NHS Monthly Insight Report

October 2026

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Introduction

'The Internal Audit Network' (TIAN) comprises the seven NHS internal audit consortiums and in-house teams operating across England. These organisations collaborate across a number of areas to leverage their collective knowledge and expertise and drive efficiency and effectiveness. This monthly insight report produced by TIAN highlights key publications and is intended as a useful update and reference tool for our clients.

Developments in the NHS	
Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) - Independent review into mental health conditions, ADHD and autism: final report	This report looks into changes in prevalence, need and demand, and what is influencing them as well as the benefits and risks of diagnosis, and how support could be better matched to need. It also describes how well current services respond, including waiting times, inequalities and gaps in support and makes recommendations for prevention, earlier support, improved care and long-term reform. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-into-mental-health-conditions-adhd-and-autism-final-report **For information**
DHSC - Children and young people's alcohol and drug services: framework	This national framework sets out expectations for how local areas should design, commission and provide high-quality drug and alcohol support for children and young people. It covers interventions for children aged 17 and under, delivered by children's and young people's specialist drug and alcohol treatment services. It also includes guidance on interventions for young people aged 18 to 24, as part of transitional arrangements in children and young people's alcohol and drug services or in adult alcohol and drug treatment services. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-and-young-peoples-alcohol-and-drug-services-framework **For information**
DHSC – Guidance on Prevent for NHS mental health services	The DHSC has issued specific guidance for NHS mental health services on how those working in this area can help reduce the risk of radicalisation in children, young people and adults. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-guidance-for-nhs-mental-health-services The general guidance and training resources designed to support people working in all healthcare settings to counter terrorism have also been updated. https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/prevent-in-healthcare-guidance-and-training-for-professionals **For information and use by NHS organisations**
NHS England - Single-sex spaces	The Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC's) Code of practice for services, public functions and associations (Services Code) came into force on 5 August 2026. It provides statutory guidance on the implementation of the Equality Act 2010 and has implications for NHS organisations, both as providers of services and as employers.

Developments in the NHS	
	NHSE has sent a system letter with guidance to support NHS organisations in the provision of single-sex services in line with relevant legislation and statutory guidance. They have published: • Privacy, dignity and safety in hospital accommodation (revised guidance on single-sex accommodation for patients); and • Guidance on NHS staff facilities NHSE recognises that the Code and the issues it addresses are highly sensitive for many people; also that it is important organisations continue to uphold NHS values, maintaining dignity, privacy, safety and respect for all patients, staff and visitors. https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/guidance-to-support-nhs-organisations-in-the-provision-of-single-sex-services-and-facilities/ https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-code-of-practice-for-services-public-functions-and-associations-2026 **For information and action by all NHS organisations**
NHS Resolution - Learning from suicide-related compensation claims: an updated thematic review	This review explores learning from suicide-related compensation claims made against mental health trusts in England. The report highlights opportunities to strengthen communication, support effective family involvement, improve risk assessment processes and address organisational factors that can influence patient safety and care. https://resolution.nhs.uk/resources/learning-from-suicide-related-compensation-claims-an-updated-thematic-review/ **Information for providers of Mental Health services**
Care Quality Commission - The state of health care and adult social care in England 2025/26	This annual report looks at the trends, shares examples of good and outstanding care, and highlights where care needs to improve. It finds that demand for health and adult social care continues to grow, and in many areas, including community mental health services, need is also becoming more complex. It outlines signs of improvement, including more GP appointments, increased use of digital solutions, and shorter waits for elective care. The report highlights examples of local innovation, including neighbourhood models and integrated teams. However, it also finds inequalities across the whole health and care system that mean people's experience of care is fractured and dependent on where they live and who they are. https://www.cqc.org.uk/publications/major-report/state-care/2025-2026 **For information**
Health Foundation - Paying with our health: impacts of the cost-of-living crisis	The cost-of-living crisis is a health crisis. When people can't afford healthy food or to keep their homes warm, their physical and mental health suffer. The Budget presents an opportunity to ease pressure on households facing the greatest hardship. This analysis examines the unequal pressures on households, the implications for health and inequalities, and what the government can do. https://www.health.org.uk/reports-and-analysis/analysis/paying-with-our-health-impacts-of-the-cost-of-living-crisis **For information**

Developments in the NHS	
Health Services Safety Investigations Body (HSSIB) - Electronic referrals for ongoing care: risk of losing patient referrals	This report highlights a risk to patient safety associated with the electronic referral service (e-RS), where referrals may be removed from health care provider organisation worklists without warning or recognition. It identified incidents where referrals disappeared from e-RS worklists without provider organisations' knowledge. These included referrals that disappeared for unknown reasons and those automatically removed after 180 days without action, before patients had been booked for appointments. The 180-day function may result in patients experiencing missed or delayed care. https://www.hssib.org.uk/patient-safety-investigations/electronic-patient-record-systems-electronic-referrals-for-ongoing-care/second-interim-report/ **For information and review by organisations using an e-RS**
Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP) - Co-production in clinical audit and quality improvement	HQIP has launched new guidance on "Co-Production in Clinical Audit and Quality Improvement", developed in partnership with HQIP's Service User Network (SUN) members. The guidance brings together their first-hand experiences and perspectives on what meaningful co-production looks like and provides practical recommendations to help audit providers build successful co-production into their work. https://www.hqip.org.uk/guidance/coproduction-ca-qi/ **For information**
Northern Health Science Alliance - Commercial principles for data-enabled research and innovation partnerships in the NHS	This report was developed by a working group of NHS Trusts from across the North of England. It responds to growing demand from industry partners seeking access to NHS data, expertise, infrastructure and analytical services to support research, innovation and product development. The report aims to provide a practical framework to help organisations identify the full scope of activity involved in data-enabled projects and recover the costs associated with delivering them safely, legally and effectively. https://www.thenhsa.co.uk/2026/10/northern-health-science-alliance-publish-new-guidance-on-commercial-data-enabled-research-and-innovation-partnerships/ **For information**
Policy Exchange - The rural penalty: how NHS funding formulas are disadvantaging rural and coastal areas and putting health devolution at risk	This report warns that the NHS framework for neighbourhood health, which is built around populations, fails to recognise the high travel distances and costs and limited choice which characterise rural areas. It finds that one fifth of England risks facing a "rural penalty" of lower NHS funding and less access to doctors under the NHS's 10-Year Health Plan with funding formulas, workforce policy and the assumptions in the NHS 10-year plan around "neighbourhood health" all neglecting the reality of how health care is delivered in rural settings. https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/the-rural-penalty/ **For information**
UCL Partners - From innovation ambition to system readiness: what health leaders need to do now	This report sets out a framework to help health leaders consider whether their organisations are ready to adopt and scale innovation successfully. The framework is a set of leadership questions to support decisions on when an innovation should be adopted, scaled, paused, redesigned or stopped. It argues that the next phase of health innovation will depend not only on what emerging technologies can do, but on whether health systems have the conditions in place to use them effectively.

Developments in the NHS	
	https://uclpartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/IGNITE-2026-Report.pdf **For information**
Nuffield Trust - What can local variation in avoidable emergency admissions tell us?	Ambulatory care sensitive (ACS) conditions are health issues where effective treatment and support in primary and community care could help prevent people from needing emergency hospital care. This "chart of the week" briefing reveals that ACS emergency admission rates vary widely across England with rates in some integrated care boards almost four times higher than in others. https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/resource/what-can-local-variation-in-avoidable-emergency-admissions-tell-us **For information**
HFMA - Data quality action plans	This briefing provides examples and themes of data quality action plans from mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity and community service providers. https://www.hfma.org.uk/publications/data-quality-action-plans **Information for mental health and community service providers**
HFMA - Pocket guide to NHS finance	This short guide provides an easy-to-read introduction to NHS finance, setting out the key themes of how the NHS finance regime works in practice. Free access for members and affiliates. https://www.hfma.org.uk/publications/pocket-guide-nhs-finance The HFMA has also published a comprehensive guide to how the NHS finance regime works, as well as the wider landscape in which it operates - which is available to purchase online with a discount for full members. https://www.hfma.org.uk/publications/hfma-guide-nhs-finance **For information**
HFMA - Regulation, guidance and governance updates for artificial intelligence	This briefing provides an overview of the recent regulatory material published to support the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) in the NHS. The briefing is intended for NHS finance professionals and commissioners across all sectors who wish to understand more about this topic. It may also be of interest to non-finance professionals considering the use of AI or developing AI models. https://www.hfma.org.uk/publications/regulation-guidance-and-governance-updates-artificial-intelligence **For information**

Disclaimer: This briefing paper is intended to highlight recent developments and issues within the NHS that may be of interest to non-executive directors, lay members and NHS managers. It is not exhaustive and TIAN cannot be held responsible for any omission.