

## Press release

### **NHS Trust Revolutionises Access to Mental Health Services for Young People, Providing Support with DXC Open Health Connect Platform**

**LONDON, 9 June 2020** -- North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust has selected the DXC Open Health Connect platform from [DXC Technology](#) (NYSE: DXC) and is creating a blueprint that could dramatically reduce mental health referral times in order to provide the right assistance for at-risk children through the use of digital technology.

The initiative at the trust, which has the potential to be adopted nationally, enables young people to use a digital portal to self-refer to local mental health services, eliminating weeks of waiting time from traditional referral processes whilst significantly alleviating pressure on busy professionals. It is also now specifically supporting young people as they cope with isolation and anxiety providing answers to some common questions whilst dealing with current crises and giving them access to mental health professionals.

“This is about getting children to the right professional or right information first time, and much faster. At present, seven in 10 referrals to CAMHS are subsequently signposted to external organisations, whilst many young people are forced to wait up to 14 weeks to be seen,” said Julia Ford, clinical lead for child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) at North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust. “We are redesigning and connecting services to change that, to remove lengthy processes traditionally associated with referrals, and using technology so we can intelligently refer and triage patients to the most appropriate service for them.”

The project analysed real-life CAMHS interactions and has involved extensive collaboration with schools, young people, families and mental health professionals. At the core of the portal is a recommendation engine that has been designed with mental health professionals at the trust, using the DXC Open Health Connect platform. It utilises rules developed by clinicians with decades of mental health experience, analyses key information and responses provided by children, parents and teachers through the portal and provides alerts to clinicians via their electronic patient records, recommending the most appropriate service for each child and ensuring mental health professionals who deliver care have a complete picture of the patient.

Colin Henderson, DXC’s director of healthcare and life sciences for the UK, Ireland, Israel, the Middle East and Africa (UKIIMEA), said: “North Staffordshire is leading the way with an important initiative that will make a real difference for the lives of young people – in a project that is applicable nationally and across the public sector. We are dedicated to doing everything we can to spread this innovation in North Staffordshire as far as possible.”

David Hewitt, chief information officer, North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust, said: “This development has real potential to reduce avoidable harm and transform lives for young people across North Staffordshire, and potentially across the rest of the country. No child should have to wait for mental health care provision – and this new approach is empowering patients to call on that help when they need it through technology which is intuitive for them.

“Whether it’s a professional at the trust, or a specialist in the third sector, we now have the tools to get young people to the person who is best placed to help them faster than ever before. And

when children arrive, professionals are now much better equipped with detailed information from the child and the people who know them best, so that the first appointment can be about treatment rather than information gathering. This is enormously powerful.”

Plans are already underway to expand the platform to other areas of the country. Information on the online portal can already be accessed by anyone who has a question about mental wellbeing, not just mental illness. But for wider parts of the programme, such as the underpinning electronic triage and clinical decision support engine, learnings are being shared through two national programmes: the cross-government green paper [Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health Provision](#), for which North Staffordshire is a trailblazer, and the Lorenzo Digital Exemplar programme, provided via the Department of Health and Social Care LSP contract, through which the trust is working with DXC to create a digital blueprint for other trusts to adopt.

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## **Notes to editors**

### **About North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust**

North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust is a leading provider of mental health, social care, learning disability and substance misuse services in the West Midlands. In 2019, the Care Quality Commission awarded the trust an overall ‘Outstanding’ rating — the highest rating they can award — making Combined Healthcare only one of two specialist mental health trusts in England to hold this rating. For more information, please visit the website:

<https://combined.nhs.uk/>

### **About DXC Technology**

DXC Technology (NYSE: DXC) helps global companies run their mission critical systems and operations while modernizing IT, optimizing data architectures, and ensuring security and scalability across public, private and hybrid clouds. With decades of driving innovation, the world’s largest companies trust DXC to deploy our enterprise technology stack to deliver new levels of performance, competitiveness and customer experiences. Learn more about the DXC story and our focus on people, customers and operational execution at [www.dxc.technology](http://www.dxc.technology).

### **Background on DXC in UK Healthcare**

DXC maintains over 100 million electronic health records and provides an extensive range of clinical and non-clinical solutions and services to NHS Trusts in England. Through the use of digital technology, DXC works with the NHS to deliver new models of care and enable better healthcare outcomes. This includes the delivery of care co-ordination, end-to-end health and care system transformation, robotics and artificial intelligence. For more information, visit [www.dxc.technology/healthcare](http://www.dxc.technology/healthcare).