



Southern Health
and Social Care Trust

TOGETHER, IMPROVING CARE, TRANSFORMING LIVES

ANNUAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2025/26



Working together



Excellence



Openness & Honesty



Compassion

Foreword

We are delighted to share our 2025/26 Annual Strategic Plan which sets out key actions for delivery in the first year of the implementation of our new Vision & Strategy 2030, 'Together, Improving Care, Transforming Lives'.

This Annual Plan will be the stepping-stone on our journey of improvement against our agreed five strategic priorities. The delivery of our strategy, like its development, will be a partnership between our staff, patients/service users, our external partner and local population.

There will be challenges along the way, including growing demand for services compounded by financial constraints, infrastructure deficiencies and available resources. However, the implementation of our vision and strategy brings with it opportunities to work better together to improve health and social care outcomes for the people who live within the Southern Health & Social Care Trust area. This plan and key actions will guide us on how we support our population to remain independent in the community for as long as possible while transforming and improving access to our hospital services. The plan will also enable us to harness and grow our digital platforms in supporting the future delivery of services.

The agreed actions set out in this Annual Strategic Plan commences our journey to a more positive future.

Eileen Mullan
Chair

Steve Sperry
Chief Executive



About Our Trust

The Southern HSC Trust's geography covers the council areas of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon; parts of Newry, Mourne and Downe, and the Mid-Ulster. The Trust provides health and social care services to residents of these areas and to others who travel to the Southern Trust to avail of regionally provided service.



Population

We provide hospital and community health and social care services to a population of **391,796 adults and children**

Our population indicates inequalities in health and life expectancy across localities, with specific areas of deprivation and rurality noted.



Workforce

We employ a workforce of **15,146 people**

Our workforce comprises of many nationalities and cultures.



Finance

We spend almost **£3.3 million**

per day delivering care and support to local people.



Estate

The Trust has a substantial property folder across a range of sites, comprising of **268 Trust owned buildings and 69 leased buildings**



355,588

Total outpatient
appointments



100,267

Community
Mental Health
contacts



11,050,111

Laboratory
Tests



689

Looked After
Children



4,483

Babies
delivered



160,870

Emergency
Department
Attendances



342,043

Diagnostic
images & X-rays



88,023

Health Visiting
Contacts



27,619

Acute Care at
Home Visits

A SNAPSHOT of Services we deliver in a Typical Year



69,848

School Nursing
Contacts



87,120

Day Care
Attendances



974,285

Calls to our
hospitals



6,739

People receiving
Home Care



950,000

Meals served to
patients and clients
in our facilities



252,979

District Nursing
Contacts



202,521

Community
AHPs Contacts

Our Vision

Our vision going forward to 2030 is:

“ Together we will grow to be a learning organisation focused on providing safe, quality care based on a community-first approach throughout the whole-life journey. **”**

This is summarised as
**“Together, Improving Care,
Transforming Lives.”**



Our Values

Our values and behaviours of working together, excellence, openness and honesty, and compassion, are the very root system of our Trust to help us deliver on our strategic priorities.

The strength of our roots will be evidenced by a flourishing culture within our organisation, nourishing our people's resolve, skill and innovation to improve care and transform lives, together with our patients, service users, and our partners.

Strategic Priorities

This Annual Strategic Plan for 2025/26 sets out Year 1 of the implementation of our 5 year Vision & Strategy 2030.

The areas of key focus as a first step in meeting our long- term strategic goals by 2030 are set against our five strategic priorities:

Collaborative Working

Learning Organisation

Safety, Quality & Experience

Whole-Life Approach

Community First

Collaborative Working | Priority Actions

Collective Leadership

Collective leadership needs to take place at all levels and offers us a real opportunity to create a culture of high quality, continually improving, compassionate care and support.

- We will formally launch our new Vision and Strategy 2030.
- We will map out the Trust's Shared Leadership Model and an associated implementation plan.
- We will utilise our newly reformed staff networks to strengthen connections and relationships to enable greater collaborative working in achieving our vision.
- We will empower clinical leaders to review and redesign clinical services to improve outcomes and productivity.

Co-Production Approach

Key to our vision is working together with patients, service users and carers to co-design and co-produce our services.

- We will review the Corporate User Involvement Strategic Action Plan in partnership with service users, staff and volunteers.
- We will review our mechanisms to enable feedback on the outcomes and impact of patient and service user involvement activity.
- We will continue with the implementation of the Working Together Strategy including a review of our Care Experience Hubs and ensuring accessible input.
- We will co-produce a 'Futures Planning' programme for carers of individuals with a learning disability.
- We will continue to develop our work to implement Shared Decision Making.
- We will review how we utilise and implement change from the feedback received from Care Opinion.

Grow & Develop Partnerships

Working with our statutory partners, community and voluntary sector and other stakeholders will be essential to support our local population.

- We will work collaboratively with our Area Integrated Partnership Board (AIPB) partners to address the population health needs of people in the Southern area.
- We will continue to be an active member of our three Community Planning Partnerships to support implementation of local Community Plans.
- We will work collaboratively with our Health Service Executive (HSE) partners to implement cross-border projects.
- We will develop a Southern Area Mental Health Collaborative.
- We will continue our engagement at both an operational and strategic level with Queens University and the University of Ulster.

Learning Organisation | Priority Actions

Patient Service User & Staff Feedback

We are committed to promoting a culture of lifelong learning, offering continuing personal and professional development opportunities. We acknowledge that in order to grow and learn we must look back to understand where we can improve.

- We will develop our mechanisms for identifying and implementing learning arising from feedback from staff (incidents), service users and families (complaints and compliments).
- We will implement the learning from formal reviews, including Internal Audit, NIMDTA Reviews, Royal College Reviews and Public Inquiries.
- We will evaluate feedback from our Employee Experience Pulse Surveys to develop mechanisms for supporting our staff to encourage development and growth.

Continuous Improvement

We will empower staff to drive innovation, embrace technology and continuously improve patient care.

- We will complete our new Quality Improvement Framework 'Building Quality into Everything We Do' 2030 which will set out our vision for embedding a culture of learning, collaboration and innovation at every level of our system.
- We will make available a range of Quality Improvement programmes to staff to build improvement capacity and capability within the organisation.
- We will embed and optimise the effective use of our new Electronic Patient Record, encompass to support transformation.
- We will use data from our new encompass system to inform decision making to drive improvements in quality and safety of our services.

Research, Innovation & Transformation

Health & Social Care is ever evolving and therefore we need to ensure we are ready to respond to change and seize opportunities to make a positive difference.

- We will achieve organisational readiness for the introduction of Equip in 2026.
- We will complete the implementation of 'Care Line Live' software and explore additional opportunities for efficiencies in the delivery of Trust Home Care services.
- We will expand the use of virtual reality technology in reducing procedural stress and anxiety levels of children undergoing interventions.
- We will increase the numbers of virtual outpatient appointments.
- We will establish a Commercial Research Delivery Centre as part of our plan to develop clinical research in the Trust.

Learning Organisation | Priority Actions

Quality Outcomes

We will have a relentless focus on Safety and Quality Outcomes.

- We will develop a 'Road Map' to delivering an open, just and learning culture, where every individual is empowered to prioritise quality and safety and to report concerns.
- We will develop strengthened Risk Management within the Trust to support safe, quality care.
- We will review our governance processes in respect of Independent Sector providers to Adult Community Services.

Patient & Service User Experience

We recognise that every interaction with a patient/service user has with our organisation shapes their perception of care and contributes to their overall well-being.

- We will support our 10,000 More Voices projects in line with the PHA strategic plan.
- We will continue to promote and respond to our Care Opinion feedback to enhance patient and service user experience.
- We will develop a simulation training suite for staff working with dementia patients and frailty patients.
- We will work to implement the new Model Complaints Handling Procedure from NIPSO to make our response to Service User Feedback more responsive and effective.
- We will implement an Electronic Food Ordering system.

Effectiveness, Productivity & Sustainability

We will ensure our resources are utilised in the most efficient and effective way to achieve the greatest outcome and improvement in our services.

- We will implement our Financial Plan including savings target for 2025/2026 while ensuring that our limited resources are used to provide safe and effective care.
- We will adopt clinical workflows that will provide accurate, real-time information to support planning and informed decision making within our services.
- We will develop a Trust Resourcing Strategy.
- We will continue to develop our Reform Improvement Savings and Efficiencies (RISE) programme with a particular focus on tackling waiting lists, recovering elective activity levels and improving system flow.
- We will launch our 5 Year Estates and Sustainability Strategy and reduce our carbon footprint.
- We will improve the biodiversity of our sites with the aim of obtaining a bronze charter.



Community-First | Priority Actions

Empowerment & Self-Care in Our Communities

By shifting our approach to community-based alternatives and working with our statutory, voluntary and community partners, we will support patients and service users to maintain their independence.

- We will revise our Health & Wellbeing Framework in response to the Employee Experience Pulse Survey results and regional health and wellbeing framework.
- We will implement recommendations from the 'Shared Decision-Making' Group in relation to supporting our population in self-care.
- We will explore the potential for personalised care plans for service users in receipt of Home Care through encompass.
- We will commence the Cooperation & Working Together (CAWT) Healthy Futures Project with a focus on prevention and management of obesity.
- We will further develop the use of technology in helping patients to manage their own health conditions.

Grow capacity within our Community Services

We will aim to maximise the care provided outside of the hospital, closer to home.

- We will improve the efficient use of resources in our Home Care Services to increase capacity for packages of care.
- We will review investment in Community and Voluntary sector organisations to promote health and wellbeing with a view to agreeing an improved future service delivery model focused on outcomes.
- We will explore opportunities to increase the level of activity delivered through Hospital at Home services.
- We will reconfigure our District Nursing service to provide enhanced access to services.
- We will enhance communication and collaborative working with General Practitioners and multi-disciplinary teams.
- We will carry out a programme of cross directorate workshops to maximise opportunities for patients and service users to access community care alternatives to hospital.
- We will develop our Single Discharge Team to maximise patient flow from inpatient care.
- We will stabilise Community Mental Health services.

Whole-Life Approach | Priority Actions

Our strategy will adopt a whole-life approach, identifying our priorities across three key stages of life: starting well, living well, and ageing well.

Start Well

We want to support children (and families) to have a positive and healthy start in life.

- We will target health improvement initiatives at children, young people and families.
- We will improve the transition experience for young people moving to adult services or preparing them for independent living.
- We will increase the number of parenting programmes within 'Homestart'.
- We will co-ordinate and deliver a schedule of Parenting Support programmes.
- We will implement a workplan in line with the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy and the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.
- We will embed family focused practice and enhance collaboration across services through the use of 'Think Family Champions'.
- We will expand support to Looked After Children and their carers.

Live Well

We want to ensure our adult population are well, feel well and stay well during their adult life.

- We will promote, with patients, the importance of early self-management of long-term conditions to help prevent further deterioration.
- We will complete the development of our Regional Diagnostic Centre which will be fully operational.
- We will implement the physical health care pathway in inpatient mental health services.
- We will explore opportunities with the Verve Healthy Living Centre Network to deliver programmes to promote healthy lifestyles and address health inequalities.

Age Well

We want to support and enable people and their carers to live fulfilling and independent lives.

- We will work to improve access to services for individuals with palliative care needs, through the development of an access hub.
- We will promote our 'Home First' approach through a communications campaign.
- We will enhance the response by Southern Trust to individuals with palliative care needs.
- We will train our staff in the fundamentals of advanced care planning.
- We will help older people to live independently and at home whenever possible.
- We will develop our Hospital at Home service to provide older people with the benefits of acute care at home whenever this is clinically appropriate.
- We will ensure that older people receive high quality rehabilitation in specialist settings and at home to enable them to regain independence after illness.



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