

Digital Change in Rural Scotland: Workforce Readiness, Experience and Potential for Transformation

Introduction

Digital transformation remains central to improving service quality, workforce sustainability, and cross-sector collaboration across health and social care in Scotland.

To understand workforce readiness for this shift, DHI conducted a survey in 2025 exploring the digital experiences, capabilities, and support needs of staff within a rural integrated health and social care partnership.

The findings provided an insight into the workforce's readiness for digital innovation and highlighted areas requiring investment in infrastructure, training, and cultural change.



Results

- The survey findings indicated a workforce broadly positive about digital innovation.
- 91% were comfortable with familiar tools or enjoyed experimenting with new technologies.
- However, significant challenges limit progress.
- Fewer than one-third of respondents rated overall digital provision as good, and connectivity issues were the most frequently cited barrier.
- Staff expressed strong demand for training in basic IT, data literacy, specialist systems, and practical, role-specific skills
- Differences between organisations highlighted the need for tailored approaches: NHS staff generally reported higher digital confidence and greater peer support, while local authority staff identified greater need for foundational training.
- Despite challenges, the high proportion of staff supporting colleagues informally indicated strong potential for peer-led capability building.

Recommendations

- **Consistent and equitable access to digital tools across organisations**
- **Structured training frameworks built into workforce development plans**
- **Recognition of informal peer support as a foundation for professional roles and career progression**
- **Tailored support models for NHS, local authority, and mixed-sector teams**
- **A commitment to long-term, collaborative investment in digital capability building**

Conclusions

- **The survey shows a workforce that is generally positive about digital tools and willing to embrace digital transformation but requires better access to devices, structured training, and organisational support.**
- **Addressing these needs will strengthen workforce confidence and accelerate Scotland's digital transformation ambitions.**



Knowing what we are allowed to use, examples of why it is useful and how it can help improve efficiency or effectiveness of my work

Access to the tech that I need to improve my performance

Dedicated time to support my colleagues who are less savvy

“More availability to training, ability to access online content on laptop for learning



Method

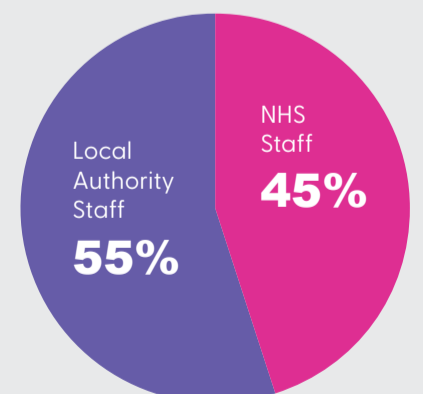
An online survey was distributed to staff across local authority and NHS services generating responses from a broad range of professional groups.



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Responses

Questions focused on access to digital tools, digital work habits, attitudes to digital transformation, barriers to digital working, and training needs.

To protect anonymity, most findings were presented as a combined dataset, with differences between the two organisations highlighted where they were meaningful.



Further Information

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The full report can be accessed here: <https://doi.org/10.1010.17868/strath.00095830>