



HTW digital open topic call Frequently asked questions

What are digital health technologies for use in health and social care?	We define digital health technologies as any standalone software or apps used to improve health outcomes or to improve how the health and care system runs.
What types of digital health technologies are HTW interested in?	We welcome submissions on any types of digital technology, but we are particularly interested in those that directly benefit people's health and wellbeing. Technologies of this type are most likely to be suitable for appraisal by HTW. Digital technologies designed to improve how the health and care systems run, but that don't directly impact on people's health or the care they receive (such as those that focus on improving efficiency) are not likely to be suitable for our full appraisal process. However, we may still be able to help by providing a snapshot of the evidence available on the technology (via a short Topic Exploration Report) or directing you to other organisations in Wales for support.
Are there any other criteria I need to meet?	There should be at least some data available on the new technology you are submitting that compares it to the technology that is currently used and how well it works compared to this. If you are unsure whether such evidence exists, we can help to determine this. As with all types of appraisals, we don't consider medicines.
Who can submit a topic for consideration?	Anyone can suggest a topic that they think we could appraise, and we are keen to receive suggestions from people with a wide range of backgrounds, including the general public. Previous suggestions have come from people: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working in health or social care• Accessing health or social care services• Providing care to a family member or friend• Developing or researching technologies and models of care and support for health or social care• Supporting people through third sector and voluntary organisations
Do companies have to be based in Wales to submit a digital health technology for appraisal?	If you are a developer or company behind a technology, you don't need to be based in Wales. However, your technology should be available in Wales or you should have plans to make it available here.
What are the benefits of Health Technology Wales' appraisals for people in Wales?	For all topics suitable for appraisal, we research and evaluate the best available clinical and cost-effectiveness on their use. This evidence is used to inform decisions on the appropriate use of technologies submitted to us. We believe this results in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved health and well-being for the people of Wales• Improved value for the people of Wales• Evidence informed, equitable adoption of care technologies in Wales• Greater parity between medicine and non-medicine technologies



What are the benefits to me of submitting if I work in health or social care?	<p>If you are interested in using a technology or looking for a solution to a health and care problem, we can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look at what evidence exists on a technology, and highlight any gaps that exist• For those we produce guidance on, HTW aims to provide once-for-Wales advice on the most effective and cost-effective ways of using a technology.• The guidance we produce has ‘adopt or justify’ status which means that health boards are expected to adopt our recommendations or justify why they have not done so.
What are the benefits to me of submitting a topic if I am a technology developer or innovator	<p>If you are a developer the benefits are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guidance from us applies to the whole of Wales and avoids ‘knocking on multiple doors’• We provide signposting and support from a range of other organisations in Wales• An independent overview of the evidence that exists and what further evidence generation might be needed is undertaken.
What happens after I submit a topic?	<p>You can find an overview of our Appraisal Process, which outlines the possible steps after a topic is submitted, here.</p>
How will technologies be assessed after submission?	<p>Initially, HTW’s in-house research team will decide whether a topic is relevant for appraisal. Topics relevant for appraisal then have a Topic Exploration Report developed by HTW’s Researchers. The findings of this are discussed with our Assessment Group and sent to the topic proposer for comments before being finalised and published.</p> <p>Where an Evidence Appraisal Report (EAR) and guidance is produced on a topic, HTW’s research team prepare and draft the EAR with input from Assessment Group. Subject experts and other stakeholders, including the topic proposer if relevant, are invited to comment on the report before it is finalised.</p> <p>HTW’s Appraisal Panel considers the evidence within the EAR and makes sure that the implications for NHS Wales and the social care sector in Wales have been properly considered. They also take the views of subject experts into account. Using all this information, Appraisal Panel agree and issue HTW guidance.</p>
How long does each step of the process take?	<p>For topics relevant for appraisal, we aim to produce a Topic Exploration Report and share it with the topic proposer within 2 months of topic submission. However, this can take longer during open topic calls where we receive a large volume of submissions at the same time.</p> <p>Topics that may be suitable for guidance to be produced will be considered in the second half of 2022 and added to our 2022-2023 work programme. The appraisal process then takes 6-9 months, so topics submitted during the open topic call will have guidance issued on them in early to mid 2023.</p>



Do you publish your findings?	Yes, all our Topic Exploration Reports, Evidence Appraisal Reports and guidance are published on our website. You can see previous examples here .
After I submit a topic, how will I be involved in any further work?	HTW's team will keep you informed about each step of your submission. If we produce a Topic Exploration Report, we will send this to you to comment on and suggest any clarifications before we publish it. If we produce an Evidence Appraisal Report and guidance, you will be invited to comment on this in writing, and/or to nominate subject experts or other stakeholders to do so. Throughout any appraisal, our research team will keep you informed and may ask to discuss and refine aspects of our work with you to ensure it is answering the right question.