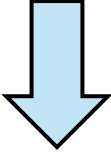
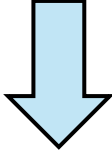


Chief Executive Update

Trust Board

Thursday 29 January 2026

Trust Key Metrics

What People Say			
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> 131 Compliments Received (Q3 2025/26) </div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> 145 Complaints Received (Q3 2025/26) </div>	
<i>An decrease of 38 since previous quarter</i>		<i>An decrease of 53 since previous quarter</i>	
What We Spend (At Month 09)			
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> Cumulative Spend £827m </div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> Savings Achieved £22.18m </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> Projected break-even except £20.69m pay award pressure that has been allocated to the Trust. Ministerial direction has been sought for this overpayment however will still bring the Trust to a deficit position at year end. </div>
Our People (At 30 th November 2025 unless stated)			
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> 13,254 </div> <p><i>Excludes Bank Staff, Staff on Career Break & Seconded out of Trust</i></p>	Permanent Staff Turnover December 2024 – November 2025 7.48%	Number of Vacancies Activity being recruited to at 30th September 2025 938	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> 6.78% Sickness Level </div> <p>April 2025 – November 2025</p>
30th September 2025 Position 13,489			30th September 2025 Position 6.50%
Our Internal Controls (At 30 th November 2025)			
Opening position – 126 recommendations for 2025/26		81 recommendations remain outstanding at this point for implementation in 2025/26	18 of the 81 recommendations remaining due will not be achieved in 25/26, including 2 of the 3 priority one issues. 63 of the 81 recommendations due over the remainder of 25/26 remain on track for implementation by 31 March 2026.

1.0 Winter Pressures/Reset

1.1 Health trusts across Northern Ireland have experienced particularly high demand following Christmas and New Year and our acute hospitals continue to be under extreme pressure. The reduced flow of patients through the hospitals has severely reduced the number of beds available for new admissions and increased waiting times for ED patients.

1.2 To help manage these pressures, The Southern Trust initiated a continuous reset period in January to embed learning from the previous Reset Days in December. This involved targeted action for admission avoidance, consistent, efficient, and effective inpatient processes such as Patient Discharge Planning Meetings (PDPM) and input of the Single Discharge team to facilitate discharges and reduce pressure on both wards and the ED.

2.0 Deputy Director

2.1 Colm McCafferty, Director of Children, Young People and Women's Services (CYPWS) / Executive Director for Social Work has been appointed as SHSCT Deputy Chief Executive.

2.2 Colm has been the Director of Children, Young People and Women's Services (CYPWS) / Executive Director for Social Work since September 2021. Prior to moving to his current role, he was Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting (children in Care services) in the Trust.

3.0 Urology Services Inquiry

3.1 Christine Smith KC, Chair of the Urology Services Inquiry issued a statement on the USI website in December providing an update on the Inquiry's work.

3.2 The statement referenced that the Inquiry has been engaged in a number of important tasks. In particular, the redacting of witness statements and accompanying documents for publication on the Inquiry's website.

3.3 The Inquiry is in the latter stages of completion of its report. Further progress updates will be provided in 2026.

4.0 Vision and Strategy to 2030

4.1 Engagement is on-going to agree priority action areas for 2026/27 to progress the Trust's Vision and Strategy commitments.

4.2 Despite the on-going challenging environment within health and social care, the Trust continues to progress action against the 5 strategic priority areas: Collaborative working, Learning organisation, Safety, Quality & Experience, Community First, Whole-life approach

4.3 Meetings with Directorates are on-going ahead of a key workshop in February, where the action plan for next year will be agreed, with publication planned for the end of March.

5.0 Waiting times

5.1 The Department of Health (DOH) recently published the quarterly NI Outpatient, Inpatient and Day Case, and Diagnostic Waiting Times Statistics*, on 30 September 2025.

5.2 542,451 patients were waiting for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment at hospitals in N. Ireland. 86.4% (468,485) of patients were waiting nine weeks + for a first consultant-led outpatient appointment. 55.6% (301,753) were waiting more than 52 weeks.

5.3 227,674 patients were waiting for a diagnostic test in Northern Ireland. 61.9% (141,038) of patients were waiting more than 9 weeks for a diagnostic test. 38.6% (87,897) of patients were waiting more than 26 weeks.

5.4 91,645 patients were waiting for inpatient or day case admission to hospitals. 68.9% (63,165) of patients were waiting more than 13 weeks for admission. 41.6% (38,166) of patients were waiting more than 52 weeks for admission.

*Figures sourced from encompass are considered to be 'official statistics in development', which are a subset of Official Statistics in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics. While caution must be exercised when using these figures and they are not directly comparable with legacy (pre-encompass) data, they are a meaningful representation of what they measure and are of sufficient quality for publication and use.

6.0 Breast cancer assessments

6.1 In May 2025, The Health Minister announced the launch of a regional approach for red flag breast cancer assessments, a major reform aimed at equalising waits for patients across Northern Ireland.

6.2 The new regional system is designed to address long standing disparities in waiting times and ensure that all patients referred with suspected breast cancer are seen based on clinical need rather than postcode.

6.3 DOH recently published its latest statistics on cancer waiting times, which indicated just 6.8% of urgent breast cancer referrals were being seen within the 14-day target in the three months ending September 30, 2025. Of a total 2,699 referrals seen during the quarter, just 183 were able to attend their follow-up appointment within the time period, with patients waiting a median time of 56 weeks and the longest wait some 69 days.

6.4 The Health Minister said the latest cancer waiting times figures reflect an early stage in the transition to the new regional breast assessment service. The Minister said: "This early transition period had a short-term impact on performance, including the 6.8% of urgent breast patients seen within 14 days. That figure does not reflect the improvements that have followed, nor the reasons why change was required."

6.5 The Southern Trust is making strong progress toward meeting regional waiting time targets under the Single Regional Waiting List (SRWL). Current performance indicates that approximately 90% of commissioned clinics are being delivered in January, February and March 2026, reflecting the team's dedication and improved service capacity. The team continues to prioritise urgent referrals and ensure timely access to breast assessment services across the Southern Trust.

7.0 Regional financial position

7.1 The Health Minister confirmed that the Department was allocated £69.3 million in the December monitoring round – less than the £100 million that had been anticipated.

7.2 The Minister said the shortfall “will place additional pressure on my Department in terms of next year’s budget but we have been planning to face an inevitable deficit for some time.”

7.3 He also welcomed the £25 million capital allocation as “it will allow progress to be made on essential IT infrastructure and equipment as well as reducing the backlog maintenance liability across the Health and Social Care sector.” He added: “Unfortunately, my department also faces significant financial pressures on its capital budget in the coming years, and it is essential that sufficient funding is made available as part of the Budget process.”

8.0 Cervical cancer screening

8.1 Senior managers from the Public Health Agency and Southern Trust attended a meeting of the ABC Council Health Working Group on 19 January at the Craigavon Civic Centre.

8.2 Dr McClean and Dr Austin gave an update and briefing on recent Cervical cancer screening reports and next steps, before responding to questions from the elected representatives.

8.3 Professor Sir Frank Atherton is conducting an expert review of all the published reports to date and advise if there are any gaps or areas that need to be explored further. He is expected to report his findings directly to the Minister in early 2026.

9.0 Radiology staffing

9.1 The Royal College of Radiologists said that by 2029 there could be a 41% shortfall in radiologists in Northern Ireland, if no action is taken to recruit and retain the workforce - the worst shortage in the UK.

9.2 Amaka Offiah, from the Royal College of Radiologists Northern Ireland said: "In Northern Ireland there's a 27% shortfall, and if absolutely nothing was done about that, then from five years from the time of the census, which means 2029, that would increase to 41%.

9.3 The Media reported (based on FOI responses) that almost £20 million has been spent by NI Health Trusts over the past three years, outsourcing radiology services (to Australia, UAE etc..) for analysis due to a shortage of radiologists. The Southern Trust had the largest spend (£5.8m).

9.4 The Southern Trust recently appointed 4 Consultant Radiologists, 3 of whom were originally employed via a specialist recruitment agency.

10.0 Rare Diseases Action Plan

10.1 The third progress report on the Northern Ireland Rare Diseases Action Plan was published recently and details the progress made against the Action Plan in 2024-25 by the Northern Ireland Rare Diseases Implementation Group (NIRDIG)

10.2 Each UK country has developed a nation-specific Action Plan to implement the UK Rare Diseases Framework, which aims to improve the lives of people living with rare diseases.

10.3 Key areas of progress over the Action Plan's third year include £12M investment from LifeArc to establish a LifeArc Centre for Acceleration of Rare Disease Trials that will improve access to specialist care, diagnosis and treatments, and increasing participation in rare disease research.

11.0 Community Pharmacy Palliative Care Network

11.1 The Health Minister launched the Community Pharmacy Palliative Care Network which will operate in around 60 community pharmacies across Northern Ireland to ensure patients have timely access to palliative care medicines and specialist advice. It will lead to better patient care at the end of life.

11.2 DOH has collaborated with Community Pharmacy NI (CPNI) to design and implement the new Community Pharmacy Palliative Care Network. The Network further highlights the Minister's commitment to 'shift left', with more emphasis being placed on Community Pharmacies in the new Neighbourhood Model of Care, as referenced in the Reset Plan.

12.0 New support grant scheme for patients

12.1 The Health Minister has announced the launch of the Support While Waiting Grant Scheme, a £500,000 fund enabling voluntary and community organisations to provide practical and emotional support to people awaiting treatment on Health and Social Care (HSC) waiting lists. The application opened 4 December 2025 and closes 30 January 2026.

12.2 The Scheme offers grants of £5,000 to £30,000 to voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations delivering community-based initiatives that strengthen wellbeing, resilience and self-management. These may include mental health support, practical assistance, peer programmes, and activities designed to help individuals maintain their health while awaiting treatment.

12.3 Minister Nesbitt emphasised that the scheme is part of a wider package of actions being taken to tackle waiting lists: "There is no single solution to waiting times. Today's announcement demonstrates our commitment to doing all we can — both to reduce the time people wait, and to support patients better while they wait."

13.0 Autism and Neurodiversity training

13.1 Autism and neurodiversity awareness training is now available for all staff within the Health & Social Care (HSC) system.

13.2 The training, which was commissioned by the Department of Health in collaboration with the HSC Leadership Centre, is available to HSC staff across all organisations that have access to the LearnHSCNI learning platform. It is the first time that every HSC Trust, including the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS), will have access to regionally consistent, neuro-affirming training.

13.3 The modules were co-produced with a neurodivergent advisory panel and the team at Middletown Centre for Autism, Co Armagh, with significant input from service users with lived experience. Forty percent of the training is delivered by people with lived experience of using the Health and Social Care Service.