

Connected Communities

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Health Education England's Connected Communities project was set up following research on career pathways [7] in health and care informatics, undertaken by the Digital Readiness programme in 2019, which recommended that further work was needed on defining the professional body offer and understanding health informatics network opportunities.

During September and October 2020 we undertook a short user research (discovery) piece to rapidly understand the needs of health informatics professionals (bodies, groups and individuals) and how best to engage with them and understand their participation and involvement in networks, in order to improve professional and service development in the future. We would like to thank everyone who contributed by sharing their experiences and opinions through surveys, interviews and workshops.

We heard many positive things, from the large and varied range of networks available, to the value people feel they bring to their work and professional development. Themes from the research include:

- The current networks and communities supporting our informatics workforce are extremely valued and demonstrate that they meet a genuine need.
- There's desire from those within networks (particularly within leadership positions), to better utilise networks and communities in policy making decisions and discussions.
- The need to support the long-term sustainability of our networks.
- Opportunities to support individual's professional development through learning and training were identified as particular areas of value as well as being in high demand.
- There are potential disparities in participation and general satisfaction of informatics networks and communities between those within leadership and management roles compared with those in more junior or entry level roles.
- There are opportunities to support individuals to identify what networks and communities are available and relevant to join.

The discovery project is now complete, and we are pleased to be able to share the outcomes. Three documents have been produced to support this project:

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Connected Communities document A - Executive summary.pdf [8]

 Connected Communities document A - Executive summary.pdf [9]

? Three-page overview of the key take-away messages.

- ## **Connected Communities document B - Main report.pdf [10]**

 Connected Communities document B - Main report.pdf [11]

? Series of recommendations based on findings.

- ## **Connected Communities document C - Summary of key findings.pdf [12]**

 Connected Communities document C - Summary of key findings.pdf [13]

? Appendices-style document outlining key findings gathered during the discovery project.

Following the publication of our discovery findings, it was felt that there were some gaps in this engagement from people early on in their careers and within certain sectors of the NHS and Social Care. In view of this, HEE decided to further test the recommendations with those that had not had an opportunity to input in the discovery project and this report gives an overview of these additional findings.

- ## **Connected Communities Consultation final report - July 2021.pdf [14]**

 Connected Communities Consultation final report - July 2021.pdf [15]

Work is on-going to plan how the recommendations from this discovery project can be tested and taken forward to be delivered with the aim of supporting our networks and communities.

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[3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/>

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