

Written evidence submitted by Faculty of Clinical Informatics (DHS0055)

About the Faculty of Clinical Informatics

The Faculty of Clinical Informatics is the UK's multidisciplinary professional membership body for health and care professionals working in digital health.

Our aim is to support the development of a safe and skilled workforce and encourage a UK wide innovative clinical informatics culture in order to improve the health and wellbeing of the population. This follows and builds on the Wachter Review of 2016.

To this end we have published competency standards for clinical informaticians which can be used for many purposes including job descriptions, employment appraisal, personal development and education. We support our membership in achieving and maintaining these standards through provision of learning resources, networking, a mentorship programme, webinars and other events, and special interest groups (SIGs) on a range of subjects, such as Digital Medicines, Clinical Safety, Interoperability, and Artificial Intelligence. The SIGs provide communities of practice and opportunities for sharing resources and learning.

We support the development of the clinical informatics workforce and have written a model job description for Chief Clinical Information Officers. In October 2022 we published a resource providing advice on building a successful integrated clinical informatics team, including case studies. The next steps include a survey of the clinical informatics workforce to provide an initial baseline which we will complete by January 2023.

Background

This submission has been informed by our multi-disciplinary membership. We currently have around 1,200 members, many of whom work in the NHS in front-line roles. Clinical informaticians practise, teach and study clinical informatics. A small number do this in full-time employment, but many more do it in combination with their professional practice in health and social care.

They do this as part of a wider team and use their clinical knowledge and experience of informatics concepts, methods and tools to promote patient and population care that is person-centred, ethical, safe, effective, efficient, timely, and equitable. They include senior digital leaders, such as Chief Clinical Information Officers (CCIOs), Chief Nursing Information Officers (CNIOs) and members of their teams.

Around 800 of our members are clinically qualified, comprising around 57% of the clinical informatics workforce in England (as cited in the NHS Long Term Plan).

Commitment 1: Co-creation of a national digital workforce strategy with the health and care system setting out a framework for bridging the skills gap and making the NHS an attractive place to work.

We are keen to be involved in the creation of a national digital workforce strategy and feel that we have much to contribute, particularly as we represent a large proportion of the clinical informatics workforce. To date we have had no visibility of work on a strategy and have not been invited to contribute to one.

We are part of a collaboration with other professional informatics bodies, the Federation for Informatics Professionals (FEDIP), the other member bodies of FEDIP should also be engaged in the development of strategy.

There is a need for a national baseline analysis of numbers and roles of those working in clinical informatics to enable both the development of strategy and the monitoring progress. We would contribute to this through our national surveys of our membership and wider networks.

The skills of clinical informaticians are central to the successful development of new pathways of care and the engagement of the wider workforce. Making sure that these skills are available will improve both efficiency and patient safety, and help to reduce the current unsustainable burden on health and social care professionals.

There are many organisations working in this space, but a lack of coordination and clarity about roles. An important role for a workforce strategy will be to clarify roles and expectations from all of the organisations who need to work together to develop the digital workforce.

We have developed a strategy for the Faculty to support the national objectives set out in the Long Term Plan and in Health Education England's report "Data Driven Healthcare in 2030". We will enable the development of the Clinical Informatics workforce through:

- 1. Building a Clinical Informatics community**, for the profession, giving it a home and a supportive place to collaborate and network.
- 2. Developing learning** for everyone involved or interested in Clinical Informatics
- 3. Leading the way for Clinical Informatics** to be recognised and developed as an important profession which drives high quality health and care and wellbeing for people by employers, education providers and professional bodies, the public and the professionals themselves. This should be based on universally accepted professional standards of practice in Clinical Informatics.
- 4. Delivering** practical projects and programmes that will demonstrate a tangible difference through the use of the Clinical Informatics specialty, using the unique, deep and diverse skillset of the Faculty's membership.

Commitment 2: We will enable recruitment retention and growth of the digital, data, technology workforce to meet challenging projected health and care demand by 2030 through graduates, apprentices and experienced hires creating posts for an additional 10,500 full-time staff.

The digital workforce is very varied and there is a need for this variety of roles to work together to achieve the digital transformation targets set in the NHS Long Term Plan. To reflect the diverse workforce targets should be set at a more granular level, for example for clinical informaticians, data analysts, knowledge managers. Targets should be measurable and should identify future requirements.

Delivering benefits to patients through transformed pathways of care requires the coordination of many different strands. Co-development by patients and practitioners offers opportunities that are otherwise not achievable. Clinical informaticians play a key translation role between technical staff, the technology, clinicians and patients. Clinicians often find it difficult to understand the benefits of Electronic Health Record systems and are concerned about the additional pressures that they can bring, often at a time when they are at their busiest.

A second key issue is developing and maintaining the skills required by clinical informaticians to enable them to undertake their roles safely and effectively. The Faculty of Clinical Informatics is developing curricula for undergraduate and postgraduate education and for practitioners in their early careers. We ensure that clinical informaticians are able to remain up to date through provision of a comprehensive CPD programme and are developing systems that will support lifelong portfolios. We provide support for health and care professionals in finding opportunities for development through sharing stories of professional journeys, providing information on development opportunities such as fellowships, and supporting employers in the recruitment of high quality clinical informaticians.

References

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[Model Job Description of a Chief Clinical Information Officer](#), Faculty of Clinical Informatics, September 2021

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