

Plan for digital health and social care will help alleviate staffing pressures across the NHS

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The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) has welcomed the plan for digital health and social care announced today by the Department for Health and Social Care. The plan outlines how the Government will accelerate the use of digital technology across the NHS and social care to improve efficiency and free up frontline workers' time.

In addition to the investment in technology, the plan recognises the need to bolster skills across the healthcare arena, outlining plans to:

- Develop a National Digital Workforce Strategy to bridge the skills gap and ensure the NHS remains an attractive place to work

- Grow the specialist data and technology workforce needed to support digital health and social through creating an additional 10,500 positions for graduates, apprentices and experienced hires

- Embed digital skills development into university curriculums to support future and incoming workforces

- Provide a digital learning offer for adult social care staff, such as offering accessible training and online resources.

Tania Bowers, Global Public Policy Director at APSCo commented:

"The healthcare sector is still trying to catch up on the backlog that was created during the pandemic, so any move to alleviate some of the time pressures on already over-stretched workers is welcome. With the Government's Health and Social Care Committee currently running inquiries around digitising the NHS and bolstering skills, the plan for digital health and social care sets solid foundations for change.

"The announced National Digital Workforce Strategy will be key to not only supporting the healthcare sector in general, but will also maximise the potential of the integrated care systems (ICS). This latest news should help improve access to skilled workers and ensure they are deployed in the right care settings at the right time to unblock patient delivery issues caused by a lack of available resources.

"Simplification across hiring frameworks in healthcare is still needed, though. In fact, APSCo launched its dedicated Compliance+ accreditation for the clinical and healthcare sector this week in a bid to

create a consistent recruitment standard that is recognised and utilised across all frameworks, in synergy with NHS Employers.”

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