effectiveness, for helping to integrate health and social care, and for tackling digital exclusion.
Better information, better health
Every day NHS Choices provides more than 200,000 people with information to help them maximise their health and wellbeing and make informed choices about their healthcare.
There is a huge public demand for good health information online and NHS Choices meets that need with comprehensive, reliable information and data on all aspects of healthcare. We help patients to share in decisions about their health and access the appropriate local services for them and their families.

Our Health A-Z is the most comprehensive patient friendly source of online health information anywhere on the web and provides reliable information on more than 800 treatments and conditions. Users access information via the interactive body map or the A-Z listing. The clinically approved content includes hundreds of videos and real life stories, as well as links to other approved sources of information.

New data on performance, including mortality ratios, provides greater transparency for patients, and makes informed decision-making easier. To support patient choice, we added new features to enable patients to make quick comparisons of performance, treatments, and facilities between different hospitals and GP practices.

Prevention is crucial to healthier communities and easing the financial burden on the NHS. Our Live Well section encourages users to take lifestyle decisions that lead to better health. A wealth of accessible information written by our team of medical writers includes videos and interactive tools to help people achieve their personal health goals, whether it is stopping smoking, losing weight, or taking more exercise.

Our unrivalled Find Services section helps the public to find the right service, at the right time. Whether it was to find a GP practice, an NHS walk-in centre, or a podiatry clinic, this comprehensive service helped 22 million users locate a local health service.
Supporting choice

Increasingly, patients have more choice over when and where they receive their healthcare. NHS Choices provides people with the information they need to make informed decisions about their choice of provider. Giving people access to hospital outcome data in easy-to-understand formats increases transparency about performance and enables the public to make meaningful comparisons.

In the past year, to support patient decision-making we have:

- Published infection rates (both MRSA and C-diff) for all acute trusts, as well as standardised mortality rates, and specific rates for selected procedures and conditions e.g. repair of abdominal aortic aneurysms, and lung, bowel and cervical cancer.

- Published an extended range of emergency re-admission rates for specific conditions.

- Introduced a choice information ‘hub’ that explains people’s rights and responsibilities and provides practical advice on navigating the health system.
Listening to patients
In a modern, taxpayer-funded NHS, it is important that patients have an opportunity to comment on their healthcare experience and read the views of others. Patient feedback informs choice and drives up the quality of service delivery.

NHS Choices users have always had the ability to comment on their hospital experience. In autumn 2009 this was extended to GP practice patients which was a move that proved very popular, with 10,000 comments posted within the first six months. These appear on the individual GP practice pages, making it easy for people to look at feedback on practices in their area.

All patient feedback on NHS Choices is pre-moderated and, importantly, hospital trusts and GP practices have the opportunity to post replies to individual comments, which appear underneath the original comment.

“The Family Doctor Association supports the GP practice patient feedback initiative and believes that patient feedback on GP services is an effective way of driving up the standards of primary care even further.”

Dr Peter Swinyard, Chairman of the Family Doctor Association
Many NHS hospital trusts now actively encourage patients to use NHS Choices to give feedback on all aspects of their care. Patient comments provide a regular flow of feedback that can be analysed and discussed by clinicians and hospital managers.

The majority of hospital comments include positive feedback from patients, many with suggestions for small changes to improve the patient experience. There is encouraging evidence that trusts are using feedback from NHS Choices to review procedures and change things that are not working.

Below is an example of where patient feedback has brought about service improvement:
After this comment and other similar feedback, the Luton and Dunstable NHS Foundation Trust Hospital introduced a dedicated discharge nurse on the maternity ward to enable new mothers to return home with their new babies more quickly.

To encourage greater levels of patient feedback, NHS Choices has trialled SMS text feedback with two NHS trust hospitals – Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow and University College London Hospital. The text service was free to the patient with no charge for receiving or sending SMS messages and is a great way to engage with those who do not have access to a computer. Both trusts are planning to continue using the service.

A sample of the hospital comparison tool, a facility that enables patients to compare the performance of each hospital.
Local partnerships
More than 150 partner organisations now carry content syndicated by NHS Choices, including Primary Care Trusts, GP practices, local authorities, Mumsnet, Boots, WebMD, Google and Channel 4. This allows each organisation to embed our content within its own website, including multimedia tools and more than 400 videos. In the past year 25 million people have viewed NHS Choices content via partners’ websites.

We actively promote our content to local councils to help meet the information needs of local residents and almost 90 local authorities have now applied to take NHS Choices content.

NHS Choices works closely with local NHS organisations and supports a series of local pilots to harness the power of information technology to deliver positive behavioural change. A workplace health initiative with Derbyshire PCT involved touchscreen kiosks placed in a variety

“NHS Choices content is absolutely fantastic, and covers a lot of areas that we at the council need to be able to give out to residents in Brent … we use it particularly to help us meet our obligations … in trying to improve the health of residents in Brent … it’s a quality that most local authorities wouldn’t be able to achieve of their own accord.”

Dane Wright,
IT Strategy Manager, Brent Council
of locations to motivate individuals to take active steps to improve their health. Information on diet, weight and exercise had the most impact and nearly half of those who used the kiosks lost weight over an eight-week period.

Meanwhile, a new text messaging service developed in conjunction with the United Lincolnshire NHS Trust helps patients access the quickest Accident and Emergency service by providing details of the current waiting times at each of the available A&E services.

**Tackling digital exclusion**

To help improve the health of the millions of people who do not use the internet, NHS Choices works with partner organisations and supports a number of nationwide initiatives.

A ‘community champions’ partnership with UK Online introduced 126,000 people living in [digitally excluded](#) communities to www.nhs.uk.

Libraries are an important source of health information for people without internet connectivity and a joint initiative with the Society of Chief Librarians and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council raised awareness of NHS Choices among 2,000 library staff, who were trained how to use the service.

"After using NHS Choices, many clients feel better-informed and therefore more able to make decisions about their condition."

Bernard Murphy
Manager, Rotherham Central Library
www.nhschoicestraining.co.uk launched in 2009 to provide guidance for health and social care professionals, along with others who provide information to the public, such as staff working in Citizens’ Advice Bureaus. It explains how the range of information on NHS Choices supports better health and wellbeing. More than 3,000 professionals accessed the training programme, which proved particularly popular with health trainers, nurses and pharmacists.

“NHS Choices has gone from just another website to something that we are now embedding in a lot of our own teaching and learning. Once we had introduced it to them, we became aware of how valuable and popular our learners found it.”
UK Online Regional Champion
4 Doing more for less
By providing access to reliable health information, NHS Choices helps people access better care and achieve better outcomes. At a time of severe pressure on public expenditure, there is now considerable evidence to suggest it is also saving the NHS money by encouraging more appropriate use of health services.

In early 2009, NHS Choices commissioned an independent research study into the impact of the NHS Choices website on GP consultations. The research involved 4,000 patients through an online questionnaire and a survey in waiting rooms of GP practices in London. The independent study was carried out by the Department of Primary Care at Imperial College London. The main points from Imperial’s executive summary are:

- 37% of NHS Choices users in the study reported that it decreased their use of GP services (and did so appropriately through self care)

- Savings already achieved by NHS Choices, through reductions in avoidable and unnecessary consultations, are approximately £44 million per year.

1 NELSON, P, MURRAY, J & KHAN, M.S
NHS Choices Primary Care Consultation Final Report Imperial College,
March 2010
Further independent research\textsuperscript{2} by Nottingham University drew attention to the variable quality of health information on the internet and encouraged people to use trusted sites such as NHS Choices.

A report in The Times in March 2010\textsuperscript{3} highlighted that GP practices were coming under increasing strain from people reporting minor ailments, such as coughs and colds, that with better health awareness are best self managed. It underlined the positive economic benefits of NHS Choices by calculating the relative costs of NHS treatment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Click on the NHS Choices website</td>
<td>46p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call to NHS Direct</td>
<td>£16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit to GP’s surgery</td>
<td>£32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit to A&amp;E</td>
<td>£111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>999 call out</td>
<td>£455</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In short, using knowledge to support more informed health and healthcare is a cost-effective treatment for the nation.

\textsuperscript{2} SCULLARD, P, PEACOCK, C, AND DAVIES, P  
Googling children’s health: reliability of medical advice on the internet  
Archives of Diseases of Children, April 2010

\textsuperscript{3} THE TIMES  
Workforce wimps cost NHS billions,  
March 16, 2010, p.3
The year ahead
NHS Choices will continue its ambitious programme to improve public health and inform choice.

Significant developments in 2010 and 2011 will include:

- Extending patient comments to all NHS services, including dentists.
- A medicines hub that provides detailed information on all products including over-the-counter treatments.
- A maternity comparison tool to enable mothers to compare key aspects of care.
- Information on each consultant working in the NHS.
- A new editing facility enabling healthcare providers to give more comprehensive details of their treatments, services and facilities.
- The ability for users to rate and comment on a wide variety of NHS Choices articles, together with improved social network linking.
- A personalised NHS Choices home page that will allow users to customise the layout and display content relevant to their age group, gender and life-stage without the need to register.
- An improved area for registered users that will provide a dashboard of personalised health information, incorporating local data on hospitals and GP surgeries.
Feedback is important to us. If you have any ideas or thoughts on how we can improve our service, we would like to hear from you.

Write to us at thechoicesteam@nhschoices.nhs.uk
The UK’s leading online health information service

www.nhs.uk