

Creating a new future together

NHS Dumfries and Galloway
2026–2029

Supporting people in Dumfries and Galloway
through every stage of life



Welcome from our CEO and Chair

Dumfries and Galloway is a special place, with strong communities, dedicated staff and a long tradition of people supporting one another.

Like many health and care systems, we are facing increasing challenges. Our population is changing, demand for services is growing, and the number of people available to provide care is reducing.

At the same time, expectations of care continue to rise.

This means we cannot continue to deliver services in the same way we do today. To ensure care remains safe, sustainable and centred on people's needs, we must change how services are planned and delivered.

This also presents an opportunity. By working more closely with our communities, staff and partners, we can design a system that better supports people to stay well, access care more easily, and receive high-quality support when they need it.



This Statement of Strategic Intent sets out the direction of travel for NHS Dumfries and Galloway. It describes the changes we need to make and how we will begin to deliver them over the coming years.

We know this will take time, and we know it will require openness, collaboration and shared responsibility.

By working together, we can build a sustainable system that continues to meet the needs of people across Dumfries and Galloway, now and in the future.



Mark Cook
Chairman
NHS Dumfries
and Galloway



Julie White
Chief Executive
NHS Dumfries
and Galloway

Our region

Dumfries and Galloway is a large, largely rural region in the south-west of Scotland, covering over 6400 square kilometres.

People live across a wide range of communities - from market towns and coastal settlements to small villages and remote rural areas.

These communities are connected by strong local relationships and a shared sense of place, but can be separated by significant distances.

The region includes a diverse landscape of coastline, farmland and upland areas, with transport and travel routes that reflect this geography.

Distances between communities can be significant, reflecting the size and geography of the region

Dumfries and Galloway has a proud history of local identity, resilience and community support.

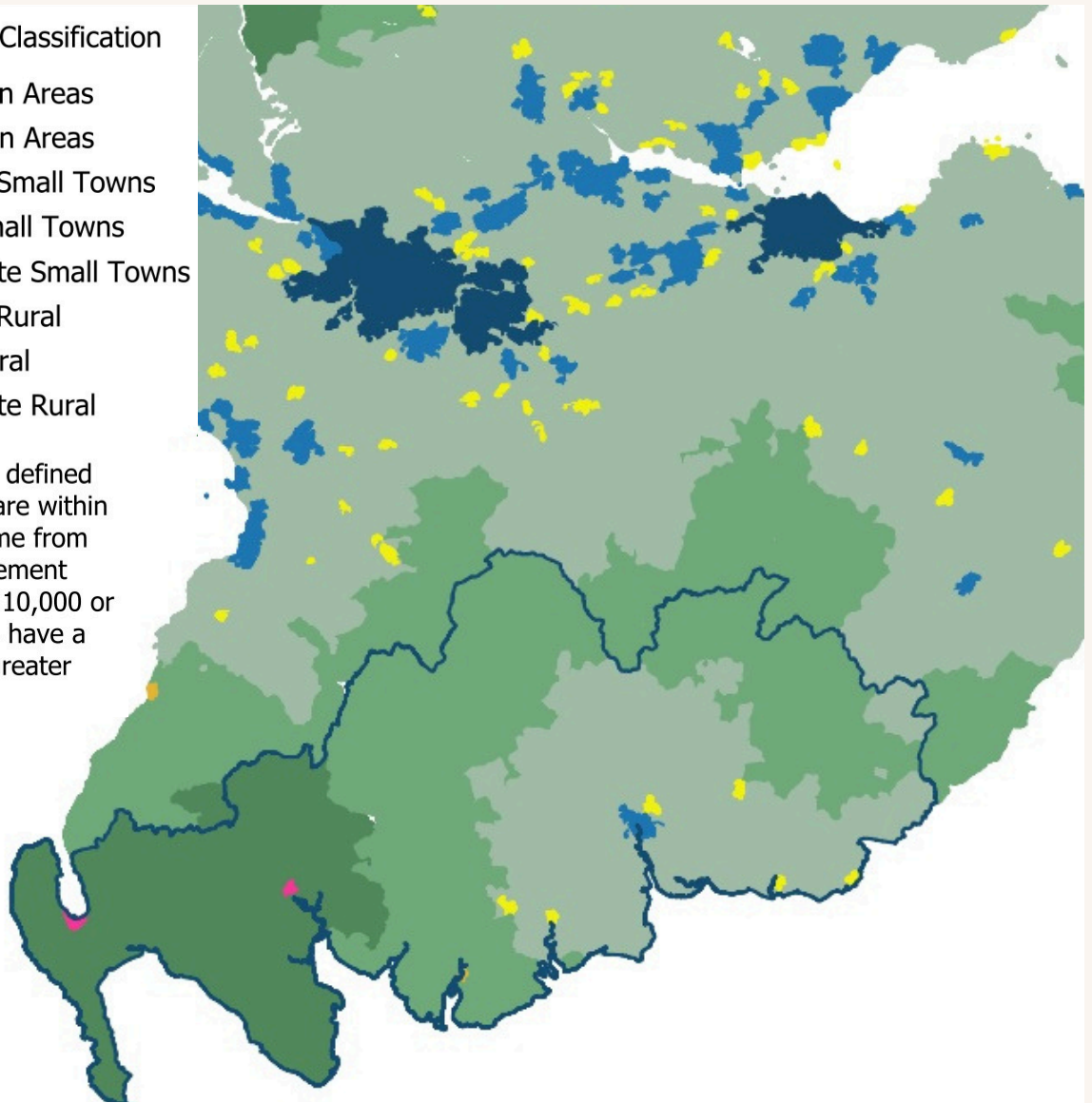
Families, neighbours and communities play a vital role in supporting one another, alongside formal health and care services.

We provide a comprehensive range of health and care services across the region, including community-based, primary and acute care, delivered in partnership with local organisations and communities.

8 Fold Urban Rural Classification

- 1 - Large Urban Areas
- 2 - Other Urban Areas
- 3 - Accessible Small Towns
- 4 - Remote Small Towns
- 5 - Very Remote Small Towns
- 6 - Accessible Rural
- 7 - Remote Rural
- 8 - Very Remote Rural

Accessible Areas are defined as those areas that are within a 30 minute drive time from the centre of a Settlement with a population of 10,000 or more. Remote Areas have a drive time which is greater than 30 minutes.



Scottish Government Urban
Rural Classification 2022

Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO.
© Crown Copyright and database right [2026]. All rights reserved.
Ordnance Survey Licence Number AC0000815244
Created by : Performance and Intelligence 30/06/2026



- Population – 148,000
- Area – 6400 km²

A rural and dispersed population

People live across towns, villages and remote communities
Distance matters

Distances between communities can be significant

Some communities are more than two hours apart

Why change is needed

Healthcare in Dumfries and Galloway is facing significant change.

Our region covers over 6,400 square kilometres, with people living in towns, villages and rural communities across a large geographical area.

Travel to healthcare services can be difficult for some people, especially in remote and rural areas.

At the same time, our population is changing.

By 2043:

- the number of people aged 75 and over is expected to rise significantly
- more people are likely to require health and care support
- the number of unpaid Carers is expected to increase
- the number of working-age people is projected to reduce

This means demand for healthcare will continue to grow while the workforce available to deliver services becomes smaller.

We also face ongoing financial pressures and must ensure services remain sustainable for the future.



Population changes

Dependency Ratio

The number of children and older people compared to the number of working age people in Dumfries and Galloway

2021

For every 10 working age people there were...



7 non working people

2043

For every 10 working age people there will be...



8 non working people

Number of people by age group

(estimates to the nearest 100 people)

2023



Total = 145,700 people

2043



Total = 139,000 people

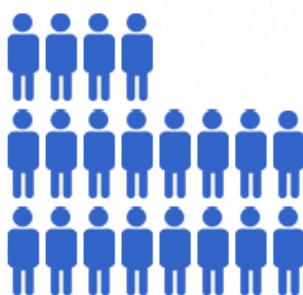
One person households

Estimated number of people aged 75 or older living alone (to the nearest 100 people)



2017

7,500 people



2027

9,900 people

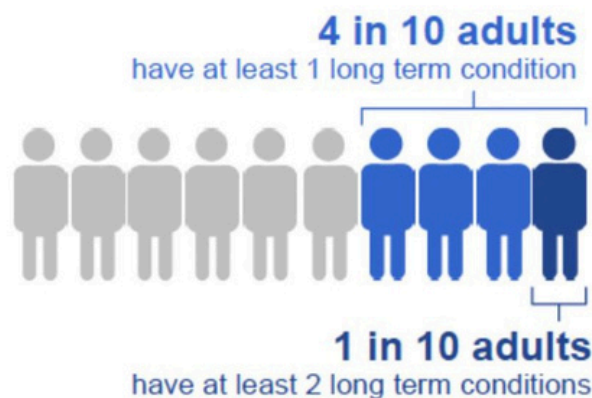
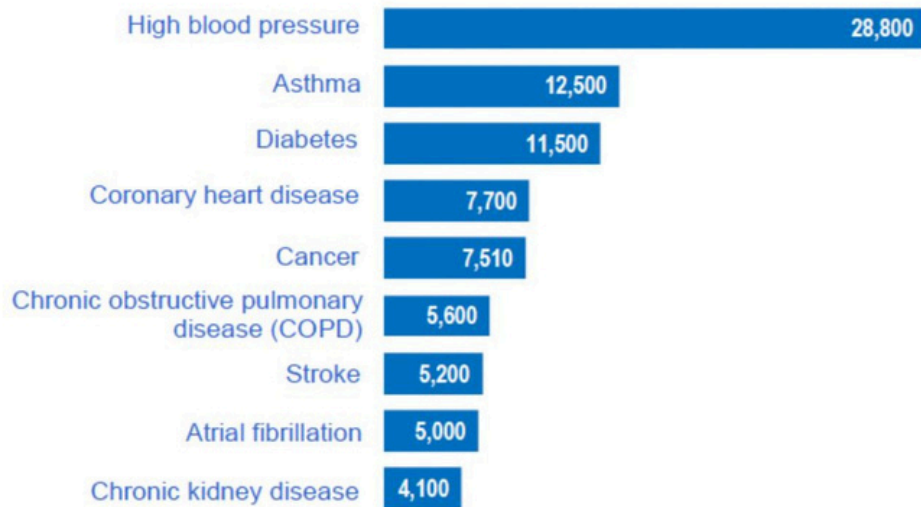


2037

11,700 people

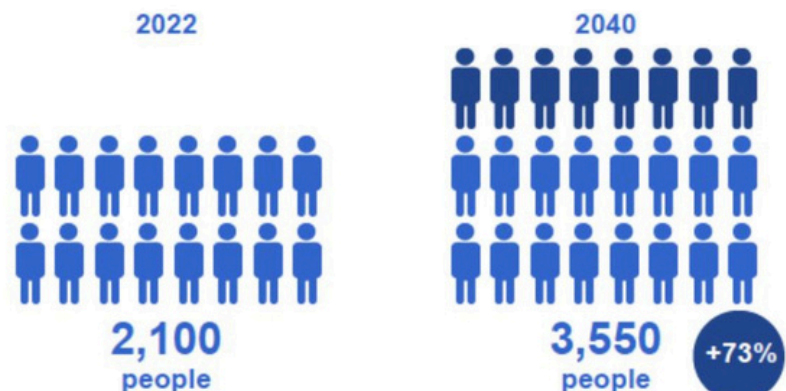
Long term conditions

Estimated number of people with existing long term conditions in Dumfries and Galloway



Dementia

Number of people predicted to be living with dementia across Dumfries and Galloway





© Dumfries and Galloway Health and Social Care Partnership

These challenges are not unique to Dumfries and Galloway, but they are felt particularly strongly in rural communities.

Doing nothing is not an option.

The future of healthcare must look different.

We must focus more on:

- preventing illness
- supporting people earlier
- delivering more care closer to home
- helping people manage their own health and wellbeing
- working more closely with communities and partners
- using technology in ways that improve access to care

Most importantly, we must make these changes together.



The future we want to build together

By 2036, we want people in Dumfries and Galloway to live longer, healthier lives, experience fewer health inequalities and continue to access safe, high-quality care.

We want healthcare to feel more connected, more local and more focused on what matters most to people.

This means:

More care closer to home

Where it is safe and appropriate, we want more services to be delivered within local communities. This can help reduce unnecessary travel and support people to remain independent for longer.

Earlier support and prevention

We want to help people stay healthier for longer by focusing more on prevention, wellbeing and early intervention.

Better use of technology

Technology can help improve access to care, aid communication and make services work more effectively. We want digital innovation to support people and staff — not replace human care.



Supporting our workforce

Our staff are central to the future of healthcare.

We want NHS Dumfries and Galloway to be a great place to work where people feel supported, valued, included and safe.

Working with communities

We want local people, staff, unpaid Carers and communities to help shape the future of services.

The best healthcare services are designed with people, not simply for them.

Working with partners

Improving health and wellbeing depends on more than healthcare alone.

We will continue working closely with local organisations, community partners and other NHS Boards to improve outcomes for people across the region.



Working together

Creating a new future together means building a different relationship between healthcare services, communities and the people who use them.

We want to create a partnership built on openness, trust and shared responsibility.

Our commitment

We will:

- listen to people and communities
- involve people in shaping services
- put safety and quality first
- support staff and value their contribution
- provide care with compassion, dignity and respect
- make evidence-based decisions about change
- use resources carefully and responsibly
- continue working to reduce inequalities and improve access to care



What we ask in return

We ask people in Dumfries and Galloway to:

- share their experiences and ideas with us
- help shape the future of services
- attend appointments where possible
- treat staff with kindness and respect
- take an active role in their health and wellbeing where they can

We believe lasting change only happens when people work together.

The future of healthcare in Dumfries and Galloway will not be created by one organisation alone.

It will be created through partnership.



Our priorities for 2026–27

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.



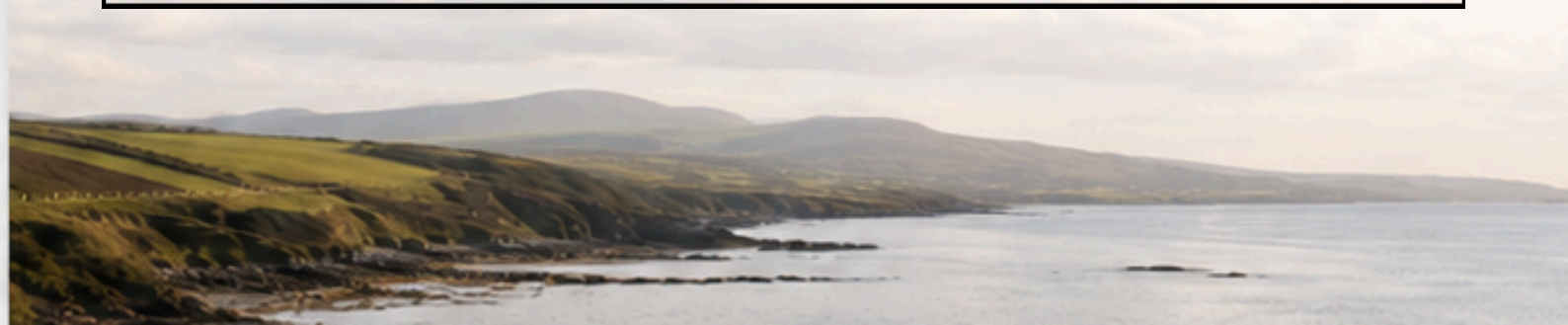
How will we achieve these priorities?

Delivering our Financial Recovery Plan for 2026/27

- Developing our Financial Recovery Plan Strategy
- Implementing Supplementary Staffing
- Controls and reducing our corporate use of bank staff
- Achieving our Year 1 financial savings
- Aligning the Corporate Services Directorate with delivery of Financial Recovery Strategy and wider organisational priorities

Strengthening staff wellbeing and inclusion

- Implementing our Culture Plan, Behaviour Framework and Effective Managers Programme
- Providing Listening and Psychological Safety to reduce staff absences
- Review and refine our professional advisory committee arrangements
- Review and refine organisational governance
- Improve our workforce training, development and career management



Co-designing our Working With Communities programme

- Continue to work on our Discharge Without Delay project

Identifying opportunities for Digital Innovation

- Explore Digital Innovation Projects
- Implement the Digital Delivery Plan (Core Programme)
- Evaluate the Near Me digital platform

Identifying and delivering opportunities for service redesign, underpinned by a culture that supports prevention and early intervention

- Develop our Population Health Maturity Matrix
- Carry out the Preventative Spend Pilot
- Work to reduce the longest waits for planned care including cancer
- Offer more patients the option of Hospital at Home
- Improve our services for adults with incapacity
- Modernise our mental health services
- Implement Year 1 of our General Medical Services Plan



Working with others to create the conditions for good health

- Work with the Community Planning Partnership to ensure a healthy environment
- Work with partners to provide place-based care

Working collaboratively with other NHS Boards to deliver regional aims and aspirations

- Design, shape and influence the outputs from the subnational Rural and Islands Workstream to advocate for and reflect the needs of people in Dumfries and Galloway.





How will we know we are making progress?

By the end of 2026–27, we will monitor:

- More people accessing services closer to home
- Increased use of digital consultations where appropriate
- Reduced unnecessary travel for care
- Improved access to key services
- Progress in reducing waiting times
- Improved staff experience and retention
- Increased participation in prevention programmes
- Improved support for unpaid carers
- Progress in reducing inequalities
- Delivery of financial recovery plans

Detailed actions, milestones and performance measures are set out annually through the NHS Dumfries and Galloway Annual Delivery Plan.

Creating a new future together

This document sets out the beginning of a long-term programme of change for health and healthcare in Dumfries and Galloway.

Detailed actions and delivery plans will continue to be developed over the coming years.

As those plans evolve, we remain committed to involving communities, staff, partners and people who use our services in shaping the future together.

Because the future of healthcare belongs to all of us.

NHS Dumfries and Galloway
2026–2029

If you would like this information in another format or language, please contact NHS Dumfries and Galloway Patient Services.

Creating a new future *together*

Supporting people in Dumfries
and Galloway through
every stage of life

Welcome from our CEO and Chair

Dumfries and Galloway is a special place, with strong communities, dedicated staff and a long tradition of people supporting one another.

Like many health and care systems, we are facing increasing challenges. Our population is changing, demand for services is growing, and the number of people available to provide care is reducing.

At the same time, expectations of care continue to rise.

This means we cannot continue to deliver services in the same way we do today. To ensure care remains safe, sustainable and centred on people's needs, we must change how services are planned and delivered.

This also presents an opportunity. By working more closely with our communities, staff and partners, we can design a system that better supports people to stay well, access care more easily, and receive high-quality support when they need it.

This Statement of Strategic Intent sets out the direction of travel for NHS Dumfries and Galloway. It describes the changes we need to make and how we will begin to deliver them over the coming years.

We know this will take time, and we know it will require openness, collaboration and shared responsibility.

By working together, we can build a sustainable system that continues to meet the needs of people across Dumfries and Galloway, now and in the future.



Mark Cook
Chairman
NHS Dumfries
and Galloway



Julie White
Chief Executive
NHS Dumfries
and Galloway



Our region



Dumfries and Galloway is a large, largely rural region in the south-west of Scotland, covering over 6400 square kilometres.

People live across a wide range of communities - from market towns and coastal settlements to small villages and remote rural areas.

These communities are connected by strong local relationships and a shared sense of place, but can be separated by significant distances.

The region includes a diverse landscape of coastline, farmland and upland areas, with transport and travel routes that reflect this geography.

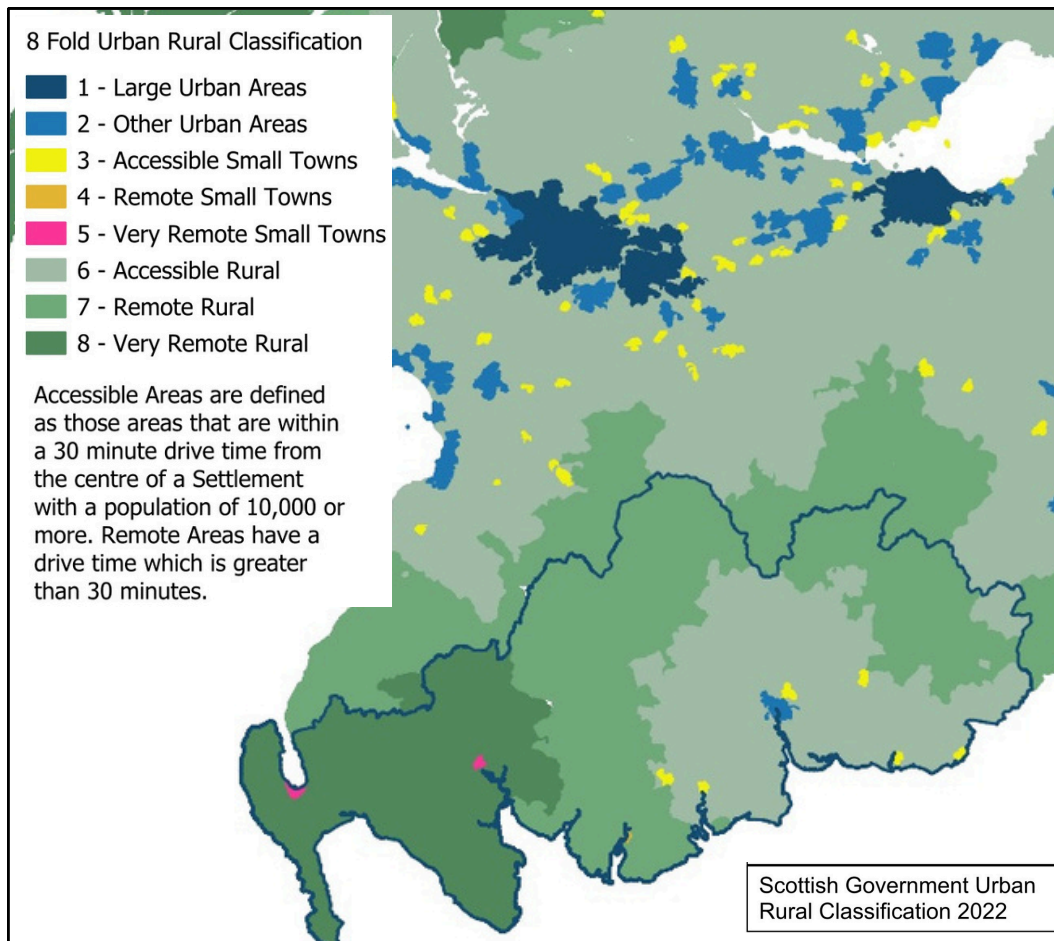
Distances between communities can be significant, reflecting the size and geography of the region.

Dumfries and Galloway has a proud history of local identity, resilience and community support.

Families, neighbours and communities play a vital role in supporting one another, alongside formal health and care services.

We provide a comprehensive range of health and care services across the region, including community-based, primary and acute care, delivered in partnership with local organisations and communities.





- Population – 148,000
- Area – 6400 km²

A rural and dispersed population

People live across towns, villages and remote communities
Distance matters

Distances between communities can be significant

Some communities are more than two hours apart

Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO.
© Crown Copyright and database right (2026). All rights reserved.
Ordnance Survey Licence Number AC0000815244
Created by : Performance and Intelligence 30/06/2026



Why change is needed

Healthcare in Dumfries and Galloway is facing significant change.

Our region covers over 6,400 square kilometres, with people living in towns, villages and rural communities across a large geographical area.

Travel to healthcare services can be difficult for some people, especially in remote and rural areas.

At the same time, our population is changing.

By 2043:

- the number of people aged 75 and over is expected to rise significantly
- more people are likely to require health and care support
- the number of unpaid Carers is expected to increase
- the number of working-age people is projected to reduce

This means demand for healthcare will continue to grow while the workforce available to deliver services becomes smaller.

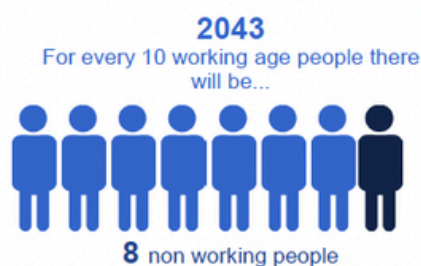
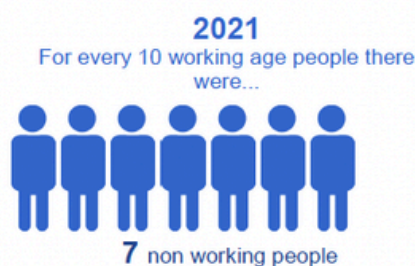
We also face ongoing financial pressures and must ensure services are sustainable for the future.



Population changes

Dependency Ratio

The number of children and older people compared to the number of working age people in Dumfries and Galloway

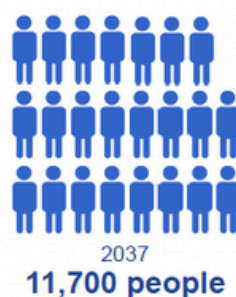
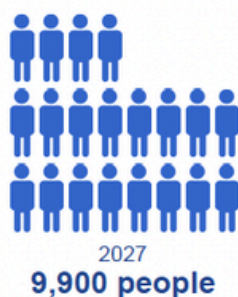
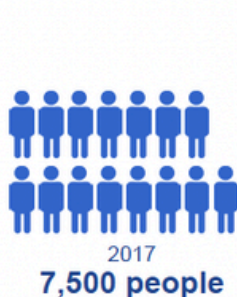


Number of people by age group (estimates to the nearest 100 people)



One person households

Estimated number of people aged 75 or older living alone (to the nearest 100 people)



Source: National Records Scotland

These challenges are not unique to Dumfries and Galloway, but they are felt particularly strongly in rural communities.

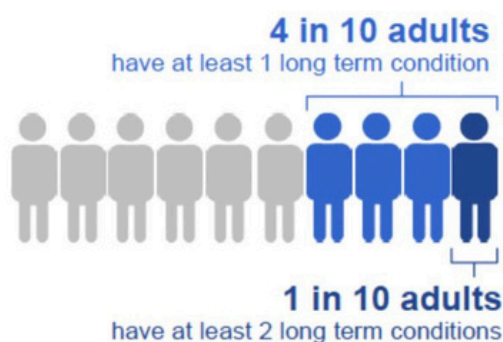
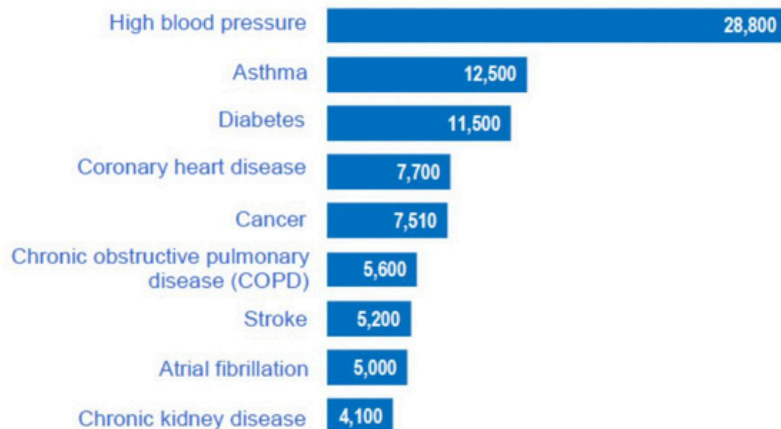
Doing nothing is not an option.

The future of healthcare must look different.



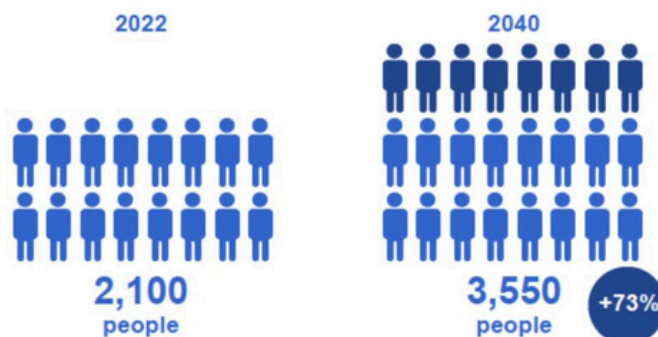
Long term conditions

Estimated number of people with existing long term conditions in Dumfries and Galloway



Dementia

Number of people predicted to be living with dementia across Dumfries and Galloway



We must focus more on:

- preventing illness
- supporting people earlier
- delivering more care closer to home
- helping people manage their own health and wellbeing
- working more closely with communities and partners
- using technology in ways that improve access to care

Most importantly, we must make these changes together.





© Dumfries and Galloway Health and Social Care Partnership

The future we want to build together

By 2036, we want people in Dumfries and Galloway to live longer, healthier lives, experience fewer health inequalities and continue to access safe, high-quality care.

We want healthcare to feel more connected, more local and more focused on what matters most to people.

This means:

More care closer to home

Where it is safe and appropriate, we want more services to be delivered within local communities. This can help reduce unnecessary travel and support people to remain independent for longer.

Earlier support and prevention

We want to help people stay healthier for longer by focusing more on prevention, wellbeing and early intervention.





Better use of technology

Technology can help improve access to care, aid communication and make services work more effectively. We want digital innovation to support people and staff — not replace human care.

Supporting our workforce

Our staff are central to the future of healthcare.

We want NHS Dumfries and Galloway to be a great place to work where people feel supported, valued, included and safe.

Working with communities

We want local people, staff, unpaid Carers and communities to help shape the future of services.

The best healthcare services are designed with people, not simply for them.

Working with partners

Improving health and wellbeing depends on more than healthcare alone.

We will continue working closely with local organisations, community partners and other NHS Boards to improve outcomes for people across the region.



