# NHS faces productivity challenges as staff report significant inefficiencies



New research conducted by Appian in collaboration with Coforge has highlighted significant inefficiencies within the National Health Service (NHS), raising concerns about productivity among its staff. The findings, part of the 2025 UK Public Sector Efficiency Survey, reveal that NHS personnel are burdened by an average of five hours of additional work or delays each week, amounting to a staggering total of 7.5 million extra hours across the NHS's workforce of 1.5 million.

The survey, which gathered responses from 1,000 public sector workers, including 242 from the NHS, indicated that 95% of NHS staff encounter process inefficiencies in their roles. Among the most frequently cited challenges were manual and repetitive tasks, the need to navigate multiple legacy systems for data entry or retrieval, and a lack of sufficient training and support. Moreover, 93% of participants reported difficulties in adapting to changes in processes while trying to maintain productivity, particularly in light of evolving service demands and government policies.

The challenges faced by NHS workers are exacerbated by a decline in productivity, as highlighted in the 2024 Darzi Report, which noted a decrease of at least 11.4% since 2019. The report also pointed out a noticeable gap between the NHS and other sectors regarding advancements in digital transformation. A 2025 investigation by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) reported that NHS England experienced 123 critical service outages in the previous year, attributed to outdated technology.

Peter Corpe, the UK Public Sector Industry Leader at Appian, emphasised the urgency of addressing these productivity issues, especially with waiting lists for elective care reaching unprecedented levels. He stated, “The research shows that NHS workers are challenged with legacy technology. Asking them to act as the human glue that binds those systems and technologies together only hinders efficiency further.”

In spite of these obstacles, NHS staff expressed a hopeful outlook regarding the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) and process automation to enhance organisational efficiency. According to the survey, 64% of NHS workers expressed confidence in the ability of AI to streamline workflows, while 69% believed that automating repetitive tasks could simplify their responsibilities and lead to improved outcomes. Among those who had experience with workflow automation tools, 95% reported noticeable benefits, including increased productivity and better communication.

Coforge, a long-standing partner of Appian, with over 350 Appian practitioners on its team, shared insights into the positive transformations that automation can bring. John Speight, Chief Customer Success Officer at Coforge, noted, “Modern AI and automation technologies are transforming complex government processes into streamlined digital workflows.” He asserted that by leveraging these technologies, organisations can significantly reduce processing times and enhance service delivery.

The UK government has recognised the importance of embracing technology in the public sector and has committed to building a modern, secure AI infrastructure to support organisations like the NHS. Corpe remarked on this initiative, stating, “The government is clear on its mission to automate processes in the public sector. AI adoption is no longer a question of if but when. And according to survey respondents, public sector workers are ready for change.”

As the NHS continues to grapple with operational challenges, the integration of AI and automation into its processes presents an opportunity to alleviate inefficiencies and refocus efforts on improving patient care. Corpe concluded, “Every NHS organisation is built on processes and when those processes improve, so do the services delivered.” With this focus on enhancing workflows, there lies the potential for meaningful benefits within the NHS framework.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://blogs.deloitte.co.uk/health/2025/01/nhs-productivity-what-is-the-current-situation-and-how-might-the-new-nhs-plan-tackle-this.html> - This article discusses NHS productivity challenges, including the impact of outdated technology and the need for digital transformation, which aligns with the survey's findings on inefficiencies and the potential of AI and automation.
* <https://www.nhsconfed.org/articles/are-people-getting-less-nhs> - This piece highlights the NHS's struggle with productivity, particularly due to poor patient flow and underinvestment in community services, which exacerbates the inefficiencies faced by NHS staff.
* <https://nhsproviders.org/media/699790/nhs-providers-briefing-on-nhs-productivity.pdf> - This briefing provides insights into the NHS productivity challenge, including the gap in digital transformation and the impact of outdated technology, supporting the survey's emphasis on these issues.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/digital-transformation-of-the-nhs> - This government announcement highlights the commitment to digital transformation in the NHS, aligning with the survey's focus on AI and automation as solutions to productivity challenges.
* <https://www.nhs.uk/news/technology-and-innovation/nhs-app-downloads-top-30-million/> - This article showcases the NHS's efforts in digital transformation, such as the NHS App, which supports the survey's findings on the potential of technology to improve NHS efficiency.