



Spotlight on Knowledge for Healthcare

November and December 2025, Issues 6-7

Welcome to this month's bulletin providing news and information for NHS staff and learners, helping you to make the most of your NHS knowledge and library service for lifelong learning, research, innovation and everyday decision making.

Find out more about the work of the [national NHS Knowledge and Library Services team](#) or take a look at [Knowledge for Healthcare](#).

In this issue:

- **A message from Louise Goswami, Chief Knowledge Officer, NHS England**
- **Health Literacy and Patient Information: Health Information Week round-up**
- **Health Literacy and Patient Information: Evidence-based techniques to improve communication**

- **Mobilising Evidence and Knowledge: Learning after techniques**
- **Resource of the month: health literacy geodata**
- **Spotlight on Resource Discovery: LibKey Nomad**
- **Partnership Perfection: NHS App and libraries**
- **Quality, Improvement and Impact: NHS knowledge and library specialists bringing the evidence you need to inform your decisions**
- **Quality, Improvement and Impact: Celebrating good practice**
- **NHS Excellence Awards now open for entries**
- **Modernising healthcare curricula**

A message from Louise Goswami, Chief Knowledge Officer, NHS England



January is a great month for “learning after” and preparing for the next phase of work by “learning before”. With my colleague Emily, who leads the NHS England Knowledge Management Service, I have been sharing useful tools and templates to make this [learning process](#) and [transfer of knowledge](#) more straightforward.

We are using similar tools to reflect on the success of the Knowledge for Healthcare strategic framework as we approach the final year of the current iteration. We are taking a [before action](#) approach to shaping the strategic direction for NHS knowledge and library services in England for the next five years. This will highlight how access to high quality proactive NHS knowledge and library services are essential to underpin the 10 Year Health Plan.

Finally, this month, during Health Information Week, the second wave of the NHS/local authority public libraries partnership was launched. This supports members of the public to use the NHS App or NHS

Account. The national Knowledge and Library Services team have brokered connections between NHS App colleagues and public library teams to encourage further use of the NHS App as outlined in the 10 Year Health Plan.

Health Literacy and Patient Information: Health Information Week round-up

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in Health Information Week 2026.

Health Information Week is a cross-sector partnership event, aiming to increase awareness of the importance of high-quality health information to equip members of the public to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing. The partners come from across the UK and include voluntary sector organisations that produce health information as well as NHS knowledge and library services and public libraries. Each year, there are themes that organisations can adopt or adapt, with associated sets of resources that can be promoted for each theme.

Our 2026 themes were:

- [Children and Young People](#)
- [Translated Patient Information](#)
- [Women's Health](#)
- [Mental Health](#)
- [Winter Health](#)

If you search using #HIW2026 on social media platforms, you will see that a wide range of events and resource promotion activities have taken place during the week. This year, the launches have included the second wave of a partnership to promote signposting to health information and the NHS App through public libraries. You can [find out more](#) about Health Information Week. If you would like to get involved in future years, please email england.kfh@nhs.net.

Health Literacy and Patient Information: Evidence-based techniques to improve communication

Time with patients is precious and making sure that key messages and information are fully understood is a challenge.

Healthcare professionals offer opportunities to ask questions and check for understanding but it can be hard to know if your patient has really taken everything in, especially when they may have heard bad news or lots of information at once.

There are two evidence-based techniques which have been shown to help to reinforce understanding:

Teach back: this involves asking the patient/service user to explain back to you in their own words the information or instructions you have given them.

Chunk and check: this technique works well in tandem with teach back and involves breaking down key information into smaller chunks, explaining and checking for understanding before moving on.

The Health Literacy Team at South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust worked in partnership with the [NHS England Knowledge and Library Services Team](#) and local practitioners to develop some short, practical role play videos in an NHS pharmacy and reception desk setting to demonstrate Teach Back and Chunk and Check in action.

- Look at [the teach back role plays](#) and share with colleagues.
- Look at our [Health Literacy Toolkit](#) and speak to [your local NHS Knowledge and Library Service](#) about Royal Society for Public Health accredited health literacy training.

Mobilising Evidence and Knowledge: Learning after techniques

Q4 and Learning After | Capturing Knowledge for Future Success

As we know, the “learning after” phase of the [NHS Knowledge Mobilisation Framework](#) focuses on reflection and insight: what did we achieve? what worked well? what could have gone better? what recommendations can we make? And as we head into the final quarter of the financial year - when Trusts and teams review progress, close projects, and plan for the year ahead – “learning after” activities can be especially valuable.

Two stand out:

- The structured review of the [Retrospect](#) is a great way to conclude the end of a phase of work or project. For example, an IT implementation team might use a Retrospect to identify what made the rollout successful and what could improve similar, future rollouts or projects.
- Capturing observations and insights from key individuals through [Knowledge Harvesting](#) addresses staff transitions, project completions, and secondments. For instance, when a senior clinician retires or a project lead moves on, harvesting enables continuity and supports handover. Use the tips and templates in the [Knowledge Retention and Transfer Toolkit](#) to help you get started.

Captured, stored, and shared, retrospect and harvest outcomes can inform those future projects, ‘knowledge-enabling’ the staff that will lead and deliver them.

NHS Knowledge and Library Services are especially well-placed to promote these activities. Reference “learning after” in Q4 marketing campaigns as a vital FY25/26 closure activity. Couple or follow it with a “learning before” offer (to undertake an evidence scan for example) as a vital FY26/27 planning activity for

new initiatives. Paired or sequenced together, “learning after” and “learning before” will support your Trust manage its transition from one financial year to the next, closing out one year well and starting the next informed by knowledge.

Resource of the month: health literacy geodata

Health literacy is the ability to access, assess and use health information to make informed decisions. Working with increasingly digital front doors to access NHS services does not just involve having digital connectivity, tools and skills, it also requires health literacy to use the content once an individual has accessed it.

At a [national level](#), 43% adults aged 16-65 struggle to understand and use health information – rising to 61% who struggle when numbers are added. These are the national figures, but the local figures vary.

To help NHS organisations to target interventions, the national NHS Knowledge and Library Services team worked in partnership with the University of Southampton to develop [borough-level health literacy geodata](#). This draws on [national datasets](#), with the most recent updates following the release of data from the 2021 census.

Users can [search for a borough or view a map](#) to see relative health literacy levels. The resource is free to all to access. Do share the [health literacy geodata](#) with colleagues who may find it helpful.

Spotlight on Resource Discovery: LibKey Nomad

A common frustration can be finding a useful journal article but then struggling to get hold of a copy to read.

Your journey to reading can be made quicker and simpler by using the free LibKey Nomad tool.

All NHS staff have the option to [download LibKey Nomad](#) and use it on any computer where they have permission. On your first visit you need to click the icon (that looks like a tear drop) to select your organisation and from then on the green icon means you are good to go. Ideally your Trust will already have made Nomad available on all Trust desktops.

Find an article you want to read on the web and the LibKey Nomad button gives you a single click route to your best option. That might be an immediate PDF download or a seamless route to the PDF if you need to login with [OpenAthens](#). If the article is not immediately available (and you are linked to a Knowledge and Library Service team) you are taken to a prepopulated form to request a free copy.



Nomad also helps you spot potential concerns by flagging articles that have been withdrawn or where there is an expression of concern that may lead to withdrawal.

Nomad lets you simply find, click and read. Give it a try and consider asking your IT team to [make it available across your Trust](#) if it is not already.

Have you got your NHS OpenAthens key to unlock knowledge resources?

To make the most of the [national collection of e-books, e-journals, databases and clinical decision support tools](#) check you have an active NHS OpenAthens account.

[Sign-up here](#) or [refresh your password](#).



Search, find, read with the [NHS Knowledge and Library Hub](#)

Partnership Perfection: NHS App and libraries

The national NHS Knowledge and Library Services team is part of a National Health Literacy Partnership, working with the [Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals](#), [Libraries Connected](#) (overseeing strategic direction for public libraries) and [Arts Council England](#) (the development agency for public libraries in England). Through this partnership, we ran [initial pilots](#) to test out signposting to high-quality health information from public libraries.

Public libraries provide digital connectivity in a warm, safe environment. Public libraries have [4.8 million active users and run 18,000 WiFi sessions per day](#). In addition, [86% of the public trust librarians](#).

Building on this partnership activity, the national NHS Knowledge and Library Services team brokered a partnership between NHS App colleagues at NHS England and public libraries. This is activity to set up local NHS/public library partnerships that support members of the public to use the NHS App, or to access their NHS Account through public library computers if they do not own a smartphone.

This partnership is now one of the actions in the [10 Year Health Plan](#), enabled by the work of the National Health Literacy Partnership.

Quality, Improvement and Impact: NHS knowledge and library specialists bringing the evidence you need to inform your decisions

Improving Patient Communication in Cystic Fibrosis Care

The Librarian at University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust delivered a health literacy awareness session for the Northwest Midlands Cystic Fibrosis Centre team. The session used data visualised through the [Health Literacy Geodata tool](#) to highlight the region's low levels of high literacy. The Librarian also demonstrated the use of the online [NHS Readability](#) tool to support the development of clearer patient communication material.

As a result of the training, the Northwest Midlands Cystic Fibrosis Centre team have revised the annual reports their patients receive to make them clearer and more accessible.

“Following on from the health literacy presentation, the team reviewed the annual review reports using the online tool and it was found that the wording was complex and not at the correct reading level for our regional population.

The team has amended their reports and now complete them at a reading level appropriate to the geographical area that the patient resides. The hope for this change is that patients are better informed of their health to then make decisions about their care.”

Cystic Fibrosis Operational Services Manager,
Northwest Midlands Cystic Fibrosis Centre.



Find out more about [#AMillionDecisions](#) or watch [our short animation about how NHS Knowledge and Library Services give The Gift of Time](#)

Quality, Improvement and Impact: Celebrating good practice

Knowledge and Evidence Specialists introduce a patient focused changed approach to reducing do not attends (DNA)

The Knowledge and Evidence Service (KES) at Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust have been working with teams across the Trust to reduce the numbers of patients who do not attend (DNA) appointments.

The KES Manager introduced a changed approach to interviewing patients to uncover in their words, what got in the way of them attending and to elicit their suggestions for what would make attendance easier. Clinical teams have then taken this insight, which often uncovers unique opportunities for change specific to that service or clinic, to explore co-produced solutions to the issues identified.

The KES are following up teams to understand what changes are made in practice and how this impacts on DNA and will make themselves available to assist with any future evaluation of impact.

Other news

NHS Excellence Awards now open for entries

[The NHS Excellence Awards have launched](#),

celebrating the most innovative and impactful work that is bringing the 10 Year Health Plan to life and making a real difference for patients and communities.

Entry to the awards is completely free and open to NHS organisations and providers working in partnership with the NHS to deliver local health and care services in England. This is your chance to share the work you're proud of and recognise the colleagues who have inspired and supported you.

[Find out more and enter](#) before 5pm Friday 6 March 2026.

Modernising healthcare curricula

The University of Plymouth and NHS England are working together on a national project to map how the priorities of the NHS Long-Term Plan (digital health, community-based care, and preventative care) are being taught across pre-registration programmes in England. We are inviting module and programme leads across England to take part in a [short survey](#) (approx. 5–10 minutes).

We want to ensure the voices of educators across all Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions are fully represented so we can learn from any innovative work already happening in education across the country. By sharing your insight, you will help highlight good practice, current gaps, and facilitators and barriers, ultimately shaping future approaches to education that align with the NHS agenda.

How to contact your local NHS Knowledge and Library

You can [find details of your local NHS knowledge and library service](#).

Once you've found your service, give them a ring or drop them an email to find out about membership and availability of local NHS knowledge and library

services, including help in finding and using resources.

No access to a local service? [Contact us to discuss options.](#)

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