Q&A
The future of digital skills development in adult social care event
10 March 2022

This document provides responses to questions asked in the Slido chat, including questions the speakers and facilitators were unable to answer on the day.

1. Request for copies of slides/event materials

Slides from the event have now been shared by Skills for Care. A recording of the event is available to view on the Skills for Care website. The executive summary of both the digital technology and digital skills reviews is available on the Ipsos Mori website, as are the full findings of the digital skills review.

2. Questions/comments relevant to case study presentations

Care City's E-Care app trains domiciliary and care home staff in remote monitoring, see: Google and Apple. Care City have also brought together stories from their work in care in A Healthy Living: Four stories from the future of care.

There was a question for the Nuffield Trust on the development of portable clinical measurement kits.

Nuffield Trust can be contacted directly at: lucina.rolewicz@nuffieldtrust.org.uk

There was a question for Mencap about how the 'What Matters Most app' works for people where English is not their first language, or people with dyslexia.

Mencap has told us that it has plans to improve the accessibility of the app and has set up a user group to ensure areas of accessibility are prioritised. It will also be making reasonable adjustments for colleagues based on locally assessed need. Mencap has a suite of guides on accessibility for different devices as there are different extensions available. Mencap can be contacted directly for further information at: scott.markham@mencap.org.uk

3. Questions/comments on training courses

There was positive feedback on the Digital Champions programme Skills for Care has been running with National Care Forum, with an expression of interest to attend in the future.

This course is currently being evaluated and decisions on re-running the course or a similar programme will be taken once the evaluation has concluded.

It was suggested that digital basics online training events would be useful for the sector.

Facilitators shared that Barclays Digital Eagles will be running a digital basics introduction session with Skills for Care on Wednesday, 30 March at 10:00. Details for signing up can be found on the Skills for Care website.

4. **Questions/comments on incorporation of digital skills within adult social care recruitment, qualifications and career progression**

A question was asked about whether there is scope to develop a training framework which incorporates digital/ technology, so people see digital as 'everybody's business'.

The NHS Transformation Directorate has been working with support from Skills for Care to develop a new digital skills framework for the sector, to help the workforce and employers understand the relevance of digital for their roles and career development. More information about this can be found in Skills for Care's presentation slides. This framework will be published shortly.

A question was asked about how the incorporation of digital skills within qualifications would be implemented.

Alongside developing the new digital skills framework, the NHS Transformation Directorate is exploring options for how best incorporate digital skills within qualification criteria and/or supporting training. Over the next three years, care providers will also be able to access additional training on digital skills as part of commitments set out in the recent White Paper, *People at the Heart of Care.*

A question was asked about how to ensure job applicants without digital skills are not overlooked for roles or promotion.

Panellists at the event discussed this question. You can listen back to the recording from 2hrs 12 minutes to hear the discussion.

A question was asked about where the budget for adult social care digital skills training will sit (in health or local authorities).

The NHS Transformation Directorate will engage with stakeholders, including the Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) and local authorities, to ensure the learning offer is as accessible as possible.

5. **Questions/comments on investing in digital technologies**

Participants asked where they could find more information about sector specific technology.

The Digital Social Care website offers advice and support to the sector on technology and data protection and has a range of helpful resources. This includes examples of specific technologies in the success stories section of the website, and an Assured Supplier List for

digital social care record solutions. This service will continually expand its advice and support, for example hosting the upcoming digital skills framework.

6. Questions/comments on driving cultural change

Questions were asked around how to help drive culture change in support of digital working and shift the discussion from the 'threat' of technology to opportunities. Other questions were asked about how to develop systems that measure the non-financial benefits of technology.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for urgent digital transformation in all areas of our lives. The digital skills review found that 90% of care providers said they would continue to use digital technology in the same way as during the pandemic. The importance of culture change was referenced in the review research, with a recommendation for a programme of myth busting, reassurance and communicating the benefits of technology.

In support of this, the digital leadership and digital champions training pilots, funded by the NHS Transformation Directorate and discussed in Skill for Care's presentation, have included training on peer support and managing change. The NHS Transformation Directorate is exploring options for further extending this support as part of the scaled-up digital learning offer outlined in the White Paper.

At commissioner level, the Local Government Association has been delivering a range of connected opportunities, such as masterclasses, coaching and communities of practice to support councils create momentum and new ways of thinking about care technologies.

As part of the £150 million funding commitment for digitisation also set out in the White Paper, plans were outlined to "test ideas [for digital in social care], scale those where there is proven benefit [and] build the case for change". Highlighting opportunities and building the case for change at a national level will in turn help to support culture change elsewhere in the sector.

A question was asked if CQC are involved in the discussions about embracing digital.

The NHS Transformation Directorate is working closely with the CQC on its plans for adult social care digitisation. Separately, a delegate at the event also commented that they were "rolling out a digital care system in our company right now and CQC are on board with what [they] are doing."

7. Questions/comments on technology and time to care

There was a question about the risk of technology reducing the length of a visit and what impact that would have on care.

Panellists at the event discussed this question. You can listen back to the recording from 1hrs 52 minutes to hear the discussion.

The ability of care workers to access training is important and we recognise the need to consider the link to ongoing capacity issues. There is growing evidence that technology can help free up staff time, including the potential for flexible and blended approaches to learning, such as online materials and courses.

The People at the Heart of Care White Paper published in December outlined the government's strategy for the workforce, backed by at least £500 million investment to develop and support the workforce over the next three years. We will work closely with adult social care leaders and staff as well as people who draw on care on how best to take forward these policies.

Questions were asked around digital poverty and bring your own devices policies.

Digital poverty, and specifically digital exclusion, was highlighted in chapters 6 and 10 of the review report as a barrier to building digital skills across the workforce, as well as for people who draw on care and unpaid carers.

The NHS Transformation Directorate recognises this challenge and funded projects to improve access to hardware to meet acute needs, for example, with the provision of tablets and video calling devices during the COVID-19 pandemic. Longer term, plans are underway to support ICSs to put in place sustainable routes for care providers, the workforce and individuals at risk of digital exclusion to access the technology they need. We will support care providers to put in place the right foundations for digital access across the sector; working to upgrade care homes internet connections, and make portable digital devices e.g laptops and tablets, more accessible to care providers.

Where options for supporting access to technology include 'bring your own device' approaches, supporting guidance has been published including on the Digital Social Care website.

Panellists also discussed bring your own device policies during the event discussion. You can listen back to the recording from 2hrs 7minutes to hear the discussion.

8. Questions on the digital transformation programme

A question was asked about how existing technology projects can access the £150 million in funding.

As set out in the White Paper, over the next three years at least £150 million in funding will be invested to support digitisation across the social care system. Part of this will include work with ICSs to provide match funding and implementation support, to reduce the financial barriers for care providers and ensure their digital transformation is sustainable.This work will include testing, and recommending proven technologies for scale. Being able to capture and evidence benefits will be key for the success of any technology project.

A question was asked about plans to involve members of the workforce in the design, development, implementation and safety of digital systems.

Further work to support the workforce to become more involved in the development of digital technologies is currently in planning, but may include expanding access to existing groups and networks, such as the Digital Social Care Rapid Reference Group, where there will be future opportunities to help shape digital projects.

The NHS Transformation Directorate will also be working closely with Digital Social Care, Skills for Care and other partners to explore other options going forward.

Useful resources

- Digital social care newsletter sign up: Newsletter Signup - Digital Social Care
- Digital Social Care digital skills page: Digital Skills & Training - Digital Social Care
- Skills for Care digital page: Digital technology in social care (skillsforcare.org.uk)
- NHS Transformation Directorate bulletin: NHS England » Transformation bulletin