

Joint Forward Plan Preface: March 2025 update

Background

2025 will be Year 3 of this five-year strategic delivery plan. Since the last publication of our Joint Forward Plan in March 2024, there have been changes to our national political, operational and financial landscapes.

The **Autumn 2024 UK Budget** provided local authorities in England with a real-terms increase of 3.2% in core spending power, including £600 million in new grant funding for social care. The NHS received £22.6 billion for day-to-day operations and £3.1 billion for capital projects. However, public services face ongoing financial pressures. There is a strong focus on improving productivity and efficiency.

Adult Social Care Reforms announced in January 2025, included the establishment of an independent commission led by Baroness Louise Casey. This commission aims to develop a National Care Service, addressing current challenges and building cross-party consensus. Immediate measures involve enhanced integration between NHS and social care services, and professional development for care workers. The commission's interim report is expected in 2026, with final recommendations due by 2028.

Following the election of the new Government, Lord Darzi was commissioned to undertake an **Independent Investigation into the NHS in England**. The findings published in September 2024, identified three key shifts:

- 1) Transforming care to focus on prevention and personalised treatment,
- 2) Harnessing digital technology for better patient care and operational efficiency,
- 3) Empowering local communities to co-design services.

These shifts closely align with the priorities in our **Integrated Care Strategy**, enabling our system to adopt these shifts within our existing strategic direction.

The three shifts are expected to be reflected in the Department of Health and Social Care **10-Year Health Plan**, due for publication in Spring 2025, which aims to build a more resilient, patient-centred NHS. The plan is expected to focus on early intervention, sustainable workforce development, and the integration of digital innovations to ensure long-term improvements in care delivery and accessibility across the system. The forthcoming **Public Sector Spending Review** will be crucial, as it sets funding parameters for these initiatives, impacting the sustainability and effectiveness of reforms.

In August 2024, we welcomed Terrance Herbert as the **new chief executive of Surrey County Council**. Shortly afterwards in December 2024, the Department of Health and Social Care published a [White Paper on local authority devolution in England](#). The government signalled its intent to create more unitary councils – single councils to deliver all key services – to simplify and streamline local government and for greater devolution of powers to create more Mayoral Strategic Authorities. Surrey has been selected for the 'first wave' of reorganisation and devolution.

Our colleagues across Surrey Heartlands have shown many examples of innovation, excellence and dedication during 2024 – improving care and outcomes for our citizens and public sector colleagues including:

- The **Surrey Health Inclusion** team won the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion award at the Unite-CPHVA (community practitioners and health visitors) professional conference for Data Driven Transformation of the Year.
- Surrey County Council's **adult social care service** has been rated 'good' by the Care Quality Commission which praised a focus on supporting people to lead independent lives in their own homes and communities.
- The **Royal Surrey Cancer Centre** (previously St Luke's Cancer Centre) multi-million-pound refurbishment completed, creating a modern facility within Surrey Heartlands.
- Significant progress on creating the environment **for support and care closer to home**, including Integrated Neighbourhood Teams - consistent with the Fuller

Stocktake, mobilising communities in Surrey's 29 towns and villages, and re-shaping public services around those communities.

- **'Only Order What You Need'** campaign by the Medicines Safety and Patient Safety teams to reduce medicines waste by only ordering what patients truly need.
- **Digital Social Care Records** in place at 85% of Surrey Adult Social Care Providers – with evidenced reduction in falls, admissions to hospital reducing the number of carer's hours supporting these incidents.
- The **Mental Health Investment Fund** has supported over [£3million pounds of grants](#) to innovative schemes across Surrey, including enabling the delivery of community based prevention and early mental health support for children and young people.

It is important we share insight into our systems' developing strategic transformation and delivery plans that represent our partners, alliances and system collaboration. This preface has been created to provide a brief update of our Joint Forward Plan in March 2025, to meet NHS Surrey Heartlands' statutory obligations, whilst we await publication of the 10-year Health Plan and other public sector national directives. We know a significant refresh of our Joint Forward Plan will be required to reflect our delivery plan response and progress of our ICS Strategy.

Across the system, resource challenges persist. Monies identified in the Autumn Budget have been allocated to support existing commitments. We are seeing increasingly high levels of demand for all our services across partner organisations. We continue to work hard to improve our financial position and to progress our system-wide sustainability plan. We need to go further and be ambitious in creating person-centred, seamless health and social care support to mitigate constraints putting pressure on services using the collective engagement of our Health and Wellbeing Board, Integrated Care Partnership and Integrated Care Board.

We enter the 2025/26 financial year with greater delivery, productivity and efficiency expectations.

What to expect

We continually review and address the complex and interconnected factors that influence people's physical, mental, and social health. Surrey retains health inequalities, with some communities experiencing poorer health outcomes than others. We are addressing issues like rising long-term conditions, mental health concerns, lifestyle-related diseases and working ensure that services are accessible, particularly for vulnerable groups through our prevention and population health management activities.

In our Summer 2025 refresh, we will be highlighting:

- our recent health and wellbeing publications including new [Joint Strategic Needs Assessments](#) chapters - such as multiple disadvantage - the Clinical Strategy, One System Mental Health plan and Women's Health Strategy
- productivity and efficiency areas of focus and delivery in support of combined requirements and need whilst managing the tension between delivering locally and at scale as partners
- partner work to develop our health inequalities offer for our populations experiencing the poorest health outcomes as understood through local tools such as the JSNA and Health and Wellbeing Strategy Index
- our new role as NHS Specialised Commissioners, following devolution from NHS England
- measures we are undertaking to support adult social care reform including increased funding for home adaptations to support elderly and disabled individuals
- our collective plans to facilitate health and care services shift to community provision (Darzi) and community team development, plus better care funding
- furthering Towns and Villages aspirations for growth and development of communities, plus plans to support 'wave one' local authority devolution

- how we are using and instigating research, public engagement and insights to shape services
- how our workforce plans are evolving
- how the system is implementing primary (including dental), elective and emergency care reform in support of national directives
- continued delivery of our preventative programmes (Ambition 1 of our Integrated Care Strategy aligned with the three priorities of the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy)

Our review will include in-year delivery milestones aligned to our three ICS ambitions.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all our colleagues who have supported the development of the Joint Forward Plan. We extend special mention to VCSE colleagues, Healthwatch Surrey and colleagues in the research and insights team, enabling Surrey Heartlands to understand and utilise lived experiences to shape our work.

Related documents

[Independent investigation of the NHS in England - GOV.UK](#)

[English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](#)

[Road to recovery: the government's 2025 mandate to NHS England - GOV.UK](#)

[Better Care Fund policy framework 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

[Handbook to the NHS Constitution for England - GOV.UK](#)

End.

7 March 2025

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