

## Press Release

20 April 2018

# QNI Launches New Report: 'Nursing in the Digital Age'

The QNI has launched a major new report on the current state of digital and mobile technology being used by community nurses.

The new report, 'Nursing in the Digital Age – Using Technology to Support Patients at Home' is based on a survey of over 500 nurses working in the community, the document revisits a subject first analysed by the QNI in its 2012 publication, 'Smart New World'.

The new report seeks to determine how far new healthcare information technology has changed in the previous six years and how skills and attitudes within community services have adapted.

Some key figures from new report include:

- There are at least 67 differently named IT systems currently being used in community healthcare;
- 74% of community nurses find IT systems a more reliable way of working, compared to paper;
- 29% of community nurses are still working largely with paper based systems;
- 41% of NHS trusts do not use telehealth systems;
- 28% of services utilise a text messaging facility to remind patients of their appointments.

Dr Crystal Oldman CBE, QNI's Chief Executive commented:

'The report presents a complex picture that shows wide variation between the large number of provider organisations involved in providing care in people's homes and communities. Most people now use IT in many aspects of their personal lives, so they expect very high standards when using information technology in the healthcare setting too.

'Community nurses demonstrate a general confidence in and acceptance of new IT systems that support efficient working and patient care. However, they also highlight in stark detail the challenges that frontline practitioners experience with systems that are complex and which require high quality support from IT departments. In some areas practitioners are frustrated by barriers to new technology, such as incompatible software systems and poor connectivity.

'When managed well, good IT systems should enable nurses to spend more time giving direct patient facing care. However, when problems do arise, community nurses are concerned that they spend more time managing the demands of IT systems rather than the pressing needs of their patients, families, carers and communities.'

Anne Cooper, Chief Nurse, NHS Digital, commented:

'We are at the cusp of a great opportunity to use technology to really accelerate the contribution of community nurses to the wide system changes we need. The possibilities of managing caseloads alone, to free resources, and to ensure we have the right practitioners, in the right place, at the right time, to meet the needs of patients, seems to have great potential.'

'Some things, however, don't change and as in 2012, we still need to focus hard on culture changes to see the real integration of technology and data into nursing practice. We also need to see patients' involvement as key; they are an untapped resource that community nurses should actively seek to engage in the digital agenda.

'We need data and system standards for community nursing that support consistent approaches to the recording, coding, entry and viewing of information about community care.'

The report makes a range of recommendations to provider organisations and to commissioners based on the information collated in the report.

To view the report go to <https://www.qni.org.uk/resources/nursing-in-the-digital-age/>

ENDS