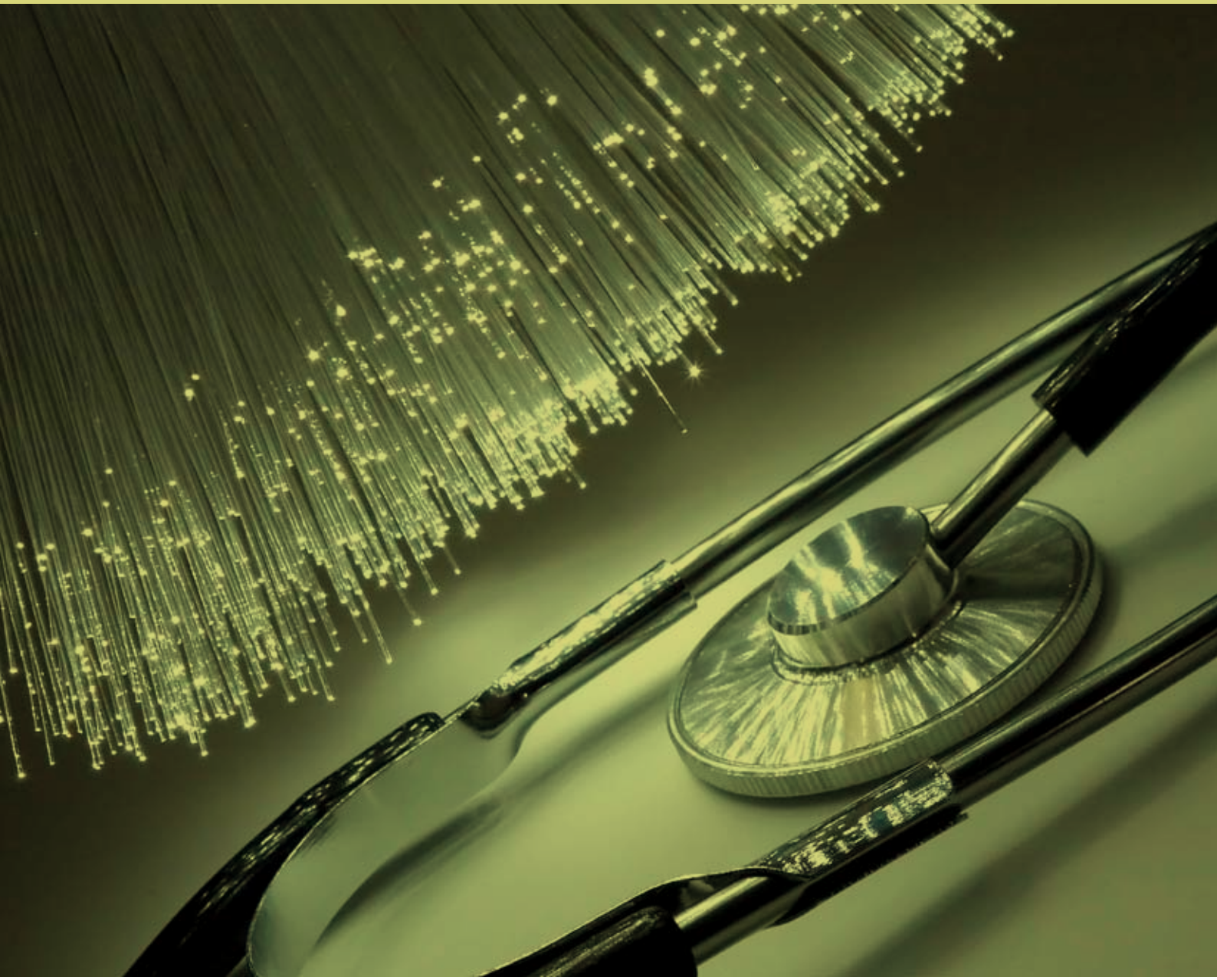

Association of British Healthcare Industries

ENHANCING PATIENT CARE IN THE NHS: THE ROLE OF MEDICAL DEVICES INDUSTRY RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Points

- The UK has a strong medical devices industry base, employing nearly 50,000 people and supporting the employment of many more.
- Action is needed if the UK is to continue to thrive in this area and patients are to realise the full benefit of medical technology.
- The “postcode lottery” is as acute for medical devices as for other forms of treatment.
- Patients must receive the most appropriate medical technology for them in the long term, not just the cheapest.
- Patient safety is the industry’s top priority. However, risk must be balanced with the potential benefits of introducing new and innovative technology in a timely fashion.
- The NHS fails to recognise the full lifetime and wider societal benefits of medical technology.
- Medical devices must be evaluated appropriately.
- The medical devices sector has the potential to further support the UK in the current economic climate.

“The UK has a strong medical devices industry base, employing nearly 50,000 people and supporting the employment of many more.”

UK Medical Devices Sector

The Association of British Healthcare Industries (ABHI) is the industry association for the UK medical devices sector. Our membership is made up of companies that innovate, develop and manufacture the medical technology and devices essential for the NHS.

NeuromatreR © Renishaw

Telescope inspection © Karl Storz Endoscopy

Insync III © Medtronic

Medical devices range from syringes and wheelchairs to pregnancy test kits, pacemakers and X-ray machines. There are about 10,000 different medical devices. Unlike pharmaceuticals, medical devices are generally based on mechanical, electrical and/or materials engineering, and act by a physical means.

In the UK, the medical technology sector:

- Is made up of over 2,000 companies - more than 80% of which are Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs).
- Is trade positive – the UK exports more than it imports.
- Employs nearly 50,000 people.
- Is part of the vibrant life sciences industry which is recognized as a key contributor to the UK economy.

“Medical devices range from syringes and wheelchairs to pregnancy test kits, pacemakers and X-ray machines. There are about 10,000 different medical devices.”

Patient Safety

Medical devices are regulated by the European Medical Devices Directives (MDD). A medical device cannot be marketed until it has regulatory approval, which is indicated by a CE mark. It is essential that, whilst patient safety is maintained, the regulation of medical devices remains proportionate and not so restrictive as to discourage innovation.

Allyn MicroView™ Otoscope © Welch

ABHI recommendations:

- Action is taken to preserve the current regulatory regime and resist changes that would impact on innovation without benefitting patient safety.
- The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is encouraged to advocate proportionate and appropriate regulation, including proposals for the approval of new technologies which ensure that patients benefit in a timely manner. To facilitate this, the MHRA should appoint an expert lead for medical devices to enable the agency to better influence EU policy and global regulatory reform.
- Device traceability is a key element to improve patient safety. Therefore, the Department of Health's report '*Coding for Success*' on auto identification of technology should be fully implemented.

Patient Access

As acknowledged in the NHS Next Stage Review, UK patients are late to enjoy the full benefits of new technologies and, furthermore, the NHS fails to recognise their full lifetime and wider societal value. This includes benefits realised in education, the workplace and the provision of domestic and social care. Industry also provides high value training and clinical support without which many devices would not be available to NHS patients.

Patients should receive the most appropriate, cost effective technology for them in the long term, not merely the cheapest to acquire and it is of paramount importance that NHS procurement processes support this.

Medical technology must be assessed in an appropriate manner. This assessment must be based on the best available and most relevant evidence and take into account the rapid iteration of device development and the resulting continuous improvement. Assessment must also be tailored for devices and not merely use methodologies developed for pharmaceuticals.

RENASYS™ GO © Smith & Nephew

ABHI recommendations:

- The way the NHS buys medical technology should support the clinician's ability to deliver the most appropriate care for an individual patient. Significant clinician involvement in the purchase of medical technology must be formalised.
- The NHS must plan ahead for new technologies, to ensure that patients benefit from the latest technologies as soon as possible. The NHS budget cycle currently disincentivises early adoption of new technology. Financial planning must allow for strategic investment.
- NHS payment systems (including the national tariff under "Payment by Results") should be flexible enough to accommodate and encourage access to new and emerging technologies.
- Assessment and evaluation must take account of the characteristics of medical technologies and utilise all appropriate evidence. This should include their wider societal benefits.

Contribution to the UK Economy

The medical devices industry makes a significant contribution to the UK economy, directly employing around 50,000 people and supporting an additional 250,000 indirectly.

Medical technology companies undertake significant amounts of manufacturing and research and development in the UK. The industry has been affected by the current economic climate, however appropriate business assistance would ensure that the sector continues to thrive and contribute to the UK economy.

ABHI recommendations:

- There must be recognition of the economic contribution that the medical devices industry makes to the UK economy. The sector must be included in official strategies addressing economic issues.
- The 2,000 SMEs in the medical technology sector must also be included in government assistance plans for businesses. In particular, the lack of capital for companies to develop and grow must be addressed to ensure the future of the sector.

> ***"The 2,000 SMEs in the medical technology sector must be included in government assistance plans for business. In particular, the lack of capital for companies to develop and grow must be addressed to ensure the future of the sector."***

Ethical Business Practice

The ABHI Code of Business Practice is a condition of membership for organisations joining the Association. The Code sets out minimum standards of business practice that member organisations are expected to adhere to.

ABHI Code of Business Practice

ABHI recommendation:

- Healthcare professionals should be encouraged to work with industry to ensure full understanding of, and alignment with, these ethical standards.

For more information about the medical technology sector, please contact laura.collister@abhi.org.uk

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Association of British Healthcare Industries
111 Westminster Bridge Road
London SE1 7HR

T (020) 7960 4360
F (020) 7960 4361
enquiries@abhi.org.uk
www.abhi.org.uk