Update on the development of the National Digital Platform (NDP)

1. NES Digital Service (NDS), the team established with NHS Education for Scotland, was commissioned by the Scottish Government in May 2018 to deliver on the commitment in the Digital Health and Care Strategy to create a National Digital Platform with the following objectives:
   “1. Information capture and access at point of contact – providing up-to-date high quality and timely role based, secure access to multiple specialist health and care information and knowledge sources, which is essential and fundamental to enabling excellent care, supporting staff, empowering citizens and enabling self-care.
2. Research and innovation to produce new products that can be made available through the platform – encouraging and opening up a broader ecosystem of development and suppliers, in particular from small and medium- size enterprises, which will support service improvement, service change and emerging consumer demand.
3. More appropriate use of information – putting in place the infrastructure and supporting improved processes for appropriate use of information for wider purposes, to ensure that health and care systems in Scotland are continuously learning. This is fundamental to supporting effective care, performance management, population health improvement, research and innovation, as well as the effectiveness of the new Public Health Body.”
   (Scotland’s Digital Health and Care Strategy: enabling, connecting and empowering, 2018)

2. Since the Summer of 2018, NES Digital Service has been recruiting software engineers, product designers, data security specialists and clinicians to create the capability to take forward the work, as well as establishing planning, risk management, information governance, security, clinical safety and other systems to underpin the work. The core architecture of the platform is in place, as is an initial product road map. As of 1 November 2019, approximately 30 full and part time staff work for NDS.

3. Work on the underpinning infrastructure of the platform includes development of the clinical data repository, integration with legacy systems, scoping work on integrating citizen access to platform products, technical work on staff authentication to the NDP, linkage to CHI and security and system reliability actions. Each of these areas of work will continue to develop and evolve over time, but sufficient progress has been made to support the creation and deployment in NHS Scotland of the first NDS products. The NDP technology is cloud based and will operate as ‘Software as a Service’.

4. The first product on the National Digital Platform is the ReSPECT application. ReSPECT supports Anticipatory Care Planning by allowing a patient’s wishes on emergency care to be appropriately accessed and shared by health and
care staff. The ReSPECT ACP product will be deployed first in NHS Forth Valley. Deployments in other Boards are being scoped, including the development of further functionality to extend the initial product. The product will be on the ground in Forth Valley in one hospital in the first quarter of 2020, with work in hand to plan roll out across Forth Valley to other clinical and care groups and to other Boards during 2020. The approach taken with ReSPECT gives a basis for work on Cancer Treatment Summaries which will commence in 2020.

5. In addition to the ReSPECT work, NDS is working with NHS NSS and other Boards to bring genomic data onto the platform to support research and clinical care, with data from two regions identified as first to transfer. Other data sets are under consideration, with the objective that the NDP enables data to be more accessible and usable to improve the efficiency and quality of care. Work to deliver the Scottish Government’s commitment in Programme for Government to transform the technology that underpins ophthalmology services will start shortly and work on endocrinology services is in the design stage.

6. As NDS completes work, it will have available components that can be used in further products, as well as an understanding of how citizens and practitioners make use of products to maximise uptake and engagement. This combined with growing the technology team will enable NDS to increase the pace of delivery.

Is it anticipated that, in time, the NDP will allow primary care professionals across disciplines, including AHPs and pharmacists, to have read and write access to a single patient record? What are the timescales for delivery of this?

7. This is an objective for the NDP. One of the reasons for selecting the ReSPECT work as an initial product for the NDP is that it is intended to be accessible and updatable by people from different disciplines potentially working for different organisations with the effect all of them have access to the same up to date ‘single version of truth’. This would only be one component of a single patient record and the process to extend that functionality out more widely will take time and will be dependent on the balance of action between mitigating the challenges of the current system and developing Once for Scotland approaches that are part of the National Digital Platform.

When do you anticipate all health boards will begin to use the NDP?

8. In the Summer of 2019, NDS agreed with the Digital Sub-Committee of the NHS Education Scotland Board that it would work to connect all Boards to the NDP within 36 months. NDS is currently in the process of meeting with each Board to agree a common work plan to cover:

- Connecting the particular Board to the platform
- Making ReSPECT and other products available within the Board
• Identifying work that can be taken forward within the Board that can add to the functionality of the platform and be deployed across Scotland on a 'once for Scotland' basis.

9. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde is currently using the NDP to support innovation projects including, asynchronous dermatology appointments and NHS Forth Valley will be using the NDP from the first quarter of 2020 with the ReSPECT application.

Is it anticipated that the NDP will allow citizen access? When will this be operational?

10. Enabling citizens to access their own data and to engage with services digitally is a high priority for NDS. The ability to do so will allow for better coordination of services, the creation of new data to support better clinical care and will improve the relation of the individual to their own health. In time, the National Digital Platform will enable citizens to digitally interact with health and care services, as well as health data, such as checking test results online.

11. The Scottish Government is leading work to establish what they describe as ‘Online Identity Assurance’ – the process by which a citizen can validate their identity in a secure way which gives them the capability to have role-based access to public sector data systems. This will allow citizens to use products on the digital platform, via authentication using pre-existing approaches. NDS is fully engaged in that process and we will continue to work with the Scottish Government, Local Government Digital Office and others to identify the likely authentication solutions, such as the MyAccount approach which has been taken with ‘My Diabetes My Way’. We are aiming to deploy solutions to test this approach by June 2020.

12. NDS will take forward initial work on citizen access during 2020 as part of the process of development and deployment of particular products.