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Digital Health  
and Care Wales

# Digital Health and Care Wales NHS Wales e-Library Strategy 2025-2028

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The NHS Wales e-Library Three Year Strategy for April 2025 - March 2028 outlines the team's core objectives for the coming three years.

The objectives have been identified through annual reports, Digital Health and Care Wales Integrated Medium Term Plan for 2025-26, library and information and Welsh Government policies, plans and papers.

There are four strategic aims that the objectives fall under:



1. **PROVIDE** value for money through competitive tenders, continuous review of e-resources and working towards 'Once for Wales'.



2. **PROMOTE** the e-Library service through new and existing engagement opportunities.



3. **EMPOWER** NHS Wales by providing learning and education opportunities on which they can rely upon.



4. **INNOVATE**, develop and grow our collections and systems leading the way in the health library sector while aligning with library and information services across sectors.

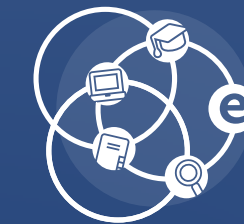
## PURPOSE

The NHS Wales e-Library has had significant investment and development since April 2017, and we are now embarking on a period of stability for the service which will provide opportunities for increased engagement, learning and training programmes and collaborative working across library and information sectors and partners across the UK.

This will help to increase the return on investment for the service from both a financial and real-life impact perspective, raising the profile of the NHS Wales e-Library as a leading, national, digital library service. With 2026 being the e-Library's 25-year anniversary, this Three-Year Plan aims to celebrate how far the service has come.

This strategy has been created by the e-Library team and approved by NHS Wales e-Library Service Board and arises from our vision which demonstrates our users' needs and our passion to deliver a leading digital source for knowledge and evidence to all our existing and prospective eligible users working in health and social care in NHS Wales, Welsh Government, Local Authorities and beyond.

The e-Library provides considerable contribution to [Digital Health and Care Wales' Organisational Strategy 2024-30](#) and vision 'To provide world-leading digital services, empowering people to live healthier lives' (DHCW, 2024c, p.3). The e-Library service sits within 'Mission 4: Drive better values and outcomes through innovation' (DHCW, 2024c) and meets five (5) of the twenty (20) strategic objectives.



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NHS Wales e-Library

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The e-Library's strategic aims are aligned to these as follows:

-  **'A secure, long-term financially stable position'**  
*Aligned with e-Library Strategic Aim 1*
-  **'Users report a top-quartile satisfaction for our products and services'**  
*Aligned with e-Library Strategic Aim 2*
-  **'A national information and data insights service which demonstrates net benefit and value'**  
*Aligned with e-Library Strategic Aim 3*
-  **'Top quartile staff and stakeholder engagement'**  
**'Deploy AI and automation, safely and ethically, to deliver year-on-year productivity improvements across NHS Wales'**  
*Aligned with e-Library Strategic Aim 4*

We are committed to developing and improving the e-Library service to meet these strategic objectives working within the values of the organisation 'to build trust with partners' through collaboration, innovation, inclusion, excellence and compassion' (DHCW, 2024c, p.12).

The NHS Wales e-Library is home to NHS Wales' largest source of evidence and digital information including e-Journals, e-Books, databases, evidence summaries/clinical decision support tools, medicines information, guidelines, e-Learning and more.



Our mission over the next three years is to review the impact and value of the digital collections, maximise value for money and return on investment, discover opportunities to engage with new external partners, support existing and new end users to utilise the service effectively and initiate innovative developments to the service to ensure continuity with the developing digital world.

## OUR VISION

To provide a high-quality, user-led service to promote evidence-based practice and empower NHS Wales to improve and innovate.

Our vision is supported by four strategic aims which direct our development priorities for the e-Library Service.



**1. PROVIDE** value for money through competitive tenders, continuous review of e-resources and working towards 'Once for Wales'.



**2. PROMOTE** the e-Library service through new and existing engagement opportunities.



**3. EMPOWER** NHS Wales by providing learning and education opportunities on which they can rely upon.



**4. INNOVATE**, develop and grow our collections and systems leading the way in the health library sector while aligning with library and information services across sectors.

## OUR HISTORY

The NHS Wales e-Library is based at Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW). We provide national digital resources and systems for NHS Wales and those working in health and social care across Wales as defined by our Authorised User Policy (NHS Wales e-Library, 2024a).

We collaborate with our strategic partners represented on the NHS Wales e-Library Service Board to deliver this service.

Following national subscriptions to key databases including MEDLINE and Cochrane Library Database via the web-based Health of Wales Information Service (HOWIS) in 2001, the NHS Wales e-Library was formally established in 2007.

The original objectives of the NHS Wales e-Library were to:

“...increase the number and range of e-resources available...

...increase universal and equitable availability regardless of professional background, employing organisation [in NHS Wales] or geographical location...

...improve usability and functionality... through HOWIS or an appropriate portal” (Informing Healthcare, 2005).



### e-Lyfrgell GIG Cymru NHS Wales e-Library

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The original objectives for the NHS Wales e-Library have certainly been met over the last eighteen (18) years with the following resources now available:

- |                                                       |                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 4,700+ e-Journals                                     | 5 Guideline platforms          |
| 1,400+ e-Books                                        | 1 Medicines Information System |
| 19 Databases                                          | 1 e-Learning system            |
| 2 Evidence Summaries / Clinical Decision Support Tool | 1 authentication system        |

(These figures do not include Open Access or freely available resources that are also made available through the website and catalogue).

Many of these resources were procured by the NHS Wales e-Library thanks to a substantial investment in the service made by Welsh Government in 2018 in line with the establishment of Health Education Improvement Wales (HEIW) when the Wales Deanery moved from Cardiff University. DHCW (at the time NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS)) were approached to submit a business case to Welsh Government identifying which additional resources would need to be procured to ensure the service provided to medical trainees and trainers following the move of the Deanery was consistent with the service offered in Cardiff University.

The approximate £10 million funding over three years with a commitment to maintain consistency thereafter was granted to provide equitable access by increasing the number and range of e-resources available to NHS Wales and other eligible users of the NHS Wales e-Library following the move of the Wales Deanery from Cardiff University to the NHS (Welsh Government, 2018b).

Following further investment in the e-Library team by Digital Health and Care Wales in 2024, the workforce has gone from 1.5 FTE in 2017 to 5 FTE in 2024.



## ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The NHS Wales e-Library is governed by the NHS Wales e-Library Service Board which includes representative from our strategic partners, NHS Wales Library and Knowledge Service, Public Health Wales, Health Education and Improvement Wales, Health Technology Wales, Social Care Wales and Welsh Government.

**The Service Board provides leadership, influence, and maintains overall stewardship and governance to ensure the successful delivery of the e-Library's Strategy and Annual Plan.**

The Board is informed by NHS Wales e-Library Champions which includes health and care professionals and subject matter experts to ensure that the e-Library and the resources it procures represent the vast array of professions within NHS Wales and supporting organisations.

The e-Library team provide recommendations to Champions and Service Board regarding procurement of resources and systems evaluated according to its Collection Development Policy (NHS Wales e-Library, 2024b) and service improvement initiatives to support the continuous development of the e-Library service.

From April 2025, the NHS Wales e-Library on behalf of the Service Board will begin to report quarterly and through submission of their Strategic Plan and Annual Report to **DHCW's Digital Governance and Safety Committee** whose responsibility it is to is 'to advise and assure the Board in discharging its responsibilities with regard to the quality and integrity; safety, security and appropriate use of information and data to support health and care delivery and service improvement and the provision of high quality digital health and care' (DHCW, 2025).

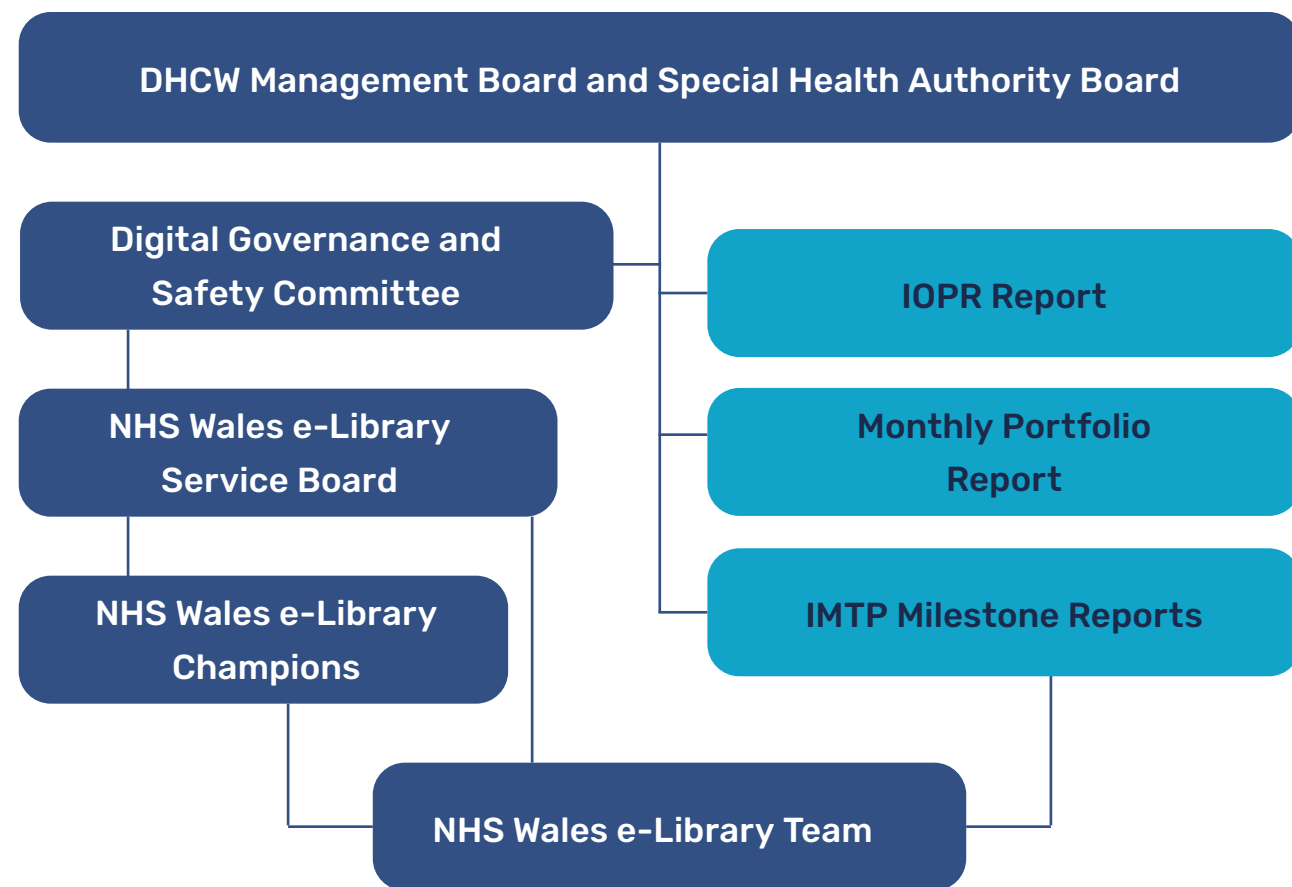
Strategic Plan(s) and resulting annual reports are also shared with the DHCW Management Board alongside procurement briefing papers submitted by the DHCW Commercial Services Team according to procurement timelines and contract value.

Lastly, the e-Library report quarterly on its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) via the e-Library website and to DHCW Management Board as part of the following internal documentation:

- Integrated Organisational Performance Report (IOPR)
- Quarterly Portfolio Reports
- Monthly Integrated Medium-Term Plan (IMTP) Milestone Reports

The e-Library team also work closely with digital library services from other countries in the NHS: England, Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The 5 Nations Digital Libraries and e-Resources Group meet biannually to support each other by sharing experiences with procurement, contract management and management of digital libraries. The group also lead on national projects relating to digital resources such as the shared e-Book Collection Development Policy and Invitation to Tender Requirements.

We have been inspired by important developments in the wider digital library and information sector. All these developments, working cultures and challenges will be recognised throughout this three-year plan as we continue to empower NHS Wales over the next three years.



## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The deployment of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to support discoverability, retrieval and summarising of information cannot go unnoticed. In February 2024, the e-Library team attended the [Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals \(CILIP\) Employers Forum](#) with speakers from University of Sheffield and Manchester University discussing their development of AI policies to support staff and students when utilising AI tools or using AI-generated information in their work.

Inspired by their readiness to act in a fast changing environment, the e-Library team, working with its strategic partners developed a guide to AI for NHS Wales staff working in the research, library and information space (NHS Wales e-Library, 2025) and a corresponding policy, to be endorsed by the AI Commission for Health and Social Care in June 2025 that supports NHS Wales to utilise these tools in an ethical, legal and appropriate way. Following this, we worked collaboratively with NHS Wales Library and Knowledge Service and Cardiff University to soft launch (January 2025) and prepare for the full deployment of Primo Research Assistant (RA) (due April 2025).

Primo Research Assistant is made available as part of the Alma (Library Management System) and PrimoVE (Resource Discovery Tool) which NHS Wales e-Library utilise to surface the nationally procured digital resources via a Memorandum of Understanding with Cardiff University. Primo RA allows users to query academic content in natural language, highlighting the top five (5) most relevant sources of information along with an AI-generated summary of those sources to aid in answering the question.

We look forward to undertaking a review of usage and user feedback in 2025-26 but have already witnessed how the tool has supported quicker access to relevant information for busy health and care professionals. The NHS Wales e-Library are proud to be at the forefront of developing AI guidance and policies in this space to support health and care professionals and have been pleased to advise and support colleagues across the Five (5) Nations.

With seamless access to evidence-based information being a priority for all library and information services, the NHS Wales e-Library have looked towards their Five (5) Nation counterparts and University library services across the UK who have deployed AI-powered linking tools to support one-click access to e-resources from a range of access points. It has been evidenced that by implementing these tools, usage and therefore return on investment has dramatically increased. For example, Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust saw their usage increase 500% after the deployment of such a tool (Third Iron, 2021, p.11) and NHS Mersey Care saw a 45% increase in usage of the e-Journals alone (Sage, 2025).

Implementation of such a tool is a priority for the NHS Wales e-Library in 2025-26 to put our collections in the hands of our users. In addition to this, the e-Library will continue to keep abreast of the fast-paced AI landscape, learning from library and information professionals across sectors and engaging with suppliers to learn of, and potentially deploy, more tools to aid users in finding and utilising evidence-based information.

## E-BOOKS

The acquisition of e-Books has been high on the agenda for all library sectors, particularly in the last five+ (5+) years. User demand during the first six (6) months of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2023) saw print book sales fall and the purchase of digital books rise rapidly among general consumers (Sweney, 2020). This was also witnessed across academic library sectors with use of the Southern Universities Procurement Consortium (SUPC) Framework Agreement (used by academic libraries across the UK) for books, e-books, e-textbooks, and associated services more than doubling and 'spend nearly tripl[ing] (rising from £8.9 million to £25.1 million)' for the academic year 2020-21 (Philips, 2022).

The NHS Wales e-Library responded to demand by procuring e-Books in-perpetuity for the first time in 2021-22. But, with the increasing demand, came concerns from the library sector regarding the e-Book market including availability, accessibility, subscriptions versus purchase in-perpetuity and high percentage mark ups for popular texts. The #ebooksos campaign led by the academic library sector aimed to address these concerns through their open letter to the Chair of the UK parliamentary Education Select Committee (#ebooksos, 2020) and is still actively addressing these concerns today. In 2021-22, the 'Five (5) Nations Group' (physical library leads in England, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Scotland and Wales) endorsed research commissioned by NHS England into healthcare staff use and non-use of e-Books (Gorring et al, 2023).

And in early 2024, a task and finish group, led by NHS Wales e-Library was established to meet the recommendation to:

**'...work together more across the Five Nations to find solutions to common issues, and to share ideas and resources.'** (Gorring et al, 2022, p. 118)

Through the:

**'Production of guidelines/specifications for the library community to utilise when looking at e-book subscriptions, tenders and contracts.'** (Gorring et al, 2022, p. 118)

The Five (5) NHS Nations e-Book Task and Finish Group have developed a collection development policy and Invitation to Tender (ITT) requirements for e-Books to ensure equity and continuity across the nations regarding the procurement of e-Books. The policy and requirements along with supporting documentation will be published by 2025-26 quarter two (2). All health and care library, knowledge and information services that sit within NHS, HSC and publicly funded health and care services (Ireland) can utilise this documentation when procuring and managing e-Books.

This work led by NHS library services is timely with the recently launched CILIP and Knowledge Rights 21 (KR21) 'Unlocking e-Book's project' that 'aims to achieve fair sales practice, copyright reform, and governmental support for libraries, education and research for digital content' (CILIP, 2025).

In addition, the February 2025 announcement from Clarivate withdrawing from the perpetual purchase market for physical and digital books by June 2026 (Clarivate, 2025) is only accelerating the necessity to reform the e-Book market. The NHS Wales e-Library, working with partners across the health library sector and beyond are committed to continue its work in this space and support the library and information sector to succeed in its mission.

## OPEN ACCESS

There has been much discussion and debate on the future of Open Access and transitional agreements for e-Journals in the academic library sector. The publication of Jisc's 'Review of transitional agreements in the UK' (Jisc, 2024) and Society of College, National and University Library's (SCONUL) response to this paper (SCONUL, 2024) highlighted that there have been unintended consequences to transitional agreements. These included 'a reduction in green Open Access' and consequently a rise in Gold and hybrid publishing leading to the amount of 'closed content remaining static' (SCONUL, 2024, p.3). As well as being responsible for the national NHS Wales e-Library, the e-Library team also support the information needs of Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW) colleagues and play a pivotal role in the Research and Innovation (R&I) space. One of the aims of the DHCW R&I Strategy is to 'develop a culture of innovation that promotes creativity, learning, encouragement and support' (DHCW, 2022).

To deliver this, the NHS Wales e-Library team created and published the Digital Health and Care Wales Open Access Policy (DHCW, 2024a) and [Research and Knowledge Repository](#) making this publicly available in April 2025.

The policy requires DHCW employees and contractors to publish their research outputs Open Access utilising a free of charge, Green Open Access route in the first instance with mandatory deposit in the institutional repository to ensure DHCW's research output is available to be the public and organisational research outputs can be monitored and recorded by DHCW. This supports the wider Open Access initiative without having to allocate funds that could result in 'double dipping' (where a publisher charges both a subscription fee and an article processing charge (APC) for an article to make it Open Access, effectively charging twice for the same content). DHCW is the first of the NHS Wales organisations (Health Boards, Trusts and Special Health Authorities) to implement an Open Access policy and institutional repository and have committed to review compliance after year one (1) in April 2026.

Jisc also found that there was a 'lack of transparency over costs' and 'slow transition rates' for journals to 'flip' to fully Open Access meaning that the transition for scholarly publishing to move away from paywalls and support access for all will take longer than anticipated when transitional agreements were first negotiated, not just by Jisc but around the world. Lastly, 'author behaviour has not changed', although transitional agreements were negotiated with forty-seven (47) publishers, 'the top ten publishers account[ed] for just over 90% of UK Hybrid output' (Jisc, 2024, p.10). In our last three-year plan, the e-Library committed to 'research the potential adoption of trans[itional] agreements for national e-Journals...' these two reports confirmed to the e-Library Service Board that alternative e-Journal agreements and Open Access publishing methods need to be explored to support the wider initiative to move forward with the transition to fully Open Access.

Consequently, the e-Library Service Board approached the Wales Institute for Digital Information (WIDI) and Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum (WHELF) to collaborate on a project with two aims:

1. To identify whether a Diamond Open Press for the publication of medical, health and social care works (e.g. articles, books) would support accelerating the shift towards Open Access for NHS and Higher Education institutions in Wales.
2. To take a deep dive into the current publishing practices across NHS Wales' seven (7) Health Boards, three (3) Trusts and two (2) Special Health Authorities and identify whether local or a national Open Access Policy, Institutional Repository and/or Open Press would benefit NHS Wales to increase their research profile while demonstrating a commitment to widening public access to research conducted in NHS Wales (scaling up the work DHCW have completed implementing their own policy and repository).

The feasibility study is endorsed by Health and Care Research Wales and will involve stakeholders across NHS Wales. The aim is to complete the study by September 2025 and act upon recommendations in the 12-24 months to follow to accelerate the shift to Open Access in the medical, health and social care field in Wales.

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT AND IMPACT

Transformational benefits can be realised through digital innovation and the NHS Wales e-Library aim to demonstrate a positive return on investment for its service users over the coming three years. Considering the wider NHS Wales deficit, the e-Library has recognised the need to demonstrate its value not only through the monitoring of usage statistics and cost per use of digital resources but by quantifying the benefits generated by the e-Library service compared to its costs.

In 2024-25 the e-Library began benchmarking its service with the Five (5) Nations digital library services to identify where NHS Wales ranked regarding budget, staffing, cost per Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) NHS employee, and resource and digital infrastructure availability. Following a literature review, the e-Library identified the need to create and implement a return on investment methodology for its service like those implemented by other library sectors across the World. For example, Tessler (2013) found that the British Library delivered £5 for every £1 invested and a more recent study on public libraries in England identified that they generate a value of £3.4 billion a year (Gordan et al, 2023). For digital library services specifically, studies have found that in the US investment in library resources showed a return of \$4.38 in grant income for every dollar invested in 2006 (Tenopir, 2010).

With the e-Library's existing reporting of its annual Key Performance Indicators (KPI) s and alongside the forthcoming ROI methodology, the service also aims to continue to demonstrate the impact the procured resources have had on patient care and end user knowledge.

In 2022, the e-Library launched qualitative surveys for some of its digital resources asking end users to identify how often they use the resource, where it supported them and an opportunity to provide a case study to demonstrate these impacts. In 2024, through active promotion of these surveys the e-Library identified several use cases that demonstrated impact including:

- access to guidelines to support patients with swallowing difficulties to receive the medication required in liquid or crushed form
- access to clinical decision support tools reconfirming the process to be taken to support patients with co-morbidities
- access to a citation database that supported creation of systematic reviews identifying literature that would have otherwise been missed

This positive engagement with end users has identified a need to continue gathering impact data to provide real-life benefits alongside the economic benefits of investing in a national digital library service for NHS Wales.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Declining engagement with well-known Social Media platforms has seen educational, research and public institutions re-assess their online presence. In 2023, the e-Library made the decision to step away from Facebook and in 2024 to close their X (formally known as Twitter) account. As with many institutions, the e-Library's concern with the spread of misinformation and lack of user engagement resulted in the decision to step away (Elliot, 2025). Since then, the e-Library have been focussing efforts on Instagram, and LinkedIn but wish to explore alternative platforms where library service communities are growing such as BlueSky and Threads (King, 2025). In addition, internal platforms such as Microsoft Viva could potentially eliminate the requirement for email communication through mailing lists and Teams channels. An engagement strategy focussed on building strong relationships with our existing and potential user base will analyse the platforms available and identify ways they can be utilised to increase engagement with and reach of e-Library service over the next three years.

## STRATEGIC APPROACH

The e-Library is a key component of the Digital Health and Care Wales's purpose 'TO MAKE DIGITAL A FORCE FOR GOOD IN HEALTH AND CARE' and operates within the following strategies and plans:

- [Digital Health and Care Wales Organisational Strategy April 2024 - March 2030](#) (DHCW, 2024c)
- [Digital Health and Care Wales Integrated Medium Term Plan April 2024 - March 2027](#) (DHCW, 2024b)
- [Digital Health and Care Wales Research and Innovation Strategy January 2023 - December 2025](#) (and subsequent strategies) (DHCW, 2022)

We will also work to fulfil applicable elements of the following Welsh Government strategies:

- [A Healthier Wales: our Plan for Health and Social Care](#) (Welsh Government. Department of Health and Social Services, 2018a)
- [Digital and data strategy for health and social care in Wales](#) (Welsh Government, 2023)



**Digital Health and Care Wales Organisational Strategy 2024-2030** (DHCW, 2024c)

How the NHS Wales e-Library can support the strategy



<p><b>Mission 4:</b> Drive better values and outcomes through innovation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivering the milestones outlined in the Integrated Medium Term Plan and DHCW Business Plan (see page 20)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic Objective 17:</b> A secure, long-term financially stable position.</p> <p><b>Strategic Objective 14:</b> A national information and data insights service which demonstrates net benefit and value.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewing all e-Library resources and services due for contract extensions or re-procurement according to the e-Library’s Collection Development Policy following industry best practices to identify value for money and return on investment. Working in collaboration with strategic partners and stakeholders to deliver competitive tender exercises based on robust requirements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic Objective 12:</b> Users report a top-quartile satisfaction for our products and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remaining a user-led service responding to feedback, concerns and recommendations to improve the collection and service. Achieved through open feedback mechanisms, e-resource impact surveys and service satisfaction surveys.</li> </ul>

**Strategic Objective 20:** Top quartile staff and stakeholder engagement.

- Committing to continue delivering the service following robust open-governance processes and expanding opportunities for stakeholders to get involved through becoming e-Library Champions or Service Board members/non-voting members/observers. Implementing an engagement strategy, reviewing current and implementing new social media platforms and continuing to deliver a well-developed and well-utilised learning and training programme.

**Strategic Objective 15:** Deploy AI and automation, safely and ethically, to deliver year-on-year productivity improvements across NHS Wales.

- Publishing the AI Commission for Health and Social Care endorsed library, information and research AI Policy applicable to all persons licenced by the NHS Wales Copyright Licence Plus.

Committing to horizon scanning for AI tools that safely and ethically support users in the library, information and research space and regularly updating the e-Library’s guidance on AI.

Deploying AI tools made freely available by existing suppliers following review according to our collection development policy and in agreement with strategic partners.

Procuring, where applicable and possible, AI tools that support users in the library, information and research space.

**Digital Health and Care Wales Integrated Medium Term Plan 2024 - 2027 (DHCW, 2024b)**

How the NHS Wales e-Library can support the IMTP



**5225:** Develop collections and increase uptake and usage of the NHS Wales e-Library.

- Delivering DHCW Business Plan milestones **5576, 5575, 5574, 5573, 5572, 5571, 5570, 5569, 5568, 3432** (internal document) on areas of procurement, engagement, learning and training.

Reviewing all resources and services due for contract extensions or re-procurement according to the e-Library's Collection Development Policy following industry best practices to identify value for money and return on investment.

Reviewing permanent collections including but not limited to owned e-Books and Open Access e-Books and e-Journals and horizon scanning for new resources to ensure that high-quality, current evidence-based resources are made available to NHS Wales.

Remaining a user-led service responding to feedback, concerns and recommendation to improve the collection and service. Achieved through open feedback mechanisms, e-resource impact surveys and service satisfaction surveys.

Reporting quarterly to governance groups on usage of the nationally procured digital resources and systems to identify increases, trends and areas for improvement.

**Digital Health and Care Wales Research and Innovation Strategy January 2023 – December 2025** (and subsequent strategies) (DHCW, 2022)

How the NHS Wales e-Library can support the R&I Strategy



**Aim 1:** Deliver the assets and resource to facilitate the research and innovation environment across Wales.

- Reviewing all resources and services due for contract extensions or re-procurement according to the e-Library’s Collection Development Policy following industry best practices to ensure high quality resources are procured that enable more effective, efficient and safer decision making to facilitate research and innovation.

**Aim 4:** Develop a culture of innovation that promotes creativity, learning, encouragement and support.

- Train and encourage NHS Wales to find digital information and evidence such as guidelines, e-Journals, databases, evidence summaries and e-Learning to support continued learning and progression in their roles to improve ways of working

**A Healthier Wales: our Plan and Health and Social Care**, national design principles to drive change and transformation. (Welsh Government. Department of Health and Social Services, 2018a)

How the NHS Wales e-Library can support the 'A Healthier Wales'

**AHW1** Evidence driven – using research, knowledge and information to understand what works; learning from and working with others; using innovation and improvement to develop and evaluate better tools and ways of working.

- Train and encourage NHS Wales to find digital information and evidence such as guidelines, e-Journals, databases, evidence summaries and e-Learning to support continued learning and progression in their roles to improve ways of working.



**Digital and data strategy for health and social care in Wales** (Welsh Government, 2023)

How the NHS Wales e-Library can support the 'Digital and Data Strategy'



**Aim 1: Transform digital skills and partnerships, Mission 2: Digital Economy**

Ensure procurement is led on an all-Wales basis by the appropriate body within health and social care to maximise long term social and economic value.

Reviewing all resources and services due for contract extensions or re-procurement according to the e-Library's Collection Development Policy following industry best practices to identify value for money and return on investment. Working in collaboration with strategic partners and stakeholders to deliver competitive, national tender exercises based on robust requirements. Working with strategic partners and stakeholders, identify opportunities to consolidate local contracts to support better value for money and contract management.

Remaining a user-led service responding to feedback, concerns and recommendation to improve the collection and service. Achieved through open feedback mechanisms, e-resource impact surveys and service satisfaction surveys.

**Aim 3: Make services digital first, Mission 5: User-centred services.**

Continue to deliver services which are informed by user research, user design and user feedback.

Work closely with clinical users and networks to ensure that digital services support recovery and drive health and social care transformation.

Work with partners to drive innovation, particularly in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data insights.

- Working in collaboration with strategic partners and stakeholders to deliver competitive, national tender exercises based on robust requirements relating to the provision of clinical information that supports patient care. Working with strategic partners and stakeholders, identify opportunities to consolidate local contracts to support better value for money and contract management.
- Publishing the AI Commission for Health and Social Care endorsed library, information and research AI Policy applicable to all persons licenced by the NHS Wales Copyright Licence Plus.
- Committing to horizon scanning for AI tools that safely and ethically support users in the library, information and research space and regularly updating the e-Library’s guidance on AI.
  - Deploying AI tools made freely available by existing suppliers following review according to our collection development policy and in agreement with strategic partners.
  - Procuring, where applicable and possible AI tools that support users in the library, information and research space.

**Aim 3: Make services digital first, Mission 6: Digital inclusion.**

Provide digital services in both Welsh and English.

- Continue to support Welsh Language Legislation and ensure all publicly available information from the e-Library service is made available in Welsh and English.
- Continue to work with suppliers to translate promotional, learning and training materials into the Welsh Language.
- Commit to procuring or making available digital services that support searching and results in the Welsh Language and promoting the capability to end users.

Encourage the use of digital services by making them as attractive, safe and easy to use as possible.

- Continue to review the NHS Wales e-Library website to ensure clarity, consistency and compliance with current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- Continue to include requirements in Invitation to Tender documentation asking suppliers to confirm compliance with current WCAG guidance, providing accessibility tools and deploying User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX) best practices.

**PROVIDE VALUE**  
for money through  
competitive tenders,  
continuous review  
of e-resources and  
working towards 'once  
for wales'



Being a part of the NHS Wales family, the NHS Wales e-Library must always be able to provide its users with high quality e-resources and ensure, to users and the public, that the e-resources and systems purchased to support professional development and patient care are of the best quality and value for money.

**OBJECTIVE 1.1 Procure national access to digital resources and systems according to procurement timelines.**

Utilising the e-Library's Collection Development Policy and Procurement Process, complete commercial activity utilising the NICE Electronic and Print Framework agreement where available and/or according to public procurement rules and DHCW Standing Financial Instructions.

**OBJECTIVE 1.2 Benchmark the NHS Wales e-Library service with counterpart services across the Five (5) Nations.**

Working with strategic leads from the Five (5) Nations Digital Library Group, benchmark resources available nationally, budget, cost per user to identify where the NHS Wales e-Library sits in terms of provision and potential areas for improvement.

**OBJECTIVE 1.3 Create a Return on Investment methodology for the NHS Wales e-Library Service.**

Complete a literature review to identify examples of library and information services across sectors that have implemented a Return on Investment methodology and use the evidence to create and apply a methodology to the e-Library service to demonstrate the value and efficiency of the service.

**OBJECTIVE 1.4 Review the NHS Wales e-Library policies, procedures and processes to ensure they meets industry standards.**

Working with strategic leads from the Five (5) Nations Digital Library Group, benchmark resources available nationally, budget, cost per user to identify where the NHS Wales e-Library sits in terms of provision and potential areas for improvement.

**OBJECTIVE 1.5** Ensure e-Library staff, partners and stakeholders are sufficiently skilled in value for money areas, knowledge of the collections and tools to best respond to user enquiries.

e-Library staff to self-evaluate their knowledge and skills according to the CILIP Professional Knowledge & Skills Base (PKSB) to identify training needs supporting ethical professional practice and ensure training is completed.

Lead workshops for Governance groups and stakeholders and offer e-Library work placements for NHS Wales, Public Health Wales and Welsh Government Library and Information colleagues.

**OBJECTIVE 1.6** Expand on the services and areas the e-Library analyses and reports on.

Create and distribute annual reports for Governance groups to be shared publicly. Report quarterly on agreed Service Level Standards (SLSs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) updating targets annually.

Using PowerBI, create dashboards for e-Library generated data and automate the collection of e-resource usage data by Health Board/Trust and national NHS Wales data to support the decision-making process regarding contract extensions and re-procurement and ensure value for money. Data will be openly available for library and knowledge services to review and support their end user engagement and promotion activities.

**OBJECTIVE 1.7** Lead the Five (5) Nations e-Book task and finish group.

Working with colleagues from national and local NHS library and information services across the Five (5) nations, develop a shared e-Book Collection Development Policy and Invitation to Tender requirements that can be utilised by any service to standardise the purchase and management of e-Book collections while also reducing administrative burden.



**PROMOTE** the  
e-library service and its  
e-resources through  
new engagement  
opportunities



Promoting the e-Library Service and engaging with our authorised users is key to the success of the e-Library. We need to continue to work within our current communication channels and seek new opportunities for engagement with end users to ensure that they feel part of the decision-making process for the e-Library service and invested in its development.

**OBJECTIVE 2.1** Develop an Engagement Strategy for the e-Library service.

To build and maintain positive relationships with e-Library audiences creating meaningful interactions, increasing participation, and encouraging ongoing communication.

**OBJECTIVE 2.2** Promote cross-sector collaboration with Welsh Universities, Royal Colleges and Societies.

Working with strategic partners, build strong relationships with the Welsh University, Royal Colleges and Society health and care community to support students leaving university and entering NHS Wales and members including:

- Academic liaison, subject librarians and college/society librarians
- Lecturers and professors
- Learning and training representatives
- Student representatives

**OBJECTIVE 2.3 Review the NHS Wales e-Library Social Media offer producing guidance to support utilisation.**

Following the closure of e-Library presence on social media platforms Facebook and X (formally known as Twitter) the team will review their current social media offer, explore new opportunities including but not limited to Bluesky, Microsoft Viva, Threads and podcasts and produce guidance to support utilisation.

**OBJECTIVE 2.4 Review and identify user groups who require support to use the e-Library and increase their confidence and uptake of services.**

Continue to work with the NHS Wales Library and Knowledge Service Training Group to seek opportunities to deliver at training days, meetings and workshops, and to advise when other known events are occurring.

Deliver presentations, demonstrations, and workshops utilising any appropriate method of engagement following review of usage data to identify subjects or professions who could benefit from further engagement.

Create a suite of video guidance to support end users with accessing, searching for and using information available to them.

**OBJECTIVE 2.5 Assure strategic partners and stakeholders of our knowledge.**

Continue with membership of the Library and Information Association (CILIP) as an employer partner, UK Serials Group (UKSG) and National Acquisitions Group (NAG) to access conferences, networks, and continuing professional development opportunities.

NHS Wales e-Library staff to publish in peer reviewed journals and industry publications, and present at and/or attend relevant sector conferences.

Contribute to professional membership and health sector library and information groups calls to action, providing case studies and reports to support the strategic priorities for the profession.

Working with partners, support the establishment of a Welsh Health and Care Library and Information Bursary utilising profit made by the European Association for Health Information and Libraries (EAHIL) 2018 Conference organising committee.

**OBJECTIVE 2.6** Involve eligible users in developing our collections and services to improve.

Increase number of e-Library Champions from a range of subject matter specialties and commit to the delivery of an annual e-Library conference.

Regularly engage with end users to seek feedback on procurement activity through establishing task and finish groups.

Encourage users to complete impact and user satisfaction surveys to demonstrate how the national e-resources impact them, their roles and patient care to support procurement activity.

**OBJECTIVE 2.7** Celebrate the NHS Wales e-Library's twenty-five (25) year anniversary.

Design and deliver a campaign to celebrate twenty-five (25) years of the NHS Wales e-Library to include sharing information on its history, successes and future plans.



**EMPOWER** NHS

Wales by providing learning and education opportunities for our e-resources of which they can rely upon



We will increase the offer of digital learning opportunities for our users to empower NHS Wales in their use of the collections and maximise usage.

**OBJECTIVE 3.1** Ensure our customer service is outstanding.

Work to achieve the Customer Service Excellence Standard (including annual follow up sessions with the examining body) committing the e-Library service to continuous improvement in customer service and user engagement.

**OBJECTIVE 3.2** Lead eligible users to the best evidence for their practice.

Collaborating with strategic partners, champions and end users, create online guides or summaries relating to key health and care awareness campaigns, trending topics, and areas of interest highlighting key electronic resources to support eligible users to access relevant and trusted information.

**OBJECTIVE 3.3** Support users with information on how to publish Open Access.

With strategic partners, develop guidance for NHS Wales on how to publish including a learning, training and engagement programme led by e-Library suppliers such as journal editors, NHS Wales published authors and library and information professionals to encourage Open Access publications.

**OBJECTIVE 3.4** Support the wide breadth of NHS Wales e-Library users to access and use the resources available to them.

Commit to regular maintenance of the e-Library website, taking into consideration feedback from end users and partners while ensuring compliance with current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

Identify web pages that would benefit from development to ensure legibility.

**INNOVATE**, develop and grow our collections and systems so they continue to align with library and information and digital health technologies practices



Developing our digital collections and services is crucial to ensure that the e-Library service continues to stay up to date with current practices in the library and information sector. We need to ensure that we use innovative ways to increase the opportunities for access to our collections and have clear policies and plans in place to ensure future use.

**OBJECTIVE 4.1** Identify and review new digital resources and systems to ensure collections continue to develop.

Encourage end users to recommend digital resources to add to the collection and commit to reviewing recommendations in line with procurement activity.

Review permanent collections to ensure the wider e-Library collection remains of high quality, applicable to current practice.

**OBJECTIVE 4.2** Commission a feasibility study on the future for health and care Open Access publishing in NHS Wales and Higher Education institutions in Wales.

Endorsed by Health and Care Research Wales and in collaboration with The Wales Institute of Digital Information (WIDI) and Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum (WHELF) lead on the delivery on study outcomes.

**OBJECTIVE 4.3** Integrate nationally procured e-resources with clinical systems utilised across NHS Wales.

Working with programme leads, identify opportunities where nationally procured e-resources can be integrated with clinical systems to enhance the user experience.

**OBJECTIVE 4.4** Develop business cases for funding to support procurement of new digital resources for NHS Wales and eligible users of the NHS Wales e-Library.

Working with stakeholders across NHS Wales, complete a scoping exercise to identify current subscriptions that would benefit from contract consolidation, minimising administrative burden, reducing overall costs and provide equity of access.

**OBJECTIVE 4.5 Drive the ethical, legal and appropriate use of Artificial Intelligence tools in the library, information and research space.**

Publish a policy on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools applicable to all users licenced under the NHS Wales Copyright Licence and endorsed by the AI Commission for Health and Social Care.

Attend industry conferences, workshops and events to stay abreast of the fast-paced environment, continuing to update guidance and provide commentary on AI tools.

Evaluate AI tools made available by existing e-Library suppliers and develop inclusion criteria for the potential procurement of AI tools in the future.

**OBJECTIVE 4.6 Complete a strategic review on the use of Internet Protocol (IP) Authentication within NHS Wales.**

Increasingly, IP Authentication is becoming an unsecure method for authentication to digital resources. With the implementation of true single sign on via Security Assertion Markup Language (SAML) federated access for NHS Wales, the e-Library will investigate whether the service can discontinue IP authentication to reduce administrative burden, increase security and improve user journeys.

**OBJECTIVE 4.7 Complete the CILIP Green Libraries self-assessment framework.**

The self-audit will support the NHS Wales e-Library, a predominantly digital service to identify opportunities for the service to set sustainability targets and reduce its digital carbon footprint.



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INDEX NUMBER	DOCUMENT NAME
DHCW-ToR-51	DHCW_Terms_of_Reference_NHS Wales e-Library Service Board
DHCW-ToR-52	DHCW_Terms_of_Reference_NHS Wales e-library Champions
ELIB-BCP-1	e-Library Business Continuity Plan
ELIB-SOP-20	NHS Wales e-Library Support Model
ELIB-POL-1	DHCW Policy Open Access Publishing
-	DHCW_Policy_NHS Wales e-Library Authorised Users
-	DHCW_Policy_NHS Wales e-Library Collection Development
-	DHCW_Plan_NHS Wales e-Library Disaster Recovery