

Media Announcement

Strategic acquisition: System C buys Careflow clinical communications system

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System C has acquired Careflow Connect Ltd, developer of the Careflow mobile communications system for clinicians and care professionals.

Careflow is a secure, mobile communications tool, which provides clinicians with real-time clinical alerts, and allows them to manage referrals and handovers between teams, conduct confidential online patient conversations, and create lists of patients. It reduces a reliance on pagers, phone calls and unsecure internet services such as SMS messaging and instant messaging apps.

The product has been shown to make significant improvements to care quality, efficiency and Trust finances.

To take one example, Careflow allows clinicians to set up alerts and track specific groups of patients such as those with sepsis, to communicate with colleagues in real-time, and take immediate decisions. Prompt intervention is a key factor in successful sepsis treatment. “The Careflow system provides an easy way to get everyone together to make quick clinical decisions. This has fantastic potential for improving patient safety and ensuring the correct accountability,” said Dr Paul Stevens, medical director at East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust.

He added that East Kent had seen a 20% reduction in hospital in-patients developing AKI stage 3 since introducing Careflow for Acute Kidney Injury alerting. “The resulting cuts in length of stay translate to significant cost savings for inpatient care and the potential savings from extending Careflow communication to all areas of the hospital may result in savings amounting to several million pounds a year for the Trust in the future”, he said.

Ian Denley, joint chief executive of System C, described the Careflow acquisition as an important strategic move for the health and social care IT group.

“Careflow is a transformational technology that will completely change the way clinical teams work together.

“We will be integrating Careflow with our complete product set, bringing the benefits of improved workflow and co-ordinated care across the whole of the health and social care arena”, he said.

System C’s plans include integrating Careflow with the company’s Medway EPR software, the VitalPAC range of mobile clinical support solutions, Liquidlogic social care, the CarePlus child health system and Graphnet’s shared record software.

Tight integration with these systems will help improve the safety and efficiency of collaborative patient care, and contribute to a richer and more up-to-date patient record.

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“This is a very exciting time for Careflow. We have already demonstrated how secure, mobile and integrated messaging technology can transform the clinical workflow and lead to safer and more efficient care coordination,” commented Dr Jon Shaw, co-founder of the company.

“By joining the System C family, we will be bringing these benefits to one of the strongest and most complete offerings across the EPR and shared record market.”

Dr Jon Shaw and fellow clinician Dr Jonathan Bloor founded the company, then known as Doctor Communication Solutions, out of personal frustration at the inefficiencies involved in using outdated communications in a clinical environment. They later renamed the company Careflow Connect Ltd to reflect the wide applicability of the technology right across the care continuum.

“Our aim was to provide a modern, integrated, communication platform that can connect, inform and engage everyone involved in a patient’s care”, Dr Shaw explained.

Both Jon Shaw and Jonathan Bloor will be continuing to work with Careflow and as part of the wider System C alliance of companies.

System C and Careflow are both longstanding Microsoft partners and this acquisition will strengthen System C’s presence in the Azure cloud. Suzy Foster, Microsoft UK’s Director of Health & Life Sciences said: “We are delighted by this news. Careflow and System C are key partners that are using Microsoft technology to deliver real innovation to the healthcare sector. Their combination of products and market presence can be expected to make an important impact on healthcare computing.”

Recent research published in BMJ Innovations found that 65% of doctors admitted using unsecure text messages to send patient information while 46% had sent pictures and x-ray results involving patients to colleagues.

One of the key features of Careflow is that it allows professionals to share patient information in a completely secure way, which complies with IG processes and procedures, at the same time as realising the time efficiencies and improved workflows that come with shared communication.

In January this year East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust and Careflow won a joint innovation award for a project bringing real-time communication, alerting and referrals to multi-disciplinary teams across the Trust. The award was part of the KSS AHSN Expo and Awards 2016.