

# The Federation of Health Informatics

## Initial Consultation

### What we're trying to do

BCS, the Chartered Institute for IT, the UK Council of Health Informatics Professions (UKCHIP) and the Institute of Health Records and Information Management (IHRIM) are working to create a new Federation for the Health Informatics profession. The collaboration between these three autonomous bodies is intended to set common standards for professionalism, education and competence in health informatics, offer wider development opportunities and enhance the standing and reputation of all Informatics professionals, no matter to which discipline they might belong.

### What we asked you

At the launch of the Federation during the HC2014 Conference in March, and subsequently through online channels, a process of consultation was begun which will continue more widely over the next three months. IT and information experts in health were asked three open questions about the priorities they thought the Federation should be addressing;

- 1) **What is important to you?**
- 2) **Why is it important?**
- 3) **What are the best ways of involving you and your professional colleagues to make sure we get this right?**

The Federation had its first meeting in shadow form at the beginning of May and we have been very encouraged by the initial responses (around 100) that we have received.

### What you've told us so far

***Your main message is that you believe that we need leaders in the health sector who understand the importance of Health Informatics and appreciate the value of Health Informatics professionalism to patient safety and public trust.***

**You want us to become an independent single voice for Policy and Professionalism.**

You believe that Informatics is critical to better healthcare and that recognition of the role of Informatics Professionals is long over due. You want us to provide leadership to enable the views of the profession to be taken into account in the development and implementation of Health ICT Policy. You also want us to promote increased professionalism through the adoption of professional standards which are a sign of a mature profession and will help to maintain public trust in the handling of personal information

### **You want us to provide a Skills Framework and offer opportunities for Continuing Professional Development;**

You believe that this will help you with Career progression because it is important to develop people and not just promote technology. Providing an approach that helps to assess staff competencies of staff, underpins professional recognition. You also think there is a role for us in developing curricula and qualification pathways and levels of entry (to the profession), including producing person specifications aligned with KSFs.

### **You want us to make sure that there is full recognition and appreciation of how integral health IT is to patient safety and service improvement**

You believe that fully engaging with health professionals in the delivery of healthcare services will lead to better use of technology and increased innovation.

It will also drive up professional standards and in turn will help individuals to be accepted as a professional in the healthcare delivery process.

### **You've told us that you would like us to involve you through .....**

#### **Wide Representation**

You would like as wide as possible within the Federation to ensure it is not dominated by one group within the health informatics domain. You believe that the best value and biggest impact will come from a range of different people working in different aspects of health IT and informatics and not just from one dominant perspective.

#### **Developing the Evidence and Knowledge Base**

You want to be actively involved in contributing to the recognised body of Health Informatics knowledge, including evidence of best practice. You suggested that this could be achieved in a range of ways including:

- Keeping informatics professionals informed through events and opportunities to share ideas;
- Setting up 'Best Practice Demo Days';
- Developing think tanks and innovation boards;
- Providing support funding for innovative ideas;
- Disseminating information on new techniques and best practice;
- Sharing global best practice by collaborating with governmental bodies and other professional bodies;
- Providing evidence of change produced by informaticians;
- Providing support for CCIO's and their equivalents;
- Sharing information about specific pieces of work informatics professionals are predominantly engaged in within their roles, e.g.:
  - what IT/data/information is needed to draw on in order to pull out commonalities in key data/info requirements;
  - to identify patterns to help prioritise what the Federation might consider focusing on - in terms of training, key work areas

- Identifying the activities done across different service models and seeing how people can share and work together;
- Sharing details of work done in individual Trusts and 'the centre';
- Identifying skills needed to avoid ongoing disastrous decisions born of ignorance;
- Providing guidance on career profiles in health informatics;
- Recommending courses to support CPD, with details of training opportunities and updates.

## **Communications & Consultation**

You told us that it was very important to have open 2-way communication and a process of engagement, enabled through:

- Surveys (like this one);
- Forming Specialist working groups to manage comment and respond on specific issues and topics of special interest;
- Having regular communications through:
  - Networking Events
  - Seminars
  - Focused Conferences
  - Focused Webinars and Seminars
  - Developing interactive guidance;
  - Virtual networking
  - Workshops on active topics
- Targeting appropriate senior government/NHS officials and 'banks' of staff such as analysts at Board/Trust level;
- Getting (professionalism) issues higher on local branch agendas;
- Having a clear and consistent message as to the value of the Federation, not just to individuals personally but also to those that engage or employ them.
- Encouraging recognition of the Federation by employers in the field of Health Informatics and by politicians and health policy makers;

## **What happens next?**

- 1) Our consultation period ends in October so there's plenty of time to let us have even more of your views via our web site

**<http://www.bcs.org/content/conWebDoc/52449>**

Keep them coming in and if you've already responded please tell your colleagues to do so as well. This is their main chance to influence the future direction of their profession.

- 2) We would also like to receive your suggestions on what you think would be a good name for new Federation – one that reflects its founding principles of Independence, Inclusivity and Sustainability.
  1. We've held a number of workshops and attended conferences to talk to people directly to explain what we are trying to do and to listen to their views. So far, in April & May we've been to Northern Ireland Health & Social Care and the North West Informatics Skills Network. We also plan to engage with the devolved governments in Scotland and Wales and CIO Networks in the North of England,

South West England, Yorkshire and the EHI CIO Council.

***If you would like us to come to one of your local meetings then please let us know by emailing [wendy.dearing@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:wendy.dearing@wales.nhs.uk)***

2. We are already engaging with NHS England and the Health and Social Care Information Centre, both of whom are completely behind what we are trying to achieve and are working with us to actively promoting the cause of Informatics Professionalism across the NHS.
3. We have begun to engage with other professional bodies to see how we can work more closely together, including the possibility of enrolling as members of the Federation.
4. We are also engaging with private sector companies who are involved in providing health informatics expertise or services to the NHS to understand what would be a good value proposition for them.
5. We intend to use the feedback that we have obtained so far - and everything we continue to receive up until October - to inform the 3 year strategy and annual plan. We will publish this when we launch the Federation by the end of this year.