

Consultation Response Form

Your name: David Cook

Organisation (if applicable): Wales Council for
Voluntary Action

email / telephone number: dcook@wcva.cymru / 02920
431 710

Your address: WCVA, Baltic House, Mount Stuart
Square, Cardiff, CF10 5FH

Question 1: We would like to know your views on the proposed functions of the new Digital Special Health Authority

Our views are based on feedback from voluntary sector organisations across Wales plus assessment from our position as the national member body for Wales.

We note some general and specific points:

1. There is a need to understand what will work for people digitally and what will not. This includes access, connectivity, skills and confidence.
2. The voluntary sector has access to valuable data. We feel strongly that the DHSA should make use of this information in the planning and development of services, as well as data it makes available as part of its reporting process. The sector must be involved in discussions around this.
3. The DHSA's Digital Governance Framework must make it explicit how the DHSA intends to contribute to the successful implementation of the Future Generations Act and set out how this will be measured
4. Care and Repair Cymru have raised concerns about how older people will be involved in the digital conversation – this is not outlined explicitly in the documentation. Welsh Government data shows that only 49% of adults over 75 in Wales use the internet. Any digital-first approach must not reduce the opportunities of older people to access services. Otherwise, there is a risk of an increase in health problems, inequalities, loneliness and isolation.
5. We would also like to hear how the Digital Special Health Authority (DSHA) will address the needs of those with sensory problems. There is potential for the DHSA to be of great benefit to those with sensory loss by utilising video with audio, BSL and subtitles and show itself to be an exemplar. However, if this does not happen, then the DHSA is potentially simply another barrier in the way of accessing services for those who need them most. Likewise, in terms of need and access, those with a learning disability need to be considered.
6. It is vital that the DHSA clearly sets out how it will work with older people, those with sensory loss, and others who may face barriers to accessing services – for example, BAME people – in order to meet the Future Generations Act's goal of a

more equal Wales and to ensure it tallies effectively with A Healthier Wales. If this does not happen, people risk being left behind.

7. Similarly, broadband is very poor in many parts of Wales. It's vital that people and communities in these areas are not left behind by the drive towards digital and that they are able to access services in more traditional ways.
8. It is vital that GP clusters are effectively engaged in these changes.
9. It is essential that services are designed, commissioned, planned and delivered co-productively so that all stakeholders feel a true sense of ownership. We do not see in the document whether patients and their carers have been involved in early discussion on the development of the DSHA, given that the Welsh Government is 'placing people and patients at the centre of this work'.

Question 2: We would like to know your views on the proposed board structure for the new Digital Special Health Authority

10. The voluntary sector is overlooked in the documentation. As a key deliverer of health and social services across Wales, both in-person and digitally, we feel the Board would benefit from voluntary sector representation. In the Board's current structure, it does not. The sector would also be able to help advertise opportunities to apply to join the Board – extending the reach and diversity of the recruitment process.

Question 3: If you believe that one or more of the proposed functions of the new Digital Special Health Authority overlaps with a function already being undertaken by a different organisation in Wales (that is not NWIS), we would like to know your reasons and any evidence to support your views on those issues.

11. As noted above, digital exclusion continues to be a problem for many people in Wales. The DSHA should set out how it intends to tackle this. We are keen to hear how the DSHA will work with Digital Communities Wales to ensure health services in Wales are digitally inclusive.
12. We also wish to hear more about how the Padlets provided to care homes could be rolled out further to other regulated residential settings and to people being cared for at home who are digitally isolated.

Question 4: We would like to know if you believe whether a further function or set of functions should be included within the responsibility of the new Digital Special Health Authority and for you to set out your reasons and any evidence and research to support your view.

13. Horizon scanning and future proofing will be an important role for the DHSA. Although there is much work to do in the present day, it – and Wales – must be prepared for what is coming over the next few years. Technology moves fast!

Question 5: We would like to know your views on the effects that 'A Digital

Special Health Authority for Wales' would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favorably than English. What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

14. The Welsh language must be embedded into planning and processes from day one. People must be able to use the language of their choice when interacting with the DHSA.

Question 6: Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy 'A Digital Special Health Authority for Wales' could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favorably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favorably than the English language.

15. Please see our response to Q5.

Question 7: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Please enter here:

16. The voluntary sector is not referenced in the consultation material. Should the sector be excluded from the planning processes, the DHSA and its partners will not benefit from the wealth of data and knowledge it possesses. There are good opportunities for partnership working in this area and we recommend they are progressed to achieve the maximum benefit for people across Wales.
17. The sector has an integral part to play in the delivery of digital health and social services, and a wealth of innovative, effective digital knowledge and experienced. It should be treated by the DHSA as the key player it is. However, it – from community-led and volunteer-involving organisations up to the Third Sector Support Wales infrastructure - will need support to maximise its effectiveness under this structure, including funding for training and equipment.
18. Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services have recommended a citizen user group be part of the DHSA to test ideas and concept, and we second this opinion.
19. The DHSA must also show how it will share good digital practice and support stakeholders in doing the same. It must also ensure it demonstrates the impact it has made on communities across the country.
20. Digital health and social delivery work well for those digitally literate. Face-to-face delivery remains important where a person does not want to engage digitally, especially around shared decision-making.

21. More clarity on how the DHSA will deliver funding under the Digital Priorities Fund would be useful. It appears that to take true advantage of the shift to digital, much of the workforce, including the voluntary sector workforce, will require upskilling – this will require funding, as, of course, will the delivery of critical digital health and social care services.
22. We thank all those who have taken time to contribute to our response, including Care and Repair Cymru, Building Communities Trust, Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services and Associations of Voluntary Organisations Wrexham.
23. WCVA will be pleased to discuss these or any other points relating to this consultation response with officials, committees or Ministers if required.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: