



Application booklet



The NHS Digital Academy

→ Nurturing the next generation of digital leaders in the NHS

The NHS Digital Academy aims to develop a new generation of digital changemakers who will drive information and technology transformation in the NHS. It develops strong digital leaders who are capable of delivering change so that patient care and the way their organisations operate, can benefit from the opportunities and innovations the evolving technology landscape has to offer.

The Digital Health Leadership programme is a 12-month fully accredited Postgraduate Diploma delivered by [Imperial College London](#) along with [The University of Edinburgh](#) and [HDR UK](#). It is aimed at CXOs (e.g. CIO, CNIO, CCIOs) and their deputies, and other senior digital change leaders who are operating within a context, and are in a role where they are required to drive and implement practical digital transformational change. Applicants need to be working in an NHS, public health, or social care role.

This agenda remains of high importance for the ambitions of [Health Education England's Digital Readiness Programme](#), building on the recommendations of the [Wachter Review](#) and also the [Topol Review](#), recently reaffirmed through the Covid pandemic to support delivery of the [NHS Long Term Plan](#).

→ An investment in digital health leadership

The NHS Digital Academy was set up in response to the findings of Professor Robert Wachter's review into how the English health and care system should best approach the implementation of information technology. The report, [Making IT Work](#), made recommendations outlining a need to develop and invest in the capability and capacity of digital change leaders who can drive forward the transformation agenda enabled by informatics and technology.

→ NHS experience meets academic rigour

The Digital Health Leadership post-graduate diploma is the flagship programme of the NHS Digital Academy. It combines practical NHS expertise with academic rigour to deliver a unique and ambitious learning experience. The programme is designed and delivered by Imperial College London's Institute of Global Health Innovation and the Usher Institute at the University of Edinburgh, in partnership with Health Data Research UK and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust. Our consortium unites NHS experts with world-class clinicians, researchers, and digital specialists, with unrivalled expertise in blended learning, health informatics and data science, leadership development and healthcare transformation.



Postgraduate Diploma in Digital Health Leadership

→ A programme for aspirational digital health leaders

The year-long programme that is set to commence in September, results in the attainment of a Postgraduate Diploma in Digital Health Leadership, awarded by Imperial College London and the University of Edinburgh.

The programme employs a blended learning approach that includes online modules, live sessions, and experiential learning. The online component of the programme will be highly engaging for participants, both supporting individual learning and creating a vibrant community of digital leaders. The programme expects and supports participants to apply learning to their professional practice, benefitting their organisation. It will impart tools and frameworks applicable to technology and change management in the workplace. A reflective practice will support leadership development throughout the year.

Experiential learning will be delivered in real-time learning sessions that span 2-3 days at a time. These real-time experiential sessions offer participants an immersive learning environment to nurture communities of practice. Therefore, real-time participation is expected in these sessions.

→ Core learning modules

The Digital Health Leadership programme encompasses 6 modules:

1. **Essentials of health systems**
2. **Strategy and transformational change**
3. **Health information systems and technologies**
4. **User-centred design and citizen-driven informatics**
5. **Decision support, knowledge management and actionable data analytics**
6. **Leadership**

→ Programme leadership team



Professor Ara Darzi
Co-Director



Professor Aziz Sheikh
Co-Director



Rachel Dunscombe
CEO

Essentials of health systems

→ Module overview

This module aims to equip participants with essential knowledge for understanding health systems. It provides a foundation of knowledge for the modules that follow. To achieve this, content is delivered in two parts: part one introduces the essential stakeholders and structures in health systems, and part two introduces key principles for evaluating the impact of process, policy or product changes within a system. Key topics in part one include: 1) the role of information in health systems; 2) the evidence-based rationale for investing in health; and 3) an introduction to recent, influential policy reform. In part two, essential principles for understanding health systems' complexity are introduced. Process mapping is a core discipline introduced here and, by the end of the module, participants will appreciate its importance to quality improvement and system re-design. Content is delivered through short videos from leading academics, which are supplemented with core readings to guide participants through the module.

→ Module lead



Alexander
Carter



Strategy and transformational change

→ Module overview

This module aims to equip participants with the tools and techniques to implement transformational change in health and social care. As we work in a complex health and social care system; digital leaders require toolkits to assist them in implementing transformational change.

The ability to manage risks and opportunities whilst taking your organisation/ locality and senior leaders on this journey is essential for the success of any digital transformation. This module focuses on human interactions including strategy setting, risk management, leveraging opportunities, and working with partners. The reference points in this module will form that basis for your approach to continually scan the environment for opportunities to improve health and social care.

The module will also cover strategy development and financial planning, integrating learning around project and programme management with business models, enterprise and innovation, and procurement approaches.

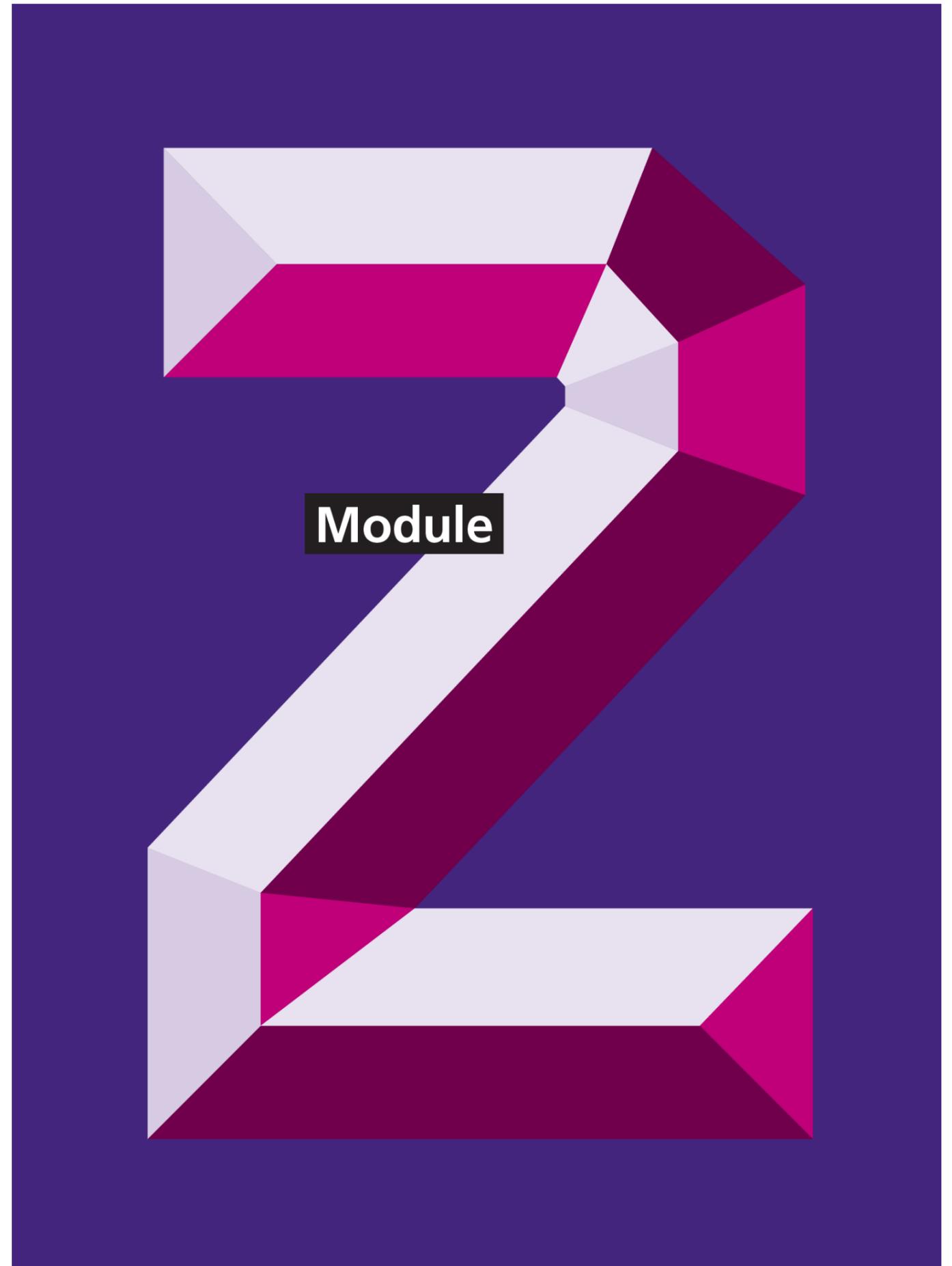
→ Module lead



Rachel
Dunscombe



Alisdair
Smithies



Health information systems & technologies

→ Module overview

In this module, we will introduce participants to new frameworks for understanding digitally enabled change. The Information Infrastructures perspective helps to understand distinctive features of the contemporary health digitisation landscape.

It highlights how simple, stand-alone “discrete” IT applications become knitted together into increasingly complex “systems of systems”. These Health Information Infrastructures emerge and evolve over extended periods of time, never reaching a final state. Major upgrades are extremely expensive, slow, and difficult to implement.

Benefits evolve only slowly as organisational stakeholders learn to exploit the new functionality. These features call into question many of the recipes you might find in popular change management handbooks or courses. For example, change management guidelines all agree on the importance of engaging the user – but how does this work with a project that takes many years to unfold in which staff who took part in engagement activities at the outset may have moved on by the time the change goes live?

Participants will learn about information governance and security, including an in-depth exploration into contemporary cyber security challenges and approaches. Participants will learn about the entire information systems life cycle, including data standards, and the complexities associated with interoperability in the health system.

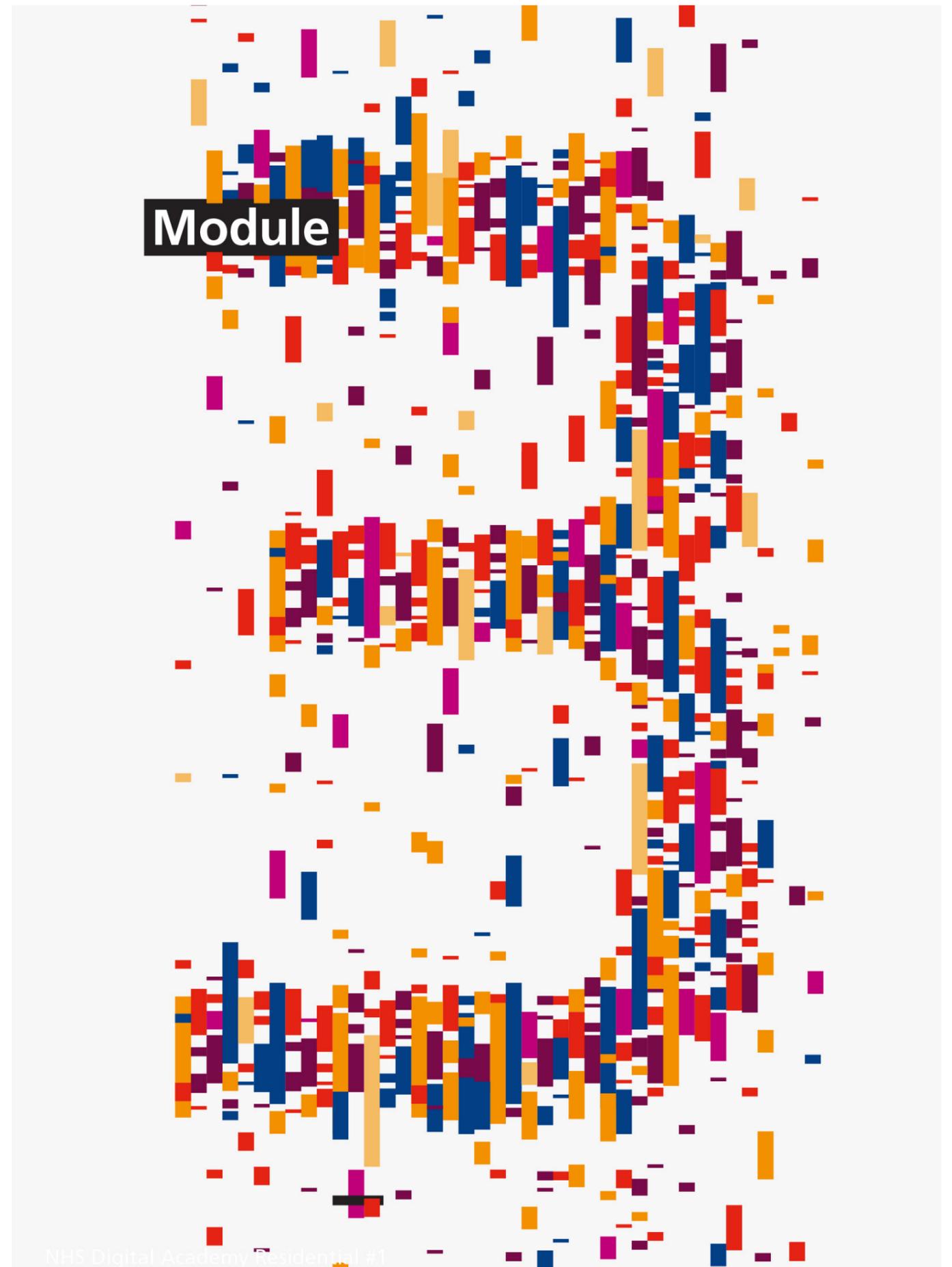
→ Module leads



Robin
Williams



Kathrin
Cresswell



User-centred design & citizen-driven informatics

→ Module overview

Understanding the needs, expectations, and experiences of healthcare users is vital if we are to effectively commission, design, and deliver digital services. In this module we examine the philosophical and practical reasons for engaging and involving people in the design process and analyse the design methodologies used to ensure that products or services are usable, acceptable, effective, and customer centric.

As part of this we will review the current landscape of patient- and citizen-facing innovations and explore the emerging direction of technology and the opportunities and threats this is likely to bring. We will review evidence and experiential learning from the use of innovations such as personal health records, apps, wearables, robots, and online decision support.

In addition, we will examine the importance of inclusive design for avoiding the 'digital health divide', how to engage citizens in decisions about uses of their data, and how to achieve innovations that are ethical, engaging, and even delightful.

This module provides participants with an insight into the latest developments in user-centred design and citizen-driven informatics. Participants will be taken through a number of in-depth case studies, each supported by the underlying theory and literature, and linked to contemporary policy, ethical and governance principles. Participants will have the opportunity to practice some of the approaches and methods they learn about during the residential component of the programme, in a number of user-centred design workshops and activities.

→ Module leads



Claudia
Pagliari



Lenny
Naar



Leadership

→ Module overview

Module 6a – Principles of leadership

In this theoretical module, participants will gain an understanding of:

- key concepts in leadership and how these affect their practice.
- how to engage and build relationships with stakeholders.
- how to ensure that digital innovation is central to strategic developments across health and social care.
- how to lead transformational change in the workplace with the added dimensions of complexity, diversity, and disruption ushered in by digital technology.

Module 6b – Leadership in practice

In this advanced leadership module, participants will build on the foundations they have acquired in the previous leadership module and harness the tools and means to lead transformational change in the workplace with the added dimensions of complexity, diversity, and disruption ushered in by digital technology.

This module is delivered in a series of mandatory synchronous online and in-person sessions and is complemented by resources in the online learning community. In addition, leadership forums bring together concepts and ideas from the other modules, helping participants to apply these principles to transform individual practice.

By the end of this module, participants will be able to apply the learning of leadership frameworks from module 6a and to operate as a leader involved in transforming health and social care services.

→ Module lead



Alison
Singleton



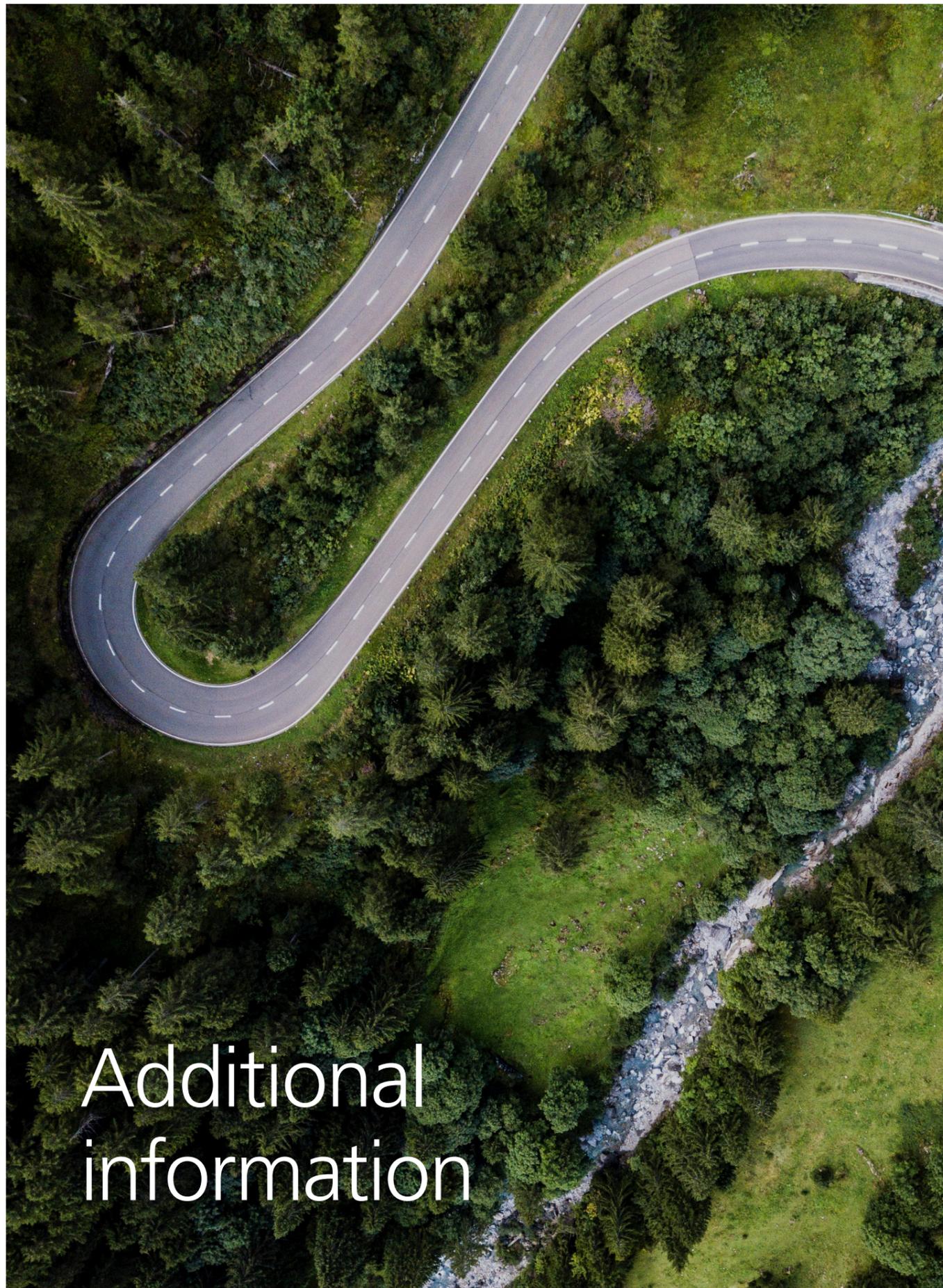
Achieving measurable impact in transformational change

At the start of the programme, participants will set out their goals for the year ahead in a Personal Development Plan. This will be agreed by an Executive Sponsor, a Board-level stakeholder at their organisation who commits to supporting the participant in their applying learning to the workplace.

The programme is designed to enable participants to apply the skills and knowledge they acquire to their practice in the workplace. They will demonstrate emerging knowledge by applying best-practice models, frameworks and approaches to improve outcomes and add further value to NHS initiatives. Throughout the programme, participants will use a learning journal to reflect on their changing practice, and to capture the impact they bring to their organisation or system. This will help them to work toward their Personal Development Plan, as well as prepare them to implement practical transformational change to the strategic benefit of their organisation.

Participants celebrate the completion of their digital health leadership journey by presenting the highlights of their professional achievements, personal growth, and demonstrating their impact in the workplace.





Additional
information

→ What is the time commitment?

Across past cohorts, the recommended study time has been 5-8 hours on average, and up to 10-15 hours per week. This breaks down as approx. 3 hours of engagement with online content, 2 hours of core reading, and additional time to engage with peers. During assessment weeks, these hours will be put towards completing specified assessments.

For module 6, the four Leadership forums will take place on the following dates:

- **Thursday 10 and Friday 11 November 2022** – Radisson Blu Manchester Airport
- **Tuesday 24 and Wednesday 25 January 2023** (virtual)
- **Tuesday 28 and Wednesday 29 March 2023** (virtual)
- **Tuesday 6 June 2023** – Radisson Blu Durham, full day event with dinner and overnight accommodation (departing **Wednesday 7 June**)

Note that, individual needs may differ, depending on previous exposure to teaching and learning. Therefore, some participants may need to commit more time to the programme, and undertake additional self-directed study in order to successfully complete the programme and achieve the learning outcomes.

Throughout the programme, participants will have access to tutoring support and bespoke pastoral care, along with the extensive learning resources of Imperial College London, and reasonable adjustments provision, should learning differences require or unforeseen circumstances require.

→ Who should apply?

Applicants should be employed by NHS, public health, or social care organisation in England.

The programme is suited to those who are:

- Applicants will have 3-to-5 years' relevant experience of health informatics or digital health
- They obtain the support of an Executive Sponsor from within their organisation or system
- They are empowered to apply learning, behaviours, and new skills to their organisational setting
- They are able to commit to attending and participating fully at live experiential learning sessions
- They have a demonstrable commitment to embed learning for the strategic benefit of their organisation or system, and to the professionalism of the workforce