

ESR Supporting Data Quality



The importance of good Data Quality – Locally and Nationally



ESR enables organisations to record and report upon a wide range of workforce data. This data is used at local and national level to manage the NHS.



Data that is not accurate and up to date will not be robust enough to run the NHS efficiently and effectively, nor to facilitate good management decision-making.

Poor data quality can impact upon every aspect of the workforce, from vacancy management to leaver analyses, employee details to aggregate staff reports and from pay to pension.

Workforce data in ESR is clearly important to each employee and each employing organisation, but it is also increasingly significant to a variety of national bodies - some of whom have direct access to it via the ESR Data Warehouse, for instance the Department of Health & Social Care, NHS Digital, the Care Quality Commission. Every aspect of managing the NHS relies on workforce data.

Data from ESR enables analysis and monitoring across a wide range of policies and activities, including: workforce information and planning, pay and reward, commissioning, statistics for FOI and PQs, diversity and inclusion, regulation, etc.

Organisations also have a legislative responsibility, e.g. General Data Protection Regulations recently introduced in May 2018, to ensure a subjects (employee's) data is both accurate and is managed/processed correctly. Across many parts of the ESR solution – including Self Service for employees to access and manage their own data quality, ESR is a key enabler to organisations being legislatively compliant.

Lord Carter's report on productivity and performance noted how incomplete and inaccurate data impacts upon understanding and therefore management of the workforce. The report stressed the significance of accurate data across all systems, including ESR.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/productivity-in-nhs-hospitals>

Operational productivity and performance in English NHS acute hospitals: Unwarranted variations

An independent report for the Department of Health
by Lord Carter of Coles

“During our visits to trusts we realised that despite the national electronic staff record (ESR), many trusts did not have a full picture of where all their staff are and what they are doing – which is critical if trusts are to optimise their resource. Our first iterations of the model hospital using the ESR data exposed this and made comparison difficult in some specialties. This is why we recently asked every trust for a snapshot of their staff so that we can work out where they are working and to enable us to make more meaningful comparisons across the NHS. Trusts must get a tighter grip of their coding to the ESR database and use the data in their daily management of staff as described later in this report so that such snapshot exercises will be unnecessary in the future.”

“During our analysis we consistently found imperfections in the data reported by individual trusts, whether it is allocation of staff to the national Electronic Staff Record (ESR), returns to the Estates Returns Information Collection (ERIC) or compilation of reference costs. Given this, we cannot stress strongly enough how important it is for trusts to record and report data accurately, particularly as this data will be used for a more open and integrated approach to performance management across the NHS. “

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How does ESR support organisations to ensure their data is robust?

Data Quality by design

ESR utilises a variety of methods to promote consistent and valid data entry:

- Drop-down lists of values are used where appropriate rather than typed entries.
- Many data items and lists of values (e.g. Job Roles, Sickness Absence Reasons and Occupation Codes) comply with NHS-wide Standards such as the National Workforce Dataset.
- Input masks ensure that entries comply with the required number and type of characters (e.g. Professional Registration PIN).
- Context-sensitive warning messages and prompts that guide the user to enter valid data.
- Entry of some data items is mandatory; however, this is kept to a minimum to avoid situations where the user would be unable to proceed, or input invalid data so as to progress a transaction.



Data Quality Reporting

The ESR Business Intelligence solution includes data quality reports:

- **Compliance reports** such as for Appraisals, Competences, Disclosure & Barring Service and Professional Registration can also be used to identify missing or expired entries.
- The **'Workforce Information Verifier Dashboard'** has been developed to help identify possible discrepancies between Occupation Code, Staff Group/Job Role and Pay Band that have been assigned to Positions.
- The **'Data Quality Dashboard'** incorporates the Workforce Validation Engine ('WoVen') tests are produced monthly in conjunction with NHS Digital, and can be run within ESR at the organisation's own choice of timing & frequency.



NHS Digital guidance explains the purpose and importance of the WoVen reporting process:

"The data validation reports focus on key data items, rather than compliancy data items; by assuring this information is up to date in ESR, this will greatly assist with planning recruitment and retention of staff and Equality and Diversity monitoring. Data from ESR can be used nationally to drive efficiency and productivity improvements across the NHS so it is essential that data in ESR is up-to-date and correct."

NHS Digital uses ESR data and typically, those data items covered in the National Workforce Dataset (NWD) Standards and Occupation Codes to determine workforce numbers and their change over time. ESR data now feeds a monthly publication, which enables the data to be used to answer Parliamentary Questions and Freedom of Information requests, the data feeds the NHS Litigation Authority (LA) CNST premiums, workforce planning and target monitoring and also the QIPP benchmarking tools. All of these secondary uses can lead to reputation damage for organisations and individuals and even financial costs due to poor quality data."

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/areas-of-interest/workforce/electronic-staff-record-data-quality-reports-woven>

ESR Interfaces enable transfer of data to and from other systems

ESR interfaces with a number of systems including HMRC, NHS Pensions, Recruitment, Rostering, Ledger, GMC, NMC, GDC, and HCPC:

- Saves time and effort, reduces errors through re-keying.
- Data is transferred accurately and on time.
- The process relies on matching the individual so the initial data entry of basic details on each system is crucial.
- Once the 'link' is established future transactions and updates are exchanged effortlessly.



Inter Authority Transfer (IAT) enables transfer of data from other ESR-using organisations

ESR's IAT functionality enables transfer of data from one employer to another:

- Saves time and effort, reduces errors through re-keying.
- Data is transferred accurately and on time.
- The sending organisation must ensure data is correct before passing on.
- The receiving organisation must ensure data is correct before accepting it.
- Enabling auto-IAT ensures that data exchange is achieved with minimal effort.

Self Service



Entry of data at source helps to ensure accurate and timely data entry. Employees and Managers with access to Self Service can enter and maintain data, submit and approve leave requests, process appraisals, etc.

ESR's Self Service functionality is available via mobile devices as well as desktop computers, so users have access whenever and wherever is most convenient. Measures are in place to safeguard against inappropriate access.

Discovering the link

ESR functionality can support and enable organisations to meet the business challenges they are currently facing in this changing NHS landscape. By fully utilising ESR as an integrated system, organisations can release greater benefits across the organisation and its workforce.

The button opposite will take you to our **Discover Your ESR** tool to help you understand how the different functionality within the system supports key strategic workforce objectives.

