

Adult Social Care Digital Skills Framework

1. Introduction

The Digital Skills Framework is a free resource to help support the development of digital skills¹ across the adult social care workforce. It defines seven key areas of effective digital working and can be used by social care employers to help with planning staff training, or by individuals for their personal development.

The framework is organised in two levels: **digital skills for all staff**, and digital skills for those who want to **'go further'** (this level is relevant for people working in, or looking to progress into supervisory, management or leadership roles, digital champions, business support, administration roles or similar).

Why was it developed?

The framework was developed in response to a recommendation of the [Technology and Digital Skills Review](#). It is specifically designed for people working in adult social care to help care professionals use and benefit from digital technologies² in their day-to-day work, to support the provision of high-quality care.

The framework is part of wider work to provide a comprehensive digital learning offer for the adult social care workforce, funded by the Department of Health and Social Care. It was developed as part of the Digitising Social Care programme³, with support from Skills for Care and with input from care providers and organisations across the social care and health sectors.

How can the framework be used?

The Digital Skills Framework can be used by anyone working in adult social care, regardless of their role or digital knowledge. For example:

- **People working in adult social care** who are looking to develop their skills;
- **Social care employers** who are looking for training opportunities for their staff;
- **Social care managers, business support professionals** and similar roles, who are implementing digital technologies in their organisations;
- **Local authority and Integrated Care System (ICS) leads**, to help with supporting care providers and adult social care professionals in their local areas;
- **Learning providers** and learning and development managers, to support the development of training and learning opportunities.

We know that different people and organisations will be at different stages in their digital journey, and so some sections of the framework may be more or less relevant depending on an individual's role, the type of care setting and/or current access to technology. The framework is intended to be a resource people can continue returning to as they build their skills and confidence.

The framework can be used alongside related guidance resources for digital working, such as the *What Good Looks Like* framework for social care.

¹ Digital skills in social care means the ability to use technology to support the safe and effective delivery of care services (adapted from [Skills for Care's definition](#))

² Digital technology can be used for managing, delivering and receiving care and includes a variety of products such as hardware, software and [apps](#)

³ The Digitising Social Care programme is part of a joint Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England unit within the NHS Transformation Directorate.

2. Framework themes and knowledge criteria

Theme 1 - Using technology to support person-centred care	
Level	Knowledge Criteria
Digital skills for all I have the knowledge and skills to...	1. Understand how technology can support person-centred care
	2. Use technology to work in a person-centred way
	3. Help people to learn about technologies that may benefit them
	4. Help people to access their personal information and contribute to their digital social care record (DSCR)
	5. Use technology to help people to build and maintain relationships and participate in their community.
Go further I have the knowledge and skills to...	6. Help my colleagues to learn about and understand the benefits of technology for person-centred care
	7. Encourage and support my colleagues to help people they work with learn about and choose suitable technologies for their care.
	8. (Depending on role) Support/lead strategic decisions on the use of technology in my organisation.
	9. Support a culture of good practice in using technology to provide responsive, person-centred care.

Theme 2 - Technical skills for using technology	
Level	Knowledge Criteria
Digital skills for all I have the knowledge and skills to...	1. Use digital devices in my day-to-day work
	2. Make use of accessibility tools on devices, and help others to use these tools
	3. Use the internet to access websites, search engines or emails as needed for my role
	4. Use care technologies and software in my day-to-day work
	5. Solve basic problems when using technology
Go further I have the knowledge and skills to...	6. (Depending on role) Support/lead the set-up, implementation and ongoing maintenance of technology in my organisation
	7. Model how to use different types of technology safely, and help others to understand how digital technologies can be used in their day-to-day work
	8. Support others to solve problems and access learning opportunities to improve their digital skills and confidence
	9. Stay up-to-date with how technology can be used to improve my service and proactively explore new digital technologies

Theme 3 - Communicating through technology	
Level	Knowledge Criteria
Digital skills for all I have the knowledge and skills to...	1. Understand the different methods of digital communication and why they are used.
	2. Choose the right type of communication technology for the situation and adapt my communication style as necessary.
	3. Use communication technologies safely, securely and appropriately, with respect for others and in line with my organisation's policies.
	4. Use digital platforms and forums to collaborate with others.
	5. Support others to use communication technologies to stay connected to family, friends and their community.

Go further I have the knowledge and skills to...	6. Lead in modelling and promoting good practice in digital communication.
	7. Help colleagues to understand, access and use communication technologies safely, and choose the right type of technology for the situation.
	8. Contribute to the development of procedures around safe and appropriate digital communication within my organisation.

Theme 4 - Using and managing data	
Level	Knowledge Criteria
Digital skills for all I have the knowledge and skills to...	1. Understand there are different types of data and know how data can be collected, kept up-to-date and shared using technology.
	2. Understand my personal responsibilities for managing data, in line with legal requirements and my organisation's policies, and know who I should speak to in my organisation if I have questions or concerns.
	3. Understand that some information about people may be confidential and should only be accessed by those who need to see it.
	4. Understand that sharing relevant and necessary information (for example, if there are safeguarding concerns) can be as important as keeping information confidential.
	5. Understand that people have a right to review and make choices about how their information is used, and know how to support them with this.
	6. Know how to record care information in an accurate, timely way using technology.
	7. Understand that when finding and using information online, I should use reliable, trustworthy sources.
Go further I have the knowledge and skills to...	8. Support and develop others to understand the importance of good data management.
	9. Assure people who use my service that information about them is treated confidentially and in a way that complies with data protection legislation, and that staff respect their privacy.
	10. Understand how to choose the right technology for my service to support good data management.
	11. Know how to analyse and present data about my service and use data to improve service quality.

Theme 5 - Being safe and secure online	
Level	Knowledge Criteria
Digital skills for all I have the knowledge and skills to...	1. Understand the importance of data and cyber security and my personal responsibility for handling data safely.
	2. Understand the requirements of, and apply the principles of data security and protection legislation.
	3. Know that there are different types of data security threats (both physical and digital) and how to avoid them.
	4. Know who to speak to in my organisation if I am concerned there may have been a data breach or risk to data security.
	5. Know how to identify signs of online abuse and safeguard others who may be at risk of cyber crime or other harmful online activity.
Go further I have the knowledge and skills to...	6. Put in place robust arrangements to ensure the security of data and data management systems, in line with legislation and data security standards. (This should include completion of the Data Security and Protection Toolkit)
	7. Support and develop others to understand their responsibilities towards data security and model good practice.

	8. Know how to respond to data and security breaches, including how to report incidents to relevant bodies and ensure lessons are learned.
	9. Identify data that is critical to the running of my organisation, and work with IT specialists to ensure necessary data back-ups are undertaken and contingency plans are in place.
	10. Understand the importance of regular software updates and anti-virus software, and work with IT specialists to ensure suitable arrangements are in place.

Theme 6 - Ethical use of technology

Level	Knowledge Criteria
Digital skills for all I have the knowledge and skills to...	1. Understand that people can be impacted by technology in different ways, and that technology should only be used with consent and to benefit people and protect and enhance their rights
	2. Involve and support people to make informed choices on the use of technology for their care
	3. Know how to respond if I have concerns technology may be negatively impacting someone or their rights
Go further I have the knowledge and skills to...	4. Model good practice and lead discussions on the ethical use of technology within my organisation, including the importance of dignity, accessibility, informed consent and person-centred choices.
	5. Inspire and drive a culture of ethical technology use and implementation, ensuring there are processes for putting people at the heart of decision-making at all stages.
	6. Assess the benefits and drawbacks of technology, and provide direction on digital ways of working that promote a rights-based approach.

Theme 7 - Digital learning, development and wellbeing

Level	Knowledge Criteria
Digital skills for all I have the knowledge and skills to...	1. Understand where to find digital training opportunities to advance my learning and self-development.
	2. Participate in and benefit from digital learning opportunities, and share opportunities with others.
	3. Use technology to review and keep a record of my personal learning and development goals.
	4. Understand that using technology can impact on my health and wellbeing and the wellbeing of others, and know how to manage this.
Go further I have the knowledge and skills to...	5. Build a positive digital learning environment and provide opportunities for staff to build digital confidence and develop their skills.
	6. Help colleagues to reflect on and self-assess their digital skills, and encourage a culture of continuous learning and development.
	7. Use technology to monitor my own development, and (if applicable) the development of those I manage/supervise
	8. Develop peer-to-peer digital learning opportunities to improve skills across my organisation.
	9. Support colleagues to be mindful of, and effectively manage their digital wellbeing.

3. Detailed framework themes, knowledge criteria and additional information

Theme 1 - Using technology to support person-centred care

Level	Knowledge Criteria	Additional information
Digital skills for all I have the knowledge and skills to...	1. Understand how technology can support person-centred care	<p>The process of adopting and using technology in care should always start with considering people's needs. I know there are different types of technology that can help people who draw on care, including people who live independently in the community, and I understand why these technologies are used. Care technologies can support quality of life and the provision of high quality, safe and personalised care.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal alarms, monitoring systems (telecare) and key safes - Social care and support guide - NHS (www.nhs.uk) • Exploring the world of assistive technology • Technology enabled care solutions for dementia, learning disabilities, falls prevention and more • Social Care Innovation Programme: Tech Repository
	2. Use technology to work in a person-centred way	<p>I can use technology to involve people in shaping their care and support. For example, I can work in partnership with people I care for to ensure their interests, preferences and goals are captured in their digital social care record (DSCR).⁴ I also have the skills to include and review use of technology within a person's care plan, to ensure it is meeting their needs.</p> <p>I know how to use technology (for example, websites, internet search engines and work systems) to help me answer questions and find online policies, procedures, and information* I need to support person-centred care planning.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training - Using Digital Technology in a Person-Centred Way • What do we mean by digital inclusion • See online resources on person-centred care. • The Skills for Care website includes a range of online tools and resources on specific care topics. Being able to search for and use such online resources can aid understanding of different conditions and support person-centred care planning. • Guidance from Scotland's Care Inspectorate includes further information on technology and care planning.

⁴ A digital social care record allows the digital recording of care information and care received by an individual, within a social care setting, replacing traditional paper records. This is sometimes also called an electronic care plan, electronic care record or electronic care management.

		*Remember to check the information you access online can be trusted. See Theme 4 - Using and Managing Data for further tips and advice.
	3. Help people to learn about technologies that may benefit them	I know how to introduce the potential for using technology in a care situation and can work with people to help them identify, choose and use digital technology that works for them, in line with their wishes and preferences. Useful resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting people with everyday technology • How tech can help people with learning disabilities or differences • Introducing technology (to support people with dementia) • Alzheimer's UK: Using technology in everyday life
	4. Help people to access their personal information and contribute to their digital social care records	I understand that people have the right to see their digital social care record (DSCR) and ask for any mistakes to be put right. I know how to help people to access their personal information in a way they can understand, and know what to do if they request changes. Useful resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What good looks like for digital records in adult social care - Care Quality Commission • Understanding your personal data rights • Individual rights <p>See Theme 4 - Using and Managing Data for further tips and advice.</p>
	5. Use technology to help people to build and maintain relationships and participate in their community.	I understand the different ways technology can help people to keep in touch with family and friends and follow their interests. I know how to support people to communicate with others and participate in activities, hobbies and their community using technology. Useful resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dementia: Using technology to keep in touch - SCIE • Keeping in touch using a video call Age UK • Learning Disabilities and Computing • Ideas and examples of online activities and virtual classes <p>See Theme 3 - Communicating through Technology for further tips and advice.</p>
Go further I have the knowledge and skills to...	6. Help my colleagues to learn about and understand the benefits	At least 1.7 million people in England already use technology to support their care, helping them to stay safe while maintaining their independence. For people who work in social care, technologies such as digital social care records (DSCRs) can also help to reduce time spend on administration tasks, freeing up time for care and interaction.

	<p>of technology for person-centred care</p>	<p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the Digital Social Care Success Stories page for examples of how technology can support person centred care • Digital champions in adult social care • Building the Case for Change Webinar Digital Social Care • What good looks like for digital records in adult social care - Care Quality Commission
	<p>7. Encourage and support my colleagues to help the people they work with learn about and choose suitable technologies for their care.</p>	<p>Technology can be used to promote the wellbeing of people who draw on care in wide variety of ways. Giving colleagues ideas and motivation to be creative in how they use technology, working in partnership with those they care for and their families, can contribute to the provision of quality, person-centred care.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using technology to support people with dementia • How tech can help people with learning disabilities or differences • Training - Using Digital Technology in a Person-Centred Way
	<p>8. (Depending on role) Support/lead strategic decisions on the use of technology in my organisation.</p>	<p>There is growing evidence of the benefits of technology for quality, person-centred care. Staff working in senior and leadership roles are well placed to champion and promote the benefits of digital technology to others in their organisation and shape decisions on the use of technology.</p> <p>Having the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate if and how different technologies may benefit your service • make the case for purchasing and introducing new technology in your organisation • work with others to develop a 'digital plan' for implementing technology and managing change <p>are key skills for social care leaders and staff involved in business management.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Care Technology - How to Choose • Measuring Digital Readiness • If I knew then what I know now... A short guide to introducing new technology in adult social care • Digital Leadership guide resource • Digital crib sheets – National Care Forum

	<p>9. Support a culture of good practice in using technology to provide responsive, person-centred care</p>	<p>Technology should always be used to benefit people who draw on care and support their best interests. This may be achieved directly, for example, through technologies that enhance people’s safety or wellbeing, or indirectly, for example, through technologies that reduce staff time spent on administration tasks and allow more time to be devoted to direct care.</p> <p>Being able to support a culture of good practice around the use of technology will contribute to the provision of responsive, person-centred care, as set out in the CQC’s ‘Responsive’ questions and quality statements. As part of this, it is important that use of technology is regularly reviewed as part of care plan reviews to ensure technology is continuing to meet people’s needs and support their best interests.</p> <p>When assessing and choosing technologies for your service, you may look for technologies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support people to be independent • reduce avoidable hospital admissions • can help people to develop their interests/participate • help people to connect with loved ones • help to support peoples’ information and communication needs • help to deliver timely care and support • help people to contribute to their care planning and reflect their needs • are easy to use <p>See also theme 6 – Ethical use of technology for further information and advice on technology best practice.</p>
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Theme 2 – Technical skills for using technology

Level	Knowledge Criteria	Additional information
<p>Digital skills for all I have the knowledge and skills to...</p>	<p>1. Use digital devices in my day-to-day work</p>	<p>I know how to carry out basic tasks on digital devices as needed for my role. For example, I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect to the internet using the Wi-Fi settings and enter the Wi-Fi password when required. • Turn on a device and enter any information required (e.g., usernames and passwords) to safely login. • Use available controls on my device (e.g., mouse and keyboard on a laptop or computer, or touch screen on a smartphone or tablet). • Find applications (apps) by choosing the correct icons on the home screen. • Update and safely change my password when prompted to do so. • Keep login information for a device and any websites secure, not shared with anyone or written down and left prominently near my device (see Theme 5 - Being safe and secure for more tips and advice) <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of devices to access the internet • Getting started – what to do once you have your devices

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting to the internet • Why do I need to know about Wi-Fi? • Using your computer or device • Computer essentials • Smartphones and tablets
	<p>2. Make use of accessibility tools on devices, and help others to use these tools</p>	<p>I understand it is possible to adapt devices to make them more accessible and easier to use. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making text larger so it is easier to read. • Changing settings to help improve access for people with specific conditions (e.g., dyslexia or arthritis) • Changing sound options or reading text aloud. <p>Being able to use these settings, and help the people you support to use them, can contribute to the provision of quality, person-centred care (see Theme 1 - Using technology to support person-centred care for more tips and advice).</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility – National Care Forum • AbilityNet 'How to' guides • Learning Disabilities and Computing • Smarthouse - Hft Virtual Smarthouse • Exploring the world of assistive technology • Ace centre resources
	<p>3. Use the internet to access websites, search engines or emails as needed for my role</p>	<p>I understand that the internet allows me to access online information and content and communicate with others. I can connect to the internet and open a browser to find and use websites I need for my day-to-day work, and can use email safely in line with my organisation's policies.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online basics • Making the most of the internet
	<p>4. Use care technologies and software in my day-to-day work</p>	<p>More and more care providers are using digital technologies to deliver quality care and to support their staff. The types and brands of technology in use will vary depending on your service and the people you support.</p> <p>This can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technologies that support quality of life. These technologies are used by, with or for the benefit of people who draw on care, based on their specific needs. Examples include technologies that support

		<p>independence or help people to stay connected to loved ones, such as sensory technologies and communication aids.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technologies that support quality and safety of care. These are technologies that can be used by care providers to improve the quality of the care they are delivering. Examples include digital social care record (DSCR) systems and electronic medication administration systems (e-MAR). • Technologies that support the provision of care. These are technologies that are used by people who arrange and provide care to help with business, administration and HR tasks such as e-rostering and digital payslips. <p>It is important that everyone working in social care can develop the skills to use care technologies and software as required for their role. This may involve, for example, accessing and updating information about people you support using a digital care record (see Theme 4 - Using and management data for more tips and advice).</p>
	<p>5. Solve basic problems when using technology</p>	<p>Digital devices and applications⁵ need regular software updates so they can continue to work safely and effectively. Without these updates, problems could arise as the technology may be vulnerable to viruses or faults.</p> <p>It is important you know what to do if you experience a technical problem when using technology. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following instructions set out in your organisation’s policies and procedures • Using the device or software manual to help you solve problems • Using the internet, chat facilities or technical support helplines (where available) to find the information you need • Using online tutorials, FAQs and advice forums <p>If you are unsure what to do, you should always speak to your manager or supervisor, a ‘digital champion’ or similar.</p>

⁵ [Glossary - Digital Social Care](#)

<p>Go further I have the knowledge and skills to...</p>	<p>6. (Depending on role) Support/lead the set-up, implementation and ongoing maintenance of technology in my organisation</p>	<p>There are several steps to implementing a new technology, from ensuring the right connectivity is in place ahead of set-up, to supporting colleagues with using the new system and adapting to new ways of working. This should also include the identification of hazards and management of risks associated with any new technology, to ensure the safety of people who use your service.</p> <p>You may take a leading role, for example, in helping colleagues to use new devices or in developing new policies and procedures for your organisation. You may also need to work with technology suppliers to ensure the installation of digital equipment runs smoothly. There are several guides available to help you with these steps.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I knew then what I know now... A short guide to introducing new technology in adult social care • How digital ready is your organisation? (skillsforcare.org.uk) • Social Care Technology - How to Choose - Digital Social Care • Measuring Digital Readiness • Connectivity, software and equipment • Guides for setting up laptops and tablets (designed for schools, but can be adapted for care settings) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Setting up Microsoft Windows laptops and tablets ○ Setting up Apple iPads <p>It is also important your organisation can maintain the technology and staff have access to ongoing technical support should any issues arise. You should contact your technology supplier for advice regarding technical support in the first instance.</p>
	<p>7. Model how to use different types of technology safely, and help others to understand how digital technology can be used in their day-to-day work</p>	<p>Learning from peers is one of the most common ways people develop their digital skills. You can support your colleagues by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the use of technology to support quality care • Demonstrating how you personally use technology in a safe and effective way • Providing advice if you see common mistakes or unsafe practices • Keeping your own technical skills up-to-date <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital champions in adult social care

	8. Support others to solve problems and access learning opportunities to improve their digital skills and confidence	<p>Being on hand to help colleagues with technical issues and to access learning opportunities will support good digital practice across your organisation. You can do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting colleagues with troubleshooting and problem solving; this may be directly or by helping them to access specialist technical support • Ensuring common problems are learned from in your organisation <p>It is important to remember some people may feel anxious around technology. Support should always be given in a way that is inclusive, non-judgemental and enhances confidence.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital champions in adult social care • What do we mean by digital inclusion • Transform lives with technology: Become a Digital Champion today • Digital skills training database
	9. Stay up-to-date with how technology can be used to improve my service and proactively explore new digital technologies.	<p>Keeping up-to-date with new technologies, championing their benefits and recognising success and innovation will help to ensure your service is continuously learning and improving, as defined in the CQC's 'Well Led' questions and quality statements.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation and why it is important - Care Quality Commission

Theme 3 – Communicating through technology

Level	Knowledge Criteria	Additional information
Digital skills for all I have the knowledge and skills to...	1. Understand the different methods of digital communication and why they are used	<p>There are many ways you can communicate digitally with colleagues, with people you support and their families, and with other professionals and organisations.</p> <p>Examples include communication via email, messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, or sending messages through specialist apps or digital social care record (DSCR) systems. You can also communicate with others in online forums or make video and phone calls virtually, using tools such as Microsoft Teams.</p> <p>Different methods of digital communication can be used for different purposes and for different audiences. It can also help to make communication more accessible, for example, through use of communication aids. See Theme 2 - Technical skills for using technology for more information.</p>

		In all situations, it is important you communicate information safely and securely, especially when sharing information about people. See Theme 4 - Using and managing data for further tips and advice.
	2. Choose the right type of communication technology for the situation and adapt my communication style as necessary	Understanding the digital communication tools on offer, and which tools are right for the situation and/or the needs of the person you are communicating with, will help you to provide quality, person-centred care. Useful resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AbilityNet: Communication aids • Communication skills in social care (includes information about technological aids)
	3. Use communication technologies safely, securely, and appropriately, with respect for others and in line with my organisation's policies	It is important that all staff can use communication technologies safely and appropriately. This may also involve helping others, for example, supporting someone you care for to set up a video call with their family. Digital communication should always be appropriate, respectful of others and in line with your organisation's policies (including any policies regarding use of social media). Useful resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to set up Video Calls for Residents' Friends and Relatives • Technology checklist for video calling an adult or carer • Keeping in touch using a video call • Email essentials • Social media guidance for social service workers (developed for staff working in Scotland, but includes useful tips and advice) <p>See Theme 4 - Being Safe and Secure Online for further advice and tips.</p>
	4. Use digital platforms and forums to collaborate with others	Having the ability to collaborate digitally with others to achieve a shared goal (for example, by contributing to a shared document or online workspace) can help you to learn and develop new skills, and contribute to the provision of quality care. There are also many online forums where social care staff can collaborate to share news, tips and advice. Your Care Association may be able to recommend other local groups and forums. Useful resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills for Care: Social Care Managers Facebook Group • FutureNHS collaboration forum (includes many spaces relevant to social care, for example the Digitising Social Care forum) • Welcome - Knowledge Hub (khub.net) (for Local Authority staff)
	5. Support others to use digital communication	There are a range of technologies that can help people to keep in touch with family, friends and their community. Tips and guides are available to help you help others to stay connected using technology.

	tools to stay connected to family, friends and their community	Useful resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dementia: Using technology to keep in touch • Keeping in touch using a video call <p>See Theme 1 - Using technology to support person-centred care for further tips and advice.</p>
Go further I have the knowledge and skills to...	6. Lead in modelling and promoting good practice in digital communication	You can support your colleagues to develop their digital communication skills by modelling and promoting appropriate use of communication technology in the workplace. You can also advocate the benefits of online forums for learning and collaboration.
	7. Help colleagues to understand, access and use communication technologies safely, and choose the right type of technology for the situation	There are a range of resources available to help you help your colleagues to communicate safely using technology.
	8. Contribute to the development of procedures around safe and appropriate digital communication within my organisation	In line with the CQC's key questions and quality statements , care providers are required to seek accessible ways of communicating with people they support and meet people's information and communication needs. As digital communication methods are increasingly used in the provision of care, staff in leadership and management roles should ensure appropriate policies and procedures are in place to support good digital communication practice.
		Care providers are also required to ensure communication takes place safely, with appropriate data security arrangements in place (see Theme 5 - Being Safe and Secure Online for further tips and guidance).

Theme 4 – Using and managing data

Levels	Knowledge Criteria	Additional information
Digital skills for all I have the knowledge and skills to...	1. Understand there are different types of data and know how data can be collected, kept up-to-	Data about someone you are supporting can be stored and shared digitally in different ways, for example, by inputting information into an app or sharing by text or email. Information relating to someone's care may be classified as 'personal data', 'special category data' (which is more sensitive) or 'confidential data'. There are different rules for handling these types of information.

	date and shared using technology.	<p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the Care Certificate module on Handling Information, and Data Security Awareness courses on elearning for healthcare for more guidance
	2. Understand my personal responsibilities for managing data, in line with legal requirements and my organisation's policies, and know who I should speak to in my organisation if I have questions or concerns.	<p>Data protection law is set out in the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The law states that everyone is responsible for protecting personal data and ensuring it is handled and used appropriately.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the Care Certificate module on Handling Information, and Data Security Awareness courses on elearning for healthcare for more guidance. • Data Protection Legislation • Data Protection Overview for social care • 10 Data Security Standards
	3. Understand that some information about people may be confidential and should only be accessed by those who need to see it.	<p>Confidential data means information that can identify someone, which they would expect to be kept private from those who do not need to see it (for example, information about a person's health condition).</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Guide to Confidentiality in Health and Social Care
	4. Understand that sharing relevant and necessary information (for example, if there are safeguarding concerns) can be as important as keeping information confidential.	<p>Good information sharing is essential for providing safe and effective care. There are a range of guides to help you understand when, how and what information should be shared, and what should be kept confidential. If in doubt, speak to the responsible person in your organisation for data protection, your supervisor or manager.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff guidance on data sharing • Safeguarding adults: sharing information • Information Sharing - elearning for healthcare
	5. Understand that people have a right to review and make choices about how their information is used, and know how to support them with this.	<p>Data protection law gives people certain rights, including the right to be informed about what data is held about them and the right to access their data. Supporting people to make choices about their personal data helps to promote their privacy, dignity and independence, and is important for providing quality care.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privacy and dignity • Staff guidance – Subject Access Requests and Individual Rights

	<p>6. Know how to record care information in an accurate, timely way using technology.</p>	<p>Good digital record keeping is important for providing quality, person-centred care. It helps to ensure people's needs are met and that any risks are identified early. Digital records also ensure that people's wishes and preferences are reflected in their care plans and help with continuity of care.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance on data quality and record keeping • What good looks like for digital records in adult social care - Care Quality Commission • Social care recording
	<p>7. Understand that when finding and using information online, I should use reliable, trustworthy sources.</p>	<p>Not all information on the internet is accurate, up-to-date or trustworthy. In the first instance, search for information on trusted websites such as the CQC, Digital Social Care, Skills for Care, Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), Local Government Association, NHS.UK, GOV.UK and similar. If in doubt, speak with your supervisor or manager.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the Open University guide on what to trust online
<p>Go further I have the knowledge and skills to...</p>	<p>8. Support and develop others to understand the importance of good data management.</p>	<p>Supporting and upskilling others to understand the importance of and how to practice good data management is essential for running a quality social care service. There are a range of resources to help with developing staff skills.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Protection: Discussion Tool and Competency Assessment - Digital Social Care • The Caldicott Principles • Training - Using and Managing Data to Deliver Care - Digital Social Care • Digital champions in adult social care
	<p>9. Assure people who use my service that information about them is treated confidentially and in a way that complies with data protection legislation, and that staff respect their privacy.</p>	<p>Care providers are required to provide assurance to people that their information is handled appropriately, and that staff respect their privacy and dignity, as set out in the CQC's key questions and quality statements.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the way you handle personal information meets the right standards - Care Quality Commission • Care Quality Commission - Good governance • 10 Data Security Standards - Digital Social Care
	<p>10. Understand how to choose the right technology for my service to support good data management.</p>	<p>Email is widely used for communicating and sharing information day-to-day. Because health and care information is sensitive, it is important it is protected and the email system used meets the secure email standard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful resources: Secure email

		<p>In addition to email, digital social care record (DSCR) systems allow information to be shared securely and in real-time with the right people across the health and social care sector. There are a range of resources to help care providers choose the right DSCR system for their service and funding is also available.</p> <p>Learn more:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assured Supplier List for social care • Buyer's Guide for External IT Support • Adult Social Care Digital Transformation Fund
	<p>11. Know how to analyse and present data about my service and use data to improve service quality.</p>	<p>There are many care technologies designed to specifically support the management of quality and governance within the social care sector. However, having the skills to analyse and present data about your service can also help with returning information to regulators or commissioners and with business audits. It can also help you to identify trends and support continuous improvement in your service, in line with the CQC's key questions and quality statements.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic tasks in Excel • Getting started with Excel for care providers

Theme 5 – Being Safe and Secure Online

Levels	Knowledge criteria	Additional information
<p>Digital skills for all I have the knowledge and skills to...</p>	<p>1. Understand the importance of data and cyber security and my personal responsibility for handling data safely.</p>	<p>Everyone has a responsibility for ensuring their organisation is cyber secure. This means IT systems are protected from digital attacks. Cyber-attacks, if successful, can result in services being disrupted, critical information being lost or financial loss.</p> <p>It is important that all staff keep up-to-date with their organisation's data protection and cyber security training.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better Security, Better Care • Learning resource: Cyber security (this includes an introductory video for frontline workers) • Keeping safe online – the essentials
	<p>2. Understand the requirements of, and apply the principles of data security and protection legislation</p>	<p>Legal requirements on data security can be found in the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). There are a range of resource which summarise how these requirements apply in social care settings.</p>

		<p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyber Security Training for Staff • Staff Guidance - GDPR & IG
	<p>3. Know that there are different types of data security threats (both physical and digital) and how to avoid them</p>	<p>Data security threats can relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Social engineering’ – This is when someone tries to trick or manipulate people to gain access to information. A type of social engineering is ‘phishing’. This is where you receive an email, text message or phone call that appears genuine but is actually malicious. It is important you can spot the signs and do not click on suspicious links or open attachments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Be careful with emails • Password security - Using a strong password, not sharing your password with other people, and using a separate password for different accounts are all important for protecting information and data security. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Using Strong Passwords, Why and How • Use of devices – Keeping your computer, tablet or mobile phone safe will reduce risks if it gets lost or is stolen. It is important to lock devices when not in use and be careful what you download onto devices, to reduce risk of viruses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Mobile Devices <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top tips for staff - Overview
	<p>4. Know who to speak to in my organisation if I am concerned there may have been a data breach or risk to data security</p>	<p>It is important that data security incidents and near misses are reported to the responsible person in your organisation (the Data Protection and Security Lead or Data Protection Officer) as soon as possible. In some cases, it may be necessary to report an incident to the police. If you are unsure who has this responsibility in your organisation, speak to your manager or review your organisation’s Data Protection Policy.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff guidance on data breaches
	<p>5. Know how to identify signs of online abuse and safeguard others who may be at risk of cyber crime or other harmful online activity</p>	<p>Online harms can include identify fraud, bullying, grooming, blackmail or scamming. Everyone who works in social care is responsible for protecting people from harm and abuse, and this includes online forms of harm. See your organisation’s Safeguarding Policy for more information.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying safe online - tips for older people <p>For more information on how to reduce potential negative impacts from technology, see theme 6 – Ethical use of technology.</p>

<p>Go further I have the skills and knowledge to...</p>	<p>6. Put in place robust arrangements to ensure the security of data and data management systems, in line with legislation and data security standards. (This should include completion of the Data Security and Protection Toolkit)</p> <p>7. Support and develop others to understand their responsibilities towards data security and model good practice.</p> <p>8. Know how to respond to data and security breaches, including how to report incidents to relevant bodies and ensure lessons are learned.</p>	<p>Care providers are required to ensure they have appropriate data security arrangements in place as set out in the CQC's 'Well led' questions and quality statements. This is also a requirement of completing the Data Security and Protection Toolkit – a self-assessment that all CQC-registered care providers should complete at least once a year.</p> <p>Better Security, Better Care is a national and local support programme to help adult social care providers to store and share information safely. It focuses on helping care providers to complete the Data Security and Protection Toolkit – the annual, online self-assessment.</p> <p>A range of resources and templates have been developed to help care providers with their data security requirements.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Template Policies and Resources for DSPT • Our top tips for strengthening your cyber security • Data Security Audit Checklist • Learning resource: Cyber security (this includes an introductory video for managers) • Staff Guidance - GDPR & IG • Data Security and Protection: Managers' Discussion Tool • Buyer's Guide for External IT Support - <p>Ensuring that staff and colleagues are competent in data security and protection is essential for running a safe, quality service. It is a requirement of Data Security and Protection Toolkit compliance that at least 95% of staff have completed annual Data Security Awareness Training in the last twelve months.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Security and Protection: Managers' Discussion Tool • Data Security and Protection: Quiz for Frontline Care Workers <p>Cyber-attacks can happen to anyone. If a data security incident occurs, it is important to act quickly to reduce the potential for harm. This should include understanding the nature of the problem, reporting the incident, gathering information about possible impact and seeking support from national organisations.</p> <p>You can report any incidents through the Data Security and Protection Toolkit. The Toolkit can also help you decide if you need to report the cyber-attack to the Information Commissioner's Office.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What to do if you are a Victim of a Cyber Attack

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyber Security Resources
	9. Identify data that is critical to the running of my organisation, and work with IT specialists to ensure necessary data back-ups are undertaken and contingency plans are in place.	<p>Keeping data backed-up separately to your computer systems is important for business continuity and will mean you can still access key data, even in the event of a cyber-attack. It is important that contingency plans are in place to ensure your service can continue to operate safely if computer systems are compromised.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back Up Your Data • Buyer's Guide for External IT Support
	10. Understand the importance of regular software updates and anti-virus software, and work with IT specialists to ensure suitable arrangements are in place.	<p>Regular software updates are important for protecting devices, computers and IT systems, while anti-virus products protect against and remove malicious software.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install the Latest Software Updates • Have Up-to-Date Antivirus Software • Buyer's Guide for External IT Support

Theme 6 – Ethical use of technology

Levels	Knowledge criteria	Additional information
Digital skills for all I have the knowledge and skills to...	1. Understand that people can be impacted by technology in different ways, and that technology should only be used with consent and to benefit people and protect and enhance their rights	<p>Technology has the potential to make a positive difference for many people who draw on care, but it is important to remember technology will not be right for everyone and it can sometimes bring risks. For example, wearable devices may help to support independence and reassure family members, but they should not be misused to restrict a person's right to privacy or be used against someone's wishes.</p> <p>Technology should <i>only</i> be used where there is a benefit to people and should protect people's human rights. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology should help to connect people, not isolate them • Technology should help to give people greater choice and control, not limit their choices or restrict their opportunity to make decisions about their care • Technology should enable the right people (e.g., staff, health and care professionals), to access the right information about a person, at the right time, to support quality care - not put people's privacy at risk • Technology should help to support independence and safety, not restrict freedom or autonomy

		<p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecare – the ethical debate • Human rights charter for technology and digital in social care • Human rights, big data and technology in social care
	<p>2. Involve and support people to make informed choices on the use of technology for their care</p>	<p>It is important that people are supported to understand the benefits, disadvantages and alternatives to using technology for their care. Technology should always be used with informed consent, or in line with people’s previously expressed wishes or the wishes of their advocates. It is important that you know the steps involved in gaining informed consent.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CQC guidance – consent to use technology as part of someone’s care. <p>See Theme 1 - Using technology to support person-centred care for further tips and advice.</p>
	<p>3. Know how to respond if I have concerns technology may be negatively impacting someone or their rights</p>	<p>If you have concerns technology may be negatively impacting someone or restricting their rights, you should take appropriate steps to report concerns to a relevant person. This could be a senior member of staff, a carer or family member, or an external organisation.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Certificate standards • Give feedback on care - Care Quality Commission
<p>Go further I have the skills and knowledge to...</p>	<p>4. Model good practice and lead discussions on the ethical use of technology within my organisation, including the importance of dignity, accessibility, informed consent and person-centred choices.</p>	<p>Supporting others to understand the importance of autonomy, privacy and dignity, and the rights of people who draw on care to make informed decisions about the use of technology (including how their personal data is collected and used) is key to ensuring technology is used ethically and in a person-centred way. It is also important that conversations about technology, and technologies themselves, are accessible to others.</p> <p>You can support your colleagues by modelling good practice, for example, demonstrating conversations that help people to learn about and understand how technology may impact their care.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital champions in adult social care • Supporting people with everyday technology • Introducing technology (to support people with dementia) • Human rights charter for technology and digital in social care

	<p>5. Inspire and drive a culture of ethical technology use and implementation, ensuring there are processes for putting people at the heart of decision-making at all stages.</p>	<p>The CQC's ‘Caring’ and ‘Responsive’ questions and quality statements require that people are involved in decisions about their care, and this includes decisions about technology. It is important that your organisation has appropriate processes in place to promote and enable this, and that staff feel able and supported to discuss technology choices with people they are caring for.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving people in decisions about their care • Consent to care and treatment - Care Quality Commission • Guidance from Scotland’s Care Inspectorate includes information about obtaining people’s wishes and considerations regarding capacity (see: Decisions about technology).
	<p>6. Assess the benefits and drawbacks of technology, and provide direction on digital ways of working that promote a rights-based approach.</p>	<p>Having the ability to weigh up the benefits and drawbacks of technology, and put in place working practices that balance the advantages of technology for organisations with the need to respect people’s rights, wishes and preferences, is a key skill in digital leadership.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being transparent in how technology may be used (including how and why data may be collected, processed and shared), and ensuring that people who draw on care and their families are informed and involved in decision-making at all stages. • Conducting impact assessments prior to the introduction of new technology – see more from the CQC: ‘The impact of digital solutions and technology’; • Putting in place systems to monitor the impact on people following technology implementation. • Ensuring that people (staff, people who draw on care and families) can share feedback or raise concerns about how technology is used, and take appropriate steps to act on feedback. <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights charter for technology and digital in social care • Research on human rights, big data and technology in social care • Digital capability for social workers, ethical considerations • A guide to good practice for the use of digital technology in health and care

Theme 7 - Digital learning, development and wellbeing

Levels	Knowledge criteria	Additional information
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Digital skills for all I have the knowledge and skills to...	1. Understand where to find digital training opportunities to advance my learning and self-development.	<p>I know where to find digital learning and training opportunities and can search for opportunities that are relevant to me and my personal development goals.</p> <p>Digital learning and training opportunities can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any adult social care learning resources or training hosted online/on a digital platform • Learning and training specifically related to digital skills. <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Skills Training Database • E-learning for healthcare (this includes online resources for the Care Certificate, see instructions for registering as a social care worker). • Health Education England's Learning Hub
	2. Participate in and benefit from digital learning opportunities, and share opportunities with others.	<p>I can participate in digital learning opportunities (e.g. complete eLearning courses and contribute to online forums) to build my skills. This includes being able to create an online training account, log in and successfully complete online courses.</p> <p>Being able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support colleagues to access online learning to improve their skills (e.g. by recommending and promoting courses you personally found helpful), and • Help people you care for to access online courses/learning opportunities in line with their interests, preferences and goals (e.g. to improve their own digital skills) <p>can also contribute to the provision of quality, person-centred care.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to succeed with online learning Tips and advice • Support someone else - Good Things Foundation
	3. Use technology to review and keep a record of my personal learning and development goals.	<p>I can use technology to assess and reflect on my learning needs to help me find relevant training opportunities, e.g. by using online self-assessment tools, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital skills assessment tool • Care Certificate standards self assessment tool <p>I can also use technology to keep a record of my learning activities to support my personal and professional development (this may be particularly important if you are required to demonstrate continuing professional development (CPD) activities for your role, or for future career progression).</p>

	<p>4. Understand that using technology can impact on my health and wellbeing and the wellbeing of others, and know how to manage this.</p>	<p>I understand that certain behaviours online can impact negatively on my own and others' health and wellbeing and I take steps to ensure my digital interactions are appropriate and respectful to others. I also know where to look for online support to boost my own health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital wellbeing • Digital wellbeing hub for health and social care • Skills for Care – Wellbeing resources
<p>Go further I have the skills and knowledge to...</p>	<p>5. Build a positive digital learning environment and provide opportunities for staff to build digital confidence and develop their skills.</p>	<p>I know how to develop a plan for digital skills training in my organisation and can implement appropriate digital learning solutions to upskill and develop staff. I ensure staff have sufficient time and support to access and benefit from digital learning opportunities; this includes providing appropriate support for staff who feel less confident using technology.</p> <p>I ensure training and support opportunities are offered in a way that is flexible, promotes equitable access and considers the needs and preferences of staff (for example, regarding when, how and where they access learning opportunities).</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and social care providers adopt eLearning • Implementing online learning – success story • Digital Skills Training Database • Data Security and Protection: Managers' Discussion Tool • Data Security and Protection: Quiz for Frontline Care Workers
	<p>6. Help colleagues to reflect on and self-assess their digital skills, and encourage a culture of continuous learning and development.</p>	<p>Supporting the development of staff skills is a requirement of the CQC's key questions and quality statements. Care providers should have processes in place whereby staff learning needs are assessed, and staff are supported to develop their skills in order to provide a quality service. Digital skills should always be included as part of this.</p> <p>The process of inducting staff and reviewing learning needs during appraisals should include an assessment of digital skills, to help staff identify areas for development and choose the right digital skills training opportunities for their needs. This Digital Skills Framework can help with these conversations.</p> <p>Staff should be encouraged to explore the full range of digital learning opportunities on offer, and should be supported to access ongoing development opportunities wherever possible, in line with their preferences and personal development goals.</p>

		<p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning resources: Managers' discussion tool and Assessment tool for frontline staff • Training Needs Analysis Template
	<p>7. Use technology to monitor my own development, and (if applicable) the development of those I manage/supervise</p>	<p>Technology can be used to keep an accurate record of staff training activities, whether this be held in a spreadsheet or in a downloadable report from an online training platform. Being able to quickly view, update and download staff training records will help you ensure staff are up-to-date with mandatory training requirements, and will help you with reporting and providing evidence of training to regulators or other organisations.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and social care providers adopt eLearning
	<p>8. Develop peer-to-peer digital learning opportunities to improve skills across my organisation.</p>	<p>Learning from peers is one of the most common ways people develop their digital skills. There is support available to help you develop peer-to-peer learning opportunities and encourage people who show an interest in technology to support and upskill others – developing themselves as ‘digital champions’ in the process.</p> <p>Opportunities for learning from other organisations (as well as people) should be explored to help with business development. Engaging with others via digital forums or online communities will help you learn from other organisations’ experiences and share best practice in relation to digital ways of working.</p> <p>Useful resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital champions in adult social care • Skills for Care: Social Care Managers Facebook Group
	<p>9. Support colleagues to be mindful of, and effectively manage their digital wellbeing.</p>	<p>Within my organisation, I promote a culture of respectful digital interaction and take action if I become aware of inappropriate practices.</p> <p>I understand the importance of, and ensure that staff are fully supported to manage their digital wellbeing. This includes promoting open, non-judgemental conversations about technology and digital learning among staff, and offering support and reassurance to those who may feel anxious using technology.</p> <p>In line with the CQC’s key questions and quality statements, I seek out and promote digital wellbeing support within my organisation to help promote staff health and wellbeing.</p>