

Cheshire and Merseyside Joint Forward Plan 25/26 Integrated Care Board (ICB) Annual Delivery Plan

29/07/2025



Introduction

This Annual Delivery Plan builds from our existing strategic priorities described in our [2024-2029 Joint Forward Plan](#) alongside newly prioritised areas to describe the priorities for NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB) in 2025-26, and reflects:

- The Health and Care Partnership Strategy ([All Together Fairer our Health and Care Partnership Plan](#)) - published September 2024);
- Our nine Place based [Health and Wellbeing Board Strategies](#);
- The 2025/26 [NHS Planning Guidance](#), including the emerging themes of the 10 Year NHS Plan due to be published later this year
- Our 2024/25 [NHS Delivery Plan](#)
- Emerging service pressures not reflected in the current Joint Forward Plan.
- Wider Public Sector reform priorities emerging nationally e.g. devolution, role of the NHS in supporting wider government health missions including Get Britain Working, the need to focus on growing levels of multi-morbidity.
- How we configure the ICB/S Operating Model to deliver our plans.



During 2025 we will more fully review our Joint Forward Plan to ensure our plans are fully responding to the priorities and opportunities outlined in the NHS 10 Year Plan.

Our Mission:

We will prevent ill health and tackle health inequalities and improve the lives of the poorest fastest. We believe we can do this best by working in partnership

We will do this through our Strategic Objectives:



Tackling health inequalities in outcomes, experiences and access



Improve outcomes in population health and healthcare



Enhancing quality, productivity, and value for money



Helping the NHS to support broader social and economic development

The 2025-26 NHS Planning Guidance

In line with the [Government Mandate](#) the number of national priorities in 25/26 have reduced from last year's guidance, focusing on a smaller set of headline ambitions and key enablers:

- Reducing the time people wait for elective care
- Improving Accident and Emergency A&E and ambulance response times
- Enhancing access to general practice and urgent dental care
- Improving mental health and learning disability services
- Improving access to Children and Young People's (CYP) mental health services
- Living within the budget allocated, reducing waste and improving productivity
- Maintaining collective focus on the overall quality and safety of services
- Addressing inequalities and shift towards prevention

The National Context

The latest review of the NHS by Lord Darzi has highlighted the need for:

- Simplifying and innovating care delivery for a neighbourhood NHS, **embracing multidisciplinary models** that bring together a **range of primary, community, mental health and wider services**
- NHS organisations **focusing on the patients and communities** they serve, with national organisations enabling and not distracting from this process
- Recognising that, as one example, people in the most deprived communities are far more likely to have multiple emergency admissions to hospital in the last year of their lives, but that the health service has a potentially huge role to play in **tackling wider socio-economic inequalities**, improving the quality of people's lives and economic prospects, at all stages of their lives.

The Fuller stocktake – a comprehensive review carried out in 2022, by Dr Claire Fuller

- Helping people to stay healthy for longer through a more **joined-up approach to prevention.**
- Providing more proactive, personalised and **multi-disciplinary care for people with more complex needs.**
- **Streamlining access** to care and advice to meet the needs of infrequent users of healthcare services.

Hewitt Review:

- Fewer central targets - resources based on the **needs of their local populations**
- Enabling a shift towards **upstream investment in prevention**
- Multi-year funding - systems can more **cohesively plan their local priorities**
- Payment mechanism flexibility - **flexibility to determine allocations**

Impact of the abolition of NHS England and changes to the NHS operating Model

The 3 Big Shifts:-

- Hospital to Community
- Sickness to Prevention
- Analogue to Digital

Neighbourhood Health Services

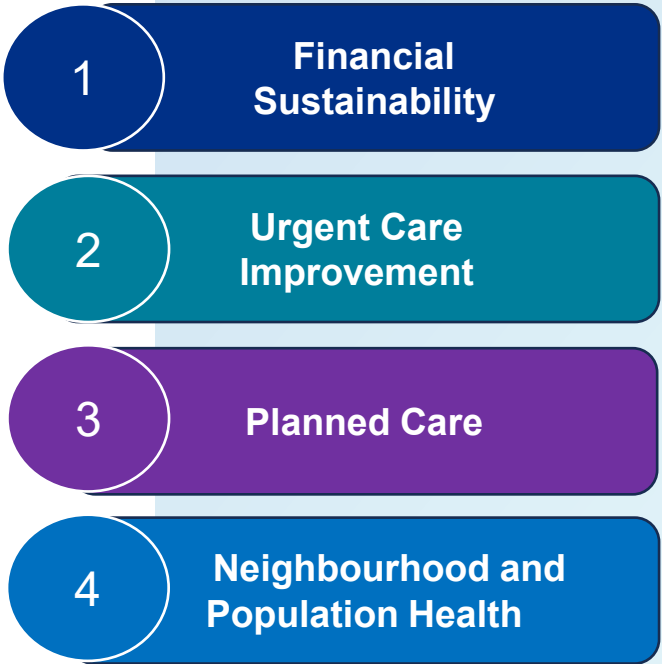
- During 2024 the Government commissioned the Darzi Review of the NHS and is now developing the 10 Year NHS Plan this builds on the existing national policy direction.
- NHS England are developing an updated Operating Model; they will publish a new NHS Improvement and Assessment Framework that will set out how NHS England will work with as well as assess the performance and capability of providers and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs).
- We have aligned our 25-26 Annual Delivery Plan to reflect our existing priorities the three national shifts and the NHS operational planning guidance to support delivery of our 4 strategic Objectives

In reviewing our plans and defining our priorities for 2025-26 we have applied a set of principles to guide us:

- Deliver financial savings through productivity reducing waste, focusing on opportunities related to efficiency at scale, corporate services and unwarranted variation.
- Any available growth funding will be protected to deliver the “neighbourhood health service” through community-based interventions and applying principles for mutual accountability for ensuring delivery of outcomes which support the three national shifts, to address health inequalities including priorities agreed by the HCP on wider determinants and improving access and outcomes in urgent care including mental health.
- Prioritisation of the local and national safety, quality and performance metrics
- Co-design solutions and plans with partners and our communities and consider the best design and delivery approaches:
 - Delivered at a whole Cheshire and Merseyside (C&M) or sub-C&M footprint to gain economies of scale and address, or avoid creating, unwarranted variation
 - Maximise local partnerships and assets to integrate joint commissioning e.g. with a local authority and/or our Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector at a Place or neighbourhood level.
 - Delegation of functions to partner organisations to lead delivery on behalf of the ICB e.g. Collaboratives, Alliances, Networks
- Detailed triangulation approach essential between Population Health / Finance / Workforce / Operational plans and ensure contracting approaches align with our commissioning plans including payment mechanisms and outcomes.
- Use clear change, continuous improvement and innovation methodologies

Determining our 25-26 priorities

As part of our 2024-29 Joint Forward Plan we prioritised a focus on two areas Financial Sustainability and Urgent and Emergency Care, we have identified two additional areas for 2025-26



These are supported by 6 Strategic and Enabling programmes (see Table below)

Our priorities for 2025-26



Our top 4 priorities for 2025/2026

1

Financial Sustainability

2

Urgent Care Improvement

3

Planned Care

4

Neighbourhood and Population Health

Our programmes that will deliver our priorities

All Age Continuing Health Care
Medicines Optimisation
Reducing Unwarranted Variation
Independent Sector Spending
Estates and facilities
Section 117 Complex M/Health
Digital
System development and sustainability
Commissioning
Corporate
Primary Care
Management costs

Admission Avoidance
In Hospital Flow
Discharge
Ambulance Improvement
Urgent and Emergency Care at Scale
Mental Health System Flow

Elective Care
Improved Waiting Times
Productivity & Efficiency
Diagnostics
Cancer treatment and early diagnosis

All Together Fairer
Population Health Management
Data into Action
Modern General Practice & Primary Care
Standardising Community Health
Integrated Neighbourhood Teams
Integrated Intermediate Care
Multi Disciplinary Teams for Children and Young People
Urgent Neighbourhood Services
Secondary Care in Neighbourhoods
Palliative End of Life Care
Urgent Dental

Our 6 strategic and enabling programmes

Mental Health, Learning Disabilities & Neurodiversity

Children and Young People (Beyond)

Women’s Health and Maternity (WHaM)

Quality, Safety & Experience

Digital and Data

Workforce

Our strategic and enabling programmes

To support delivery of our 4 priorities we have defined additional strategic and enabling programmes further detail on these can be found by clicking the link below.

In line with the concept of a *“self-improving system”* described in the Hewitt Review we intend to develop our capabilities and be ambitious in developing our leadership, workforce and improvement approaches alongside our delivery plans.

To support this, we will focus on those areas that enable us to develop as a system.