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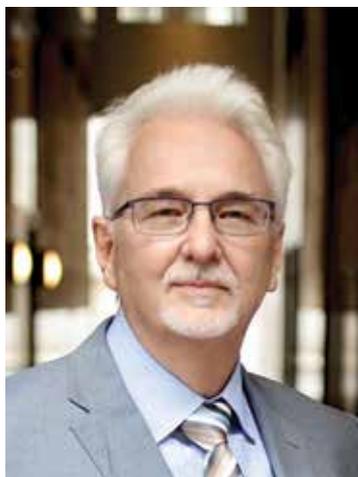
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Grimshaw is appointed for the redevelopment of Cringle Dock Waste Transfer Station at London's Battersea Power Station

International architecture practice Grimshaw, with LDA Design, engineering consultants WSP, and planning consultants Arup has been appointed to design the redevelopment of Cringle Dock Waste Transfer Station which sits in the Nine Elms Regeneration Area, adjacent to the newly developed Battersea Power Station..

Led by the Western Riverside Waste Authority - which encompasses the four inner London boroughs of Lambeth, Hammersmith & Fulham, the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and Wandsworth – proposals for the site will address the context of the waste transfer station which sits within increasingly urbanised and commercial surroundings.

Cringle Dock is one of London's strategic waste transfer stations, handling thousands of tonnes of waste onto barges each week, which reduces road haulage, cuts emissions and keeps the London functioning. Originally commissioned in the early 1970's, the intention is to

redevelop the site to create state-of-the-art facility that is not only in keeping with the area but also supports it socially, economically and environmentally, all while minimising disruption to existing services.

'The opportunity is clear,' said Kirsten Lees, Partner at Grimshaw. 'To reimagine Cringle Dock not as hidden infrastructure but as a centre of environmental excellence. The function of infrastructure, its critical role within and enabling the life of our cities, is to be celebrated not hidden. Our design will be a mechanism

to realise this and create wider benefits to the community, residents and visitors.'

Sitting right on the south bank of the river Thames, the project is also a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to connect Londoners to the site. Another aim is to reconnect The Thames Path and provide a portal into the site to demystify waste and its management. A visitor and education centre will bring forward learnings about the circular economy of the city, and viewing platforms and walkways will afford a new identity to this site. The design itself will embody the purpose of the

station – adopting sustainable, reclaimed and repurposed materials, renewable energy and enhancing the biodiversity of the area.

'It is very exciting for Western Riverside Waste Authority to work together with Grimshaw Architects on this project, which is of vital importance to the long-term management of London's waste and recycling, along with promotion circular economy and other environmental initiatives,' said Euston Ling, Infrastructure Development Manager at Western Riverside Waste Authority.



Now's the time to invest in public services and go for growth, says UNISON

Commenting on the chancellor's spring statement, UNISON general secretary Andrea Egan has said.

"Workers will be feeling anxious as global events beyond their control affect household bills. The cost-of-living crisis is far from over.

"But it's good to hear the chancellor calling time on the failed 'trickle-down' economics of the past.

"A Labour government must do more than talk tough. It has to act. Stand up for workers, back public services, defend migrants and deliver real change.

"Any improvement in the

nation's finances must be invested in essential services and the staff who provide them.

"Right now, from the NHS to local councils, services are stretched to breaking point - asked to do more with less just when the country needs them most. That cannot continue.

"Strong, properly funded

public services aren't a luxury. They're the engine of growth. They're the backbone of safe, healthy communities. And they're how to deliver the change people demanded.

"Now's the time to stop tinkering and start delivering for workers."

LGA calls for urgent sentencing review as court fines for fly-tipping undercut council penalties

LGA calls for urgent sentencing review as court fines for fly-tipping undercut council penalties

The Local Government Association (LGA) is calling on the Government and the Sentencing Council to urgently review sentencing guidelines for fly-tipping, after new figures show that offenders prosecuted through the courts are often fined less than the penalties councils can issue directly.

Analysis of the latest fly-tipping data shows that the average court fine for fly-tipping is £539, which is £87 lower than the £626 average fixed

penalty notice (FPN) councils can issue for the same offence. The LGA says this sentencing gap undermines deterrence, weakens enforcement, and leaves councils out of pocket after time-consuming and costly prosecutions.

Fly-tipping costs councils more than £19.3 million each year to clear up, with 1.26 million incidents recorded in England in 2024/25 alone. Councils are taking increasing enforcement action against offenders, but taking cases to court often requires lengthy investigations, high evidential thresholds and significant staff time.

Despite this, sentencing

outcomes frequently fail to reflect the seriousness of the offence or the public cost involved.

In York, two offenders were each fined £300 by magistrates for waste offences, despite Fixed Penalty Notices of £600 and £1,000 being issued. In Wiltshire, a fly-tipper who failed to pay a £1,000 Fixed Penalty Notice was fined just £80 when the case was brought to court. In Chelmsford, two offenders were each fined £300 after being prosecuted for fly-tipping, lower than the £400 Fixed Penalty Notices they had received.

The LGA says sentencing guidelines are now out of step

with the real impact of fly-tipping on communities, the environment and public finances, and that tougher penalties are needed to deter repeat and organised offenders.

Cllr Arooj Shah, Chair of the LGA Neighbourhoods Committee, said:

“Fly-tipping is criminal activity that blights communities and costs taxpayers millions of pounds every year.

“Councils are working hard to investigate and prosecute offenders, but when court fines are lower than fixed penalties, it undermines enforcement and fails to act as a deterrent.”

£5 million to help Welsh households invest in greener homes

Welsh households looking to cut their energy bills and reduce their carbon footprint will benefit from more than £5 million in new funding for the Green Homes Wales scheme in 2026-27.

Green Homes Wales is a Welsh Government initiative, managed by the Development Bank of Wales, designed to support eligible homeowners in making energy-efficiency and low carbon heat improvements to their homes. Since its launch in October 2024, the Welsh Government has invested almost £12 million into the scheme

The scheme offers interest-free loans ranging from £1,000 to £25,000, with repayment terms of up to 10 years, as well as fully funded expert advice — giving households the support and flexibility they need to make meaningful improvements without large upfront costs.

Homeowners begin with an initial assessment and a detailed whole home review to identify suitable improvements, before receiving tailored advice and support to apply for an interest free loan. An independent Retrofit Coordinator oversees all works to ensure they are safe, high quality and fully compliant.

The £5 million allocation follows strong demand for the scheme this year, reflecting the appetite among Welsh households to take control of their energy costs and invest in their homes.

Green Homes Wales can be used alongside the UK Government’s Boiler Upgrade Scheme, which provides grants for heat pump installations across England and Wales. Homeowners do not need to apply directly, an approved heat pump installer will submit an application on their behalf.

It also works in conjunction

with collective purchasing schemes being organised by a number of local authorities in Wales, helping households access even more support.

Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government, Jayne Bryant, said: “Green Homes Wales has already helped hundreds of households across Wales reduce their energy bills and lower their carbon footprint, and the strong demand we’ve seen shows just how much appetite there is among homeowners to invest in their homes.

“This new £5 million investment means even more people in Wales will be able to make the improvements they need to futureproof their homes and lower their energy bills — whether that’s installing a heat pump, upgrading their insulation, or modernising their heating system — without needing thousands of pounds upfront.

And the free expert support means householders can invest with confidence.

“The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that making your home greener is a choice that’s open to everyone and I’d encourage anyone interested in making improvements to their home to find out what Green Homes Wales can offer.”

Cenydd Rowlands, Property Director at the Development Bank of Wales, said: “We’ve seen strong demand for the support provided by Green Homes Wales from homeowners across the country.

“This new funding will allow us to continue to service that demand, and support households as they look to improve their energy efficiency and cut bills.”

His Majesty The King visits Northwood Headquarters

- **His Majesty The King makes his first visit as monarch to the UK's top operational military headquarters.**
- **Military personnel and civil servants showcase their round-the-clock work to keep the UK and our allies safe.**
- **The visit reaffirms the enduring and close relationship between the Crown and the United Kingdom's Armed Forces.**

His Majesty The King recently visited the Northwood military headquarters in North-West London, paying tribute to the dedication and service of personnel, whose 24/7 work keeps the UK and its allies safe.

Northwood HQ is the nerve centre of UK defence, directing military operations across the globe. Home to the UK's joint headquarters, as well as NATO's Allied Maritime Command, His Majesty The King met with soldiers, sailors, aviators, and civil servants from the UK and NATO allies who are always on, co-ordinating joint and combined military activities around the clock.

His Majesty met with personnel across the site, including the team who recently oversaw the UK's Carrier Strike Group deployment to the Indo-Pacific, as well as those who play a vital role supporting Ukraine.

The visit comes as the war in Ukraine enters its fifth year, with the UK standing to support Ukraine for as long as it takes.

His Majesty was welcomed by the Deputy Commander of Cyber & Specialist Operations Command (CSOC), Air Marshal Suraya Marshall, before being shown the operational control rooms from which all live overseas operations are managed.

Northwood, which was originally home to the RAF Coastal Command during the Second World War, is home to key military commands,

including the UK's most recently established Four Star Military Command - Cyber and Specialist Operations Command (CSOC), as well as the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), Allied Maritime Command (MARCOM), and the Royal Navy's Maritime Operations Centre (MOC). Together, they provide critical specialist capabilities working in alliance, to keep the UK secure at home and strong abroad.

Air Marshal Suraya Marshall, Deputy Commander CSOC, said: "His Majesty's visit means a great deal to everyone here at Northwood HQ".

"As one of the most strategically significant military headquarters for the UK and NATO, the work carried out here - day and night, at home and overseas - is critical to the security of the United Kingdom and our allies. To have that work recognised at the highest level is a tremendous honour."

The visit recognised the dedication and professionalism of the servicemen and women, civil servants and contractors based at Northwood, and the vital importance of the work they do every day in the service of the nation.



King Charles

LGA reacts to Baroness Casey call for action on adult social care

Responding to the announcement from Baroness Louise Casey on the Casey Commission review of Adult Social Care, Cllr Louise Gittins, Chair of the Local Government Association, said:

"Stabilising and reforming adult social care so it can best support people is one of the most urgent

challenges we face as a society. Baroness Casey is right to recognise the need to elevate the true value and purpose of care and support nationally. It is encouraging that she has strongly signalled for this to be a core foundation behind her proposals for the sector's future. "A focus on safeguarding people who draw on care and support

is vital to creating a prevention-focused and person-centred system. There is a strong role for local government in ensuring that people's rights under the Care Act 2014 continue to improve. We look forward to seeing the proposals in more detail.

"We are engaging closely with councils, the care workforce, and

people with lived experience through our 'Care where we live' conversation series to inform the shaping of a future system that enables people to draw on dignified care and support, when and where they need it. Sustainable resourcing of adult social care remains key to successful system reform.

Edinburgh Gateway project points the way towards the neighbourhoods of the future

Residents of new 950-home development on the western outskirts of the city will have choice of bus, tram or train.

Edinburgh is justifiably proud of what the city offers: a great quality of life, a beautiful green environment, good connectivity and a world-renowned natural, cultural and built heritage. It is an enviable place to live.

And its City Plan 2030 aims to keep it that way as the capital continues to expand, with the expectation that new homes will be built to the highest emissions quality standards in resilient, connected neighbourhoods, in the right locations, with the right infrastructure.

That is why, when our firm, Dougall Baillie Associates, were called upon to provide a Transport Assessment for the huge new 950-plus home development at Edinburgh Gateway, up-to-the-minute thinking was required to align compatibly with the city's stated policies.

The Gateway project, ambitious though it is, is more akin to a city centre development although it is situated far out on the western outskirts, well past

the traditional suburbs and much closer to the airport than to the Castle.

Granted planning permission subject to certain conditions at the end of last year, the project will deliver a rich mix of private sale housing, homes which are built specifically for rental and a substantial contribution to the city's affordable housing provision. It will also feature a new hotel with in excess of 170 bedrooms.

But, unlike developments of the past, which have been heavily-skewed towards car use, and the expectation that each household would have two in the drive, the Gateway is focused with on a high-density, walkable environment.

As well as cycling, pedestrian, bus, tram and train transport options, it reflects the city's framework of characterful streets and attractive public spaces. The design draws on the site's past, and the agrarian pattern of meadows and fields.

What differentiates it from what has gone before, however, is the fact that, although it will have close to 1,000 residential units, the City Plan provides for only 250 parking spaces and the

proposal, in fact, suggests just 193.

This will be a crucial factor in defining the demographic of the Gateway and, indeed, of future 20-minute neighbourhoods where residents can fulfil their day-to-day needs within a short walk or cycle ride of the amenities they require.

One of the standard criticisms of such schemes is that, if adequate public transport provision is not in place, they can become unworkable and lead to the sort of social isolation experienced in the old, post-war housing schemes.

That will be far from the case at the Gateway, which will have an embarrassment of riches in terms of transport, including direct access to Edinburgh Gateway rail/tram interchange, which offers train services to the city, Fife and the airport.

The tram is the obvious option for people working in the city centre, taking just 11 minutes from Gateway to Waverley, and a short walk to the busy Maybury Junction which will give residents the choice of some 20 different bus services.

There will also be direct access to the Gyle, Edinburgh's

most established shopping centre offering retailers including Marks and Spencer, Morrisons and a wide range of outlets, specialist shops, and food and drinks venues.

The planning application for the Gateway, lodged last summer, has been recommended to be granted planning consent and its proposals illustrate the council's determination to deliver high-quality development within the parameters of its longer-term goals and policies.

These include radically changing the way residents move around the city with the Gateway creating an excellent opportunity to show how that can sustainably be achieved.



Stuart Harrow

New law supports digital economy: Digital Assets (Scotland) Bill passes Stage 3

New legislation has been passed giving greater legal protection to digital assets.

By clarifying rights to ownership, the Digital Assets (Scotland) Bill enables individuals and businesses to trade and invest with more confidence.

Scotland's financial technology sector is now worth £14 billion to the Scottish economy. It has grown from 26 companies in 2018 to more than 260 in 2026, including those directly involved

in developing digital assets.

Speaking after the legislation was approved by the Scottish Parliament, Business Minister Richard Lochhead said:

"Digital assets are used for a wide range of purposes - from payments and investments to innovative financial products and services by businesses and individuals.

"As they become more integrated into our financial markets, providing greater legal certainty for those who

invest in, trade and own them is increasingly important.

"The Digital Assets (Scotland) Bill supports the fast-changing digital economy and helps ensure Scotland remains an attractive destination for financial technology companies, enabling them to continue innovating and driving economic growth."

Associate at law firm CMS Euan Reid said:

"The Bill being passed is welcome news for Scotland and

its continuing role within the digital assets markets and as a technology hub. It clarifies the law for legal practitioners and market participants, providing legislative recognition of digital assets.

"The new legislation is technology neutral, providing flexibility for future technological advances and allowing Scots law to keep pace with other jurisdictions."

Hammersmith & Fulham Council: strengthening urban safety with Genetec Security Center



Hammersmith & Fulham is home to over 180,000 residents within 16 square kilometres, boasting entertainment venues like the Eventim Apollo and Shepherd's Bush Empire, and Westfield London—the largest shopping centre in Europe. It serves as the UK base for global businesses and is the only borough hosting three professional football clubs: Chelsea, Fulham, and Queens Park Rangers.

With bustling hubs and high visitor footfall, the council faced a key challenge: how to modernise security and infrastructure whilst managing costs. Speaking on the challenges, Andrew Foster, Managing Director Public Services at North, said: "Local government is facing a perfect storm. Rising costs, combined with a reduction in spending power, mean councils have some tough decisions to make. Technology has a huge role to play in making operations more efficient."

From disjointed systems to a unified platform

The Council's CCTV network was fragmented across three ageing platforms used to monitor

public spaces and housing estates. This led to duplicated effort, inconsistent service quality, and rising maintenance costs, while hindering collaboration with partners like the Metropolitan Police.

In 2021 the council commenced a four-year upgrade programme with Genetec and North to modernise infrastructure, streamline operations, and deliver long-term value. An initial £4.5 million investment supported the upgrade.

Unifying three systems was a significant technical and operational challenge, but collaboration between the council, Genetec, and North created a far more efficient surveillance environment with a simplified user experience and enhanced public safety.

Reimagining public safety

The council has now migrated almost all cameras into Genetec Security Center, a single scalable platform integrating public space CCTV, IoT sensors, and analytics. This provides a secure foundation for key services including the Law Enforcement Team, Gangs Unit, and Violence against Women and Girls prevention team.

The system supports phased adoption of AI and intelligent analytics to improve situational awareness, saving time for operators so they can focus on faster incident identification and response. The platform also gives the council freedom to choose the best camera or sensor for each location, avoiding vendor lock in and improving value for money.

With the ability to monitor more cameras using the same number of operators, the council has begun offering monitoring services to neighbouring boroughs, generating revenue to fund further control room improvements.

Neil Thurlow, Assistant Director Community Safety, Resilience and CCTV, explained: "We've worked together to explore upgrades to technology and shared service partnerships with neighbouring boroughs, including Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster. Not only does this approach allow us greater ability to cost-effectively invest in our own CCTV network, it also helps the Met Police respond to crime and antisocial behaviour reports that occur in the wider west London area, enabling us to improve safety and ensure better outcomes for residents."

Smarter systems, safer spaces

The unified CCTV system has delivered clear, measurable benefits, with operators now able to respond faster and collaborate more easily with external partners. Enhanced data sharing has strengthened joint operations, especially during events.

Public safety has seen marked improvement, with the total number of offences dropping 10% year on year, including:

- 44% reduction in knife crime
- 35% fall in robbery
- 30% decline in burglary
- 29% drop in theft from motor vehicles

These results reflect the council's commitment to using technology to allocate resources where they are needed most.

Ben Durrant, Account Executive State & Local Public Admin at Genetec, said: "Our solution allows smart integration of multiple systems, including AI, IoT devices and analytics, into a single unified platform. This gives Hammersmith & Fulham the flexibility needed to create safer public spaces."

Future aspirations

The council next phase of transformation will focus on taking advantage of further advanced capabilities with Security Center, scaling monitoring operations and deepening AI integrations.

A key ambition is to embed AI across the CCTV network to support both routine monitoring and strategic objectives such as crime prevention and urban planning. As the service develops, real time object detection, behaviour analysis and pattern recognition will become essential.

AI and intelligent analytics will also support wider initiatives, including IoT integration and smart city development. Ongoing work with Genetec will ensure innovation continues to drive safety, efficiency and long-term value.

HIGHWAYS

in FOCUS



SHIMPAC® -

The winter maintenance solution built for performance, efficiency and environmental responsibility

As winter passes and temperatures begin to rise, local authorities face increasing pressure to keep networks safe, open and resilient.

Cold weather creates challenging working conditions and exposes weaknesses in road infrastructure, particularly around ironwork, which remains one of the most common points of failure on the network.

The winter maintenance cycle demanded rapid inspections, quick interventions, limited working windows and minimal disruption to road users. SHIMPAC® offers a clear advantage in all of these areas. Its engineered system for seating and levelling ironwork is proven, reliable and widely trusted throughout the UK's highways sector, making it ideally suited to the most demanding seasonal conditions.

One of the reasons SHIMPAC® stands out during winter is its ability to perform consistently in low temperatures.

Where traditional materials can become brittle, difficult to manage or prone to failure in cold weather, SHIMPAC® remains stable and effective.

This allows winter maintenance teams to carry out essential work without waiting for warmer conditions, reducing delays and preventing further deterioration caused by frost, water ingress and freeze-thaw movement. Its reliability ensures that ironwork installations remain secure and long-lasting even when subjected to severe winter stresses.

Another key advantage during the winter season is the absence of curing time. SHIMPAC® products can be trafficked immediately after installation, giving contractors and authorities the ability to complete works quickly and reopen the network without delay.

This is particularly important during winter, when every extra minute of road closure increases congestion, raises risk for workers and road users, and complicates the wider maintenance programme. Immediate trafficking means

reduced traffic management requirements, shorter working windows, and less disruption at a time of year when the network is already under strain.

The environmental benefit is equally significant. Local authorities across the UK are working to meet ambitious carbon reduction targets, and winter maintenance operations traditionally carry some of the highest emissions due to repeat visits, extended closures and increased vehicle use. SHIMPAC® supports sustainability by reducing the time spent on site, eliminating unnecessary return visits thanks to its long life expectancy, and avoiding the need for heavy or energy-intensive equipment.

Operational efficiency is also improved. Winter maintenance budgets are notoriously tight, with unexpected failures and emergency works placing strain on resources.

Because SHIMPAC® is simple to use, lightweight and requires no specialist machinery, teams can complete works far faster than with traditional methods. This efficiency is invaluable in winter, when daylight hours are limited, weather windows close quickly and labour resources are often stretched.

Winter places unique stress on roads, with freeze-thaw cycles causing movement,

creating cracks and accelerating the breakdown of poorly supported ironwork. SHIMPAC® is engineered to support ironwork throughout the full maintenance cycle and often far beyond, ensuring that installations do not fail during the winter months when emergency repairs are most difficult.

The nationwide availability of SHIMPAC® through established civils merchants further strengthens its suitability for winter maintenance. Local authorities and contractors can access stock quickly and reliably, avoiding delays caused by long lead times or supply shortages. With winter defects rising rapidly once temperatures drop, having a dependable and readily accessible solution is essential for ensuring a smooth, responsive maintenance programme.

Ultimately, SHIMPAC® aligns perfectly with the broader environmental and operational goals of local authorities. Winter maintenance now plays an important role in reducing emissions, improving network resilience, managing budgets responsibly, and delivering safe, reliable roads for communities. SHIMPAC® supports all of these aims by offering a system that is fast, durable, sustainable and dependable in even the harshest winter conditions.



How can strategic asset management ensure predictive road maintenance?



Chris Newson

Local councils are under ever-growing pressure to ensure their roads and other public assets remain safe and reliable, while at the same time having to manage tighter budgets and increased public expectations. A reactive approach, responding to issues of asset degradation only after they are noticed, is increasingly unsustainable and, especially with issues such as pothole repairs, short-term fixes all-too-often use up crucial funds without delivering long-term improvements.

Brightly Software helps councils tackle this challenge with its strategic asset management software.

Strategic asset management provides a structured approach for councils to plan the long-term replacement of assets that considers all factors relevant to an organisation. Councils use it to plan how assets are acquired, operated, maintained, renewed or retired. Chris Newson, Business Development, Strategic Asset Management, Brightly Software, comments: "Managing the physical future can't be based on estimates from years past or reacting to failing assets; councils can use a structured approach that helps them visualise and strategise for the future."

With strategic asset management, Brightly Software is helping councils move away from reactive repairs. The Road Surface Treatments Association estimates that surface treatments cost £3.50 - £8 per square metre, while reactive pothole repairs can exceed £80 per repair. The Public Accounts Committee's 2025 report on local road maintenance also found that planned works were 35% more cost-effective than

reactive fixes.

To shift from short-term fixes towards lasting benefits, councils need a way to compare different options and understand how they might assist them. Asset investment optimisation delivers that clarity.

Asset investment optimisation

Asset investment optimisation sits at the centre of strategic asset management. It's the process of analysing data and strategically allocating financial resources across various assets and investment opportunities to maximise returns – all while minimising risk.

For councils, this approach enables them to carry out root cause analysis and fix problems before they manifest, rather than the traditional 'responsive' approach to asset management and maintenance, which has not necessarily delivered the most efficient or effective outcomes or demonstrated the best use of money.

Ultimately, this approach enables strategic decision-making by analysing multitudes of data on community requirements, budgets, historic outcomes and more – as well as drawing extensively on third-party statistics.

- **Risks** can be assessed based on numerous factors, from regulations to environmental effects, to community size, traffic flows and infrastructure features. In addition, potential strategies for risk mitigation can be modelled and analysed.
- **Budgets can be pre-planned** and allocated for maximum long-term effectiveness, enabling councils to prioritise projects based on urgency, ROI and the impact they will have on the community.
- **Infrastructure upgrade**

requirements can be identified and prioritised based on the needs of the community and the impact on associated assets.

- **Carbon-efficient** solutions can be evaluated and considered based on their cost, environmental impact and risk.
- The delivery of **public services** can be optimised by investing in technology and systems that improve the efficiency of the process.
- Councils can stay up-to-date with **regulations** that may impact their investments and procedures.
- Councils can **engage with their communities** to find out their needs and requirements, as well as explaining their reasons for carrying out works, the methods being used and expected completion dates. This improves transparency and trust.

Predictor

Predictor, Brightly Software's digital, cloud-based solution, can foresee the multitude of issues councils face today, helping them to act pre-emptively, rather than reactively, to address problems before they get out of hand – or even before they arise at all. It does this through the process of asset investment optimisation. Predictor is built on three pillars:

Data

Includes unique asset IDs, network measures, service criteria, treatment filters, additional attributes and more.

Model

Uses degradation profiles, service lives, treatment criteria, treatment effects and life cycle variations to understand how assets change over time.

Strategy

Incorporates unit costs,

operational costs, budget allocations and benefit variations, enabling councils to test multiple investment choices.

Predictor provides its users with a roadmap for the future of their assets, supported by analytics and forecasts, with the user's budget in mind.

Local authorities will always need to strike a balance between dealing with immediate issues (which are typically the issues most visible to the public and of most concern to them) with the need to save and to plan for the future. Predictor is an enormously powerful tool to help with planning and prioritisation, both for the here and now and into the future. And it does so in the most cost-effective, time-efficient manner, and all while keeping risk to an absolute minimum.

It's a versatile solution that can be tailored to help each council balance its community's needs, assets' health and budget.

An investment in Predictor isn't merely a software purchase. It's a partnership with Brightly's team of experienced and expert analysts, backed by Siemens, one of the world's leading technology brands. It's an investment in the future and for the communities managed.

Strategic asset management allows councils to develop robust and reliable long-term plans. Tools like Predictor make that possible by modelling, optimising and forecasting strategically. Councils that invest in solutions for strategic asset management can help protect their assets, manage finances and maximise the benefits for the public.

To explore how Predictor can support you, visit: <https://www.brightlysoftware.com/en-gb/products/predictor>



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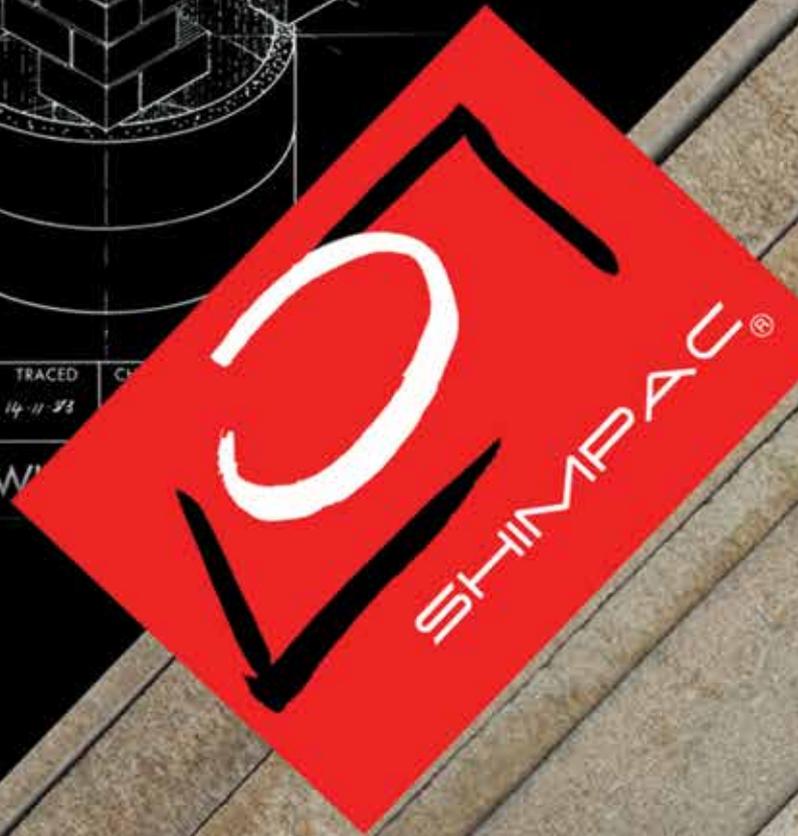
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 and levelling system

SHIMPAC® Systems - How can Local Authorities protect their budgets?

Local Authorities are facing greater scrutiny and asset management is brought into focus, not just for asset life or maintenance but also for environmental impact and sustainability credentials.

As a result, products, services, and solutions that are budget friendly are more important than ever. However, it's not only in-year budgets that local authorities will have their eye on, but those that cover the full asset lifecycle and beyond.

Indeed, long-term solutions steeped in cost-effectiveness are becoming the holy grail for local authorities who continue to battle against seemingly ever decreasing budget allocations, creating a knock on effect for every service that they provide.

Maintaining highways is a constant challenge for governments and local authorities, and one of the most significant issues they face is ensuring the sustainability, durability and longevity of their infrastructure. That's why products like SHIMPAC®'s ROADSHIMS® ironwork seating solutions are so important. In a closely linked additional challenge, the environmental

impact of solutions is another huge focus for Local Authorities, as councils come under more and more pressure to meet CO2 reduction targets.

When you factor in products that tick the box of vital environmental concerns along with being budget friendly, the field starts to narrow.

Highway infrastructure must be built to last, and this is where SHIMPAC® comes in. By providing a reliable and long-lasting solution, this product can help to reduce the cost of maintenance and repairs in the long term, freeing up budget for other projects and initiatives.

One of the main benefits of ROADSHIMS® is ease of installation. The product can be installed quickly and easily, which means that highways can be up and running in no time. This can help to minimise disruptions and keep traffic flowing smoothly.

Another benefit is durability. The product is designed to withstand heavy loads and harsh weather conditions, making it ideal for use in high-traffic areas. This durability ensures that the infrastructure remains safe and reliable for years to come, reducing the risk of accidents, damage to vehicles, and subsequently – damage claims against already cash strapped councils.

The installation and durability benefits in turn contribute to the meeting of key environmental and sustainability targets. Less vehicles needed on site

upon installation, no need for year-on-year repair and a dramatic reduction in materials are all key results of utilising ROADSHIMS® for ironwork seating.

ROADSHIMS® are incredibly cost-effective. The products are designed to be low maintenance, which means that it can help to reduce the overall cost of maintaining highway infrastructure both in the short and long term. By reducing the need for repairs and maintenance, the product can help to save money in the long term, which is essential for budget-controlled authorities.

Short-term, the cost of a SHIMPAC® installation is 40% lower than an alternative ironwork seating option, yet also bucks the trend of a lower priced solution resulting in lower quality. Technical compliance and with numerous 35-year installation sites around the UK still intact and performing, it's undoubtedly the case that this isn't a pocket friendly option that will result in regret.

Barry Andrews, Technical Lead at SHIMPAC® told us:

It's about a long-term approach, yet our system also has the all-important low installation cost.

"Rightly or wrongly, we know there will be a certain percentage of those looking for a solution will decide based purely on cost. So, to make sure we provide cost-effectiveness is vital, and we're proud to say using SHIMPAC® Systems saves a minimum of 40% for the same ironwork seating installation using other compliant products.

"Additionally, SHIMPAC® Systems products are the only materials that have consistently been used to gain product assurance certification (HAPAS/PAS) covering ironwork installations.

"As our councils face more and more pressing budget issues, it's systems like ours that can come to the rescue in the short-term, and keep more budgets intact for other local authority issues longer term, when our products are still performing."



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Fire Aware: we are facing one major threat across many sectors

Growing fire safety organisation Fire Aware is emphasising the need for cultural change across multiple sectors which are particularly vulnerable to fire risk.



Gavin Skelly

The industry body – which is attracting more members as it seeks to unite members beyond legislation – is highlighting the sectors of relevance as well as property and construction including hospitality, healthcare, the public sector and retail.

Fire Aware CEO Gavin Skelly said: “Fire Aware crosses the

boundaries of sectors that have responsibilities for end-user safety.

“This is not just about construction companies. We are working with any organisation that wants to show the public that they are responsible and are committing to only delivering the safest outcome for their staff, clients and customers.”

He cited those sectors with particular responsibilities who work and move about in their buildings including hospitality which oversees the many bars, restaurants and hotels which are trusted to protect their customers and staff.

Healthcare, too, is a sector of focus which has to protect many vulnerable and elderly people

many of whom are ill or cannot look after themselves in the event of a real fire.

Gavin Skelly added: “Working in this industry is a vocation, not a job, and should be treated as such. All parts of the supply chain across multiple sectors should work with the same vocational approach, not just those who are qualified to do so.

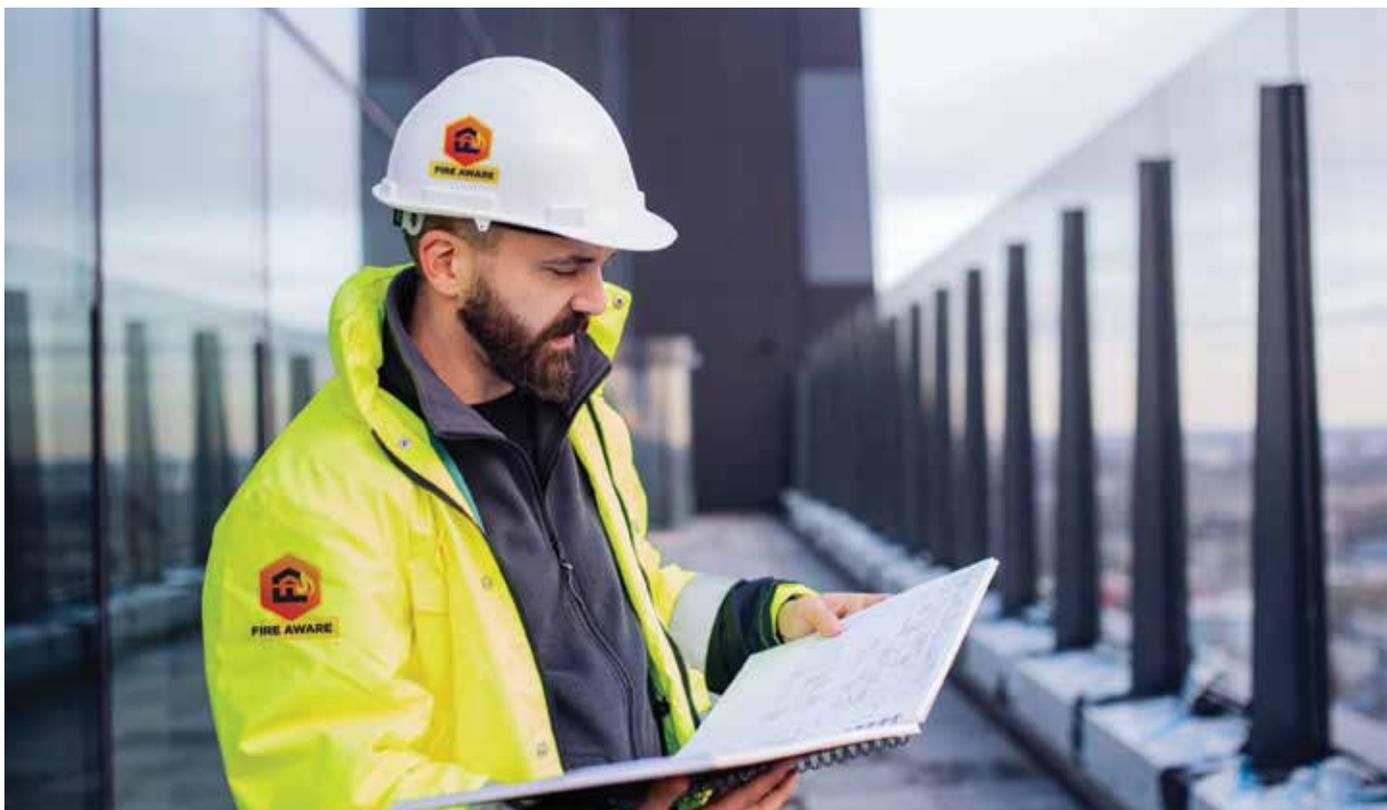
“The legislation being introduced is robust and also quite complex. The guidance and support we offer will help navigate the relevant parts for our members and for anyone else wishing to tap onto this knowledge and intelligence.”

The expanding industry body is leading the way by focusing on the moral responsibility of

all those working in the fire safety supply chain including designers, developers, asset owners, managers and other stakeholders.

It aims to change the culture of the built environment sector by introducing a moral code of conduct via a series of charters designed to influence how member companies behave in upholding their duty of care.

Fire Aware is a recognised membership body serving the built environment and related sectors with a common aim to work and trade responsibly to all best practice standards in the interests of the safety of the general public.



Act now with a 'whole house approach' to tackle complex retrofit projects



Paul Towers
Framework Manager
(Construction and Decarbonisation)

As the UK targets a zero-carbon future by 2050, public sector organisations face mounting challenges in retrofitting buildings and homes. Paul Towers, Framework Manager (Construction and Decarbonisation) at Fusion21, highlights the need to stop treating works in isolation.

The government's £15 billion Warm Homes Plan signals a new wave of retrofit works for housing providers and contractors.

For public sector organisations facing increasing obstacles ahead of the UK's zero-carbon deadline of 2050, this funding is another opportunity to deliver essential decarbonisation works – and the time to start preparing is now.

This means identifying the right suppliers early, with the skills and capacity to deliver complex retrofit works efficiently. Fusion21's Decarbonisation Framework provides a compliant, quick route to market, enabling public sector organisations to deliver retrofit projects across private and social housing.

Taking the whole house approach

Complex properties can include those that date back to the pre-1950s, are in conservation areas, or are high-rise buildings. Regulatory requirements can make it difficult to achieve decarbonisation efficiencies, so it's imperative to find suppliers with the right experience and competence.

Fusion21's Decarbonisation Framework offers pre-approved suppliers with experience across a range of property types, ensuring they can install decarbonisation technologies that are both suitable for the property and compliant with regulatory standards.

Paul Towers, Framework Manager (Construction and Decarbonisation) at Fusion21, explained: *"One consideration is that retrofit is only one of many priorities housing providers need to address. For example, when working in customers' homes, there may also be damp and mould issues, fire safety remedial works and component replacement works."*

Our Decarbonisation Framework provides a turnkey solution that addresses decarbonisation requirements along with any additional works as part of a whole house approach. This means reviewing and planning required works and delivering them as a single project with one contractor.

Sourcing projects through the framework makes it easier to find pre-approved suppliers with the skills and capacity to deliver this variety of work – from surveys, retrofit assessments and preparatory design work through to installation.

Paul added: *"Where a supplier takes responsibility for the whole delivery, the project is normally delivered on time and on budget. Our framework and turnkey approach enable this to happen, supporting Fusion21 members from early engagement and procurement through to contract award and delivery."*

Facing the challenges of local authority-funded projects

Not all complex projects involve conservation zones or high-rise buildings. The new Warm Homes funding is also expected to be weighted towards private households alongside social housing properties, which presents its own challenges.

Within social housing, decarbonisation projects tend to be batched, e.g. by street, allowing contractors to consolidate labour and resources.

By contrast, projects on private homes funded by local authorities to lift residents out of fuel poverty are often scattered across a local area, complicating planning and delivery.

"These projects are often lower-value single retrofit measures – for example, funding may only cover the cost of loft insulation rather than wall insulation," said Paul.



“Homeowners or residents may sometimes object to the specification of work being delivered, and gaining access can be difficult in any property. All these factors make it important to find the right supplier, and we are well-placed to help, with a broad mix of suppliers available through the framework.”

SMEs make up 42% of the framework, providing strong local and regional coverage and the capability to deliver widely dispersed projects efficiently.

The importance of early engagement

Early engagement with residents and homeowners is crucial. Homeowners may be hesitant or decline retrofit works after seeing them completed in neighbouring homes. Or, for example, some customers may not understand the technology being installed or why it's needed.

Paul explained: *“Early engagement can help residents feel comfortable with the changes – especially if they are shown the technology and how it will work – as well as understanding how they will benefit from having a warmer home with lower energy bills.”*

This engagement can be built into procurement through Fusion21's Decarbonisation Framework, alongside aftercare services where suppliers return to homes to address any potential issues and ensure customers are happy with the work delivered.

Delivering social value you can see

Fusion21 specialises in efficient, impactful public sector procurement and delivering social value you can see. Retrofit and decarbonisation projects often involve significant investment, which creates opportunities to leverage social value throughout the supply chain – including apprenticeships, local jobs, education projects, and green skills training.

Joining Fusion21 is free, and the organisation supports members across the housing, local authority, education, NHS, and blue light sectors to identify and maximise these benefits.

The Decarbonisation Framework

Providing updated specifications and pricing models, flexible procurement routes, and regional and national coverage, Fusion21's Decarbonisation Framework is worth £1.5 billion over four years and can deliver multiple measures at scale and volume.

It offers two Lots:

Lot 1 – Whole House Decarbonisation

Covers fabric measures within domestic dwellings, such as wall and under-floor insulation, ventilation systems, renewable energy systems, and whole house refurbishment works for both internal and external components, including windows, doors and roofing. All suppliers are PAS2030:2023 compliant and TrustMark accredited.

Lot 2 – Decarbonisation of Public and Educational Buildings

Covers works and services to non-domestic buildings, including pre-construction activities, design and planning. It supports RIBA stages 0–7 and meets PAS2038:2023 standards.

Over the last five years, Fusion21's Decarbonisation Framework and its previous iteration have delivered £758 million of works and services on behalf of Fusion21 members.

It is one of four frameworks supporting thermal performance, building fabric, heat and power, and building management systems, alongside Fusion21's Consultancy, Heating Renewables and Electricals, and Refurbishment, Construction, New Build and Modular Buildings frameworks.

“We understand the demands that come with decarbonisation projects, and we're here to help organisations find the right suppliers and consultants to overcome them,” said Paul.

To date, Fusion21 has saved its members £424 million through the procurement process, created over 16,600 employment outcomes, and generated more than £300 million in social impact.



For more details about Fusion21's Decarbonisation Framework visit:

fusion21.co.uk/decarbonisation-framework or call 0845 308 2321

Why we must look beyond retirement villages to solve Britain's ageing housing crisis

By Mike Lord, CEO of Stiltz Homelifts



The UK is facing a ticking time bomb. The number of people aged 65 and over will soon exceed 27 per cent of our population. As a society, we urgently need a national housing policy to address this. But if the answer we settle on is simply building more retirement villages, we will have failed. We must stop isolating our elderly population and instead start investing in the homes they already live in keeping them in the heart of the community.

Recent calls for a national strategy focusing primarily

on large-scale retirement developments dangerously miss the point. They offer an outdated, two-dimensional solution to a deeply complex, three-dimensional challenge.

My position on the matter is clear: the future of housing for older people lies not in displacement, but in integration and adaptation. We need to ensure older people, if they wish, can continue to live in their family homes, fully integrated into their streets and communities, whether in their existing property or a new build.

The Emotional and Economic Cost of Forced Moves

Our research in the Stiltz white paper, 'Elevating Housing: Why the Future of UK Homes Must Look Beyond the Staircase', reveals a painful truth: 70% of adults over 50 want to stay in their current homes for at least the next decade. Yet, nearly one in four fear they will be forced to move as their mobility declines.

This is more than just an inconvenience; it is a crisis of emotional well-being and social isolation. Forcing older people to move away from their beloved

family homes severs deep community ties and actively exacerbates the loneliness epidemic, with data suggesting more than two million older Britons already wish for someone to spend time with during Christmas alone.

The financial cost of this failure is also astronomical. Unsuitable housing drives up demand for care and health services. Falls in the home alone cost the NHS an estimated £2.3 billion per year, with a third of people over 65 and half of those over 80 falling at least once annually. Meanwhile,

over 2.3 million people aged 55 and over already live in “non-decent” homes that fail basic health or accessibility standards. We are paying a heavy price for our collective failure to future-proof our housing stock.

Adaptation is the Real Solution

For many, a mobility challenge is not a signal to pack up a lifetime of memories; it is a signal to adapt. This is why products like homelifts are such a powerful intervention. They remove the mobility barrier that forces a move, allowing people to remain independent and connected.

Take the example of Eddie and Chanda Advani from Greenford. Both were facing significant health challenges; Chanda with fibromyalgia and knee issues, and Eddie with lung sarcoidosis and pending heart surgery. Both had suffered falls, making the stairs in their home of 29 years a dangerous obstacle. They reluctantly started planning a move to single-floor retirement



What stopped them? Installing a homelift. Chanda emotionally explained why leaving was so traumatic: “We’ve got too many memories attached to our home,” it’s where they raised their children and keep her parents’ ashes.

The lift became their “lifeline,” eliminating the fear of falling and providing their children with “peace of mind”. As Chanda puts it: “We don’t need to move

basically now because we have ease ... I would recommend it to anyone who is struggling, rather than moving out of your home that you love, invest in adaptations.”

My Two-Point Plan for Future-Proofing Britain

If we accept that building isolated complexes is not the only answer - especially when the UK already faces a shortfall of 46,000 retirement housing units within five years - we must pivot to a dual-pronged strategy:

1. Future-Proof All New Housing:

The government must mandate “lift-ready” or “mobility-adaptable” design in all new housing, promoting national adoption of M4(2) accessibility standards. This simple design foresight ensures new homes can evolve with their owners, serving young families, disabled individuals, and older people alike.

2. Support Adaptations in Existing Homes:

We must do more to educate homeowners

on the financial support available for essential adaptations. The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) offers means-tested grants up to £30,000 in England for accessible-living products like homelifts. This information should be front and centre for anyone facing mobility challenges, alongside charities and VAT relief options.

We’re building homes for the moment, not for life. Britain’s obsession with building upward, especially with narrow townhouses, is simply creating a generation facing future home displacement.

Ageing in place shouldn’t be a privilege; it must be the standard. We have the opportunity now to design homes that support independence, combat the loneliness epidemic, and protect public services from the long-term costs of inaction. We need to act now.





Hörmann UK is reinforcing its commitment to public safety and infrastructure resilience with a range of certified high-security bollards designed to meet the stringent requirements of public sector and local government environments. The range has been engineered specifically to protect people, buildings and critical infrastructure from unauthorised vehicle access while supporting the operational needs of modern public spaces.

Central to their suitability for government and public projects is their compliance with recognised international impact resistance standards. All bollards within the Hörmann High Security Line are crash-tested and certified to PAS 68 and IWA 14-1, demonstrating proven performance against high-speed vehicle impacts of 30mph and 50mph using a 7,200kg vehicle. This level of certification provides specifiers, planners and security consultants with confidence that the products meet the requirements for high-risk and sensitive locations.

Alongside their certified impact resistance, Hörmann bollards are designed to offer flexibility

in deployment across a wide range of public spaces and infrastructure projects. Fixed, removable, semi-automatic and fully automatic options provide a balance between permanent protection with the need for controlled access for emergency services, deliveries or temporary events. This adaptability supports effective traffic management without compromising security credentials.

Durability and long-term performance are also a key consideration, with Hörmann bollards being manufactured using corrosion-resistant materials and robust construction methods, helping to reduce

costs through low maintenance requirements and extended service life. Automatic variants incorporate intelligent control systems and integrated heating, ensuring reliable operation in demanding environmental conditions often encountered in exposed urban locations.

Aesthetics are increasingly important in public sector developments, particularly within regeneration schemes and shared public spaces. Hörmann bollards are designed to integrate discreetly into the urban landscape, allowing certified security measures to be implemented without detracting from the visual and architectural

quality of the surroundings.

With decades of experience delivering industrial and commercial access solutions, Hörmann UK brings together German engineering expertise and local technical support to meet the complex needs of public sector clients. Its certified security bollards are already trusted across Europe, providing local authorities and government bodies with a proven, compliant and future-ready solution for perimeter protection.

For further information on the Hörmann security bollards visit: www.hormann.co.uk or call **01530 516868**.

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Accelerating public sector resilience: from digitisation to intelligent data extraction

By Andrew Graham, Channel Development Manager, PFU (EMEA)



Across the UK public sector, the gap between digital ambition and operational reality is widening. Whether in a GP surgery still reliant on “Lloyd George” folders, a local authority managing legacy records, or an NHS Trust navigating mountains of clinical documentation, one truth persists: business processes are still moving at the speed of paper.

And in 2026, that velocity is no longer viable.

For years, “getting it in writing” was the gold standard for accuracy, accountability and trust. Today, however, physical documents have become a critical point of failure. Paper is slow when services need to be fast. Paper is fragile when systems must be resilient. Paper is opaque when leaders need actionable insight.

The public sector has made meaningful progress in digitisation, but scanning documents to PDF - without transforming the underlying data - simply creates digital paper. The opportunity now is far greater: to extract intelligence at the point of

capture, transform dark data into usable insight, and reduce hidden risk while accelerating service delivery.

This evolution doesn’t just capture information - it unlocks it.

The Velocity Gap: Public Services Can’t Run at Paper Speed

Public-sector workflows increasingly rely on real-time decisions: clinicians reviewing histories before prescribing; local authorities assessing urgent housing cases; benefits teams responding to applications under tight statutory deadlines.

Yet many of these processes still operate at the speed of paper:

- Files physically passed from team to team.
- Paper forms waiting in in-trays.
- Notes transported on trolleys between wards.
- Documents manually sorted, named, and indexed.
- Handwritten forms re keyed into digital systems.
- The counting of ballot papers during elections

This mismatch between required speed and actual speed creates what PFU calls the velocity gap - a widening divergence between the pace at which services must operate and the pace manual, paper-dependent processes allow.

Closing this gap requires intervention at the point where information first enters the organisation.

Resilience vs. Reality: The Hidden Risk in Filing Cabinets

Public-sector resilience frameworks assume information is universally accessible. Yet in practice, if a document is in a filing cabinet, stored off site, circulating between departments, or temporarily “on someone’s desk” - then during a moment of need, it effectively ceases to exist.

This is not limited to crisis events. Even in daily operations, paper undermines resilience:

- A missing safeguarding report can delay urgent intervention.
- A misfiled benefits form can postpone payments.

- A misplaced clinical letter can affect continuity of care.
- A paper record required for a DSAR or FOI request may take days to locate.

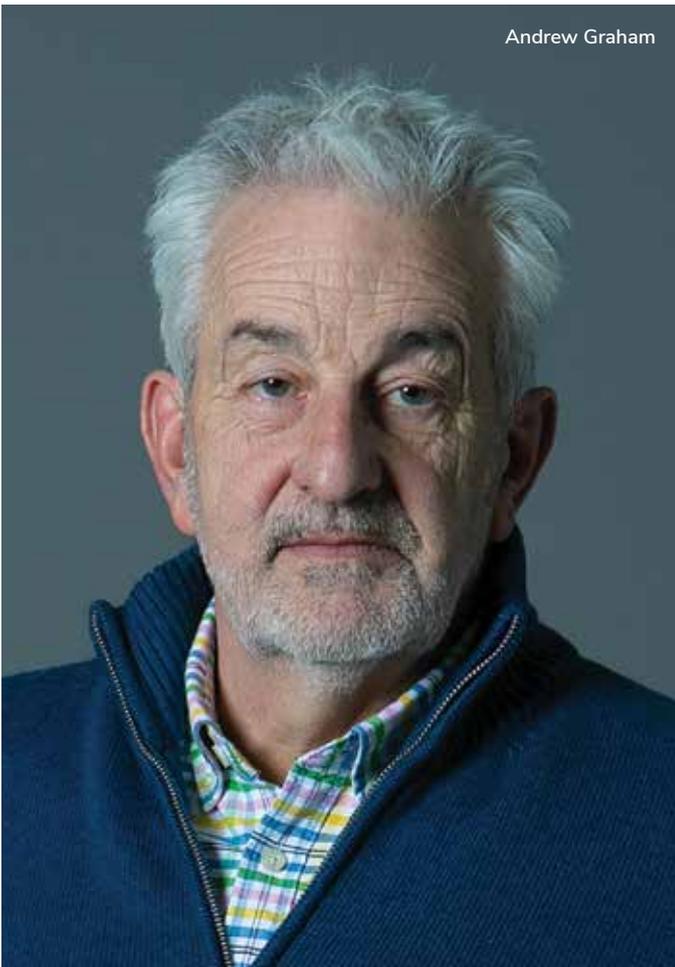
Modern public services require information that is not only digitised but instantly retrievable and consistently structured.

Space Reclamation: A Physical Constraint on Service Capacity

Paper is also a spatial burden. Restore Records Management has highlighted that removing paper records from hospitals could free space equivalent to 10,000 additional beds - a striking illustration of the physical inefficiency of storing information on shelves instead of systems.

Across local government, policing, education, and healthcare, paper occupies valuable real estate - space that could otherwise support frontline services or create safer, more efficient environments.

Digitisation is therefore not only an information strategy, but an estates and capacity strategy.



Andrew Graham

Beyond the Image: Why just “Scanning to PDF” Falls Short

Many organisations believe they have modernised because they scan documents to PDF. But this is fundamentally limited. A PDF is simply a digital photograph of a page - a picture rather than data.

Traditional scanning creates:

- No structure.
- No automation.
- No machine readability.
- No workflow triggers.
- No metadata consistency.
- No categorisation.
- No guarantee of accuracy.
- No structured taxonomy or logical structure and uniformed naming convention

True transformation requires moving beyond the image.

With intelligent data extraction, documents can be:

- Automatically classified the moment they are captured.
- Tagged with predetermined metadata or security markers.
- Processed without human sorting.
- Interpreted so that typed or

non-cursive handwritten fields become structured data.

- Routed to the right workflows automatically.
- Redacted for DSAR or FOI compliance.
- Stored as both a perfect digital original and a clean, machine optimised copy.

This turns paper into an actionable digital asset, rather than a static digital replica.

From Manual Entry to Instant Intelligence

The difference between digitisation and intelligence is often measured in the number of human decisions removed:

- Where should this go?
- What should this file be called?
- Which tags apply?
- Who needs to see this next?
- Is any personal data exposed?

Manual data entry invites error. A single misplaced digit can delay a payment. A misclassified referral can stall care. A missing metadata tag can complicate an audit.

Automating naming conventions, file structures,

tagging, and classification at the moment of capture eliminates this risk. It also moves the organisation from search (the act of looking) to findability (instant access without effort).

This is the foundation of reliable digital operations.

The Human Factor: Solving the “Shadow Paper” Problem

Technology alone does not eliminate paper. People must trust the digital record.

When they don't, they create shadow paper:

- Printing documents “just in case”.
- Keeping their own unofficial file copies
- Duplicating material already stored digitally.

Shadow paper undermines version control, governance, and GDPR compliance. It also signals a deeper issue: staff believe the digital record is incomplete, inconsistent, or difficult to retrieve.

To eliminate shadow paper, digital systems must deliver:

- Consistently accurate results.
- Clear, readable digital outputs.
- Reliable indexing.
- Sensible and structured file names.
- Fast retrieval.
- Demonstrable authenticity for compliance.

The journey must be gradual - paper paper lite paperless - but trust is earned through reliability.

Operational Benefits: Faster, Safer, More Connected Services

The transition from digitisation to intelligent data extraction delivers tangible improvements:

Retrieval in milliseconds

Whether in a clinical review, an audit, or a benefits assessment, rapid access changes operational outcomes.

Synchronous collaboration

Documents no longer move sequentially between departments - multiple teams can access the same information simultaneously.

Compliance built in, not bolted on

Digital records can retain “wet ink” authenticity while supporting automated workflows.

Sensitive information protected automatically

Security tagging and redaction become reliable, repeatable, and consistent.

Large archives of “dark data” activated

Previously unreachable information becomes available for analytics, planning, and insight.

Human optional processing

Document processing can run fully automatically, or incorporate humans where needed - by policy, process, or choice.

A Simple Commercial Model: Fixed Cost per Device

A key practical advantage of some modern intelligent capture platforms is a predictable licensing model: a fixed cost per device, not per page or per volume.

For budget conscious public sector environments, this provides:

- Simplified approval cycles.
- Predictable expenditure.
- No penalties for scanning more.
- Easier organisation wide scale. Digitisation should not introduce financial volatility.

Conclusion: Ready Data for a Resilient Public Sector

For the public sector, moving beyond the speed of paper is not an environmental gesture. It is a resilience imperative.

A compliance imperative.

A capacity imperative. And

ultimately, a citizen-experience imperative.

When the public sector needs to change direction quickly - whether in response to policy shifts, operational pressures, or societal needs - information must be ready before the moment of need.

Intelligent data extraction ensures that it is.

PFU (EMEA) Limited is committed to supporting public-sector organisations through this evolution - helping them uncover hidden risks, accelerate transformation, and build a resilient digital future where insight is always available, and information is always ready to be used.

More training - and one code to guide it

From pressure washing pavements to removing concrete in highway bridges, water jetting is vital for maintaining Britain's infrastructure. The industry's trade body is now taking fundamental steps to improve support for its members and service users alike.

New single WJA code to promote standards

No trade association can afford to stand still – least of all one dedicated to water travelling at supersonic speeds. The Water Jetting Association is the trade body for the UK water jetting industry, and the term 'jetting' could not be more fitting.

Ultra-high pressure (UHP) water – used every day by some of the WJA's members – leaves their jetting nozzles at speeds greater than the fastest RAF jet.

There is no sonic boom. But the force unleashed can demolish solid concrete. It is what UHP water jetting is used for every day, on critical structures like bridges, road carriageways and building foundations – demonstrating the innovation and impact of the water jetting industry.

The safety implications of using pressurised water to clean and cut structures, as well as removal significant parts of them (a process called hydrodemolition), are at the forefront of the WJA's work.

It is why the association has developed three highly-respected water jetting codes of practice, which it is now in the process of merging into one, unifying code. The change is, arguably, the most significant development in technical guidance for water jetting safety in the UK, if not the

world, in recent years.

The WJA is also broadening another crucial way it promotes the highest and safest standards in water jetting: its coaching and examination programme.

Through its City & Guilds-accredited courses, the WJA is the largest provider of water jetting training in the UK.

The courses are popular in other countries, too, especially in the gas, oil and petrochemical industries in the Middle East, where the WJA's codes of practice are also widely applied.

Now, for the first time, the WJA is also adding non-water jetting courses to its training portfolio: courses closely related to water jetting, and to the drainage and wastewater industries in particular.

It's an important element of the WJA's dynamic business strategy: enhancing practical support for a growing membership, to meet their evolving technical and commercial needs.

HSE backs jetting codes updates

WJA Director Leanne Smith said: "Our codes of practice, now being merged into one code, have been the cornerstone of the technical and safety standards we've developed in collaboration with our members.

"They've also directly informed

the development of our coaching and examination programme, which is why our courses are so respected by contractors, water jetting service users and specifiers.

"That process will continue, including with courses that don't directly involve water jetting, because we're applying the same rigour applied to water jetting to develop courses for other disciplines."

Positive impact on procurement

The WJA's three codes of practice have been developed over more than 30 years. The Blue Code for high and ultra-high water jetting was the first, followed by the Red Code for water jetting in sewers and drains. The Purple Code for pressure washers was launched in 2024.

In recent years, the WJA has worked particularly closely with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) when updating the code.

This is significant, because the HSE uses WJA codes of practice as a guide to appropriate standards when investigating incidents.

For this reason, the WJA will invite procurement professionals and service specifiers to include a reference to the new code of practice in their documentation, alongside evidence of WJA

An ultra-high pressure water jetting robot carries out hydrodemolition on a concrete marina jetty



membership and WJA training.

The WJA hopes the new single code will help to accelerate this recognition of WJA standards.

WJA Chairman Lee O'Callaghan said: "The Code of Practice will contain all the relevant guidance in the three codes it replaces, plus important new sections, but in a simpler, more accessible format.

"It also reflects connections between water jetting at different pressures and for different purposes. Because of this, we hope both contractors and procurement professionals will see the code's relevance to their interests, in terms of delivering service safely, and to a high standard."

Find out more about joining the WJA by visiting:

www.waterjetting.org.uk/join-the-WJA

Email: info@waterjetting.org.uk
Telephone: 0208 320 1090



Hydrodemolition being carried out to release bearings on a bridge over the River Ouse in East Yorkshire

Coaching and examination ready for rapid expansion

Training has always been central to the WJA's purpose. Over the next 12 months, its programme will go into overdrive, with more courses offering high quality coaching for a broader range of skills.

The WJA's water jetting course portfolio has already been expanded with a new practical module – Drain, Sewer and Gun – to support safe washdown techniques, primarily in the drainage and water utilities sectors.

Another practical module – Drain, Sewer and Robotics – covering the use of ultra-high pressure water jetting robots to remove concrete and scale in sewers and culverts, is also being launched in 2026.

Operatives must pass a one-day class-based Safety Awareness course, then at least one of five (soon to be six) one-day practical modules to be awarded a WJA operational jetting card.

Skills training for critical services

In April 2026, the association is launching the first three of a series of new stand-alone courses, in the biggest expansion of its training programme for over a decade.

Most do not involve water

jetting, but do involve disciplines that underpin services often delivered by water jetting contractors, mostly in the drainage, water utility and cleaning sectors.

The first three of these courses are Drainage CCTV, Gutter Cleaning, and Electro-Mechanical Cleaning.

WJA Chairman Lee O'Callaghan said: "This is an exciting step for the WJA and our members. We're expanding our offer as a direct response to requests from our membership and other customers.

"CCTV surveying is a critical part of drainage maintenance. A good number of contractors also carry out electro-mechanical cleaning and gutter cleaning services, or would like to start to.

"Our new courses will provide structured coaching in these techniques, delivered to an unrivalled standard by WJA-registered examination providers and WJA-approved coach/examiners.

"This will make the process of building team skills and developing new services easier, more streamlined and more cost-effective, with the excellent outcomes they know they get from WJA courses."

All the new courses are City & Guilds-accredited, take one day to deliver, combine class-based

and practical elements.

They share other elements with the water jetting coaching programme that define the high standard of training.

For example, operatives are also assessed with CLiKAPAD digital Q&A tool, and must achieve an 80 per cent pass mark to achieve certification.

Also, operatives must pass a refresher course every three years to maintain their WJA certification.

WJA members get a marketing edge

The WJA is also applying the same joined-up approach in the way it is helping businesses gain the maximum advantage of being association members.

For example, from January 2026, it is issuing a distinctive new member's logo. It is one of a series of initiatives being rolled out by the WJA that are designed to support member businesses.

Leanne Smith said: "We hope our members will proudly publish their new member logo on their websites, other digital channels, and on other company documents. Indeed, some already have.

"We know they value the marketing edge they get from being seen to uphold the WJA standards. It gives many customers important assurance. Some companies will only contract services from WJA members.

"By working with our members to raise awareness of our shared standards, we expect more companies will see the compelling case for joining the WJA, so they can also access all the benefits membership brings."

Find out more about WJA training by visiting:

www.waterjetting.org.uk/training



New WJA course on Drainage CCTV

Government and defence: why **WAN Acceleration** reinforces zero trust

By David Trossell, CEO and CTO of Bridgeworks



In Government and Defence circles, protecting data isn't to be dismissed, and it shouldn't be taken for granted. Wide Area Networks are often based on TC/IP protocols, which are inherently unencrypted. With Defence and some parts of Government, where it is deemed necessary, Top Secret videos, documents and communications are encrypted. However, there will be certain aspects that aren't. As Google AI says, Zero Trust Architectures (ZTA) only go so far as to require "strict, continuous verification for every user and device trying to access resources, regardless of their location inside or outside the network perimeter." It doesn't protect data in the way that encryption does.

Both must be in place because a Zero Trust Architecture only aims to secure network access rather than data protection. So,

if an unauthorised user were to gain access, ZTA could still fail to protect data from theft or misuse. To prevent this, it's particularly vital in certain Government and Defence operations to secure network access and to encrypt highly sensitive and confidential data.

For example, command and control data in a Defence situation could be exposed to hostile actors unless a Zero Trust Architecture and data encryption is put in place to protect it. This principle applies as much to the UK government as it does to the US administration.

The Executive Summary of the US National Security Agency Technical Report, published a 'Zero Trust Implementation Guideline Primer' in January 2026, explains: "Rather than relying on perimeters, ZT emphasises continuous authentication and authorisation of every User/

Person Entity (PE), device/ Non-Person Entity (NPE) and application, operating under the principles of "never trust, always verify" and "assume breach." This approach is critical for safeguarding sensitive data, systems and services against increasingly sophisticated cyber threats."

WAN Optimisation risks

So, if data is sent unencrypted, for Government purposes or for military command and control, data can be diverted when it's sent over a Wide Area Network (WAN). Arguably, technologies such as WAN Optimisation therefore don't fulfil the defined objectives of Zero Trust architectures. That's because, while it has its benefits, it can't handle encrypted data. The data needs to be unencrypted, deduped, and then re-encrypted

before it can be sent over a WAN, and then, once it has been received, it can be de-encrypted and then de-duped before it can be used.

Due to digital transformation, however, this might happen less frequently: It's a bit like a bank or a large shop needing to transport significant amounts of cash or goods to a safe location. Once the cash or goods leave the premises, there is a danger that someone might attack the security vehicle or even a less secure vehicle, to steal whatever it needs to move to another location. Similarly, once data has been transmitted, there is a risk that a cyber-criminal or bad actor from a Defence perspective could divert and steal the data – particularly if the data is not encrypted and is sluggishly transmitted.

WAN Optimisation often uses MPLS (Multiprotocol Label

Switching). It employs a private and isolated infrastructure rather than encryption. Google AI adds: "It offers separation of traffic between customers, but data typically travels in the clear (unencrypted), making it vulnerable to interception if the network is breached." Conclusively, it is therefore often not considered secure by default.

Unpredictable SD-WAN performance

The option that's proving to be increasingly popular in Government and Defence market is the SD-WAN – a great technology, but it also has its weaknesses. These include unpredictable performance, latency and packet loss. WAN Optimisation was originally a standalone appliance in the past, but it's often integrated into SD-WANs, which can use MPLS or LTE networks simultaneously. Bolted on as an afterthought is artificial intelligence and machine learning to improve SD-WAN performance.

The UK Government's Digital Marketplace claims: "SD-WAN service revolutionises network connectivity. Seamlessly integrating security and optimisation, it ensures agile, reliable and secure connections. Experience enhanced application performance and simplified network management with Fortinet's advanced SD-WAN solutions."

Despite this, SD-WANs can still be impacted by latency, packet loss and poor bandwidth utilisation. To help with this, Tristan Wood, founder of Livewire Digital, recommends a hybrid approach to networking. Speaking about them military and Defence terms, he comments in his article for Advance, 'Strengthening military connectivity in contested environments' on 14th March 2024:

"A key benefit hybrid connectivity brings to battlespace is its ability to bolster resilience to physical and cyber-attack. By combining the resources across the full spectrum of available channels on a Wide Area Network, (WAN) including satellite, hybrid connectivity

mitigates against single-point failures and ensures continuity of operations - even in the face of persistent interference and disruptions caused by adversaries."

He explains that SD-WANs sit at the core of this hybrid infrastructure and says software-defined networking concepts use an architecture to "create a virtual overlay that bonds underlying private or public WAN connections, such as Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS), internet broadband, fibre, LTE, 5G cellular or wireless." This permits hybrid SD-WAN networking to "agnostically combine and transition between these networks."

Hybrid SD-WANs don't rely on a failover that employs classic routing techniques, replacing one bearer with another. Instead, he says, they bond all the available connections into a single, seamless and heterogenous 'pipe.' He therefore claims: "Applying this technique to connectivity on the move, where the availability and characteristics of networks change rapidly, a hybrid solution overcomes the challenges of intermittent connectivity, poor performance and resultant difficulty in scaling."

SD-WANs: Strong growth

It may be for this reason that the UK SD-WAN market for Government and Defence is experiencing strong growth. The drivers are the need for secure, high performance, cloud-first networks, accelerated digital transformation and the adoption of high-assurance, low-cost connectivity. Industry reports also suggest that the UK SD-WAN market is projected to grow significantly by 2031. Leading the demand for SD-WANs will be managed services and cloud-based solutions. They may also be supported by 5G integrated.

However, both Government and Defence sectors could do with a literal boost with WAN Acceleration, which is not to be confused with WAN Optimisation. It can also accelerate SD-WANs as an overlay. How? Well, rather than making AI and machine learning an afterthought, they are fully

integrated into the technology, which is for use alongside data parallelisation to mitigate the effects of latency and packet loss. A significant advantage of WAN Acceleration is that it can send and receive any kind of encrypted data – not even my team at Bridgeworks can see the data when it's at rest or on the move.

Project TRINITY: Essential connectivity

Its benefits could be useful to Defence WANs such as Project TRINITY, which is an £89m programme led by BAE Systems. It has the aim of delivering a secure, state-of-the-art tactical WAN. As it stands, it is said to offer 100 times the data capacity than previous systems, with the ability to facilitate real-time video feeds from drones and aircraft to commanders on the ground.

The key goal is to provide the essential connectivity that's needed for modern, data-centric warfare and Defence. WAN Acceleration could support the transmission of large volumes of Government and military data by, for example, increasing bandwidth utilisation and by obfuscating bad actors. The data is sent at higher speeds than WAN Optimisation, and even SD-WANs can't manage it so well alone. Their performance can be boosted by adding a WAN Acceleration overlay.

Government departments, such as the Ministry of Defence (MoD), could therefore

benefit from integrating WAN Acceleration into their Government and Defence IT systems, particularly as this technology is about Zero Trust. With its inclusion in its armoury, it could support the MoD's digital backbone, which aims to create a single, secure ecosystem connecting sensors, decision-makers and effectors across all the domains of Land, Sea, Air, Space and Cyber.

WAN Acceleration is Zero Trust

WAN Acceleration offers Zero Trust capabilities because it is data agnostic and can transmit encrypted data without human intervention or interference. It has the capability to allow for Big Data analysis in command-and-control situations for decision advantage, and to significantly accelerate the backing up and restoring of voluminous amounts of data over large distances by mitigating latency and packet loss – allowing data to be stored in at least 3 different global locations.

It also reinforces the concept of Zero Trust architecture, as it is much more secure than WAN Optimisation and enhances the performance of SD-WANs. Lastly, WAN Acceleration can support an allied air force or a ministry as much as it can any other kind of government and public sector organisation. With it they invest in their data, and they can gain advantage on the battlefield.



David Trossell

The Cyber Security & Resilience Act is coming. Here's how to comply with the new measures

Author: Shannon Simpson, CEO, Cyro Cyber

The Cyber Security & Resilience Act (CSR) is making its way through Parliament in 2026.

Assurance will no longer be enough with the new Act. For too long cyber security it has been an underfunded, poorly-supported, tick-box measure. The arrival of the CSR Act will change this, especially as it comes weaponised by the enforced use of the new Cyber Assessment Framework, known as a CAF and overseen by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC). Each regulator, or Oversight Body, will also have its own, enhanced CAF (eCAF).

For critical national infrastructure and essential services, securing a network has unique challenges. Their systems have often been built up over many years and, in the case of operational tech, there was never any expectation it needed to sit alongside critical information tech. As a result, they are often unable to receive patches, are deeply integrated with critical processes and must remain operational 24/7.

These services can't just be shut down. So we recommend layering modern security processes around the legacy kit. This approach avoids the rip and replace idea and prepares for evolving threats. Here are some steps to take towards securing your critical network:

Start where you are

The best way build resilience is to properly implement what you already have. It's not that government organisations don't invest in cyber resilience, it's that the implementation often wanes. Before spending on expensive new tools, configure the current

systems and bring them up-to-date. This will put you in a better place to plan what needs doing next.

Establish good governance

The Cyber Assurance Framework supports clear, experienced governance. The NCSC says: 'Effective security of network and information systems should be driven by organisational management and corresponding policies and practices. There should be clear governance structures in place with well-defined lines of responsibility and accountability for the security of network and information systems'

Good governance needs to extend throughout the team with training that works. Credentials misuse is an easy way for attackers to access the system, and once they're in, to move laterally, exfiltrating data as they go. This form of attack has been seen on Councils in 2025.

We're not great advocates of the repeated tests some users have to take. Training needs to be interactive and preventative. So it stops users from moving on and redirects them to a test or explanation before they can continue. This method ingrains security procedures across the organisation.

Support the full lifecycle

Part of the responsibility for short-termism lies with vendors. In a legacy system, the original vendors may no longer support the system. We would like to see pressure on vendors to provide ongoing support for legacy systems in government organisations. This would reduce the huge costs in technology end-of-life upgrades. Proper support

from vendors will help to manage ongoing changes, and costs, in the cyber risk environment.

Implement zero trust

A resilient system should be built on core zero trust principles. So all users have to explicitly verify themselves, access is limited to just-enough and segment access is minimised. Attacks on Councils in 2025 have come via unauthorised access to outdated legacy systems. In our work, we've seen networks where none of the nodes are monitored and no alerts are sent, for example.

Organisations can improve resilience and create an evidence trail by implementing zero trust methods. Instead of believing that everything behind the corporate firewall is safe, a zero trust model assumes every entry is a breach and demands verification from each request.

There's also the new challenge of OT; dumb end-points. For example, cameras that monitor roads, rail and underground services are being digitalised. Traditionally this has been legacy technology on isolated networks. Now OT is increasingly on the same network as the critical systems, but without the accompanying security measures. OT needs segmenting and the principles of zero trust applying. Locking down communication between systems and enforcing least-privilege access can reduce attack surfaces and limits who can interact with critical components.

Plan for evidence

The CSR Act will require evidence that your security procedures work in practice. We've identified some processes to help with this.

- Create a Senior Information Risk Owner position at Board level, with responsibility for security. This is a good way to ensure that difficult conversations don't get watered down at a senior level. The SIRO can also lead a security working group, which should include those with expertise and responsibility for security, not just those who procure it.

- Use the existing compliance regimes to accelerate the CAF. Review what's missing and how you can meet the requirements.
- Identify a breach back-up team and the technology it uses. If or when a breach happens, what do you do? What happens if the SOC is lost or your primary cloud provider goes down? Does everyone know what their role is?
- Start a testing programme for the systems and control you have. Record this and monitor change. This should include a schedule for Cyber Incidence Exercises (CIE). Identify who's involved.

The best time to start with cyber security is always yesterday. But whatever stage you're at, now is the moment to review your cyber security. Now that the CAF will mandate certain processes, it's definitely time to show evidence of your network's resilience.



The Long Goodbye

Can the seemingly intractable problem of delayed hospital patient discharge be solved by the creation of a single responsible body?

Norman Niven CEO at The Medication Support Company and former director at BUPA

What seems to be the problem? Perhaps the biggest challenge facing the NHS is greater numbers of patients experiencing delayed discharge from hospital.

The impact is especially acute when waiting lists are rising, A&E departments are overstretched, and the winter flu season is upon us. Planned procedures are also impacted.

Finally, longer stays bring risks, including hospital-acquired infections, blood clots, muscle weakening, and pressure sores.

While most will be discharged to their home, many require support from the social care sector.

The NHS often cites lack of social care capacity as the primary reason for delayed discharge – but the problems run much deeper.

Could the answer be a single body with responsibility for handling every aspect of the discharge process, and with a single source of funding that covers all cost areas?

What is the scale and nature of the problem?

Stand by your beds

According to a piece from September last year on the Nuffield Trust website, between June 2021 and June 2025 there was an increase of 43% in the number of delays, reaching an average of nearly 10,000 per day. The peak, in January 2024, was over 14,000.

The reasons for being unable to leave are:

- **Hospital Process:** Issues within the hospital's control
- **Wellbeing Concerns:** Concerns about safety, or delays in assessing mental capacity.

- **Care Transfer Hub Process:**

Delays in identifying the appropriate destination or funding.

- **Interface Process:** Delays in coordinating care with external services.

- **Capacity:** Shortages of community or long-term care beds, or lack of home-based support staff.

A May 2025 blog on The King's Fund website noted capacity is the most common reason for delayed discharge, but that cannot be attributed to social care alone.

Who's in (dis)charge?

Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) were established by the Health and Care Act 2022. ICSs are the overall partnership, while ICBs manage the budget and commission services.

The ICB has overall responsibility for patient discharge, working with local authorities to arrange community support.

But it's not working and that's in part down to a lack of proper funding..

According to a July 2025 Blog by Dr Agnes Arnold-Forster on The Health Foundation website, "ICBs are facing cuts of 50% to their running costs."

Everyday responsibility for discharging lies with the consultant/clinician, the discharge coordinator/case manager, nurses, social workers, and occupational therapists. A Care Coordinator often acts as the main contact.

So it is not surprising to find friction, communication problems, and financial challenges.

Show me the money

The Better Care Fund (BCF) combines mandatory contributions from ICBs and local authorities, with a significant focus on hospital discharge.

The Hospital Discharge Fund (now consolidated within the BCF) manages funds for ICBs and local authorities to pay for short-term care packages.

Continuing Healthcare is for primary health needs; ICBs fund the entire health and social care costs, including personal care and care home accommodation.

In the face of such complexity, the obvious response is to simplify.

A new hope

A new service, based on an equal partnership between the NHS and social care sector, with direct government funding, and with a mandate to implement best practice for patient discharge, could be the answer.

A 'Health and Care Unified Discharge Programme' could take advantage of the ICBs to operate this new service.

The key issue is who pays; in a BBC report, Kerrie Allward, a policy lead for the Association of Directors of Social Services, said; "Councils often lack the funds to invest in integrated services that would support more timely discharge."

Some hospitals in North West England are already demonstrating what can be achieved with such a unified approach; patient discharge delays and hospital readmissions have been cut significantly.

In this case, the local ICB was not directly involved.

Conclusions

Making changes to a large, complex system is a major challenge, very often leading to unintended consequences.

The NHS is a textbook case; the results of government tinkering over the past 50 years have not been encouraging.

The problems with discharge serve to expose systemic issues within the service and its relationship with the social care sector.

A tangled mess has emerged by continuous interference, short-term thinking, and patched-up solutions, but existing structures, systems, and processes could be utilised to better deliver optimal patient discharge.

The proposed new body would be ultimately responsible for ensuring every patient is discharged in a timely manner, to an appropriate destination, with all the necessary support measures in place.

About The Medication Support Company

The Medication Support Company offers a complete medication management service, from internet-based home communications systems to remotely lockable medicines cabinets.

Our trained and accredited pharmacy technicians contact people at home to ensure the right drugs are taken at the right time, in the right dosage.

This improves population health and ultimately saves money for the NHS.

<https://medicationsupport.co.uk>

Delivering democracy on time: why fast, accurate data capture matters in UK elections

By Andrew Graham, Channel Development Manager, PFU (EMEA)

Administering elections remains one of the most demanding responsibilities in public service. Even with continuing digital transformation across government, paper based processes are still central to UK electoral administration. Physical paper trails are widely regarded as the gold standard for transparency, auditability and public confidence. Postal vote statements, registration applications, identity verification forms and many other supporting documents must all be captured quickly, accurately and in line with immovable statutory deadlines. In this high pressure environment, speed and precision of data capture are essential to delivering trusted and timely democratic outcomes.

Meeting the Unique Pressures of Election Timelines

Election operations face bursts of exceptionally high demand within very short timeframes. Postal vote opening sessions, for example, may require processing of thousands of forms every hour. Any delay, whether from manual entry, interpretation errors or workflow congestion, can place statutory deadlines at risk.

To meet these pressures, election service providers increasingly rely on advanced document capture technologies designed to interpret information directly from large volumes of paper. Production grade devices such as RICOH production scanners offer the high throughput, reliability and paper handling robustness required to keep documents flowing smoothly during peak periods. When paired with intelligent

capture software such as PaperStream Capture Pro, which can accurately extract printed and non-cursive handwriting and tick boxes, processing becomes faster, more consistent and can transform operational outcomes for election teams.

Why Accuracy Is Essential to Electoral Integrity

Accuracy is fundamental to fairness. A misinterpreted signature, missing character or misread field can lead to incorrect rejections - undermining voter enfranchisement and placing additional strain on verification teams. With thousands of postal vote statements and registration forms processed in compressed time windows, even marginal error rates can multiply into significant operational burdens.

Modern capture platforms address this through advanced image optimisation, reliable recognition of typed and non cursive handwritten text, and automated validation rules that reduce the risk of incomplete or inconsistent captures. When supported by scanning hardware capable of generating consistently clear images even from creased, folded or imperfect documents, the accuracy uplift is immediate. Fewer exceptions mean fewer delays, fewer manual interventions and greater confidence in the integrity of election workflows.

Scaling Effectively During Peak Election Periods

Election workloads are unique: long periods of routine activity punctuated by short, intense peaks where throughput becomes mission critical. Technologies selected for this

environment must therefore maintain consistent performance under pressure.

High speed scanning solutions engineered for substantial daily duty cycles help ensure that documents can be processed continuously without interruption. At the same time, intelligent capture software capable of classifying documents, extracting information and routing data automatically allows staff to focus on exceptions rather than routine work. Together, these capabilities ensure teams can meet deadlines comfortably without compromising accuracy or increasing operational stress.

Reliability and Public Trust

Reliability is central to public confidence. A technical failure during postal vote verification or a capture workflow error during registration processing can escalate workloads, delay key milestones and raise concerns about process integrity. The technology chosen for election environments must therefore be robust, predictable and designed for sustained use under scrutiny.

Enterprise grade capture systems support this through stable performance, high quality image output and comprehensive audit trails that provide transparency at every stage. Configurable validation rules aligned with election requirements ensure that processes remain consistent, compliant and defensible, even during high volume periods.

Choosing the Right Technology for Election Readiness

When selecting technology, election administrators should

prioritise capability over branding. High resolution scanning, dependable paper handling, intelligent information extraction, seamless integration with existing electoral systems and the ability to scale rapidly for peak workloads are all essential. These features enable teams to process information quickly while maintaining a high level of accuracy and operational resilience.

A Reliable Foundation for Democratic Delivery

Paper will remain a central component of UK elections for the foreseeable future. Ensuring that data captured from paper documents is accurate, fast and reliable is therefore critical to timely and transparent delivery of democratic processes. Investing in technologies designed for high volume, high pressure environments allows election teams to protect operational integrity, meet statutory deadlines and reinforce public trust.

To explore these topics further or discuss how advanced capture technologies can support election readiness, visit <https://www.pfu-emea.ricoh.com>.



Stannah reappointed to CHIC's Lifts & Mobility Aids Framework

Stannah, a leader in the UK lift sector, is proud to announce its successful reappointment to CHIC's (Communities & Housing Investment Consortium) Lifts & Mobility Aids Framework for a second consecutive term.

This achievement reinforces Stannah's commitment to delivering safe, reliable, and high-quality access solutions across the housing sector. The previous four-year framework, which began in 2021, supported thousands of locations across the UK and enabled the delivery of essential lift and mobility services nationwide.

Running until 2029, CHIC's framework provides installation, maintenance, and repair services for lifts, stairlifts, and hoists to member housing associations, local authorities, and public sector bodies nationwide. Acting as a centralised procurement tool, it ensures improved access

to specialised works and continuity for members.

As part of the new framework, Stannah has been awarded as a supplier for both Lots, ensuring comprehensive coverage for passenger lifts and mobility aids:

Lot 1 – Passenger Lifts:

Providing a full range of installation and refurbishment services for passenger and goods lifts across the UK. This includes installation, modernisation, and refurbishment to meet the latest Lift Regulations, DDA, and current safety standards.

Lot 2 – Mobility Aids:

Installation and servicing of stairlifts, step lifts, platform lifts,

through-floor lifts, patient hoists, and similar equipment.

Stannah brings 150+ years of expertise to the framework, providing new lift installation services through both its home accessibility and new lifts businesses, and maintenance and repair via its extensive nationwide branch service network. The broad range of mobility solutions the Stannah Group provides ensures that homes and communal spaces remain safe, accessible, and compliant with the latest standards.

Reappointed followed a rigorous tendering process, demonstrating Stannah's proven

ability to deliver high-quality services that meet the needs of housing providers across the UK. Through the CHIC Lifts & Mobility Aids Framework, Stannah will play a key role in supporting the effective delivery of crucial works and services for CHIC members, helping maintain accessibility and safety for all residents.

Speaking on the contract, Paul Baylis, National Contracts Manager at Stannah, said: "We are delighted to be reappointed to CHIC's Lifts & Mobility Aids Framework. Securing both Lots reflects our continued focus on delivering safe, reliable, and high-quality solutions. Our priority is ensuring long-term performance through responsive servicing and maintenance, helping CHIC members keep their equipment safe, compliant, and operational. We look forward to working closely with CHIC members."

For more information on lift installation, maintenance and repair solutions, visit:

www.stannahlifts.co.uk

For information on our public sector stairlift and home lift installation work, visit:

www.publicsector.stannah.com



CHIC
Stannah

From paper piles to predictive power: AI at the heart of citizen-centred government services

By Ashish Devalekar, Executive Vice President and Head of Europe, Mphasis



Ashish Devalekar

Across the UK's public sector, there is a shared ambition that rarely makes headlines: to deliver services that genuinely work for citizens, while protecting public money and supporting overstretched public servants. Yet behind the scenes, many government organisations face a difficult reality. Demand for services continues to rise, budgets remain under pressure, and decades of technology decisions have created complex, fragmented estates that are difficult to change and expensive to maintain.

Artificial intelligence is increasingly seen as part of the solution, not as a silver bullet, but as a practical enabler. Used responsibly, AI can help government agencies tackle fraud and error, support faster decision-making, automate high volume workflows, and shift from reactive service delivery to a more predictive, citizen-centred model.

The real challenge is not whether AI plays a role, but how government moves from isolated experimentation to meaningful, system-wide impact. Too often, promising pilots fail

to scale while structural issues in data, processes, and legacy technology remain unresolved. The risk is not moving too fast with AI – it is moving too slowly, while complexity, cost, and citizen expectations escalate.

A system under strain

One of the most persistent challenges in government is fragmentation. Similar activities are repeated across departments, with teams performing overlapping roles on disconnected systems. Valuable data exists but remains locked in silos, limiting its usefulness and causing inefficiencies that affect both taxpayers and service users.

Legacy technology compounds the problem. Many core public services still depend on ageing platforms written in languages few understand. These systems keep essential services running but are difficult to modernise and risky to change. So innovation slows and transformation programmes compete with the need simply to keep the lights on.

Public sector leaders also face a clear mandate to do more with less. Citizens expect faster responses, simpler digital journeys, and more personalised services, while government must reduce fraud, manage risk, and respond quickly to policy changes.

AI offers a way to square this circle by unlocking the value of data and focusing human effort where it matters most. Organisations must confront fragmentation directly. AI cannot simply be layered on top of disconnected and outdated

system; it must be embedded into redesigned workflows that integrate data, decision logic, and operational accountability. Without this foundation, AI risks reinforcing inefficiencies rather than resolving them.

Tackling fraud and error more intelligently

Fraud and error remain major drains on public finances, particularly in high-volume services such as welfare, taxation, immigration, and licensing. Even small improvements in detection and prevention can release significant funding back into frontline delivery.

Historically, government has relied heavily on rules-based systems. While useful in identifying potential fraud, these are limited. They depend on predefined scenarios, struggle to adapt to new behaviours, and often generate false positives. As a result, investigators can spend disproportionate time reviewing low-risk cases, while higher-risk or more complex cases are not prioritised as quickly as they could be due to workload and capacity constraints.

AI changes the equation. Machine learning models can analyse enormous datasets in seconds, identifying anomalies and hidden patterns that would take human teams weeks to uncover. AI can prioritise cases based on a range of factors – including risk, monetary value, timespan, or complexity – allowing investigators to focus on the most significant or high-priority work.

This approach is already delivering results across

government. In benefits administration, AI can flag inconsistencies across claims, employment records, and household data. In tax, it surfaces undeclared income or unusual activity. In visa and licensing services, it helps identify organised misuse or fraudulent applications. The outcome is not fewer people involved in decisions, but better-supported staff able to work more efficiently and confidently.

However, deploying new models or incremental optimisation of rules-based systems will not close the gap. Government must invest in data quality, cross-departmental data sharing, and explainability controls that ensure AI-supported decisions remain transparent. Without these safeguards, trust – both internal and public – can quickly erode.

Better decisions and faster responses for citizens

Beyond fraud, public sector organisations face a quieter but equally significant challenge: information overload, especially as services move from paper to digital. Every day, departments process vast volumes of correspondence, calls, and applications. Delays often occur not because decisions are difficult, but because it takes too long to gather, reconcile, and interpret the relevant information.

AI can take on much of this heavy-lifting. By scanning and classifying incoming communications, it can identify urgent or vulnerable cases for staff attention. In contact

centres, AI-driven triage can reduce waiting times by directing straightforward queries to self-service channels while ensuring complex or sensitive issues reach experienced agents.

Departments should prioritise AI deployment in high-friction citizen touchpoints – where delays, duplication, and manual triage create the greatest frustration. Quick wins in these areas delivers visible improvements, building both public confidence and internal momentum for broader transformation.

Human oversight remains central. AI highlights priorities, but people retain responsibility for context, intuition, judgement, and final decisions. Used this way, AI becomes an enabler of better governance and outcomes for citizens – not a replacement for people.

From reactive to predictive public services

One of AI's most transformative benefits is predictive insight. Traditionally, government has been reactive, responding to demand spikes, service backlogs, or fraud losses after they occur. Predictive analytics offers a different approach.

By analysing historical and real-time data, AI can forecast demand, anticipate risks, and support smarter resource allocation. Departments can plan staffing around peak periods, prepare for seasonal fluctuations, and identify operational bottlenecks before they affect

citizens.

Predictive capability does not emerge organically. It requires integrated data platforms, real-time visibility across services, and leadership commitment to acting on insights – not simply reporting them. This shift has both operational and human benefits. Over time, moving from reactive firefighting to proactive, predictive planning would help rebuild trust in public services, something technology alone cannot achieve, but can strongly support.

Automating the routine to protect the exceptional

Many public sector tasks involve repetitive or administrative processes: data entry, system-to-system transfers, routine checks. These activities consume time and energy, limiting capacity for higher-value work that requires judgement, expertise, and citizen interaction.

AI-led automation is already reducing this burden. By eliminating low-value “swivel-chair” work, teams focus on complex cases, policy interpretation, and citizen interaction – where human judgement and empathy matter most.

The key is thoughtful implementation. Automation should be designed into processes from the outset, not added as an afterthought, and must be rigorously tested across real-world scenarios. In the public sector, explainability and accountability of data are key to maintaining trust. When

automation is explicitly tied to outcomes such as productivity improvement, fraud reduction, and service quality, it moves from experimentation to strategic necessity.

Starting small and scaling with trust and purpose

Trust is the cornerstone of successful public services, and AI must be deployed to strengthen public confidence through clear governance, transparency, and a continued role for human oversight – especially where outcomes affect people's rights or livelihoods. AI's benefits should be communicated in line with outcomes that directly reflect what citizens care about most, like faster resolutions, shorter waiting times, better protection of public money, and more effective action against abuse.

For organisations at an early stage of their AI journey, the most effective approach is to start with focused, well-defined use cases that reflect real operational challenges. Scaling AI successfully then depends on more than technology, but on three critical enablers: strong data foundations, domain-led AI governance, and structured change management. Without these, pilots remain isolated. With them, AI becomes embedded into everyday service delivery.

Adoption, scale, and the road ahead

Looking ahead, successful AI-enabled government services will be defined by outcomes: reduced

fraud and error, improved productivity, and services that work better for citizens.

The next phase of public sector transformation will belong to organisations willing to rethink not just tools, but operating models. AI should not be treated as an overlay, but as part of the architecture of modern government – supporting continuous improvement rather than episodic change.

As public sector organisations consider the next phase of transformation, the focus must remain on outcomes rather than technology alone. Responsible adoption of AI requires strong data foundations, clear governance, and a continued emphasis on public trust. Government organisations do not need to navigate this transition alone. Mphasis works with public sector organisations to address these transformation challenges – from data foundations to AI-enabled service transformation – so departments can modernise legacy estates, embed responsible AI, and deliver measurable outcomes for citizens and taxpayers alike. With the right foundations in place, AI can move from isolated experimentation to meaningful, system-wide impact – supporting resilient services that better meet the needs of citizens now and in the years ahead.



The UK's rising **spine-health burden**: why back and neck pain are now a public-sector priority

By Anthony Ghosh, MD FRCSMR, The Spine Multi-Disciplinary Team

Back and neck pain are often framed as inevitable features of modern life, an individual inconvenience rather than a collective challenge. Yet new evidence shows that spinal health has become one of the UK's most significant, yet under-recognised, public-sector issues. Affecting nearly one in five adults, spine-related musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions are now a major driver of NHS demand, workforce inactivity and widening health inequalities. The scale and persistence of this burden demand a coordinated response from government, healthcare systems, employers and local authorities alike.

Musculoskeletal conditions remain among the most prevalent long-term health problems in England, with back and neck pain the leading contributors. Spine-related conditions account for up to 30 per cent of GP consultations, placing sustained pressure on already stretched primary care services. The economic consequences are equally stark. More than 30 million working days are lost each year due to MSK problems. At the same time, work-related MSK disorders alone affect over half a million workers annually, resulting in millions of lost working days.

Crucially, this is not a short-term or self-correcting problem. Since 2019, the number of people economically inactive due to long-term sickness has risen sharply, with back and neck pain consistently cited among the leading causes. Once individuals leave the labour market because of chronic spinal pain, return

rates are low without coordinated clinical and occupational support. This creates a cycle of reduced participation, lower productivity and increased welfare dependency.

Spine health underpins almost every aspect of daily life, from mobility and independence to work, caring responsibilities, and social participation. When spinal function declines, people reduce movement to avoid pain. Over time, this leads to muscle deconditioning, greater instability and heightened pain sensitivity, a vicious cycle that drives chronic disability.

For the public sector, the implications are profound. In healthcare, delayed access to physiotherapy and rehabilitation increases chronicity, repeat GP appointments and demand for imaging and pain management services. In employment, spinal pain fuels both absenteeism and presenteeism, with productivity losses often exceeding those caused by sickness absence alone. In social care, loss of mobility and independence among older adults increases reliance on formal and informal care networks.

Viewed through this lens, spinal health is not simply an orthopaedic issue; it is a determinant of national capability and economic resilience.

The rise in spinal disorders reflects significant changes in how people live and work. Sedentary behaviour has emerged as a major, modifiable risk factor. Evidence now shows that spending more than six hours a day sitting increases



Anthony Ghosh

the risk of developing chronic back pain by around a third. Prolonged sedentary leisure time, particularly television viewing, is causally linked with disc degeneration, sciatica and cervical spine disorders.

Hybrid and home working have increased these risks, as they have reduced incidental movement, such as commuting and walking between meetings. Many home workspaces lack ergonomic design, and long periods of uninterrupted sitting have become normal. Importantly, research suggests that it is not posture alone that causes harm, but prolonged immobility. Regular movement and posture change are far more protective than striving for a single "correct" sitting position.

For policymakers, this has clear implications. Sedentary behaviour is not merely a lifestyle choice; it is embedded in transport systems, workplace norms and digital design. Treating it as a population-wide prevention issue, on a par with smoking or

poor diet, represents a major opportunity to reduce future spinal pain and disability.

The UK's ageing population adds another layer of urgency. Millions of people are living with osteoporosis, leading to hundreds of thousands of fragility fractures each year. A substantial proportion are vertebral fractures, many of which go undiagnosed and are misattributed to "ordinary" back pain.

These fractures are far from benign. They cause chronic pain, loss of height, spinal deformity and reduced independence, and they significantly increase the risk of further fractures. For employers, fragility fractures among working-age adults already cost tens of millions of pounds annually in sickness absence, a figure set to rise as the workforce ages.

From a public-sector perspective, the universal implementation of Fracture Liaison Services (FLS) and proactive vertebral fracture assessment are among the most

cost-effective interventions available. Where FLS models are fully operational, re-fracture rates fall, and long-term care costs are reduced. Yet coverage remains inconsistent across the UK.

Spinal pain does not affect all groups equally. Women consistently report higher rates of chronic back and neck pain than men, reflecting a combination of biological factors, occupational exposure and unpaid caring responsibilities. Socioeconomic deprivation is an even stronger predictor. People living in the most deprived areas are more than twice as likely to report long-term MSK pain as those in the least deprived areas.

These inequalities are reinforced by differences in work conditions, access to early intervention and the built environment. Manual and care-related occupations carry

higher physical demands and fewer workplace adjustments, whilst communities with limited green space, public transport infrastructure and affordable exercise facilities provide fewer opportunities for protective movement.

For local authorities and integrated care systems, this underscores the need for place-based strategies that link health improvement with urban planning, transport and employment policy.

The evidence points to a clear conclusion - the UK's spine-health burden is not inevitable, but it will continue to grow without coordinated action. Three priorities stand out.

First, sedentary behaviour must be included within national prevention frameworks. Clear public messaging, such as encouraging people to stand

and move every 30 to 45 minutes, should be reinforced by workplace standards, media campaigns and active travel policies.

Second, community MSK services must be treated as core prevention infrastructure. Early exercise-led intervention reduces chronic pain, and long-term work absence. Scaling up first-contact MSK practitioners in primary care and shortening waits for physiotherapy would deliver both health and economic benefits.

Third, bone health must be a priority through universal FLS coverage and systematic screening for vertebral fractures. As the population ages, preventing spinal fragility will be central to maintaining independence and controlling future care costs.

Spine health offers a powerful lens through which to view

the UK's broader health and productivity challenges. It sits at the intersection of ageing, work, inequality, mental health and physical inactivity. Improving it does not require high-tech solutions, but consistent, evidence-based policy that makes movement easier, intervention earlier and prevention universal.

For the government and the public sector, the message is clear. Protecting spinal health is not simply about reducing pain; it is about safeguarding the nation's capacity to work, care and thrive. A healthier spine is the backbone of a healthier, more resilient UK.

Read the full report here:

<https://www.spinemdt.com/conditions-treated/rising-spine-health-burden.php>

Barrister returns to Forbes Solicitors' Housing Team

Barrister Lucie Wood has joined Forbes Solicitors as a partner, returning to the Lancashire-headquartered firm where she first started as a legal clerk.

Lucie had previously spent over a decade with Forbes, specialising in complex cases of litigation for businesses and registered providers of social housing. She joined Cobden House Chambers in 2019, where she has spent the past six years.

Ranked by Chambers & Partners and Legal 500 as a Leading Junior, Lucie takes up her new position in Forbes' Housing & Regeneration team, part of the firm's Public Sector Division. The role involves providing litigation advice and representation to Forbes' roster of social housing landlords, which includes more than 100 registered providers of social housing nationwide, as well as over 60 local authorities.

Commenting on her new role,

Lucie Wood, said: "Registered providers of social housing operate in a fast-moving regulatory environment and face heightened risks of litigation. It's important that issues can be effectively managed and resolved. Expert advice helps to minimise the risk of matters spilling over and disrupting wider service provision and standards.

"Forbes' housing team understands the intense scrutiny facing social landlords and what best-practice looks like for supporting the interests of organisations and tenants. It's a fantastic opportunity to be part of this again."

Siobhan Keown, Head of Housing Litigation at Forbes, concluded: "It's an absolute pleasure and a privilege to welcome Lucie back. She is highly regarded throughout the social housing sector, having successfully represented organisations in the High Court and County Court, as well as

her appointment to the Attorney General's Panel of Junior Counsel to the Crown.

"Our team works closely with social housing landlords, fully understanding their duties and responsibilities, and the matters that risk compromising

these obligations. Lucie fits perfectly with this approach and our team's resolve to support registered providers of social housing with their goals to maintain high standards of housing and compliance."

Lucie Wood



How location data can help identify Hard-to-Heat homes in Britain

With rising living costs, heating homes is not always easy for every household and fuel poverty is now sadly heard on a regular basis.

Ordnance Survey (OS) has analysed 23.6 million homes across Great Britain. With over 600 million data features, the OS NGD provides trusted, authoritative insight into Britain's buildings, including age, construction material, roof structure and solar panel presence. The data was used to identify trends and compare the physical characteristics of homes using a heat index to assess how easy they are to heat, and which households might be more vulnerable when temperatures drop.

This analysis aligns with the government's recently announced £15 billion Warm Homes Plan, which aims to help millions of families benefit from energy-efficiency improvements, save households hundreds of pounds on their energy bills, and reduce fuel poverty by 2030. This insight provides useful evidence for targeting retrofit investment, particularly insulation and solar installations, and could help local authorities and homeowners identify where energy efficiency improvements would have the greatest impact.

The analysis considered three key building characteristics:

- Connected homes – Properties with shared walls, such as terraced or semi detached homes, retain heat better than detached houses.
- Period of construction – Older properties built before 1960 are less likely to have cavity walls, insulation or double glazing.
- Construction material – Homes built with more insulating

materials lose heat more slowly.

Initial analysis suggests that urban areas generally have a lower heat loss risk. This could be influenced by factors such as the urban heat island effect, higher ambient temperatures, and denser, often newer housing stock. In contrast, OS data indicates that coastal and remote areas tend to be harder to heat.

Local Authority Districts in northern Scotland and Wales have the highest average heat loss scores. Na h Eileanan Iar (Western Isles) has the highest average score of 1.30, while Stevenage in Hertfordshire has the lowest at 0.26. Across Britain, most Local Authority Districts fall between 0.8 and 0.95, with around 6% scoring 1 or higher.

Additional factors also play a role. In Cornwall, the predominance of traditional granite built homes can make insulation more challenging. Coastal areas in Wales and Scotland also have a higher proportion of detached properties – 29% in Wales and 32% in Scotland – meaning every wall is exposed to the elements. In the Scottish Highlands, older stone houses often lose heat through poor insulation, ageing windows and doors. While these details are based on general characteristics rather than OS data, they help illustrate why some areas face greater heat retention challenges.

In London, boroughs such as Tower Hamlets rank among the easiest to heat, likely due to a high proportion of flats with shared walls, modern construction standards, and fewer pre 1960 buildings. In contrast, Harrow is among the hardest to heat, largely because of its high number of standalone properties and older housing stock.

Homes built post 1960 generally benefit from cavity walls, better insulation and double glazing. Building regulations introduced in the mid 1960s required insulation, with standards tightening significantly since then. As a result, newer homes typically require less energy to heat and are less prone to damp and condensation.

New towns such as Milton Keynes and Stevenage are among the easiest to heat, reflecting their largely post 1960 housing stock. Stevenage has the lowest heat index overall and the highest proportion of post 1960 homes, while Basingstoke and Deane also has a relatively low heat index due to more recent development.

Using OS data, it is possible to identify south facing rooftops suitable for solar panels, as well as areas with high or low existing solar uptake. In South Cambridgeshire, 14% of residential properties already have solar panels installed. Solar panels work throughout winter because they rely on daylight rather than temperature, although shorter daylight hours do reduce output. This insight could enable faster renewable adoption, help reduce energy bills, and guide efficient investment into retrofit programmes.

Andy Wilson, Government Services Lead, Ordnance Survey, commented:

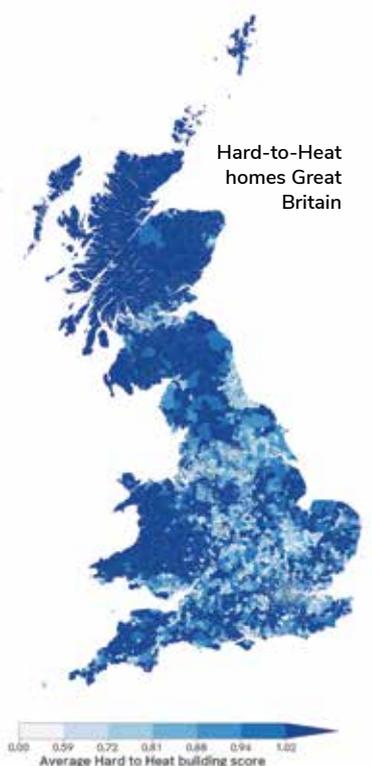
“OS already plays a central role in supporting national and local government through the Public Sector Geospatial Agreement, which provides free, at the point of use access to authoritative geospatial data. Our data can support government and local authorities to reduce fuel poverty, identify where heat networks are most viable, and help build 1.5 million new, energy efficient

homes.”

OS is already supporting the delivery of low-carbon heat networks and government heat decarbonisation ambitions. This includes a partnership with Arup, appointed in 2024 by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), to identify and develop heat network zones across England, underpinned by OS data.

Conclusion

By applying OS NGD building attributes to create a heat index, it is possible to visualise where homes are most at risk of heat loss. These insights can help target retrofitting, insulation upgrades and renewable investment, supporting warmer homes, lower energy bills and more effective decision making across Britain.



Unified payments for unitary councils: the key to financial insight and smarter decisions

By Steve Rose, IMS Project Strategic Finance Lead at Somerset Council

When Somerset Council was formed as a new unitary authority, as part of the largest shake-up in local government in 50 years, five district councils became one. With that came the significant task of unifying systems, services and teams to ensure a smoother, more consistent experience for the people who rely on them every day.

Among the most urgent challenges were payments. Each predecessor council had its own payment systems, contracts and processes. This fragmentation not only created inefficiencies for staff but also made it harder for residents to make payments, and for us to track income in real time.

To deliver reliable, accessible and transparent financial services for our communities, we needed to bring everything together under one roof. Consolidating five legacy payment systems was never going to be straightforward - each had its own technical architecture, reference structures and operational quirks.

But in that complexity lay a unique opportunity: the chance to design a system fit for the future, not just a patchwork of the past. Our goal wasn't simply to replace outdated systems, it was to build a unified payments infrastructure that would support a more connected council and, in turn, a better experience for residents.

From five into one

Time was against us from the get-go. With legacy contracts expiring in December 2024, we had just four months to implement a single income

management platform. Success would mean more than just meeting a deadline - it would mean ensuring continuity of service for our 570,000 residents across the county.

After a thorough tender process, we assembled a focused internal team and worked with Access PaySuite to deliver the transformation on time and on budget. Holding daily stand-ups, twice-weekly reviews and a hands-on problem-solving culture kept momentum high and decisions fast.

When challenges arose, which they inevitably did, we met face-to-face to find solutions. That human connection was key to maintaining focus and trust, ensuring that service quality for residents was never compromised during the transition.

Where we once had multiple systems, suppliers and contracts, we now have one single point of reference for all income data across the council. Integration with Microsoft Dynamics 365 means every service area can access the same real-time financial information.

Reporting that once took days now happens in minutes, helping teams respond more quickly to issues, make better decisions and direct resources where they're needed most. Ultimately, we freed our teams to focus on delivering efficient, equitable and responsive services for the people of Somerset.

Less admin, more impact

The real value isn't in the technology itself, but in what it enables for the people using it every day and for

the communities they serve.

This wasn't just a technical improvement; it was a cultural shift. Finance is no longer fragmented but unified, transparent and collaborative.

Many of the manual tasks that once consumed hours have been replaced with intelligent workflows that run quietly in the background. Teams now spend less time reconciling figures and more time improving services, from processing refunds faster to ensuring frontline teams have the resources they need to deliver.

Automation hasn't replaced people, it's empowered them. By removing repetitive, low-value tasks, we've given our staff the space to focus on work that truly makes a difference to communities. In local government, where every hour and every pound counts, that impact is profound.

We knew from the outset that aligning systems was only half the job, aligning teams and mindsets mattered just as much. We brought colleagues from across the former district and county councils together to co-design new processes, share best practice and build a shared culture of collaboration.

The result is more than a unified finance system; it's a unified Council. A shared sense of purpose turned what could have been a complex IT project into a people-first transformation that has improved how we serve Somerset's residents every day.

A foundation for the future

Looking ahead, our unified payments platform and data-driven insight mean Somerset Council can plan

more strategically, respond more quickly and innovate with greater confidence, ensuring every pound collected and every payment processed directly contributes to better outcomes for residents.

This transformation has shown that when technology, people and purpose align, even the most complex challenges can become opportunities for lasting improvement. We are already building on that foundation, onboarding additional third-party tools and moving remaining payment types, such as chip and pin and legacy online payments, into the Access PaySuite platform.

For other Councils navigating similar journeys, the lesson is clear: unification isn't just an IT upgrade, it's an organisational strategy. The right technology enables it, but success depends on communication, collaboration and a shared commitment to delivering simpler, more seamless experiences for residents.

That's what 'One Council' truly means.

Steve Rose



Apricorn becomes first and only hardware-encrypted USB storage device manufacturer to achieve AS9100 Certification

New certification demonstrates operational rigour and aerospace-grade quality standards for its encrypted hardware storage products

Apricorn, the leading manufacturer of software-free, 256-bit AES XTS hardware-encrypted USB drives, today announced that it has become the first and only encrypted USB storage device manufacturer to achieve AS9100 certification, the internationally recognised Quality Management System (QMS) standard for the aerospace and defence industry.

AS9100 is a quality management standard for aerospace suppliers that builds on ISO 9001 with aerospace-specific requirements and complements the EU's EASA (European Union Aviation Safety Agency) rules as an organisational QMS used by manufacturers, maintenance and design organisations to ensure consistent quality and customer confidence. The standard incorporates additional, stringent criteria specific to aviation, space, and defence organisations, including enhanced risk management, supply chain oversight, configuration control, product traceability, and continuous improvement.

By securing this certification, Apricorn has demonstrated the operational discipline, process maturity, and quality assurance measures required to support high-stakes aerospace and defence environments.

"Achieving AS9100 reflects the rigor embedded throughout our organisation, from design and manufacturing controls to supplier management and documentation. The AS9100 certification further strengthens

Apricorn's position as a trusted partner to organisations that require secure, reliable, and compliant data protection solutions," said Kurt Markley, Managing Director, Apricorn. "For our aerospace and defence customers, it serves as an independent assurance that Apricorn products are developed and delivered under a quality management framework designed for mission-critical use."

The AS9100 certification process includes comprehensive third-party audits of an organisation's quality management system, focusing on risk mitigation, operational consistency, corrective action processes, and continuous improvement. For organisations operating in aerospace and defence, AS9100 provides confidence that suppliers maintain disciplined, repeatable processes designed to meet exacting regulatory and performance requirements.

Apricorn's portfolio of hardware-encrypted storage devices is widely used to protect sensitive data at rest and in transit across regulated industries, including government, defence contractors, aerospace manufacturers, and critical infrastructure operators. The company also holds other certifications including TAA, ISO 9001, CMMC Level 1, SEWP, NATO restricted, and FIPS 140-3 pending for Q3 2026. Collectively, these certifications enable Apricorn to support the government and defence industries as well as other

highly regulated sectors such as healthcare, manufacturing, energy and utilities, higher education and communications.

"As data security becomes increasingly intertwined with national security and operational resilience, quality cannot be separated from cybersecurity," Markley added. "Our customers need to know not only that their data is encrypted, but that the devices themselves are manufactured and managed under strict quality controls. AS9100, as well as the other certifications we hold, reinforces that commitment which has always been a major part of Apricorn's DNA."

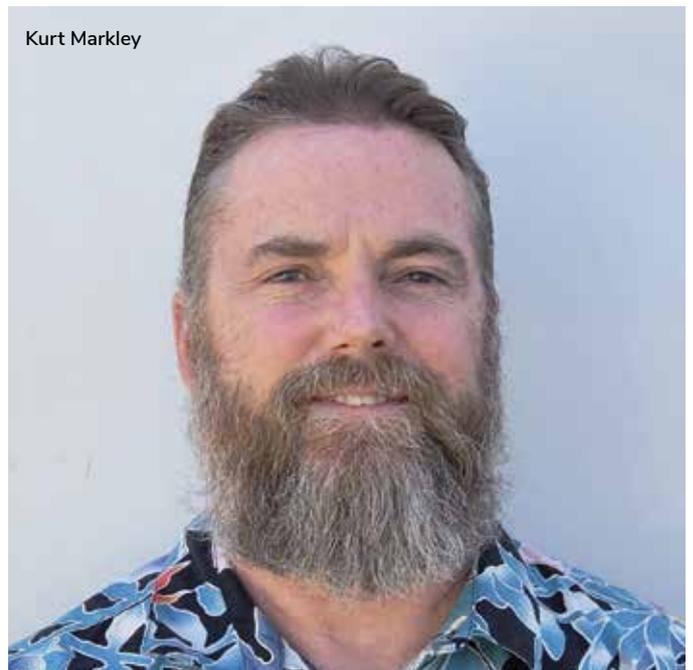
With AS9100 certification in place, Apricorn is well positioned to expand its support

for aerospace, aviation, and defence organisations seeking secure storage solutions aligned with globally recognised quality standards.

Apricorn provides secure storage innovations to leading organisations in finance, healthcare, education, and government across North America, EMEA, and Asia. Apricorn products have become the trusted standard for a wide range of data security strategies. Founded in 1983, Apricorn has developed numerous award-winning products and patents under its own brand as well as for leading computer manufacturers on an OEM basis.

Please visit:
www.apricorn.com

Kurt Markley



7 in 10 UK government IT leaders say outdated systems are hindering AI adoption

Cloudhouse research highlights public sector skills gaps and reactive technical debt as key factors shaping IT modernisation

New analysis from Cloudhouse, based on a survey of UK public sector IT decision-makers, reveals significant technical debt across government technology estates - and an urgent need for modernisation as AI adoption accelerates.

The Cloudhouse State of Technical Debt Report found that 7 in 10 (69%) government IT leaders say existing systems are currently hindering AI adoption. At the same time, 84% of public sector organisations continue to rely on existing Microsoft Windows environments, underlining the scale of transformation now

required across government infrastructure.

Internal capability also remains a critical challenge. Three quarters (75%) of public sector organisations lack the skills needed to modernise ageing systems, while 53% say technical debt is still addressed reactively rather than through structured transformation programmes - reinforcing the need for practical, low-risk modernisation approaches.

“Government organisations need to modernise traditional systems while protecting critical services and maintaining audit confidence,” said Mat Clothier,

CEO at Cloudhouse.

“Cloudhouse provides the control and visibility needed to reduce transformation risk and ensure change doesn’t become a failure.”

Operational resilience and compliance are also shaping priorities. Half of government organisations report difficulties proving compliance during audits, while 78% experience configuration drift across their estates - highlighting the growing importance of continuous visibility and control as transformation progresses.

To see more findings from the Cloudhouse State of Technical Debt Report, see: https://cloudhouse.com/techdebt_2025_report/



From students to highly-skilled workers: how a government programme is attracting young people to work in medicines manufacturing

By Ivan Wall, Professor of Regenerative Medicine at University of Birmingham and co-director of Resilience, the UK's Medicines Manufacturing Centre of Excellence

Experts estimate that the UK's medicines manufacturing sector is facing an estimated shortfall of 145,000 workers over the next 10 years.

That's 70,000 new (and 75,000 replacement) jobs available to those coming through the current education system.

But not enough is being done across the country to help young people understand the breadth of career opportunities available, especially in STEM related industries.

Taking a step back, it's important to recognise the role that education plays in the development of young minds.

From the early years of primary school, through secondary and further education the system is rightly aiming to create rounded minds, develop reasoning and problem-solving skills, teamwork, and a work ethic that will set young people up for future success.

It is, or should be, much more than learning facts parrot fashion.

Yet, there is still a mismatch between the skills with which students are leaving further education, and those students being "work ready" for highly-skilled industries.

A government programme, RESILIENCE, run by Innovate UK and comprised of four universities around the country, has been working closely with both educators and industry leaders to help plug that 145,000 skills gap.

But filling a skills gap is a complex business. It's not just about teaching, or even upskilling through education, it goes much deeper.

Golden years

For early years education, even into secondary age children, it's more about inspiration; helping to stimulate interest in STEM subjects, to encourage a pathway, and interest in, the wider life sciences industry.

As students refine their education pathway, we need to recognise the importance of acquiring depth of knowledge and applying that knowledge.

In 2013 OFSTED warned that schools were not giving "adequate careers advice to students" leaving unfilled opportunities in industries where the demand for skilled jobs is high.

Careers advice should be much more integrated into everyday teaching in further education. Too often we hear of education being more about learning facts and passing exams, rather than preparing young minds for a future career.

This is where the real disconnect between education and industry lies. We are hearing more and more from the industry that applicants are simply not workplace ready.

A solution

RESILIENCE a two-year, £4.5



Professor
Ivan Wall

million project funded by the Office for Life Sciences, part of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, to create a UK-wide programme to build a sustainable medicines manufacturing workforce.

The team at RESILIENCE aims to not only address the shortage of an industry ready workforce, but to also address the lack of EDI seen in the industry, engaging pupils throughout the education system.

When we embarked on the project we recognised huge inconsistencies not only in the course content, but the application of careers advice and support across the country.

One of our core aims was to reach and engage those students without access to advice and support to bring consistency, across the UK, to the further education pathway into the world of medicines manufacturing.

The Resilience affiliate

programme provides free access to materials and will scale to over 300 schools, colleges and universities to ensure national accessibility.

To support this, the program has partnered with other platforms and technologies such as Unifrog. This helps students compare every university course, apprenticeship, and Further Education courses.

Working with Unifrog means we can join up the process of making students aware of what's possible in the life sciences more widely and make the process of finding and applying for the right courses a lot easier, helping to remove any potential barriers for those with an interest in the sector.

The use of VR (Virtual Reality) and AR (Augmented Reality) has also been key in bringing consistency and developing practical skills for the workplace.

Virtual certainty

VR and AR are powerful training tools that can recreate an interactive, real environment, making them perfect for training in those environments that it would be expensive, impractical or disruptive to use.

With VR we can train anywhere, anytime, and repeat as necessary. Crucially, there's no need to use actual labs or manufacturing facilities for much of the core training as it's more about orientation, building confidence, familiarity and understanding of the processes, so it's a highly efficient and cost-effective way to deliver training.

The VR software RESILIENCE is using consists of modules that together form a comprehensive training package that addresses

workplace readiness for working on new medicine types in manufacturing cleanrooms.

VR hardware, training licenses and onboarding support will be provided to 20 universities, FE colleges and other stakeholders to support sector-specific outreach and training.

There are many other benefits of VR. No expensive consumables or single-use plastics are needed and there's no limit on the number of people we can train at the same time helping to support the government's net zero goals.

Perhaps most importantly, VR is a highly engaging technology and has been shown to enhance learning. For the many school and college students who've used the technology, it has also proven to

be a very powerful mechanism for engaging them.

The disconnect between education and industry is not limited to STEM, or medicines manufacturing, however the work being undertaken by

the RESILIENCE programme could pave the way for similar applications in other industries in the future.

To find out more about Resilience, please visit <https://www.resilience-skills.com/>.



Modern buildings risk not being ready for climate change warns academic

A leading climate-resilience architecture academic has warned that new thinking is needed in how modern buildings are designed to cope with a warming climate.

Professor Emeritus at Heriot-Watt University Susan Roaf says most modern public and private buildings are simply not designed for the impending realities of the 2030's and 2040's climates.

With over 50 years' experience in extreme-climate design, from the deserts of Iraq to Antarctica, Professor Roaf warns that as weather events intensify, less climate-adapted buildings may increase health risks and place additional pressure on services.

Professor Roaf said: "We are moving into a world that is getting significantly warmer, with extreme weather records being broken year after year.

"Our workplaces, public sector care facilities and our own homes must be designed to cope with future conditions and currently 'modern' designs

simply are not compatible with this reality. The Government's focus now is on warm homes but the need for cool homes is growing.

"More intense storms, heatwaves and cold snaps place additional pressure on energy systems. We need to be designing buildings and homes that will remain habitable should these systems fail."

Roaf's warnings are clearly set out her new book 'Adaptive Thermal Comfort: At the Extremes', co-authored with leading comfort experts Fergus Nicol and Michael Humphreys.

Professor Roaf added: "For instance, with more people now working from home or in hybrid patterns, the cost and usefulness of large glass office building types must be looked at more closely.

"The higher the structures the higher energy demands and vulnerable to over-heating and cooling during power outages when mechanical systems fail.

"We've already seen what happens when buildings cannot function without electricity.

Recent winters showed that some rural Scottish communities experienced extended power interruptions, during which lightweight homes cooled more quickly than traditional constructions."

The same design logic is now embedded in hospitals, schools and care settings, Roaf warns, buildings that often have sealed facades, restricted or non-existent opening windows, and ventilation that can spread pathogens between rooms with recirculating air.

"During COVID, studies in Scottish hospitals found that naturally ventilated spaces were associated with lower transmission risk compared with some mechanically ventilated settings.

"In 2020, Lanarkshire acute hospitals introduced an enhanced infection-prevention package that included greater use of natural ventilation, which was associated with reduced COVID-19 clusters.

"Yet many new hospitals have limited natural ventilation. In a heatwave or power interruption,

this can make it harder to manage indoor temperatures and air quality for vulnerable patients."

Roaf argues that there is an urgent need to globally move to the next generation of climate-safe, low impact buildings that are 'mixed-mode' buildings that can run on local energy with sun and natural ventilation, shading and energy storage for as much of the year as possible and only report to heating and cooling when and where needed. All this for the health and wellbeing of populations and the planet.

Professor Roaf added: "Our research makes one thing clear, we need to prepare ourselves and our societies to live decently in the very different climates of the future. To do so we need common sense and good science to lead us.

"That cannot be done in silos. It requires genuine collaboration between government, regulators, health and care leaders, architects, engineers and communities to deliver buildings that are safe, healthy and resilient by design."

When vetting fails at the top, everyone pays the price

By Susie Thomson, Chair Elect of the Professional Background Screening Association (PBSA) and former founder of Security Watchdog



Susie Thomson

The latest headlines surrounding Sir Keir Starmer and questions over appointments to the House of Lords have once again pushed vetting into the public spotlight. Political controversy will always generate noise, but beneath it lies a serious governance issue. If questions about due diligence and judgment can surface at the highest levels of government, then every leader - in every sector - should pause and reflect.

If it can happen at the top of government, it can happen anywhere. Leadership appointments are not administrative exercises; they are culture-defining decisions. Selecting the right people for senior roles and validating their experience, affiliations and suitability can be career-defining for those making the appointment. Conversely, getting it wrong can undo years of reputational capital in a single news cycle.

I have long argued that vetting is not simply about confirming employment dates or academic qualifications. It is the bedfellow of culture. The people we allow into positions of influence shape decision-making, team morale and ultimately organisational integrity. Toxicity does not remain neatly contained; it seeps outward.

The UK story does not stand alone. Across the Atlantic, a recent U.S. case involving an individual reportedly responsible for conducting federal background investigations, who was himself arrested in a prostitution sting, demonstrates that even those entrusted with safeguarding systems are not immune to misconduct. While the facts of each case differ, the underlying lesson is the same: governance frameworks must be robust, proportionate and defensible.

As Melissa Sorenson, Executive Director of the Professional Background Screening Association (PBSA), observes, "Whether we're talking about senior political appointments or federal clearance investigations, confidence in institutions depends on demonstrable rigour." She cautions against complacency in mature systems. "Risk indicators evolve - digital footprints, financial vulnerabilities, online conduct and increasingly sophisticated fraud techniques. Leaders must ensure their processes evolve just as quickly."

That point is critical. Screening programmes cannot remain static while risk becomes more complex. One of the greatest enemies of good vetting is incuriosity. The moment an organisation stops asking probing questions, stops independently validating claims and begins to rely on reputation alone, it starts down a risky slope. Turning a blind eye, whether out of loyalty, convenience or political expediency, is rarely benign. It is often the first step towards crisis.

But strong governance is not simply about intensity; it is about proportionality. As Melissa rightly notes, effective screening must be appropriate to the role, the responsibility and the level of



Melissa Sorenson

access an individual will have to people, data or financial systems. The checks applied to a senior investigator overseeing security clearances should not mirror those for a junior operational role. That is not a UK-US distinction, it is simply smart programme design. What matters is that organisations develop screening frameworks that are thoughtful, structured and defensible. No system, including government systems, is immune to bad actors. The aim is not perfection; it is resilience.

Another important distinction between the UK and U.S. contexts lies in cultural assumptions around data. In the U.S., information is often presumed public unless restricted by law. In Europe, the default position tends to assume privacy unless disclosure is permitted. Yet despite these differences, expectations are converging. Increasingly, there is an understanding, particularly in senior appointments, that scrutiny is not exceptional; it is standard. And it should be.

Vetting is not about suspicion. As Melissa puts it, "Screening is not about suspicion; it is about stewardship. Clear policies, independent verification and regular review of procedures are essential if organisations on

either side of the Atlantic want governance that is resilient, ethical and worthy of trust." I could not agree more.

This is not about outsourcing accountability. Responsibility for appointments always rests with leadership. However, leaders must recognise when specialist expertise is required and ensure that processes are regularly reviewed against emerging risks. A screening programme that was robust five years ago may now be insufficient.

When governance falters at the top, the consequences are rarely confined to the individual concerned. Employees question standards. Stakeholders hesitate. Public trust weakens.

The current controversy in Westminster, alongside events in the United States, should not be dismissed as isolated failures. They are cautionary tales. They remind us that screening must be consistent, proportionate and continuously improved.

If we want organisations that are ethical, resilient and trusted, we must resist complacency and design programmes that can withstand scrutiny. We may operate on different sides of the Atlantic, but in this respect we are more alike than different.

When vetting fails at the top, everyone feels the consequences.

Unique Rossendale Works programme delivers lasting impact for residents, communities and the local economy

A human-led approach to supporting people back into work has been commended following the release of a new impact report. Rossendale Borough Council and Active Lancashire have published a new impact report highlighting the significant social and economic benefits delivered through Rossendale Works, a partnership programme delivered alongside a network of local organisations.

Since its launch in 2018, Rossendale Works has taken a distinctive, community-based approach to employment support, combining physical activity, wellbeing and practical employability guidance to help residents overcome barriers to work, training and confidence. The model, which is unique to Rossendale, has attracted interest from other areas keen to understand how its outcomes have been achieved.

The latest impact report shows how Rossendale Works continues to deliver results not just for individuals, but for the wider borough. During 2024-25, the programme supported 68 residents, helped people move into employment and training, and generated more than £500,000 in social value, reflecting improved wellbeing, reduced isolation and stronger community connections.

Council Leader Alyson Barnes said: "Rossendale Works shows what can be achieved when local government works closely with trusted partners and our communities. This is not a one-

size-fits-all employment scheme. It's a flexible, human approach that recognises the challenges people face and supports them to rebuild confidence, skills and routine. The impact is felt right across the borough – from individuals moving closer to work, to stronger communities and a healthier local economy."

Delivered in partnership with Active Lancashire, Rossendale Works begins by engaging participants through free, weekly physical activity sessions, creating a welcoming and supportive environment. Once wellbeing improves, tailored employment support follows, including CV support, interview preparation, training opportunities and access to specialist help where needed. Many participants progress into employment or training within three months, significantly quicker than the national average reported by the Office for National Statistics.

Paul Becouarn, Project Lead at Active Lancashire, said: "What makes Rossendale Works so effective is the way it brings everything together – physical activity, mental wellbeing, skills development and community connection. It's about meeting people where they are and building confidence step by step. The results speak for themselves, and it's no surprise that other areas are now looking at Rossendale as a model of good practice."

The programme's impact extends beyond individuals to businesses and community



Rossendale Works employability officer Oliver Chadwick and support worker Danny Thomas

organisations. Partnerships with local employers, training providers and voluntary groups help participants gain real-world experience while supporting local assets and services. Volunteering projects, such as a community work party that helped with the renovations on Bacup Football Club's clubhouse, provide structured routines, develop transferable skills and contribute tangible value to neighbourhoods across the borough.

For participants, the difference can be life changing. Chris, who accessed Rossendale Works while experiencing severe social isolation and depression, described the programme as giving him "a reason to get out of bed in the morning." After building confidence through regular sessions, he secured employment with a local manufacturer and is now thriving, while continuing to engage with the programme and support others.

Chris added: "The only way I can describe looking for a job at almost 50 years old is like looking through the wrong end of a telescope. It

takes people like the staff at Rossendale Works to teach you not to give up, but to turn the telescope around! I don't know if Rossendale Works realise just how much they have supported me – a huge thank you to their team for all of their help and encouragement."

Another participant, Angela, who faced long-term health challenges, said: "When I first joined, I felt employment was no longer an option for me. Rossendale Works helped me regain confidence and realise I wasn't alone. I've tried activities I never thought I would, and now I feel optimistic about the future."

Rossendale Borough Council believes the success of Rossendale Works lies in its place-based design, strong partnerships and focus on long-term outcomes rather than quick fixes. By improving wellbeing, building skills and reconnecting people to their communities, the programme reduces pressure on public services while strengthening the local workforce and economy.

You can review the report on the Council website: <https://bit.ly/RossWorksImpact>

A shift from analogue to digital sits at the heart of the Government's ambitious plans for NHS reform in England

Steve Sanghera,
CEO and Co-Founder
of Inventus



The 10-year health plan outlined earlier this year intends to make the NHS 'digital by default' and central to the overhaul will be the roll out of an NHS App tool which will read real-time data from wearables, biometric sensors or smart devices.

According to one Government source: "This Plan will take the NHS from the 20th century technological laggard it is today, to the 21st century leader it has the potential to be."

Now one expert in the health technology solutions space has come forward to unveil a new and enterprising proposal he believes could be a gamechanger for the NHS.

Steve Sanghera is the CEO and Co-Founder of Inventus, a British company immersed in the life sciences space and one which provides bespoke tech solutions to meet the unique needs of clinical trials.

Launched five years ago, Inventus is now a successful global exporter and works with some of the biggest pharmaceutical companies in the world.

It is this expertise and success that has allowed Steve to see

that the NHS needs to push further and harder with its plans to digitise.

And central to its rollout is a 'Digital Health Ecosystem'.

So, what will this mean for the NHS, what will it look like & why is it needed?

The NHS faces the same tech challenges as the clinical trials industry – digital acceleration is key

Says Steve: "I know first-hand how fundamental data is to allow better and logical decisions to be made when it comes to health and patient care. And when you start looking at the NHS and the complexities of how it's structured with all its different facets, from managing GPs, hospital appointments, to care homes and care workers, it's a Digital Health Ecosystem that is needed to join up all the dots.

"But it's important to remember, creating a digital ecosystem for the NHS is complex. If it was easy, it would have been done already.

"Various experts will have a different view; interpretation of what it looks like. For me, it will be based on the area of expertise that Inventus has. The technology challenges faced by

the NHS are similar, if not the same, to the ones experienced by the pharmaceutical companies we support.

"Clinical trials are complex, involving multiple people, systems and data flows. Success depends on the technology infrastructure as much as the science itself.

"Innovative technology that can be sewn into existing NHS platforms and accelerates and streamlines logistics through integration, improves patient experience through seamless connectivity across the NHS and leverages AI responsibly to create neighbourhood networks are the components I believe create a successful Digital Health Ecosystem."

Prevention rather than cure

Explains Steve: "The use of wearables, which has already been outlined in the digital plan unveiled by the NHS, is vital to supporting the outcomes of a Digital Health Ecosystem and creating a prevention rather than cure attitude towards the NHS.

"The data we have access to as a result allows us to get to know the person before they become a patient. This is instrumental when creating a preventative health focus which moves the NHS from reactive treatment to proactive prevention and early intervention.

"A Digital Health Ecosystem also allows for access to information across the board – from wearables (which could provide information on sleep patterns, blood pressure for example) to medical records, treatment plans whether that's from a GP, or a dietician.

"What this then creates is a holistic picture of an individual which allows for a more detailed plan to be created which can focus on preventative care and allow for steps to be put in place to prevent someone from becoming ill in the first place.

"Technology will be crucial in order to do this and specifically bringing in technology that can help assess from the start and is end-to-end."

Strengthen communities

Using a Digital Health Ecosystem to build communities is a key driver of Steve's vision. He explained: "It will support the transition from hospital-based care to community and neighbourhood-led models of support.

"But let's look at how you build communities – it's through better communication and the most used tool in the world for doing this is a mobile phone.

"Creating messaging and discussion forums allow for shared experiences and create a sense of community.

"Technology also gives you the opportunity for the community to start within your house and a Digital Health Ecosystem then allows for a ripple effect to ensue so that this then extends to street and then your neighbourhood.

"A key component to this is data and the joining up of the dots to highlight people who have health and lifestyle similarities who can support one another. Considered and careful use of AI and technology allows this to happen.

"This is an exciting time for the NHS and a journey Inventus is keen to be part of."

The future is connected healthcare - How IoMT ecosystems can solve medication non-adherence

By Mark Scrivens, FPT UK Chief Executive Officer, FPT Corporation



Mark Scrivens

Although diagnosis can be one of the great challenges in healthcare, once a healthcare plan is developed, we naturally assume that patients take the medications that clinicians prescribe for them. However, this could not be further from reality. In fact, medication non-adherence represents one of UK healthcare's most persistent and costly challenges.

Whilst the scale of medication adherence in the UK has not been recently reported, a 2018 report from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimated that poor adherence results in 200,000 premature deaths in Europe each year. The financial fallout from medication non-adherence is also huge, with approximately \$100-300 billion in avoidable US healthcare costs each year through unused medications, tests and excessive healthcare provider visits.

The fundamental cause of this epidemic is fragmented communication between patients and healthcare providers. When medical devices and applications operate in isolation, this cannot provide a connected ecosystem that supports sustained patient engagement and adherence.

As part of the digital transformation in healthcare, there may now be a breakthrough to the crisis, via a comprehensive Internet of Medical Things (IoMT) ecosystem.

Building a comprehensive IoMT ecosystem

In order to best illustrate such a solution that can address the problem of medication non-adherence, we can look at how a leading multinational technology manufacturer with operations

across more than 40 countries developed a comprehensive Internet of Medical Things (IoMT) ecosystem to address the issue.

This was based on three core strategic pillars designed to transform patient care delivery:

• Setting up a unified IoMT ecosystem

The foundation of the solution involved creating a seamless communication network that connected all healthcare stakeholders. This unified ecosystem integrates compliant medical applications with intelligent IoMT devices, enabling unprecedented data sharing capabilities while maintaining strict adherence to international healthcare standards, including HL7 FHIR, HITRUST r2, and HIPAA compliance.

• Designing a patient-centric mobile application

The team designed a patient-centric mobile application that would allow patients to actively participate in their own healthcare journey. Through this app, patients can log medication schedules, share progress with healthcare providers and, most importantly, track their adherence patterns in real-time. The platform features intelligent alert systems with customisable reminder options delivered via a variety of channels - SMS, in-app notifications, and email. This allows patients to tailor their medication reminders according to their communication preferences.

• Intelligent and insightful medical decision-making

Taking healthcare beyond patient engagement, the app offers clinicians authorised access to patient data, which drives more intelligent and informed medical decision-making. Pharmaceutical companies

can also benefit from valuable insights while receiving regulated software solutions that comply with stringent requirements for protecting patient information and processing data.

Through this multi-stakeholder approach, all appropriate stakeholders in the healthcare ecosystem can utilise shared data to improve patient outcomes while maintaining high standards of privacy and security.

The benefits of patient-centered digital health technology

The implementation of this comprehensive IoMT solution delivered significant improvements across many healthcare metrics, including:

Retention rate - The patient-centric mobile application achieved an impressive 89% retention rate, significantly higher than the typical retention rate of healthcare applications. This retention rate suggests that patients derive sustained value from the platform, with potential for long-term changes in healthcare behaviour.

Patient engagement - Most significantly, patient engagement with the application resulted in medication adherence rates reaching 75%. This achievement is down to the platform's reminder systems, progress tracking capabilities, and patient empowerment features in encouraging consistent medication compliance.

Data-driven treatment decisions

- In generating real-time and accurate patient data, clinicians are able to make more informed, data-driven treatment decisions. Healthcare providers can now access comprehensive patient medication patterns, adherence trends, and outcome metrics.

This means more personalised treatment plan adjustments and can enable medication reviews and proactive intervention strategies. This visibility into patient behaviours supports more effective care coordination and potentially better health outcomes across patient populations.

Harnessing clinical research data - Beyond immediate patient care improvements, the platform serves as a valuable tool for gathering clinical research data, enabling advances in medical treatment and understanding to make future improvements in medication management strategies.

The future is connected healthcare

This successful IoMT implementation highlights that comprehensive, patient-centric digital health solutions can meaningfully address the crisis of medication non-adherence. By creating seamless connections between patients, providers, devices, and pharmaceutical companies, healthcare organisations can achieve measurable improvements in patient engagement and outcomes while significantly cutting healthcare costs such as inappropriate or cancelled appointments and medication wastage.

With a medication adherence rate of 75%, this patient-centric app translates to saving lives and improving the UK's healthcare system. For UK healthcare leaders, it means at last building a holistic ecosystem that supports regulatory compliance and data-driven patient-centered healthcare that benefits citizens and healthcare practitioners throughout the patient journey.



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