Briefing Paper: VHS
Data Strategy for Health and Social Care

Background

Over the last two years we have seen a dramatic shift in how data is used within Health and Care. The pandemic has clearly demonstrated that if data is made more accessible and used proportionally, respectfully, ethically and securely, data can empower people, empower communities, and this can save lives.

The recently published [Digital health and care strategy - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)](#) commits to the development of Scotland's first ever dedicated Data Strategy for Health and Social Care.

Data Strategy for Health and Social Care – Our draft Vision

"To ensure health and care data supports the delivery of health and care services. To ensure it does so in a way that empowers the citizen and enables innovation and research."

Data is at the heart of our health and social care systems. Collecting, sharing and analysing data can help identify disease earlier, support independent living and make services more effective. But it is important that people are at the heart of any developments and that trust is built in how our data is stored and used.

To achieve this, an extensive dialogue with stakeholders from across Scottish Government, local government, other public sector partners, the third sector, industry, civil liberties groups, universities and colleges, and the public is underway. The stakeholder engagement commenced in December 2021 and is running in parallel with the development of the content for the strategy so that the draft content will continuously adapt based upon what is heard via the engagement, in an iterative manner. The latest feedback from engagements will be reviewed every time the Data Strategy working group meets, which is fortnightly. A formal consultation will also take place online from May, open for three months, with the final Strategy being due for publication in the autumn of this year.

Citizen Engagement

The Digital Health and Care Directorate commissioned NESTA to undertake an eighteen-month long dialogue with Scottish citizens to better understand their opinions and ideas for the use and sharing of health and care data. The full report on that dialogue can be accessed here: [Data Dialogues Summary Report](#). There is also an interactive website that provides an innovative way of presenting the dialogue findings: [Data Dialogues (nesta.org.uk)](#). Further engagement will be carried out by Nesta to ensure their voices are heard and included in the development of the strategy.

Data Strategy Working Group
A Data Strategy working group was established in August 2021, which brings together expert representation from across Scottish Government, Local Government and Public Health Scotland to coordinate the development of the strategy at a practical level (for example, the coordination of stakeholder engagement and the drafting of content).

The Working Group recently proposed to the Digital Health and Care Strategic Portfolio Board that a new Health and Care Data Board be established which will bring together a broader representation of stakeholders from across sectors to oversee the work of the working group. This will ensure that the development of the strategy has the collective sponsorship and scrutiny that will be required for it to be a success. The board will continue to exist to oversee after the strategy is launched to oversee its implementation.

You can keep updated on the development of the Data Strategy via the Working Group page: Digital Health and Care Data Strategy Working Group - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

The Working Group also publishes monthly blogs which can be accessed here: Health and Social Care Health and Social Care - Scottish Government Blog (blogs.gov.scot)

Questions we will like to ask:

Q1. Do teams within your organisation have access to the data they need, when they need it? (If not, what are the barriers to accessing and sharing data?

Q2. What is the current level of data skills within your organisation and what support would you require in order to work with data more effectively?

Q3. What challenges do you face in gathering and sharing information (with other organisations, funders, regulators, Care Inspectorate)?