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Your ref:
Our ref:

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Dear Convener

Further to your letter dated 5th December 2023 please find responses against each of your requests for information.

In considering each individual answer, it is worth emphasising for the committee that our strategic direction is set out across the Scottish Government and COSLA's shared strategy Care in the Digital Age and its supporting Data Strategy for Health and Social Care. Both are accompanied by delivery plans that are reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis alongside the strategies themselves. Iterative development of these strategies is a key approach to achieving our vision for a better health and wellbeing for the people of Scotland in a rapidly changing and complex landscape.

The inaugural Data Strategy for Health and Social Care was published in February 2023 and is a key driver in our work to improve data sharing across the health and social care sectors. It builds on a great deal of existing work to ensure we have a robust and sustainable foundation on which to enhance data sharing, data access, research, and innovation for those delivering services as well as for those accessing them.

An example of the existing work the strategy builds on is the national implementation and adoption of Microsoft 365. Working with COSLA, the NHS and local authorities are now 'federating' their access to M365 – this means that, for the first time, staff who work across health boards and local authorities, for example in Integration Authorities, can enable the sharing of calendars and documents. This capability is now live in 17 local authorities and is making a real difference to local joint working and data sharing. This is a prime example of how Scottish Government in association with COSLA is not just driving the agenda for data

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sharing through regulations and policy but empowering organisations with the digital tools to do so effectively.

Scottish Government and COSLA continue to identify opportunities for practically improving collaboration and better use of data across Health and Social Care with a keen eye on doing so against a backdrop of greater financial and workforce pressures.

Innovation will be a key tool in achieving more with less and work remains ongoing to identify opportunities using existing solutions and maximising cross governmental resources.

I hope this provides you with adequate information but if you have any further questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Data access for individuals

1. Actions undertaken to date to progress the Digital Front Door, and associated key milestones expected for its development and roll out.

The Scottish Government has commissioned NHS Education Scotland (NES) as main delivery partner and initial planning, design and development is underway. The programme work to date has been informed by the achievements and learning from initiatives across health and social care in Scotland, but further input and engagement is required. Therefore, our programme team continue to liaise with our Digital leaders on several issues including complimentary technology and Digital Identity as the programme takes shape and moves into the delivery phase.

While it is not currently a live service, we expect the first iteration of the Digital Front Door to be delivered by the end of the current Parliamentary term in 2026, subject to resources, as confirmed in the 2023/2024 Delivery Plan.

Data access for professionals

2. Actions undertaken to date to progress the following:
 - o GP IT Programme
 - o the National Digital Platform
 - o development of an Integrated Social Care and Health Record
 - o Regional Clinical Portals
 - o the National Clinical Data Store across Scotland

The rollout of the new [National GP IT system](#) is being delivered by the national 'GP IT' re-provisioning programme and the roll out is well underway.

To date there are now roughly 147 GP practices currently live with the new system, with Tayside having now completed all their Vision-to-Vision migrations. Lothian, Lanarkshire, and Grampian are now in progress with Vision migrations and should be complete with their Vision 3 sites by the Summer 2024. We expect all Health Boards to enter into agreements with the Supplier by the end of the Framework on 31 January, and full rollout completed by mid-2026.

The National Clinical Data Store is a key component of the National Digital Platform rather than a separate entity. Building on the capabilities of the National Clinical Data Store which was developed to store national vaccination data and supports

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the aim of capturing health data once and using it many times, the following NDP developments have been progressed:

- **A FHIR interface to the New CHI system aligning to the International Patient Profile standard which will provide a modern, consistent way for other systems to perform searches to uniquely identify patients and the ability to create or update records.**
- **A Workforce Identity Service that will allow the health and social care workforce to securely access digital services and data.**
- **Design of an identity broker service to meet the needs of the Digital Front Door programme to allow the public to access digital services and data.**
- **Further development of the NDP Access Management capability that will allow NDP to determine what resources a user can access based on known data attributes about their employment and professional roles.**
- **Development of the NDP Care Summary service that will broker the foundational data sets for programmes such as DFD and the Integrated Social Care & Health Record and can expand to include other source systems and data sets over time. Expansion of the National Clinical Data Store's structured and unstructured data storage capabilities to support specific data workloads like medical device data and dermatology images along with the design of an end-to-end service that supports the data storage needs of individual programmes.**
- **Preparation of the NDP Developer Platform to allow health and social care organisations to applications and services they are developing on the NDP.**

Additionally, the APIs used within the NDP have been published via an API Catalogue, which allows developers to use APIs to integrate applications to provide information that is held within NDP and will expand overtime as common APIs used across health and care become available. This will support professionals to have easier access to health and social care data.

Our current strategic ambitions for data sharing and the principles for the ethical use of data, are set out in Scotland's Data Strategy for Health and Social Care. Furthermore, our priorities for current investment are confirmed in our Delivery Plan for Digital Health and Care.

We continue to work with Research Data Scotland on how we can improve access to data within Trusted Research Environments for research and innovation purposes. This includes consideration of how we can improve the equity of data held across each of the regional safe havens.

Research Data Scotland have already started work to review the approvals process for access to data. This involved engaging with industry, academia, public sector, data owners, Scotland's Safe Havens and panels who support decision making about the use of public sector data to set out recommendations to improve the Scottish Data Approvals process

Development of the Integrated Social Care and Health Record (ISCHR) will follow an agile delivery methodology; which means we will test, build and iterate to ensure the ISCHR meets the identified needs of citizens and professionals within the delivery cycles. This component-based approach means there will not be a 'big bang' delivery day but rather a gradual building of services. An initial outline

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business case will be reviewed through the governance process, with progress to delivery subject to the availability of funding which is still to be identified.

3. Local improvements made by NHS Boards, Health and Social Care Partnerships and Local Authorities that have improved data sharing between professionals, and how learning from these has been shared more widely.

This information is not held centrally but within each local organisation. We recognise a federated approach to information governance is needed to expedite and streamline appropriate access to health and care data. That is why we are developing a new national approach to Information Governance, in line with the Scottish Government's Once for Scotland approach, under the remit of the Data Strategy.

The National Information Governance Programme will further provide a strong, future-proofed framework and tools that will give assurance to the public and enable those managing and controlling data to work more effectively.

The Microsoft Office 365 federation project is an example of how data sharing between organisations is improving.

4. What access arrangements are being developed to allow full access to national shared electronic patient care records for:

- o community pharmacists
- o social care staff
- o social work staff
- o wider multidisciplinary team members

Our aim is to provide appropriate access, in line with current legislation, as user research and engagement has evidenced that not all users want or should have access to all information. We continue to work towards a national approach to mature access management processes, national, regional and local that aligns with best practice. Work surrounding national systems for example National Digital Platform and clinical portals supports this approach. Access has, however, been extended to some systems. For example, community pharmacists can now access the Emergency Care Summary (ECS) and Key Information Summary (KIS).

5. What information-sharing agreements currently exist across health and social care organisations, including private and third sector providers, what work is currently being undertaken to improve these, and mechanisms for oversight and accountability.

The Intra NHS information sharing Accord is in place underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). We are always working to update or governance to ensure maximum protection and as such an updated MoU has been circulated to PHS and COSLA/SOLAR for review with approval expected in early 2024. The launch of Research Data Scotland service in 2021 and its new approach to information sharing for academia is also a key improvement.

6. When the Scottish Government anticipates these information sharing agreements will be in place across the entirety of Scotland under a once for Scotland approach.

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Updated MoUs are expected to be approved and come into effect in early 2024. This governance has been set up to provide an umbrella agreement for information sharing and will be underpinned by more detailed Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) as well as other bespoke assessments that may be required.

7. What new digital products and solutions will be delivered within social care, and how these will be consistently rolled out across multiple providers and sectors.

Officials are always looking at opportunities to utilise new and existing digital solutions to improve services across health and social care. For example, the new ARC program and telecare platform will see the acceleration of fresh solutions rolled out across Social Care. Digital Health and Care's work on [CivTech 10](#) (a Scottish Government accelerator programme supporting startups to solve public sector challenges, will increase pace in 2024 with challenges in the theme of Care and Wellbeing due to be promoted later this year in partnership with Local Government Digital Office and COSLA. This is one initiative to promote innovation to addressing sever challenges across the sector.

8. How the Scottish Government envisages the Digital Health and Care Strategy and delivery plan will link with other upcoming policy and legislative changes, such as the National Care Service.

'Care in the Digital Age' Digital Health and Care's Strategy is accompanied by a delivery plan which is continually being reviewed and updated to ensure it remains relevant to the sector landscape and policies. The strategy provides the framework for how and why digital should be developed, and upcoming policy and legislative changes should take into account the role of digital.

The strategy also supports the aims of the NHS recovery in its ambition to address the backlog in care and meet ongoing healthcare needs for people across Scotland. It will support reform of the care system, including better integration of health and care services. It outlines the health and care contribution to the overarching Digital Strategy.

Furthermore, Part Two of the NCS Bill will support digital transformation across health and social care by introducing a new legal gateway for information sharing and a scheme for Scottish Ministers to set out common information standards for both the NHS and NCS, as well as organisations commissioned by the NHS or NCS to deliver services.

9. Details of any risk assessments that were undertaken to inform the development of the Digital Health and Care Strategy and delivery plan.

The Data Strategy for Health and Social Care and the Digital Health and Care strategy continue to assess risks and opportunities of policies and deliverables as part of their robust engagement of stakeholders and their ongoing, iterative development. More details of engagement and consultations carried out as part of the strategic development can be found [here](#) as well as relevant impact assessments.

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10. How the Digital Health and Care Strategy delivery plan will be monitored and Evaluated.

Monitoring and evaluation are a continuous part of the oversight in place. Most recently, we have reviewed the overall governance in place that oversees delivery and, in conjunction with COSLA who as joint owners of the Strategy are, are in the process of establishing new governance arrangements. This started with the new Strategic Leadership Board for Digital and Data Transformation (SLB), which is co-chaired by a Chief Executive from SOLACE and a Chief Executive from the NHS. Over the next couple of months, a new Major Programmes Assurance Board, a Digital Capabilities Board, a Technical Design Authority, and a Digital Services & Innovation Board established alongside the existing Data Board for Health & Social Care. These Boards will report into the SLB and, as a collective, will have responsibility for driving the digital and data agenda forward. We will continue to publish updates on progress – the 2023/24 Delivery Plan for ‘Care in the Digital Age’ includes an update on 2022/23 actions, and we will soon publish an overview of the Data Strategy after its first year.

11. Progress with the roll-out of HEPMA (Hospital Electronic Prescribing and Medicines Administration) to replace paper prescribing and medication administration systems across Scotland.

We continue to work with key partners across Scotland to ensure that information is available to all staff and patients when and where they need it. Hospital Electronic and Medicines Administration (HEPMA) will be rolled out across Health Boards, improving safety, and reducing medication errors. So far, this has been implemented in 13 Health Boards with the remainder to commence in 2024.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Matheson MSP