



NHS Monthly Insight Report

January 2025

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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	
UK Health Security Agency - Emergency preparedness, resilience and response concept of operations	<p>This guidance sets out the UK Health Security Agency's approach to systematically preparing for, responding to and recovering from health security incidents. These include: infectious diseases; pandemics; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear events; extreme adverse weather events; business continuity challenges; and cyber security events.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness-resilience-and-response-concept-of-operations/emergency-preparedness-resilience-and-response-concept-of-operations</p> <p>For information</p>
Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) - New Hospital Programme: plan for implementation	<p>Following the 2024 General Election, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Chancellor set out to undertake a review of the New Hospital Programme to provide a realistic and affordable timetable for delivery. The DHSC and HM Treasury have agreed a high-level plan for the programme, which has the flexibility to plan on the basis of a total spend of £15 billion in each five-year Spending Review period. The plan for implementation details the waves of delivery for the programme and summarises the findings of the review.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-hospital-programme-review-outcome/new-hospital-programme-plan-for-implementation</p> <p>For information</p>
NHS England - Reforming elective care for patients	<p>This plan sets out how the NHS will reform elective care services and meet the 18-week referral to treatment standard by March 2029. The aim is that elective care will be increasingly personalised and digital, with a focus on improving experience and convenience, and empowering people with choice and control over when and where they will be treated.</p> <p>https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/reforming-elective-care-for-patients/</p> <p>NHSE have also issued a letter to trusts, ICBs and primary care network leads which sets out immediate steps for ICBs and acute trusts to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• name an existing director who will be responsible for improving the experience of care, and the experience of waiting for care• review and improve operational processes that affect how patients and their carers receive correspondence and access information on wait times• make customer care training available to non-clinical staff with patient-facing roles <p>https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/publication-of-the-plan-to-reform-elective-care-for-patients/</p> <p>NHS Providers have issued a briefing which highlights the key points from the plan, and includes NHS Providers' view:</p> <p>https://nhsproviders.org/media/699851/otdb_reforming-elective-care-for-patients_6-january-2025.pdf</p> <p>The Health Foundation has also issued a briefing called "Government's plan for 18-week NHS waiting times: is it realistic?". This considers</p>

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	<p>the government's elective care reform plan pledge to meet the NHS standard that 92% of patients should wait no longer than 18 weeks for treatment by the end of the parliament. This objective compares with current performance of just 59%. Their analysis estimates this will require the number of people being removed from the waiting list to increase from 20.8 million a year in July 2024 to 23.5 million a year in July 2029. This corresponds to around 500,000 extra treatments in the first year, rising to 2.6 million extra treatments in the final year, an annual increase of 2.4%:</p> <p>https://www.health.org.uk/reports-and-analysis/analysis/government-s-plan-for-18-week-nhs-waiting-times-is-it-realistic</p> <p>For information and implementation</p>
NHS England - Annual assessment of integrated care boards 2023/24	<p>This report is a summary of the assessment of each ICB, covering how effectively they have led their local NHS system and their contribution to each of the four core purposes of an integrated care system. It summarises an assessment of performance during the 2023/24 financial year and reflects NHS England's views relating to that period only.</p> <p>https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/annual-assessment-of-integrated-care-boards-2023-24/</p> <p>For information</p>
NHS England - 2025/26 priorities and operational planning guidance	<p>NHSE has released the planning guidance for the NHS in England in 2025/26, setting the operational targets, revenue and capital allocations and financial rules for the year ahead. There is a major focus on reducing spending and costs, with systems required to set a limit on elective activity spending and facing new targets for reducing agency and bank staff expenditure. Specific guidance includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025/26 priorities and operational planning guidance • Revenue finance and contracting guidance for 2025/26 • Allocation of resources 2025/26 • 2025/26 NHS Payment Scheme consultation • Draft NHS standard contract 2025/26: consultation • Capital guidance for 2025/26 <p>https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/2025-26-priorities-and-operational-planning-guidance/</p> <p>Experts from the King's Fund have considered the impact this guidance will have on different areas across the health service, and set out what the document tells us about NHS priorities in a range of areas, and what it might mean:</p> <p>https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/blogs/planning-guidance-2025-top-takes</p> <p>For information and implementation</p>
Public Accounts Committee - NHS financial sustainability	<p>This report argues that senior health officials seem to be unambitious when it comes to taking the radical steps to begin to implement it. The government has laid out its planned 'three big shifts': from hospital-based to community care; from analogue to digital; and from treating ill health to prevention. The report makes recommendations in each of these areas.</p> <p>https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/46303/documents/233234/default/</p> <p>For information</p>
Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) - Tackling inequalities in care for people with learning disabilities and autistic people	<p>People with learning disabilities and autistic people continue to experience unacceptably poor health outcomes in comparison to the rest of the population, leading to lower life expectancy and a higher number of avoidable deaths. This guidance aims to close the gap in skills and knowledge across the adult health and social care workforce. It gives commissioners and practitioners the practical steps, confidence, and legislative awareness needed to improve experiences of care and support for people with learning disabilities and autistic people.</p>

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	https://www.scie.org.uk/tackling-inequalities/tackling-inequalities-guidance/ https://www.scie.org.uk/app/uploads/2025/01/Tackling-inequalities-for-adults-with-learning-disabilities_FINAL2.pdf For information
Healthwatch England - A pain to complain: why it's time to fix the NHS complaints process	<p>Written complaints in the NHS reached a record high in 2024. This report finds that low public confidence is preventing people from taking any action after experiencing poor care, meaning that current complaints numbers could just be the tip of the iceberg. There is also little evidence that complaints are being systematically used to improve care. The report states that action is needed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make the complaints process easier for patients and their families to navigate; • monitor and improve the performance of organisations that handle complaints; and • develop a culture of listening to and learning from complaints. https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/sites/healthwatch.co.uk/files/20250120_Complaints%20report%20draft%20FINAL%20HWE.pdf For information
NHS Providers - Mental health services: the NHS trust perspective	<p>This briefing provides an outline of mental health services in the NHS, the current levels of demand that NHS trusts are facing, and what trusts need in order to deliver a more proactive and co-ordinated community-based model of mental health care.</p> https://nhsproviders.org/media/699853/mh-parliamentary-explainer_january25_final.pdf For information
Nuffield Trust - In the balance: lessons for changing the mix of professions in NHS services	<p>The NHS workforce has gone through shifts and rebalances of roles since the service began, driven by changing needs as much as financial constraints and staff shortages. In recent years there has been a rebalancing through expanding roles like nursing associates, advanced practitioners, physician associates and clinical pharmacists, and further growth of these roles is planned. This report, commissioned by NHS Employers, reviews the evidence around introducing these new roles and offers a set of lessons for how emerging roles could be better implemented and integrated.</p> https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/Nuffield%20Trust%20-%20In%20the%20balance_WEB.pdf For information
Royal College of Nursing - On the frontline of the UK's corridor care crisis	<p>This report documents the experiences of more than 5,000 NHS nursing staff following a survey at the end of December 2024. Thousands of nursing staff responded, confirming that corridor care is widespread across the UK. Almost 7 in 10 (66.8%) respondents to the RCN's survey said they are delivering care in overcrowded or unsuitable places – such as corridors, converted cupboards and even car parks – on a daily basis. More than 9 in 10 (90.8%) of those surveyed said patient safety is being compromised.</p> https://www.rcn.org.uk/news-and-events/news/uk-corridor-care-devastating-testimony-shows-patients-are-coming-to-harm-160125 For information
Royal College of Physicians - Bridging the gap: a guide to making health inequalities a strategic priority for NHS leaders	<p>This guidance provides actionable steps for tackling health inequity within health care delivery, emphasising the role that clinicians and clinical leaders can play in addressing these longstanding disparities. It argues that tackling these disparities is essential to improving the nation's health and reducing unnecessary pressures on health care services. It underscores that NHS leaders have a statutory, moral and financial responsibility to prioritise this issue, and includes: practical actions; existing statutory duties and guidance; and barriers and enablers.</p> https://www.rcp.ac.uk/media/xhinkOak/bridging-the-gap-making-health-inequalities-a-strategic-priority-for-nhs-leaders.pdf For information

Developments in the NHS	
NHS Confederation - Are integrated care systems improving population health outcomes?	<p>This is the first in a four-part series exploring how integrated care systems are faring against their core purposes. This part delves into how systems are improving population health outcomes.</p> <p>https://www.nhsconfed.org/articles/are-integrated-care-systems-improving-population-health-outcomes</p> <p>For information of ICBs</p>
Local Government Association - Preventive and proactive care: research report	<p>This research was commissioned by the Better Care Fund Support Programme to collect and synthesise existing publications and reports related to local prevention or proactive targeted support initiatives that enable people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer. The aim was to better understand what preventive and proactive care initiatives local areas have invested in, and the extent to which these initiatives have been effective and provide value for money.</p> <p>https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Preventative%20and%20proactive%20care%20Alma%20Economics%20report%20FINAL%20REMEDIATED%20VERSION%20%28v7%29.pdf</p> <p>For information</p>
Centre for Mental Health - Care beyond beds: exploring alternatives to hospital-based mental health care	<p>According to this report, an overhaul of mental health care is needed to achieve the government's goal of shifting treatment from hospitals to communities. It finds that inpatient care is too often characterised by unsafe levels of bed occupancy, chronic staffing shortages and dilapidated facilities that risk re-traumatising patients. Black people, neurodivergent people and children are among the most poorly served. It concludes that the NHS 10-year plan must boost investment across the mental health system to drive a 'safe and sustained shift' towards community care, and to provide inpatient care that is high quality, close to home and adequately staffed.</p> <p>https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CentreforMH_CareBeyondBeds.pdf</p> <p>For information of Mental Health Providers</p>
Resolution Foundation - Ageing in the fast and slow lane: examining geographic gaps in ageing	<p>Like most countries, the UK is ageing. Over the past five decades, the median age has risen from 34 to 41. This deep demographic trend has all sorts of implications for public policy, not least the need to find greater resources to provide care for a growing elderly population. What is less well appreciated is that this ageing is playing out differently in different parts of the country – both in terms of the age profile of different areas, but also the rate at which places are ageing. This report explores these trends and draws out some implications for local public services.</p> <p>https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2025/01/Ageing-in-the-fast-and-slow-lane.pdf</p> <p>For information</p>
Care England - Sector pulse check: adult social care sector annual review 2024	<p>This annual report, produced together with the learning disability charity Hft, analyses the finances and workforce of adult social care, providing a benchmark for the nature and scale of the challenges facing the sector. The research highlights how the current approach to adult social care funding is not working; the sector remains in a sustained crisis.</p> <p>https://www.careengland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Hft-Sector-Pulse-Check-2024-Digital-Spreads-3.pdf</p> <p>For information</p>
National Audit Office - Maintaining public service facilities: cross-government	<p>This report finds that maintenance backlogs across key public services, including schools, hospitals and prisons, are estimated to be at least £49 billion. It finds that poor condition of buildings can affect public service delivery, with 5,400 clinical service incidents occurring in the NHS every year due to property and infrastructure failures. It recommends that government should consider the best way to manage its assets alongside its long-term investment plans, in addition to the cost of ongoing maintenance, to bring property condition to a satisfactory level.</p>

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	https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/maintaining-public-service-facilities.pdf For information
HFMA Briefing - The importance of the annual report and accounts	<p>The annual report and accounts is an official, legal document that demonstrates each NHS organisation's stewardship of public sector resources to their stakeholders. This briefing sets out why it is important, what is included in the document and why people not involved with its production should be interested.</p> <p>https://www.hfma.org.uk/system/files/2025-01/Why%20the%20ARA%20is%20important%20202425_0.pdf</p> 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.

