

NHS Scotland Assure Strategy

2023 -
2026



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Introduction

Our vision – the future we will create

To be the recognised national technical and clinical leaders in the healthcare environment for NHS Scotland.

Our purpose – how we will shape the future

To provide expertise and evidence-based advice that contributes to reducing risk, delivering a sustainable healthcare service, and improving the healthcare experience for Scotland.

Our role

NHS Scotland Assure has been designed with users to deliver a coordinated approach to the improvement of risk management and quality in the healthcare environment across NHS Scotland.

We underpin a transformation in the approach to promoting excellence, protecting patients from the risk of infection, and supporting better outcomes for the population.

We provide clinical and technical expertise to minimise risk and improve quality, practice and sustainability in the healthcare environment.

Established in 2021, NHS Scotland Assure has introduced new, and where appropriate enhanced existing services. We encompass services provided by Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infection (ARHAI) Scotland and Health Facilities Scotland.

Our approach

Our strategic objectives and core themes inform our service delivery. We will continuously improve how we deliver our services. We will focus on quality to ensure our services are safe, efficient, effective and facilitate best practice. We will further integrate our services by collaborating with our stakeholders to ensure we meet their needs.



Our core themes

We will focus on five core themes over the next three years:

National leadership and strategy – we will have an overarching leadership role in NHS Scotland’s work to manage environmental and clinical Infection Prevention and Control risk in the built environment, and we will influence the development of new policy.

Planned life cycle support – we will collaborate with health boards to ensure the best healthcare environment and services for patients and staff.

Capacity and capability – we will support the development of workforce requirements across Scotland as it relates to the healthcare environment. We will collaborate in the national drive to develop a sustainable, skilled workforce.

Response – as well as our planned activities, we will work with stakeholders to respond to specific emerging issues or risks.

Intelligence and knowledge sharing - We will deliver a coordinated research portfolio to support the development of evidence-based guidance. We will coordinate national data sets and use this intelligence to support improved outcomes and decision making for the benefit of NHS Scotland.

Our strategic objectives

Service excellence



To deliver service excellence we will:

- support the delivery of a safer healthcare environment across multiple disciplines, ensuring that infection prevention and control is embedded in all stages of the healthcare build lifecycle
- use data and intelligence to inform stakeholders, empower staff and enable health boards to identify, monitor and manage built environment risk factors
- provide health boards with clear and streamlined services by aligning and integrating our service offerings and underpinning them with digital solutions
- identify and address gaps in practice by leading, producing, and commissioning quality research, guidance, and advice
- provide tailored national leadership and expertise in response to outbreaks and incidents, enabling and informing local capability and developing epidemiological and evidence-based intelligence.



Climate Sustainability



To deliver climate sustainability we will:

- embed climate sustainability in everything that we do. For more information read the [NSS Environmental and Sustainability strategy](#).
- support NHS Scotland boards to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and impact on the environment, adapt to climate change and better contribute to the UN Sustainable Development goals
- support NHS Scotland in its ambition to become a net zero and environmentally sustainable healthcare service as described in the NHS Scotland Strategy on Climate Emergency and Sustainability. For more information read the [NHS Scotland strategy](#).
- provide expertise and advice to stakeholders, including evidence-based guidance for net zero healthcare environment.



Workforce sustainability



To deliver workforce sustainability we will:

- have a diverse, knowledgeable and skilled workforce
- work with stakeholders to create a sustainable and resilient workforce model by developing in-house, competent, qualified subject matter experts that meets their identified needs
- work with stakeholders to establish career pathways across multidisciplinary teams, and provide appropriate pathways for professional development
- support the development of NHS Scotland's workforce in collaboration with NHS Education for Scotland (NES), to ensure staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge for their role.

Financial sustainability



To deliver financial sustainability we will:

- deliver services in a financially sustainable way, using opportunities to work collaboratively
- support NHS Scotland to develop a financially sustainable healthcare environment
- develop a financial plan that supports improvement, innovation and collaboration
- build clear structures that reduce waste while increasing resilience
- put in place a National Services Scotland (NSS) wide asset register with clear lifecycle plans
- use innovative tools and techniques to present knowledge and information to stakeholders that will aid financially sustainable decision making.



Collaboration and engagement

Collaboration is at the heart of our services. We do this through stakeholder networks and look for opportunities for new engagement.

We work with health boards, other public sector organisations, academia and the private sector to deliver our strategic objectives. We are committed to open and transparent working relationships with our stakeholders in line with NHS Scotland values. We recognise how important a supportive environment is to deliver services successfully.

NHS Scotland Assure is commissioned by the Scottish Government. We work closely with the Chief Nursing Officer and Health Finance Directorates. We advise on and contribute to policy as required. Our strategy is informed by the needs, priorities, and policy of Scottish Government.

NHS Scotland Assure has processes in place to respond to and prioritise requests from stakeholders. This ensures that new work is transparently managed in line with our capacity and aligned to our strategy.



Our services

Engineering and Assurance

We provide comprehensive, proactive and reactive engineering services to assist health boards gain assurance that their engineering services are safe for patients and staff. Our goal is to support health boards to reduce risks in the healthcare environment underpinned by industry-leading guidance, robust processes and procedures.



Research, Innovation and Intelligence

Research and innovation

The guidance and advice we produce helps ensure that patients, their carers, and those delivering healthcare are in an environment which is safe, effective and person centred. Research plays a pivotal part in supporting this as it ensures that guidance and advice are based on best practice and best evidence.



Intelligence

We support health boards to identify, monitor and manage their healthcare environment risks. Our data and intelligence supports informed decision-making and risk management.

Workforce Development

NHS Scotland has a diverse workforce in the healthcare environment with many experts in their field. In partnership with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) we provide opportunities for staff to develop their interdisciplinary awareness and knowledge. For more information read the [NES Healthcare environment resources](#).



This supports an integrated workforce with the knowledge and skills needed to reduce risk and improve safety and quality in the healthcare environment.

ARHAI Scotland

We provide expert intelligence, support, advice, evidence based guidance, clinical assurance and clinical leadership to local and national government, health and care professionals, the public and other national bodies. Our aim is to protect the people of Scotland from the burden of infection and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). As the national organisation responsible for IPC and AMR, we liaise with other UK countries and international counterparts to develop and deliver Scotland's IPC and AMR programmes of work.



Find out more about ARHAI Scotland at www.nss.nhs.scot/media/3401/arhai-scotlands-operating-model-strategy.pdf

Facilities

We provide national support services for health boards including support and guidance for service improvement and innovation in healthcare facilities services. We support the planning of health board decontamination services and commission the national home oxygen service for patients. Our medical physics service supports the Scottish Breast Screening Programme with safety advice and training.

We support NHS National Services Scotland with all aspects of property management. This is to ensure the safety and compliance of our buildings and workspaces, delivering an environmentally sustainable and effective working environment for all our staff.



Property and Capital Planning

We provide expert services covering the full range of property and capital planning activity. For capital build projects, we provide a range of construction and professional services frameworks, an advisory service, a design assessment and assurance service, and an end-to-end equipping service. For the existing estate, we provide a range of systems and processes, advice and guidance, and national survey programmes. We also provide a response service to significant building failure events. The Digital Estate service aims to improve the performance, effectiveness and efficiency of the existing NHS Scotland estate by adopting digital technologies. We also support health boards with operational Public Private Partnership, Non-Profit Distribution and Hub contracts.

These services improve quality, reduce risk, encourage shared learning, and provide a consistent best practice approach to property and capital planning.

For more information read the [NHS Scotland Assure case study - NHS Scotland Assure Information Management System \(AIMS\)](#) and the [NHS Scotland Assure case study - equipping Badenoch and Strathspey Community Hospital](#).



Climate change, Sustainability and Environment

We provide advice and guidance to Scottish Government and health boards to support NHS Scotland's climate and environmental sustainability commitments.

How to engage with us

Find out more about us:

NHS Scotland Assure - nss.nhs.scot/browse/nhs-scotland-assure

ARHAI Scotland - [Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infection | National Services Scotland \(nhs.scot\)](#)

Health Facilities - [Health facilities | National Services Scotland \(nhs.scot\)](#)

Email: nss.NHSScotlandAssure@nhs.scot

Ask us a question via our enquiry form:

<https://www.nss.nhs.scot/nhs-scotland-assure/contact-assure/contact-nhs-scotland-assure>

If you work in an NHS Scotland board, sign up to our Learning Network: <https://forms.office.com/r/jhhSiqfS0j>

