



Changing the future of healthcare

How we helped bring quality to health and wellness apps

The public will be able to use health and wellness apps to proactively manage their healthcare needs, and use their own data and personal information to access the products, services and interventions they need. An app is a software application that can be used on a mobile device. A health and wellness app can contribute to any aspect of the physical, mental or social wellbeing of the user.

Challenge

In recent years, an increasing number of new health and wellness apps have been launched in the UK. An absence of agreed principles for app developers to follow has made it difficult for them to provide assurances that their apps are fit for purpose. This has led to a lack of confidence amongst healthcare professionals and end users.

With any new technology, defined quality criteria and agreed terms and definitions can help promote wide acceptance and trust with end users.

The challenge in this instance was to provide a set of principles for app developers to follow through an app project life cycle, so that healthcare professionals, patients and the public trust their products and services.

The Office for National Statistics projects the number of people aged 75 and over is set to rise by 89.3%, to 9.9 million, by mid-2039^[1]. This is placing additional financial and operational requirements on the NHS. UK healthcare organizations are therefore looking to new technologies, products and services to help them continue to offer high standards of healthcare.

[1] Office for National Statistics. Available from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/nationalpopulationprojections/2015-10-29/pdf>



Solution

Innovate UK worked with BSI to develop agreed guidelines and good practice for app developers in the form of a BSI PAS.

[PAS 277](#) helps developers make better apps. It defines good practice and recommends an approach to testing which will improve the quality of the information provided by the app. It helps app providers focus on ensuring the advice being offered by the app is clinically accurate and has increased the rigour of testing, for both clinical accuracy and usability of the app.

During the development of the PAS, BSI built an independent steering group with representatives from organizations with expertise in app development, healthcare professionals, patient groups and professional bodies. This sharing of expertise and knowledge allows for an agreed single approach based on consensus within the group. The broad range of views from the Steering Group and those received from the public consultation ensure the final document promotes best practice in the UK as a whole.

“If developers follow the process in PAS 277, 90% of them will make a better app and you are much more likely to make an app that will help people.”

Hope Caton,
Founder, Healthy Games, developer of Cigbreak

Outcome

The recommendations in this PAS help developers to create wide reaching innovative health apps, which will help build on the UK's expertise in the digital area and its global presence in the health technology sector.

Defined quality criteria and guidance for health and wellness app developers will allow health care professionals to see which apps have followed the recommendations for developers. Moreover, it will help them to understand what good looks like for an app to be used in the healthcare sector.

About Innovate UK

Innovate UK is the UK's innovation agency. Innovate UK works with people, companies and partner organizations to find and drive the science and technology innovations that will grow the UK economy - delivering productivity, new jobs and exports. The aim of Innovate UK is to keep the UK globally competitive in the race for future prosperity.

Why BSI?

BSI lead the world in standards and our trademark Kitemark™ is recognized globally as a symbol of quality and safety. For a standard to be accepted and adopted by Governments, Industry, trade associations and businesses of all sizes it must be built on consensus and credibility. The PAS is developed through a rigorous consensus based process, evolved by BSI over more than 100 years.

Our aim

We aim to improve the quality and safety of products, services and systems by enabling the creation of standards and encouraging their use.

New standards are being developed all the time as new sectors, markets and business models emerge. The sooner these standards are in place, the faster and more efficiently growth occurs.

Take the lead in your sector

Learn more about what your business will gain by sponsoring a PAS, visit:
bsigroup.com/pas

Or get in touch with us to discuss creating a PAS today!



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