



# Glossary of NHS terminology

The aim of this chapter is to provide you with information on useful terms and a glossary of health service, management, non-clinical and medico-legal terms along with some definitions. For clinicians some of the terminology might already be familiar.

I'm afraid that further new terms continue to be introduced, many related to new information technology. Some are fairly obvious and have been included not just for the sake of completeness but just in case they need clarification. Beware – quite often they are terms that have only a loose connection with their real meaning. You may need to check this out when you hear the expressions, but do not be surprised if the speaker is not aware of the correct meaning. The meaning may also relate to a specific connection. A few terms are attempts that have been made to transfer manufacturing terminology to medical work.

**Abduction** In clinical terms a form of logical inference, commonly applied in the process of medical diagnosis. Given an observation, abduction generates all known causes. (*See also* deduction, induction and inference.)

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**Absenteeism** Absence from work not authorised through appropriate channels.

**Access rate** An estimate of the availability of facilities to people living in an identified locality, irrespective of where they are treated. The measure is stated as discharges and deaths per 1000 population.

**Accident** Any unexpected or unforeseen occurrence, especially one that results in injury or damage.

**Accident and Emergency (A&E)** The title given to the hospital department previously termed 'Casualty' and now frequently called 'Emergency'. The Accident and Emergency patient may be brought by ambulance or car, or may arrive on foot.

**Accident report** A written report of an accident. The format of the report is laid down in health and safety legislation.

**Accommodation (children)** Being provided with accommodation replaces the old voluntary care concept. It refers to a service that the local authority provides for the parents of children in need, and for their children. A child is not in care when they are being provided with accommodation. Nevertheless, the local authority has a number of duties towards children for whom it is providing accommodation, including the duty to discover the child's wishes regarding the provision of accommodation, and to give them proper consideration.

**Accountability** Being answerable for one's decisions and actions. Accountability cannot be delegated.

**Added value** A measure of productivity expressed in terms of the financial value of an item as a result of workforce. Often used loosely in the NHS.

**Adolescents** Young people in the process of moving from childhood to adulthood. Because of their age, adolescents may have special needs as patients.

**Adoption** Total transfer of parental responsibility from the child's natural parents to the adopters.

**Advance care planning** The process of discussing the treatment and care a patient would or would not wish to receive in the event that they lose capacity to decide or are unable to express a preference. This might include their preferred place of care and who they would like to be involved in making decisions on their behalf.

**Advance decision (England and Wales) or advance directive (Scotland)** A statement of a patient's wish to refuse a particular treatment or care if they become unable to make or communicate decisions for

themselves. A valid advance refusal if applicable to the patient's current situation must be respected and is legally binding on those providing care in England and Wales (provided it relates to life-prolonging treatment and it satisfies the additional legal criteria). This is likely to become legally binding in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**Advance statement** A statement of a patient's views about how they would or would not wish to be treated if they become unable to make or communicate decisions for themselves. This can be general and would involve considerations regarding their place of residence, religious and cultural beliefs along with other personal values and preferences, as well as their medical treatment and care.

**Adversarial** One of two kinds of court process: adversarial and inquisitorial. The adversarial system refers to a court process in which the parties bring competing claims so that the court decides the outcome on the merits of each case.

**Advocate** An individual acting on behalf of, and in the interests of, patients who may feel unable to represent themselves in their contacts with a healthcare or other facility.

**Advisory boards** Bodies established to ensure the National Programme for IT engages with stakeholders, such as patients, the public, and health and care professionals.

**Affidavit** Statement in writing and an oath sworn before a person who has the authority to administer it, e.g. a solicitor.

**Amenity bed** A bed in a single room or small NHS hospital ward for which a patient may be charged a small fixed amount for the hotel part of the cost, but not the cost of treatment, under section 12 of the 1977 NHS Act.

**Analysis of expenditure by client group** Analysis of expenditure over broad groups of service related to patient care groups, e.g. services for mentally ill people, services mainly for children, and general and acute hospital and maternity services.

- ▶ **Functional (objective):** The object for which the payment has been made – medical staff services, nursing staff services, transport services and so on.
- ▶ **Subjective:** According to the nature of the payment, e.g. salaries and wages, travel, drugs, etc.

**Annual report** A report, written annually, which details progress over the last year and plans for the following year. Includes financial and activity statements.

**Apology** A sincere expression of regret.

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**Appeal (Care of Child)** Appeals in care proceedings are now to be heard by the High Court or, where applicable, the Court of Appeal. All parties to the proceedings will have equal rights of appeal. On hearing an appeal, the High Court can make such orders as may be necessary to give effect to its decision.

**Application** In computer technology this is a synonym for a program that carries out a specific type of task. Word processors or spreadsheets are common applications available on personal computers.

**Arbitration** The process of settling a disagreement between two or more parties by the introduction of an external body or person with authority to make and implement an agreement.

**Arden syntax** A language created to encode actions within a clinical protocol into a set of situation-action rules for computer interpretation, and also to facilitate exchange between different institutions.

**Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC)** Based on the boundaries of the local authority, it provides a forum for developing, monitoring and reviewing the local child protection policies, and promoting effective and harmonious co-operation between the various agencies involved. Although there is some variation from area to area, each committee is made up of representatives of the key agencies, who have authority to speak and act on their agency's behalf. ACPCs issue guidelines about procedures, tackle significant issues that arise, offer advice about the conduct of cases in general, make policy and review progress on prevention, and oversee interagency training.

**Artificial intelligence (AI)** Any artefact, whether embodied solely in computer software or a physical structure like a robot, that exhibits behaviours associated with human intelligence. (*See also* Turing test.)

**Artificial intelligence in medicine** The application of artificial intelligence methods to solve problems in medicine, e.g. developing expert systems to assist with diagnosis or therapy planning. (*See also* artificial intelligence and expert systems.)

**Assessment** Process by which the capacities and incapacities of people who may require community care are established by social services departments, with appropriate services thereby identified.

**Assessment (children)** Process of gathering together and evaluating information about a child, its family and circumstances. Its purpose is to determine children's needs, in order to plan for their

immediate and long-term care and decide what services and resources must be provided. Childcare assessments are usually co-ordinated by social services, but depend on teamwork with other agencies (such as education and health).

**Associates** Salaried doctors who support principals in hard-pressed areas, such as the London Implementation Zone Education Initiative area or remote parts of Scotland.

**Asynchronous communication** Communication between two parties when the exchange does not require both to be an active participant in the conversation at the same time, e.g. sending a letter. (*See also* synchronous communication and email.)

**Audit** Originally the process by which the probity of operations and activities of an organisation was examined (internal audit) and a report on the annual accounts produced (external audit). Now used more widely, e.g. clinical audit evaluates the effectiveness of clinical activities; and management audit evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of organisational and management arrangements. It involves the process of setting or adopting standards and measuring performance against those standards, with the aim of identifying both good and bad practice and implementing changes to achieve unmet standards.

**Audit Committee** A committee of an NHS trust or authority board, comprising non-executive members, which ensures probity in the corporate governance of the organisation. Following the Cadbury Report, NHS bodies should have such a body.

**Audit trails** Anyone accessing a patient's record using the NHS Care Records Service is automatically recorded in an audit trail. This is like an electronic footprint that shows who they are, when they accessed the record and what they did.

**Authorised person (children)** In relation to care and supervision proceedings, this is a person not from the local authority who is authorised by the Secretary of State to bring proceedings under section 31 of the Act. This covers the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and its officers. Elsewhere in the Act there is a reference to persons who are authorised to carry out specified functions, e.g. to enter and inspect independent schools.

**Average daily available beds** The average number of staffed beds in each department in which patients are being treated, or could be treated, each day without any changes being made in facilities or staff. Beds borrowed from other departments are included.

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**Average length of stay** The average number of days a bed is occupied by each patient.

**Bayes' theorem** Theorem used to calculate the relative probability of an event given the probabilities of associated events. Used to calculate the probability of a disease given the frequencies of symptoms and signs within the disease and within the normal population.

**Bed bureau** An administrative unit that ensures that patients needing urgent admission are directed to a hospital which will admit them.

### **Bed days**

- ▶ **Available bed days:** the sum of beds available for use each day during a specified period of time.
- ▶ **Occupied bed days:** the sum of the number of beds occupied by patients each day during a specified period of time. This total, divided by the number of discharges and deaths during the same period, gives the average length of stay.
- ▶ **Vacant bed days:** the number obtained when the total of occupied bed days is subtracted from the available bed days.

**Bed norm** A measure of the bed requirements for a given population, expressed as number of beds per 1000 people. Bed norms may be used in several different ways: age specific, as in the case of hospital accommodation for the elderly – 10 beds per 1000 aged 65 years and over; or by specialty, as in the case of orthopaedic beds – 0.35 per 1000.

**Bed occupancy** The number of beds occupied by patients at a particular time, usually midnight. It may be expressed as a percentage of available beds.

**Bed state** The number of beds, both occupied and vacant, at a particular time.

**Bed turnover** The average number of patients using each bed in a given period, such as a year.

**Behavioural science** The study of individuals and groups in a working environment. Issues may include communication, motivation, organisational structure and organisational change. The science is still being developed and relies on contributions from psychology and sociology.

**Benchmarking** Defined by the UK Benchmarking Centre (1993) as the continuous, systematic search for best practices, and the implementation that will lead to superior performance.

**Benchmarks** Benchmarks are sources of information (e.g. cost,

quality outcomes, etc.) used as comparators to compare performance between similar organisations or systems.

**Booked case** An elective admission where the date has been arranged in advance with the patient. Waiting lists should include booked cases.

**British Association of Medical Managers (BAMM)** Aims to ‘support the provision of quality healthcare by improving and supporting the contribution of doctors in management, together with all other activities which contribute to, further, or are ancillary to this principal aim’.

**Broadband** A type of data transmission in which a single (telephone) wire can carry several channels at once. Cable TV, for example, uses broadband transmission.

**Budget** A statement of the financial resources made available to a budget holder to provide an agreed level of service over a set period of time.

**Business plan** A plan setting out the goals of an organisation and identifying the resources and actions needed to achieve them. Usually prepared on an annual basis, the business plan seeks to balance planned activity with income so as to minimise financial risk.

**Caldicott Guardian** The member of staff in an NHS organisation who is responsible for ensuring that patient rights to confidentiality are protected.

**Capacity** The ability to make a decision. An adult is deemed to have capacity unless, having been given all appropriate help and support, it is clear that they cannot understand, retain, use or weigh up the information needed to make a particular decision or to communicate their wishes.

**Capital asset** Land, property, plant or equipment valued at more than £5000.

**Capital Asset Register** A list of all the capital assets of an organisation. This contains information required to administer a capital asset replacement programme such as the purchase price, acquisition and replacement date of assets.

**Capital Asset Replacement Programme** A programme which uses depreciation accounting techniques to spread the cost of the replacement of capital assets.

**Capital charges** Since 1991, the use/ownership of capital in the NHS has incurred a cost, the capital charge. This was introduced so that NHS capital was no longer regarded as a free good or gift from

the state. Capital charges consist of two elements: depreciation and interest on fixed assets. The interest rate currently applied is 6%. NHS trusts retain depreciation charges within the trust and are required to make a target rate of return equivalent to the interest rate.

**Capital programme** A plan over a period of time (normally five years) showing costs and starting and final dates of schemes of work to be charged to the capital allocation.

**Career advice** Providing information on career opportunities and training requirements.

**Career counselling** Discussing career options for which the individual may be most suited.

**Care order (children)** Order made by the court under s31 (1)(a) of the Children Act placing the child in the care of the designated local authority. A care order includes an interim care order except where express provision to the contrary is made.

**Care pathway** An approach to managing a specific disease or clinical condition that identifies what interventions are required, and sets out the various stages of care through which a patient passes and the expected outcome of treatment.

**Care plan** A written statement of community care services to be provided following assessment (q.v.). The document details the care and treatment that a patient receives and identifies who delivers the care and treatment. This term covers the term 'individual plan' (*See also* health record).

**Care Programme Approach (CPA)** The individual packages of care (care programmes), developed in conjunction with social services, for all patients accepted by the specialist psychiatric services. Care programmes may range from 'minimal' single-worker assessment and monitoring for individuals with less severe mental health and social needs, to complex and multi-professional assessments and treatment.

**Care Record Development Board (CRDB)** Established as an independent body to provide advice to NHS Connecting for Health on a variety of issues arising from the development of the NHS Care Records Service. The CRDB was replaced on 1 October 2007 by the National Information Governance Board for Health and Social Care, which will continue to publish and review the NHS Care Record Guarantee, formerly produced by the CRDB (*See also* National Information Governance Board for Health and Social Care).

- Care Record Guarantee** The commitment of the NHS in England to patients that it will use records about them in ways that respect their rights and promote their health and well-being. The Guarantee covers people's access to their own records, controls on others' access, how access will be monitored and policed, options to further limit access, access in an emergency and what happens when someone cannot make decisions for him or herself.
- Carer** A person who regularly provides help (without pay) to someone who requires domestic, physical, emotional or personal care as a result of illness or disability. This term also incorporates friends, relatives and partners. There are thought to be six million 'informal carers'.
- Case-based reasoning** An approach to computer reasoning that uses knowledge from a library of similar cases, rather than by accessing a knowledge base containing more generalised knowledge, such as a set of rules. (*See also* artificial intelligence and expert system.)
- Case conference (children)** Formal meeting attended by representatives from all the agencies concerned with the child's welfare. This increasingly includes the child's parents (and the Act promotes this practice).
- Casemix** The mixture of clinical conditions and severity of condition encountered in a particular healthcare setting.
- Cash limit** A limit imposed by the government on the amount of cash a public body may spend during a given financial year. Separate cash limits may be set for revenue and capital.
- Causal reasoning** A form of reasoning based on following from cause to effect, in contrast to other methods in which the connection is weaker, such as probabilistic association.
- Chairman (chairperson or chair is more politically correct)** A person who leads or conducts discussions. A chair's skill and technique may be used in a one-to-one meeting or by indirect communication methods, such as the telephone.
- Change agent** A third party, who may be a trained behavioural scientist, and who acts as a catalyst in bringing about change by means of an organisation development programme.
- Checklist** A means of recording observations relating to fixed criteria; used to check compliance with agreed procedures or standards.
- Child** A person under the age of 18 years. There is an important exception to this in the case of an application for financial relief by a 'child' who has reached 18 years and is, or will be, receiving education or training.

**Child assessment order** The order requires any person who can do so to produce the child for an assessment and to comply with the terms of the order.

**Child Protection Register** Central record of all children in a given area for whom support is being provided via inter-agency planning. Generally, these are children considered to be at risk of abuse or neglect. The register is usually maintained and run by social service departments under the responsibility of a custodian (an experienced social worker able to provide advice to any professional making inquiries about the child). Registration for each child is reviewed every six months.

**Child minder** Person who looks after one or more children under the age of eight for reward, for more than two hours in any one day.

**Children in need** A child is in need if: (a) he or she is unlikely to achieve or maintain (or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining) a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him or her of services by a local authority; or (b) his or her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired (or further impaired) without the provision for him or her of such services; or (c) he or she is disabled.

**Children living away from home** Children who are not being looked after by the local authority but are nevertheless living away from home, e.g. children in independent schools. The local authority has a number of duties towards such children, e.g. to take reasonably practicable steps to ensure that their welfare is being adequately safeguarded and promoted.

**Choice** Giving patients more choice about how, when and where they receive treatment is one cornerstone of the government's health policy. In the context of NHS reforms, this is the overarching policy term given to range of initiatives within the reform of the NHS designed to act as a driver for efficiency, quality and effectiveness.

**Choose and Book** Allows a patient, in partnership with health and care professionals, to book first outpatient appointments at the most appropriate date, time and place for the patient.

**Clinic session** A session held, and not merely scheduled, for, by or on behalf of one consultant, senior hospital medical officer or dental officer. Now extended to include sessions run by nurses and other clinical staff.

**Clinical budgeting** The allocation of specific budgets to consultant clinical staff who are responsible for the budget management. A part of management budgeting.

- Clinical directorate** A unit of management for specific clinical services. A clinical directorate is usually led by a clinical director, who is often a consultant working in that role for a number of sessions per week. They are supported by a nurse and/or business manager. The extent to which management responsibilities for budgets and staff are devolved to directorates varies.
- Clinical guideline** An agreed set of steps to be taken in the management of a clinical condition.
- Clinical pathway** *See* clinical guideline.
- Clinical protocol** *See* clinical guideline.
- Clinical responsibilities** Range of activities for which a clinician is accountable.
- Clinical Risk and Safety Board** Local NHS boards responsible for establishing a framework for the safe implementation and continuing use of new IT systems in local NHS organisations. The board is made up of clinical representatives including doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals.
- Clinical Spine Application (CSA)** The web-based application that enables healthcare professionals who do not have access to local NHS Care Records Service systems and services to have controlled access to the Personal Demographics Service (PDS) and the Personal Spine Information Service (PSIS). It enables clinicians and other staff to access information held on the Spine.
- Clinician** Health professional such as a doctor or nurse, involved in clinical practice.
- Clinician's sealed envelope** *See* sealing.
- Closed beds** Beds which have not been used (i.e. closed) for longer than one month for the purpose of redecoration or structural alterations, or because of a shortage of staff, but are scheduled to be reopened at a future date.
- Code** In medical terminological systems, the unique numerical identifier associated with a medical concept, which may be associated with a variety of terms, all with the same meaning. (*See also* term.)
- Cognitive map** A process of recording information in related groupings and intended to assist lateral thinking. (*See also* mind map.)
- Cognitive science** A multidisciplinary field studying human cognitive processes, including their relationship to technologically embodied models of cognition. (*See also* artificial intelligence.)
- Commissioner** An organisation or individual involved in purchasing healthcare. (*See also* purchaser.)
- Commissioning** Relates to the purchasing and contracting of

healthcare services. It is a broad term that can cover a range of activities but in principle a distinction can be drawn between two levels of commissioning. At one level, commissioning can involve service planning and design, through identifying population need; assessing the local priorities; understanding the market; and determining where and how services should be provided and by whom. On another level, commissioning can involve the daily purchasing of services, through managing contracts and spending budgets.

**Commissioning a patient-led NHS** The letter and attachments (entitled *Commissioning a Patient-led NHS*) was sent to NHS Chief Executives and others at the end of July 2005. It builds on the *NHS Improvement Plan* and *Creating a Patient-Led NHS*. The details contained in the papers relate to the form and function of primary care trusts and strategic health authorities and was designed to begin to address the tension between providing services and commissioning services in PCTs. It was also intended to prompt cost savings of £250 million; deliver practice-based commissioning (PBC) by December 2006 at the latest; and SHAs will be reconfigured to move towards alignment with Government Office boundaries.

**Communication** The two-way process of exchanging ideas, thoughts, feelings and facts.

**Communication strategy** A written statement of objectives for effective communication and a plan for meeting those objectives. The strategy should be consistent with the business plan.

**Community care** The assessment and commissioning of health and social care and treatment to patients/clients outside hospital, who have an identified physical or mental illness or disability. It is often more narrowly associated with patients being resettled from institutional care, e.g. from large psychiatric hospitals, or frail, elderly people who previously would have remained in hospital care.

**Community Health Councils (CHCs)** ‘Patient watchdog’ bodies established as part of the NHS reorganisation in 1974. Their role included assisting with complaints and visiting NHS premises. The government published the *NHS Plan for England* in 2000, which proposed the abolition of CHCs in England and their replacement by Patient and Public Involvement Forums and Patient Advocate and Liaison Services and established by each NHS trust, including primary care trusts in England. CHCs have been retained in Wales and Scotland.

**Community health services** These divide into two main groups:

- patient care in the community – the treatment or care (outside hospital) of patients with identified physical or mental illness or disability; and services to the community – services of prevention or intervention that are provided to a population, such as immunisation, screening and health promotion.
- Complainant** A person who expresses dissatisfaction. They may or may not be the patient concerned.
- Complaint** An expression of dissatisfaction.
- Complaints procedure (children)** The procedure that a local authority must set up in order to hear representations regarding the provision of services under Part III of the Children Act from a number of persons, including the child, the parents and ‘such other person’ as the authority considers has sufficient interest in the child’s welfare to warrant his or her representations being considered by them.
- Compliment** An expression of approval or satisfaction.
- Computer-based patient record** *See* electronic medical record.
- Computerised protocol** Clinical guideline or protocol stored on a computer system so that it may be easily accessed or manipulated to support the delivery of care. (*See also* clinical guideline.)
- Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC)** The Local Service Provider (LSP) for the North West and West Midlands Cluster and North East and Eastern Clusters, delivering software developed by its main subcontractor iSoft.
- Conciliation** The process of a layperson assisting two parties in dispute to reach informal agreement through discussion and persuasion without any legally binding status.
- Conciliatory** The application of conciliation techniques particularly outside a formal conciliation process.
- Concurrent jurisdiction (children)** The High Court, a County Court and a Magistrates’ Court (Family Proceedings Court) all have jurisdiction to hear proceedings under the Children’s Act.
- Connectionism** The study of the theory and application of neural networks. (*See also* neural network.)
- Consent to share** Where a patient has explicitly consented to share information across organisations for the purpose of their health-care, or has expressed no preference so consent is inferred. The sharing of information will be on a need-to-know basis. A Summary Care Record exists and is visible to an authorised user with a legitimate relationship to the patient. Consent may be given in two ways.

- ▶ **Implied consent:** When a patient has not expressed a preference so consent to share is inferred. For example, when a GP sends clinical information to a consultant following a patient referral to specialist care, the GP is assuming the patient's consent to send that information as part of the referral.
- ▶ **Express consent:** When a patient expresses permission for the sharing of their clinical information across NHS organisations.

Patients may also express dissent to the sharing of information.

- ▶ **Dissent to share:** Prevents confidential information maintained by one legal organisation being accessible by another legal organisation, unless the information is sent as part of a direct clinical communication like a referral or discharge note. A Summary Care Record will exist but will not be automatically visible to any authorised user, when combined with Consent to Store.

**Constant prices** A mechanism for comparing prices for goods and services over a number of years, which compensates for the distortion introduced by inflation.

**Contact order (children)** Order requiring the person with whom a child lives, or is to live, to allow the child to visit or stay with the person named in the order.

**Continuing education** Activities which provide education and training for staff. These may be used to prepare for specialisation or career development as well as facilitating personal development.

**Continuing professional development (CPD)** Defined as: 'A process of lifelong learning for all individuals and teams which enables professionals to expand and fulfil their potential and which also meets the needs of patients and delivers the health and healthcare priorities of the NHS'.

**Contract/Agreement** A document agreed between providers and purchasers of healthcare. Details activity, financial and quality levels to be achieved.

**Contract currencies** Agreed units of measurement for contracting, e.g. finished consultant episodes.

**Contracts** The basis for agreement on the services that should be provided to patients, including specification of quality. Block contracts specify facilities to be provided, and may include workload agreements including patient activity targets within an agreed range. Cost and volume contracts specify the level of services required by the purchaser. Purchasers can link payment with

- agreed activity. Provider units will be able to match funding with workload and deploy resources more flexibly. Cost per case contracts cover the cost of treatment for specific patients.
- Control measures** Ways in which risk can be controlled, including physical controls such as locking away drugs and valuable items, and system controls such as restricting access to hazardous areas to specific staff groups.
- Convenor** A non-executive director of a trust, health authority or health board who decides whether or not to convene an independent panel to review a complaint against an NHS provider.
- Corporate** Relating to the whole of an organisation, e.g. the management of an organisation.
- Corporate seal** A seal used by organisations to certify documents used in legal transactions (such as the sale of land) so as to fulfil legal requirements.
- Court welfare officer (children)** Officer appointed to provide a report for the court about the child and the child's family situation and background. The court welfare officer will usually be a probation officer.
- Criterion** A measurable component of performance. A number of criteria need to be met to achieve the desired standard.
- Cross-functional team** A team of people from different disciplines.
- Cruse** A non-religious UK-based organisation specialising in bereavement. Email [info@crusebereavementcare.org.uk](mailto:info@crusebereavementcare.org.uk)
- Cybernetics** A name coined by Norbert Wiener in the 1950s to describe the study of feedback control systems and their application. Such systems were seen to exhibit properties associated with human intelligence and robotics, and so were an early contribution to the theory of artificial intelligence.
- Cyberspace** Popular term (now associated with the Internet) which describes the notional information 'space' that is created across computer networks. (*See also* virtual reality.)
- Cycle time** Time a patient is under treatment (in hospital). Thus, cycle time plus waiting time equals the lead time.
- Database** A structured repository for data, usually stored on a computer system. The existence of a regular and formal indexing structure permits rapid retrieval of individual elements of the database.
- Day care (children)** A person provides day care if they look after one or more children under the age of eight on non-domestic premises for more than two hours in any day.

**Day cases** Patients who have an investigation, treatment or operation, but are admitted electively and discharged on the same day.

**Decision support system** General term for any computer application that enhances a human's ability to make decisions.

**Decision tree** A method of representing knowledge that makes structured decisions in a hierarchical tree-like fashion.

**Deduction** A method of logical inference. Given a cause, deduction infers all logical effects that might arise as a consequence. (*See also* abduction, induction and inference.)

**Designated person** A person within an NHS provider, or a department of an NHS provider, who is delegated responsibility to ensure that complaints are properly resolved locally.

**Detailed records** At present patients have many detailed records. These include a GP record, usually held electronically but often supplemented by paper records. Where patients have visited a hospital or clinic, there will usually be an electronic patient administration record; a separate written clinical record in their local hospital; a separate paper record if they have been pregnant; a further separate paper record if they have received mental health treatment; another separate paper record if they have been treated in the sexual health clinic; and a separate record if they have attended Accident and Emergency. Each of these records will be repeated for each hospital or clinic the patient has attended. In addition, the patient may have a community record if receiving long-term care in the community (e.g. physiotherapy). The National Programme for IT has a clear objective to reduce this duplication of diverse records by providing a patient-centred electronic detailed record that spans these areas. As a minimum, this would be within a hospital but there are real benefits when providing a consistent record across a local health community and across the boundaries involved in care pathways for a patient. The overall objective is a single detailed record for an individual patient that is accessible by the GP and by community and local hospital care settings.

**Dictionary of Medicines and Devices (dm+d)** The source of terminology and a common language for medicines and devices used in healthcare.

**Direct credits** The income from the sale of meals to staff, renting accommodation to staff and so on.

**Direct discrimination** Where someone is treated less favourably purely on grounds of marital status, sex, ethnic origin or similar criteria

- which do not affect the individual's ability to perform the job. (*See also* indirect discrimination)
- Disabled (children)** A child is disabled if 'he or she is blind, deaf or dumb or suffers from a mental disorder of any kind or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity or such other disability'.
- Dissent to share** *See* consent to share.
- Disclosure interview (children)** Term sometimes used to indicate an interview with a child, conducted as part of the assessment for suspected sexual abuse. It could be misleading (since it implies, in some people's view, undue pressure on the child to 'disclose') and therefore the latest preferred term is 'investigative interview'.
- Discrimination** May be direct or indirect. For details see separate headings.
- Distributed computing** Term for computer systems in which data and programs are distributed and shared across different computers on a network.
- Dual registered homes** Homes for disabled or elderly people, registered as both a residential care home and a nursing home.
- Duty to investigate (children)** A local authority is under a duty to investigate in a number of situations where they have a 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in [its] area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'.
- Early Adopter Programme** A programme of work involving NHS Connecting for Health supporting the first primary care trusts to implement Summary Care Records for patients in their area. There were six Early Adopter PCTs that made up the Early Adopter Programme. The Early Adopter sites were independently evaluated so that lessons could be learned and business processes tested and refined before Summary Care Records started to roll out across England from 2008.
- European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)** A training course in essential IT skills available to all NHS staff to help them prepare for new ways of working and increase confidence in their use of IT. ECDL is an internationally recognised qualification that has been adopted as the NHS standard. Since replaced by Essential IT Skills.
- Education supervision order (children)** Order which puts a child under the supervision of a designated local education authority.
- Education welfare officer (EWO)** Social work support to children in the context of their schooling. While EWOs' main focus used to

be the enforcement of school attendance, today they perform a wider range of services, including seeking to ensure that children receive adequate and appropriate education and that any special needs are met, and more general liaison between local authority education and social services departments.

**Educational psychologist** A psychology graduate who has had teaching experience and additional vocational training. Educational psychologists perform a range of functions including assessing children's education, psychological and emotional needs, offering therapy and contributing psychological expertise to the process of assessment.

**Electronic mail** *See* email.

**Electronic medical record** A general term describing computer-based patient record systems. It is sometimes extended to include other functions, such as order entry for medications and tests, among other common functions.

**electronic Government Interoperability Framework (eGIF)** Standards used to ensure the security of systems for registering system users and authenticating their identity. The eGIF defines the technical policies and specifications governing information flows across government and the public sector.

**Electronic Patient Record (EPR)** EPR is a catch-all term covering the patient data held in digital form by computers. The National Programme for IT is delivering a number of EPRs. A Summary Care Record (SCR), Detailed Records, Diagnostic Test Order and Results, PACS images and all other clinical data held in computers are examples of EPRs.

**Electronic transmission of prescriptions (ETP)** Enables GPs/prescribers to send prescriptions electronically to pharmacies.

**Email/e-mail/electronic mail** A messaging system available on computer networks, providing users with personal mail boxes from which electronic messages can be sent and received.

**Emergency admission** A patient admitted on the same day that admission is requested.

**Emergency protection order (children)** That which a court can make if it is satisfied that a child is likely to suffer significant harm, or where inquiries are being made with respect to the child and they are being frustrated by the unreasonable refusal of access to the child.

**End of life** Patients are 'approaching the end of life' when they are likely to die within the next 12 months. This category includes those where death is expected within hours or days; those who

have advanced, progressive incurable conditions; those with general frailty and co-existing conditions that mean they are expected to die within 12 months; those at risk of dying from a sudden acute crisis in an existing condition; and those with life-threatening acute conditions caused by sudden catastrophic events. The term can also be applied to extremely premature neonates whose prospects for survival are known to be very poor and patients who are diagnosed as being in a persistent vegetative state for whom a decision to withdraw treatment and care may lead to their death.

**End stage** The final period in the course of a progressive disease leading to a patient's death.

**Enterprise-wide arrangements** Arrangements with key suppliers in the IT industry. Given its size, the National Programme seeks to procure quality IT services from suppliers to the NHS on a greater scale and at a more competitive rate than any single NHS organisation.

**Epidemiology** Study of the distribution and determinants of disease in human populations.

**Epistemology** The philosophical study of knowledge.

**Estates strategy** A written statement of objectives relating to estates management and a plan for meeting those objectives. The strategy should be consistent with the business plan.

**European Directive** A requirement which binds an EU member state, e.g. the one designed to facilitate the free movement of doctors and the mutual recognition of their diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications (Council Directive 93/16/EEC).

**Evaluation** The study of the performance of a service (or element of treatment and care) with the aim of identifying successful and problem areas of activity.

**Evidence-based medicine** A movement advocating the practice of medicine according to clinical guidelines, developed to reflect best practice as captured from a meta-analysis of the clinical literature. (*See also* clinical guideline, meta-analysis and protocol.)

**Existing system provider** A supplier whose system is currently installed within the NHS and related care settings. NHS Connecting for Health's Existing Systems Programme works with these suppliers to make their systems compatible with National Programme systems and services that in turn ought to enable patients to benefit from the new services such as Choose and Book, the Electronic Prescription Service and GP2GP Record Transfer.