

2025/26 Operational Planning

Council of Governors 11th February 2025

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2025/26 Operational Planning

30 January 2025, NHS England published its operational planning guidance for 2025/26, outlining the priority areas and objectives for the service.

Three Strategic Shifts



- Population Health Management
- 'Home First' Approach
- Standardising Community Health services
- Urgent neighbourhood services
- Neighbourhood Multi-Disciplinary Teams
- The Modern GP



- Improve blood pressure and cholesterol with GP's targeting lipid and blood pressure levels
- ICB's to agree plans for:
 - Vaccinations and screening
 - Core20PLUS5
 - Leading Causes of Morbidity



- 70% of Planned Care appointments in NHS App by March 2026
- GP's enable all core NHS App capabilities
- Complete Electronic Patient Record(EPR) procurements
- Providers deploy e-prescribing

2025/26 Operational Planning – National Priorities

- Reduce the time people wait for planned elective care
- Improve A&E waiting times and ambulance response times
- Improve access to general practice and urgent dental care
- Improve mental health and learning disability care
- Live within the budget allocated, reducing waste and improving productivity
- Maintain our collective focus on the overall quality and safety of our services
- Address inequalities and shift towards prevention

2025/26 Operational Planning – Financial Framework

- Nationally NHS organisations will need to reduce their cost base by at least 1% and achieve 4% improvement in productivity before new local pressures are accounted for
- This is almost double last year's 2.2 percent national target and more than four times the NHS's historical rate of productivity growth at 0.9 per cent.
- Base growth set at 4.4% reflecting 2% efficiency requirement - Additional funding must cover final pay settlements for 2025/26, increased employer national insurance contributions, faster improvement on the elective waiting list, and new treatments mandated by NICE
- Agency spending must be reduced by a minimum of 30% and Bank spending by 10% while support function spend must be reduced to April 2022 levels.
- If systems don't submit / deliver breakeven plans their capital allocations will be reduced
- The guidance states that Systems will have to make tough and unpopular decisions over service provision, closing some relatively lower value services to balance the books.

2025/26 Operational Planning – ‘Headline’ Milestone Targets

Planned Care

- Work towards 92% of patients waiting no longer than 18 weeks for Planned Care elective treatment by 2029
- Nationally 65% of Elective patients seen in 18 weeks by March 2026. All Trusts to make a 5% improvement in 18 week wait times compared to 2024/25.
- All Trusts to improve cancer 62 Day standard to 75%, and 28 Day Faster Diagnosis Standard (FDS) to 80% by March 2026
- ICB's to inform all patients & Carers of 'right to choose, by September 2025
- All Trust to ensure they have Patient Initiated Follow Up Pathways (PIFU's) in place for all appropriate services by March 2026

Urgent and Emergency Care

- A&E Target of 78% of patients seen in 4 hours
- Working towards ambulance hospital handovers within 15 minutes and none more than 45 minutes
- Further reductions in Length of Stay (LoS)

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Useful Links

- NHSE Operational and Joint Forward Planning guidance is available at the following link: [NHS England » NHS operational planning and contracting guidance](#)
- **The NHS Confederation has produced a helpful summary of the 2025/26 planning guidance at the following link: [2025/26 NHS priorities and operational planning guidance: what you need to know | NHS Confederation](#)**