Digital Healthcare

Lead Researcher: Sarah Hatherley, Senedd Research

1 Description of the Project

The Welsh Government's long-term vision for the NHS, A Healthier Wales, sets out the importance of digital technology in the future of healthcare. In September 2019, the Welsh Government announced plans to create the role of Chief Digital Officer for Health and Care and a new NHS Wales organisation to deliver national digital services, supported by £50 million new funding.

The Fellow's research could focus on:

- How digital health technology is currently used by NHS Wales and its role throughout the health services and in social care.
- Changes to the digital infrastructure in Wales and the anticipated impact this will have on the sustainability and accessibility of health and social care.
- The development of digital services for professionals, patients and the public, including new devices and telecare, alongside the regulatory and ethical challenges.
- The extent to which patients in Wales use digital technology to manage their own health and well-being and opportunities for enhancing this in future.
- An understanding of cyber-security threats and how resilient NHS Wales is in terms of minimising the impact on services to patients.
- The extent to which the development of digital services in NHS Wales can help to improve data and intelligence information about services.
- Identification of good practice in transforming digital services for professionals and patients and/or examples of new technologies and devices being used in other parts of the UK and elsewhere, that may be relevant to Wales, including the development of electronic care records.

The Minister for Health and Social Services has commissioned four strategic reviews of digital health and care in Wales. He has committed to publishing next year an all Wales Digital Infrastructure Plan, a Digital Workforce Plan, a Commercial Strategy and a Communication Strategy. In this context, it would be useful to have recommendations for how future scrutiny work in relation to digital services could be taken forward by the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, and/or future Assembly Committees.
2 Skills/expertise required

- Ability to write clearly in a completely impartial manner
- In-depth knowledge of health economics/ funding arrangements for NHS Wales
- Ability to crystallise complex subject matter into readable formats for people of differing levels of knowledge
- Excellent oral communications skills – be comfortable giving evidence to Assembly Committees

3 Expected Outputs

- Research briefing
- Possible evidence or oral briefing to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee.
- Possible blog publication with Senedd Research

4 Expected timescale

The project should be complete before the end of the Summer 2020

5 Working arrangements

There is no requirement for the academic to be based in the Assembly’s offices in Cardiff. Periodic meetings with researchers will be required. The working arrangements are flexible and will be negotiated with the successful candidate. However it is unlikely to be more than 1-2 days a week for 3-4 months.