



Herefordshire and  
Worcestershire  
Clinical Commissioning Group

# ICS Health Inequalities and Prevention Collaborative

## Digital Access to Health Action Plan

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# Background

- Healthwatch Worcestershire undertook a survey into Digital Access to Health during 2021
- The survey results and report were shared with NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire, and a formal response requested in January 2022
- This was an important survey as it provides both a local and a post pandemic understanding of our population's experience of digital healthcare services on offer at the time of the survey
- NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire provided an ICS system response by way of action plan in March 2022
- Both the Healthwatch report and ICS response can be found here: [Digital Access to Healthcare Report | Healthwatch Worcestershire](#)
- ICS Digital Inclusion Forum will support the delivery and implementation of the action plan under the Digital Inclusion Programme
- Health Inequalities and Prevention Collaboration will be accountable for the Digital Inclusion programme delivery, with reviews every 6 months
- Today's meeting is to outline the key themes and agreed actions from our ICS response that will underpin our action plan

# Healthwatch Digital Access to Healthcare key findings

- Some people told us that it is more **convenient** and **saves time**, in particular being able to order repeat prescriptions online and having GP appointments without having to visit the practice.
- However, **16% of respondents told us they do not use the internet** and many people experienced difficulties using functions on digital devices, such as sending photographs and making video calls.
- Some people had also struggled with the process of setting up and using online systems for GP access and in some cases they were not able to use functions they would like or felt the process could be simplified.
- Only 27% of respondents told us they would find it easy to discuss health concerns via phone or video call.
- Many people would **prefer face-to-face** appointments, saying that **remote appointments lack personal interaction and make communication difficult**. Some people expressed concerns about the ability to diagnose patients remotely.
- People had concerns about the **privacy, confidentiality and security** of accessing services online. Many found it difficult to have a private space to have a conversation via telephone or video call.
- Online access and remote appointments were especially difficult for: older people; people with a disability, including learning disability, Autism and hearing and visual impairment; people with long term conditions including Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's, Dementia and those who have experienced a stroke; people with mental health issues; people experiencing homelessness or on lower incomes; and those for who English is not their first language

# ICS Action Plan - Key themes and actions

## Workstream 1 - Intervention coordination and population support

- Promote and support Device Loan and data access schemes.
- Identify and introduce additional interventions to support specific at risk groups.
- Engage with providers across the ICS and community and voluntary groups to bid for funding to support interventions.
- Identify opportunities to engage hard to reach groups with training and ongoing support to get online and develop their skills.
- Programme of work to consistently record and share communication needs and preferences information of service users and patients.
- Progress Reasonable Adjustment Flag programme nationally to capture individual adjustment and communication needs.
- Progress work to integrate key public facing systems with NHS Login.
- Reduce the number of video consultation solutions in place within the ICS.
- Integrate video consultation platforms into the ICS wide patient portal to simplify use for patients into the future.
- Programme of work to consistently record and share carers information for patients/service users across providers.

## Workstream 2 – Workforce Development

- Programme to raising awareness and skills within GP Wellbeing teams and Library Digital Champions.
- Develop and expand the network of ICS digital champions
- Incorporate health literacy standards in any training and support offers.
- Set up additional digital inclusion awareness training for our health and social care workforce and/or to include this within Equality and Diversity training.
- Create staff awareness material in to reinforce training
- Work with Local Authorities on making digital inclusion awareness training available to social care providers.
- All staff working in patient facing or operational teams within H&W Health & Care Trust complete 'Learning Disability Awareness' training and all staff in Mental Health in-patient settings complete "Autism Spectrum Matters" training.
- Mental Health First Aid, Learning Disability and Autism awareness training to be available for all staff across the ICS.
- Continue to build workforce awareness of digital services they become available.

# Key themes and actions continued

## Workstream 3 - Analytics and Evaluation

- Develop digital inclusion heatmap to easily, pro-actively target personalised support and services.
- Review all GP practice and Provider websites within each ICS in the region against Accessibility standards and ensure services are easy to navigate and find for patients.
- Ensure all schemes are monitored to ensure benefits, value for money and impact on reducing digital inclusion and health inequalities are being delivered.
- Ensure standard operation procedures and Quality Impact Assessments are in place in the use of remote and digital consultations.
- Ensure Clinical Safety reviews are in place when introducing new technology and digital services.
- Link Core20PLUS5 analysis to the digital exclusion maps as a way of monitoring impact of digital and online services.
- Support evaluation of digital inclusion programmes across health, social care and voluntary/community sectors so that benefits and progress can be reported and success measured.

## Workstream 4 - Public communications & engagement

- Communications programme to increase public awareness of digital support/training, device loan and mobile data schemes.
- Ensure that Here2Help (Worcestershire), Talk Community (Herefordshire) and Wellbeing hub resources signpost to available programmes and support.
- Promote Here2Help, Talk Community, Wellbeing hubs, NHS App, NHS.uk and H&W app library as trusted and safe sources of health information and digital services for patients.
- Ensure information is available in a variety of accessible formats (e.g. guides and animations) and widely distributed across health and care settings, community & public spaces.
- Ensure that access to foreign language and BSL support for health and social care services is easy to find.
- Continue our public communications campaign about the methods of access to Primary Care and the different roles within community pharmacies and general practice; Urgent Care services, MIUs and Mental Health services.
- Raise awareness of web and communication accessibility standards across system partners.
- Work with partner and voluntary sector organisations and community groups to help increase reach of these communications messages.
- Include messages about the security of digital platforms, patient data security and signpost to privacy notices.

# Key themes and actions continued

## Workstream 5 – Primary Care

- Review all GP practice websites during 2022/23 against accessibility and ease of navigation standards.
- Engage with practice Patient Participation Groups in relation to accessibility of services and look for recommendations.
- Work with practices to promote Here2Help (Worcestershire), Talk Community (Herefordshire) & Wellbeing hub resources.
- Ensure the specification of health check services account for engaging with hard to reach groups as part of addressing health inequalities.
- Healthcare Access Support Workers to work closely with PCN Annual Health Check/Learning Disability leads to review individuals who did not access Annual Health Checks 21/22.
- Use the audits into the quality of Annual Health Checks to review patient experience feedback re digital services.
- Support those with learning disabilities who failed to attend their Annual Health Check in 2021/22 to engage in 2022/23.
- GP Learning Disability Registers to be re-validated.
- Work with Primary Care and PCNs to ensure that digital inclusion is linked to local plans for population health management and health inequalities.

## Workstream 6 – Overall programme

- Work with Place-based Health and Wellbeing Boards, Equality leads and patient engagement groups, as well as the Health Inequalities and Prevention Board, to monitor the programme of work and align with other health inequalities initiatives.
- Work with regional and national digital inclusion groups and expert organisations to develop and iterate our programme.
- Continue work with key communities and agencies such as Healthwatch and Community First to engage with patients with known health inequalities and disadvantaged groups to align programmes of work and evaluate how our action plan is impacting on patient's ability to access care.
- Identify how Shared Care Record and Patient Portal can use the findings in this report to improve digital services for patients and service users.
- Share this report and action plan with wider ICS provider digital, equality and communications leads to incorporate into planning and action at Place and Provider level.
- Ensure that options for non-digital access to healthcare are maintained and considered in service redesign.

## Next steps

- Incorporate the Healthwatch action plan into overall Digital Inclusion plan
- Work with provider leads on identifying key contacts who will be able to support delivery of elements of the plan and agree timescales for delivery
- Align the plan with other key programmes of work across the ICS
- Stand up task and finish groups and projects where needed to manage delivery
- Report progress back to this group in September 2022