

Microsoft 365 Cross-Organisation Collaboration

Supporting colleagues across the Health and Care sector to collaborate more easily

Introduction

To plan for this year's winter pressures, NHS Scotland Digital Leads came together in early 2022 to identify rapid, tactical deliverables that could be developed and implemented by October 2022.

For several years, frontline workers, respective Heads of Service and CMTs across Local Government, Integrated Joint Boards, NHS Scotland and the Care Inspectorate have fed back the challenges of calendaring, collaborative communication and working between multi-function teams across Scotland's Health & Care System.

Building on the desire to make better use of technology and Microsoft 365 to expand on the benefits realised during the Covid-19 pandemic, it was recognised that enabling further collaboration between Health & Social Care Partners will act as an enabler for a better integrated approach between teams at all levels.

A Short Life Working Group, jointly chaired by Scottish Government Digital Health & Care and Digital Office for Local Government, was established to explore and implement Outlook Calendar Availability Sharing (free/busy) and Teams calls/chat functionality in a handful of Local Authorities/Health Boards by October 2022. The results of this Test of Change would inform the wider rollout across all Health Boards and Local Authorities and set the foundations for further collaboration.

Test of Change – Phase One

A test of change involving 3 Health Boards and 6 Local Authorities has successfully enabled the sharing of Outlook calendars (free/busy information only) and direct communications (chat/calls) via Microsoft Teams. The Health Boards and 6 Local Authorities involved in the Test of Change were as follows:

- Argyll & Bute Council
- Glasgow City Council
- Highland Council
- NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
- NHS Highland
- NHS Lanarkshire
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Renfrewshire Council
- South Lanarkshire Council

A suite of documents has been prepared following the Test of Change to support new organisations to enable this functionality.

Benefits

The initial anticipated benefits of this functionality, identified by the pilot, include:

- Increased ease, efficiency and productivity through time-saved by accessing calendars and direct communications, rather than relying on email and/or searching for telephone numbers
- Increased speed of communications through knowing if/when people are available, direct messaging/calls, reduced reliance on emails/third party messages
- Reduced delays for patients/staff due to the ability to make real-time decisions, improved meeting attendance, reduced rescheduling of meetings
- Reduced duplication of effort by having direct access to calendars, rather than managing duplicate calendars.

Next Steps

Wider rollout of Phase 1

All remaining Health Boards and Local Authorities are now invited to adopt the same approach, to ease communication challenges as we move into the winter period.

The following organisations have confirmed their participation in the wider rollout to date:

- Scottish Borders Council & NHS Borders
- North Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire & Arran
- East Renfrewshire Council, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
- West Lothian Council & NHS Lothian
- Angus Council, Perth & Kinross Council, NHS Tayside
- Fife Council, NHS Fife
- Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, NHS Grampian

The central project team is working with them to identify suitable timings for welcome and debrief sessions.

If your organisation would like to join the next workstream, please get in touch at info@digitaloffice.scot. You will be asked to nominate a team within your organisation to deliver the changes in collaboration with the Health Board in your area.

The dedicated leads will be given access to the project Teams Channel, hosted on the Digital Office tenancy, and will gain access to a range of supporting documents. They will also be invited to an introductory meeting where they will meet the national team and have an opportunity to ask questions.

Phase 2

This work will now transition into a national programme to ease collaboration between Health & Social Care teams. The central programme team will work with Health Boards and Local Authorities over the coming months to understand how to help improve communications and ways of working and will establish a roadmap for further developments.