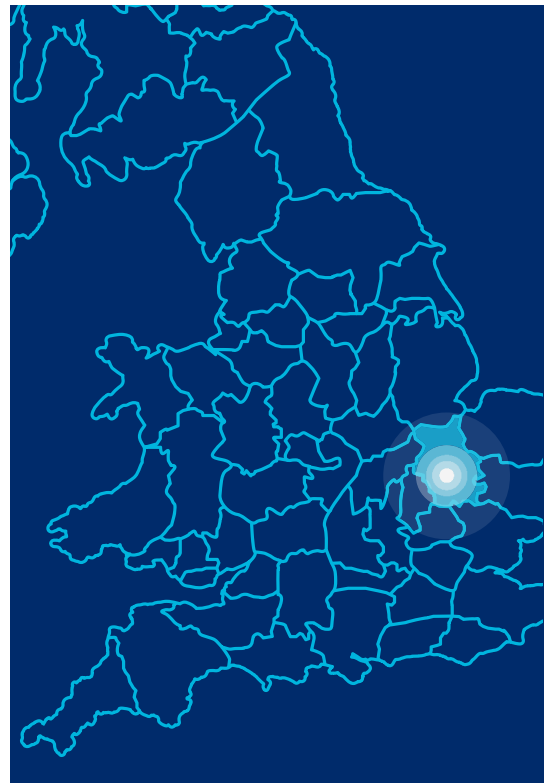




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# CIO/CCIO roundtable series: East of England executive summary



# Six key takeaways to consider when adopting standards

Continuing GS1 UK's countrywide tour of healthcare institutions, we have been speaking to the chief information officers and chief clinical information officers of NHS trusts in the east of England, to see how standards are improving the way their organisations run.

Sponsored by Datalogic and Brother, 13 representatives from nine different organisations across the region came together to look at how GS1 standards could help to shape their trusts for the better.

## Alignment and education of suppliers

The perception is that scanning barcodes is solely for the betterment of procurement and supply chain processes and holds no benefit for the clinical side of the system.

Education about the value of the standards should be the province of those who can show best practice: those who employ GS1 standards should be actively encouraging those who don't.

## The need for central mandates

One of the main reasons behind an average uptake of GS1 standards in the supplier base, is the lack of prescriptive guidance from central NHS sources on procurement.

If there were directives in place to ensure suppliers had to fall in line with GS1 standards to qualify for a shortlist of preferred providers or tenderers, there would be either a quick whittling away of non-compliant parties, or an uptick in compliance of those wanting to work inside the system.

Compliance can then be enforced by bloc action in accordance with guidelines, rather than loosely by recommendation. Two examples of such action are the NHS standard contract, and the recent EU Medical Device Regulation (MDR) and In-vitro Device Regulation (IVDR) that comes into force in May 2021.

In the instance of MDR and IVDR, the regulation calls for Unique Device Identification (UDI) across the entire supplier industry to enable traceability across the patient pathway and improve the efficiency of product recalls.

## Cultural change and user buy-in

Standards are built to drive efficiency in the machinery of complex organisations, especially in terms of asset tracking, where they can greatly reduce the risk of something going missing, and save money in the process.

The benefits are tangible and well documented – yet standards adoption faces the same barriers that govern the uptake of most technologies: resistance to change, inconsistent championing at all levels, and the lack of well-trained users to ensure that the basics are outlined and fostered in an enthusiastic user base. This must be tackled head on.



Suppliers working collectively to drive standards adoption across the NHS

## Best practice must be policed

Cutting corners to save time becomes instinctive in a high-pressured work environment. Unfortunately, every corner cut takes caregivers further away from best practice.

A good example of a common shortcut taken on the ward, is the dispensing of unscanned paracetamol tablets on night rounds to avoid disturbing patients. While this is understandable from the perspective of smooth-running, it is a departure from protocol that can become a bad habit.

Monitoring to make sure that best practice is actually practised is crucial if standards are to work in the healthcare environment.

## Healthcare must learn from retail

On the subject of best practice, brands and retailers have been tracking and tracing goods across supply chains the world over for decades. In this way they have been better able to control and visualise inventory, as well as minimise shrinkage.

With a vast array of examples to draw from, some parts of healthcare – veterinary healthcare, to be precise – have actively employed lessons from retail.

We are able to register and track the movements of our pets using passive RFID devices and a centralised database, yet we are unable to track inpatients throughout their journeys at a hospital.

Using non-invasive technology, it should be possible to locate patients across a trust's footprint, saving time and increasing efficiency and safety.

## The dm+d must be updated and adhered to

The NHS Dictionary of Medicines and Devices (dm+d) is the standardised repository for all medicines and devices licensed for use across the NHS.

dm+d provides a unique code for each medicine and device, as well as a text description of the item in question, allowing clinical systems to use a single common language. It is a cornerstone of the Electronic Prescription Service, which sends e-prescriptions from GP surgeries to pharmacies in a move towards a more paperless NHS.

With it comes a level of accuracy and traceability, enabling every step of medicines prescribing, administration and dispensing, to be monitored throughout the entire process – enabling fully closed-loop prescribing.

In order to be fit for purpose, the dm+d needs to be refreshed regularly to reflect changes in the market. In addition, suppliers need to ensure they are not reusing the Global Trade Item Numbers (GTIN) assigned to them at all.

GTIN reuse and out-of-date product information results in the kind of inaccurate catalogue data that could invalidate the whole point of standardisation in the first place, as well as risking patient safety.



The NHS Dictionary of Medicines and Devices (dm+d).

## How GS1 UK is helping

GS1 UK's not-for-profit status and neutral stance makes us a key intermediary between NHS trusts and suppliers.

In our role, we can see a bird's eye view of the whole healthcare sector and advise all parties without bias in our areas of expertise. Add to that our unique relationship with NHSX, and we are in exactly the right place to be able to showcase the evidence benefits and bring in the patient safety elements for the whole standards journey.

Through our partner programme, focus on engagement with suppliers, and our standards adoption groups can facilitate the discussions and field the all questions that decision makers need answering.

Find out more about GS1 standards in healthcare on our website at [www.gs1uk.org/healthcare](http://www.gs1uk.org/healthcare) or contact a member of the healthcare team at [healthcare@gs1uk.org](mailto:healthcare@gs1uk.org).

To learn more about GS1 standards in action visit our case study portal at [healthcare.gs1uk.org/](http://healthcare.gs1uk.org/).

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