

DIGITAL LITERACY Executive Summary

A scoping study to explore the digital skills of NHSScotland Estates and Facilities staff



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Analysed the individual and focus groups interviews and wrote final report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

All staff within the Health and Social Care sector need to become more digitally skilled to be better able to deliver technology enabled care in the future. The potential of digital technology to improve the efficiency and co-ordination of health and social care might act as a driver for transformational change at all levels and across all roles in the Health and Social Care workforce.

During 2017, we collaborated with a number of NHSScotland health boards to explore the digital literacy of staff working in Estates and Facilities roles and to ascertain what might be needed for them to become digitally capable and digitally enabled in the future.

Estates and Facilities staff work in a range of healthcare settings and, with approximately 19,000 staff working across Scotland, this is one of the largest workforce segments in the health service.

We collected information in relation to staff access to, and use of, digital technology in the workplace and at home, current skill levels, digital work requirements and learning needs regarding new and existing technologies.



“I help my colleagues and friends with any IT tasks or issues.”

Arjun - Catering Assistant (Band 2)*

*These illustrative case studies are representative of the research and its key themes.

Method

A mixed-method design resulted in 38 questionnaire responses, 15 interviews and 4 focus groups across 5 different job families.

Findings

Access to the internet was commonly via a shared computer so it was challenging for staff to become digitally skilled at work or to access information about learning, development or new roles which were often posted on their local intranets. It was noted that without access to technology and the underpinning digital skills, much time was spent undertaking paper-based administration.

Organisations did not have a shared understanding of role requirements in terms of digital skills and use of technology within the workplace. The need for digital skills and usage of technology was not commonly found in job descriptions or person specifications.

Many of the Estates and Facilities staff we spoke to were digitally connected at home and owned a range of devices including smartphones, tablets, and laptops. The majority, however, including supervisors, were underconfident about their digital capabilities in the workplace and were unable to engage with digital technology in that environment.

Despite being disconnected from digital technology at work to varying degrees, this group of staff were willing to enhance their digital capabilities if they were given sufficient support and encouragement.

Recommendations

The following recommendations relate to the key findings from the report and will help to build a sustainable inclusive learning culture which harnesses the power of digital technology.

Leaders and Managers should:

- > provide all staff with ready access to technology within the workplace.
- > foster staff commitment to the process of digital transformation by explaining the need for change in terms of the benefits of technology and how this will help staff in their everyday work.
- > embrace and promote new ways of working which harness the power and efficiency of technology. These new ways of working have the potential to engage and empower Estates and Facilities staff to embrace innovation and associated technology.
- > consider role requirements and usage of technology throughout the employee life-cycle. This may include considering role entry requirements, updating job descriptions and discussing individual learning needs in relation to digital skills, for example, during Personal Development Review and Planning conversations.
- > involve Estates and Facilities staff in the design and use of technology in the workplace so that systems are geared to the needs of the worker and the needs of the work.
- > consider prioritising time for learning for staff across all job families, particularly those who are digitally excluded.
- > work in partnership to design and deliver differentiated digital skills programmes to take account of wider learning issues and to build confidence in staff in accessing and using technology.

Next steps

- The report, its findings and recommendations will be shared with stakeholders for comment.
- NES will continue to work in partnership to co-create a development programme entitled “Digital Matters” which helps staff gain and build upon their core digital skills.
- NES will provide leadership for, and work in partnership to, co-create development solutions which address digital skills at all levels from entry to senior leadership level.
- NES will work collaboratively with other public-sector agencies to support and champion the delivery of the Digital Health and Social Care Strategy.
- NES will conduct further research in to digital skills and capability of the health and social care workforce where evidence gaps exist regarding digital usage.

“I want to help staff with their IT skills. However, I am not confident myself.”

Michelle - Domestic Supervisor (Band 3)*



*These illustrative case studies are representative of the research and its key themes.

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- > **iMatter Leads**, NHSScotland
- > **e-KSF Leads**, NHSScotland



“I don’t really use much technology within the workplace but I’d like to learn.”

Jessica - Linen Assistant (Band 2)*

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