Embedding a rights-based approach to digital social care

Self-evaluation tool

Introduction

There is huge potential for digital technology in social care. From digital devices that support independence to connecting with friends and family, technology is becoming more integral to good quality social care. Adopting a person-centred approach and human rights principles is fundamental when considering how technology can improve people's outcomes. The Health and Social Care Standards highlight this, stating that technology should be used to enable people to be independent and have more control over their health and wellbeing.

This self-evaluation tool is designed for services that wish to evaluate their use of technology to improve outcomes for people. It is not a workbook or guidance document; it is designed to help services evaluate their digital capabilities and develop an improvement plan. Regardless of whether you are new to technology or more digitally enabled, adopting a self-evaluation approach will help you to improve. No one should be excluded from the opportunities and benefits technology offers. Therefore, this tool is intentionally outcome-focused and aspirational. However, we recognise that barriers exist and that improvements take time, with resources not always available. Please visit our [Hub page](#) for a range of digital resources.

Self-evaluation is best done by those who know the service. Find ways to include people, their families, staff, or other stakeholders/professionals as appropriate for each question. We do not expect you to return this self-evaluation tool to us. This is part of your wider evaluation and improvement plan for your service.

Three key questions that help with self-evaluation.

1. How are we doing?
This helps you to understand the impact of your service on the lives of people.

2. How do we know?
This helps you consider the evidence which shows how good you are. For each question, think about the best ways of gathering this evidence. This could include:
- the views of people experiencing care and their families (you will need to consider the best ways of seeking the views of the people you support)
- the views of other stakeholders and professionals who interact with your service
- direct observations of staff practice and interactions
- performance or improvement data collected by you or others
- reviewing documentation that evidences how decisions are made
- improvement stories
- quality assurance activities such as benchmarking, team meeting discussions, family focus groups, reviewed risk assessments/reviewed personal plans/risk assessments.

3. What are we going to do now?
This helps you to make specific plans to improve based on the first two questions, including changes you plan to test out and specific actions you are going to take.

Self-evaluation tool

The ability to identify what is working well, what is not working well and how improvements can be made is a strength. Using this information to develop and carry through an improvement plan demonstrates good leadership and management and is characteristic of an organisation that continues to develop to support the best outcomes for people.

The tool allows you to choose a numerical rating against each statement, list the evidence you have to back up the rating, and the next steps to take. The scale is consistent with the Care Inspectorate's evaluation criteria and can be found in the footer of this document. The quality frameworks remain the key methodology for inspection and wider self-evaluation.

You do not need to complete the whole self-evaluation tool at one time. It may be helpful to select a section to focus on initially. The sections are: **Laying the foundations for digital; Digital leadership; Digital: a rights-based approach; Cyber security and Data protection**.

By the end of the questions, you will be ready to complete your improvement plan with specific dates and people responsible for carrying through each step. We have included an improvement plan template at the end of the document along with further information, useful links and resources which we hope will be of help.

Date of self-evaluation:

Who led this self-evaluation?

Who else was involved (should be many people)?

Laying the foundations for digital	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? For example, what do children/people/families/staff/ stakeholders say? What is written down?)	What would we like to focus on to make this even better?
The service has suitable digital devices for staff to perform their roles effectively.								
People being supported have access to suitable devices for activities such as learning, meaningful connection and recreation.								
(For building-based services) The service has access to fast, reliable internet connection in all areas, including bedrooms.								
Staff have access to digital skills training and can confidently access the resources they need to develop.								

1. Major weaknesses - urgent remedial action required   2. Important weaknesses - priority action required   3. Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
4. Important strengths, with some areas for improvement   5. Major strengths   6. Outstanding or sector leading

Laying the foundations for digital	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? For example, what do children/people/families/staff/stakeholders say? What is written down?)	What would we like to focus on to make this even better?
Staff understand the level of digital skills required for their role and are supported to work towards this level and beyond if appropriate.								
The service has effective systems to report problems with digital technology. Support is responsive and repairs are carried out quickly.								
Where possible, people can use video conferencing to attend appointments virtually.								

*Supporting resources in Appendix 2

⚙ If using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, staff are equipped with knowledge about AI capabilities, limitations, and ethical considerations.

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Digital leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? For example, what do children/people/families/staff/ stakeholders say? What is written down?)	What would we like to focus on to make this even better?
Leaders are committed to delivering digital inclusion across the service based on their understanding of need.								
There is a positive culture towards digital technology to improve outcomes for people.								
The team has the skills and knowledge to implement and embed new digital solutions.								
Leaders and staff use technology creatively to support greater participation from people, family and friends.								

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Digital leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? For example, what do children/people/families/staff/ stakeholders say? What is written down?)	What would we like to focus on to make this even better?
The service development plan includes how digital technology is being used to improve people's outcomes.								
Staff and leaders remain up-to-date about technology that supports people towards improved outcomes.								

*Supporting resources in Appendix 2

⚙ Leaders guide staff through changes, with clear policies and governance for AI use. AI tools are tested before wider use, and regularly reviewed to ensure accountability, security, and improvement.

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Digital: a rights-based approach	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? For example, what do children/people/families/staff/ stakeholders say? What is written down?)	What would we like to focus on to make this even better?
Leaders and staff understand digital exclusion and how it impacts people.								
Leaders commit to identifying and utilising resources for digital inclusion.								
Technology is used to enable people to be independent and have more control over their health and wellbeing.								
People are actively supported to use technology which meets their needs and preferences.								

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Digital: a rights-based approach	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? For example, what do children/people/families/staff/stakeholders say? What is written down?)	What would we like to focus on to make this even better?
The service works in partnership with people, family and relatives when introducing technology to provide person-centred care.								
People can make an informed choice between using digital or non-digital services. They may switch between them without compromising the quality of care they experience.								
Following their preferences, people being supported can access support to develop their digital skills.								

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Digital: a rights-based approach	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? For example, what do children/people/families/staff/ stakeholders say? What is written down?)	What would we like to focus on to make this even better?
Options to attend appointments, reviews, and hearings virtually are available. Building-based services have suitable private space for this to take place and staff support to do so.								
People's use of technology is reviewed regularly and considered as part of individual care planning.								
Leaders and staff are guided by frameworks for good practice that consider consent and the ethical use of technology to promote better outcomes.								

*Supporting resources in Appendix 2

AI systems used to support people's care must promote human rights, dignity, and fairness. Its use is risk-assessed, transparent to people and families, and regularly checked to ensure consistency with professional values, ethics, and standards.

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Cybersecurity and data protection	1	2	3	4	5	6	How do we know? What is our evidence for choosing this number? For example, what do children/people/families/staff/stakeholders say? What is written down?)	What would we like to focus on to make this even better?
Leaders and staff have access to secure email with clear data protection policies and procedures.								
People are well supported to access their data, have appropriate control over it, and know how it is used.								
Cyber security and data protection training/ support is available for staff and people being supported.								
Leaders complete an annual assessment to show how people's information is kept safe and protected from a data breach or cyber-attack.								

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A cyber incident response plan has been drawn up and signed off by senior leaders, outlining the required actions to be undertaken in the event of a cyber-attack.								

*Supporting resources in Appendix 2

If using AI systems, these should comply with data protection legislation. The systems should be assessed for vulnerabilities that could lead to data breaches.

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Outcome What do we want to achieve?	Actions How are we going to do it?	Timeframe When will this step be completed or reviewed next?	Person responsible Who is responsible for completing this step/action?	Leave this column blank until you review the improvement plan. Date of review: Is the action complete? If not, what is the next step?

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Appendix 2: Mapping digital resources to digital self-evaluation tool

Laying the foundations for digital

Supports staff and people experiencing care to access and use digital tools effectively.

- Turas - Digital Skills: Training in communication, handling information, problem-solving, and online safety.
- Turas - Digital assessment tool: Evaluates digital capability using the Digital and Data Capability Framework.
- Education Scotland DigiLearn: Digital learning resources for care and education staff.
- SCVO - Digital: Digital capability support for charities and social care providers.

Digital leadership

Helps leaders develop digital strategies and embed technology into service improvement.

- Skills for Care: Digital Leadership Guide: Tools for managers to build digital confidence and strategy.
- Skills for Care - Tool: Digital Training Tools: Practical resources for staff training and service enhancement.
- Choosing Digital-toolkit: Guidance on selecting and implementing digital solutions effectively.
- Digital Office: Digital transformation strategies for public and social care sectors.

Digital: a rights-based approach

Ensures technology use is ethical, inclusive, and person-centred.

- Digital ethics and inclusion: (Scottish Government): Policies to promote digital access and ethical practices.
- Digital Inclusion Charter: Resources to support digital access, skills, and confidence.
- Mhor Collective: Free workshops on digital inclusion for care services.
- Good Things Foundation: Funding and training for improving digital access.
- Mental Welfare: Decisions About Technology: Guidance on ethical, person-centred tech use in care.
- Human Rights Charter for Technology and Digital in Social Care: Framework for ethical, inclusive digital practices.

Cyber security and data protection

Provides resources to safeguard data and protect against cyber threats.

- SSSC Online Safety and Security Open Badge: Training for social care staff on online safety.
- Information Commissioner's Office: GDPR and data protection guidance.

- [Cyber resilience - SCVO:](#) Strategies for securing social care data.
- [Cyber Scotland:](#) Cybersecurity guidance for care providers.

Digital health and social care

Supports the integration of digital tools to improve care quality and communication.

- [The Health and Social Care Standards:](#) National framework for person-centred digital care. Sets out expectations for digital care and person-centred approaches.
- [The Care Inspectorate: Meaningful Connection Literature Review:](#) Research on digital tools supporting social connection.
- [Care Inspectorate personal planning guides for providers:](#) Digital tools for personalised care planning.
- [Digital Health Care:](#) Information Sharing Toolkit: Best practices for secure data sharing.
- [Find TEC services:](#) Guidance on implementing technology-enabled care.
- [TEC modules:](#) Training for social care staff on using TEC effectively.
- [Technology Guides:](#) Step-by-step guidance for implementing digital tools in care settings.

Digital assessment and strategy

Helps services evaluate and improve their digital capabilities.

- [Digital maturity assessment:](#) Tool for measuring digital progress and identifying areas for improvement.
- [Care Inspectorate - Digital Social Care; Good practice guide:](#) Best practices for adopting digital care solutions sustainably.

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