



Southern Health
and Social Care Trust

TOGETHER, IMPROVING CARE, TRANSFORMING LIVES

YEAR 2

ANNUAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2026/27



Working together



Excellence



Openness & Honesty



Compassion

Foreword

When we launched our Vision and Strategy 2030 in 2025 it set out our commitment to improve care and transform lives. We set ourselves an ambitious agenda for our first year and are now pleased to release our Year 2 Plan – building on what we’ve achieved over the last 12 months and taking the next steps on our transformation path.

Our plan sets out a clear direction to drive our Trust forward, to improve outcomes for our population and to embrace and harness the technology that will support our future services.

With the Northern Ireland Reset Plan driving the regional agenda for health and social care, we have an ambitious programme to deliver change.

Despite the many challenges – a growing population, steadily increasing demand, outdated infrastructure and on-going financial constraints putting pressure on all areas of our system - our staff have embraced our change agenda and taken the first important steps towards 2030.

Our Vision and Strategy is our commitment to how we will improve, by working better together, learning constantly, driving safety, quality and experience, building community services and being a partner in your life journey.

Our plan takes into account the requirement to achieve very significant financial savings. Our staff teams will look for ways to improve services by making better use of existing resources. We will concentrate on improving the design of, and compliance with, evidence based pathways for treating patients because this can simultaneously achieve greater efficiency and better outcomes. We may reduce access to some services to meet our financial duties, and we will not initiate new service developments unless they are fully funded.

We look forward to updating on our progress over the coming year, as we build on our Year 1 foundation.

EILEEN MULLAN
CHAIR

STEVE SPOERRY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Financial Context

As we head into Year 2 of our Vision and Strategy, we continue to face the most challenging financial environment, while demand for health and social care services continues to increase alongside ageing population and demographic changes.

Despite all the hard work and efforts and having achieved significant financial savings in 2025/26 and resulting in a break-even position the outlook for 2026/27 is projected to be even more challenging and will require significant decisions to be made by the Trust.

The Trust will continue to drive innovation and long-term planning to address these challenges, including workforce, service reform and efficiencies.

We continue to drive change and improvements for our population, but what and how we deliver care is vitally underpinned by the resources available and public sector funding projections for next year would suggest significant constraints will continue.

Nonetheless, we will continue to push forward, embrace technology and ensure a renewed focus on efficiency, sustainability and productivity to improve access to services for all.

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 **390,976 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 **15,155 people**. Our workforce comprises of many nationalities and cultures.



Finance

We spend almost **£3 million** per day delivering care and support to local people.



Estate

The Trust has a substantial property folder across 61 sites, comprising of **269 Trust owned buildings and 15 leased buildings**.



364,591
Total outpatient
appointments



11,698,856
Laboratory
Tests



701
Looked After
Children



100,267
Community
Mental Health
contacts



4,718
Babies
delivered



164,612
Emergency
Department
Attendances



350,280
Diagnostic
images & X-rays



88,023
Health Visiting
Contacts

A SNAPSHOT of Services we deliver in a Typical Year



62,913
School Nursing
Contacts



27,619
Acute Care at
Home Visits



84,164
Day Care
Attendances



1,087,000
Calls to our
hospitals



6,739
People receiving
Home Care



950,000
Meals served to
patients and clients
in our facilities



202,263
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.

Our People

Our people are key to achieving our vision and delivering on our five strategic priorities. We will continue to work on transforming our culture through a relentless focus on our three people priorities of wellbeing, belonging and growing and a refreshed focus on our HSC values and behaviours.

Our People Framework 2022-2025 now needs reviewed and refreshed as we approach the end of the initial three years. We will develop and launch a revised People Framework 2025-2030 in line with our Vision and Strategy 2030.

In 2026 we will continue on our digital transformation journey. Our focus will be to deliver a replacement for the existing HRPTS and FPL systems, which our people use on a daily basis for accessing their pay information, updating personal details and to procure goods and services, which support our HSC organisations to deliver the best outcomes for patients and service users. The Equip Programme will deliver a new single, integrated solution which replaces the existing systems with an enhanced user experience and additional business capabilities for HSC.

A healthy, happy, engaged and resilient workforce is a productive one and when you serve the local community in the variety of ways we do, this is essential. We have learned a lot about the wellbeing of our people over the last number of years and so we will continue to build upon the existing work and strengthen our efforts to improve health and wellbeing in the workplace. We will deliver on the actions set out in our year 1 wellbeing action plan from our revised Health and Wellbeing Framework 2025-2030 and work on continuing to recognise and appreciate our people in a way that is meaningful and important to them.

We recognise we can only deliver safe, high quality, compassionate care and support sustainable services by ensuring we attract, retain, develop and engage a skilled, diverse and motivated workforce. Through our new People and Culture committee we will agree and deliver on actions to support the implementation of the regional 'Being Human – A Framework for Safety Culture', including exploring opportunities for shared learning and gathering staff feedback. We will start planning for how we can grow and develop our senior leaders and middle managers, through a 'Southern Trust Academy'. We will also identify key resourcing strategies to inspire, attract and recruit, including launching a new Medical Resourcing Strategy.

BELONGING

GROWING

WELLBEING



In summary our people priorities for 2026-2027 are:

1.

Develop and launch our revised People Framework 2025-2030 in line with our Vision and Strategy 2030 and identify directorate action to support delivery of our strategic priorities.

2.

Ensure organisational readiness for the implementation of the Equip programme; a Health and Social Care Northern Ireland (HSCNI) wide programme to replace the existing Human Resources (HR) Finance and Procurement systems with a single cloud-based solution.

3.

Deliver on year 1 of our wellbeing action from our newly revised Health and Wellbeing Framework 2025-2030.

4.

Establish a workstream to plan for the implementation of the regional 'Being Human – A Framework for Safety Culture'.

5.

Establish a cross directorate collaborative forum to develop the 'Southern Trust Academy' concept to develop a unified approach to leadership development and the broader development of all our people, aligned to our Trust Strategy and People Framework

6.

Establish strategic resourcing fora to drive forward key resourcing strategies and stabilise our workforce.

Strategic Priorities

This Annual Strategic Plan for 2026/27 sets out Year 2 of the implementation of our 5 year Vision & Strategy 2030.

The areas of key focus 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 develop our leaders of the future and drive our collective leadership approach across clinical, managerial, inter-divisional and inter-directorate teams.
- ✓ We will harness closer working to improve interfaces to support flow across services.
- ✓ We will continue to work and build upon medical engagement and involvement via the Medical Leaders Forum.
- ✓ We will develop leadership practice in our staff
- ✓ We will work collaboratively with other HSC Trusts

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 continue to embed a co production ethos across the organisation with particular focus on our partnership working with AIPB, Primary Care, Community & Voluntary Sector, Community Planning Partners and our service users and carers.

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 implement Year 1 actions from the Mental Health Area Collaborative.
- ✓ We will continue to progress the outworkings of the AIPB in relation to our priorities of frailty, mental health and heart failure.
- ✓ We will develop better partnership working with Independent Sector Providers on the commissioning of elective care services.
- ✓ We will further develop our working relationships with local Universities and develop research opportunities.
- ✓ We will support the delivery of new Advanced Practice for Paramedics programme through the provision of practice placements.
- ✓ We will respond to the Right Care Right Person (RCRP) model in conjunction with Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)
- ✓ We will explore further opportunities for Cross Border working to stabilise and improve services to our population.



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 review the internal mechanisms for cascading and embedding the learning and recommendations from reviews, SAIs, inquiries, and complaints and how technology and communications can assist with the roll out.
- ✓ We will introduce a mechanism to translate the vision and strategy actions into all levels of the Trust.

Continuous Improvement

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

- ✓ We will encourage and support local staff recognition processes.
- ✓ We will drive reform of services with a Quality Improvement focus.
- ✓ We will optimise the use of our new digital Electronic Patient Record (encompass) to drive continuous improvement and transformation.
- ✓ We will continue to review the quality of the data and reports from our new encompass system with epic and service users to improve uptake and usage of the system.

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 progress with the development and the delivery of a new Commercial Research Delivery Centre.
- ✓ We will explore the potential of digital technology (e.g. AI) in creating more efficient ways of working.
- ✓ We will explore research opportunities to work with Councils and Life Science Industries.

Quality, Safety and Experience | Priority Actions

Quality Outcomes

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

- ✓ We will improve clinical engagement across all services.
- ✓ We will continue our work through the 'Timely Care Programme' to focus on improving flow through our services.
- ✓ We will review the Medical Model and make recommendations in relation to improved ways of working to drive quality and efficiency outcomes.
- ✓ We will ensure the delivery of the principles of SENSIBLE Care to be embedded across the organisation.
- ✓ We will explore the opportunities to use available data to improve safety, quality and experience (SQE).
- ✓ We will strengthen Risk Management and governance systems.

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 undertake an evaluation of the Care Experience Hubs.
- ✓ We will review the 'Working Together Strategy'.
- ✓ We will encourage the further use of and evaluation of Care Opinion and explore opportunities to gather real-time feedback.

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 Year 1 of our 5 Year Estate and Sustainability Strategy.
- ✓ We will continue to deliver on the Reform Improvement Savings and Efficiencies (RISE) programme and explore the potential for income generation.
- ✓ We will implement our Financial Plan for 2026/27 including agreed savings targets and will embed ownership of the financial challenges in decision making at all levels within the Trust.
- ✓ We will work with the Department to pilot a tariff-based incentive scheme to increase productivity in HSC delivered elective care.
- ✓ We will have a focused effort on realising financial benefits from encompass.
- ✓ We will maximise our theatre utilisation.
- ✓ We will improve efficiencies within diagnostic services.
- ✓ We will drive improvements through the Outpatients Modernisation programme.
- ✓ We will ensure compliance with the Effective Use of Resources.
- ✓ We will support improvement of cancer pathways through whole system working.

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 review the management of chronic conditions to identify improvements in process and assist individuals to self-manage conditions.
- ✓ We will work with GPs to develop a community pathway which will help to reduce hospital admissions.
- ✓ We will explore through the 'Together for Families' opportunities to reduce the number of children in care at the earliest intervention point.
- ✓ We will explore opportunities to enhance our digital capability to provide more accessible information, with focus on targeting needs of specifically defined groups.
- ✓ We will continue to implement Shared Decision Making (NG 197)
- ✓ We will drive forward the 'Waiting Well' Initiatives.
- ✓ We will drive forward the roll out of Patient Initiated Follow Up approach.
- ✓ We will implement the agreed Co-Operation & Working Together (CAWT) initiatives.

Grow capacity within our Community Services

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

- ✓ We will review the current and future provision of a number of our community services across the Trust and identify areas for improvement in quality and efficiency
- ✓ We will undertake an evaluation and review the potential to further increase the activity delivered within the Hospital at Home service.
- ✓ We will engage with GP Federations to maximise the further roll out of MDT within Primary Care.

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, ageing well.

Start Well

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

- ✓ We will focus on reduction of paediatric elective care waiting times.
- ✓ We will explore with our partners the opportunities for the enhancement of Sure Start Projects.
- ✓ We will consider opportunities for enhanced education and awareness from health care professionals within schools.
- ✓ We will explore opportunities to enhance the Transitions between children's and adult services.
- ✓ We will undertake a workforce review for medical services within Maternity and Women's Health.
- ✓ We will further roll out of the Continuity of midwifery care model across the Trust.
- ✓ We will agree the Trust approach to how we consider addressing Domestic Abuse and impact on service provision.

Live Well

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

- ✓ We will consider the use of Charitable Trust Funds to take forward innovative preventative/public health initiatives to support public education.
- ✓ We will develop targeted communication strategies to better engage across whole life approach to different groups with specific approaches.
- ✓ We will consider the use of digital/AI capacity to build progressive engagement.
- ✓ We will explore the potential for the Trust to become a 'Marmot' Trust following the Marmot principles.
- ✓ We will enhance our communications messaging to promote 'Making Every Contact Count' for the promotion of healthy behaviours.

Age Well

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

- ✓ We will promote Advanced Care Planning across Trust services.
- ✓ We will develop plans to implement palliative care hubs.
- ✓ We will work to deliver the 'Big Discussion' improvement of preventative home visits for >75 yr olds.
- ✓ We will implement the Regional Dementia Care pathway and work to improve access to memory services.



TOGETHER, IMPROVING CARE, TRANSFORMING LIVES