

Reduce Waiting Lists and Drive your Agenda

Drive the NHS Innovation Agenda

The Department of Health and Social Care issued a Press Release in September 2021 entitled *'Innovation and New Technology to Help Reduce Waiting Lists'*. In the release it was highlighted that **surgical hubs, virtual wards** and **artificial intelligence** are key innovations to tackling the backlog of patients and putting the NHS on a sustainable path.

Specifically, it was noted that new ways of working were critical to speeding up diagnosis and tackling growing waiting lists. In addition, the NHS Elective Recovery Plan in 2022 set out how the Health Service would address backlogs built up during COVID.

The core propositions of these renewed initiatives by the NHS are as follows:

There is a NEED for innovation



New ways of working are critical



Technology will drive many new initiatives



The King's Fund published an excellent article in 2018 titled *'Adoption and Spread of Innovation in the NHS'*. It noted that whilst technology was an enabler, it was not necessarily the most important factor to address patient backlogs and capacity issues. Other key innovations included **earlier diagnosis and intervention, changes in staff roles** and the **empowerment of patients** to take a more active role in their care.

These comments align with Apodi's experiences of seeing innovation in action. It does not necessarily have to be complex and often is a result of new working practices that can be identified and implemented relatively easily.

GP Practices, Hospitals and Trusts have started to embrace this thinking in increasing numbers. Although, the time that can be dedicated to new initiatives is constrained by the 'business as normal' workload and the challenges of dealing with the backlogs created by the Pandemic.

Guys and St Thomas Hospital's initiative to use high intensity lists – known as **HIT lists** – to help reduce the backlog for non-emergency surgery caused by the pandemic is just one example. A razor like focus was used on 1 specific procedure at a time, working through weekends and out of hours to clear the backlog.



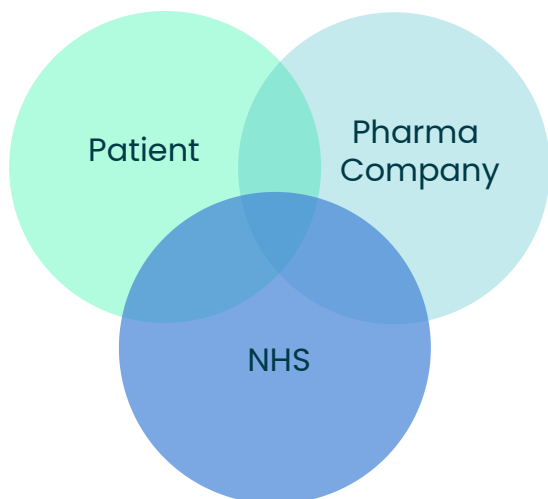
The above is just one example of many innovations taking place. However, it is not enough, and the NHS needs huge support and assistance to implement and drive new innovations.

How Can Pharma Help?

Apodi recently came across a scenario where a Pharmaceutical Company was attempting to promote a specialist medicine however, they were really **struggling to drive access to the product** even though certain Trusts had made the decision to prescribe (this is by no means a rare event).

The main problem: a complex care pathway that requires:

- Significant clinical time
- Administrative and coordinated support
- Involvement from a number of different departments and specialists



As a result, the three key stakeholders were experiencing real difficulties in meeting their own key objectives:

- Patients were left on sub-optimal treatments
- NHS workload continued to increase
- No or few sales of the product for the Pharma Company

To solve these problems, the NHS needed help and support to implement new working practices consistent with those outlined in the NHS initiatives noted on page 2.

Our solution was to recommend a **'Capacity Busting' Patient Programme** to be piloted in a small number of Trusts sponsored by the Pharma Company. The results of the Pilot were as follows:



An unblocking of the Care Pathway leading to **patients actually being treated** for their disease.



Return on Investment for the sponsoring Pharma Company from the additional product sales.



A **reduction in NHS waiting lists** freeing up Clinician time leaving a legacy of new ways of working for sustainable improvement.

Summary

Pharma Companies are embracing such initiatives in increasing numbers. The benefits to all stakeholders including itself can be immediate. It also shows how the Pharma industry can play a massive role in the promotion and support of the NHS Innovation Agenda to drive down waiting lists.

For more information about how we work with our clients, click here:

[Welcome to Apodi](#)

Alternatively, contact us directly on info@apodi.co.uk and we will respond within 24 hours.