

**20th September 2024****BY EMAIL**  
**Our Ref: FOI 2288**Dear ,

Your request for information was received on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2024 and was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please be advised that the Business Services Organisation (BSO) has now completed its search for the information you requested in relation to Encompass IT system and its role in Social Care.

Please find a response as follows.

**I recently came across the Encompass IT system which is currently being rolled out throughout all Trusts and I was curious to know if there are any plans to integrate voluntary and community care such as charities or psychological services?**

Please be advised that the use of encompass outside of core Health & Social Care Organisations requires detailed consideration. While there has been useful engagement and discussion around the use of more condensed functionality for areas such as Independent sector organisations encompass cannot proceed until there is an agreed policy in place, associated Information Governance issues are resolved and contractual and financial arrangements are in place. This work is being led from a Policy perspective by the DHCNI within the Department of Health.

**Also, are there provisions for carers and family members within this system in relation to access and self-education?**

Please be advised that a component of encompass is the 'My Care' service user portal or app, which offers service users controlled, secure access to specific segments of their healthcare records. This access is intended to empower service users, allowing them to take a more active role in managing their health

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and care by providing them with direct access to pertinent information such as appointment details and treatment records.

The My Care portal offers secure access to a subset of data to the service user or their nominated proxy (such as a carer). Access to proxy users is enabled either by an HSC staff member following the relevant Trusts Proxy Policy, or by the service user through the App. Some information is not available for proxies universally and some information is not available depending on the type of proxy access given.

**Finally, how dynamic is the system in relation to multi-disciplinary teams? Has it facilitated decision-making processes for them?**

Please be advised that the encompass programme is a clinical and operational transformation programme with an electronic patient record solution (EPR), supplied by Epic, at its heart. The EPR will provide those working in Acute and Community Care with a single, holistic, appropriate view of a patient or service users' interactions with those sectors. Primary Care professionals will also have appropriate access to the information.

The programme is unique in that it incorporates secondary health care, community nursing, mental health and social care. NI is the first system to adopt this unified approach to an electronic health record at Integrated Care System level and is the first in the UK to incorporate Social Care as part of this endeavour. It is the largest implementation of the Epic Platform in Europe.

The encompass implementation will provide real time data for all professionals providing input multidisciplinary teams and will enable all professionals to share in decision making. The implementation provides transparency, best practice guidance and standardised patient and client pathways across Northern Ireland. Patients and Service users will be able to access the outcomes of these decision making processes through the patient portal "MyCare".

Encompass will change how staff work at all levels across HSCNI, whether clinical, operational or in supporting roles. It will help HSCNI to work more effectively and efficiently through this regional standardisation based on best practice, and will create better experiences for those receiving, using and delivering services.

When fully implemented encompass will make a significant contribution to rebuilding HSC services through greater access to virtual platforms for service users and health professionals; replacement of existing disparate systems and functionality; a single patient record; and enhanced data analytics and reporting to provide accurate, real-time reporting and dashboards.

While multi-disciplinary teams have always worked together to ensure the best possible patient care, the single digital integrated record will further reduce barriers and provide the right level of information to the right people at the right time and streamline the process of supporting patients that have multiple conditions. The holistic record enables staff to share information and communicate easier across multi-disciplinary teams to jointly agree on the best possible treatment plans. The implementation of solutions like My Care will also provide increased involvement of the service user, or their proxy, in decisions about their care.

I hope that the information provided assists you. If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter, as the BSO, along with all other public authorities are not obliged to accept internal review requests after this period has lapsed.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to

Information Governance Manager,  
2 Franklin Street,  
Belfast,  
BT2 8DQ

If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision-making panel, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the BSO has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

You can contact Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office – Northern Ireland  
10th Floor  
Causeway Tower  
9 James Street South  
Belfast  
BT2 8DN

Telephone: 0303 123 1114  
Email: [ni@ico.org.uk](mailto:ni@ico.org.uk)

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However, the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Bailey".

**Karen Bailey**  
Chief Executive