

Item: 16

REPORT CLASSIFICATION	✓	CATEGORY OF PAPER	✓
Official	✓	Proposes specific action	✓
Official: Sensitive Commercial		Provides assurance	
Official: Sensitive Personal		For information only	

BOARD	
3 JUNE 2025	
Report Title:	NENC ICS Digital Inclusion Strategy
Purpose of report	
To present the NENC ICS Digital Inclusion Strategy to the Board for approval.	
Key points	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The enclosed draft NENC ICS Digital Inclusion Strategy has been developed in partnership with the NENC ICS Digital Inclusion Steering Group members. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Steering Group was established in December 2022 and meets every six weeks. Chaired by Steph Downey (Strategic Director Integrated Adults and Social Care Services, Gateshead Council and North East ADASS Digital Policy Lead), the Steering Group has over 30 representatives, including colleagues from across Health, Social Care and VCSE organisations. As per NHSE 2025/26 priorities and operational planning guidance, there is an expectation that 'all systems mitigate against digital exclusion, including by implementing the framework for NHS action on digital inclusion'. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This draft NENC ICS Digital Inclusion Strategy focusses on five key inter-linked themes, based on the national domains for action on digital inclusion, as set out in the framework. Following significant stakeholder engagement in the development of the draft Strategy, it has been presented and socialised regionally, including (<i>but not limited to</i>) the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NENC ICS Digital Partnership Council NENC ICS Digital Delivery Group NENC ICS Digital Strategy and Innovation Group Joint ICT OSC (North East Combined Authority) North East ADASS TEC Forum NENC DSDN Annual Conference NENC CIO Network NENC VCSE Partnership Forum NENC CCIO Network NENC ICB Executive Team Meeting The Strategy is underpinning to the NENC ICS Digital, Data and Technology Strategy and supports the 'left-shift' in health and care. The NENC ICS Digital Inclusion Steering Group has strong links to and representation from NENC ICB Healthier and Fairer colleagues, with elements of delivery funded via the Healthier and Fairer Programme. 	

Risks and issues						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent announcements around ICB cost reductions and subsequent expected restructuring requirements, may impact upon direction and resource to oversee ongoing delivery of the NENC ICS Digital Inclusion Strategy. Recent announcements regarding NHS England may impact upon availability of potential national funding opportunities, to support delivery of the Strategy. Availability of funding via the NENC ICB Healthier and Fairer Programme may impact upon delivery capabilities. 						
Assurances and supporting documentation						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developments will be monitored as they emerge and evolve, to assess impact upon delivery of the Strategy. The Executive Committee recommended the NENC ICS Digital Inclusion Strategy for approval to the Board. 						
Recommendation/action required						
The Board is asked to approve the NENC ICS Digital Inclusion Strategy.						
Acronyms and abbreviations explained						
<p>NENC – North East and North Cumbria ICS – Integrated Care System ICB – Integrated Care Board ICT – Information and Communication Technology OSC – Overview and Scrutiny Committee ADASS - Association of Directors of Adult Social Services TEC – Technology Enabled Care DSDN – Digital Skills Development Network CIO – Chief Information Officer CCIO – Chief Clinical Information Officer VCSE - Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise</p>						
Sponsor/Approving Executive Director	Professor Graham Evans - Chief Digital and Infrastructure Officer/SIRO					
Date approved by Executive Director	30 April 2025					
Report author	Maria Williams – Deputy Director of Digital Programmes and Governance					
Link to ICP strategy priorities (please tick all that apply)						
Longer and Healthier Lives						✓
Fairer Outcomes for All						✓
Better Health and Care Services						✓
Giving Children and Young People the Best Start in Life						✓
Relevant legal/statutory issues						
Note any relevant Acts, regulations, national guidelines etc						
Any potential/actual conflicts of interest associated with the paper? (please tick)	Yes		No		N/A	✓

Equality analysis completed (please tick)	Yes		No		N/A	✓
If there is an expected impact on patient outcomes and/or experience, has a quality impact assessment been undertaken? (please tick)	Yes		No	✓	N/A	
Essential considerations						
Financial implications and considerations	To date, elements of funding to deliver the NENC ICS Digital Inclusion Strategy has been provided via the NENC ICB Healthier and Fairer Programme. – Confirmation of 2025/26 funding tbc.					
Contracting and Procurement	n/a					
Local Delivery Team	n/a					
Digital implications	Professor Graham Evans - Chief Digital and Infrastructure Officer/SIRO					
Clinical involvement	Dr Jonathan Richardson (CCIO) is a member of the NENC ICS Digital Inclusion Steering Group. The draft Strategy has also been presented to the NENC CCIO Forum.					
Health inequalities	Colleagues representing Health Inequalities via the Healthier and Fairer Programme are members of the NENC ICS Digital Inclusion Steering Group.					
Patient and public involvement	Colleagues from NENC HealthWatch have been included in the development and socialising of the Strategy.					
Partner and/or other stakeholder engagement	Partner/stakeholder engagement via NENC ICS Digital Inclusion Steering Group. Also, as detailed above and documented within the Strategy.					
Other resources	n/a					