



A – Z Introductory Guide to Health and Social Care

Electronic Multi-Agency Information Sharing across Care Services (eCare)

Brief description

The eCare Programme works with a number of local eCare projects across Scotland to develop information sharing systems that support service delivery to users of community care, services for children, and services for adults with learning disabilities. As well as service specific developments, the programme has taken forward technical and organisational development work to ensure common data standards and system architecture, and the provision of a network of data stores.

National Policy and Key Developments

Background

The current phase of eCare is funded by the Modernising Government Fund (MGF2), supported by the Public Service Reform and Efficiency Division in the Scottish Executive, working in partnership with health boards, local authorities and voluntary agencies throughout Scotland. eCare supports the policy agendas of [Joint Future](#) (specifically Single Shared Assessment), [‘For Scotland’s Children’](#) and Learning Disability [‘The same as you?’](#).

The eCare Programme builds on the success of local projects funded under the first round of the Modernising Government Fund (MGF1). It seeks to re-use the best of the MGF1 technical products and learning, to deliver information sharing across more local partnerships and more care groups.

Recent Developments

- The local eCare projects were due to report in March 2005, but a recent Joint Ministerial decision has approved the continued activity of these projects until the end of September 2005.
- During this period the Data Standards and eCare Division, now located within the Scottish Executive Education Department, will work on the development of a further Ministerial submission, for rolling-out and embedding eCare beyond September 2005.

eCare SSA Sub-Programme

The SSA sub-programme consists of nine local authority / NHS partnerships. Initially, these projects will use eCare products to support the single shared assessment process for older people. It will then be extended to all other Community Care client groups.

The eCare projects will benefit service users, their carers, and practitioners. For **service users and their carers**, it will:

- Result in more appropriate assessment and care management, because the eCare products allow practitioners a more holistic view of the care and service record;
- Reduce the volume of questions asked, as information will only be collected once and then shared by multiple practitioners.

For **practitioners**, it will:

- Save time, because core data will be shared, rather than gathered more than once;
- Reduce the possibility of duplicated or inappropriate care, because practitioners will be sharing information;
- Enable practitioners to see the nature and spread of interventions across practitioner groups;
- Allow viewing of data across geographic areas, enabling tracking of core provision irrespective where it is provided.

eCare Children's Services Sub-Programme

At present, work with children and young people, together with their families – be it by education, health, reporter or social work professionals – can be hampered by a lack of relevant information from colleagues in other agencies, or problems with timely provision of information. An unnecessary amount of time can be spent re-collecting vital information that the client, student or patient has already provided, with repeated interviews to establish the same overall requirement. There may also be few opportunities for the child or family to contribute actively and positively to this process.

The eCare Children's pilot programmes operate in four areas (Aberdeen, Glasgow, Dumfries & Galloway, and Lanarkshire) and seek to provide solutions to the present lack of electronic information interchange between agencies.

Specifically, they are:

- Developing an Integrated Children's Services Record (ICSR) (across Grampian);
- Identifying data and processes for the Integrated Assessment Framework (IAF) (Glasgow and Dumfries & Galloway);
- Developing a Personal Care Record (PCR) to enable children to view their own summary care data (Glasgow); and
- Developing a framework for sharing messages on child protection across agencies (Lanarkshire).

eCare Learning Disability Sub-Programme (eSAY)

The Learning Disability sub-programme (also referred to as eSAY) is being led by the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability and involves four main partners (Dundee, Glasgow, South Lanarkshire, and Western Isles).

Specifically, the eSAY project will:

- Enable information sharing at a local level between practitioners who are involved in providing services to people with learning disabilities and their carers;
- Enable the collection of national data that allows patients and service users to remain anonymous;
- Provide a framework for data that facilitates Scottish Executive monitoring of the implementation of The same as you?;
- Enable access to local and national information for people with learning disabilities and their representatives.

Implications for Joint Working

ECare is about forming partnerships to provide better and more joined-up care, advice and assistance to the people of Scotland through the use of computers and communication technology. With the individual's consent, eCare enables secure information sharing between professionals, such as doctors, nurses, social workers and teachers, in public and voluntary agencies. The most obvious benefits include:

- Reducing the amount of time service users have to spend repeating information they have already given to one person or agency;
- Helping practitioners to access complete and up to date information before making an assessment or diagnosis;
- Giving members of the public easier access to information about themselves.

There are also wider benefits:

- Targeting future public spending on the people or areas in greatest need;
- Assessing whether particular types of intervention or treatment are effective;
- Holistic engagement of the multi-agency practitioners involved with care;
- Boundaries of geography and agency disappear as information is shared.

Relevant legislation and statutory guidance

[Modernising Government Fund](#) – this gives the background to the Modernising Government Fund, which funded the first two phases of the eCare Programme.

How can I find out more?

The [eCare website](#) contains a full range of information on eCare, with links to other relevant sites, and information and contact details for the eCare project team.

The [Social Care Data Standards Project website](#) contains a range of information on the data standards that are being developed for the eCare Programme.

Accessible through the [eCare website](#), the eCare Quickplace is a password protected document repository, used by all local projects and the central eCare Team. It contains all the key documentation relating to technical, OD, and Data Standards development, along with papers for all key local and national meetings.