Improving a nation’s health through the voyage of NSS Discovery

Background
NSS Discovery is a web-based information system created to provide easy access to comparative information to help review, monitor, and plan services, and support quality improvement in health and social care. NSS Discovery was developed initially to consolidate benchmarking indicators, as previous systems were held in a variety of inaccessible formats making information difficult to access and use.

The information system is complemented by an information consultancy service to support and deliver bespoke analyses and further complex investigations.

Methodology
To ensure NSS Discovery adhered to the current and future needs of users, comprehensive user engagement was carried out throughout its development phase, adopting a co-creation approach with user representatives to ensure that the required content, knowledge, feel, and functionality of the system was achieved. Discovery provides a range of users including managers, analysts, and clinicians with comparative and benchmarking information to underpin service planning and delivery.

Aims
Information within NSS Discovery is presented at NHS Board level with drill-down functionality to reveal more detailed information, including with the appropriate authorisation patient level data. This supports quality improvement in health and social care in Scotland and allows comparisons with English & Welsh peers.

NSS Discovery is also instrumental in supporting the information contained in the Scottish Atlas of Variation, a publicly-accessible tool for investigating variation in health, healthcare provision and health outcomes. Users are encouraged to further investigate areas of interest highlighted in the Atlas within NSS Discovery to gain deeper insights into the potential causes of variation. This link establishes a basis to support Realistic Medicine, help eliminate unwarranted variation and help to reduce harm and waste within health and social care.

Scottish Atlas of Variation
The Scottish Atlas of Variation was developed in line with the Realistic Medicine agenda to highlight geographical variation in the health of the population, provision of health services and associated health outcomes.

The interactive dashboard is designed to facilitate discussion and raise questions about why differences exist in Scotland’s health, and promote improvement through this conversation.

The expertise and the information developed for Discovery is now being utilised in developing the Atlas of Variation.

Results/outcomes
NSS Discovery was successfully launched in 2015 and contains a wide range of quality indicators and measures reflecting the requirement within NHS Scotland for robust and comprehensive comparative information.

The web-based system consolidates and streamlines measures currently contained within disparate information systems into a single system for ease of access. It provides a knowledge base for managers, clinicians and public health specialists, who need comparative and benchmarking information to underpin service planning and delivery.

www.nssdiscovery.scot.nhs.uk

“Discovery allows me to see trends and compare to peers, which helps me identify improvement opportunities and provides an easy way to monitor change. With the addition of more clinical and quality information, Discovery is helping to engage clinicians in what matters to them and encourages greater use of data to drive improvement.” – Head of Health Intelligence

“First and foremost Discovery gives me a quick way to compare performance with peers. But it is the drill down dataset within my own Board that I really use a lot, which helps me identify improvement opportunities and provides an easy way to monitor change.” – Consultant Physician in Acute Medicine

References
www.nssdiscovery.scot.nhs.uk


Data Quality Assurance Team (ISD), 2012. Assessment of SMR01 Data 2010-11.[Online].