



Partnerships

How we plan to work with our partners to deliver our HSC digital strategy

Our partnership approach

Our Ecosystem Partners

To ensure successful digital transformation, we must also work with those who use our digital services and tools. Establishing strong, ongoing partnerships with these groups will provide mutual benefits and as such we will outline a number of commitments that we will make to our partners, as well as our expectations of them to support our digital agenda. We have provided a summary of our partnerships and the initiatives we will create and foster in this section.



Our Population

Summary: The people that use our services are central to everything that we do in HSC – our vision is based on providing digital health and care services to enable better processes, support improved care pathways and ultimately, deliver better outcomes for all.



Our People

Summary: Our staff are the lifeblood of the health and social care services we deliver – they are also often the primary user of the digital tools and products we deliver. Our obligation to them is that tools are fit-for-purpose and designed with user experience in mind.



Universities, Higher & Further Education

Summary: HEIs and Further Education Institutes are a vital research and innovation partner and an important partner in teaching and developing the next generation of health and social care professionals. We will rely on them to replicate our digital advancements in their courses.



Arms-Length Bodies (ALBs)

Summary: ALBs are a key partner in our delivery of quality care and will be an important source of expertise and insight in our digital transformation. We will rely on them to provide input and feedback.



Digital Suppliers

Summary: We will rely on suppliers to support us in delivering strategic and technology programmes, bringing their industry expertise to complement that of our in-house delivery teams. We will ensure we have an effective supplier management approach to support this.



Sector Partners

Summary: We will work with third parties such as public sector care providers to drive seamless patient journeys and greater alignment across health and care in Northern Ireland. We will also work with partners in the public sector to deliver improved health outcomes.

Supporting our population

HSC exists to help the people of Northern Ireland to keep well. That’s why we are committed to strengthening and improving the quality and effectiveness of personal and public involvement, to tackle inequalities in health, promote health and wellbeing and to improve service delivery and patient experience.

A health and social care service that is truly people focussed requires consistent collaboration and co-development, particularly with regard to the design and delivery of digital services. We have set out three key requirements of the population that we serve in delivering digital transformation, alongside our commitments as an organisation to enabling them.

Our requirements	Description	Our commitments
Co-designing services	We want services to address user-needs and therefore it’s important to hear about health and care experiences, personal needs and opinions on new services as they designed and rolled out.	We will work with focus groups representing our population throughout service development to capture requirements and design digital services.
Awareness and utilising our digital services	New services and platforms take time to learn and adjust to and users will need to take time to understand how to engage with them. This is a critical success factor in ensuring they are successful.	We will provide digital channels to support people in using new digital systems and services. HSC will also expand existing initiatives that support digital education within the community.
Managing their information	Our population must be active participants in the security and use of their data. Through patient portals, people will have access to their health and care information and will be able to take responsibility for its accuracy.	We will further enhance our stringent security measures to protect the data – we will build data quality checks into our systems and introduce new learning for our staff and awareness of information governance for our population. .

Table 3. Our requirements and commitments for supporting our population

How does this improve the care our population receives?



Greater control over your own health data

Our new systems will provide you opportunities to manage and maintain your own data – bringing you closer to the care you receive.



Services that better meet your needs

By working with us to design digital services, the health and care services you receive will more closely meet your needs and expectations.



Reduced waiting times

Integrated systems, designed with your input, mean that we can identify the right pathway more quickly and progress your care.



Paperless communications

As more information is shared, you will be able to digitally communicate with those who care for if this is your choice and appropriate to do so.

Supporting our people

Our people are fundamental to everything we do and deliver – they are the primary user of our digital systems and tools and therefore are critical in the success of our digital transformation. We recognise and understand that our people need digital systems and tools that are enabling and support them to do their job better.

Therefore, digital transformation must involve close collaboration with our people to ensure that systems meet their needs. We will ask them to help us in three major areas:

Our requirements	Description	Our commitments
Subject Matter Expertise	Our people are the experts in their domains, with the knowledge and expertise in the delivery of care. We will rely on them to provide this expertise to help us create and deliver tools and systems that map to existing models of care, or help to define better models.	We will work closely with our professional groups across all health and care settings to define digital pathways. We will provide opportunities for our people to be embedded in programme teams to support and evaluate the delivery of new tools.
Championing digital change	Systems and tools are only effective if people use them and feel confident in using them. We need staff to act as change leaders in our digital transformation, actively using and investing the time to understand systems and training those around them to as well.	We will provide opportunities for staff to take on 'Digital Champion' roles, providing the support, training and recognition for doing so.
Providing Feedback	Systems are rarely perfect first-time and so we will require constant feedback and ideas from our key users – this will ensure we can continuously improve services and the outcomes that we are delivering together.	We will create new forums for staff to share experiences and improvements for systems – we will provide mechanisms to incubate and scale staff-led innovation and recognise staff for ideas that scale.

Table 4. Our requirements and commitments for supporting our people

How does this improve working?

	Intuitive and integrated experience	Designing systems with the right expertise ensures that we can align processes and care pathways, providing a better experience for users.
	More time to focus on patients	As we introduce co-designed systems and tools, especially those with greater automation, staff will be free to spend more time with those they care for.
	Improved satisfaction and performance	Our systems are better designed for users and constant evolution means our staff are confident to request changes that improve use and care.
	Greater flexibility and remote working	As our systems advance, the flexibility to access them from anywhere will mean that our staff can do more work remotely.

Working with educators

Our academic institutions are an important partner in teaching and developing the next generation of health and social care professionals. We will rely on them to replicate our digital advancements in the modules and courses they deliver. Our universities will also continue to be a vital research and innovation partner for us.

We are extremely fortunate to have existing partnerships with our Northern Ireland universities and colleges and are committed to furthering these partnerships to ensure they are mutually beneficial.

Our requirements	Description	Our commitments
Digital awareness, upskilling & readiness for our staff	Academic institutions provide us with the workforce of the future and we need those who are joining us to understand and feel confident in building their careers with us. We need people who are comfortable using the systems of tomorrow specifically using data to deliver evidence-based care.	We will work with academic institutions to increase the awareness and visibility through increased engagement and insight sharing. We will share more of our digital strategy and solutions and the impact that they have on providing health and care.
Integrate digital tools training into education pathways	As part of our transformation, we must ensure new programmes and tools are replicated in our education pathways. We need to provide the right levels of access for students to undertake practical learning in a safe environment.	HSC will engage with academic institutions to discuss how we can support changes to existing curriculums based on the digital programmes we are implementing. We will conduct an system access review and identify where more access can be provided.
Support digital innovation and research	Our academic institutions have innovation and research capabilities that can support us to develop new treatments, processes and services. We need them to continue their important work in collaboration with HSC as we continue to transform our organisation and the services we deliver.	We will work to identify new collaboration methods that support effective research and innovation. This will build on our existing support for Ulster and Queen’s University innovation centres. We will seek to share more data and insights with our academic institutions in order to develop new and better digital health solutions.

Table 5. Our requirements and commitments for working with our academic institutions

How does this improve sustainable delivery of care?



Sustainable pipeline of HSC professionals

Developing and encouraging digital career paths will support us to build a sustainable workforce who will support our ongoing transformation.



A digitally prepared workforce

Enabling access for students to develop practical experience and knowledge of systems will support them to deliver great care from day one.



Continuous focus on improvement

As we strengthen our research and innovation methods and share more data and insight, the services we provide will continue to improve.

Working with ALBs

Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) provide a significant and sustained improvement effort in our work to progress digital health and social care services in Northern Ireland. They are a key partner in our delivery of quality care and will be an important source of expertise and insight in our digital transformation.

Our digital transformation must be undertaken in collaboration with our ALBs to ensure that we can collectively meet the needs of our people and our population, as well as support the ALBs that work with us. We work with a wide range of partners including trusts and other related organisations. These include PHA, BSO, RQIA, NISCC, NIBTS, NIGALA, NIMDTA, PCC, NIPEC and NIFRS.

Our requirements	Description	Our commitments
<p>Provide input on digital solution design and delivery</p>	<p>A key part of digital transformation for HSC will include the integration of our ALBs in providing input into the digital solutions that we plan, design and deliver, providing their unique perspectives.</p>	<p>We will ensure that representatives from our ALBs form part of planning and design teams for new solutions, acting as an important voice in developing solutions.</p>
<p>Providing Feedback</p>	<p>As users and customers of the digital solutions we implement, ALBs will be well placed to provide feedback on user experience, effectiveness and value. We will ask ALBs to share constructive suggestions for improvement with us and work to design changes that meet the needs of their organisation's users.</p>	<p>HSC will create new forums for ALBs to share feedback and invite ALB representatives to join design and delivery teams where new digital programmes are being commissioned.</p>

Table 6. Our requirements and commitments for working with our Arms Length Bodies

How does working with ALBs improve our digital offering?



Global insights and experiences

Our ALBs can bring experience and knowledge from specialist fields and perspectives that will enable us to develop global benchmarks.



Improved quality of solutions

As we strengthen our relationships with ALBs and improve our understanding of requirements, we will develop better solutions.

Working with digital suppliers

HSC relies on a vast number of suppliers and service providers to help deliver across our health and social care system – our digital transformation is no different. We will rely on suppliers to support us in delivery of strategic and technology programmes, bringing their industry expertise to complement that of our in-house delivery teams.

We will ensure we have an effective supplier management approach that sets out where and how to best use supplier organisations and embed them into our existing delivery structures.

Our requirements	Description	Our commitments
Bring learnings from wider industry	Our suppliers come with strong cross-industry experience in digital strategy and technology transformation – as we undertake our digital transformation, we will require learnings from across industry to support the implementation of our programmes.	We will work with suppliers in the market to identify opportunities for collaboration and where they can best support us within procurement and legal guidelines.
Solution focussed approach	As our health and social care system evolves and continues to respond to public health challenges, we need solutions that support us. We must focus on interoperability of systems, analytics and technologies that support decision making and support people.	We will work with partners to define clear requirements and specifications that enable better solutions for our people. We will engage regularly with the market to understand and share our requirements to help shape future offers in digital health and social care.
Understanding the landscape and our context	Our planned portfolio of programmes and projects is a significant investment of resources and time and will be very complex to deliver. Our health and social care system is also under significant strain as a result of the pandemic. We need partners who understand our challenges and can work with us to address them without working beyond our means.	We will be transparent with our partners, sharing regular updates on the wider challenges of our system, our understanding of the risks involved and working constructively with them to solve delivery challenges.

Table 7. Our requirements and commitments for working with our suppliers

How does this improve digital service delivery?



A more informed transformation

As we engage with suppliers more regularly, we will gather greater insight and exposure to successful transformations that we can replicate.



Improved quality of solutions

As we strengthen our relationships with suppliers and improve our understanding of requirements, we will develop better solutions.



Increased value for money

A more accurate and targeted use of suppliers to support us in implementing solutions will reduce risk and improve delivery efficiency.

Sector partners

As we continue our digital transformation, we will look to expand our partnerships and work more cohesively with external care providers and those organisations that support the delivery of health and social care.

HSC is dependent on private sector domiciliary care providers, care homes and private clinics who deliver services on our behalf, as well as the community and voluntary sector who provide valuable support to our services. In addition there are a number of organisations and initiatives that HSC can work with to harness expertise, insight and resources to enhance our digital transformation.

Our requirements	Description	Our commitments
Investing in health and social care services of the future	We will work with our partners in the third sector - scanning for future new and emerging digital solutions and opportunities and take an active role in the co-development of new solutions	We will continue to horizon scan for new digital development, trends and opportunities by working closely with research agencies and industry. We will continue our work with the City Regions on the City Deal, towards the delivery of more than 20 highly ambitious projects and programmes.
Collaborating to co-invest in services that improve the lives of the people of Northern Ireland	We should continue to identify areas of joint working with third parties across all sectors, where knowledge and expertise outside of HSCNI can be tapped to co-design solutions and deliver tangible digital development for HSC and improved outcomes for .	We will develop a common approach for HSCNI to engage with third parties (especially those within the Digital Ecosystem) to deliver mutual benefits. We will explore opportunities to work with Digital Catapult NI which supports the growth of companies based in the region, accelerating the adoption of emerging technologies for commercial benefit.
Improving communication with private sector care providers to drive more integrated care pathways	We will work to communicate better with private sector care providers who deliver services on our behalf, so that we can deliver a more integrated care experience for patients that is easier to navigate.	We will co-design relevant care pathways across public and private sector care providers, to build a standardized patient journey between providers. We will keep our private sector partners informed of any relevant developments within the HSC and maintain a culture of collaborative working.

Table 7. Our requirements and commitments for working with our Third Parties

How does working with third parties improve our digital offering?



A more informed transformation

As we engage with third parties more regularly, we can integrate insights – and keep pace with – solutions from the private sector



Improved quality of solutions

Through strengthened partnerships and collaborative working, we can improve the quality of the digital solutions we implement at HSCNI