

INNOVATION IN THE NHS Call for evidence

Dear Colleague,

The Plan for Growth¹ announced that the NHS Chief Executive would provide a report by November 2011 on how the adoption and diffusion of innovations can be accelerated across the NHS. Sir David Nicholson has asked that I lead this work on his behalf and, as a first step, I wanted to write to you personally to set out my plans for taking this work forward and to seek your support and contributions.

Innovation – especially in a system as big as the NHS – demands excellent people with excellent ideas. The NHS has both of these, but whilst the NHS is recognised as a world leader at invention, we are less successful at spreading them at pace and scale.

More than ever before, innovation and the rapid spread of ideas has a vital role to play if we are to continue to improve outcomes for patients and deliver value for money.

Much has already been done. The Department of Health has introduced a legal duty for the SHAs to promote innovation and committed £20m annually to a regional innovation fund aimed directly at spreading our very best ideas. There has been significant investment in NHS Evidence, a website hosted by NICE which puts information about the best new ideas in healthcare at the fingertips of all NHS staff. Over 10,000 people have visited the two innovation Expo's which showcase what is brightest and best about healthcare in the NHS - the Expo's are the largest events of their type in Europe. The iTAPP

¹Plan for Growth, HM Treasury and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, March 2011 (http://cdn.hm-treasury.gov.uk/2011budget_growth.pdf)

programme has been established to allow the NHS and industry to work together to identify high impact technologies and devices and get them into every day use right across the NHS, and the Life Sciences Innovation Delivery Board allows industry and the NHS to work collaboratively to accelerate uptake. There is more excellent work underway at the centre and locally as part of the QIPP programme, but we need to do more to systematically identify and spread the very best ideas. Innovation must be encouraged and nurtured by each of us.

This requires a fundamental change to the way in which people currently work. At the heart of this is strong leadership – both clinical and managerial at all levels in the system. It will require all leaders to identify and tackle the behaviours and cultures that stand in the way of innovation. We will need to look at system incentives, such as tariff, to ensure they are aligned to support and encourage innovation. We will need to create 'pull' for new ideas from patients and the NHS, rather than relying on the traditional top down 'push'. We should reward those individuals and organisations that adopt best practice and new ideas, and we should ask those organisations that don't to explain why. We need to experiment more and be less risk averse. We need to take a longer-term view on investments and we need to ensure staff are supported to introduce and scale up new ideas and technologies.

I know that many of you are either involved in or lead activity at a local level, which is addressing these very points. With that in mind, I would like to invite you and your stakeholders to contribute views. This could include actions for the Department of Health, wider government, industry, the NHS Commissioning Board, the NHS, or other sectors. I would also welcome your support in encouraging as many staff – both clinical and managerial – to contribute.

I am also writing to industry, other government departments, the academic, scientific and voluntary sectors and social care to seek their views and contributions.

The call for evidence will close Wednesday 31 August. For more information on the review and how to contribute, please visit: www.dh.gov.uk/innovationreview. If you have any questions please email: health.innovation@dh.gsi.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully,

SIR IAN CARRUTHERS OBE

la Canto.

Chief Executive NHS South West