

Electronic referral and image sharing between optometry and secondary care in England – national context and background

May 2021 – update for optometry professionals in community settings



EeRS introduction & context

Aim

Scale the use of **electronic referral management and image sharing (EeRS)** solutions for eye care referrals across **primary and secondary eye care services** in England.



Objectives

- Establish a framework for electronic eye care referral systems
- Establish minimum standards and interoperability roadmap
- Regions and systems procure solutions with access to central funding
- Deploy and implement electronic eye care referral systems in FY2021/22
- Test the benefits of the model with a view to future commissioning arrangements

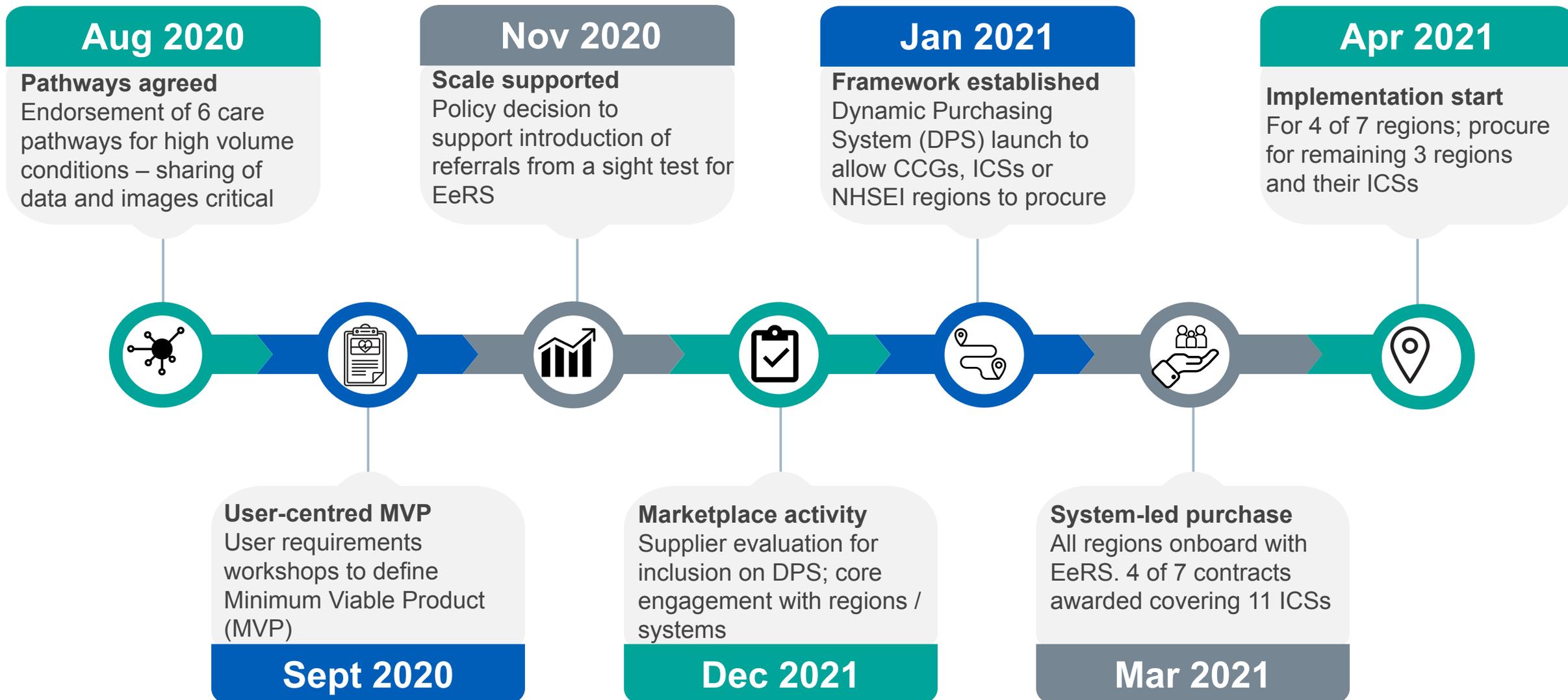


Benefits

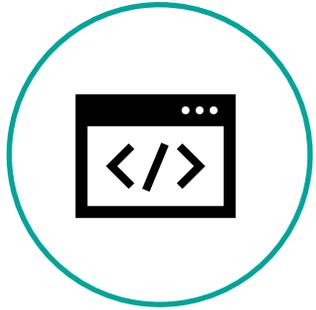
- Reduce outpatient attendances through effective referral and triage
- Remove the need for fax and referrals via GP
- Provide feedback for referrers
- Support image sharing
- Increase the use of locally commissioned services in the community



EeRS timeline



Core supplier requirements (DPS framework)



Functionality to deliver **digital referrals** AND **key eye care pathways** (glaucoma, macular, cataract)



Cloud based solutions that can be set up easily in optometry practices



Supplier led **training** and kick-off meetings for optometry



The ability to give **feedback** to referring optometrists on their referral



Good IT helpdesk support



Safe and secure **information governance**, and **clinically safe** processes for digitising referral pathways

National implementation approach



Conduct discovery and engage with clinicians to understand requirements and solutions



Establish a special purpose procurement vehicle for EeRS solutions providers nationally



Release 1 year transformation funding for use by regions to procure solutions



Coordinate and support regional efforts to procure solutions across participating integrated care systems (**North West, North East Yorkshire and Midlands**)



Provide guidance and support for implementation (**South East, East of England, London and South West starting to implement their contracts**)



Coordinate learning and evaluation



Link the programme to national policy work around elective care recovery



Advance common technical requirements once nationally for all regions

National technical priorities



Support APIs to reduce double-keying in optometry practices

NHSX and NHSEI are commissioning NHS Digital to deliver a supplier led Application Programming Interface (API) **that reduces double-entry**.

Most optical PMS suppliers and many large and small optical businesses are involved, as are key professional standards bodies.

We are working towards a national API standard for **August**



GP systems relationship (notification, referral, and copying the outpatient letter)

We have identified a need for optometrists to:

- Notify the GP of a referral
- Refer to the GP for action
- View any **outpatient letters** following a referral

We are working with EeRS suppliers and NHS eye hospitals to support this on a case by case basis



Support and respond to secondary care technical requirements

To achieve the key patient benefits, we need secondary care or intermediary services to be able to review the clinical and imaging data associated with a referral where that is provided. There are technical and business process elements to this work.

This activity is **driven by acute and ICS digital colleagues**, and we hold a national forum to support that.



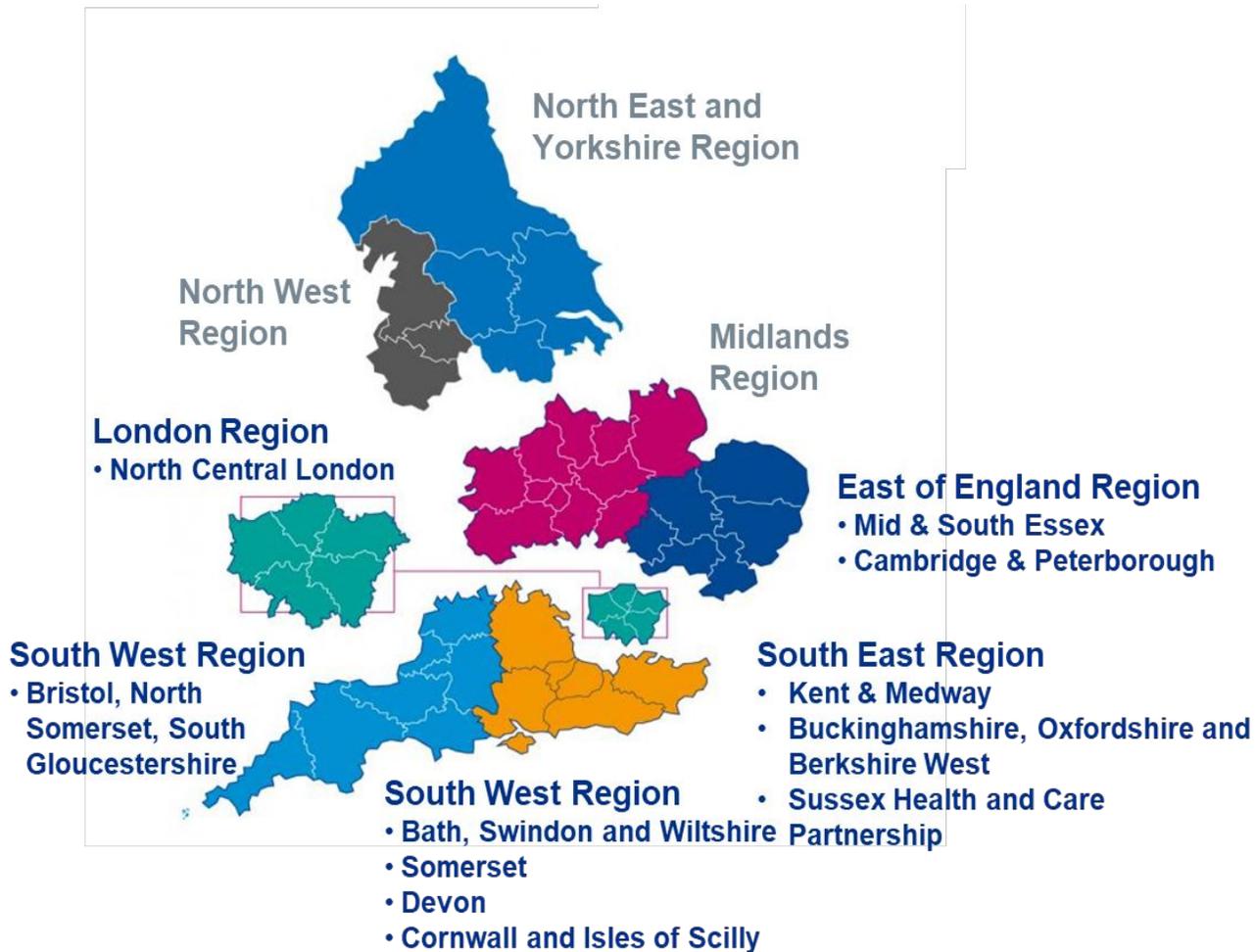
Support interoperable image viewing and analysis

We have identified that a large proportion of community imaging cannot be shared with secondary care.

There are several reasons behind this, but the DICOM conformance and licensing arrangements are a key one.

We are working with standard setting bodies to start to address this, but it is expected to take **a number of years**.

EeRS – planned coverage for 2021/22



40 million people will live in areas supported by EeRS systems in 2021/22

EeRS systems procured across **11 ICSs** covering **13.4m population**

Further procurements being published imminently covering an additional **18 ICSs** with **26.3m population**