National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

Digital, Information and Technology progress report

1. This report provides an update on key issues and developments in the Digital, Information and Technology (DIT) directorate in the period September - October 2020.

Summary of activity

In line with the agreed digital and IT delivery roadmap and Connect plans, key project activity in the period included:

* Ongoing refinement to the strategic outline business case for enabling an efficient digital workplace through the use of SharePoint Online and the Microsoft 365 (M365) suite of products. This includes refining cost estimates and validating our planned approach with input from other organisations before the business case is returned to the NICE Board for consideration;
* Ongoing work with the NICE guideline collaborating centres to roll out the use of the EPPI Reviewer (web tools for searching evidence, systematic review needs and building an evidence surveillance capability);
* Ongoing work on the NORMA (NICE ONS recommendations matching algorithm) to support more efficient updating of guidelines;
* Progress and user research for our work on the Comment Collection tool, to enable organisation-wide feedback;
* Development of planning and scoping briefs for an agreed Connect deliverable; the Life Sciences/Commissioner Hub Discovery;
* Start of an 8 week 'alpha' testing potential alternative solutions for our Planning Timelines and the visibility and updating of these across the organisation;
* Completion of work to deliver a 'cookie' banner for NICE services to meet a mandatory requirement enabling visitors to the website to select which cookies are applied to their visit;
* Planning for a piece of work to support a 'prototype' for an integrated guideline as part of the NICE Connect programme;
* Initial drafts of architectural diagrams and other artefacts to support the creation of an agreed digital and technology strategic roadmap for NICE;
* Ongoing preparation for the move of the NICE London Office to a new location shared with other Arm's Length Bodies (ALB's). This includes specification of the datacentre hosting requirements, development of a testing plan and planning the closure of IT services in the current NICE London office.

Notable issues and developments

Ongoing response to COVID-19

Teams continue to support NICE's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Notable activities in September and October include

* Upgrade of our Zoom account to support more effective meeting management with external stakeholders;
* Ongoing roll out of laptops to provide stable and modern equipment to support home working;
* Piloting of Zoiper softphone application.

Recruitment into the integrated DIT teams

Following the creation of the DIT directorate, a number of priority vacancies have been launched for recruitment. New team members have joined to strengthen our expertise and IT infrastructure and further appointments made to provide specialist focus on our digital workplace programme. Recruitment into key strategic roles to support our data management and content engineering specialities, digital product design and many other areas are ongoing in the next period.

NICE web services - usage statistics

Summary: a new cookie banner and policy was published on core NICE services in October in order to be compliant with privacy legislation. This has an impact on the data we can collect and analyse going forwards and means that some metrics, including the session totals referenced below, will be estimated from the subset of users who consent to cookie storage.

All services show the expected increase in sessions in September and October after lower traffic over the summer period. NICE.org, CKS, BNF and BNFc continue to perform well, with BNFc showing particularly strong performance in September and October 2020 compared with the same period in 2019. Pathways and HDAS by contrast show continued low traffic compared to last year's figures. HDAS is not being actively developed due to the services scheduled decommissioning. Evidence search traffic dropped by 9% in October after a sustained period of good performance.

Figures 1-2: October 2020 sessions for all NICE web-based services

Note: A session is a period of activity by a user on a website. Session totals from Oct 2020 onwards are estimated from a sample and are rounded to the nearest 1,000 to reflect this reduced accuracy.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Description | Value |
| Total sessions in October 2020 across NICE web-based services | 6,516,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | 9% |
| % month-on-month variance | 18% |
| Total sessions for the full year ending in October 2020 across NICE web-based services | 66,276,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | 8% |

Figures 3-6: Performance of web services providing access to NICE guidance and advice

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| --- | --- |
| Description | Value |
| Total sessions on NICE.org in October 2020 | 1,903,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | 4% |
| % month-on-month variance | 19% |
| Sessions on NICE.org in year ending October 2020 | 20,045,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | 2% |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Description | Value |
| Total sessions on Pathways in October 2020 | 234,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | -7% |
| % month-on-month variance | 28% |
| Sessions on Pathways in year ending October 2020 | 2,403,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | -14% |

Figures 7-12: Performance of services that provide access to other forms of evidence

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| --- | --- |
| Description | Value |
| Total sessions on Evidence Search in October 2020 | 371,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | -9% |
| % month-on-month variance | 16% |
| Sessions on Evidence Search in year ending October 2020 | 4,694,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | 17% |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Description | Value |
| Total sessions on CKS in October 2020 | 1,140,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | 13% |
| % month-on-month variance | 16% |
| Sessions on CKS in year ending October 2020 | 10,939,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | 11% |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Description | Value |
| Total sessions on HDAS in October 2020 | 25,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | -20% |
| % month-on-month variance | 24% |
| Sessions on HDAS in year ending October 2020 | 292,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | -12% |

Figures 13-16: Performance of services providing access to the BNF content

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| --- | --- |
| Description | Value |
| Total sessions on BNF site in October 2020 | 2,587,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | 16% |
| % month-on-month variance | 18% |
| Sessions on BNF site in year ending October 2020 | 25,206,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | 11% |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Description | Value |
| Total sessions on BNFc site in October 2020 | 256,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | 27% |
| % month-on-month variance | 2% |
| Sessions on BNFc site in year ending October 2020 | 2,697,000 |
| % year-on-year variance | 33% |

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