

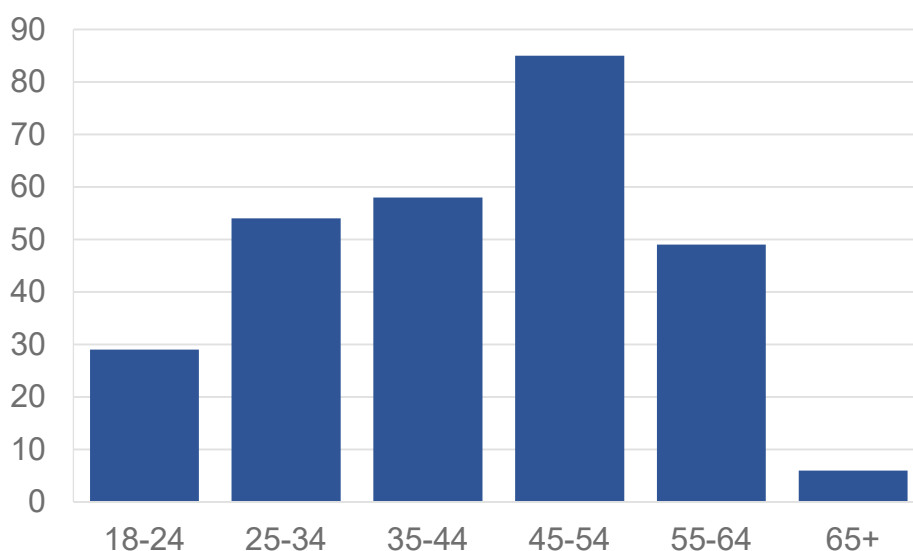


Digital skills and access for social care staff: Staff survey analysis

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 operational staff. A similar questionnaire was also shared with managers. 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. Around 64% of the responses were received on paper, the rest online.

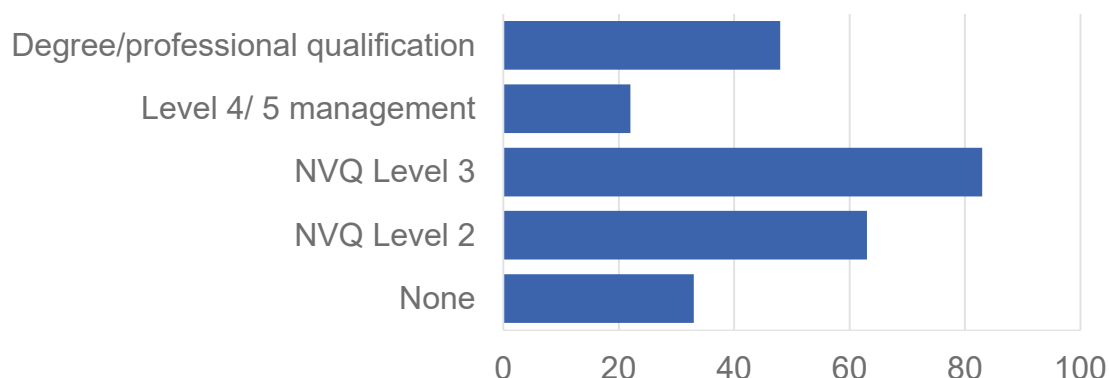
The staff digital survey was completed by 283 people, of whom 74% worked as a care or support worker and 8% worked as a nurse. The roles of other participants ranged from domestic or catering (8%); Activity co-ordinator (3%); and office or admin (4%). The majority of respondents were aged 35 and over, which is broadly similar to the overall age structure of the social care workforce in North Wales.

Chart 1: Age range of survey participants



In terms of highest qualification, the most frequent response was that respondents were trained up to NVQ level 3 (30%), while 18% had either a degree or professional qualification and 12% said they had none of the formal qualifications listed.

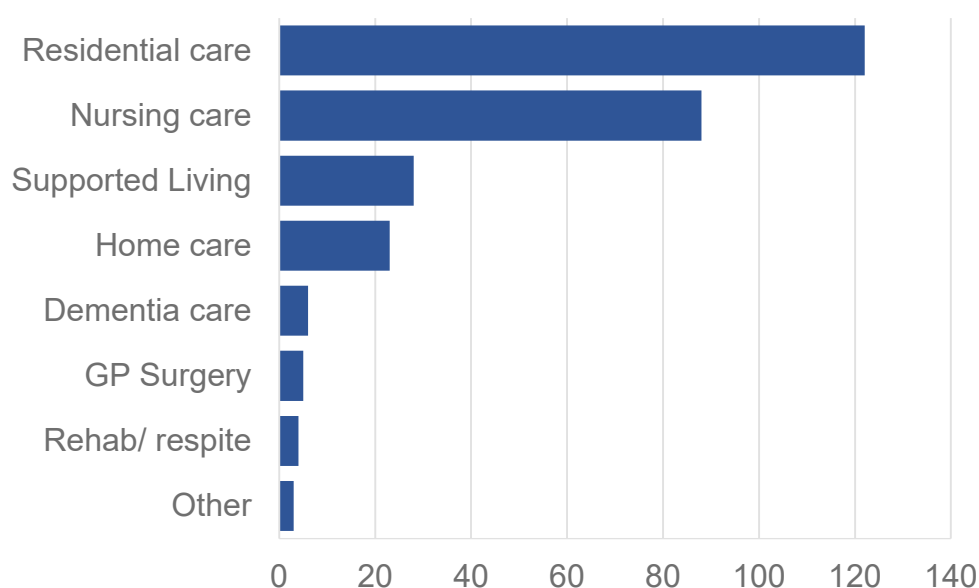
Chart 2: Highest level of qualification of survey participants



The vast majority of respondents stated that their preferred spoken and written language was English, with 6% saying their preferred spoken language was Welsh or Welsh and English. This is lower than the 24% of social care staff that can communicate effectively through the medium of Welsh in North Wales (Social care staff profile, 2018).

The majority of respondents worked for a private sector organisation (70%). The type of service provided by that organisation varied.

Chart 3: Type of service provided by organisations

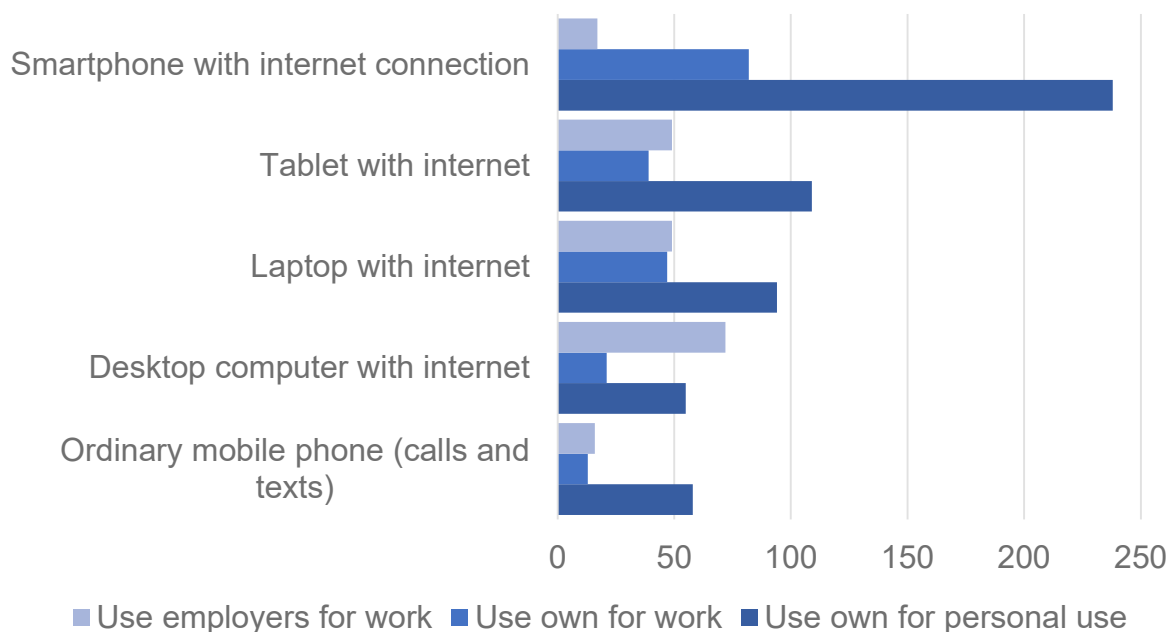


Access to digital devices

Respondents were asked a series of questions and which digital devices they currently used, who they belonged to and what they used them for. Responses to this question indicated that the majority of operational staff working within the care sector are familiar with, and make most use of smartphones

The overwhelming majority of respondents who used a smartphone did so for their own personal use (91%). Of the 99 people who stated they used a smartphone for work, 82 reported using their own work phone, while only 16 used their employers.

Chart 4 how participants use technology



In terms of individuals who continue to use a mobile phone (not a smartphone), 58 used their own mobile phone for personal use. Of the 29 staff who used a mobile phone for work use, 13 employees reported using their own mobile phone, while 16 staff were able to make use of a work's mobile phone.

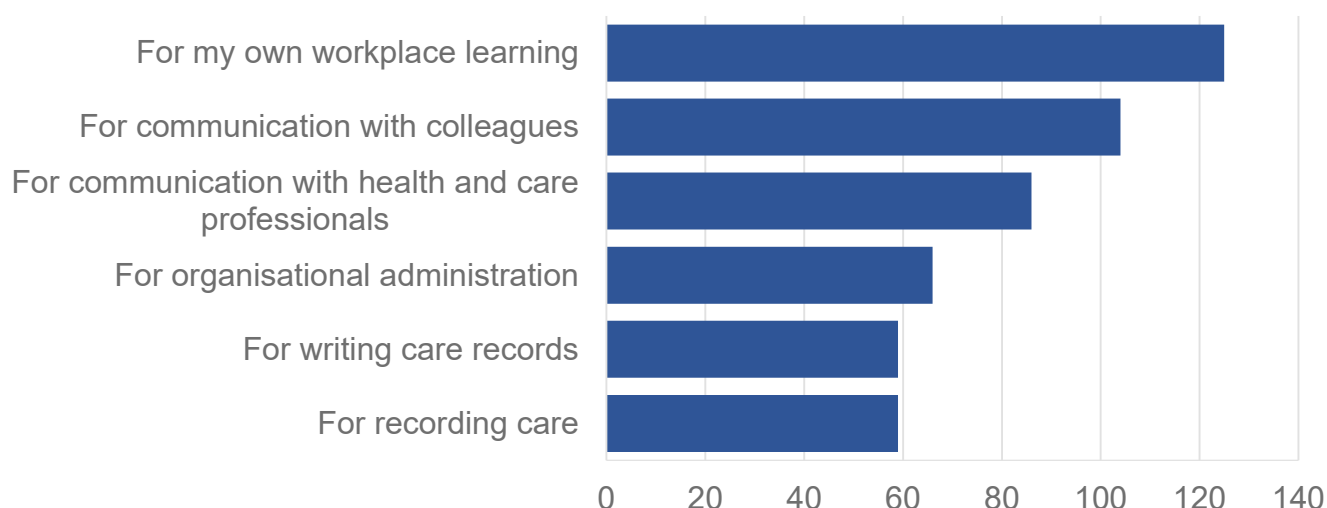
With regards to desktop computers, 126 operational staff responded to say that they used a desktop computer – of whom 55 used their own computer for their own use. Of the 93 staff who used a desktop computer for work use, 21 used their own computer while 72 used their employers.

Of the 96 respondents who used a laptop for work, 47 staff reporting using their own laptop and 49 reported being able to make use of their employer's laptop. Finally, of the 88 operational staff who used an iPad/ tablet for work purposes, 39 used their own device, while 49 used an iPad/ tablet provided by their employer.

Using digital technology in the workplace

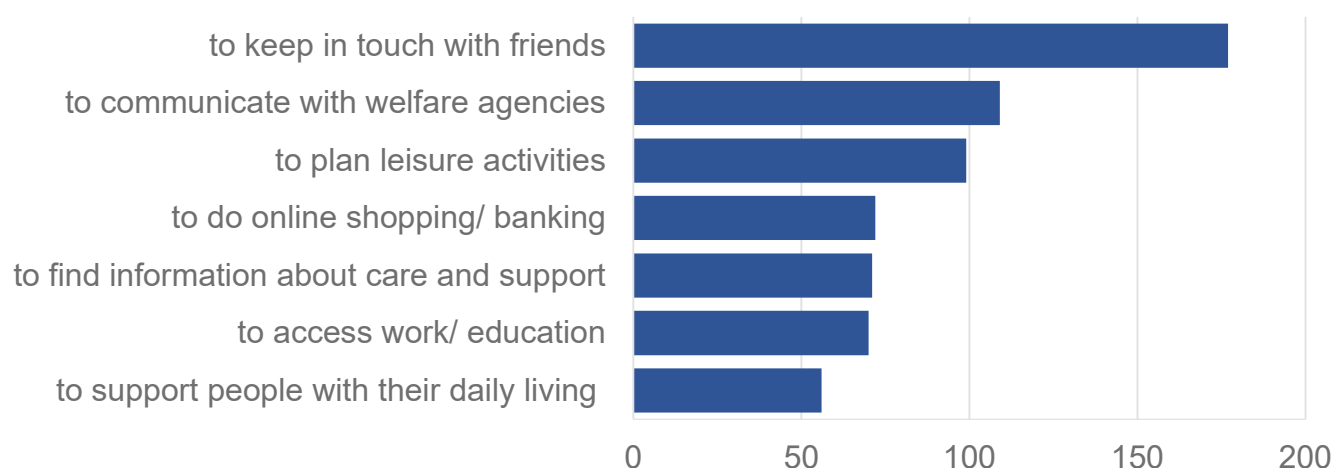
When asked how they used digital technology in their workplace, the most common response to use a digital device for workplace learning (44%). Digital devices were most infrequently used by operational staff in order to record care.

Chart 5 Using digital devices in the workplace



The main reason staff use digital technology with people with care and support needs was to help them keep in touch with family and friends (63%), while only 20% reported using digital technology to support people with their daily living.

Chart 6 Using digital devices with people who need care and support

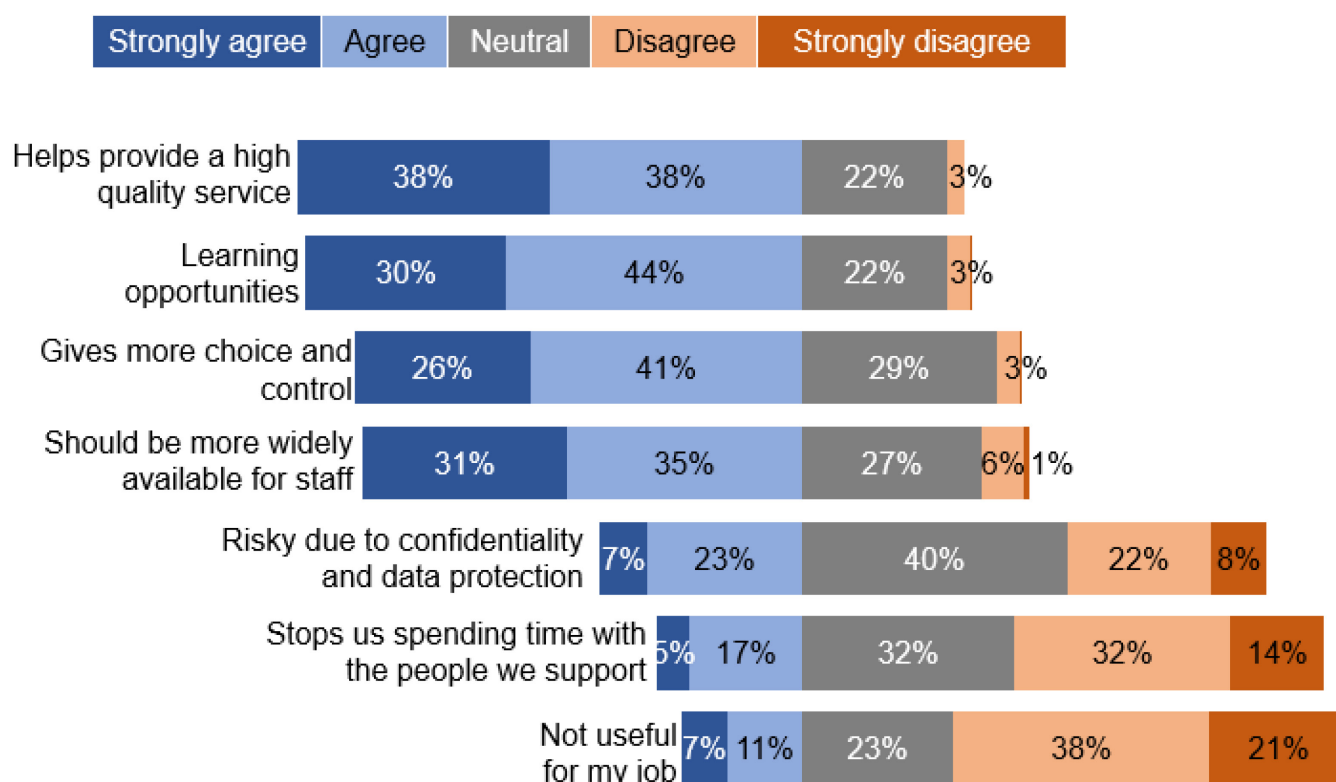


Other uses for digital activities included consultations with doctors and for activities including: skyping a local school to sing Christmas carols, memory related electronic games, using street view with people to view holiday destinations in the past, viewing old photos and watching films.

Role of digital technology in the social care workplace

The majority of operational staff surveyed agreed that digital technology in the workplace is good because it helps them to provide a high quality of service to the people they support (76%) and provides learning and development opportunities. While 18% of people agreed that digital technologies were not useful for their job, it is interesting to note that 66% felt that digital technologies should be more widely available for staff to use in the workplace.

Chart 7 Role of digital technology



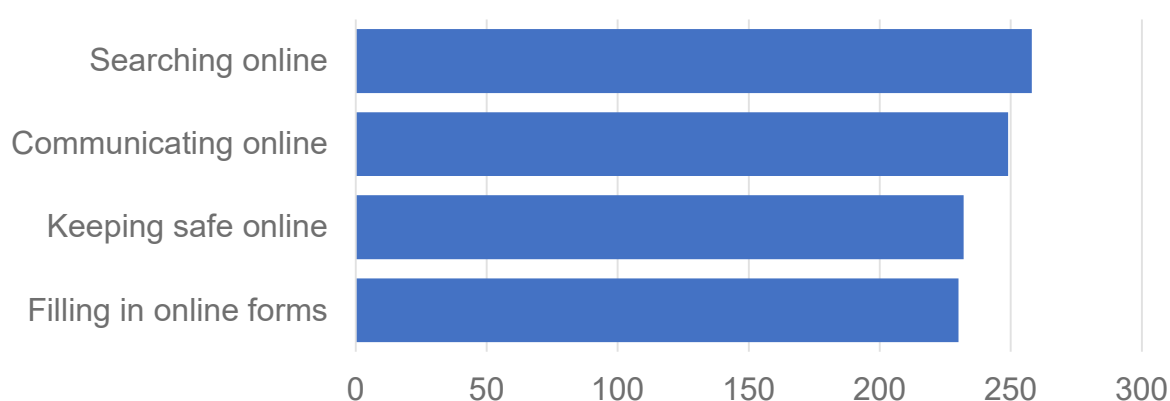
Importantly, the majority of staff disagreed with the statement that 'digital technologies are bad because they stop staff spending time with residents (78%) and 67% felt that digital technologies can give people using care and support more choice and control.

In terms of the value of digital technology to them in their job role, 74% staff agreed that digital technologies were able to offer them learning and development opportunities that they would otherwise not get.

Digital skills of social care staff

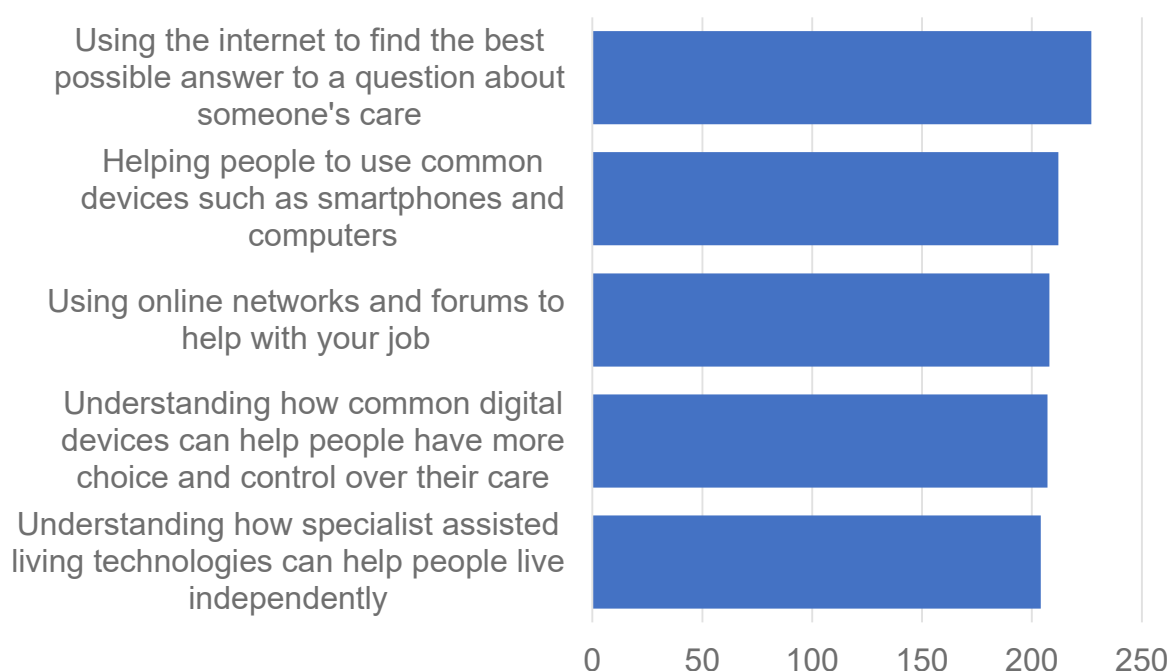
When asked about their digital skills, the majority of staff responded that they felt most confident searching online (92%). Conversely, staff felt least confident filling in online forms (82%).

Chart 8: Staff confidence in digital skills



When asked to consider their confidence in using digital technology within their job role, operational staff felt most confident using digital technology to find the best possible answer to a question about someone's care (81%). Conversely, staff felt least confident about understanding how technology can help people live independently and have choice and control over their care.

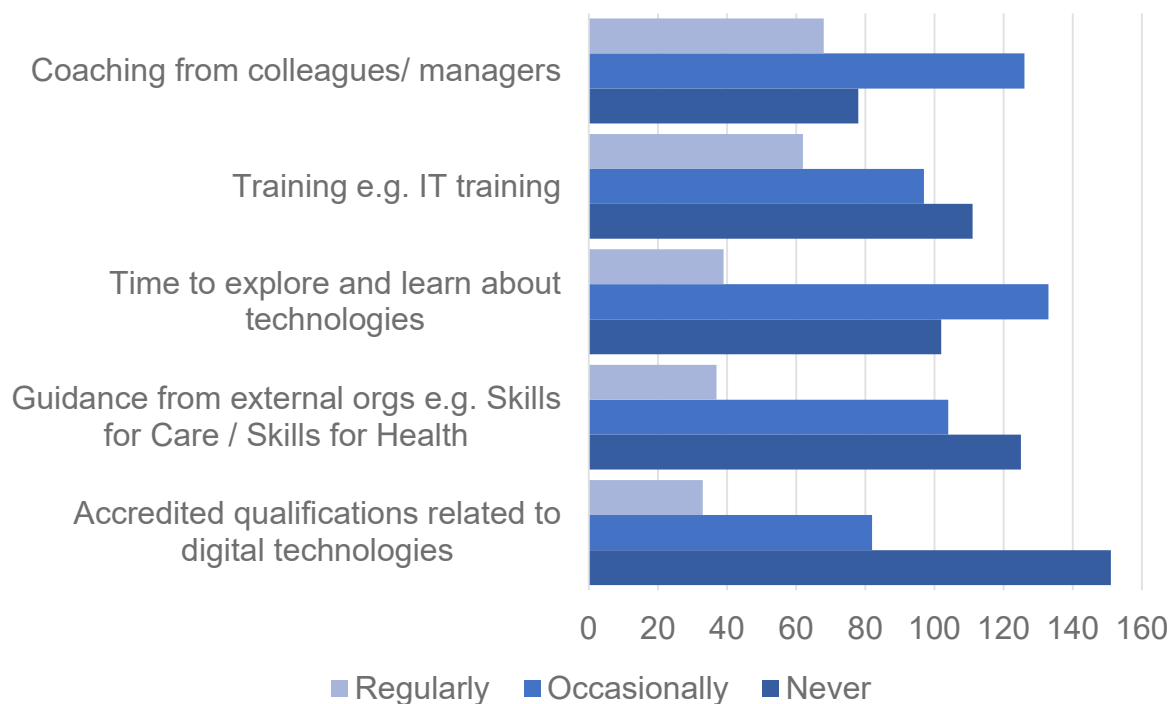
Chart 9 Staff confidence using digital technology for work



Training and support to use digital technologies at work

On the whole, work-based training in how to use digital technology was reported by operational staff to happen 'occasionally' rather than regularly, with the greatest amount of support being in the form of 'coaching from colleagues/ managers' (71% receive some coaching). According to staff participating in this survey, accredited qualifications related to digital technologies was the type of training or support least available to them (57% never receive them) and guidance from external organisations also reported as being infrequently available to operational staff (47% never receive any).

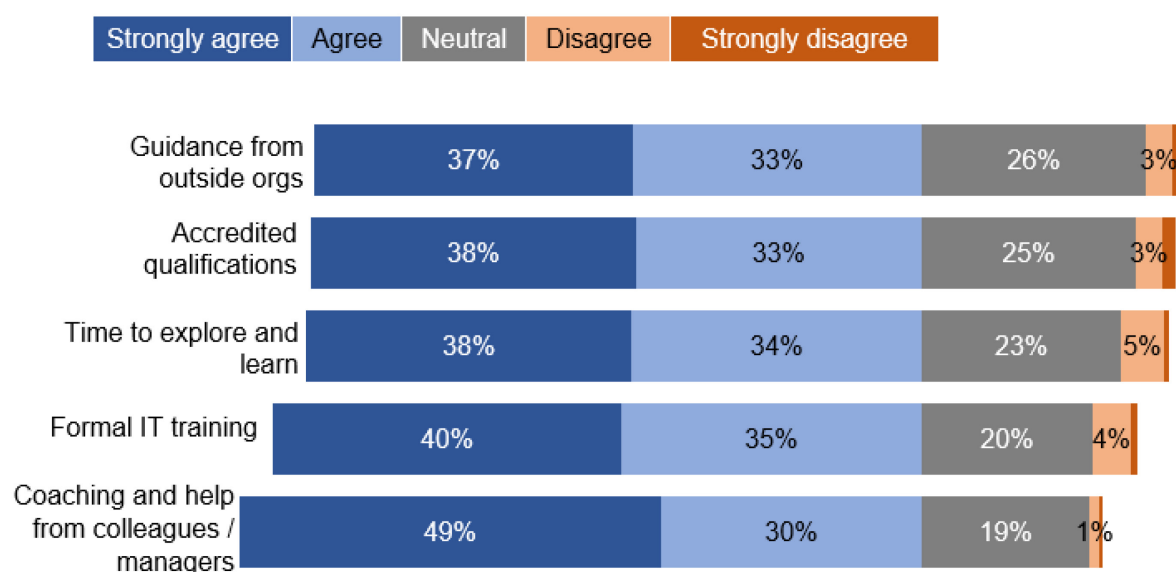
Chart 10: Training and support to use digital technologies



When asked whether training or support to use digital technologies would help them to do their job better 73% answered 'yes it would'.

Next, staff were asked to reflect on the types of support/ training they would find most useful. Operational staff reported that they would find both formal IT training (75%) and coaching and help from colleagues/managers (79%) most helpful to them.

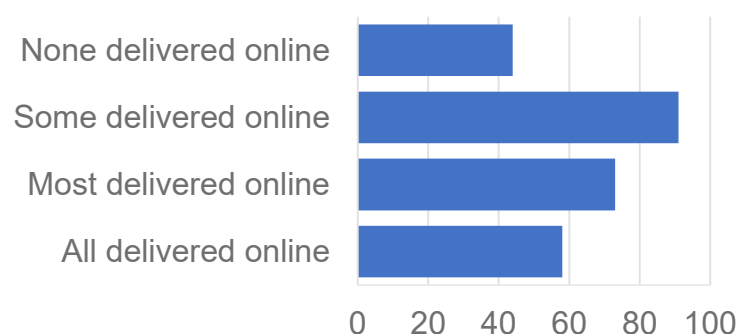
Chart 11: Types of training staff would find most helpful



Undertaking training / e-learning at work

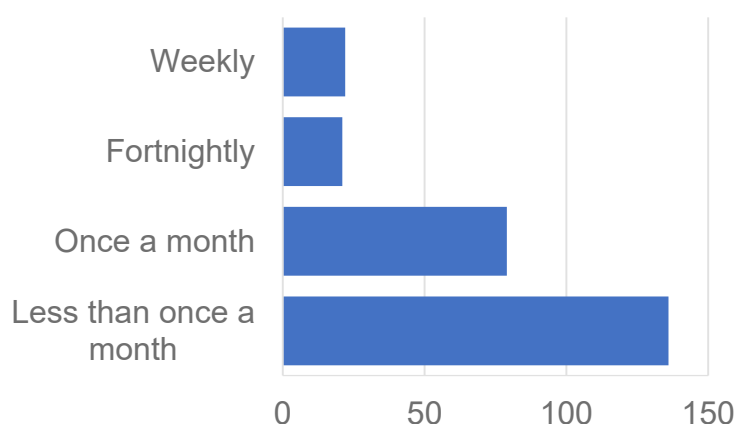
The amount of training/ e-learning that staff do as part of their job varies, with the majority (83%) reporting that at least some of their training was delivered in this way.

Chart 12: Amount of training delivered online



The majority of staff (51%) reported that they spent less than once a month online training or e-learning.

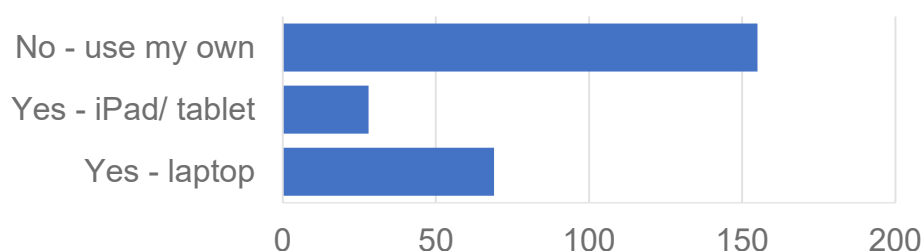
Chart 13 Amount of time spent on online training



There most common place to do online training or e-learning was at home (42%) or a combination of home and work (35%). Only 17% of staff exclusively undertook training or e-learning in work.

Of those staff who undertook either some or all of their training or e-learning at home, 47% said this was because they had no time to complete such training at work, while 43% stated that they preferred doing training or e-learning at home. There were also 10% of staff who said that the reason the do some or all of their online training or e-learning at home was because there was no computer at work for them to use.

Chart 14 Provision of digital equipment by employer



Of those operational staff who completed some or all of their online training or e-learning at work, 43% said that there was not a dedicated training or computer room for them to use. This resource was available to 56% of staff although 24% reported that it was often busy.

Similarly, the majority (62%) of operational staff reported having to use their own digital equipment in order to do training or e-learning for work. Where digital equipment was provided, 27% were provide with a laptop and 11% with an iPad.

Finally, the extent to which operational staff are paid by their employer for the time spent training, the majority (58%) reported being paid, although for 15% of participants, this was only sometimes. There were 42% of staff who reported not being paid for time spent on work-based training or e-learning.

Staff comments about digital technology

Some comments from staff were about how helpful digital technology is, including reducing the amount of paperwork and saving time. Others talked about technology causing stress because of lack of confidence, not having the right equipment or good Wi-Fi connection, confidentiality and hacking. This included comments about technology creating an expectation for information on demand and times when it's quicker and better to talk to people directly rather than relying on technology and because 'it works'.

There were also comments about training which included people saying they would like more training around this area and that this training should be paid.