



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

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Departmental Strategic Business Plan

2023-2024

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INTRODUCTION BY PERMANENT SECRETARY

This Strategic Business Plan – my first as Permanent Secretary – comes at a critical moment for the Department of Health (DoH) and the wider Health and Social Care (HSC) system.

We are emerging from the pandemic; and while we have learned many valuable things from the last three years, the impact of Covid can still be felt right across our system. As we now seek to rebuild our system, we are facing into a range of new challenges with severe service difficulties, unacceptable outcomes for patients, political uncertainty and unprecedented constraints on our finances.

I recognise the huge sacrifices by all our staff to maintain and deliver services. Since joining the department, I have taken every opportunity I could to meet with colleagues from different parts of our system, I wanted a firsthand understanding about the legacy of Covid, how it has affected our people and our communities. I was also keen to get their perspectives, ideas and concerns and to listen to their views on the future of the HSC, including how best the DoH can support the delivery of better services.

Although daunting, the challenge for us is clear: we need to develop and deliver better services, increasing capacity to match ever growing demand, while addressing the legacy of the pandemic and managing limited resources. The scale and complexity of this task is unlike anything our health and social care service has faced before and it will require leadership in every part of the system.

This means: being more efficient, intelligent and targeted with how we use our resources; identifying ways to improve access to services, investing in transformational change which increases community capacity and delivers reforms to reduce waiting times, and leveraging technology and data to a greater degree than we have before to contribute to sustainability and quality of services.

This Business Plan sets out our key priorities for meeting this challenge.

An important part of this will be ensuring that we identify the benefits and efficiencies flowing from the dissolution of the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), which was a Ministerial direction. The subsequent integration of HSCB functions into the Department, in the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG), has resulted in an innovative organisational structure, with former HSCB staff working within our departmental structure, but remaining HSC employees. This has been a very challenging time for HSCB staff, who remain hugely important to the delivery of high quality services in the HSC. A clear goal for this Department is to ensure that we make the most of the opportunities this novel arrangement presents, reducing duplication and promoting innovation and transformation.

We also want to create a platform for the creativity and passion across the HSC - allowing our people to find new and better ways to deliver services. We need to create a strategic context which empowers people across the system to make improvements and deliver change.

It's also crucial that we work with patients, families, communities and delivery partners to strengthen relationships and to coproduce solutions which lead to improved outcomes. It's clear that no one has all of the answers. However, if we work together, we will be able to identify and deliver the changes we need.

This is the work of years. This business plan represents the first step on a long and demanding road and I am under no illusion about how difficult much of this will be. However, I have very quickly learned that our people are capable of achieving extraordinary things and so I approach these challenges with optimism and I look forward to working with all of you to achieve our aims.

Peter May, Permanent Secretary

OUR STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2023-24

Overarching Draft Programme for Government Outcome: “We all enjoy long, healthy, active lives”

DoH has lead responsibility for the draft Programme for Government (PfG) outcome: ‘We all enjoy long, healthy active lives’. DoH also contributes to a number of draft PfG outcomes led by other Departments. As the DoH led outcome is about facilitating people to enjoy long, healthy, active lives, this means supporting people to take greater control over their own lives and enabling them to make healthy choices about how they live their lives, as well as helping to create an environment that makes such choices easier. It also means working with other partners to tackle the root causes of poor health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce health and social inequalities in Northern Ireland. Everyone in Northern Ireland will use health and social care services at various points in their lives. We must ensure that services are safe, effective and centred on the needs of service users. In respect of this outcome, the Department will work with, amongst others, our health and social care colleagues, other Departments, with colleagues in the community and voluntary sector and we will seek to engage people directly in their role as active citizens.

Whilst all areas of health and public safety are important and we will ensure the continued delivery of services to the highest possible standard, we are focusing on the key strategic objectives shown on the next page for the next year.

DoH Strategic Objectives 2023-24

Strategic Objective 1 - Maximising what can be delivered from within the resources available

Focusing on using our available resources to the best effect for the benefit of health, social care and fire service users.

This requires the Department to:

- a. Drive efficiency across the Department and our Arms-Length Bodies (ALBs);
- b. Empower others to improve and change to build capacity and increase productivity;
- c. Embed a culture of continuous improvement;
- d. Be honest and realistic on what can be done within existing resource, also give consideration to what may no longer be possible;
- e. Take action to address the determinants of health and wellbeing outcomes and drivers of health inequalities.

Strategic Objective 2 – System Improvement

Reviewing, re-designing and transforming services to deliver improved access to health and social care services, a better service experience and improved outcomes for users.

This requires the Department to:

- a. Provide the strategic and overarching policy context to support and enable change;
- b. Challenge ourselves and Trusts/ALBs to utilise resource to optimum levels;
- c. Empower ALBs to change, reform and improve service delivery;

- d. Support projects that will deliver improvements across population health and wellbeing, quality, safety, improved service and access;
- e. Build a sustainable HSC workforce using effective whole system workforce planning to respond to changing service demands.

Strategic Objective 3 – Understanding our system and our performance

Improving the use of data to become an insight led health and social care system, providing an improved understanding of capacity and demand, managing performance, contributing to long term sustainability of our sector. Improving the quality and experience of services and prioritising investments.

This requires the Department to:

- a. Develop publish and deliver on an implementation plan for the HSC Digital Vision and Strategy;
- b. Secure adequate IT funding to address historic underinvestment and the accrued technical debt;
- c. Develop and implement the HSC Data Institute, which will:
 - Configure available data to support performance management and service improvement;
 - Support providers to aid better understanding and interpretation of data to inform decision making; and
 - Define metrics required to capture performance management and service improvement.
- d. Reflect and incorporate feedback and experience gained from co-production, service user involvement and engagement;
- e. Focus on improving outcomes for service users and measuring this improvement;
- f. Consider and implement whole system performance measures.

Strategic Objective 4 – People

Supporting our people post-COVID, developing and empowering them through a DoH people strategy that addresses wellbeing, leadership, skills and development.

This requires the Department to:

- a. Support and improve the training and development available to DoH staff;
- b. Show leadership and effective management, supporting staff engagement and wellbeing;
- c. Develop workforce planning strategies to ensure DoH workforce capacity and capability to deliver business priorities.

Strategic Objective 5 – Resilience

Remaining agile and ready to deal with potential future events including pandemics or health security matters.

This requires the Department to:

- a. Capture pandemic learning;
- b. Review emergency planning and business continuity arrangements;
- c. Develop effective resourcing responses and agreed escalation points.

Strategic Objective 6 – Corporate Governance

Ensuring that appropriate direction and control is exercised in respect of good governance, finance, ALB sponsorship.

This requires the Department to:

- a. Ensure Departmental governance arrangements are robust and effective;
- b. Work in partnership with ALBs within constrained finances to deliver break-even and required efficiencies;
- c. Re-start and embed ALB sponsorship processes to ensure appropriate governance structures in place to effectively challenge and hold ALBs to account for service delivery and performance;
- d. Review and update policy and legislation to reflect and support policy improvements.

Business Plan - Objectives and Actions 2023-24

Strategic Objective 1 – Maximising Resources Maximising what can be delivered from within the resources available – focusing on using our available resources to the best effect for the benefit of health, social care and fire service users.		
Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM) /Chief Professional
1. Supporting Trusts' rebuild activity to meet levels agreed with DoH.	March 2024	Sharon Gallagher
2. Restarting, restoring and redesigning elective care services through the 2023/24 implementation of the Elective Care Framework. The deliverables include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseeing Trust activity to ensure appropriate prioritisation of elective activity within the funding and staffing levels available. • Overseeing the implementation of Second day procedure centre at Omagh enabling Seven regional theatre lists per week across urology and general surgery. • Overseeing the Mater Hospital, South West Acute Hospital (SWAH) and Daisy Hill to become overnight elective stay centres delivering intermediate complexity elective surgery on a regional basis. These centres will be operational on a phased basis over 2023/24. 	March 2024	Jim Wilkinson / Sharon Gallagher

Strategic Objective 1 – Maximising Resources

Maximising what can be delivered from within the resources available – focusing on using our available resources to the best effect for the benefit of health, social care and fire service users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM) /Chief Professional Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overseeing the implementation of Lagan Valley Hospital (LVH) Day Procedure Centre (DPC) to deliver over 900 theatre lists per year across Ear Nose and Throat (ENT), urology, general surgery, and gynaecology, alongside 20 regional endoscopy lists which will see an extra 6,000 patients per year receiving intermediate complexity procedures during 2023/24 . 		
<p>3. Developing a Cancer Strategy Implementation Plan by end of April 2023 and implement the actions in the Plan by end of March 2024.</p>	End March 2024	Jim Wilkinson / Sharon Gallagher
<p>4. Supporting the transformation of urgent and emergency care services, in line with the recent review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalising a three-year Implementation and funding Plan, covering each of the three strategic priorities. Launching 24/7 Phone First service, linked to a regional 111 telephone number, for all urgent care needs. Ensuring Urgent Care Centres and appropriate rapid access and treatment pathways are available in all five Trust areas, to underpin the Phone First service. Completing Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) Review of emergency medicine in Northern 	<p>July 2023</p> <p>September 2023</p> <p>September 2023</p> <p>June 2023</p>	Jim Wilkinson / Sharon Gallagher

Strategic Objective 1 – Maximising Resources

Maximising what can be delivered from within the resources available – focusing on using our available resources to the best effect for the benefit of health, social care and fire service users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Meeting (EBM) /Chief Professional Officer
<p>Ireland and launch the Summary Emergency Department Indicator Table (SEDIT).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Through the Unscheduled Care Management Unit (USCMU), developing and implementing a programme of work to support and enable service improvement across Unscheduled Care (USC).	On-going/March 2024	
5. Maintaining an ongoing focus on management and delivery of a proportionate acute public health COVID-19 response including test, trace and whole genome sequencing.	Ongoing 2022-24	Michael McBride
6. Overseeing the implementation of the recommendations of the 'Transforming Medication Safety' programme to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishing a NI Yellow Card Centre in collaboration with Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).• Developing and implementing the World Health Organisation's '5 moments for Medication Safety' tool.	March 2024	Michael McBride

Strategic Objective 1 – Maximising Resources

Maximising what can be delivered from within the resources available – focusing on using our available resources to the best effect for the benefit of health, social care and fire service users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Meeting (EBM) /Chief Professional Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establishing an improvement programme focused on safer opioid prescribing.		
7. Responding to the social wellbeing needs of people most at risk of marginalisation and isolation in the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Developing the work of the regional loneliness forum.Developing and support poverty aware practice in health and social care services.	Ongoing to March 2024 Ongoing to March 2024	Aine Morrison
8. Improving health and reducing health inequalities, by March 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Putting in place a new ‘Making Life Better’ action plan, aimed at addressing the wider determinants of health through increased partnership working across Government.Developing a new strategic plan for services under the Substance Use Strategy and ensuring this is operational.Developing a new Tobacco Control Strategy.	March 2024	Michael McBride

Strategic Objective 2 – System Improvement

Reviewing, re-designing and transforming services to deliver improved access to health and social care services, a better service experience and improved outcomes for users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
<p>1. Completing a final draft HSC Reconfiguration Design Plan paper and Communications/Engagement plan by May 2023.</p> <p>Carrying out a programme of engagement on the HSC Reconfiguration Design Plan with key stakeholders including politicians, clinicians, trade unions, service users and local communities, by September 2023.</p>	<p>May 2023</p> <p>Sept 2023</p>	<p>Jim Wilkinson</p>
<p>2. Developing and implementing a plan of work to facilitate enhanced regional understanding and oversight and improve system compliance with safety and quality indicators. Specifically:</p> <p>Working with all relevant stakeholders, including Public Health Agency (PHA) as lead partners, to develop a prioritised action plan to enhance compliance with the implementation, monitoring, reporting and assurances of a range of safety and quality processes. This will include (but not exclusive to) Serious Adverse Incidents, HSC Complaints, The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance and confidential enquiry reports. The action plan will seek to develop where appropriate a range of safety and quality indicators and will take account of emerging policy development in relevant areas – for example refresh of the Serious Adverse Incidents (SAI) process.</p>	<p>June 2023</p> <p>March 2024</p>	<p>Sharon Gallagher/ Michael McBride</p>

Strategic Objective 2 – System Improvement

Reviewing, re-designing and transforming services to deliver improved access to health and social care services, a better service experience and improved outcomes for users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
Implementing the above action plan which will facilitate enhanced regional oversight and improve system compliance.		
<p>3. Supporting the development of Primary Care General Practitioner (GP) including the roll-out of multi-disciplinary teams, Dental, Pharmacy and Optometry services. Ongoing to March 2025.</p> <p>Establishing a revised plan for further implementation of the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Programme over the next 4 years, subject to available funding.</p> <p>Developing a project plan for new GP contract, incl. milestones, timeframes and key deliverables.</p> <p>Identifying and developing options for the sustainability of GP services.</p> <p>Delivering measures to support General Dental Services (GDS) rebuilding including increased patient access to dental services.</p> <p>Identifying and developing options and project plan for GDS contract reform.</p> <p>Developing strategic plans for general practice and community pharmacy.</p>	<p>End March 2024</p> <p>End May 2023</p> <p>End August 2023</p> <p>End Sep 2023</p> <p>End Sept 2023</p> <p>End March 2024</p> <p>End March 2024</p>	<p>Jim Wilkinson / Sharon Gallagher</p> <p>Michael McBride/ Cathy Harrison</p>

Strategic Objective 2 – System Improvement

Reviewing, re-designing and transforming services to deliver improved access to health and social care services, a better service experience and improved outcomes for users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
<p>4. Overseeing the delivery of ongoing initiatives to assess and improve safety of HSC maternity and neonatal services. By March 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completing a review and assessment of midwifery-led care.• Considering the recommendations and agreeing an implementation plan from the Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) review of governance arrangements in place to support safety within maternity services in NI (publication expected Spring 2023).• Progressing the outstanding recommendations from previous reviews/reports, including the developing a regional maternity network. <p>Completing a review of learning from maternity related SAIs and other significant reports e.g. Ockenden.</p>		Jim Wilkinson / Sharon Gallagher / Maria McIlgorm / Michael McBride
<p>5. Progressing the implementation of the Ministerial approved Nursing and Midwifery Task Group recommendations including communication. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewing the current delivering care policy in line with proposed safe staffing legislation and review of current workforce establishments.	Sept 2023	Maria McIlgorm

Strategic Objective 2 – System Improvement

Reviewing, re-designing and transforming services to deliver improved access to health and social care services, a better service experience and improved outcomes for users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating of a Nursing and Midwifery Quality Assurance Framework for NI.• Implementing the recommendations from the Recruitment and Retention report and monitoring Trust implementation of recommendations.• Commissioning a review of effective rostering and development of guidance, education and training for charge nurses – alignment with Agency reduction work.• In conjunction with Workforce Policy Directorate (WPD) and Digital Health, developing agreed data definitions across Trusts in relation to rostering real time reporting and safe care live (quality indicators).• Implementing the recommendations of the review of Post Registration Nursing and Midwifery Education commissioned by Permanent Secretary and reported Sept 2022. This will include a review of the current commission of post graduate education for Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Professionals (AHP's). <p>Developing a National career pathway for Nursing, Midwifery and AHP's for NI – so post graduate education can be commissioned to support pathway progression and meet current and future workforce requirements.</p>	March 2024 March 2024 March 2024 March 2024 March 2024 March 2024	

Strategic Objective 2 – System Improvement

Reviewing, re-designing and transforming services to deliver improved access to health and social care services, a better service experience and improved outcomes for users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
<p>6. Supporting the rebuilding and reconfiguration of paediatric hospital and community services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• By April 2023, in conjunction with the Child Health Partnership, establishing a Child Health Programme Board to support, oversee and drive delivery of existing paediatric hospital, community and palliative care strategies.• By October 2023, reviewing progress against existing paediatric strategies in the context of significant system changes since 2016, to refocus priorities accordingly in conjunction with CHP and wider stakeholders.• By March 2024, working with HSC partners to scope and develop approaches to stabilise vulnerable paediatric specialties, including consideration of cross-border approaches where appropriate e.g. paediatric pathology.• By March 2024, overseeing the regional delivery of elective paediatric service at levels higher than pre-pandemic.	End March 2024	Jim Wilkinson
<p>7. Progressing a programme of reform within Children’s Social Care Services, to address service challenges which have arisen as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and those which pre-date it, taking account of the findings and recommendations of the independent review of children’s services.</p>		Peter Toogood

Strategic Objective 2 – System Improvement

Reviewing, re-designing and transforming services to deliver improved access to health and social care services, a better service experience and improved outcomes for users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a Children’s Services Reform Programme. • Completing Service Delivery Strategic Outline Case. • Completing an Independent Review. • Developing a response to Independent Review/Implementation Plan. 	<p>April 2023</p> <p>May 2023</p> <p>June 2023</p> <p>October 2023</p>	
<p>8. Supporting and driving forward the modernisation of critical enabling services (imaging and pathology) to support HSC transformation and rebuild:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the Regional Medical Imaging Board, DoH will complete an options appraisal and business case for a Regional Imaging Academy to increase radiology and radiography trainee places to meet ever increasing growth in demand, by March 2024. • As Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the HSC Pathology Blueprint Programme, DoH will oversee completion of an options appraisal and business case for a new regional management structure for HSC Pathology services by March 2024. 	<p>End March 2024</p>	<p>Jim Wilkinson</p> <p>Jim Wilkinson / Michael McBride</p> <p>Jim Wilkinson / Michael McBride</p>

Strategic Objective 2 – System Improvement

Reviewing, re-designing and transforming services to deliver improved access to health and social care services, a better service experience and improved outcomes for users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">DoH will support the ongoing development of modern HSC genomic and molecular diagnostic services, in line with UK-wide strategic commitments. Subject to available resources, DoH aims to establish a NI Genomics Partnership by March 2024.		
<p>9. Progressing stroke and neurology service reform:</p> <p>Stroke:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increasing the number of people receiving thrombectomy in Northern Ireland from 4.5% of ischaemic stroke admissions to 6%.Developing a preferred option for the establishment of Hyperacute Stroke Care. <p>Neurology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Completing the final report of the Regional Review of Neurology services.Commencing public consultation on proposed reforms to Neurology services.	March 2024 March 2024 July 2023 September 2023	Jim Wilkinson
10. Supporting the reform of adult social care services (RASC) by:		Peter Toogood

Strategic Objective 2 – System Improvement

Reviewing, re-designing and transforming services to deliver improved access to health and social care services, a better service experience and improved outcomes for users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishing an Adult Social Care Collaborative Forum and programme structure to oversee the reform process.• Developing a 10-year implementation plan for reform proposals.• Developing a future model of domiciliary care provision and achieve efficiencies in domiciliary care provision through the implementation of digital solutions.• Ensuring the effective use of Care Home capacity, through the development of accurate and timely information about Care Home bed availability.	April 2023 April 2023 March 2024 March 2024	
<p>11. Developing and publishing an Enhanced Clinical Care Framework for People who live in care homes by April 2023 which will set out a clear vision how we can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improving equity of healthcare access;• Continuing to build on learning from the pandemic;• Maintaining people in their own home where appropriate to do so; and• Improving outcomes to ensure people in care homes live their best life. <p>The framework will provide a series of recommendations and links to good practice which will help transform care for people living in care homes in NI.</p>	April 2023	Maria McIlgorm

Strategic Objective 2 – System Improvement

Reviewing, re-designing and transforming services to deliver improved access to health and social care services, a better service experience and improved outcomes for users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
<p>12. Scoping and developing an Intermediate Care Paper which describes the current position in NI in relation to NICE Guidance (74) as phase one of the project by April 2023.</p> <p>Developing a project plan, timescales and oversight group to take forward phase two of this project to further develop the models of in relation to the 4 pillars of intermediate care which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hospital @ home (acute care at home);• Bed based intermediate care; and• Homebased intermediate care. <p>Publishing best practice guidance document for Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT), commissioners and DoH by March 2024.</p>	March 2024	Maria McIlgorm
<p>13. Developing and implementing the 23/24 Mental Health Strategy Delivery Plan, to include the following priority actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishing the regional mental health service.• Commencing delivery of three-year early intervention and prevention programme.	End March 2024	Peter Toogood/Sharon Gallagher

Strategic Objective 2 – System Improvement

Reviewing, re-designing and transforming services to deliver improved access to health and social care services, a better service experience and improved outcomes for users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Implementing emotional health and wellbeing in school's teams across the region.Fully rolling out community perinatal mental health teams across all Trusts.		
14. Supporting the reform of Learning Disability Services through the Learning Disability Strategic Action Plan by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Finalising the Learning Disability Service Model and Children with Disabilities Framework – by September 2023.Making recommendations on the future of Muckamore Abbey Hospital – by May 2023.	September 2023 May 2023	Peter Toogood
15. Delivering the implementation of the first tranche of the Encompass programme in 2023/24, target dates for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) – November 2023.Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) – April 2024.Lessons learned to inform further phases by Mar 2024.	March 2024	Dan West
16. Progressing the development and implementation of the Integrated Care System (ICS NI) – scheduled April 2024.	End April 2024	Sharon Gallagher

Strategic Objective 2 – System Improvement

Reviewing, re-designing and transforming services to deliver improved access to health and social care services, a better service experience and improved outcomes for users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
Implementing a test site in the Southern Area in April 2023. Rolling-out shadow Area Integrated Partnership Boards in remaining four Areas by March 2024.		
17. Supporting and enhancing the HSC workforce, in line with the Workforce Strategy Action Plan (22-23 – 24-25) and other related strategies. Developing an optimum workforce model: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Developing a robust methodology for an optimum workforce model that utilises outputs for an agreed rolling programme of service level workforce reviews that will be undertaken for the purposed of strategic workforce planning. This model will provide a system wide view of workforce requirements across the reconfigured health and social care system over a five-to-ten-year horizon.	End March 2025 End March 2024	Jim Wilkinson
18. Developing a HSC staff health and wellbeing framework that will support employers in planning and implementing effective processes and resources for improving staff health, wellbeing and safety at work.	End December 2023	Jim Wilkinson
19. Providing the mechanisms to assist HSC employers to realise savings targets for agency expenditure: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Delivering new procurement frameworks for:	End March	Jim Wilkinson

Strategic Objective 2 – System Improvement

Reviewing, re-designing and transforming services to deliver improved access to health and social care services, a better service experience and improved outcomes for users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Nursing and Healthcare Support; ii. Medical and Dental; and iii. Non-Medical agency staff. • Developing and implementing mechanisms to support a significant reduction in ‘off contract’ agency expenditure including new protocols surrounding the use of agency/locum staff and the reform of HSCT staff banks. 	<p>2024</p> <p>End March 2024</p>	
<p>20. Recruiting of international health and social care workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering the international nurse recruitment programme to complement the health and social care workforce with view to maintaining existing annual level of 600 new international nurse recruits. 	<p>End March 2024</p>	<p>Jim Wilkinson</p>
<p>21. Developing safe staffing legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing, agreeing and publishing a public consultation on legislative proposals for a Safer and Effective Staffing Bill, in partnership with Trade Unions and Stakeholders. • Seeking Ministerial decision on Safer and Effective Staffing legislative proposals and Executive agreement to engage with Office of Legislative Counsel to commence drafting a Safer and Effective Staffing Bill. 	<p>End June 2023</p> <p>End June 2024</p>	<p>Jim Wilkinson</p>
<p>22. Progressing the work of the Social Work Workforce Review Implementation Plan.</p>		<p>Aine Morrison</p>

Strategic Objective 2 – System Improvement

Reviewing, re-designing and transforming services to deliver improved access to health and social care services, a better service experience and improved outcomes for users.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
Delivering the plan to cease the use of recruitment agency social work. 23. Completing safe staffing projects for social work in Children’s Services, Mental health Services and Older People’s Services. Enhancing the collation and analysis systems in place for social work workforce intelligence. Reviewing existing and potential entry pathways into the social work profession.	June 2023 March 2024 March 2024 March 2024	
24. Producing a Social Care Workforce Strategy by January 2024.	End January 2024	Aine Morrison
25. Introducing standardised regional learning and career pathways across all sectors for the registered social care workforce.	End March 2024	Aine Morrison

Strategic Objective 3 – Understanding our system and our performance

Improving the use of data to provide an understanding of capacity and demand, manage performance, improve services and prioritise investments.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
1. Finalising the implementation plan for the HSC Digital Vision and Strategy, launched in October 2022, setting out the specific goals and timelines, crucially ensuring this is based on an agreed and affordable investment plan – outlining the prioritisation and sequencing of investments and implementation activities	Publish end September 2023	Dan West
2. Overseeing and ensuring co-ordinated approach to the implementation of major IS programmes – to build the foundational IT systems that will capture and utilise high quality and timely information across the HSC, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encompass• Northern Ireland Picture Archiving and Communications System (NIPACS)• Northern Ireland Laboratory Information Management System (NILIMS)• Northern Ireland Digital Identity Service (NIDIS)• Blood Production and Tracking Solution (BPAT)• Equip	Numerous delivery dates between 2023 – 2025	Dan West and SROs of programmes

Strategic Objective 3 – Understanding our system and our performance

Improving the use of data to provide an understanding of capacity and demand, manage performance, improve services and prioritise investments.

Reviewing the implementation plans for major programmes and ensure alignment of delivery with Departmental priorities		
3. Defining the Business Case for creation of the HSC Data Institute Securing approval for funding. (Readiness for the institute becoming operational by June 2024)	May 2023 December 2023	Dan West
4. Securing approval and funding for the HSC Cyber Security Outline Business Case Running procurement, finalising Full business case (FBC) and commencing implementation. (Have the new cyber services operational by December 2024)	July 2023 April 2024	Dan West
5. Overseeing the implementation of the new HSC Digital Services organisation as an enabler for HSC IT delivery and operations, with transition of all IT staff into the new organisation by end of 2024 and completion of phase 1 transition by end of 2025. Agreeing the organisation structure and transition plan with programme Senior Responsible Owner (SRO).	Various March 2024	Dan West and programme SRO
6. Securing approval and funding for the HSC Digital Workplace Business Case (Commence implementation by December 2024)	September 2023	Dan West

Strategic Objective 4 – People

Supporting our people post- COVID, developing and empowering them through a DoH people strategy that addresses wellbeing, leadership, skills and development.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
1. Working closely with the staff engagement forum ¹ , to develop a DoH people strategy ² and action plan by May 2023, with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff engagement• Leadership skills and development• Workforce planning and organisational development• Wellbeing and inclusion.	May 2023	Chris Matthews
2. Implementing the DoH People Strategy and action plan from June 2023 with all staff, line managers, DoH Senior Leadership Forum, staff engagement forum, Trade Union side, DoH Top Management Group (TMG) and the Departmental Board. Working closely with the staff engagement forum on the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the	June 2023 – March 2024.	Chris Matthews

¹ The DoH staff engagement forum includes representatives from DoH (NICS) staff. Separate arrangements are in place for SPPG (HSC staff) recognising their separate employer arrangements.

² The DoH People Strategy includes all DoH (NICS) staff. An Ambition People Strategy and Action Plan is already place for 2022 – 2024 for SPPG (HSC) staff recognising their separate employer arrangements

Strategic Objective 4 – People

Supporting our people post- COVID, developing and empowering them through a DoH people strategy that addresses wellbeing, leadership, skills and development.

strategy and action plan.		
3. Continuing to implement the SPPG Ambition People Strategy and Action Plan ³ for 2022 – 2024	Ongoing and by end March 2024	Sharon Gallagher
4. Supporting the ongoing development of the staff engagement forum and continue to develop and implement the departmental internal communications and engagement framework.	Ongoing and by end March 2024	Chris Matthews
5. Implementing DOH Redesign ⁴ recommendations to deliver DoH optimum workforce size, mix and alignment with the Department’s priorities within affordable budget levels.	Phase 1 by September 2023 Phase 2 by March 2024	Chris Matthews

³ The SPPG Ambition and People Strategy is in place for SPPG (HSC) staff recognising their separate employer arrangements

⁴ The DoH Redesign project includes all DoH (NICS) staff. A programme of work is underway to review the roles and responsibilities and structure of SPPG to ensure it is organised to deliver within the new Integrated Care System.

Strategic Objective 5 – Resilience

Remaining agile and ready to deal with potential future events including pandemics or health security matters.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
1. Reviewing and replacing current health protection legislative framework to ensure routine and emerging health protection concerns can be identified early and appropriately managed. A consultation paper to be published by end of 2023, with subsequent work progressed, timing subject to the return of the NI Executive.	End December 2023	Michael McBride
2. Completing an exercise to capture lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic 2020-2021 and embed that learning in future planning (for responding to resurgence of COVID-19 or other, as yet unknown, threats)	2023-2024 Subject to resourcing	Michael McBride
3. Reviewing and updating the Department's business continuity plan, reflecting on lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic.	September 2023	Chris Matthews
4. Leading major refresh of pandemic planning in NI in collaboration with The Executive Office (TEO) and other NI government Departments, as well as on a 4 Nations basis by March 2024.	End March 2024	Michael McBride
5. Refreshing DoH Emergency Response Plan (ERP) by 31 March 2023 and build resilience in the Department to respond to a major emergency requiring strategic leadership from the Department and activation of Health Gold by 31 December 2023.	End December 2023.	Michael McBride

Strategic Objective 5 – Resilience

Remaining agile and ready to deal with potential future events including pandemics or health security matters.

6. Through the implementation of the review and refresh of the PHA, ensuring that the entire organisation is structured to deliver its statutory functions and core purpose, including health protection and pandemic preparedness, effectively and efficiently.	March 2024	Michael McBride
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Strategic Objective 6 – Corporate Governance

Ensuring that appropriate direction and control is exercised in respect of good governance, finance, ALB sponsorship.

Priority Actions	Timescale	Owner Executive Board Member (EBM)
1. Finance – managing the budget allocated to DoH to as close to break-even as possible, taking into account political and operational constraints.	End March 2024	Chris Matthews EB
2. Managing the budget allocated to Trusts/SPPG as close to break-even as possible, taking into account political and operational constraints.	End March 2024	Sharon Gallagher
3. Leading the development of a programme to drive Best Value throughout the Department and its ALBs, driving increased levels of efficiency and productivity across the system to realise both cash releasing and non-cash releasing savings.	Agreed programme and targets by 30 June 2023 2023/24 target: savings delivered by 31 March 2024. 2024/25 target savings agreed by 31	Chris Matthews, supported by all EBMs

Strategic Objective 6 – Corporate Governance

Ensuring that appropriate direction and control is exercised in respect of good governance, finance, ALB sponsorship.

	December 2023.	
4. Post EU Exit and medical supplies –Continuing to engage with UK Government, Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and HSC relating to medical supplies to keep up to date with current issues, understand policy implications and progress actions as required.	Ongoing in response to issues arising	Michael McBride
5. Progressing relevant Legislation in line with Ministerial requirements/Assembly timescales. Indicative legislative plan includes the introduction of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Adult Protection Bill in Year 1 of the new mandate; and• The Public Health Bill, Safe Staffing Bill, and Minimum Unit Price of Alcohol (Public Health Bill) in Year 2.• A Bill to make amendments to the Pharmacy Order 1976 to enable the professional regulation of pharmacy technicians in Year 2.	Ongoing - as per individual timeframes	Chris Matthews, supported by all EBMs
6. Supporting and prioritising responses to requests from Public Inquiries such as Covid Inquiry, Infected Blood, Muckamore Abbey Hospital Inquiry and Urology Services Inquiry.	Ongoing as per timescales set by Inquiries	Chris Matthews, supported by all EBMs
7. Replacing Management Statement/Financial Memorandum with Partnership Agreements for all DoH ALBs by end December 2023. The partnerships between the department and its ALBs are underpinned by common principles: a clear and well understood purpose of the ALB; a proportionate approach to assurance and a mutual understanding of risk; sharing of skills and experience; and the	End December 2023	Chris Matthews, supported by all EBMs

Strategic Objective 6 – Corporate Governance

Ensuring that appropriate direction and control is exercised in respect of good governance, finance, ALB sponsorship.

partnership is based on open, honest and constructive working relationships, based on trust.		
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OUR DEPARTMENT

The Department of Health (DoH) has a statutory responsibility to promote an integrated system of Health and Social Care (HSC) designed to secure improvement in:

- The physical and mental health of people in Northern Ireland;
- The prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness; and
- The social wellbeing of people in Northern Ireland.

Under the Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009, the Department is required to:

- Develop policies;
- Determine priorities;
- Secure and allocate resources;
- Set standards and guidelines;
- Secure the commissioning of relevant programmes and initiatives;
- Monitor and hold to account its ALBs; and
- Promote a whole system approach.

The Department is also responsible for establishing arrangements for the efficient and effective management of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS). The Department discharges its duties both by direct Departmental action and through its Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs).

Working in Partnership

- The Department has 16 Arm's Length Bodies:
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCCT)
- Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCCT)
- South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCCT)

- Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT)
- Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT)
- Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust (NIAS)
- Business Services Organisation (BSO)
- Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service (NIBTS)
- Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA)
- Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing & Midwifery (NIPEC)
- Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC)
- Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency (NIGALA)
- Public Health Agency (PHA)
- Patient and Client Council (PCC)
- Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA)
- Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS)

In addition to our ALBs, the Department relies on working collaboratively and in partnership with other NICS departments, a wide range of local government representatives, community groups and professional bodies and with the Food Standards Agency, a non-Ministerial government department with devolved policy responsibilities in Northern Ireland and access to the Assembly through the Health Minister. The Department also maintains close working relationships with 2 North-South bodies: The Institute of Public Health in Ireland (IPHI) and the Food Safety Promotion Board (also known as Safefood).

Resources – Finance and People

The Department's annual budget is approximately £7billion, with 95% allocated to our 16 Arm's Length Bodies for running costs and service delivery and 5% allocated for the running costs of the Department itself. The Department also receives an annual capital budget of approximately £350m, with the majority of this allocated to our 16 ALBs for the delivery of new major projects and strategies, IT, research and

development, investment in primary care, mental health, in our emergency services and for the ongoing maintenance of the Health Estate.

The financial position is particularly challenging. Our forecast outturn in 2022-23 was some £450m in excess of our expected revenue allocation. Subsequent intervention by the Secretary of State has set the 2022-23 Budget at £7.3bn and it is likely that this will enable us to balance the position in year. Prospects for the future however are now more challenging as it is likely that these additional allocations will be deducted from funding available to Northern Ireland in 2023-24. Whilst the draft budget is unlikely to represent a realistic position for future years it is also unlikely that we will see significant funding growth. Due to increasing costs and demand, the funding gap will therefore rise if action is not taken to reduce expenditure through greater efficiency and productivity.

For capital, the Draft Budget proposed allocation is £358.3m/£369.8m/£368.3m over the three-year budget period 2022-2025. Cost pressures continue to increase owing to rising inflation and the increase in the cost of materials such as steel for our major construction projects. There is a risk that our forecast outturn in 2022-23 will breach the proposed draft budget allocation if normal patterns of slippage in the last quarter do not materialise this year. Increasing costs and associated delays to capital projects in the financial year 2022-23 is likely to impact the delivery of the capital programme for the remainder of the budget period.

Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff	
Department	SPPG formally HSCB
558	465 (FTE)

With closure of the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) on 31 March 2022, an additional 465 (FTE) staff now work as part of DoH

Strategic Planning and Performance and Chief Digital Information Officer Groups. These staff are not Civil Servants. They remain HSC employees hosted via the Business Services Organisation (BSO).

Departmental Board

The Departmental Board supports the Minister and Permanent Secretary, as Accounting Officer, in directing the business of the Department as effectively as possible to achieve objectives and priorities. Within the overall policies and priorities established by the Minister, and subject to his approval, the remit of the Board is to:

- set the Department's standards and values;
- agree the Department's strategic aims and objectives as set out in the Departmental Business Plan;
- oversee sound financial management and corporate governance of the Department in the context of the Departmental Business Plan;
- oversee the allocation and monitoring of the Department's financial and human resources to achieve aims and objectives set out in the Departmental Business Plan;
- monitor and steer the Department towards the achievement of agreed performance objectives as set out in the Departmental Business Plan;
- scrutinise the governance and performance of ALB's; and
- set the Department's 'risk appetite' and ensure appropriate risk management procedures are in place

The Departmental Board usually meets six times per year and comprises the following Members:

Peter May	Permanent Secretary (Chair)
Sharon Gallagher	Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning & Performance Group
Andrew Magowan	Independent Non- Executive Board Member
Chris Matthews	Deputy Secretary, Resource and Corporate Management Group
Michael McBride	Chief Medical Officer
Jim McCooe	Independent Non- Executive Board Member
Peter Toogood	Deputy Secretary, Social Services Policy Group
Dan West	Chief Digital Information Officer
Jim Wilkinson	Deputy Secretary, Healthcare Policy Group
Brigitte Worth	Director of Finance

OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY – STAY CONNECTED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The Department has a legal commitment to conform to the ICO's model publication scheme. However, in addition, we aim to make available as much information as possible in respect of the work that underpins our strategic objectives, good governance and wider business. See our website - www.health-ni.gov.uk

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