Equality Impact Assessment Report

Title: Building Digital and Data Capabilities Programme

Organisation: NHS Education for Scotland

Directorate or department: People & Culture, Digitally Enabled Workforce

Date report completed: 29/08/2025

Introduction

Equality Impact Assessment is a process that helps us to consider how our work will meet the three parts of the Public Sector Equality Duty (eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations). It is an important way to mainstream equality into our work and to help us:

- Take effective action on equality.
- Develop better policy, technology, education, and learning and workforce planning solutions for health, social care and a wide range of our partners, stakeholders and employees.
- Demonstrate how we have considered equality in making our decisions.

The aim of this EQIA is to ensure that all activities, networks and resources created or taking place under the banner of the **Building Digital and Data Capabilities Programme** are inclusive, accessible and equitable. The assessment seeks to identify and eliminate any potential barriers to participation, particularly for individuals from protected characteristic groups, while promoting diversity and inclusion.

Work Covered by the EQIA

The **Building Digital and Data Capabilities Programme** (the Programme) is commissioned by the Scottish Government and COSLA to support the delivery of Scotland's Digital Health and Care Strategy, Data Strategy, and Care in the Digital Age delivery plan. The Digitally Enabled Workforce (DEW) team within NHS Education for Scotland are the delivery partner for this Programme.

The aims of this Programme are to provide accessible, equitable and inclusive learning activities, networks and resources that support the development of digital, data and leadership capabilities across the entire health and social care workforce in Scotland (NHS, Local Authorities, Health and Social Care Partnerships, Social Work, Social Care, Care and Support Providers, Housing, Third and Independent Sectors).

The work being delivered under this Programme is extensive but can be roughly grouped into three workstreams:

- Digital leadership
- Digital and data skills for the wider workforce
- Digital and data skills for the specialist workforce

Digital Leadership

Leadership in the digital age is about more than just managing technology, it's about guiding people through change, fostering a culture of innovation, and building the capabilities needed for success. The Programme emphasises the concept that 'leaders' can develop at any level within an organisation, and that anyone can be a 'digital leader'. It is also fundamental to the success of the Programme that different voices and perspectives on digital leadership are heard and seen. The key elements that make up the Digital Leadership workstream are:

- The **Exploring Digital Leadership Webinar Series** – This regular series of webinars is open to anyone, in any role, who has an interest in the subject areas covered. The live sessions are held online but are recorded so are available on catch-up for those unable to attend the live sessions, or who prefer not to participate in online sessions. The series organisers strive to include speakers from diverse organisations and perspectives, and to cover a wide range of topics. For example, recent webinars have included 'Designing for Social Good with Glasgow City Council', 'Leading Digital Inclusion in Health and Social Care with the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations', and 'Leading the Design and Delivery of Scotland's first Digital Hospital'.

- The **Digital Health and Care Leadership Programme (DLP)** is a fully funded programme supporting participants to develop the strategic leadership skills required to influence the use of digital solutions in health and social care delivery, maximising the potential for these to bring benefits for both citizens and the workforce. A central focus is bringing individuals and teams from across the health and social care ecosystem together, increasing participants' awareness of others' perspectives and challenges, and identifying areas where collaboration and knowledge sharing between organisations, and across sector boundaries, can improve service delivery.

- The **Leading Digital Transformation in Health and Care for Scotland PGCert/PGDip/MSc** – This postgraduate-level study opportunity, delivered in partnership with the University of Edinburgh, builds on foundations introduced by the DLP and is designed to support current and future leaders in developing the strategic and practical skills required to drive, deliver and embed digital transformation. The programme offers a unique chance to gain a recognised qualification while actively contributing to digital change in organisations and across the wider health and social care system in Scotland. Cohort 1 participants were fully funded for both the Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) and Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip), while subsequent cohorts are fully funded for the PGCert, which ensures the opportunity for study and development at this level remains equally accessible to individuals from all types and sizes of organisations across the sector.

- **Digital Mindset Sessions** – These provide free learning resources and training events to board members and senior leaders (directors, associate directors, heads of service, service managers, etc) across health and social care in Scotland.

Digital and Data Skills for the Wider Workforce

This wide-ranging workstream is tasked with developing and promoting resources that can help ensure all health and social care staff possess the essential digital and data skills they need to do their jobs. This is done through the provision of quality, tailored, digital and data capability learning and development resources on accessible platforms (all free, all open access).

Digital skills is one of the 3 key pillars of digital inclusion. By supporting staff to develop their own digital and data capability the Programme is helping to ensure that members of this workforce are not only able to deliver the best possible health and care services, but also to fully participate as citizens in a digital society.

Wider workforce resources that have been developed so far include:

- The **Digital and Data Capability Framework** and accompanying **Self-assessment Tool** – These have been created to support the development of digital capabilities for everyone working in health and social care in Scotland, identifying the skills, knowledge and behaviours that are essential to allow this workforce to do their jobs, irrespective of their role. For organisations that are unable to provide staff with access to suitable digital devices/connectivity, or where current digital capability is low, the framework self-assessment is available as a printable document that can be used as a first step on the road to developing digital and data capabilities.

- The **Digital and Data Resources Hub** – This open-access Turas Learn site hosts free learning resources for the development of digital and data skills, centralising and simplifying access to existing resources, removing the need for duplication across the sector. The resources are quality controlled and curated to provide learning content in a range of different formats to suit different learning styles, with clear indicators for duration, format, and intended audience level.

- The **Thriving in a Digital Age Pathways** – These offer learning resources and reflective activities to help broaden knowledge of key digital and data topics. The Digital and Data Pathway is intended to develop understanding of fundamental digital health and care concepts and is suitable for anyone, working at any level, across the sectors. There are also topic specific pathways that provide more focussed learning on Cyber Security and Artificial Intelligence. Again, these pathways are all open to anyone and free to use.

- **Digital Champions** – Workplace Digital Champions are an invaluable resource for organisations embedding digital change. The Programme has developed freely available and open access resources and networks to support organisations across the sector to identify, engage and empower digital champions.

- The **Click & Grow Network** – This is a Microsoft Teams community that welcomes and supports those looking to develop their digital skills from the ground up. The network

allows users to ask questions and get advice, share experiences, and find out about free resources, events and training that will help develop digital capabilities. This is a safe and inclusive space, open to anyone from across the health and social care sector in Scotland, where those lacking in confidence are encouraged to participate, engage, and develop.

- The **Professional Development Award in Technology Enabled Care (PDA)** is a fully funded SQF level 7 award that has been developed in partnership with employers and industry representatives from across health and social care in Scotland. Technology Enabled Care (TEC) supports citizens to live, work, participate, and flourish within society. By upskilling the workforce in the use of TEC this Programme is contributing to citizens' equitable access to health and care services and societal inclusion through enhanced access and opportunities. The recently launched **Technology Enabled Care Module** has been adapted from PDA content and serves as an introductory overview of the key TEC concepts. It provides bite-sized tasters of the topics covered in the full award and is ideal for anyone looking for an initial understanding of TEC before committing to the full qualification. Both the PDA and TEC Module are designed specifically for those working in frontline roles in social work, social care, health, housing organisations, care homes, or care-at-home services. These free learning opportunities equip the workforce with the knowledge and skills to evaluate and adopt emerging technologies that support health and social care delivery, helping citizens to self-manage and live independently, ultimately improving their quality of life.

- The **NHS Scotland M365 Skills Hub** is a one-stop-shop for everything Microsoft 365. The constantly updated site hosts supportive community engagement plus curated learning resources, webinars, service updates, and how-to guides for the different Microsoft 365 applications. These apps, particularly Microsoft Teams, have fundamentally changed the design and delivery of health and social care services and there is a huge demand for these resources. Due to the nature of the NHS Scotland Microsoft tenant this resource is, by default, available to all NHS Scotland organisations. Access has also now been enabled for most of the Health and Social Care Partnerships and Local Authorities across Scotland, with ongoing engagement to onboard the remaining organisations.

Digital Skills for the Specialist Workforce

Those in specialist digital and data roles in health and social care have previously tended to work in isolation within organisations, with little or no access to appropriate training or networking opportunities. As part of this Programme a new Knowledge Information and Data (KIND) Learning Network has been established offering an inclusive and supportive community of practice for staff across this workforce, irrespective of job title or organisation.

By bringing this workforce together the KIND network aims to further the role of this community in the digital transformation of health and social care, supporting learning, sharing best practice, and developing interdisciplinary collaborations. The KIND network centres on an extremely active Microsoft Teams site with additional activity/resources in 3 areas:

- **KIND Training** – there are regular free online training opportunities at different levels, from entry through to expert, which are open to anyone to attend. These are accompanied by the **KIND training site** which hosts training materials via GitHub. Using GitHub ensures that all materials are completely open and accessible to anyone from across health and social care, bypassing known limitations on sharing documentation from NHS Scotland SharePoint.

- **KIND Resources** – again using GitHub to ensure no one is excluded from access, this site is used to publish and share KIND network resources that are not linked specifically to KIND training (above). Information shared here includes platform-specific standards for commonly used information and data tools, examples of standard operating procedures, and FAQs. There are also links to various community activities including reading groups, community meetups, and a supportive coding beginners club.

- The **KIND technical mentoring scheme** where expert mentors are matched to mentees to support them through specific challenges or short projects.

EQIA Assessment Evidence

The workstreams described above have been in place for 2-3 years with activities, networks and resources constantly evolving. The Programme is committed to working closely with stakeholders, ensuring that everything is developed in collaboration with organisations and individuals working in the relevant sectors. In this context "stakeholders" may be sector-wide representatives or organisations, specific organisations, cross-sector groups, or individual participants.

Evaluation is key to the success of this Programme. Feedback is constantly sought, guaranteeing that the voices of those with lived experience in the health and social care workforce are heard. Thorough and proactive feedback mechanisms (including external evaluation where appropriate) ensure that any accessibility or inclusivity concerns are raised and addressed at the earliest opportunity. Activities, networks and resources are constantly iterated and tailored to the requirements of different people in different circumstances from varying locations, across the sectors.

Equality of opportunity is promoted through activities like the #IAmRemarkable workshops, which guide attendees on how to articulate workplace achievements, and the KIND Network 'Win of the Week' which has had over 1500 'wins' submitted in the past year. These activities give confidence to individuals to speak positively about their successes, which is particularly important for encouraging participation from traditionally neglected groups.

In 2022 the Programme worked with Capgemini on Digital Skills User Research to better understand what the health and social care workforce need and want from digital skills learning resources. Cross-sector research included an online survey, one-to-one interviews, and focus groups. The detailed findings report and the survey response report are available to download from this open access Turas page: https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/61462. The findings relevant to digital inclusion for the workforce are primarily that:

- 38% of the respondents were aged 51-65+ (findings report page 77)
- 97% of respondents use a smartphone every day (findings report page 78)
- Most respondents are able to complete basic digital tasks at work, e.g. 92% felt confident or very confident joining an online meeting (findings report page 80)

This appears to contradict assumptions that older age groups of workers are less able or willing to engage with digital technology. However, over half of the respondents thought that greater access to digital devices would help them do their job better (findings report page 88), indicating that some workforce digital inclusion barriers may relate more to the availability of suitable devices or connectivity.

Assessment

This assessment has considered how the work of the Building Digital and Data Capabilities Programme impacts on the health and social care workforce in Scotland, and how it meets the Public Sector Equality Duty. This includes how it might affect people differently, taking account of protected characteristics and how these intersect. It has also considered children's rights and the role of corporate parenting:

Protected Characteristic/ Population Group	Impact (+/- /neutral)	Rational
Age ▪ Children ▪ Young People ▪ Adults ▪ Older age groups	Positive	Programme activities, networks and resources aim to be equally accessible for everyone working in health, social care and social work, regardless of age. DEW research has shown that older age groups are willing and able to engage with digital when given the opportunity and suitable support (see above). It is recognised that age may influence preferred formats for resources and engagement methods so all Programme workstreams strive to ensure that, wherever possible, resources are provided in various formats, that the same information can be accessed irrespective of preferred learning style, and that engagement is possible through a variety of different means. This ensures that all age groups can benefit equally from the opportunities on offer. No impact on children or children's rights has been identified or is anticipated. No impact on NES's role as a corporate parent identified or anticipated.
Disability	Positive	Programme activities, networks and resources aim to be equally accessible for everyone working in health, social care and social work. As described above, Programme content is, wherever possible, available in different formats or through different engagement methods to accommodate varying needs and preferences. All DEW-produced content is reviewed against accessibility guidelines. Where the Programme signposts to externally hosted/produced resources that are not under the

| | | control of DEW, and therefore may not meet the same standards, this is clearly indicated and feedback actively looked for, as on the Digital and Data Resources Hub where each page of links to external resources has a feedback form attached. If an issue with accessibility is identified with an external resource, suitable alternatives are always sought.

With only a tiny exception (face-to-face MSc events organised by the University of Edinburgh) all Programme events and resources are hosted online, ensuring that no travel is required to participate equally.

Where appropriate, pre-event questionnaires are used to identify participants who consider themselves as having a disability that could impact on their engagement or experience. If the participant wishes they can use the questionnaire to describe the support required, or the participant is offered the opportunity to contact the DEW team directly if they prefer. Every effort is made to accommodate requests received.

Information on potential/perceived/actual barriers, and suggestions for addressing them, is combined with all other feedback and used to inform the ongoing efforts to improve Programme accessibility. |
|---|---|---|
| Pregnancy/Maternity | Neutral | No additional impact or benefit is identified or anticipated for this protected characteristic. |
| Marriage/Civil Partnership | Neutral | No additional impact or benefit is identified or anticipated for this protected characteristic. |
| Gender Reassignment | Neutral | No additional impact or benefit is identified or anticipated for this protected characteristic. |
| Race/Ethnicity | Neutral | No additional impact or benefit is identified or anticipated for this protected characteristic. |
| Religion/Faith/Belief | Neutral | No additional impact or benefit is identified or anticipated for this protected characteristic. |
| Sex | Neutral | No additional impact or benefit is identified or anticipated for this protected characteristic. |
| Sexual Orientation | Neutral | No additional impact or benefit is identified or anticipated for this protected characteristic. |
| Socio-economic Status | Positive | Programme activities, networks and resources aim to be equally accessible for everyone working in health, social care and social work, irrespective or personal or organisational socio-economic or economic status.

Almost without exception (e.g. the 3rd year of the Leading Digital Transformation in Health and Care for Scotland MSc) all Programme activities, networks, and resources are free and equally open irrespective of personal circumstances, location, or organisational circumstances.

In addition, and again with only very specific exceptions (e.g. face-to-face cohort events organised by the University of Edinburgh as part of the Leading Digital Transformation in Health and Care for Scotland post graduate PGCert and PGDip years) all Programme activities, networks and |

		resources are free to access online, ensuring that no travel is required to participate equally. Wherever possible webinars and events are recorded and made available online, supporting equity of access, particularly for those from smaller organisations where there can be difficulty releasing front-line staff to attend events at specific times. Similarly, the DLP programme avoids scheduling live sessions on Mondays, Fridays and afternoons as these are known to be unsuitable for many part time workers.
Digital Exclusion	Positive	Programme activities, networks and resources aim to be equally accessible for everyone working in health, social care and social work. To help participants feel more digitally confident the DLP Programme offers each cohort the opportunity to attend pre-session "tech-checks" which provide a safe space to test out their technology, ask questions, get expert advice, and practice, ahead of the actual learning sessions. The KIND and 'Click and Grow' Networks provide similar support and encouragement on an ongoing basis through their active Microsoft Teams communities, while the M365 Skills Hub does the same using an embedded Viva Engage Community. Anecdotal evidence from stakeholders suggests that the workforce may encounter digital exclusion through employers not providing appropriate digital devices and/or connectivity, and employers not protecting staff time for digital upskilling. Whilst the DEW team are not in a position to resolve these issues directly, they make a point of highlighting the importance of workforce digital inclusion when speaking to employers and decision makers in this area.
Different Sectors	Positive	Programme activities, networks and resources are designed for the entire health and social care workforce in Scotland (NHS, Local Authorities, Health and Social Care Partnerships, Social Work, Social Care, Care and Support Providers, Housing, Third and Independent Sectors). A major benefit of the Programme is the way it brings health and social care employees from different backgrounds and organisations together. By presenting opportunities for cross-sector collaboration, opening up discourse, and raising awareness of different viewpoints this Programme is fostering good relations – a requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Conclusion

The activities, networks and resources provided/supported by this Programme are aimed at the entire health and social care workforce in Scotland (NHS, Local Authorities, Health and Social Care Partnerships, Social Work, Social Care, Care and Support Providers, Housing, Third and Independent Sectors).

The breadth of this target audience presents both opportunities – like the chance to foster cross-sector collaboration, or the ability to focus on and champion sections of the workforce that have previously felt neglected – and challenges – for example ensuring that solutions and interventions are equally appropriate for everyone, irrespective of role or employer.

The Building Digital and Data Capabilities Programme takes these opportunities, and addresses these challenges, while strongly supporting the Public Sector Equality Duty by advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations across Health and Social Care in Scotland. It is recognised that some barriers remain but by being aware of this the DEW team can work towards addressing and reducing these. The Programme's inclusive design, constant stakeholder engagement, and continuous feedback mechanisms, ensure ongoing responsiveness to diverse needs. The Programme is committed to creating a more inclusive and equitable environment for those choosing to engage with the available activities, networks and resources.

Sign-off

Signed by: Janice Gibson, Associate Director – Workforce, People and Culture

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