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This report shares detail collected by RCN Scotland in late 2016, through stakeholder interviews with district nurses and community nursing managers from seven NHS boards and with academics. All stakeholders were selected because of their interest in technology enabled care.

These interviews covered topics relating to technology and eHealth in district nursing. While technology-enabled care is much broader, this report focuses on what stakeholders shared with the RCN in relation to mobile technologies.

Questions were explored around the current use and awareness of mobile technologies by district nursing teams, barriers and facilitators to their more widespread introduction, and the perceived benefits of mobile technologies in the context of multidisciplinary and multi-agency team working and the integration of health and social care.

Throughout the report direct quotes about mobile technologies from people who participated in the stakeholder interviews, are used to illustrate key themes in the report.

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- Participants in the interviews
- Jennifer Waterton, who conducted the interviews and research on behalf of the RCN
- Alice Gentle, Policy Officer at RCN Scotland, who led on the writing of this report.



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As district nurses and the teams they work with are a key workforce for the delivery of the Scottish Government's strategic goals⁴, the implementation of mobile devices for district nursing, along with applications to support improved decision making should be a priority at all levels. A number of high level actions will be required:

1. The Scottish Government's digital strategy⁵ includes an action to ensure community health workers have remote access to up-to-date information. As part of delivering this, the Scottish Government's upcoming *Digital Health and Social Care Strategy 2017-22* should prioritise and allocate funding for mobile technologies for district nursing teams.
2. Given the focus of the new Scottish Government Sustainability and Value Programme Board on improving procurement – and the opportunities available in the upcoming *Digital Health and Social Care Strategy 2017-22* – RCN Scotland urges the Government to consider how a 'once for Scotland' approach would support an efficient and co-ordinated approach to procurement of secure and coherent technology options for community nursing across Scotland.

3. Integration authorities are now responsible for the strategic commissioning of community services. To fast-track the implementation of mobile technologies in district nursing teams, NHS board HS ~ pdd . k 1 g 1 m or



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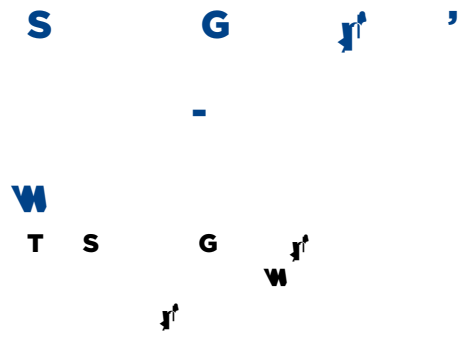
or transferring data from paper-based to electronic systems); inefficient use of time in travelling 'back-to-base' to update records – this time could be spent with patients; and the non-availability of fully up-to-date information about the patient at the point of care.

However, many stakeholders felt frustration at the 'poor relation' status of district and other community nursing in regard to technology development both generally and specifically, in relation to the development of electronic record systems and mobile technologies.

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change required to enable informed and safer decisions to be made by primary care practitioners and patients.¹¹



A number of key actions in this strategy are relevant to mobile technologies for district nursing in particular “design key public services in areas such as health and social care, justice and social security around the needs of their users” and “introduce shared technology platforms as a core part of the process of public service reform”.

The new strategy refers directly to the opportunities digital technologies present for community-based health and social care services:

“Digital enables us to transform the delivery of health and care, giving real choice to people across Scotland. Benefits include the ability to manage your own care, have a video consultation or be supported in your own home by a care worker who can use mobile technology to access the data and records they need. This provides the opportunity to use remote monitoring to track your health condition and anticipate problems at the earliest possible stage.”



BOX 0 SR

Despite the Scottish Government’s strategic focus on digital technologies, and the number of policy levers designed to enable a digital health and social care system, on-the-ground investment and implementation of digital technologies for district nursing has been slow and patchy.

There are a number of examples of mobile technologies used by district nursing teams in Scotland. Examples stakeholders shared with RCN Scotland include a ‘lone worker system’ which helped to protect individuals conducting visits on their own; two digipen pilots (no rollout planned); tablets used as electronic diaries; and in one NHS board, a board-wide implementation of Microsoft tablets for its district nurses. However, beyond the latter example, there has not been concerted or widespread implementation of mobile technology for district nursing.

Stakeholders identified a range of barriers to implementation of mobile working. The main barrier noted was a lack of investment and availability of finance to support this work. However, there is also a strong view that the investment is necessary to achieve the benefits identified above and is, therefore, ‘worth it’.

“When new systems are introduced we need to ensure that we have nurses involved who understand the impact that these will have on practising nurses [and] the importance of training and supporting staff using new technology. Often things are purchased and staff have to learn as they go along. We also need to ensure there is nurse leadership around purchasing equipment and devices which are practical to be used in the clinical settings.”

There was a view that responsibility for investment in mobile working should be shared between departments. For example, a common scenario described by stakeholders was that an NHS board’s eHealth department funds the

“If another professional has to visit the patient the same day or out of hours, the professional

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I W , Realising Scotland's Full Potential in a Digital World,¹² S

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Mobile technologies can support district nursing to be more agile and responsive, enabling evidence-based decision making including through more accurate documentation and by saving time in accessing the information they need. However, creating widespread use of mobile technologies across the community nursing workforce will require change at all levels.

Future direction for the Scottish Government should include: supporting the further development of nursing expertise in technology-enabled care; working with NHS boards and integration authorities to understand local requirements; and investing in solutions that work for staff on the ground and the people they work with.

Likewise, there is a need for more strategic decision making by integration authorities and NHS boards in order to develop appropriate and fit-for-the-future technological solutions for

district nursing teams. As commissioners and employers, they will require a clear understanding of the benefits of technologies as well as what learning and support is required to enable staff to use them effectively.

Nurse leaders with expertise in digitally-enabled care are required at both local and national levels, to ensure that software, devices and training are fit for purpose and practically useful. There are activities underway to develop this leadership. For example, the NMAHP eHealth Leadership M p r tal reM b

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