

NEWS RELEASE

Scotland's 2020 digital health leaders of the year recognised at Holyrood Awards

Scotland's digital health and care leaders have been recognised for better connecting patients, at the Holyrood Digital Health and Care Awards 2020, sponsored by InterSystems

Edinburgh, 3rd March 2020 Individuals who have made a significant impact on the lives of patients through technology have been recognised at the Holyrood Connect Digital Health and Care Awards 2020.

Now in their third year, the national awards hosted in Edinburgh celebrate excellence and innovation in Scotland's growing digital health and care sector.

Clare Morrison was awarded the 2020 Digital Leader Award. Morrison was recognised for her drive and determination in leading the NHS Near Me initiative since its inception. The initiative, at NHS Highland, has co-designed and delivered a video consulting service to transform how outpatient care is being delivered across the region, with the service currently being spread to primary care.

Patients are now being offered video appointments in their own homes and local centres, and around 10% of patients who used to travel the 100 miles or so from Caithness to Inverness for outpatient appointments are now seen by Near Me instead. Video appointments are now being provided across 36 outpatient specialties, reducing both patient and staff travel, and associated carbon footprint.

Commenting on the award, Morrison said: "This award is recognition for our whole team in NHS Highland – that includes the patients, clinicians and non-clinical staff who co-designed the Near Me service with us, even down to choosing the name. The starting point for NHS Near Me was about patients – making it much easier for patients to attend appointments. We now want to spread the success of this programme as far as possible across Scotland."

Chris Grant, ITCANHELP Scotland coordinator at AbilityNet won the 2020 Digital Impact Award. The category is awarded to an individual who has championed the use of digital to transform services on a local level, improving outcomes for service users in their area.

Grant was recognised for generating huge growth in the number of volunteers and the hours of free tech support provided to older people and people with disabilities.

Grant said: "Connectivity can change people's lives and in a healthcare context the work we do can help connect patients with NHS services digitally so that they don't need to travel 50 to 60 miles or more for an appointment. Winning this award gives people confidence in our services, and has already opened new doors for AbilityNet, with conversations having taken place with the NHS the morning after the award that will help us to expand our reach to more people in need of support."

Both categories were sponsored by InterSystems and the awards were organised by Holyrood Events. The awards were presented by Charles King, InterSystems lead in Scotland, following an address at the event by Jeane Freeman, cabinet secretary for health and sport in the Scottish Government.

Speaking at the awards, Jeane Freeman said: “I am a champion of digital, I am a champion of what you do. We will be very keen to understand how we can help you to continue to innovate. Whether it is digital or clinical innovation, or simple small structural changes that improve the quality of care, what I see are a lot of really good examples of excellent ideas put into practice. What we don’t quite see enough of yet is pace to spread.

“So my view is very clear, if something works and we have the evidence, it fits with the values, it is cost effective and it delivers safe effective person centred care, then I expect to see it everywhere, unless someone can give me a reason why it won’t work in their area. The more we collaborate and share ideas and knowledge, the better the work we do will be. Here we have a lot of knowledge and expertise focussing on how [digital] enables the individual citizen to receive the care they need, and in the manner they need, to live an independent a life as they wish to.”

Shortlisted nominees for the Digital Leader Award included Jacqueline Walker for playing a pivotal role in launching and rolling out several digital projects across the whole of Scotland for NHS Tayside and the Scottish Government, and Dr Donald Macaskill who was recognised for his leadership and writings on human rights and technology.

Charles King, InterSystems lead in Scotland said: “Technology starts to really mean something when it can have an impact on the lives of people – both staff and patients alike. From my daily interactions with NHS boards, I can say with certainty that the standard of innovation and commitment to using technology for patient benefit in Scotland is extremely high. Congratulations to every winner and to everyone who was nominated for an award.”

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Notes to editors

About Holyrood Connect Digital Health and Care Awards 2020

The Scottish Digital Health & Care Awards celebrate excellence and innovation in the growing digital health and care sector in Scotland. The awards aim to recognise the achievements of those individuals and teams working in the health and social care sector whose creativity and innovation continues to put Scotland at the forefront of the digital revolution in healthcare and improves the life chances and quality of patients across the country and beyond. For more information, visit <http://digitalhealthandcareawards.holyrood.com/>

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