To: Chief executives of all local authorities
      Directors of adult social care
      Chief executives of care provider umbrella bodies
      Action: Please read and cascade to chief executives of care providers and local care providers and associations

Copy to: NHS Regional Directors of Digital Technology
            Regional Ageing Well leads
            Regional CIAs

Dear colleagues,

IMPORTANT UPDATE ON DIGITAL SUPPORT FOR CARE PROVIDERS

The social care sector and councils, working with the NHS, continue to do an excellent job of providing people with the care and health services they need during the pandemic. As you continue to implement higher levels of infection control and testing whilst supporting the current vaccination programme, we thank you for all you have done and continue to do.

We don't underestimate the effort required by those in the sector, nor the challenge we collectively face this winter as the sector continues to face a huge range of competing Covid and non-Covid related demands on time, resources and energy.

An important part of the pandemic response has been the ability for care providers to use technology to ensure the continuation of healthcare and reduce the burden on staff. Our commitment is to support the sector to realise the potential gains from technology, and in the attached annex, we summarise the digital support available to the social care sector and how to access it. Please have a look through the initiatives set out in the annex, and do come back to us if you have any questions, concerns or advice.

Our focus for winter has been on the delivery of the digital and technology elements contained in the DHSC Adult Social Care Winter Plan. We are delivering this support as part of wider digital collaboration to join up care, led by NHSX in conjunction with the LGA and ADASS and working with Care Provider Associations. There is a focus in parts of this on care homes, given the pressures on that part of the sector. But much of this support is available to the full range of social care providers, and our longer term digital ambitions will embrace the sector as a whole.

We wanted to draw your attention to two initiatives in delivery right now. Firstly, we have distributed 11,000 **data enabled iPads** to care homes. We know that "kit" provision alone achieves little, so we have put in place support, advice and guidance to enable staff to use

the iPads to best effect in supporting the health and wellbeing of residents. This includes ensuring residents can use the devices to video call loved ones, whilst also benefiting from fast and reliable access to digital health services such as video consultations, telemedicine and virtual check-ins with a GP.
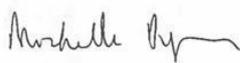
Secondly, we published the simplified [Data Security Protection Toolkit for social care providers](#) on 30 November. This free, self-assessment toolkit helps care providers to show they can keep service users' data and information safe and take reasonable steps to protect their organisation from cyber-attack. We strongly encourage engagement with the [national and local support](#) offer early in 2021, to help secure compliance.

We ask Directors of Adult Social Care to please ensure this letter and annex is passed on to local care providers, and that it is brought to the attention of local NHS leaders. Similarly, please can provider associations support distribution of this letter through your networks to care providers and care homes. We also invite you to learn more about these initiatives at one of our two winter webinars. Please use the links below to book your place (please note you will need to create a free NHS events account).

- Winter webinar for local authorities and NHS **Tuesday 26 January 3pm - 4.15pm** [find out more and register: https://www.events.england.nhs.uk/events/digital-support-for-adult-social-care](https://www.events.england.nhs.uk/events/digital-support-for-adult-social-care)

- Winter webinar for social care providers - **Wednesday 27 January 10am - 11.15am** [find out more and register: https://www.events.england.nhs.uk/events/digital-support-for-adult-social-care-5ffda0f1cac50](https://www.events.england.nhs.uk/events/digital-support-for-adult-social-care-5ffda0f1cac50)

Finally, we thank you again for your continued hard work and commitment in the challenging times ahead. We believe that these winter initiatives provide important steppingstones in the digital transformation journey ahead, delivering meaningful change for both the users and providers of care. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the sector, to listen, support and to co-develop our longer-term ambitions and how we deliver on these.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Dyson
Director General, Adult
Social Care - DHSC

Iain O'Neil
Director of Digital
Transformation NHSX

Councillor Ian Hudspeth
Chair of the LGA's
Community Wellbeing
Board

Annex

Support available to care sector providers aligned to the **digital and technology elements contained in the DHSC Adult Social Care Winter Plan**		
What are the key winter commitments?	How will this help support me and my staff in improving the health and wellbeing of my users?	Where can I find out more and access support?
1. Provide regular updated support materials on the Digital Social Care website	To help you to rapidly implement and benefit from new technologies and to protect your data and cyber security, support and guidance materials will be regularly published on the Digital Social Care website, To keep up to date with the latest NHS guidance for care providers, please sign up to the DSC newsletter.	Digital Social Care website: https://www.digitalsocialcare.co.uk/ Sign up for the newsletter: https://www.digitalsocialcare.co.uk/newsletter-signup/
2. Access to NHSmail and Microsoft Teams for all care providers	NHSmail is a secure email service, available free to all care providers in England who have registered with the Data Security and Protection Toolkit. Around ⅔ of care homes and ⅓ of social care providers now have an NHSmail account. This gives you quick access to digital discharge summaries, the NHS service directory and will help you to more easily and securely communicate with other care providers, local authorities and the NHS including GP practices, community and hospital NHS teams. You can also order tests and prescriptions more easily. In some care settings, staff have used MS Teams tools, such as video and audio calls,	Find out more and complete the new fast track registration process to apply for an NHSmail account. https://www.digitalsocialcare.co.uk/covid-19-guidance/covid-19-quick-access-to-nhsmail/ Free access to MS Teams: https://www.digitalsocialcare.co.uk/covid-19-

	instant messaging and document sharing facilities to host team meetings and minimise staff travel between different group care homes and offices.	guidance/covid-19-microsoft-teams/
3. Discounted broadband deals for care home providers	A wide range of discounted priority broadband packages have been created to meet the needs of both small to medium and large care homes. Ensuring adequate bandwidth to support e-communications, sharing of electronic records, and enabling residents to access online health video consultations as well as video calls with loved ones.	Internet connection details for care homes: https://www.nhsx.nhs.uk/covid-19-response/social-care/internet-connection-deals-care-homes/
4. Distribute 11,000 iPads to care homes	NHSX has distributed data enabled iPads to eligible care homes whose applications showed they had the greatest need for support. Ongoing guidance and education will be provided to help staff to use the iPads to deliver safe, modern and compassionate care to residents. This will include using the iPads to help residents to access video health consultations and video call loved ones.	Read more about the iPads: https://www.digitalsocialcare.co.uk/social-care-technology/nhsx-care-home-ipads/
5. Accelerate the safe adoption of products that enable care providers to: ● reorder medications online on behalf of their residents ● access GP record information	**Ordering medications online** The majority of care homes can quickly, safely and conveniently order their residents' repeat medications online via proxy access to their GP online account. New guidance including all the template forms you will need to complete, is available online. **Access to client's health information** In some areas and Integrated Care Systems, local agreements and records are in place to enable health information to be shared across the local NHS and social care providers. Nationally, the NHS is looking at how existing tools can be utilised as quickly as possible, to ensure that care providers in any locality in England can access the information they need. Below is a short overview of the different projects that are being progressed. During the winter, we will run a large proof of concept to support authorised, registered and regulated care staff in up to 500 care homes, to access patient information within the Summary Care Record Application on the recently	**GP proxy access -** New guidance is now available online: https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/clinical-policy/ordering-medication-using-proxy-access/ To access regional support to help your care home to set up and use proxy access please email digitalprimarycareengland@nhsx.nhs.uk Find out more about Summary care record additional information: https://digital.nhs.uk/services/summary-care-records-

	distributed iPads. This includes current medication, allergies and bad reactions to medicines and additional information in the Summary Care Record. Care homes which are in receipt of iPads and also currently at 'Standards Met' level of the Data Security and Protection Toolkit will be contacted during January, and offered access and the details of the set-up process.	scr/additional-information-in-scr
	In addition we are working to provide access to clinical staff in care settings to patient information via GP Connect. This will see the information integrated within existing IT Systems and care workflows. Care providers will be contacted directly by their case system suppliers to register interest in being part of the pilot.	Information on GP connect: https://digital.nhs.uk/services/gp-connect
	As part of NHS Digital's Social Care Pathfinders Programme, new social care standards have been introduced to integrate key health and social care information. These five new standards have been introduced to ensure that important personal details, such as the need for additional social care support after a person's hospital stay, will be recorded in a clear and consistent way and shared with their care team.	New social care standards to support personalised care: https://www.digitalsocialcare.co.uk/new-social-care-standards-to-support-personalised-care/
6. Publication of a new version of the data security and protection toolkit (DSPT) for the care sector, with additional guidance and support to enable safe use of technology	The simplified Data Security Protection Toolkit for social care providers is now available. This free, self-assessment toolkit helps care providers to show they can keep service users' data and information safe and take reasonable steps to protect their organisation from cyber attack. We strongly encourage care providers to engage early with the national and local support offer to help you to secure compliance. To confirm the requirement to complete Entry Level on the Data Security and Protection Toolkit before accessing NHSmail has been temporarily waived due to the pressure of COVID-19. Whilst this means that CQC registered providers do not need to meet the requirements of the DSPT until at least summer 2021, **providers should register with the DSPT team to ensure ongoing access to services such as NHSmail**	DSPT toolkit for social care providers:https://www.dsptoolkit.nhs.uk/ National and local support to help with compliance: https://www.digitalsocialcare.co.uk/data-security-protecting-my-information/better-security-better-care/ Guidance to help you to register with the DSPT: https://www.digitalsocialcare.co.uk/latest-guidance/registering-for-the-data-security-and-protection-toolkit/
Update on additional COVID related resources and support available for care providers		

7. COVID Oximetry @home	The NHS is expanding a self-monitoring service which is helping to support people at home, including people who live in care homes, who have been diagnosed with coronavirus and are most at risk of becoming seriously unwell. People who have been diagnosed with coronavirus, are symptomatic, and either extremely vulnerable to coronavirus or over 65, will be provided with a pulse oximeter and supporting information so that they can self-monitor their oxygen levels at home for up to 14 days, with assistance from carers and/or family where appropriate. Already available in many areas of the country, this service is now being expanded as part of how the NHS is supporting coronavirus patients during the second wave of the pandemic.	To help care providers to support patients with COVID Oximetry @home, supplementary guidance for care providers will be available shortly. Please check the DSC website for an update.
8. Support for implementing tech-enabled remote monitoring services	If your care home is working with your local NHS organisation to implement a tech-enabled remote monitoring service, you might be able to get additional practical support from a small team at NHSX. This might be a remote monitoring service to help residents to manage their long term conditions or a tech-enabled COVID Oximetry @home service.	Support with remote monitoring: https://www.nhsx.nhs.uk/covid-19-response/technology-nhs/supporting-the-innovation-collaboratives-to-expand-their-remote-monitoring-plans/
Update on other work underway to support our longer-term digital ambitions for the sector		
9. Digital social care records	Electronic care plans and digitised care records have an important role in joining up care across social care and the NHS, enabling automation of some administrative tasks and secure sharing of important data and information. During the first quarter of 2021, we will be launching a Dynamic Purchasing System that will support social care providers to buy and implement a digital social care record solution, which meets a minimum viable standard. More information about this work will be published in the coming months.	Read the latest blog: https://www.nhsx.nhs.uk/blogs/support-digital-social-care-records/
10. Sharing of health records	Work to join up health and care should be supported through the use of data and digital technologies, including the introduction of a minimum shared care record in all systems by September 2021. Some national funding will be provided to support this.	

11. Migrating digital services to the internet	NHS Digital has published guidance to help health and social care organisations to meet the Internet First policy. This guidance provides information for suppliers of digital services and the organisations that commission, procure or use them and technical guidance on the standards and requirements services need to meet. One of the key benefits of transferring digital services to the internet is that it will enable users to access them in different locations supporting remote working. The Internet First policy and guidance have been developed based on the government strategic direction that states all new health and social care digital services should be internet facing and existing services should be changed to be made available over the internet as soon as possible	Internet First webpage: https://digital.nhs.uk/services/internet-first