



**NHS 24
BOARD MEETING
27 FEBRUARY 2025
ITEM NO 9.3
FOR ASSURANCE**

STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Executive Sponsor:

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Lead Officer/Author:

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Action Required:

The Board is asked to review the attached risks and take assurance from the strategic risk management update and processes in place to manage risk in NHS 24.

Key Points for the Board to consider:

In line with Board and Committee Workplans, the Board is presented bi-annually with the Strategic Risk Register. The presented risk register represents the organisations year-end position. Work is already underway to assess and consider risks to the delivery of the Draft Corporate Delivery Plan as presented to the Board at its development session on 30 January 2025. The outcome of those assessments will be included in the Strategic Risk Register and presented to the August meeting of the Board. It is intended that each of the risks on the Strategic Risk Register will be aligned to one of the key organisational strategies or delivery plans as appropriate.

Although, presented to the Audit & Risk Committee and Board bi-annually, these risks will be reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis by the EMT Risks & Opportunities Group.

Since previously presented to the Board, the key changes for consideration are as follows:

- There are currently 7 Strategic risks in total, which is the same number presented to the Committee back in August 2024.
- Of the 7 risks presented, 5 scores remain the same, 1 has reduced and 1 has increased.

Governance process:

Prior to presentation to the Board, Strategic risks were presented at the following forums:

25/11/24: Operational Risk Management Group.

11/12/24: EMT Risks & Opportunities Group.

04/02/25: Circulated to EMT Business Meeting for approval.

13/02/25: Audit & Risk Committee

Strategic alignment and link to overarching NHS Scotland priorities and strategies:

This paper is part of the governance review process for risk and provides assurance to the EMT Business Meeting, Board and Committees that there is an effective risk management process in place to support delivery of key strategic priorities and supporting documentation below:

- NHS 24 Strategy
- 3 Year Corporate Delivery Plan
- Key Scottish Government Ministerial Priorities
- NHS 24 Realistic Medicine Framework

Strategic alignment and link to Corporate Delivery Plan activity:

Corporate Deliverable 2: Continuous improvement of core service performance in line with NHS 24's Key Performance Framework, and delivery of programmes to support the wider health and care system and delivery of Right Care, Right Place.

Key Risks:

Organisational key risks are outlined in this paper.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. Any financial implications will be highlighted within the risk register attached.

Equality and Diversity:

There are no direct equality and diversity (E&D) implications associated with this report.

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The Board is asked to review the attached risks and take assurance from the strategic risk management update and processes in place to manage risk in NHS 24

2. TIMING

- 2.1 There are no timing issues associated with this paper.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Audit and Risk Committee, in line with its Terms of Reference, has the delegated authority of the NHS 24 Board to monitor the effectiveness of risk management arrangements, to assess and manage risk and provide the Board with assurance in this regard. The Committee discussed this paper and provided feedback at its meeting on 13 February 2025.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE/ACTIVITIES

- 4.1 The presented risk register represents the organisations year-end position and forward look.
- 4.2 Strategic Risk was discussed at the Board Development Session on 30th January 2025 as part of the overarching Risk Management Framework. This demonstrated the clear alignment between key corporate planning documents and the development, refinement and mitigation of risks across the organisation at all levels. Work is already underway to assess and consider risks to the delivery of the Draft Corporate Delivery Plan and Draft Finance Plan as presented to the Board at its development session. The outcome of those assessments will be reviewed and updated at the quarterly Executive Risk & Opportunities Group and presented to the August meeting of the Committee in line with the bi-annual review of the Strategic Risk Register. It is intended that each of the risks on the Strategic Risk Register will be aligned to one of the key organisational strategies or delivery plans as appropriate and each of the corporate risks are aligned to one of the strategic risks.
- 4.3 Our strategic planning processes are continuously being developed and matured with consideration of risk now embedded into processes to ensure early consideration and planning for any potential or emerging risks and their mitigation. Work will be ongoing to ensure continuous improvement of strategic planning and risk processes. This is evidenced with the increase in mitigations in place, and those completed, within the Risk Register.

5. RISK SUMMARY

- 5.1 There are currently 7 Strategic risks in total, which is the same number presented to the Committee back in August 2024. Of the 7 risks presented, 5 scores remain the same, 1 has reduced and 1 has increased.

5.2 The EMT Risks & Opportunities Group, reviewed and discussed the Strategic Risk Register in detail and agreed that overall, the 7 risks were still relevant. However, it was acknowledged that these risks would need to be reviewed and potentially updated or refined to ensure clear understanding and alignment with the 2025/27 Delivery Plan once approved.

5.3 Key changes are as follows:

RI-0008871: There is a risk that NHS 24 will be unable to deliver its Strategy and Corporate Delivery Plan in full to achieve identified outcomes and realise benefits, if timelines and resource are not sufficient and are mis-aligned to support key programmes of work. This risk likelihood increased from 2 to 3 since previously reported, increasing the overall score to 15. This is due to the number of key priorities, capacity and resource issues. However, this risk is currently being assessed against the year-end position. Target date for this risk is aligned to the 25/27 Delivery Plan.

RI-0008873: There is a risk that Service Delivery's current resources and infrastructure are not sufficient to enable delivery of the Service Transformation Programme and deliver business as usual services. This risk score currently remains the same as mitigation of this risk will develop as the Service Transformation Programme work develops which is closely linked to the implementation of the Digital Transformation Programme. Target date is aligned to implementation date of the DTP programme, however, it is not anticipated that this risk will be fully mitigated by then, but this will be a key milestone where this risk will be reassessed.

RI-0010083: There is a risk that NHS 24 are unable to deliver change at the pace and scale, on time and on budget, that will deliver NHS 24 Strategy and meet stakeholder needs. It was agreed that this risk was still current but would be considered in line with the 25/27 Delivery Plan. Target date is currently the end of the financial year but will likely be aligned to the Delivery Plan following review.

RI-0008872: There is a risk to the sustainability of NHS 24 Services due to additional pressure through unnecessary demand created by insufficient knowledge and awareness of the public and key stakeholders' on how and when to access the right services at the right time to meet their needs. This risk remains, current target date is end of the financial year, but this date will be considered in line with the 25/27 Delivery Plan and the Communications Strategy.

RI-0008830: There is a risk that NHS 24 will not have the technology and digital resource capacity to deliver core services and support service and digital transformation in the event of an unexpected and unplanned Scottish Government or key stakeholder commission. This risk has reduced due to progress with the key mitigating actions. This risk has reduced from 12 to 8.

RI-0008869: There is a risk that NHS 24 will not provide an environment in which its people can thrive if it does not plan for, attract and develop a sustainable workforce. The score remains the same and target date aligned to the Workforce Strategy.

RI-00100016: There is a risk that due to the high degree of financial uncertainty at a national level, NHS 24 do not receive the funding settlement required, as set out in the approved 2024/25 Financial Plan, to deliver on its strategic objectives. This risk score has reduced to its target score and is due for closure in line with its target date at the end of the financial year. New risks to the delivery of the 2025/26 financial plan are currently under consideration.

NHS 24
STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER (correct as of 03/02/2025)

Case Ref	RI-0008871
Risk Register	Strategic
Receipt Date	28/06/2024
Primary Governance Committee	NHS 24 Board
Secondary Governance Committee	Audit & Risk
Description	Strategic Risk: There is a risk that NHS 24 will be unable to deliver its Strategy and Corporate Delivery Plan in full to achieve identified outcomes and realise benefits, if timelines and resource are not sufficient and are mis-aligned to support key programmes of work.
Significant Impact	NHS 24 not able to realise fully the potential key benefits from delivery of strategic programmes of work.
Executive Risk Owner	Director of Transformation, Strategy, Planning & Performance
Strategy Type	Reduce
Mitigating Action	<p>Mitigating Actions Ongoing/Ongoing Controls</p> <p>1. Detailed in-year Delivery Plan (2024/2025) and indicative Delivery Plan (2025/2027) in place which will be reviewed and updated as appropriate. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing - 31-03-2027)</p> <p>2. Work ongoing by SROs of key programmes of work, supported by the strategic planning team to identify shared objectives, risks and dependencies across key programmes of work. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (target date aligned to six month review set out below) (Ongoing - 31.03.2025)</p> <p>3. Capacity planning and critical path planning developed and being monitored with robust programme deliver mechanisms in place. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing Control-31.03.2025)</p> <p>4. Quarterly reporting to Scottish Government in place. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing Control-31.03.2025)</p> <p>5. Oversight and review of progress and resource requirements for all key programmes of work being monitored by the Strategic Delivery Group. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing Control -31.03.2025)</p>
Mitigation(s) Complete	<p>1. There is now a three year Strategy and Corporate Delivery Plan approved and linked to the Finance Plan.</p> <p>2. Robust programme board governance structures and review processes in place for the Digital and Service Transformation Programme of Works</p> <p>3. Corporate Planning Framework in place (Complete)</p> <p>4. Six month review of Corporate Delivery Plan to be undertaken and reported to Scottish Government.</p>
Previous Score (AxB)	10
Current Consequence (A)	Extreme (5)
Current Likelihood (B)	Possible (3)
Current Score (AxB)	15
Risk Appetite	
Target Score (AxB)	5
Target Date	31/03/2025

Case Ref	RI-0008873
Risk Register	Strategic
Receipt Date	28/06/2024
Primary Governance Committee	NHS 24 Board
Secondary Governance Committee	Audit & Risk
Description	Strategic Risk: There is a risk that Service Delivery's current resources and infrastructure are not sufficient to enable delivery of the Service Transformation Programme and deliver business as usual services.
Significant Impact	Strategy and Corporate Delivery Plan are not delivered on time and in budget.
Executive Risk Owner	Director of Service Delivery
Strategy Type	Reduce
Mitigating Action	Mitigating Actions/Controls - Ongoing 1. Performance Board to be established to review and monitor operational performance across all areas to deliver and improve frontline service. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing - 31 March 2025) 2. Ongoing monitoring and delivery of Service Optimisation Programme. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing - October 2025) 3. Oversight of dependencies, competing resource requirement and shared risks across key programme of works through Strategic Delivery Group. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing Control) 4. Recruitment drive ongoing to achieve and maintain establishment targets (Ongoing Control)
Mitigation(s) Complete	Mitigating Actions/Controls - Complete 1. Service Transformation Programme Board and governance structure established (Complete). 2. Establishment of well defined workstreams with clear project briefs including Current Service Optimisation, Future Care Pathways and Enhancement of Online Products/Services (Complete) 3. Confirmation from Establishment Control Group for additional resource and backfill to support both DTP and STP (Complete) 4. Analysing data/insight to systematically and objectively identify clear priorities. This will be refined, and sense checked to underpin prioritisation and resource allocation. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Complete) 5. Development of ongoing reporting and monitoring of processes through the Service Transformation Board. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Complete) 6. Work ongoing, supported by the Strategic Planning Team, to established an agreed understanding by senior executives and SROs of key programme of works, of shared objectives, risks and dependencies. (Complete) Mapping exercise to undertaken to understand current resource capacity Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Complete)
Previous Score (AxB)	12
Current Consequence (A)	Major (4)
Current Likelihood (B)	Possible (3)
Current Score (AxB)	12
Risk Appetite	
Target Score (AxB)	4
Target Date	31/03/2026

Case Ref	RI-0010083
Risk Register	Strategic
Receipt Date	17/07/2024
Primary Governance Committee	NHS 24 Board
Secondary Governance Committee	Audit & Risk
Description	Strategic risk: There is a risk that NHS 24 are unable to deliver change at the pace and scale, on time and on budget, that will deliver NHS 24 Strategy and meet stakeholder needs.
Significant Impact	Specifically related to newly developed services and NHS 24 being the provider of choice for digital health services. This may impact on future investment opportunities. Reputation with the public and other key stakeholders, Non-delivery of the NHS 24 strategy.
Executive Risk Owner	Director of Transformation, Strategy, Planning & Performance
Strategy Type	Reduce
Mitigating Action	Mitigating Actions 1. Ongoing monitoring of progress and resource requirements in place by the Strategic Delivery Group. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing Control - 31.03.2025) 2. Robust review and monitoring of the Annual Delivery Plan with continuous governance and engagement internally and externally Action Owner [REDACTED] (Ongoing Control-31.03.2025) 3. Management of change is set within a governance framework. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing Control-31.03.2025) 4. A Programme Management Framework sets out a robust approach to programme delivery including evaluation and benefits realisation of a number of key activities that contribute to the ADP and strategic intent. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing Control-31.03.2025)
Mitigation(s) Complete	1. Approved Strategy and Corporate Delivery Plan, aligned to the Financial Plan, Workforce Plan and key programme of works, in place. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Complete) 2. Individual objectives aligned with delivery plan. Action Owner [REDACTED] (Complete) 3. Robust governance structure in place to review and monitor delivery of the Digital and Service Transformation Programmes with dedicated Programme Management resource to support it. (Complete) 4. Framework for change implemented so management of change is set within a governance framework (Complete) 5. A Programme Management Framework sets out a robust approach to programme delivery including evaluation and benefits realisation of a number of key activities that contribute to the ADP and strategic intent (Complete) 6. Strategic Delivery Group established to review and monitor key programmes of work. (Complete) 7.Strategic Delivery Group established to review and monitor key programmes of work.(Complete)
Previous Score (AxB)	10
Current Consequence (A)	Extreme (5)
Current Likelihood (B)	Unlikely (2)
Current Score (AxB)	10
Risk Appetite	
Target Score (AxB)	6
Target Date	31/10/2025

Case Ref	RI-0008872
Risk Register	Strategic
Receipt Date	28/06/2024
Primary Governance Committee	NHS 24 Board
Secondary Governance Committee	Audit & Risk
Description	Strategic Risk: There is a risk to the sustainability of NHS 24 Services due to additional pressure through unnecessary demand created by insufficient knowledge and awareness of the public and key stakeholders' on how and when to access the right services at the right time to meet their needs.
Significant Impact	Reduced service provision for those in need due to insufficient knowledge of choosing the right service at the right time by callers and incorrect signposting by wider health and care organisations. Impact on health inequalities through lack of accessible information and digital inequalities Negative impact on patient journey through insufficient information and incorrect signposting by wider health and care organisations. Negative impact on patient-facing staff.
Executive Risk Owner	Chief Communications Officer
Strategy Type	Reduce
Mitigating Action	Mitigating Actions 1. Patient information resources developed in accessible formats (Complete). Requirement for recurring funding to be established to maintain continued stakeholder engagement Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing - 31 March 2025) 2. Develop and deliver public health marketing campaign to increase public awareness and use of NHS 24's digital services. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing - 31 March 2025) Ongoing Controls 1. Continuous development and distribution plans in place for Right Care Right Place Campaign and Guide to Services materials (Ongoing Control) 2. Stakeholder Mapping exercise undertaken and monitored (Ongoing Control) 3. Governance Group in place to evaluate effectiveness of engagement and outputs. (Ongoing Control) 4. Engagement Activity with stakeholders to support dissemination of resources underway with ongoing monitoring (Ongoing Control) 5. Internal communications on the measures being taken to educate our patients and wider stakeholders on our services, and when and how to access them (Ongoing Control) 6. Ongoing patient and wider stakeholder review and evaluation undertaken and monitored to identify new and/or changing requirements and mitigate against risks (Ongoing Control) 7. Engagement Activity with stakeholders to support dissemination of resources underway with ongoing monitoring (Ongoing Control) 8. Internal communications on the measures being taken to educate our patients and wider stakeholders on our services, and when and how to access them (Ongoing Control)
Mitigation(s) Complete	Mitigating Actions Complete 1. Community & Partner Communications and Engagement Framework developed with associated cross-directorate governance in place to support key deliverables against the risks highlighted (Complete) 2. Proactive communication and marketing plans in place utilising all available channels to provide accessible public information on services (Complete)
Previous Score (AxB)	9
Current Consequence (A)	Moderate (3)
Current Likelihood (B)	Possible (3)
Current Score (AxB)	9
Risk Appetite	
Target Score (AxB)	3
Target Date	31/10/2025

Case Ref	RI-0008830
Risk Register	Strategic
Receipt Date	27/06/2024
Primary Governance Committee	NHS 24 Board
Secondary Governance Committee	Audit & Risk
Description	Strategic Risk: There is a risk that NHS 24 will not have the technology and digital resource capacity to deliver core services and support service and digital transformation in the event of an unexpected and unplanned Scottish Government or key stakeholder commission.
Significant Impact	Potential financial impact for required additional resource. Key programmes of work either not delivered or delivered late resulting in non-delivery of Strategy and Plans.
Executive Risk Owner	Chief Information Officer
Strategy Type	Reduce
Mitigating Action	Mitigating Actions/Controls - Ongoing 1. Strategic Delivery Group in place to oversee progress on all key programmes of work and monitor cumulative risk. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing Control) 2. Clear mechanisms within Programmes of work to monitor resource. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing Control) 3. Regular directorate review to ensure resources allocated against critical deliverables within Corporate Delivery Plan and key programmes of work are on track. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing Control)
Mitigation(s) Complete	Mitigation Actions Complete 1. Robust planning and monitoring processes in place, including establishment of Programme Boards for all key programmes of work. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Complete). 2. Additional staff now deployed into key roles, increasing capacity and technical expertise. (Complete) 3. Full ICT project review has been performed with some projects rescheduled with exec approval. (Complete) 4. ICT objectives modified to prioritise capacity for core services and Digital Transformation Programme. (Complete) 5. Administration burden for internal ICT meetings has been reduced to maximise capacity. (Complete) 6. 6. SPRA process in place to support resource identification to monitor and support priorities across NHS 24. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Q2 - Q4 2024/25). COMPLETE - new staff in place
Previous Score (AxB)	12
Current Consequence (A)	Major (4)
Current Likelihood (B)	Unlikely (2)
Current Score (AxB)	8
Risk Appetite	
Target Score (AxB)	4
Target Date	31/10/2025

Case Ref	RI-0008869
Risk Register	Strategic
Receipt Date	28/06/2024
Primary Governance Committee	NHS 24 Board
Secondary Governance Committee	Audit & Risk
Description	Strategic Risk: There is a risk that NHS 24 will not provide an environment in which its people can thrive if it does not plan for, attract and develop a sustainable workforce.
Significant Impact	Staff turnover increases, net gains are not realised, and target establishment levels not achieved impacting the patient journey. High labour turnover rates create significant financial costs to the organisation. Staff morale, retention and wellbeing is impacted, and service pressure demands are exacerbated by increased absences. Staff and leaders in the organisation are not equipped with the skills (inc. digital), resilience and behaviours required to transform the organisation per the Corporate Strategy 2023-28. Culture does not support the vision of NHS 24 where winning hearts and minds is key to delivering a fully matured and high performing organisation. NHS 24 workforce does not meet service demands therefore does not provide safe and effective patient care.
Executive Risk Owner	Director of Workforce
Strategy Type	Reduce
Mitigating Action	Note this risk relates to the delivery of the Workforce Strategy and Plan 2022-2025. Mitigating Actions • Deliver key objectives of the five priorities of the Workforce Strategy. Robust framework in place to track and monitor progress to ensure key milestones are met: 1. Sustainable Workforce: Strategic Review of Recruitment and Workforce Digital Workplan Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing - 31 October 2025) 2. Inclusive Culture: Cultural Alignment Programme, 'Our Wellbeing Matters' Strategy and Plan, new HR Advisory Model, implementation of Once for Scotland policies, Staff Engagement Framework and Workforce ED&I Plan. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing - 31 October 2025) 3. Enhanced Learning and Development: Annual Review of Essential Learning and LearnMore24 supplementary learning system, Internal Consultancy model. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing - 31 October 2025) 4. Effective Leadership and Management: Management Essentials Programme, Leading with Courage, Leading with Impact and EMT Development Programmes Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing - 31 October 2025) 5. Collaboration and Engagement: Area Partnership Forum Workplan, new routes into employment through working with diversity, equity and inclusion specialist organisations and other public sector bodies, NES/SAS/NHS 24 workforce collaboration. Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing - 31 October 2025) Ongoing Controls 1. Continue to manage and mitigate the 11 detailed corporate level risks pertaining to delivery of the Workforce Strategy through risk management framework. 2. Ongoing monitoring and refresh of Workforce Strategy and Plan annually, including review of Key Performance Indicators. 3. Submit Quarterly Workforce Report and regular key deliverable updates to Staff Governance Committee covering the five priorities set out in the Workforce Strategy and Plan.
Mitigation(s) Complete	
Previous Score (AxB)	8
Current Consequence (A)	Major (4)
Current Likelihood (B)	Unlikely (2)
Current Score (AxB)	8
Risk Appetite	5
Target Score (AxB)	4
Target Date	31/10/2025

Case Ref	RI-0010016
Risk Register	Strategic
Receipt Date	01/04/2024
Primary Governance Committee	NHS 24 Board
Secondary Governance Committee	Audit & Risk
Description	Strategic Risk: There is a risk that due to the high degree of financial uncertainty at a national level, NHS 24 do not receive the funding settlement required, as set out in the approved 2024/25 Financial Plan, to deliver on its strategic objectives.
Significant Impact	NHS 24 unable to deliver on all its strategic objectives. Strategic planning will be negatively impacted or delayed.
Executive Risk Owner	Director of Finance
Strategy Type	Reduce
Mitigating Action	<p>Mitigating Actions Ongoing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supported with ongoing dialogue to confirm NHS 24 and Scottish Government's agreement on planning assumptions Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing - Q4 2024/25) 2. Confirmation of breakdown of NHS 24's allocation Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing - Q4 2024/25) 3. Governance reporting to Board and Committees to develop corporate understanding of financial position for 2024/25 Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing - Q4 2024/25) 4. SPRA process to support Finance and Strategic Planning to ensure quarterly reviews Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing - Q4 2024/25). 5. Corporate Delivery Plan approved. Ongoing planning and performance review and monitoring arrangements in place Action Owner: [REDACTED] (Ongoing - Q4 2024/25). 6. Sustainability and Value Group in place to ensure regular review and identification of efficiencies (Ongoing - Q4 2024/25) . <p>Ongoing Controls</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SPRA process in place to enable prioritisation for use of funding to ensure balanced budget 2. High Impact Changes and SPRA as a vehicle for getting commitment for funding of strategic priorities. 3. Continued engagement and representation at the appropriate forums to influence/inform decision making in relation to urgent care, mental health, health and social care priorities etc are 4. Continued monitoring of performance and governance processes in place to evaluate and enable quick decisions if the funding landscape changes 5. Quarterly reporting to Planning & Performance Committee.
Mitigation(s) Complete	1. Submission and approval of 3 year financial plans to Scottish Government and Board (Complete)
Previous Score (AxB)	12
Current Consequence (A)	Major (4)
Current Likelihood (B)	Unlikely (2)
Current Score (AxB)	8
Risk Appetite	
Target Score (AxB)	8
Target Date	31/03/2025