

Understanding what users need means getting closer to what they experience

All NHS trusts have established ways of bringing patient and service user views to the board. But how close are you to your users' digital experience?

At our development sessions and peer learning events, trust leaders have shared some practical ideas to bring these essential stories and viewpoints to the board's attention. This briefing note sums up what we've heard so far.

1

Observing how things work in the real world

Watch staff using the trust's existing computer systems or patients as they access a digital service. What does this tell you? Are people relying on workarounds and why?

Ensure board members try out new digital services, especially when they're still in development. If a chief executive struggles to use them, patients and service users will struggle too.

2

Understanding where you're at

Map out all the trust's existing digital services and spend time exploring the interconnections. Or review the digital challenges and opportunities in a specific patient pathway and identify the wider learning.

Convene focus groups of staff and service users to get people talking openly and honestly about their experiences of the trust's digital platforms.

Review all complaints relating to digital at a future board meeting. Ensure questions about the digital user experience are considered when complaints are investigated.

3

Making it part of the day job

Ensure the stories that come to the board include experience of the trust's digital services.

What does this tell board members about current pain points?

Ask about digital user journeys as part of the board's existing service visits to get ongoing feedback from patients, service users and staff.

Review how staff are involved in digital service development. Look at the role of users in the governance of the trust's digital programmes.

Develop a network of 'digital champions' who can help to drive further digital innovation while connecting the board to views at the frontline.

Questions for boards

- How do we gather feedback about new digital services?
- How can we make it easy for stories about user 'pain points' to reach us at the board?
- Have we directly experienced what our users experience, rather than reading a description on paper?
- How can we bake user feedback requests into the design of all new services?
- Whose viewpoints are we missing? Which users have we overlooked?
- Are our digital services inclusive to, and accessible by, everyone who needs them?
- What small changes would have a big impact?



The single biggest change that truly digital organisations make is becoming genuinely user-centred. That means understanding the needs and digital experience of all your users – not just patients and service users, but also clinicians, operational and support staff. Everyone.

PUBLIC DIGITAL



It's not enough to ask users what they want. It's essential to watch them using your services – in real time, in person – to truly, genuinely understand the problems they face.

PUBLIC DIGITAL

Finding out more

The Digital Boards programme, delivered in partnership with Public Digital and supported by Health Education England and NHSX, has engaged board members from over 100 trusts over the last six months. This briefing is the first in a series to capture some of the insights and actions boards have committed to take to improve their collective leadership of the digital agenda.

- **Read** our **guides** on digital leadership hot topics
- **Visit** our **knowledge hub** for blogs, case studies and other board resources on digital transformation
- **Join** one of our **virtual events**
- **Contact** louise.stopford@nhsproviders.org to book a free, tailored board development session on leading digital transformation.