



Connecting for Health
Implementing the National Programme for IT

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Sir David Cooksey
Cooksey Review of Health Research
HM Treasury – 4th Floor
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ

Dear David,

Consultation for the Cooksey Review of UK Health Research

I write giving an input to your review from two perspectives, reflecting the responsibilities of the two jobs that I am doing at present.

From the perspective of the National Screening Committee

I am Programmes Director for the UK National Screening Committee, responsible for policy-making, ensuring best policy advice is given to the four UK Health Departments, and then, when a policy decision has been made, I am responsible for implementing screening programmes and for their continual quality improvement. I attach a copy of the annual report of the National Screening Committee for speed reading.

We have three main national programmes: Fetal, Maternal and Child, Cancer, and Vascular Disease. All of these programmes are based on best current evidence and I am a major consumer of both MRC and Health Technology Assessment outputs. The outputs of the Health Technology Assessment Programme have underpinned the whole of this work and, attached as Appendix B is a list of the HTA reports that have been produced and the decisions that have been made on the basis of these reports. The HTA Programme has certainly saved the country a large amount of money in allowing me to resist pressure for the implementation of programmes that would do more harm than good. The HTA Reports, together with the MRC reports, have been used to support the case for screening for bowel cancer and abdominal aortic aneurysm, and

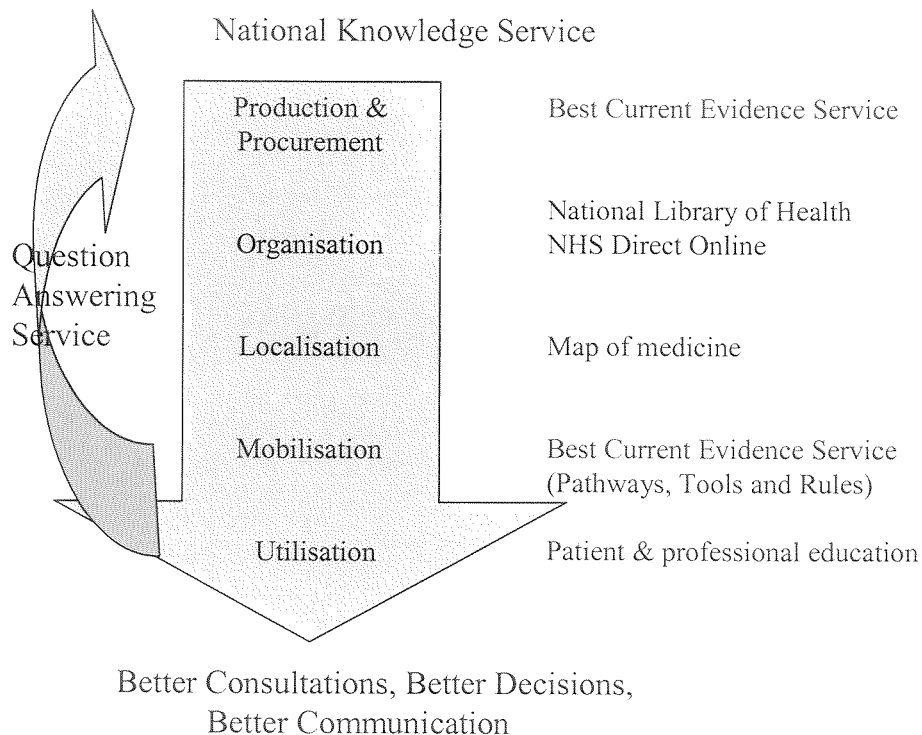
have ensured that the screening policies we have implemented give best value for tax-payers and populations in the UK.

Although I am obviously biased, I think there is good evidence that the approach we have adopted has allowed us to achieve the best screening programme in any large developed country.

From the perspective of the National Knowledge Service

In the other half of my life I am Director of Clinical Knowledge, Process and Safety for Connecting for Health, the IT Programme for the Department of Health and the NHS. Within this my principal responsibilities are the National Library for Health and the National Knowledge Service. The National Library for Health at www.library.nhs.uk is the single source of knowledge for clinicians. It is also open to patients and the public.

The National Knowledge Service embraces the National Library for Health and its structure is set out in the diagram below.



There are still major problems in implementing best current evidence and I am in discussion with the producers of research evidence to discuss ways in which their outputs could be much more easily and quickly put into practice.

This requires the following.

- Research producers to address the questions of importance to the NHS, which, by and large, they have done, but I believe we should do this in an even more focused way using methods of displaying knowledge and identifying uncertainty, such as DUETS and the Map of Medicine. I know that Iain Chalmers has written to you about DUETS. The

Map of Medicine is software developed in Britain which not only allows the very clear display of what we know but also allows the easy identification of what we do not know.

- The education of individuals about the way they use knowledge.
- The exploitation of IT to deliver knowledge where and when it is needed.
- The development of a management system to ensure that knowledge is put into practice; this is described in the attached paper on clinical knowledge governance.

I am not a research worker but I have spent thirty years of my professional life trying to get knowledge into practice.

I also believe that the United Kingdom has developed a cadre of people skilled in knowledge management and that we should develop businesses from this pool of talented knowledge managers to create wealth for the United Kingdom.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance to your Enquiry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J A Muir Gray'.

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Director of Clinical Knowledge, Process and Safety