Amanda Pritchard & Dr Timothy Ferris

NHS England

Redditch

B97 9PT
England

8 December 2021

Dear Ms Pritchard & Dr Ferris,

We are writing to you as the Chairs of the Digital Health CCIO, CNIO and CIO Networks. We are the elected representatives of a community of 6,000 digital leaders across the NHS delivering transformation on behalf of our patients and workforce.

This is following the publication of the Wade-Gery review, and the recently announced streamlining of NHSX and NHS Digital into the Transformation and CIO Directorates of NHS England respectively.

We see this streamlining ultimately as a sensible step, however across our membership there have been some concerns raised that we felt it important to highlight and to offer our engagement, to ensure that we maintain the focus on digital transformation that is so critical to the NHS as a whole.

Over the last twelve months, and in particular during the response to the Covid pandemic, we have built strong and improving relationships with our NHSX and D colleagues across all aspects of digital leadership, and of course our thoughts are with them as this reshuffle is enacted. There are always people at the centre of these change initiatives.

In terms of where we see some challenges, we have summarised key themes below and would welcome your views and assurance on these points:

We are keen to seek assurance that digital delivery and transformation remains a key, highly visible element of the overall NHS strategy, with a clear voice for frontline leaders in this space. We would not want to see that focus lost through the streamlining exercise

There has been progress in terms of strategic direction, transparency of communication, and engagement with our members to help define the frameworks and measures to support this. We feel strongly that we would not want to see this momentum and engagement fall victim to the distractions of organisational change, **and want to retain the current focus on frontline representation for our diverse digital community.**

We strongly believe that the leadership of the digital agenda should be mandated at Board level - at the centre, regionally and locally.

We believe the changes that are being made have the real potential to be a force for good and to provide cohesion and focus. Whilst highlighting where we see challenges, we are also keen to offer our continuing engagement and support to maintain the focus on the delivery of the vital digital services and transformation that the NHS both needs and deserves.

Kind regards,

Lisa Emery

Chair of the CIO Network

Chief Information Officer, Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust

Sarah Hanbridge

Chair of the CNIO Network

CCIO Nursing & AHP, The Christies NHS Foundation Trust

James Reed

Chair of the CCIO Network

Director of Health Informatics, The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust