



<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Correspondence</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>Council Meeting</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>5 March 2024</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>
<b>To be discussed In Committee</b>	<b>No</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council operates as one effective and efficient corporate unit with a common purpose and culture
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	N/A
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>YES/NO</b>
Capital/Revenue	N/A
Code	N/A
Staffing Costs	N/A

<b>Legal Considerations</b>	
Input of Legal Services Required	<b>YES/NO</b>
Legal Opinion Obtained	<b>YES/NO</b>

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to present correspondence for Members' consideration.

2.0 The following correspondence has been received:

### **2.1 Peter May, Department of Health, 1 February 2024 (copy attached)**

*Thank you for your letter of 18th January 2024 regarding the treatment of Cystic Fibrosis.*

*The Department of Health has a formal link with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) under which NICE Technology Appraisals are reviewed locally for their legal and policy applicability in Northern Ireland. Whilst there is a process to check the guidance for legal and policy applicability here, there is no reassessment of the clinical or cost evidence used by NICE in coming to its decisions and forming its advice.*

*Where found to be applicable, they are endorsed for implementation within Health and Social Care (HSC) organisations. This link has ensured that Northern Ireland has access to up-to-date, independent, professional, evidence-based guidance on the value of health care interventions.*

*As you are aware, NICE recently issued draft guidance on the use of Kaftrio, Orkambi and Symkevi for consultation: Consultation | Ivacaftor–tezacaftor–elexacaftor, tezacaftor–ivacaftor and lumacaftor–ivacaftor for treating cystic fibrosis [ID3834] | Guidance | NICE.*

*The current draft guidance does not recommend that Kaftrio, Orkambi and Symkevi are routinely available on the NHS because the most likely cost-effectiveness estimates from current economic modelling are substantially above the range that NICE considers an acceptable use of NHS resources.*

*Consultation on the draft guidance closed on Friday 24th November 2023. The draft guidance is not NICE's final guidance, and I can advise that comments received during this consultation were considered by NICE at a further appraisal meeting on 14th December 2023. NICE will continue to liaise with key stakeholders to determine the most appropriate next steps before the next draft guidance is issued. NICE expect to publish final guidance around 13th March 2024, in which the Institute has also stated will incorporate the licence extension to Kaftrio to include paediatric patients aged 2 to less than 6 years.*

*When final guidance is issued by NICE, the Department will consider it under the usual process for NICE technology appraisals as per the guidance set out in circular HSC (SQSD) 12/22 which is available at:  
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/doh-hsc-sqsd-12-22.pdf>*

*The NICE draft guidance is clear that the recommendations are not intended to impact on patients already receiving treatment with Kaftrio, Orkambi or Symkevi, who will be able to continue treatment until they and their HSC clinician consider it appropriate to stop.*

**2.2 Jonny Donaghy, Policing & Community Safety Partnership, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, 2 February 2024**

*At the PCSP meeting on Thursday 1st February 2024 it was agreed that*

*The PCSP Manager write to the Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens to consider signing the Womens Night Safety Charter NI with the full support of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership. (correspondence attached)*

**2.3 Heather Moorhead, Northern Ireland Confederation for Health and Social Care, 9 February 2024 (copy attached)**

*Please find attached Back on Track: Securing the Health and Wellbeing of our Population which we hope will be a resource for you, given that in large part many of our population's health and care outcomes cut across the work of every government department. As you will be aware, as in the rest of the UK, Northern Ireland's health and social care system is under extreme and mounting pressure, NICON (The NI Confederation of Health and Social Care) represents all the organisations across the statutory system, and our members have come together to set out our priorities for the way ahead. Specifically, we have four core priorities, supported by a further 8 underpinning areas which require action;*

- Workforce*
- Sustainable funding*
- Redesigned services*
- Empowered and collaborative leadership*

*Supporting this, we must place health and wellbeing at the heart of the Programme for Government – and invest in stabilisation and transformation; development of a population health approach; implementation of mental health and social care reform; delivery of our technology strategy; engaging patients and partners; being proactive innovators to drive outcomes and the economy Health and Wealth in Northern Ireland: Capitalising on the Opportunities | NHS Confederation; and supporting delivery of the net zero targets.*

*Whilst the challenge is truly unprecedented, our members believe that there is significant opportunity to make material progress by delivering a bold reform agenda and placing health and social care at the heart of all we do in Northern Ireland. We trust this document will be helpful and look forward to working with you in the coming weeks and months.*

**2.4 John Kelpie, Chief Executive, Derry City and Strabane District Council, dated 16 February 2024 (copy attached)**

*At a meeting of Derry City and Strabane District Council held on 31 January 2024, the following Motion was passed:*

*That this Council notes with deep concern that at least 26,000 civilians have been killed as a result of the ongoing bombardment and siege of Gaza of which at least 10,000 are children Council notes that more than 8000 Palestinians are missing. Council further notes there is an escalating death toll in the West Bank, with 370 people killed of which 99 are children.*

*Council is alarmed that almost 70 percent of the buildings in Gaza, including hospitals and schools, have been destroyed or severely damaged. The civilian population is facing a dire humanitarian crisis, with critical shortages of food, water, and medical supplies.*

*Council is particularly concerned that civilians are being confined to increasingly smaller areas without access to shelter or aid. This dire situation is leading to an escalation in civilian deaths due to bombing, shootings, starvation, disease, and lack of medical treatment.*

*Council resolves to:*

- 1. Write to the British Prime Minister and Home Secretary, urging them to immediately implement a Palestinian Visa Scheme similar to the Ukraine Visa Scheme,*
- 2. Write to an Taoiseach asking that a request is put to the EU commission proposing a temporary protection directive, for those Palestinians seeking sanctuary, as was enacted in March 2022 in response to the Ukraine war.*
- 3. Council will also write to the leaders of all political parties across Ireland urging them to support this call.*
- 4. Council will seek collaboration from ALL NI councils and relevant Northern Ireland government departments, support this call pledging to facilitate and support the resettlement of Palestinian families in Ireland*

*With this in mind, we as a council affirm our support to UN General Assembly resolution 194, article 11, which enshrines the Palestinian Peoples' Right of Return.*

*I would appreciate your consideration in this important matter and would be grateful for a response at your earliest opportunity.*

### **3.0 Recommendation**

**It is recommended** that Council consider the correspondence.

**From the Permanent Secretary  
and HSC Chief Executive**



Sinéad Duggan  
[REDACTED]

Castle Buildings  
Upper Newtownards Road  
BELFAST, BT4 3SQ

Tel: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Your Ref:

Our ref: SCORR-0059-2024

Date: 1 February 2024

Dear Sinéad

Thank you for your letter of 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 regarding the treatment of Cystic Fibrosis.

The Department of Health has a formal link with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) under which NICE Technology Appraisals are reviewed locally for their legal and policy applicability in Northern Ireland. Whilst there is a process to check the guidance for legal and policy applicability here, there is no reassessment of the clinical or cost evidence used by NICE in coming to its decisions and forming its advice.

Where found to be applicable, they are endorsed for implementation within Health and Social Care (HSC) organisations. This link has ensured that Northern Ireland has access to up-to-date, independent, professional, evidence-based guidance on the value of health care interventions.

As you are aware, NICE recently issued draft guidance on the use of Kaftrio, Orkambi and Symkevi for consultation: [Consultation | Ivacaftor-tezacaftor-elexacaftor, tezacaftor-ivacaftor and lumacaftor-ivacaftor for treating cystic fibrosis \[ID3834\] | Guidance | NICE](#). The current draft guidance does not recommend that Kaftrio, Orkambi and Symkevi are routinely available on the NHS because the most likely cost-effectiveness estimates from current economic modelling are substantially above the range that NICE considers an acceptable use of NHS resources.

Consultation on the draft guidance closed on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The draft guidance is not NICE's final guidance, and I can advise that comments received during this consultation were considered by NICE at a further appraisal meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023. NICE will continue to liaise with key stakeholders to determine the most appropriate next steps before the next draft guidance is issued. NICE expect to publish final guidance around 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024, in which the Institute has also stated will incorporate the licence extension to Kaftrio to include paediatric patients aged 2 to less than 6 years.

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The NICE draft guidance is clear that the recommendations are not intended to impact on patients already receiving treatment with Kaftrio, Orkambi or Symkevi, who will be able to continue treatment until they and their HSC clinician consider it appropriate to stop.

I trust you will find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely



**Peter May**

## Ursula Harper

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**From:** Jonny Donaghy  
**Sent:** 02 February 2024 09:51  
**To:** Mayors Office  
**Subject:** Womens Night Safety Charter NI  
**Attachments:** REPORT ITEM 9 Night Charter Causeway Coast Glens.pdf

Good morning

At the PCSP meeting on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 it was agreed that

The PCSP Manager write to the Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens to consider signing the Womens Night Safety Charter NI with the full support of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership.

I attach the correspondence.

Kind regards  
Jonny

**Jonny Donaghy**

Policing & Community Safety Partnership



**Causeway  
Coast & Glens  
Borough Council**

[www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk](http://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)

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14th April 2023

Dear David,

### Re: Womens Night Safety Charter Northern Ireland

As key stakeholders, Hospitality Ulster and the White Ribbon NI charity have joined forces to adopt the Women's Night Safety Charter (WNSC) and support its rollout in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland is a safe place, but research suggests that too many women feel unsafe when travelling, working, or going out at night. The Northern Ireland Executive Office is working with stakeholders to prioritise the safety of women and girls.

First established in London and now operating in several regions across the UK, the WNSC is a commitment by organisations and businesses involved / operating at night to support the campaign to End Violence Against Women and Girls.

After signing up to the charter, organisations and business will be supported with White Ribbon NI's 'Listen, Learn, Lead' toolkit. Which offers simple ideas, inspiration, information, and resources to help organisations and businesses meet the charter's seven simple pledges. It advises on possible courses of action, some changes that may need to be made and how organisations can upskill their staff.

The rollout of the WNSC in Northern Ireland is supported by the Executive Office's Ending Violence Against Women & Girls (EVAWG) team and PSNI, with key stakeholders including Tourism NI and Translink having already signed the charter.

Before we begin the roll out of the WNSC to businesses, we are asking key stakeholders, including all Local Authorities in Northern Ireland to sign the Womens Night Safety Charter and its seven pledges (below).

The WNSC forms part of a wider Safer Socialising initiative led by the industry and supported by PSNI. To oversee these initiatives, we plan to establish a Steering Group with representation from key stakeholders including a nominated representative from SOLICE to represent Local Authorities in Northern Ireland.

I therefore invite Causeway Coast & Glens Council to support the safety of woman at night in Northern Ireland by signing the Womens Night Safety Charter and adding your logo to the Stakeholder section on the Charter.

The Charter Pledges:

- Nominate a champion in your organisation / business who actively promotes women's night safety
- Demonstrate to staff and customers that your organisation takes women's safety at night seriously, for example through a communications campaign

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#### HEAD OFFICE

91 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HP

Telephone (028) 9032 7578

Email [enquires@hospitalityulster.org](mailto:enquires@hospitalityulster.org)

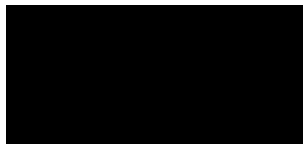
[www.hospitalityulster.org](http://www.hospitalityulster.org)



- Remind customers and staff that Northern Ireland is safe, but tell them what to do if they experience harassment when working, going out or travelling
- Encourage reporting by victims and bystanders as part of your communications campaign
- Train staff to ensure that all women who report are believed
- Train staff to ensure that all reports are recorded and responded to
- Design your public spaces and workplaces to make them safer for women at night

I look forward to welcoming you as a signatory to the Womens Night Safety Charter NI, working to ensure all women and girls feel safe at night.

Yours sincerely,



Colin Neill, CEO Hospitality Ulster

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By email

9 February 2024

Dear MLA

Firstly, we would like to offer congratulations on the return to Stormont and wish you well in your roles in the newly appointed committees.

Please find attached **Back on Track: Securing the Health and Wellbeing of our Population** which we hope will be a resource for you, given that in large part many of our population's health and care outcomes cut across the work of every government department. As you will be aware, as in the rest of the UK, Northern Ireland's health and social care system is under extreme and mounting pressure, NICON (The NI Confederation of Health and Social Care) represents all the organisations across the statutory system, and our members have come together to set out our priorities for the way ahead. Specifically, we have four core priorities, supported by a further 8 underpinning areas which require action;

- **Workforce**
- **Sustainable funding**
- **Redesigned services**
- **Empowered and collaborative leadership**

Supporting this, we must place health and wellbeing at the heart of the Programme for Government – and invest in stabilisation and transformation; development of a population health approach; implementation of mental health and social care reform; delivery of our technology strategy; engaging patients and partners; being proactive innovators to drive outcomes and the economy [Health and Wealth in Northern Ireland: Capitalising on the Opportunities | NHS Confederation](#); and supporting delivery of the net zero targets.

Whilst the challenge is truly unprecedented, our members believe that there is significant opportunity to make material progress by delivering a bold reform agenda and placing health and social care at the heart of all we do in Northern Ireland. We trust this document will be helpful and look forward to working with you in the coming weeks and months.

Kind regards

Heather

**Heather Moorhead**

**Director**

**NI Confederation for Health & Social Care (NICON)**

☐ 07808 181 625



**Northern Ireland  
Confederation  
for Health and Social Care**



Northern Ireland  
Confederation  
for Health and Social Care

# Back on track: securing the health and wellbeing of our population

Health and social care leaders' priorities  
for the incoming executive

Towards an HSC which is innovative, efficient, outcomes-focused, has  
a valued and supported workforce and works in partnership to get  
closer to communities

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# About us

## About NICON

The Northern Ireland Confederation for Health and Social Care (NICON) is the voice of the organisations working across Northern Ireland's integrated health and social care system (HSC). Part of the NHS Confederation in England and Wales, it is the membership body for all HSC organisations which comprises of all six HSC trusts together with the range of regional HSC organisations.

[www.nhsconfed.org/NICON](http://www.nhsconfed.org/NICON)

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# Our priorities: overview



## Investment in workforce

Our members urge immediate agreement on a new pay deal and the implementation of the Health and Care Workforce Strategy 2026 to address our significant workforce gaps. This must be supported by investment to ensure the HSC is recognised as a great place to work, to attract and retain staff and modernise for the future.



## Sustainable funding

To stabilise, support transformation and meet growing demand, we need a sustained funding package underpinned by a three-year budget to support effective planning. Funding shortfalls will limit progress. We need honest conversations with the public and realistic expectations within the funding envelope agreed. Importantly, we must recognise spending as an investment with a £4 return for every £1 spent.<sup>1</sup>



## Redesigning services – accessing value

There are significant opportunities to improve the design of our service delivery model, but changes have traditionally been met with resistance. It is urgent that we break this pattern to deliver. We propose the establishment of a Citizens' Assembly to support this vital public conversation, to fast track agreement and support make progress at pace.



## Collaborative and empowered leaders

We must invest in more collaborative ways of working, tapping into leadership in our HSC organisations, communities, partners, patients and in our workforce.



## Stabilisation and transformation

Recognising the significant pressure currently, we must prioritise the stabilisation of our services and address unacceptable waiting times, while seizing opportunities for transformation.



## Population health approach

We must press on with our integrated care planning model, investing in prevention and addressing inequalities and working in partnership with communities, other public services and the voluntary sector.



## Mental health

Our new Mental Health Strategy has been co-created with patients and partners, emphasising the need for parity of esteem between physical and mental health. We call for adequate funding and the continued support of our partners to deliver this ambitious agenda.



## Social care

We welcome recent progress on the reform of adult social care and children's social care services and call for progressive action to deliver for our citizens, not only improving quality of life but delivering efficiencies in our system.



## Investment in technology

We welcome the beginning of the rollout of encompass, NI's first digital health and care record. We need sustained focus on implementation of our new suite of digital strategies, supported by adequate staff training, to access the considerable benefits that technology and data can offer.



## Engaged patients, public and partners

Learning from international experience, we call for a cultural shift in public engagement and invite the people of NI, as well as staff and partners, to be involved in keeping people well and active at home.



## Innovation and economy

Having a strong and fair economy can help improve health outcomes. There are many opportunities to more fully support the HSC to embrace innovation and contribute as partners in local economies



## Net zero carbon commitments

At COP26, the HSC committed to reaching net zero as part of the global effort to tackle climate change. New action is required to proactively drive this agenda.

# Introduction

This report sets out the collective views of our members and aims to inform the ongoing public debate and subsequent decisions of the incoming Northern Ireland Executive.

Northern Ireland's Health and Social Care system is under mounting pressure. A series of strategic reviews had concluded that significant service redesign, and sustained investment would be necessary to address the long-term needs of our population.<sup>2</sup> The pandemic, absence of functioning government, rising demand, and industrial action has considerably worsened the situation. Unsurprisingly, health consistently ranks as a key concern in the public's mind.<sup>3</sup>

Over the last few years, colleagues at all levels in the HSC have demonstrated exceptional dedication, compassion, collaboration and creativity to maintain services and lead change across the system. Widescale vaccination programmes, digital ways of working, and new elective care centres are all noteworthy examples of the swift pace at which change has been implemented.

As this new Executive and Assembly take up office, health and care must be the key focus in the new Programme of Government to deliver amidst what are undoubtedly immense challenges. This document sets out the priorities agreed by the Northern Ireland Confederation of Health and Social Care members.

While the challenge is truly unprecedented, our members believe that there is significant opportunity to make real progress, by delivering a bold reform agenda and placing health and social care at the heart of all we do in Northern Ireland. Our call to the public and politicians alike is to 'support us to support you', so that we can ensure our health and care system gets back on track to meet the needs of our population.

**Michael Bloomfield**  
Chair, NICON  
Chief Executive, NI Ambulance Service



**Jonathan Patton**  
Vice-Chair, NICON  
Chair, South Eastern HSC Trust





# Our vision

Members agree that the vision that our citizens ‘lead long, healthy, and active lives’ and the four ambitions for reform set out in Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together<sup>4</sup> remain at the core of our ambition and continue to align with international best practice.

- **Building capacity in communities and in prevention**
- **Providing more support in primary care**
- **Reforming our community and hospital services**
- **Organising ourselves to deliver**

Although we have seen significant strides to deliver in these key areas,<sup>5</sup> progress has been significantly hampered, creating additional pressure and demand for services, while Northern Ireland’s waiting times continue to deteriorate. If we are to get back on track, members agree there are four core enablers, complemented by a set of eight supporting activities that must be prioritised in the new Assembly.

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“This is a time of unprecedented challenge for our nations. Driving change in our health care must form a turning point to create a cultural revolution in how we deliver services.

At this very important time of restoration of the institutions in Northern Ireland, this report sets out our members’ views, based on international best practice, and calls for a revitalised national mission, system leadership and local engagement approach. I commend this report to politicians and the public alike. Tough decisions and a relentless focus on implementation are now urgently needed. The NHS Confederation and our members stand ready to play our part.”

**Matthew Taylor, Chief Executive, NHS Confederation**

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# Core priorities

To support healthcare leaders to deliver this vision at the necessary pace and scale, our members believe **four core, interrelated enablers** must be in place:

## 1. Investment in workforce

Workforce capacity is central to the functioning of our entire health and social care system. However, there are currently significant gaps in our medical, nursing and social care workforce. The impact of a prolonged period of underinvestment is apparent in the form of widespread industrial action, vacancies at unsustainable levels and, despite some progress, there remains an overreliance on agency staff. The pandemic and ongoing pressure has further exacerbated staff shortages, with soaring absence rates and reports of staff leaving the HSC early due to burnout and low pay being cause for serious concern.<sup>6</sup>

While the latest workforce statistics show a consistent increase in the number of WTE staff across virtually all groupings since 2018, this rate of growth has been outmatched by the parallel increase in demand.<sup>7</sup>

Such staff shortages place undue pressure on existing staff and ultimately translate into increased waiting times and reduced quality and safety. Breaking this vicious cycle and securing a highly valued and supported workforce will be key in stabilising and shaping our services for the future. We must act to **ensure we have the optimum number of staff in place** to deliver both core services and to implement the variety of new strategies that will facilitate transformation. This will require **swift resolution of pay disputes** and investment in **long-term workforce planning**. This must be robustly backed up with adequate, recurrent funding, according to the renewed action plan of the Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy 2026.<sup>8</sup> In addition, we must work with partners to keep pace with emerging thinking and innovation, modernising our workforce with new roles and new ways of working.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, there is a pressing need to care for our workforce. We need cultural change to **ensure the HSC is seen as an attractive place to work**, wherein our workforce feel valued, supported and empowered to lead in their own service areas. Evidence indicates that placing mental health and wellbeing at the forefront of our efforts will be particularly important as we seek to deliver and transform services – something we simply cannot do without our staff.<sup>10</sup> Given the importance of this work, we note the appointment of a Chief People Officer in other nations, and believe the creation of such a role would be helpful in Northern Ireland.

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“Having the right workforce is the single biggest challenge for our system – we have made good progress on planning, but we need sustained funding to ensure we can recruit and retain our workforce for the future.”

Jacqui Reid, Director of HR, Northern HSC Trust

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## 2. Sustainable funding

As we approach the General Election this year, there is ongoing national debate, with many calling for a wholesale reinvestment in the NHS to match the founding vision of a service free at the point of need. This also the case locally. Current estimates indicate that the HSC could be facing a potential deficit **in excess of £500 million in 2023/24** when pay uplifts are accounted for and before any additional funding is applied.

HSC leaders require an uplifted and sustained funding package to support stabilisation, prioritise waiting lists, meet rising demand and meaningfully continue the transformation journey. A three-year budgeting cycle would greatly support effective planning and implementation.

Members therefore call for early agreement and prioritisation of the health and care budget, underpinned with pump priming investment to support a rapid approach to transformation. Funding must also be viewed as an investment. Carnall Farrar's report shows that for every £1 spent there is a return of £4 in our economy.<sup>11</sup>

Politicians and the public must understand that **failure to provide sustained funding**, to meet the recognised level of need within Northern Ireland **will limit progress** in key areas, such **waiting list management** and **wider transformation efforts**. The full delivery of crucial strategies such as the Cancer Recovery Plan and Mental Health Strategy will also be at risk.

Members believe that our priorities – including building workforce capacity, investing in prevention and service redesign – represent significant opportunities to ensure that funding offers the best value for money. Working collectively and using best evidence, we must ensure that future investment is used to drive efficiency and deliver improved population health outcomes.

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“The funding package agreed will shape what we can realistically deliver. We need honest conversations and must ensure that we are employing all the money we have as effectively as possible.”

**Maureen Edwards, Director of Finance,  
Belfast HSC Trust**

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## 3. Redesigning services – accessing value

As has been highlighted by many reviews, the current design of our services is no longer fit for purpose; it neither offers citizens the best outcomes nor the best value for money. An honest, two-way conversation must be brokered with the public to deliberate on the changes that must take place across our health and care system. We invite politicians and the public to consider evidence-based research and international best practice setting out the benefits that service redesign can bring about for our population.

We call for a wider dialogue on this service design, which members believe will support staff to deliver the best outcomes possible, for the best value. New Decade, New Approach committed to holding a Citizens' Assembly on an annual basis as part of a wider programme of civic engagement.<sup>12</sup> Given the significance of the health and care system in our wider society, members call on elected representatives to commission a Citizens' Assembly or similarly robust public engagement process on this vital topic to support the process of making best use of our workforce and estates.

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“During the pandemic, we saw how the system can change very quickly and effectively – we must build on this learning to redesign many of our services to secure the best value and outcomes for our communities.”

**Neil Guckian, Chief Executive,  
Western HSC Trust**

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## 4. Collaborative and empowered leaders

Change happens in large systems when leaders and at every level of our organisations are empowered and supported to lead that change. While we have made some progress by investing in collective and clinical leadership programmes, we need to step up this approach to create a much more enabling culture.<sup>13</sup>

This will involve working more effectively with communities, partners, and our staff, tapping into local knowledge and existing relationships to develop collective solutions. We call on the public, politicians, and partners to engage with new integrated care partnerships which provide a framework for more collaborative ways of working that can support better outcomes.

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“In the HSC, as in the NHS, we know that collaborative ways of working are delivering more. We need to embrace these new ways of working by developing both systemwide and local solutions.”

**Dr Maria O’Kane, Chief Executive,  
Southern HSC Trust**

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# Supporting priorities

## 1. Stabilisation and transformation

As ministers return, we must prioritise the unacceptable waiting times, while seizing opportunities for transformation to more sustainable ways of working. Members agree the need to progress the 2021 Elective Care Framework, which proposed a £707.5 million investment over five years to close the stark gap between capacity and demand driving our waiting times.<sup>14</sup> To progress this, we welcome investment in specialist elective care, in primary care, and further development of the suite of transformation initiatives, with a particular focus on improving access to care outside of acute settings.

Members also support consideration of a regional approach to tackling waiting lists via a series of pilot projects, which would ensure a focus on equity of access. Such a project should be data driven and entail greater communication with patients and carers.

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“We have a real opportunity to redesign how we deliver elective care, in a way which protects the need to improve waiting lists, be more efficient, prevent harm and lead to better outcomes. The Regional Day Procedure Centre in Lagan Valley is a real example of success and should be further developed; dedicated centres such as this will improve access to treatment for all our population.”

**Roisin Coulter, Chief Executive, South Eastern HSC Trust**

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## 2. Population health approach:

### Investing in prevention and addressing inequalities

Evidence shows that fairer societies deliver better citizen health and wellbeing.<sup>15</sup> However, one in four children in Northern Ireland are living in poverty<sup>16</sup> and those living in the most deprived areas live in “good health” for up to 15 fewer years less than those in wealthier areas.<sup>16</sup> Members therefore welcome the new Integrated Care System (ICS) planning model, which will be rolled out in shadow form this year. We must harness this model, in which the HSC will work with local partners to plan and deliver health and social care services based on local population needs, to

provide more integrated and continuous care, create a greater focus on prevention and early intervention and address the unacceptable inequalities which drive poor health outcomes. We must now also change our commissioning processes to support this aspiration, getting closer to communities.

New ministers must also agree a Programme for Government which embraces this approach by investing in housing and education, addressing economic inactivity and other social determinants of health.

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“The pandemic and cost-of-living crisis have shown in sharp relief the impact of poverty and deprivation. We call for a whole of government approach to address these issues systemically and support the new integrated care planning model to ensure that prevention and population health are at the heart of the HSC.”

**Aidan Dawson, Chief Executive,  
Public Health Agency**

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### 3. Mental health

Members welcome the political commitment to addressing mental health in Northern Ireland in New Decade, New Approach, agreeing that this supports a more preventative approach. Colleagues welcome the move to a regional mental health service, which will provide a more focused and consistent approach across Northern Ireland, and the agreement of the new Mental Health Strategy 2021-31.<sup>18</sup> In particular, adopting a multi-agency, early intervention and prevention-based approach will be key. Members call for the 10-year strategy to be adequately funded, noting that poor mental health costs NI an estimated £3.4 billion annually.<sup>19</sup>

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“We are delighted that Mental Health is receiving a much greater profile, in parity with physical health. We have engaged with many stakeholder groups to co-design our far-reaching Mental Health Strategy. We must now ensure this is appropriately funded to deliver for our citizens”.

**Petra Corr, Director of Mental Health,  
Northern HSC Trust**



## 4. Social care

Social care is an integral element of how societies secure the health and wellbeing of citizens, but for too long, it has been treated as a ‘Cinderella service’, resulting in a poorer quality of life and additional hospital pressures. We have an opportunity to reprioritise the social care agenda, learning from others about how we engage communities in the mission to care for vulnerable people in our society. The Department of Health has engaged extensively with stakeholders through work on the Reform of Adult Social Care to develop an ambitious reform agenda for the next ten years that is aligned with international best practice.<sup>20</sup> We must work through the new Social Care Collaborative Forum to secure the urgent delivery of this long-awaited reform, underpinned with adequate funding and investment in this workforce to support a sustainable social care system. This is a challenging agenda, but it must be considered a core priority.

Similarly, following the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care Services by Professor Ray Jones in June 2023,<sup>21</sup> the Children’s Social Care Services Strategic Reform Board has since been established to progress the reform programme in this area. Taking forward this crucial work and addressing the report’s recommendations will involve urgent prioritisation of workforce gaps, funding issues, and improving the design of services. Children’s social care services in Northern Ireland must be given the priority it deserves if we are to succeed in ensuring that all children have the best start in life and are equipped to achieve their full potential.

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“If we are to enable all our citizens to live well and give every child the best start in life, we must invest in and value our social care workforce and ensure that sustainable funding is secured to facilitate this.”

**Patricia Higgins, Chief Executive,  
NI Social Care Council**

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## 5. Investment in technology

Significant progress has been made with the use of technology in the last decade and has been much accelerated over the last two years with the beginning of the rollout of encompass, Northern Ireland’s first electronic patient care record. There is, however, a long way to go to fully realise the potential of data and technology as an enabler.

There must be a sustained focus on implementation of our new suite of digital strategies published in the spring by Digital Health and Care NI; electronic healthcare record, cyber security, data and innovation. Staff must be provided with the training and time to engage with this work, and we must build much better relationships with our partners to accelerate and deliver innovation.

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“Delivering an economically sustainable Health and Social Care service for the next generation requires breaking the linear relationship between rising demand for services and our capacity to meet that demand. While technology and data are only one part of the jigsaw puzzle, it is the one with the highest potential. Creating impact on the bottom-line through adoption of Digital is perhaps the biggest challenge and opportunity we face as leaders.”



**Karen Bailey, Chief Executive, Business Services Organisation**

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## 6. Engaged patients, public and partners

The challenge ahead to recover and reshape our services is immense. In order to succeed in achieving the vision set out in Health and Wellbeing 2026, we will need energy, support, diversity of thought, as well as constructive challenge, to deliver the level of change necessary.

Building on the important co-production agenda and the HSC values, we need to strengthen and promote these open ways of working, facilitating local government input into new integrated care planning, patients and carers co-designing new pathways and more strategically engaging with and harnessing the expertise and support of the voluntary and community sector. In addition, we should explore further mechanisms to actively support families and communities to protect and enhance their own health. We welcome the opportunity to learn from effective citizen-led approaches to public health in other areas, such as Wigan.<sup>22</sup>



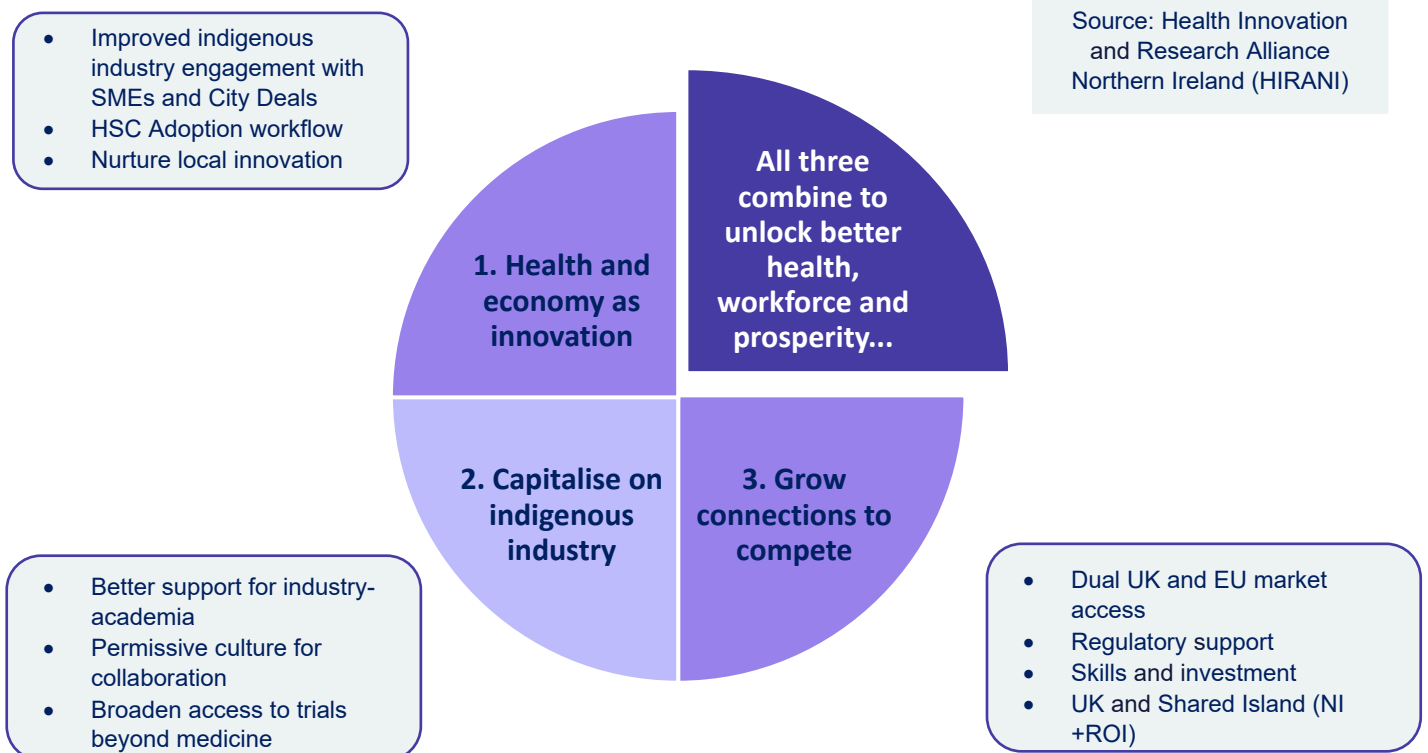
“In the Northern Trust, we have been prioritising engagement for several years now and have seen significant benefits in terms of harnessing greater energy and innovation – there are significantly more opportunities to progress this agenda.”

**Jennifer Welsh, Chief Executive,  
Northern HSC Trust**



## 7. Innovation and economy

In the past, innovation and the economy have been perceived as bolt-on activities. However, recent evidence reiterates how investment in innovation and fostering our local economy, with HSC bodies acting as ‘anchor institutions’, can in fact act as a central pillar for recovery. The HSC must be supported to fully embrace this agenda, by working proactively with universities and partners in the health and life sciences sector and with communities to be a key partner in supporting Northern Ireland’s economy.



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“Closer engagement between health and economy will be fundamental to deliver benefits for the citizens of Northern Ireland. It will deliver a Return on Investment for HSC and help improve patient outcomes, drive efficiency and working as a key player in local economies can help improve health and wellbeing in our communities.”

**Dr Janice Bailie, Assistant Director,  
HSC R&D Division**

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## 8. Meeting net zero carbon commitments

Climate change is the global issue of our time, which is set to negatively impact the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our citizens in a range of ways. During the COP26 summit in Glasgow, Minister of Health Robin Swann committed the HSC to a net zero carbon target, contributing to the global mission to tackle climate change.<sup>23</sup>

The HSC must be supported to work more proactively, both internally and with our partners, to drive this agenda. To that end, the HSC should establish a small expert unit, or at a minimum, tap into the learning from the wider NHS, ensuring milestones can be met and that we offer strong, forward-thinking leadership on this agenda.

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“The HSC must join citizens and colleagues across government to become a key player in moving towards a low carbon economy. We must develop clear policies and programmes and work with our staff and partners to deliver this change.”

**Michele Larmour, Chair,  
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service**

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Derry City & Strabane  
District Council  
Comhairle  
Chathair Dhoire &  
Cheantar an tSratha Báin  
Derry Cittie & Strábane  
Districk Cooncil

Our Ref: TJ/C49/24

16 February 2024

Mr David Jackson  
Chief Executive  
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Dear Mr Jackson

At a Meeting of Derry City and Strabane District Council held on 31 January 2024, the following Motion was passed:

**That this Council notes with deep concern that at least 26,900 civilians have been killed as a result of the ongoing bombardment and siege of Gaza of which at least 10,000 are children Council notes that more than 8000 Palestinians are missing. Council Further notes there is an escalating death toll in the West Bank, with 370 people killed of which 99 are children.**

**Council is alarmed that almost 70 percent of the buildings in Gaza, including hospitals and schools, have been destroyed or severely damaged. The civilian population is facing a dire humanitarian crisis, with critical shortages of food, water, and medical supplies.**

**Council is particularly concerned that civilians are being confined to increasingly smaller areas without access to shelter or aid. This dire situation is leading to an escalation in civilian deaths due to bombing, shootings, starvation, disease, and lack of medical treatment.**

**Council resolves to:**

**1. Write to the British Prime Minister and Home Secretary, urging them to immediately implement a Palestinian Visa Scheme similar to the Ukraine Visa Scheme,**

**Derry**

C/o Council Offices  
98 Strand Road  
Derry  
BT48 7NN

**Strabane**

C/o Council Offices  
47 Derry Road  
Strabane  
BT82 8DY

**John Kelpie MEng., CEng., MStructE., MIEI**

Chief Executive  
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- 2. Write to an Taoiseach asking that a request is put to the EU commission proposing a temporary protection directive, for those Palestinians seeking sanctuary, as was enacted in March 2022 in response to the Ukraine war.**
- 3. Council will also write to the leaders of all political parties across Ireland urging them to support this call.**
- 4. Council will seek collaboration from ALL NI councils and relevant Northern Ireland government departments, support this call pledging to facilitate and support the resettlement of Palestinian families in Ireland**

**With this in mind, we as a council affirm our support to UN General Assembly resolution 194, article 11, which enshrines the Palestinian Peoples' Right of Return.**

I would appreciate your consideration in this important matter and would be grateful for a response at your earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely



**John Kelpie  
Chief Executive**