

# Annual Report

## IT and Connectivity Network 2022



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[www.npag.org.uk](http://www.npag.org.uk)

# Mission Statement

**‘Striving to understand and improve safe connectivity between IT systems and medical devices and optimum use of patient machine data.’**

## Introduction

The NPAG IT and Connectivity Network was formed in 2016 following suggestions from Clinical Engineers and IT suppliers attending the NPAG Annual Conference the previous autumn. The need arose to address a gap in knowledge for connecting Medical Devices to IT systems.

The group held its first series of meetings in 2017. From the outset, it attracted a good mix of managers from the IT and clinical engineering departments across the UK. These staff understood the demands of working at the front line of clinical science while bringing together complex Medical Devices and IT systems. The group established useful links with various suppliers as well as NHS Digital, the National Cyber Security Centre, CARE-Cert and NHS Supply Chain.

The group has a dynamic agenda, which has continued to develop following the re-launch in 2019. Digital transformation and the need to ensure successful engagement with all parties has become an important area for the membership over the last two years.

The group has continued to look at providing quality services in a complex market and considered strategies to ensure that services continue to be enhanced by the introduction of innovative technologies. Crucially we also started to address how it feels for staff who are affected by implementation of new systems – what preparation do they need? How do we support them through major change?

The last meeting round was the first for a couple of years in which we were able to meet face-to-face again in central London, after an extended period of virtual meetings were held via MS Teams. This Annual Report reviews what has been done and achieved during the last twelve months.

***John King, NPAG Facilitator***

# Chairs' View

Like it has been for most people, the past year has been another challenging one, but that does not seem to deter the strength and commitment of our IT and Connectivity Group.

Not being able to meet up in person until part-way through this last round of meetings has meant more virtual meetings. But Members have been extremely adaptable, and these have worked incredibly well.

Each of our meetings provides members with a very rare and valuable opportunity, the time to think. The space our meetings create allow us to explore with like minded professionals the challenges – and the successes – of our work; and there has been some lively and interesting discussions over the year.

There are perhaps too many to talk about here, but we would like to share a few of them with you, in the hope that they may stimulate your interest enough to maybe come and join us next year? We certainly hope so.

We have especially valued the chance to:

- Hold professional discussions across the widening variety of disciplines attracted to the group
- Explore current topics and professional challenges
- Support each other by extending our contact with NPAG members between meetings
- Hear from others through presentations from credible and informative guest speakers and suppliers
- Learn from each other and exchange good practice
- Bring together IT and Clinical Engineering managers to pursue common aims.

There is no doubt in our minds that the NPAG IT and Connectivity Group is rich in talent and experience, supportive of its membership and keen to explore innovation and new ways of working. It may have been a challenging year, but for our group it has been a good one.

*Patrick Maw, Chair of the Group in 2022*

# Terms of Reference

## **Updated for 2022:**

To share information including clinical, technical and working practices, organisational developments, partnership working with external bodies/partners

To advise relevant national organisations and professional bodies through the partnership pathways of gaps within IT connectivity and clinical engineering to influence research and development

To develop better training for IT & CE technical staff in connectivity and cyber security

To seek to understand the original vision or intention behind government policy or guidance and disseminate this through the members own organisations

To interpret latest ideas regarding practice for fellow professionals

To develop, nurture and maintain relationships with relevant advisory and professional groups for example:

- ◇ Chief clinical information officer (CCIO), NHS digital, national cyber security centre, MHRA, IPEM, IET, BCS, NHS supply chain, NHS improvement
- ◇ NHS England

Respond to and take part in national and regional consultations

Develop a group/work action plan which considers the national agenda

To invite guests from the above bodies to attend group meetings on a regular basis.

### Meeting Venues

Traditionally, we have met in central London in the Bloomsbury area, which is very accessible for mainline stations such as Euston and King's Cross St Pancras.

However, for over two years, meetings had needed to be held virtually via MS Teams due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

We made a very welcome return to face-to-face meeting in 2022 and for the next round we are again planning a mix of virtual and traditional meetings.

The plan is to hold two face-to-face meetings in 2023, commencing in central London and also to explore a second face-to-face meeting in central Birmingham.

### Networking

Meetings continue to be the focal point for members to build an affinity and trust with each other—having quickly adapted to the virtual meeting environment. And we are at last able to take advantage of the opportunity to meet face-to-face and engage in informal networking during breaktimes—after just over two years.

Between meetings the **NPAG Network** is available to all members of NPAG's national groups where questions and requests for advice or sample policy documentation can be requested and then shared with all members. Documents, policies and minutes / agendas are kept on the NPAG members page for this group.

We are also taking full advantage of the MS Teams facilities to support Members throughout the year.

### Influencing Policy

The membership has a valuable voice and can influence national policy and practices.

Relevant information of findings will be passed on with Members' approval. A positive link with an [NHS Digital](#) representative has been established with personal visits to most meetings.

# 2022—Some Meeting Highlights

We held four meetings in this round, a mix of virtual, via Microsoft Teams and face-to-face in central London. Meetings generally lasted around five hours and included comfort and lunch breaks.

## Meeting 1— 26 January 2022

We kicked off the new year with an excellent session—a **Presentation and Discussion with Ben Tongue, of NHS Digital looking at Implementing a Net Zero NHS and how the group were currently considering sustainability**

Members welcomed Ben back to the group.

For the benefit of new Members, Ben outlined his lead role on greening IT at NHS Digital. He would shortly be taking up a new appointment at NHSX.

While he wanted to share the latest guidance, Ben was also keen to encourage a discussion with the group about their own experiences of preparing for a Net Zero NHS.

He commenced with an overview of sustainable tech in healthcare and then, to encourage discussion, put up these points:

- ◆ What type of healthcare provider do you work with?
- ◆ What do you already know about?
- ◆ Which of your processes have sustainability embedded?
- ◆ What have you achieved?
- ◆ What support would you need to do more?
- ◆ How have organisations adopted tech to adapt to new ways of working?

Members shared their experiences – there was a fairly wide variation.

One common theme was that IT managers were not aware of their Trust's Green Plan (formerly the SDMP) or the contents that related to technology. Ben's advice was to seek out the Trust Sustainability Team to start the dialogue.

In addition to making carbon savings, Trusts should also be looking into achieving 'social value'. What is social value in healthcare? Essentially it requires people who commission and deliver public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic, and environmental benefits. It might include encouraging more local employment or working closely with suppliers to get better value from procurement.

As well as producing their own green plans, Trusts needed to work with local ICS partners to contribute to an ICS-wide green plan.

Sustainability in IT has now become a regular feature on the group's agenda.

# Meeting 2 — 27 April 2022

**We had a very interesting session as part of our April meeting—Working with the NPAG Clinical Engineering groups: with Maryam Mirjafari, new Member and Chair of NPAG Clinical Engineering South group.**

NPAG currently runs two Clinical Engineering groups. Maryam is Head of Clinical Engineering at Kingston Hospital NHS FT. She is Chair of the NPAG Clinical Engineering South Group and had recently joined the IT group.

She said she was very pleased to share some of the discussion points from the CE group around the interface with IT and connectivity. Issues included:

How to engage more effectively with suppliers: It was important to work closely together – clinical engineering, IT, and the external provider - to ensure that when the contractor leaves site we do not lose all the expertise with them.

Dealing with the 'grey areas' between CE and IT: This was, in part, the point that was discussed previously, about 'autonomous IT departments' and how we recognise the issues and challenges and come together to address them. Although the IT & Connectivity Network is split between IT and CE leads, there were not many IT managers at the meeting and Members debated ways of attracting more IT people onto the group.

This is a key objective for the coming round of meetings in 2023.

# Meeting 3 — 13 July 2022

For our July meeting we finally returned to central London, meeting face-to-face at The Bedford Hotel in Southampton Row. This certainly added a welcome dimension to the meeting—informal networking, which had been much missed during the pandemic.

**It was a packed day including a provider presentation 'Medical Device Connectivity solutions presentation by Capsuletech' - introduced by Patrick Maw - with speakers: Debbie Pope, Omar Mamsa and Chelsea Speckham**

Capsule had recently been taken over by Philips. They offer a Medical Device Information Platform. Debbie commenced by outlining some of the challenges for healthcare providers:

- ◆ Long waiting times for surgical procedures – worsened during the pandemic
- ◆ Strategies to become paperless and automate clinical workflows
- ◆ Challenges in recruiting / retaining good quality staff
- ◆ Making clinical decisions on inaccurate data

Patients demanding a greater involvement in their own care.

Capsule seek to drive improvements in care quality, efficiency, and safety through medical device integration. Debbie referred to case studies at UCLH and Cambridge hospitals. A single platform can provide three focused solutions - for unlocking the power of medical device data, simplifying patient vitals acquisition and utilisation, and identifying at-risk patients sooner.

The Medical Device Information Platform (MDIP) has seven core capabilities, which together help to liberate, aggregate, analyse and share data. Cloud capability reduces hardware and support requirements, while enabling rapid deployment.

Capsule is growing rapidly with over 1000 different types of supported devices.

## Meeting 4 —2 November 2022

**RFID at my Trust** – update by Andy Barrow, Kent Canterbury Hospital - 2Gether Support Services

The project was initiated following a CQC visit which commented on the protection of Trust assets.

Radio-frequency identification (RFID) uses electromagnetic fields to automatically identify and track tags attached to objects. An RFID system consists of a tiny radio transponder, a radio receiver and transmitter. When triggered by an electromagnetic interrogation pulse from a nearby RFID reader device, the tag transmits digital data, usually an identifying inventory number, back to the reader.

Because of the CQC involvement funding the project was not an issue. Active tags were used initially - active tags have an on-board battery and periodically transmits its ID signal. They are relatively expensive.

A decision was shortly made to switch to passive technology. A passive tag is cheaper and smaller because it has no battery; instead, the tag uses the radio energy transmitted by the reader. However, to operate a passive tag, it requires a power level much stronger than an active tag for signal transmission.

In response to a question, Andy said that passive tags are around £3 each and stickers 30p. The whole system costs around £6K per annum for all devices / tags.

The RFID server collects data from and manages the RFID devices. Collected data is integrated into Trust systems. It can be used to track all types of assets and can, for example, help to spot the dumping of equipment in corridors.

There was a discussion about privacy concerns. Barts Health specifically mentioned Smith & Nephew Renasys Touch Connect Negative Pressure Wound Therapy Pumps which they used to have. They had a GPS chip (??) built in. As far as is known they are no longer available due to the privacy concerns.

In conclusion, Andy said that Passive technology is the way to go. Technology is changing very quickly and investing in active tags cannot be justified.

Andy would be happy to speak to any Member outside of the meeting.

# Current and Future Topics

We have already identified topics for our agendas in 2022 including:

- ◆ Pursuing a Net Zero NHS
- ◆ Cyber Security / Cyber Essentials and The Internet of Things (IOT)
- ◆ Raising the IT literacy profile
- ◆ Engaging People in IT developments and Supporting them through change
- ◆ Engagement with central agencies and networking across related NPAG groups

**A typical Meeting Agenda is shown below:**

- ◆ Minutes of last meeting
- ◆ Action Review and Matters Arising
- ◆ Presentation(s)
- ◆ Discussion:
- ◆ Members' exchange (shared good practice, i.e. policies, board papers, business planning, cyber incidents, tenders, and who else is tackling the issues)
- ◆ NPAGNetwork -Review of Questions asked of members. - Information Sharing Updates
- ◆ Dates / Agenda matters for the coming months.
- ◆ Any Other Business.

# Member Trusts in 2022

Barts Health NHS Trust  
Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust  
Kent Canterbury Hospital - 2Gether Support Services  
Kingston Hospital NHS FT  
North of England Commercial Procurement Collaborative  
Royal Surrey County Hospitals NHS FT  
Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust  
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals  
University Hospital Birmingham NHS FT  
West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust  
UCLH



# NPAG Developments

### CPD Certification

The NPAG is a member of the CPD Certification Service. An application for certification has been submitted for approval for the IT & Connectivity Network 2023.

CPD Certification is a formal recognition of the contribution that membership of the IT & Connectivity Network makes to members' continued professional/personal development.

At the end of the annual round of meetings, members will receive certificates of attendance for all meetings attended during the year to evidence the contribution made as part of lifelong learning.

### NPAGNetwork

The NPAGNetwork provides the facility for members to ask questions of any individuals, group or groups within the overall NPAG membership. Questions can be sent to the NPAGNetwork Coordinator who disseminates them across the NPAG membership. Responses are collated and returned to the originator and others who declare an interest in the question asked.

### NPAG Library

The NPAG Library holds presentations from NPAG best value groups and conferences, together with policy and other documents sent in by members. Access to these items is via the NPAGNetwork Coordinator.

### NPAG Website

The NPAG website includes a private members Area for each of the NPAG BVGs. Through these sites, BVG members can access and download meeting agendas, minutes, presentations and survey forms. The areas are password protected.

# Discounts and Offers

**Members Referral Fee** – Introduce a friend and get 1 meeting for free.

A member referral resulting in another Trust / Organisation registering for full membership of the same group will result in the referring member qualifying for a 25% discount.

The discount applies to the full membership fee only (not applicable to the 2nd member rate). The discount will be applied once, at the start of the current meeting round. Mid round membership referral discounts will be processed at the start of the following year's membership round.

Multiple referrals will result in multiple discounts up to four referrals per meeting round.

**Second Club Membership** - A 25% discount will be applied when an existing NPAG member joins an additional Group. This does not apply to the £295 second member rate.

Introducing our **Try Before You Buy** option. Simply attend the first meeting of a group's new round, see what it's all about and if you decide it's not for you walk away commitment free\*.

*\*Try before you buy option is available to new members only. New members must inform NPAG in writing that they wish to 'try before they buy' prior to first meeting attendance. If the new member continues membership beyond the first meeting then the full group membership fee applies.*

## NPAG Best Value Groups

The NPAG organises and facilitates a national network of Best Value Groups that enables members to share experience, identify good practice; innovation and information to assist individual managers develop their own service improvement action plans.

Arts, Heritage & Design in Healthcare Network	NHS Car Parking & Sustainable Transport Network
Clinical Engineering (North) BVG	NHS Sustainability Leads Network
Clinical Engineering (South) BVG	NHS Transport and Logistics BVG
Decontamination BVG	NPAG Violence Reduction & Security Management Network
Estates BVG	Nursing and Temporary Staffing BVG
Facilities (North) BVG	Operating Theatres BM Group
Facilities (South) BVG	EPRR Network
Health Visiting & School Health Services DN	Telecoms BVG
IT and Connectivity Network	Waste Management BVG
National District Nurses Network	

For further information on the NPAG and our future activities, please contact Marie Cherry or Laura Howe by e-mail on:

[marie.cherry@npag.eastamb.nhs.uk](mailto:marie.cherry@npag.eastamb.nhs.uk)

[Laura.howe@npag.eastamb.nhs.uk](mailto:Laura.howe@npag.eastamb.nhs.uk)

### Some Group Testimonials...

*“I LOVE being part of this group – it’s really opened up the arts and health network into something more like a team, our trust in each other, the sharing and ideas pooling that goes on, the mutual support during – and continuing – COVID and the security of knowing there are those out there going through the same issues, frustrations and challenges and we have a safe space in which to share and support – great stuff.”*

**Arts Programme Manager, North Bristol NHS Trust, Member of the Arts, Heritage & Design Network 2020**

*“We are certainly in a similar place and it was so helpful to hear from others earlier today. I have been somewhat left with this by our Procurement people! That’s why discussing with others provides such great support. Another NPAG success and in such challenging times too!”*

**Sustainability & Fleet Manager, Dorset Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust,  
Member of the NHS Sustainability Leads Network 2019-20**

*“I find Facilities South NPAG to be a very valuable Group, bringing together a broad range of knowledge and experience from across the NHS to one forum. The agenda allows for specific conversation with invited subject matter specialists and there is also time to talk about matters arising. As one NHS I feel these Groups are the way forward, sharing benchmarks and reducing duplication making them productive for all those who engage.”*

**Head of Estates and Facilities, RJA Orthopaedic Hospital Foundation Trust,  
Member of the Facilities South BVG 2022**

# NPAGNetwork

Available to all members of NPAG Benchmarking and Best Value Groups, and individual subscribers, the **NPAGNetwork** provides the facility for members to ask questions of any individuals, group or groups within the overall NPAG membership.

The response to questions raised has been excellent. The **NPAGNetwork** provides a managed forum for colleagues to share information - saving time and money in not re-inventing the wheel!

Questions raised in the past month have included the following topics:

- ◆ Job descriptions and banding
- ◆ Staff parking charges
- ◆ Electric Vehicle (EV) charging
- ◆ Disposal of ionisation smoke heads
- ◆ HFSS food removal
- ◆ Reporting pressure ulcers
- ◆ DaVinci Robot use
- ◆ Pathology waste policy
- ◆ Pool cars
- ◆ Decontamination of portable medical equipment
- ◆ Use of latex gloves

For full details of how to use the **NPAGNetwork**, please contact the NPAG team via email: [npagnetwork@npag.east.amb.nhs.uk](mailto:npagnetwork@npag.east.amb.nhs.uk)

## Forthcoming NPAG Events

Please visit [www.npag.org.uk](http://www.npag.org.uk) for all our current course, workshops, training & BVG meetings.

Email: [marie.cherry@npag.eastamb.nhs.uk](mailto:marie.cherry@npag.eastamb.nhs.uk) or [laura.howe@npag.easstamb.nhs.uk](mailto:laura.howe@npag.easstamb.nhs.uk)

## Contact Us

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NHS Trust  
Chelmsford Office, Hospital Approach  
Broomfield, Essex  
CM1 7WS

# REGISTRATION FORM



National Performance  
Advisory Group

## IT and Connectivity Network 2023

Organisation

Address


If you are a member of another NPAG Networking Group, to activate your discount please indicate which one here:

**Member 1 for a £530 Fee**

(x2 MS Teams & x2 F2F meetings)

**Member 2 for a £295 Fee**

Name

Job Title

Email

Special  
Requirements  
(Dietary / Access)

Phone No.

PA Details

	Member 1 for a £530 Fee (x2 MS Teams & x2 F2F meetings)	Member 2 for a £295 Fee
Name		
Job Title		
Email		
Special Requirements (Dietary / Access)		
Phone No.		
PA Details		

### Registrations

Please email your completed registration form to:

E: [laura.howe@npag.eastamb.nhs.uk](mailto:laura.howe@npag.eastamb.nhs.uk)

W: [www.npag.org.uk](http://www.npag.org.uk)

**National Performance Advisory Group  
East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust  
Hospital Approach  
Broomfield, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 7WS**

### Invoicing

If the invoice address is different from that above please enter below:

_____
_____
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### REGISTRATION CONDITIONS:

A VAT invoice will be issued. VAT Registration No. 654 9195 01. VAT applies to any NHS organisation outside England and to any non-NHS organisation. Payment is due on receipt of invoice. DO NOT send payment in advance of receipt of invoice. When invoice is received, payment should be made to 'East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust.'

ALL cancellations must be in writing. Cancellations received within 14 days of receipt of the registration form will receive a full refund. After this date refunds cannot be made. A substitute is acceptable. NPAG cannot be held responsible for any travel expenses or accommodation costs in the event of a cancellation or postponement of a meeting, workshop or event.

A 25% discount will be applied when an existing NPAG member joins an additional Group. This does not apply to the £295 second member rate. As a registered contact you will receive our monthly NPAG Newsletter. Additionally, we may also send you more general information about our services, new products and offers. If you would prefer not to be contacted outside of your membership please tick here

I confirm that I have read and accept the above REGISTRATION CONDITIONS and would like to register as a member of the 'IT and Connectivity Network'  
Please invoice me for payment.

Authorisation Signature ..... Purchase Order Number.....