CYDWEITHREDFA GWELLA GWASANAETHAU
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NORTH WALES SOCIAL CARE AND WELL-BEING
SERVICES IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE

Trawsnewid
Gwasanaethau Cymunedol
**Community Services
Transformation**

Digital skills and access for social care staff: Manager's survey analysis

Introduction

The North Wales Regional Partnership board carried out a survey to help better understand the extent to which digital technology is being used, the barriers faced, and the level and type of support required moving forward, from the perspective of someone with a management position. A similar questionnaire was also shared with operational staff. To make sure that the survey also reached people who did not have easy access to digital technology, paper copies were also made available in addition to the online form. While 46% of the staff surveys received were paper, the vast majority of manager's survey responses were online, with 5 paper copies received.

The manager's survey was completed by 56 people, of whom, just over half (57%) were managers, while 13% were owners. A total of 62% of respondents worked in either residential (32%) or domiciliary care (30%).

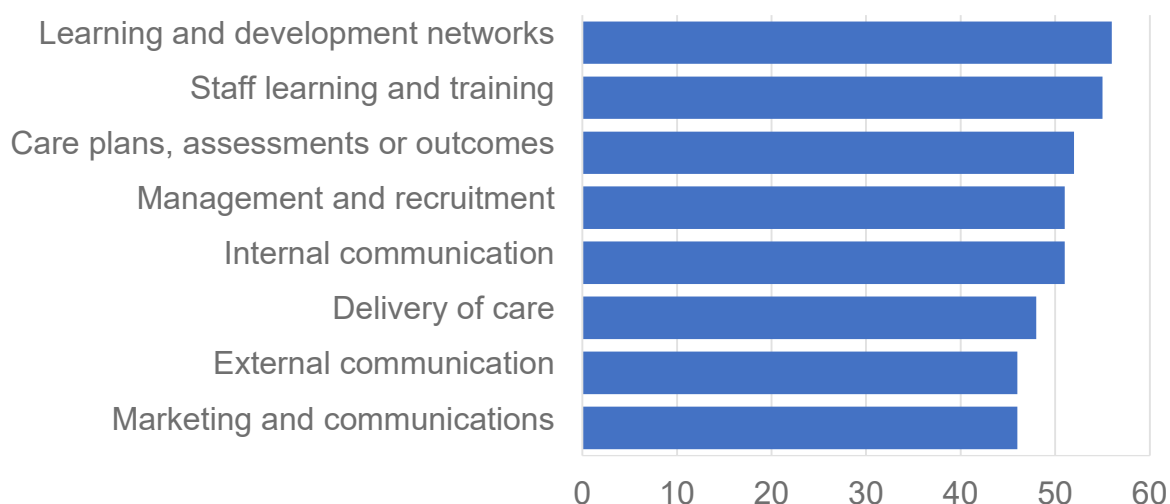**Chart 1: The type of services the organisation provides**
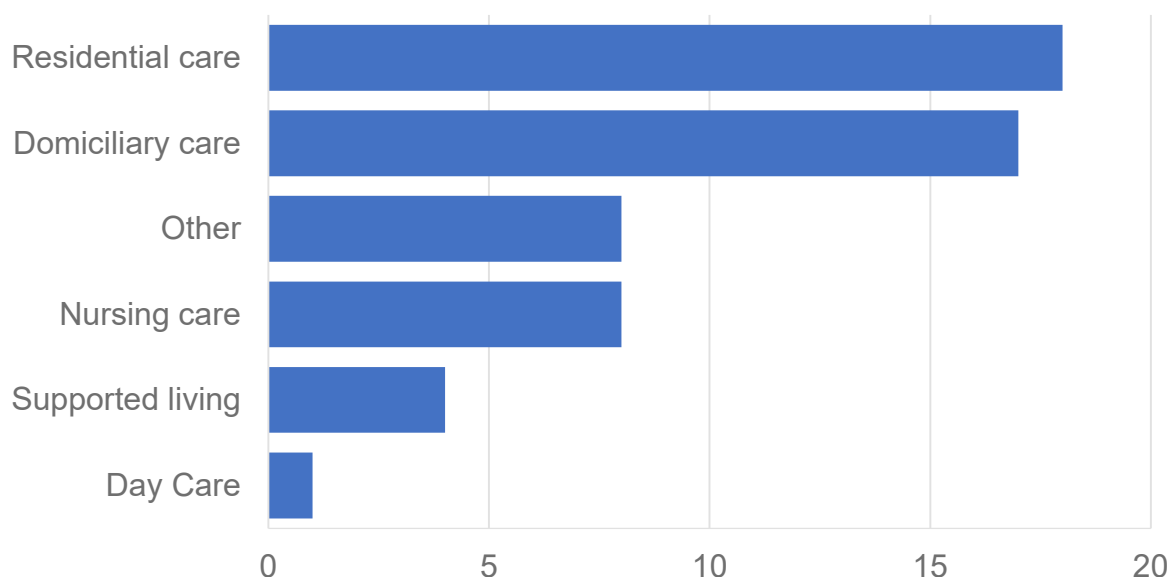
Notes: The other category included GPs, pharmacists and all of the above.

How providers currently use digital technology

The manager's survey highlighted that digital technology, such as computers, laptops and tablets are being used for a variety of purposes, with the most frequent use being to 'enable staff to access external learning and development networks'. This was closely followed by 'delivering, recording, and/or managing staff learning and training'.

Chart 2: Organisational use of technology (used extensively or used a bit)

Bar chart showing organisational use of technology:
- Learning and development networks: ~56
- Staff learning and training: ~55
- Care plans, assessments or outcomes: ~52
- Management and recruitment: ~51
- Internal communication: ~51
- Delivery of care: ~48
- External communication: ~46
- Marketing and communications: ~46

The use of digital technology during interactions with people needing care and support

In addition to being asked how they made use of digital technology as an organisation, managers and owners were asked whether they supported staff to make use of digital technology during their interactions with people needing care and support.

The majority said staff used digital technology to help the people they support with keeping in touch with family and friends, closely followed by 'planning or attending leisure activities to find entertainment'. Other activities people mentioned in the comments were Zoom activities for individuals and wellbeing activities.

Table 1 Use of digital technology to help people needing care and support

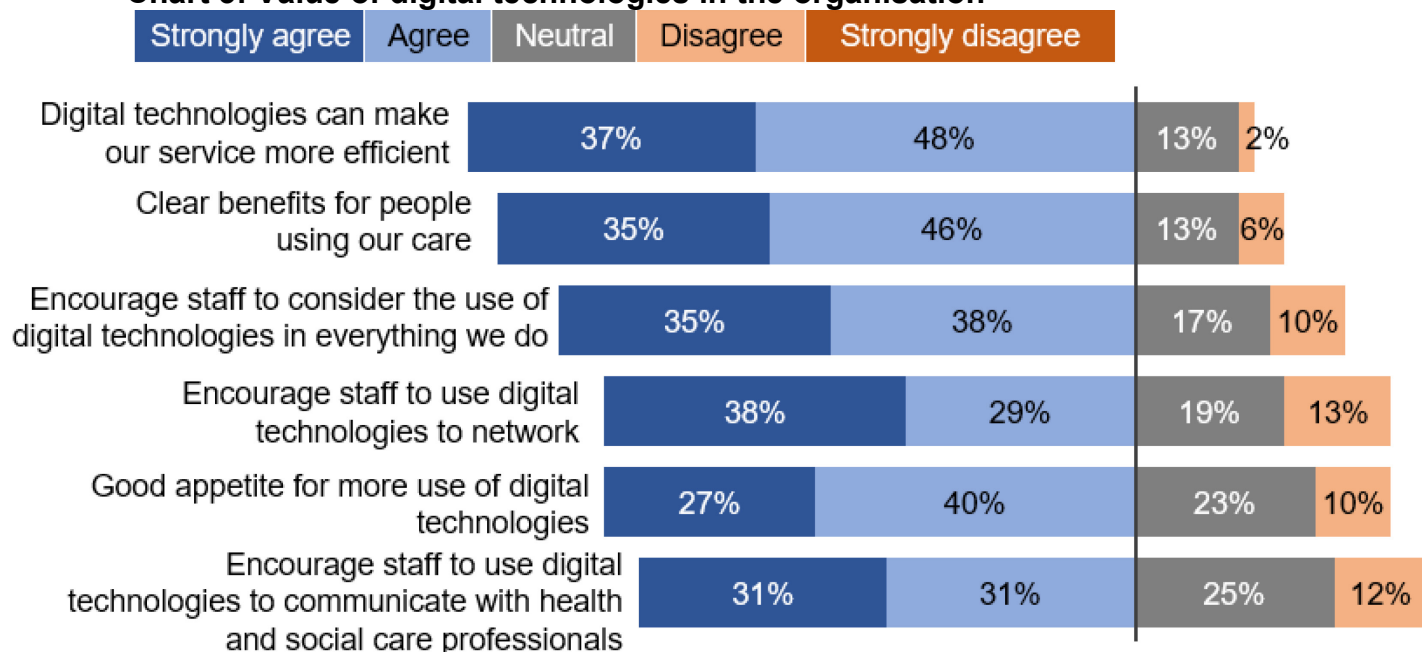| Type of use	Use	Don't use at all
Keep in touch with friends and family	47	6
Plan / attend leisure activities or find entertainment	44	9
Find information about the person's care and support	43	12
Communicate with welfare agencies or other services (e.g. GP, Housing support)	42	11
Help with daily living e.g. assisted living technologies such as falls monitors	39	14
Do education or employment related tasks	35	16
Access health and well-being apps	31	21
Do shopping or bank related tasks	30	19

The value of digital technology within care organisations

Managers and owners were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about the value of digital technologies, within their care organisation. Responses to all statements were largely positive, with the majority of managers (44 out of 52) stating that there was a 'common consensus in their organisation that digital technologies can make the service more efficient'. In addition, 42 out of 52 managers and owners said that their 'organisation felt that using digital technologies has clear benefits for people using care and support services.'

Managers and owners were most ambivalent about whether their 'organisation encouraged staff to use digital technologies to communicate with health and social care professionals' (13 out of 52). This was closely followed by questions over whether there 'was a good appetite within their organisation for more use of digital technologies' (12 out of 52).

Managers and owners saw the least amount of value in 'encouraging staff to use digital technologies to network with colleagues and peers' (7 out of 52)
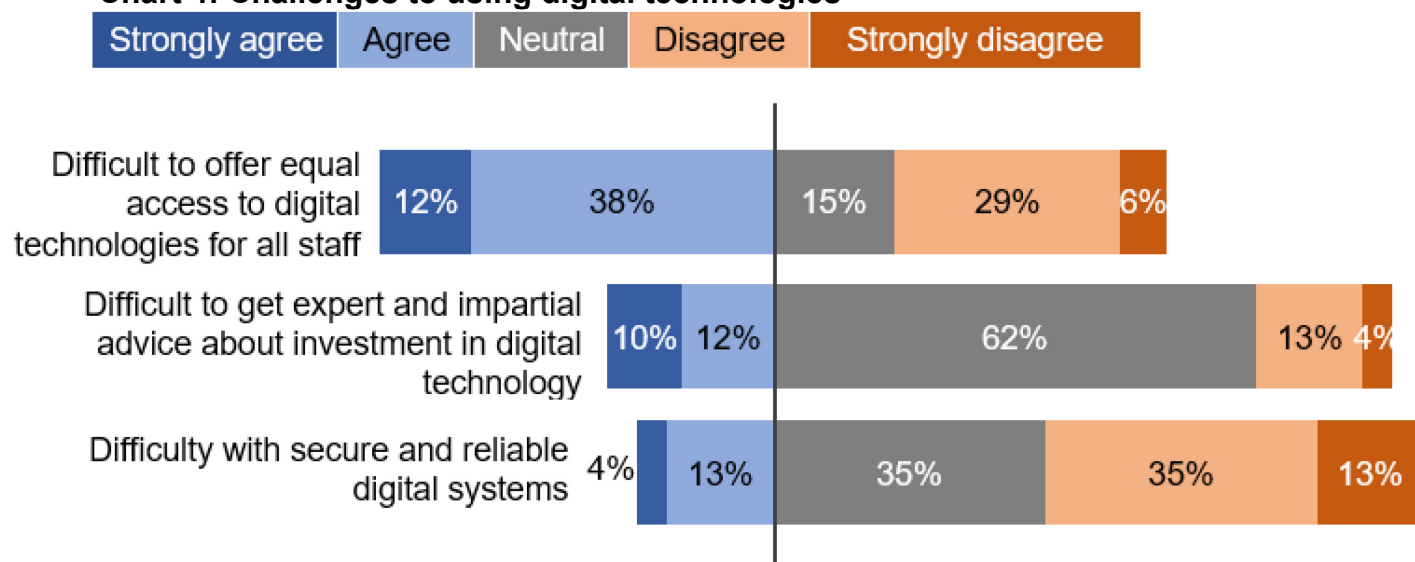
Chart 3: Value of digital technologies in the organisation

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Digital technologies can make our service more efficient	37%	48%	13%	2%
Clear benefits for people using our care	35%	46%	13%	6%
Encourage staff to consider the use of digital technologies in everything we do	35%	38%	17%	10%
Encourage staff to use digital technologies to network	38%	29%	19%	13%
Good appetite for more use of digital technologies	27%	40%	23%	10%
Encourage staff to use digital technologies to communicate with health and social care professionals	31%	31%	25%	12%

Challenges of using digital technologies

Managers and owners agreed that the biggest challenge to using digital technologies within the workplace was in terms of 'offering equal access to digital technologies for all staff'. Conversely, managers and owners were least concerned with having 'difficulties ensuring digital technology systems and secure and reliable'.

Chart 4: Challenges to using digital technologies

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

|	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Difficult to offer equal access to digital technologies for all staff	12%	38%	15%	29%	6%
Difficult to get expert and impartial advice about investment in digital technology	10%	12%	62%	13%	4%
Difficulty with secure and reliable digital systems	4%	13%	35%	35%	13%

Digital technologies and the workforce

Managers and owners were asked to think more about the use of digital technologies amongst the workforce. There were 28 out of 52 of the managers and owners completing the survey who felt that a 'lack of digital capabilities amongst staff meant that they made less use of technologies than they could, while 14 out of 52 felt that this was not the case. There were 31 out of 52 managers and owners who felt that 'keeping staff skills up to date is challenging given the pace of technological change'. Only 7 managers or owners responded to say they did not feel this to be the case.

A clear barrier to using digital technologies within the workplace appears to be the age of the workforce, with 35 out of 52 of managers and owners responding that they felt that 'younger staff do not need as much support to use digital technologies as older staff'.

Out of the 52 managers and owners, 19 said they didn't actively recruit people who are able and confident using digital technology while 11 out of 52 said that they did. Moreover, 26 out of 52 managers and owners reported that their 'organisation checks the digital skills of potential staff'.
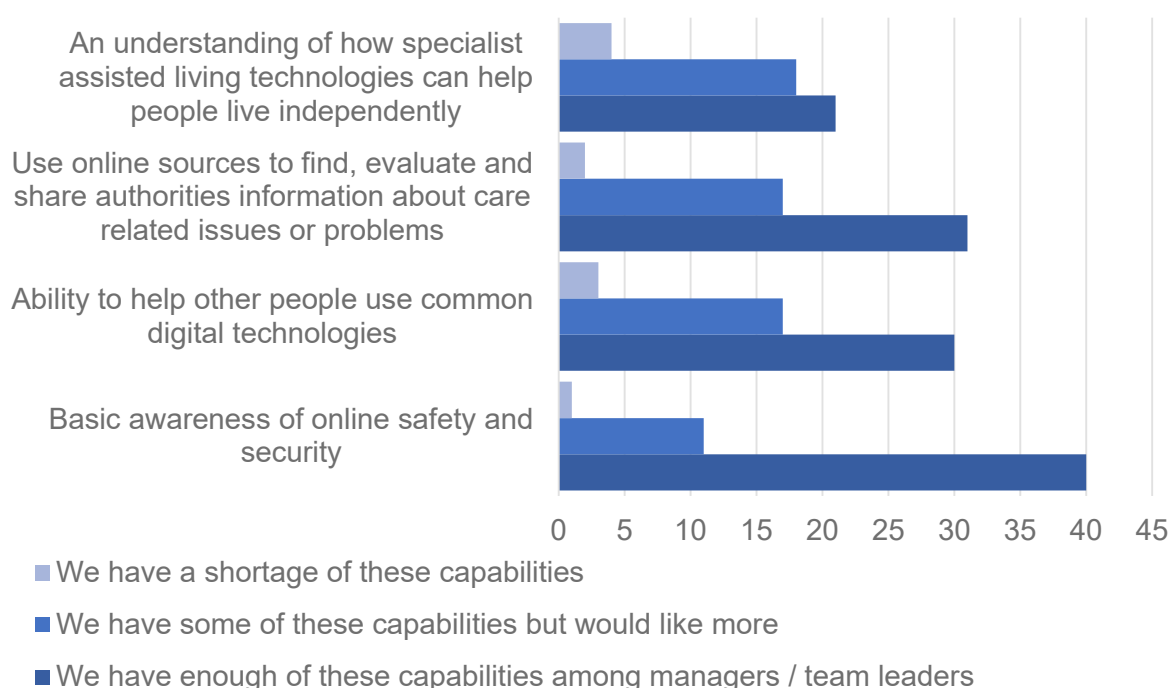
Chart 5: Digital technologies and the workforce
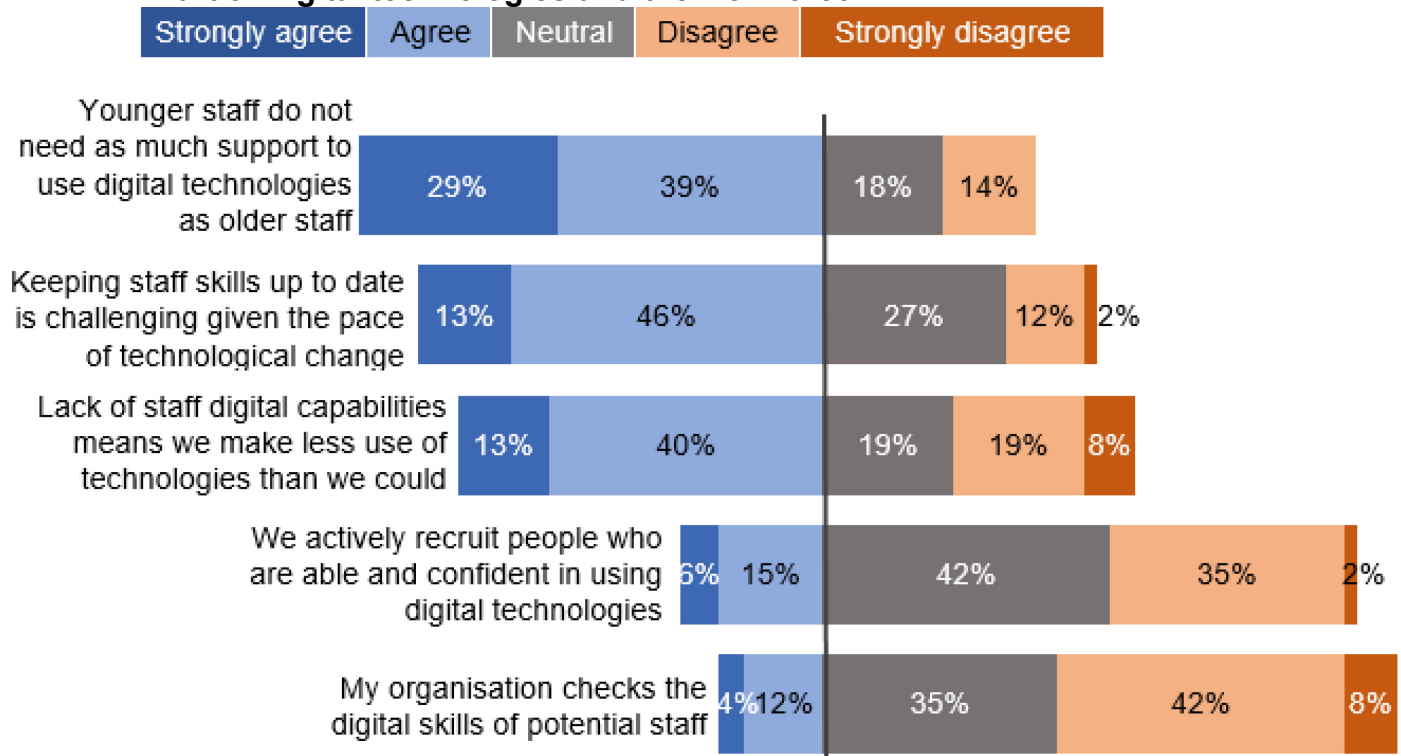
Digital capabilities of managers and team leaders

Managers completing this questionnaire were most confident that managers and team leaders within their organisation have enough digital capabilities with regards to 'basic online skills (use of email, use a search engine, fill in a form) (42 out of 52). Managers were least confident the managers and team leaders within their organisation had enough digital capabilities when it came to 'an understanding of how specialist assisted living technologies can help people live independently.
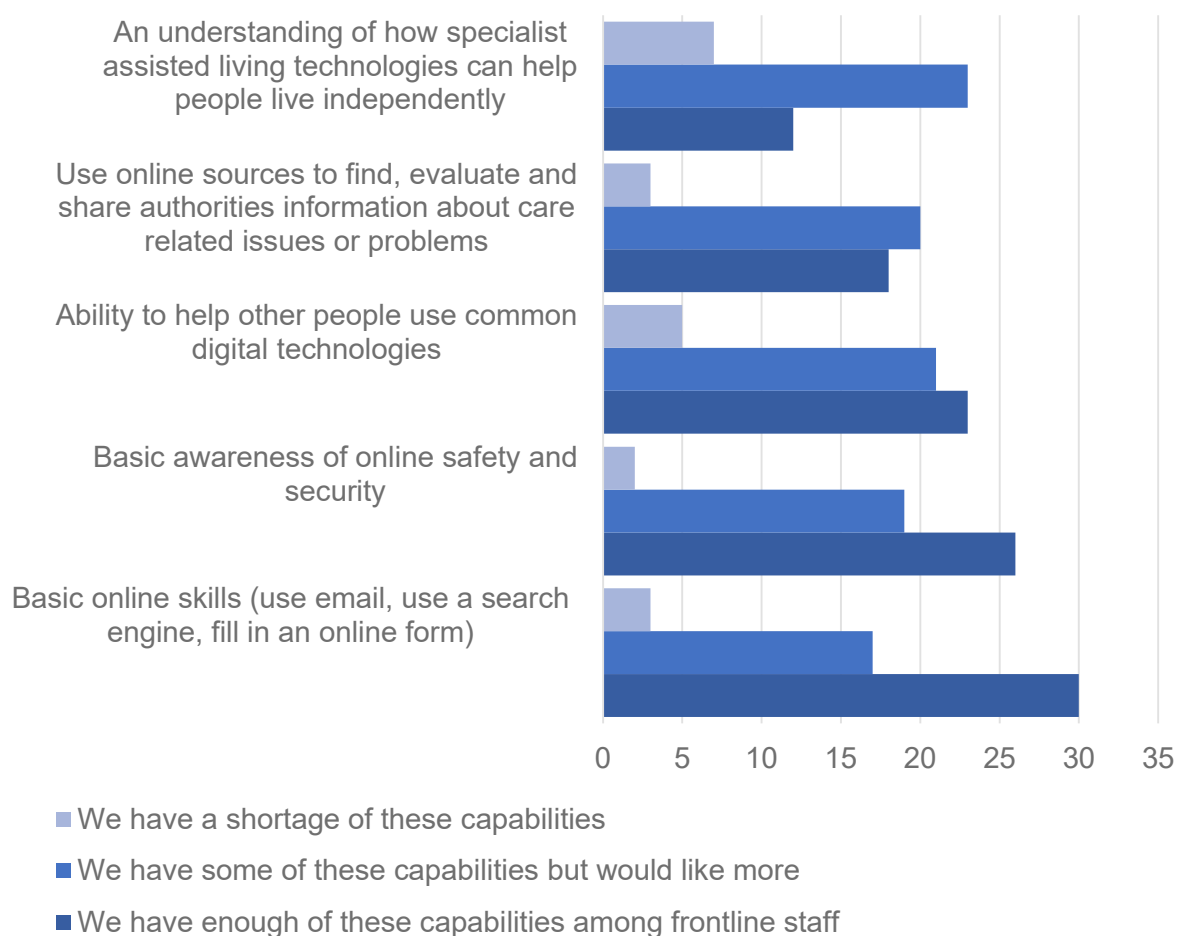
Chart 6: Digital capabilities of managers and team leaders

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- ■ We have a shortage of these capabilities
- ■ We have some of these capabilities but would like more
- ■ We have enough of these capabilities among managers / team leaders

Digital capabilities of frontline staff

Manager's perception of digital capabilities amongst managers and team leaders was largely echoed when asked to think about the digital capabilities of frontline operational staff. Again, managers felt that frontline staff were most capable with regards to basic online skills (30 out of 52), but were least capable with regards to how specialist assisted living technology can help people to live independently (12 out of 52).

Chart 7: Digital capabilities of frontline staff

An understanding of how specialist assisted living technologies can help people live independently

Use online sources to find, evaluate and share authorities information about care related issues or problems

Ability to help other people use common digital technologies

Basic awareness of online safety and security

Basic online skills (use email, use a search engine, fill in an online form)

■ We have a shortage of these capabilities

■ We have some of these capabilities but would like more

■ We have enough of these capabilities among frontline staff

Support to develop digital skills in the workplace

Managers were asked about the types of support available within the workplace to help people develop their digital skills. The most common form of support was identified as being coaching and help from colleagues or managers (41/52). Responses to this question indicated that across providers the extent to which formal training (e.g. IT training) and accredited qualifications were provided for staff was split almost 50/50 with just under half (46%) offering formal IT training, and 40% offering formal training. Similarly, accredited qualifications in digital technology were provided by 48% of organisations, and not provided by 42% of organisations. In addition, 56% of managers responded that time was provided for individuals to explore or learn about technologies themselves, while only 31% of managers stated that guidance was sought from outside organisations, such as Skills for Care and SCIE.

Chart 8: Support to develop digital skills available in the workplace
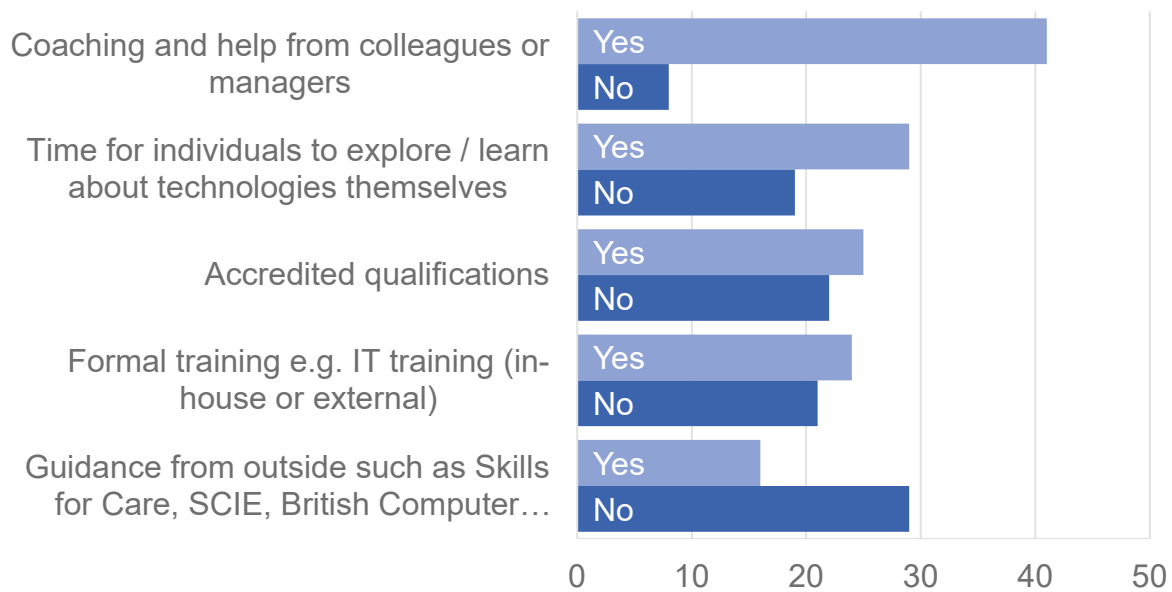
Online training / e-learning

According to the managers participating in this survey, the majority of training or e-learning is currently delivered online (25 out of 52). Very few managers responded that no training was delivered online (4 out of 52).

Chart 9: How much training / e-learning is delivered online
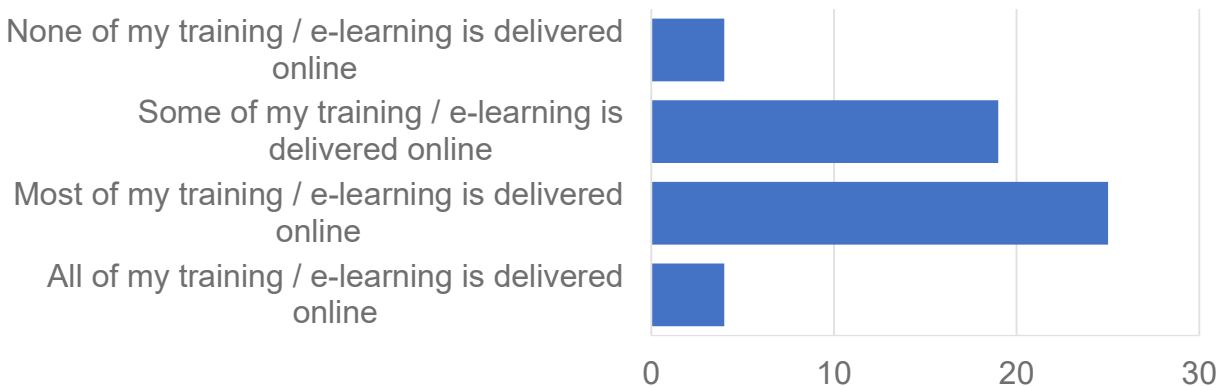
The majority of managers responded to say that on average they spent approximately once a month, or slightly less, on online training or e-learning (41 out of 52), with the majority reporting that they undertook this training both at home and at work (27 out of 52), while 23% undertook training or e-learning exclusively at home, and 23% undertook it exclusively in work.

For those managers who did some, or all of their online training or e-learning at home, this was for the majority of managers, due to personal preference. However, it should be noted that 31% of managers felt that there was no time to do online training or e-learning at work.

Chart 10: Reasons for doing online training or e-learning at home
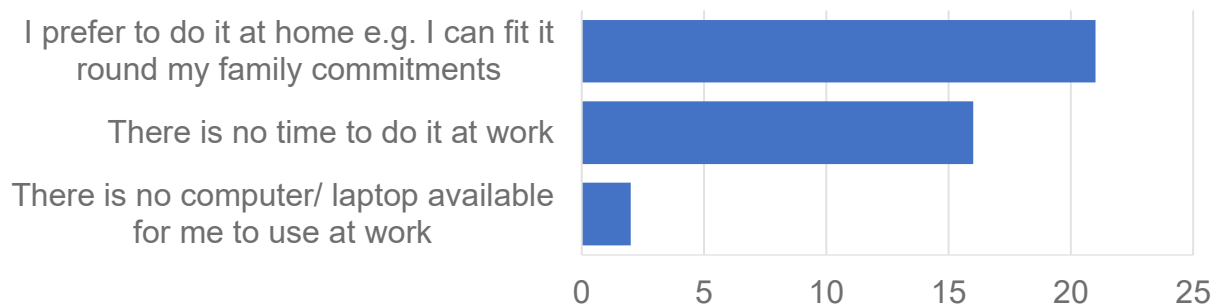
Furthermore, 50% of managers reported that there was no dedicated training or computer room that they could use for online training purposes. While 20 out of 52 (38%) of managers did have access to such a space, 6% responded to say that it was often too busy for them to make use if.

Over half of managers (56%) who participated in this survey stated that they are always paid for the time they spend training or e-learning, whether that be at work or at home. However, 21% reported being only sometimes being paid for time spent training, while a further 21% reporting not being paid for undertaking training or e-learning.

Chart 11: Number of respondents who are paid for time spent training
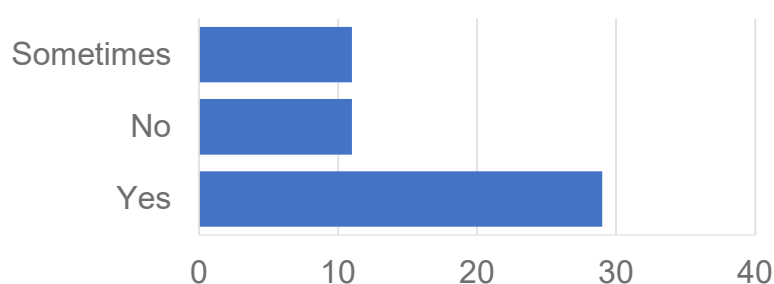
Finally, 71% of all managers surveyed stated that their employer provided them with the digital equipment necessary in order to undertake training or e-learning, while just under one third of managers had to use their own device.

Comments from managers

Comments from staff included challenges with getting access to equipment to do e-learning and online training. There were other comments about staff skills varying a lot and that it can take a lot of time to coach, train and reassure staff in digital skills. There were also comments about the value of person to person learning over online training and the value of WhatsApp in communicating with staff and helping staff communicate with each other.