Innovation ECHO 28th September 2022 – Digital developments
10 minute summary

Charity Digital Skills – Steve Thorlby-Coy, Director of IT and Digital Services, Hospice UK

The Charity Digital Skills report give an annual snapshot of how digital technology is being used in the charity sector. It enables organisations to benchmark their digital progress and identify trends.

The report shares findings from a survey of 435 charity professionals across the UK. There are 20 themes, and it is recommended to read the full report. Key points include:

- 82% of charities see digital as more of a priority following COVID-19.
- Wellbeing is seen as an important part of remote working.
- Barriers to digital progress include not having funding for devices and infrastructure as well as needing to upskill staff and volunteers.
- 12% of charities see themselves as being ‘curious’ about digital, and 31% see themselves as ‘starting out’. Only 12% see themselves as ‘advanced’.
- Around a third of charities have someone who leads on digital as part of their role. However 22% don’t have anyone pushing forward the digital agenda.
- There are skills gaps around using data to plan and design services.

If you have any questions about any of the content covered in this presentation or Charity Digital Skills in general, please feel free to contact Steve via email at s.thorlby-coy@hospiceuk.org.

Using the Charity Digital Skills report for digital development - Marc Esmiley, Trustee, St Andrews Hospice

Marc was recruited as a trustee of St Andrews because he has considerable experience of technology and digital solutions. St Andrews has used the Charity Digital Skills report as a matrix to help identify skills gaps and form a more strategic digital plan.

The hospice did not have anyone leading on digital development, so Dennis Vause has now been recruited as Head of IT and Transformation. They have also formed a Digital Strategy committee and appointed digital champions across the organisation.

A key priority for the committee is helping people connect, internally and externally. Considerations include data warehousing and secure storage for clinical data; giving clinical staff easy access to laptops and hardware; and having remote solutions for retail teams.

Remote working has been beneficial for the governance of the hospice – it means trustees can be recruited from a wider geographical area.
**Discussion – key points**

Digital leadership is key – there was interest in the idea of having a Board member with digital skills.

Digital underpins everything – the more we can do, the better.

There can be a perception that digital/IT is overwhelming – the digital world is continuously evolving and we don’t know what we don’t know. The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to take huge steps forward in a short space of time but we are now reaching a more nuanced understanding of how best to incorporate hybrid working.

There is strong interest in forming a network to help hospices keep abreast of digital developments, co-operate and share learning. This includes sharing what has gone wrong as well as what has worked well.

There were requests for shared resources around creating a job description for a digital lead, skills matrixes, examples of key documents such as IT policies and strategies, guidance on the pros and cons of using different services and systems.

Areas to explore further:

- Evaluation of the impact of services that are delivered remotely compared with face-to-face
- Using technology to deliver programmes and training in partnership with other hospices, particularly clinical training and health/wellbeing programmes
- Digital technology and equality, diversity and inclusion

**Helpful resources**

Hospices have used the following to benchmark their digital progress:

- The [Charity Digital Skills report](#)
- NCVO’s [Digital Maturity Matrix](#)
- Health Education England’s [Health and Care Digital Capabilities Framework](#)

There was a discussion about the use of the HSCN (Health and Social Care Network) for accessing and sharing patient data in England. HSCN replaces the older N3 system and gives organisations a list of approved network providers to choose from. [Access more information about how to get connected to the HSCN](#).

**Continue the discussion**

- Join the Innovation ECHO [online discussion group](#)
- There will be two sessions on Digital at the [Hospice UK Conference](#) in November
- We will keep everyone updated with information about the new Digital/Technology network
• If you have examples that you would like to share, please contact us.