



NHS Monthly Insight Report

April 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 - Renewed Women's Health Strategy for England	<p>This renewed strategy is aligned with the 10 Year Health Plan for England and sets out how women will have voice, choice and power in their health and health care.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/renewed-womens-health-strategy-for-england</p> <p>For information</p>
Department of Health & Social Care - Independent review into mental health conditions, ADHD and autism: interim report	<p>This interim report sets out progress made on the independent review into mental health conditions, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and autism, including the main findings from the evidence so far, including gaps and uncertainties. It also outlines what the review has learned from engagement and how different evidence is interpreted, and looks at priorities and questions for the next phase of the review.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-into-mental-health-conditions-adhd-and-autism-interim-report</p> <p>For information</p>
NHS England (NHSE) - 1 April 2026 next steps on planning and priorities for 2026/27	<p>This letter from Sir James Mackey, Chief Executive, NHS England sets out collective priorities for the NHS and looks ahead for the new financial year.</p> <p>https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/1-april-2026-next-steps-on-planning-and-priorities-for-2026-27/</p> <p>For information</p>
NHSE - Neighbourhood health centre guidance for regions and integrated care boards	<p>This guidance is both a statement of policy intent and a practical planning instruction for neighbourhood health centre (NHC) development in the current planning period. It sets out the strategic framework for how integrated care boards (ICBs) and NHS England regions, working with providers, should identify and develop NHC schemes to support neighbourhood health: the archetypes to consider, estate planning, pipeline development and funding routes. The guidance also instructs ICBs and NHS England regions on the planning work now required to develop a coherent pipeline of NHC schemes.</p> <p>https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/neighbourhood-health-centre-guidance-for-regions-and-integrated-care-boards/</p> <p>A specification has also been issued to support the planning and delivery of new-build neighbourhood health centres. It is not a detailed technical rulebook, but a tool for consistent planning and design by providing a common starting point for local systems to develop designs that reflect community needs while remaining aligned with national policy.</p>

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	<p>https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/neighbourhood-health-centres-design-and-performance-specification/</p> <p>For information, and action by ICBs</p>
NHSE - The future of Freedom to Speak Up	<p>Following the Dash review of patient safety across the health and care landscape, the government has agreed that the National Guardian’s Office will close at the end of June 2026. From 1 July 2026, NHSE will deliver some activities previously undertaken by the National Guardian’s Office, and healthcare organisations will take on greater responsibility and accountability for embedding effective Freedom to Speak Up arrangements. This document sets out the revised responsibilities for Freedom to Speak Up across the NHS.</p> <p>https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/the-future-of-freedom-to-speak-up/</p> <p>For information</p>
NHSE - Annual assessment of Integrated Care Boards 2025/26: supporting guidance	<p>NHSE has published guidance for the annual assessment process it will follow to assess ICB performance in the 2025/26 financial year. The assessment process will follow five sequential steps: using the NHS Oversight Framework’s ICB contextual metrics data to understand each ICB’s relative performance against the high-priority objectives for 2025/26; assessing performance and capability, using qualitative evidence and local insight; the reviewing of formal intervention, support and partnership feedback; agreeing and finalising the assessment conclusion; and finally summarising the individual regional reports and data in a single national summary report and publishing it on the NHSE website.</p> <p>https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/annual-assessment-of-integrated-care-boards-2025-26-supporting-guidance/</p> <p>For information</p>
NHSE - Microsoft 365 Copilot information governance guidance	<p>Microsoft 365 Copilot, including Copilot Chat (called “copilot” from this point) is a tool that uses Artificial Intelligence (AI). Health and care organisations may use copilot to help with day-to-day tasks. Copilot has both a free and a paid-for model. This guidance relates to the paid-for enterprise model which integrates with Microsoft 365 apps. The guidance sets out information for patients and service users, healthcare workers and information governance professionals.</p> <p>https://transform.england.nhs.uk/information-governance/guidance/microsoft-365-copilot/</p> <p>For information</p>
NHSE - Safeguarding accountability and assurance framework Fifth edition, 2026	<p>Safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk in the NHS is a key priority. NHSE’s framework sets out the safeguarding roles and responsibilities of all individuals and organisations related to their statutory requirements, and appropriate accountabilities for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk of harm or abuse.</p> <p>https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/safeguarding-children-young-people-and-adults-at-risk-in-the-nhs/</p> <p>For information</p>
UK Covid-19 Inquiry - Module 4: vaccines and therapeutics	<p>This report examines how vaccines and therapeutics were developed, authorised and delivered across the four nations of the UK during the Covid-19 pandemic. It finds that decades of global research and preparation – including to develop mRNA vaccines and vaccine platform technologies – were fundamental to the UK’s Covid-19 vaccine response. It concludes that the development and rollout of Covid-19 vaccines was “an extraordinary feat” and the vaccine and therapeutic programmes were “two of the success stories of the pandemic” – but that governments and health services must now work to rebuild</p>

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	<p>public trust in vaccines.</p> <p>https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/09151131/E03430128_Covid-Inquiry-M4-Inquiry_Accessible.pdf</p> <p>For information</p>
<p>Nuffield Trust - Cause for alarm: what can safeguarding data tell us about the challenges facing health and care services?</p>	<p>Baroness Casey's recent call for a national safeguarding board was another reminder of safeguarding's crucial role across health and care, but it can often go under the radar. In this explainer, Rachel Hutchings describes what safeguarding is, examines how safeguarding concerns and enquiries have changed over time, and states why they should be a cause for concern.</p> <p>https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/resource/cause-for-alarm-what-can-safeguarding-data-tell-us-about-the-challenges-facing-health-and-care-services</p> <p>For information</p>
<p>The Health Foundation - Healthy life expectancy trends in the UK: a watershed moment</p>	<p>This analysis examines variations in waiting times across ICB geographies to understand the extent of progress towards recovering pre-pandemic waiting times, including changes in referrals and activity. To do so, it analysed data from ICB footprints before the April 2026 boundary changes for 2025 and compared them with 2019 data by reconstructing ICB geographies.</p> <p>https://www.health.org.uk/reports-and-analysis/analysis/a-growing-gap-icb-variation-in-elective-care-waiting-times-in-2019</p> <p>For information</p>
<p>The King's Fund - Environmental sustainability in the NHS: a new approach to national leadership and accountability</p>	<p>This report, co-written with the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare and commissioned by the Health Foundation, draws on expert interviews, literature review, and analysis of existing sustainability metrics to examine how national and local NHS bodies are held to account for sustainability.</p> <p>https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/reports/environmental-sustainability-nhs</p> <p>For information</p>
<p>Cancer Research UK - Cancer in the UK: overview 2026</p>	<p>This report finds that more than 403,000 people are being diagnosed with cancer each year in the UK. It summarises key evidence across prevention, diagnosis, treatment and outcomes, looking at where progress is being made and what challenges remain. It breaks down the factors that are contributing to the rise and sets out what the country can do to slow it down.</p> <p>https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/our-reports-and-publications/cancer-in-the-uk-overview</p> <p>For information</p>
<p>Ipsos - Trust on the line: how healthcare in the UK is being reshaped</p>	<p>This report discusses how cultural and societal shifts are shaping trust within health care, what the consequences of these shifts are for the health care ecosystem, and what can and should be done to strengthen or rebuild trust.</p> <p>https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/trust-line-how-healthcare-uk-being-reshaped</p> <p>For information</p>

Developments in the NHS	
<p>UCL Global Business School for Health - Health of the Health System Index: annual report 2025/26</p>	<p>This report introduces the “Health of the Health System” Index, developed by UCL Global Business School for Health in collaboration with the Health Service Journal. The Index offers a new perspective on NHS system health by combining structured quantitative indicators with the judgements of senior leaders across England. It focuses not only on outputs but on the organisational conditions – leadership, workforce, culture, integration, digital readiness, prevention, and financial alignment – that determine whether performance can be sustained and reform delivered over time.</p> <p>https://www.ucl.ac.uk/population-health-sciences/global-business-school-health/research/sector-insights/health-system-index</p> <p>For information</p>
<p>HFMA - NHS cyber security: risks and responsibilities</p>	<p>Cyber-attacks on the NHS threaten patient safety, disrupt operations and damage financial stability and reputation. At the heart of the NHS lies a duty of care, and robust cyber security is fundamental to maintaining patient welfare and ensuring service continuity. Effective cyber security depends on collective responsibility across the organization, and all staff must understand their role. This briefing covers why cyber security matters, how to prevent cyber-attacks, and steps to take if an incident occurs. It is aimed primarily at NHS finance staff and non-executive directors in the UK.</p> <p>https://www.hfma.org.uk/publications/nhs-cyber-security-risks-and-responsibilities</p> <p>For information</p>

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.

