

Monday 17 February 2020

Dear James and Adrian,

Thank you very much for your letter of 6 January.

May we start by thanking you both for the work you do to support and build the community of CCIOs and CIOs. The networks you represent are incredibly important and the high degree of support and engagement they have is testament to your collective commitment and effort. We are delighted to work with you and will be strengthening that working relationship over the coming months.

We agree that digital transformation is primarily about people, and getting the people side right requires investment. We have been working with colleagues across the system to work out how we might do that better and you will see evidence of this in the coming months.

We will be putting in place an NHSX Heads of Profession for CCIOs and CIOs (in our new national CIO), and a Director of Workforce. As we build that capacity, we will ensure that we link with your networks, and draw on your members' expertise and insights to help us get things right.

NHSX are making significant progress on most of the six areas you highlight, predominantly through the Building a Digital Ready Workforce (BDRW) programme. To take them each in turn:

1. CCIO/CIO representation at board level

The NHS Long Term Plan was clear. We are now starting the process of defining what good looks like in digital, which will include board-level leadership. Your networks need to be fully integrated with the process of creating these standards, and then how we propagate them, including through incorporating the standards in CQC inspections.

2. Digital Leadership programme

We agree that Board and C-level leadership is critical to the success of digital transformation. The BDRW programme has an established strand focussed on engaging and training boards. We are stepping this up and would welcome your thoughts about how best to do this. Our current thinking includes investment to deliver board development interventions, in line with Health Education England (HEE)'s new mandate.

The programme has engaged closely with chairs and chief executives in health and care, through two different engagement projects reaching hundreds of board members. This has resulted in a programme that is relevant, wanted and impactful. Testing is progressing well and by the end of March we expect between five and ten boards or other groups will have experienced a 'Digital in a Day' session, resulting in lasting impact in the way they manage digitally-enabled transformation.

3. NHS Digital Academy and wider digital programmes

The NHS Digital Academy has created large cohorts of expert, motivated, networked digital leaders. We want to do more and are looking at all options for extension and expansion.

In many ways, the Digital Academy *is* the Nye Bevan course for digital leaders. We currently have no plans to commission a Nye Bevan course specifically for digital leaders, but we are investigating how we incorporate the digital agenda into existing courses offered by the Leadership Academy.

4. Business school programmes

The NHS Digital Academy is intended to offer digital leaders the insights that would come from a business school, with numbers that will make a scale difference across the NHS. But we need to do better at sharing insights from across other sectors. We are asking both the Digital Academy and the BDRW programme to consider how we might do this.

NHSX, through the BDRW programme, has made additional investments into the cadre of current and future digital leaders. It has invested in the Topol programme for Digital Health Leadership aimed at staff earlier in their clinical informatics career, and we have just invested in nine digital fellowships delivered through the Florence Nightingale Foundation - aimed at senior nurse digital leaders. In addition, HEE has partnered with Yale to deliver a programme of digital leadership that is educating 30 leaders from ICSs, taking representation from senior leaders in health, social care and education.

5. Accreditation of CCIOs/CIOs to a minimum professional certification

NHSX supports the direction of travel here. We need CCIOs and CIOs to form genuine professions, with accreditation, training, certification, progression, status and so on. NHSX and HEE colleagues are thinking through how we define the relevant bars. We will progress work in this area and look forward to collaborating with you on how this might evolve.

Throughout all this work runs a commitment to fostering a digital leadership community that is inclusive and diverse. We will continue to work with partners such as the Shuri Network to support and develop leaders that have the knowledge, skills and behaviours to advance equality and diversity within the sector - delivering on the principles set out in the Interim NHS People Plan.

We hope this answers the key points in your letter. We are keen to establish a more regular dialogue with your networks, not least to ensure NHSX is getting it right.

Best wishes,

Matthew and Simon

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