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Dear Chair,

Thank you for your letter of 21 April 2023 seeking further information on the Digitising Social Care programme and its Accounting Officer Assessment.

You are quite right to point out that this AO assessment was not produced in a timely manner and I am grateful for the opportunity to set out the position.

As you know, over the last year the Department has been working to re-establish a number of the controls and disciplines that we would normally expect to have in place but had stood down during Covid in order to ensure all our efforts were focused on fighting the pandemic.

This AO assessment fell due in the period of time when our systems for facilitating AO assessment production were not yet properly up and running. This led to a delay both in the initial commissioning of the assessment and the process by which it was then produced, cleared and published.

I can assure you that the Department has now stepped up its programme of work to resolve these delays and has put in place a clear set of expectations around the timelines to which AO assessments will be produced in future. The provision of an AO assessment is now an integral part of the Department's business case approval process and all DHSC major programmes now report regularly to me as Chair of our Portfolio Oversight Board.

For completeness, there are a small number of further AO assessments which will be published in the coming months which also relate to programmes that are already on the GMPP. These are listed in the table attached to this letter. Beyond these I am confident that our new processes will ensure that future AO assessments will be delivered in a more timely way.

In respect of the detail you asked for on the Digitising Social Care programme budget, timeline, and Gateway Review, the answers are as follows:

**1. Programme budget and spend to date**

The programme has a budget of £112.5m, with spend to date of £13 million in FY 21/22 and £32 million in FY 22/23.

**2. Progress against key programme milestones**

The programme's primary objective is for 80% of CQC registered care providers to have a digital social care record by March 2024. The key milestones and their delivery status are as follows:

- i. Publish standards and capabilities roadmap for digital social care records (Baselined 31/03/2022) (Complete)
- ii. Launch of ASC Digital Transformation Fund to scale digital social care records (Baselined 01/06/2022) (Complete)
- iii. 60% of CQC registered care providers have a digital social care record (Baselined 31/03/2023) (Forecast 30/06/2023)
- iv. 80% of CQC registered care providers have a digital social care record (Baselined 31/03/2024) (Forecast 31/03/2024)

**3. Update from recent IPA review**

The programme had its most recent IPA review in March 2023 and received an amber rating. The assessment was that whilst the programme objectives were ambitious, they were achievable and that "clear progress had been made" against the delivery objectives, setting a "strong foundation" for future delivery. Potential blockers to delivery were identified as the programme's resourcing constraints, affordability of the solutions in the longer term and the digital readiness of the adult social care sector. As you would expect, the programme team is working actively on these issues to ensure that they are properly managed.

I hope this reply gives you the information you are looking for and I am of course happy to discuss further if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,



**Shona Dunn**  
**Second Permanent Secretary**

Department of Health and Social Care

**ANNEX: AO Assessments Pending Completion for programmes currently on the GMPP**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Estimated Publication Date</b>
AI Labs	The programme is currently updating its business case which is due for consideration/approval in May. It will complete its AOA as part of that process.	July 2023
Frontline Digitisation	The programme is currently updating its business case which is due for consideration/approval in June and will complete its AOA as part of that process.	August 2023
New Hospitals Programme	The programme is due to produce a revised Programme Business Case by December this year and the AOA will be produced as part of that process.	February 2024
Science Hub	The programme is due to produce a revised Programme Business Case by July and the AOA will be produced as part of that process.	October 2023