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16th December 2021

Dear Russell,

Please find attached our response to your letter dated the 26th November 2021 in which you asked for our views on the role of Digital Health & Care Wales in delivering a digital-ready health & care workforce.

Answers to the questions are provided in the accompanying document.

If you require any further information, please let me know.

Kind regards,

Professor Helen Thomas
CEO
Digital Health & Care Wales

One of the seven key themes which underpins the joint strategy: <u>A Healthier Wales: our workforce strategy for health and social care</u> is to build a digitally-ready workforce by 2030. To achieve this, the health and social care workforce will need to be fully supported.

During the evidence session, HEIW told us that they are working with partners, including Digital Health and Care Wales, to ensure that the infrastructure is aligned with expectations and ambitions. In terms of training, HEIW noted that this work included:

- *A digital skills and capabilities framework, including a self-assessment tool, which is being piloted with allied health professional workers to allow them to assess where they are and what sort of training that they need.*
- *Other training, which we were told was being "rolled out and delivered through our partner, DHCW".*

1. **How are the workforce's current digital skills and capabilities and the future skills and capabilities requirements being assessed? What other methods are being considered in addition to the self-assessment toolkit being piloted with allied health professionals?**

- The digital skills and capabilities framework, including self-assessment tools, is being taken forward by HEIW as part of their digital readiness programme. This will provide the national capability to test the digital skills of the NHS Workforce through a self-assessment, and once completed will signpost individuals to suitable resources to improve their skills.

- DHCW are supportive of the model and have been involved in the initiation workshop which took place in July 2021. This work aligns with the associated packages of work which Welsh Government has prioritised including:
  - The priorities of Digital Communities Wales, funded by Welsh Government, on ensuring patients and the public can access digital services in health and care settings

  - An independent review of the digital and data profession within NHS Wales, known as the Digital Workforce Review. The Review is being undertaken by the Federation of Informatics Professionals (FEDIP) and supported by DHCW to put in place a shared definition and common framework for the profession and undertake analysis into the key areas of demand which need to be addressed in the short, medium and long term.

- Welsh Government approved the use of the Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) Plus' framework in December 2021 as an outcome of the Review's first phase. DDaT is a framework developed by the Government Digital Service and covers a wide range of technology roles such as software developers and data scientists. The 'plus' element will reflect the additional aspects which are found in health and care settings and not included in the main DDaT framework, such as

clinical coding and informatics. Other areas such as Cyber Security are being developed by UK Government's recently established UK Cyber Security Council (CSC) and DHCW, HEIW and Welsh Government officials will work alongside the UK CSC to ensure that these skills and competencies are also signposted to within the framework.

- National programmes and projects where DHCW are the lead organisation also consider the skills requirements of the workforce in their work. For example, within the Welsh Nursing Care Record (WNCR) programme, the team carried out baseline assessments on the digital skills and capabilities of the workforce, which were then considered in the planning and implementation of the programme, and actions such as providing training has addressed any identified skills gaps. In addition, DHCW undertakes an organisational wide annual training need analysis which identified continued and new priorities for training investment, and these are facilitated as part of the organisation's annual training activities

2. Could you explain your role in meeting the training needs identified through such skills and capabilities assessments?

- Once the self-assessment tools are launched, it is expected that they will be used prior to implementation of any new digital programme to assess the readiness of the workforce. Tailored support will then be put in place, based on an analysis of those results.

DHCW already provide access to training, some examples are below:
- We have provided our teams with on-line technical training materials
- As part of our Office 365 rollout, we have provided relevant on-line learning materials to all users in NHS Wales
- We have funded a number of specific training courses for DHCW staff

2a. Are you confident that the right training opportunities are available to support the health and social care workforce to become digitally ready?

- There is still further work to be done in this area, as the potential for digital transformation over the next few years is great. There are a number of training courses and support available to increase digital and data skills, some examples include:

  - A review by HEIW of postgraduate qualifications relating to digital;

  - A joint review of health informatics apprenticeships in NHS Wales by DHCW and HEIW, in partnership with wider users and providers;

- DHCW, in partnership with the Wales Institute for Digital Information (WIDI), are supporting existing staff and newly employed apprentices with study opportunities, funded through Welsh Government initiatives. These part-time qualifications range from level 3 course in Health Informatics through to Digital degrees;

- DHCW are also partnering with a number of external training agencies which provide a wide range of professional vocational courses that could be relevant to DHCW's staff across Wales. Professional courses available include both technical and non-technical subjects and offer a range of qualification levels;

- These training opportunities will be collated together as part of the digital capabilities self-assessment tool, where users will be able to easily find information on the range and scale of courses available;

- DHCW, HEIW, and Welsh Government are proactively working together to plan how the workforce elements of the proposed refresh to the 2015 digital and data strategy for health and care in Wales *'Informed Health and Care'* can be supported by a workforce oversight group. It is suggested that this group will provide advice and leadership in relation to the digital workforce;

- Cyber resilience is a key challenge within health settings and falls under the UK Government Network and Information System (NIS) Regulations. Welsh Government in collaboration with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has created a development session for NHS Wales Boards which is being rolled out across NHS Wales organisations. The feedback to date has been extremely positive.

- DHCW has facilitated online training on Cyber Security via the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) platform.

- DHCW develop and supply a range of training content and support on national digital systems to NHS provider organisations, with responsibility for implementation sitting with the provider organisation.

Investment in digital infrastructure and a digital ready workforce
One of the areas of concern highlighted in written evidence from stakeholders to inform the oral evidence session was investment in digital infrastructure and the development of a digital ready workforce. Concerns were also raised regarding the lack of financial detail and clarity associated with the strategy.

3. **Please provide details of what assessments have been made of the additional investment (financial and staff time) required for**

    i)   **digital infrastructure and**

ii) **training to ensure that the health and social care workforce is prepared and able to adopt new technologies and harness innovation.**

- The All-Wales infrastructure Programme (AWIP) builds on the findings of the all-Wales independent review into IT infrastructure, completed in February 2020, and aims to develop common standards and principles across NHS Wales for all aspects of digital infrastructure such as the use of cloud, digital identity management and digital networks. These principles and standards will be underpinned by detailed roadmaps to support digital professionals to implement them. Aligning security and information governance are important to making sure users can utilise digital services safely and efficiently.

- The Digital Workforce Review has recently completed its first phase, identifying a framework to define and analyse the digital workforce. This will be followed by an assessment of the size and makeup of the profession in NHS Wales, which will report by March 2022. The social care workforce will be scoped in phase three, and a workforce plan to identify actions to support the digital workforce in the short, medium and long term will be completed by the end of the summer term.

- In addition to funding the Digital Workforce Review, Welsh Government through the Digital Priorities Investment Fund (DPIF) are funding the following activity:

  o Programme support for the digital skills and capabilities framework programme run by HEIW;

  o Training on the importance of user-centred design of services is being developed by the Centre for Digital Public Services (CDPS) to support NHS Wales Boards;

  o Welsh Government officials are working with cyber security leads across NHS Wales and the NHS Wales Cyber Resilience Unit to secure licences for all NHS Wales staff to gain a foundational understanding of cyber resilience to aid in keeping systems safe from attempted attacks such as phishing;

  o In addition, via the NHS Wales Cyber Resilience Unit, dedicated training for clinicians and cyber security leads in NHS Wales is being developed to support health settings in understanding their obligations under the NIS Regulations;

  o Working with NHS Wales partners, the University of South Wales (USW) has launched a Digital Transformation Intensive Learning Academy in December 2021 to develop leaders in health and social care to deliver more effective

and efficient services to patients. This is part-funded by Welsh Government via the DPIF and aims to provide a range of flexible courses that include postgraduate and doctorate level opportunities covering Leading Digital Transformation;

o The DPIF also funds Digital Communities Wales; a programme led by the Wales Co-operative Centre to reduce digital exclusion in Wales so everyone has the skills, access and motivation to be a confident user of digital technology, which will be vital as digital technologies become more widely adopted in health and care settings.

Smaller health and social care providers
HEIW acknowledged during the evidence session that experience across health and social care of access to IT and digital technologies is mixed, and added that:
"Obviously COVID has accelerated the deployment of digital approaches, and we've got to be really sure that we don't leave people behind as we rush to grab the latest bit of kit or technology."

4. **Please outline your views on the level of risk that smaller health or social care providers could be left behind when it comes to digital transformation compared to larger NHS organisations, and how this risk is being mitigated**

- Typically, the risk can relate to the investment ask in both monetary and staff capacity/skillset terms – smaller organisations are unlikely to have access to inhouse expertise. At a time where significant resource is allocated to covid response as well as maintaining core business activity the ring fencing of time to support transformational endeavours can be problematic. Whilst the case for financial investment can be justified on a strategic and benefits basis there remains a risk to these smaller organisations in terms of manpower and skillset to drive change. A mitigating action could be the establishment of a Health and Social Care Digital Change Hub/Network to provide the necessary expertise, support and guidance along the transformation journey. This would aid in embedding and sustaining the relevant skills for the required pace of change.

- From a digital transformation perspective the Digital Priorities Investment Fund includes primary and community care services, which are managed as part of a whole system approach.

- Of note Digital Health & Care Wales provides a fully managed and supported service to general practice including desktop and printing services, and the Choose Pharmacy programme has driven wider adoption of digital services in community pharmacy across Wales.

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- For smaller social care providers, such as independent residential care providers, the emphasis is on targeted support rather than on managed services. For example, during the pandemic this has included devices to support digital inclusion, through Digital Communities Wales.

- The Welsh Government's policy approach is based on open digital architecture, common standards, interoperable systems, and a user-centred design approach. There is also a shift to all-Wales services hosted in the cloud and delivered through apps and websites, which has been reflected in the digital response to the pandemic (for example, contact tracing, vaccine delivery, test booking and covid pass services). This will help digital transformation in smaller organisations firstly by making common services more accessible to them, and secondly by enabling third party services to connect to the national digital architecture. Welsh Government also provides general support to businesses to encourage digital transformation.

- Investment in the digital professional workforce in Wales will strengthen whole system capacity, as people move between sectors and employers throughout their careers. For example, DHCW and the Digital Intensive Learning Academy will support communities of practice, and the Digital Health Ecosystem Wales supports industry engagement targeted at smaller businesses. These activities strengthen our whole system capacity and benefit smaller health or social care organisations as well as larger NHS organisations.