



NHS Dumfries and Galloway

Creating a new future together: 2026 – 2029

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1 Executive Summary



2 Background

NHS Dumfries and Galloway established its first Statement of Strategic Intent in 2023/24. That document set out a vision for the future, how we would work with others and our priorities for delivery.

The Statement of Strategic Intent became the context for subsequent Annual Delivery Plans and, year-on-year, was subject to minor amendments to reflect changes in national policy, direction and priorities.

During 2025/26 there has been significant change in the policy and planning landscapes with Scottish Government publishing:

- A Renewed Approach to Population Planning (2024);
- The Population Health Framework (2025)
- The Service Renewal Framework (2025); and
- Sub-National Planning: Co-operation & Planning Directions (2025).

These policy and planning changes, combined with our reducing life expectancy and healthy life expectancy, demographic change, increasing demand for healthcare, the need to respond to climate change and our ongoing financial challenges mean a more fundamental review and re-set of the Statement of Strategic Intent is now necessary.

In undertaking this review, Board Members are clear that the level of service redesign and transformation needed will require full engagement with, and participation of, our staff, local communities, people who use health services, local planning partners and other NHS Boards.

Board Members also recognise that the scale and scope of change needed is challenging. We therefore need to be realistic about the steps we take towards the ambitious future for health and healthcare that we have set out in our Statement of Strategic Intent, and the timescales for realising that change.

This document has been shaped by Board Members in light of the consultation feedback we have received to create an impactful new vision for the future, underpinned by a commitment to work in partnership to make that a reality.

It offers the foundation for our 3-year programme of **Creating a New Future Together**, as well as the direction and priorities that we will begin to deliver through the specific, measurable actions described in our Annual Delivery Plan for 2026/27.

3 NHS Dumfries and Galloway – Who are we and what do we do?

As an NHS Board, we are responsible for planning and delivering services that will protect and improve the health of our local population, in line with the policies and priorities set out by Scottish Government.

In recognition of the vital relationship between health and social care, we will build on our history of working collaboratively with the Integration Joint Board, receiving, adopting and implementing the Directions they set for the delegated Primary Care, Community Health and Mental Health Functions.

And we will continue to work closely with Dumfries and Galloway Council and wider planning partners, including the Third Sector and Independent Care Providers, to identify shared objectives. Together we will shape and influence plans and services to create the conditions that will support people to achieve their best health outcomes.

We believe everyone should be able to make informed choices about their own health and wellbeing that help them to live their best life.

Recognising that creating opportunities for healthy living is a shared responsibility, we are committed to working with our communities, our workforce and our partners to play our part.

And when people need our services, we will ensure care and support is easily accessible and delivered consistently, safely and to a high standard.

To achieve this, we will embrace and adopt the Scottish Government's Population Health and Service Renewal Frameworks by ensuring our services are preventative and support self-care, and are accessible and equitable. At the same time, we want to ensure that services are high quality, effective, safe, sustainable, good value and contribute to reducing climate change, and are respectful of individual needs and outcomes.

4 Changes that are impacting on health and healthcare

In NHS Dumfries and Galloway, we serve approximately 145,000 people across a geographically wide and diverse area covering almost 2500 square miles.

With a workforce of around 4500 staff, we are focused on improving the health and wellbeing of people across our region and ensuring they have access to safe, effective, person-centred care when they need it.

The population of Dumfries and Galloway is changing. By 2043, the number of people aged 75 and over is projected to have increased by 58%, and the number of unpaid Carers is anticipated to increase. At the same time, those of working age are projected to decrease by 13%.

This changing picture will mean rising levels of healthcare needs alongside a smaller workforce. To meet the challenges this will bring, we must change the way we deliver healthcare, supporting people to stay in good health for longer and to self-care where they can, while ensuring rapid, high-quality responses when their health deteriorates, as well as the best end of life care when they need it.

Given the geography of our region, travel times to local services can vary significantly. For example, GP practices are typically 1–15 minutes by car or 3–31 minutes by public transport from people's homes.

As our population changes and travel becomes more challenging, we need to deliver more services within local communities. This will improve accessibility and help people maintain and regain good health for longer.

To achieve this, we will modernise our digital infrastructure, explore new roles with our workforce, and remain relentless in providing safe, effective, and person-centred services. And we will do this while continuing the journey toward financial sustainability.

At the same time, we will work collaboratively with other NHS Boards, including through the new regional, or Sub-National Planning, arrangements to help deliver and secure safe, high-quality, and timely healthcare across the West of Scotland.

5 Responding to these changes together

Within NHS Dumfries and Galloway we value the diversity of our workforce and are committed to further developing an inclusive culture.

We do not tolerate bullying, harassment or abuse, and we recognise that staff need a psychologically safe, supportive environment where they feel valued, and included - able to thrive, and deliver the best possible healthcare.

By listening to all of our staff and working closely with our Minority Ethnic, Disability, LGBTQ+ and Women's Networks, we will develop and sustain that culture.

We are committed to promoting and maintaining staff wellbeing by developing our workforce and equipping staff with the values, behaviours, knowledge, and skills needed to deliver new ways of working. This ensures confidence in providing evidence-based, person-centred care and supporting people's wellbeing as close to home as possible.

We also recognise the importance of listening and responding to the voices of lived experience.

We engage, listen to and involve people who use our services and the teams who deliver them as we look to redesign our services and develop new ways of working that will be sustainable into the future.

We also know that some factors that impact on the health of people in Dumfries and Galloway are beyond our direct control and we are committed to working with other local organisations to help create the conditions for good health.

Finally, we acknowledge that given the rural nature of our region, we cannot directly deliver all of the health services that people in Dumfries and Galloway will need during their lifetime. We are therefore committed to working with other NHS Boards to ensure these are readily available when they are needed.

In short, we are committed to **Creating a new future together**, where we use our collective strengths, knowledge and experience to improve health and healthcare in Dumfries and Galloway.

6 Our Mission

Reflecting our purpose, the changes impacting on services and our commitment to work in partnership to respond to the challenges we face, we have re-defined our Mission Statement to be:

To improve population health and wellbeing, while tailoring our services to meet your healthcare needs from cradle to grave.

Making this Mission a reality means that:

- We are here to help everyone in Dumfries and Galloway live the life they want and thrive, empowered to make informed choices about their health and wellbeing that enable them to experience longer, healthier lives.
- When people need our services, they will experience the best, value-based rural healthcare in Scotland; where their social circumstances are not a barrier to them accessing excellent and timely care and support they need to enjoy better health, live well, recover well and, ultimately, die well.
- Our teams will work effectively together and with those who need our help, ensuring care and support is timely, accessible, compassionate, efficient, high quality and focused on, as well as sensitive to, their needs, circumstances and desired outcomes.
- We will work with and support unpaid Carers, recognising their vitally important and increasing role in healthcare in our region.
- And, when people need more specialist services, or those planned and delivered on a regional basis, we will work collaboratively with other NHS Boards to ensure they are supported to access them.

7 Our Vision

In committing to that Mission, it is important that we are clear about our ambition to make a difference to people's lives over the next 10 years. We have therefore established our Vision for the future that confirms our commitment that:

**By 2036 people in Dumfries and Galloway
will live well, experiencing longer, healthier lives,
recover well when they experience illness and, ultimately, die well**

Realising this Vision means that:

- We will have strengthened and further embedded our sustained track record of working with our local communities, unpaid Carers social care providers and our local, regional and national planning partners, with evidence of people living the life they want, while experiencing fewer health inequalities and crises, as well as improved healthy life expectancy.
- We will have maintained financial stability by delivering services differently using the resources available to us. We will be more environmentally sustainable and use digital innovation to enhance preventative, safe and effective Rural Healthcare, with people who use our services and our staff at the heart of the innovation journey.
- We will continue to be a trusted partner in health, with a track record of working with communities to co-design and deliver a new future that offers safe, sustainable, high-quality care close to home, helping people live longer, healthier, more fulfilling lives and to experience a good death.

8 Our Strategic Outcomes

Having confirmed these long-term ambitions, it is important that we set out the key areas for change that we are prioritising over the next few years, as well as what good would look like in terms of progress against these.

We have agreed that by 2029 we will be:

- Embedding prevention and early intervention in service models that are sustainable within Dumfries and Galloway
- Adopting new technologies that will improve service delivery.
- Becoming a Great Place to Work where workforce-led change is the norm.
- Maintaining financial sustainability, building on the achievement of a balanced budget.
- Co-designing services with our local communities that meet healthcare needs, promote self-care, and reduce health inequalities.
- Working with Partners to create more of the conditions that support people to live the lives they want to live.
- Improving co-operation and collaboration with other territorial and national NHS Boards, to deliver on shared regional priorities.

9 Our Year 1 Commitments

To realise our ambitions and the changes we want to see through our **Creating a New Future Together** programme, it is important that we start work now.

We are therefore focusing our efforts in 2026/27 on making progress towards our Strategic Outcomes by:

- Delivering our Financial Recovery Plan for 2026/27.
- Strengthening staff wellbeing and inclusion.
- Co-designing our Working With Communities programme.
- Identifying opportunities for Digital Innovation.
- Identifying and delivering opportunities for service redesign, underpinned by a culture that supports prevention and early intervention.
- Working with others to create the conditions for good health.
- Working collaboratively with other NHS Boards to deliver regional aims and aspirations.

Full details of the actions we will take against these Commitments, the timescales for delivery and how we will measure their impact will be set out in our Annual Delivery Plan for 2026/27.

10 Our commitment to you, and our ask in return

At the heart of our ambition, is a strong desire to build on our history of working with local communities and renew and develop our commitment to jointly designing healthcare services for the future.

We want to develop co-production approaches that will underpin a partnership built on mutual responsibility and trust, a partnership that is focused on improving health and wellbeing.

As a first step, we will work with our communities to develop a partnership agreement, or a social compact, that will define our Working with Communities Programme.

While we have developed the following as an example of what this agreement could include and how it might look, we look forward to working with our communities to create something that is meaningful to them and reflects their ambitions and aspirations.

Our commitment to you:

We will work in partnership with people in Dumfries and Galloway to plan and deliver the best possible healthcare within the resources available, helping them live the lives they want and support people to have a good death. This involves open and honest dialogue about what can be delivered close to home, what needs to be delivered in our hospitals, and what needs to be delivered in partnership with other NHS Boards.

As well as listening to people who use our services, we will listen to and support our staff to identify and implement changes that can help improve people's experience and outcomes without unnecessary delay.

We will work collaboratively with our communities, staff and partners to co-design services and ensure decisions about change are informed by those who use and deliver care. We will also ensure that people can see how their input has influenced decisions and changes to services. This includes working to ensure that the experience of care is consistent, coordinated, and person-centred across all services, recognising and reducing unnecessary variation where it exists.

We will always put safety and quality first, using the resources available to us to make bold, evidence-based changes where they are needed, striving to deliver the best possible care, efficiently and compassionately.

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Finally, we will support people to make positive, informed choices that will improve their health and wellbeing – helping them to live well, manage their illness and take control of their health and, ultimately to have a good death.

Our ask in return:

We ask people in Dumfries and Galloway to work with us and share what matters to them about the services we provide and the opportunities they see to deliver care differently. This includes helping us understand how community-based services can support health and wellbeing and identify barriers to access.

We ask our staff to identify and act on opportunities to remove waste, reduce unwarranted variation, and implement changes that make services more sustainable without compromising safety, quality or equity.

We also ask staff to work proactively and collaboratively with colleagues, communities and partners. This includes demonstrating an understanding of people's changing needs and personal circumstances, and adopting a flexible approach to support each person to achieve their preferred outcomes.

We ask people who need our support to help us understand the outcomes they want to achieve, attend scheduled appointments, and treat staff with kindness, dignity, and respect.

And, where they can, we ask people in Dumfries and Galloway to take an active role in their health and wellbeing, making informed choices and managing their conditions where possible to enable better health outcomes.