

Glossary

NHS terms and abbreviations

Academic Health Science Centre / Network (AHSC / AHSN)

An academic health science(s) centre (AHSC) or network (AHSN) is a partnership between one or more universities and healthcare providers focusing on research, clinical services, education and training. AHSCs are intended to ensure that medical research breakthroughs lead to direct clinical benefits for patients.

Acute care

Also known as secondary healthcare, where a patient receives active but short-term treatment for a severe injury or episode of illness, an urgent medical condition, or during recovery from surgery. Acute care services are generally delivered by teams of healthcare professionals from a range of medical and surgical specialties.

Acute trust

A legal entity/organisation formed to provide health services in a secondary care setting, usually a hospital.

Annual Governance Statement

This is the mechanism by which the NHS trust's accountable officer (in our case the Chief Executive Officer) provides assurance about the stewardship of the organisation in her capacity as accountable officer for the Trust.

The governance statement records the stewardship of the organisation to supplement the accounts. It will give a sense of how successfully it has coped with the challenges it faces and of how vulnerable the organisation's performance is or might be. This statement will draw together position statements and evidence on governance, risk management and control, to provide a more coherent and consistent reporting mechanism.

Assurance Framework

The Assurance Framework provides organisations with a simple but comprehensive method for the effective and focused management of the principal risks to meeting their objectives. It also provides a structure for the evidence to support the Annual Governance Statement.

Better Payment Practice Code

The Better Payment Practice Code requires the Trust to aim to pay all valid non-NHS invoices by the due date or within 30 days of receipt of goods or a valid invoice, whichever is later.

Breakeven (duty)

A financial target: in its simplest form it requires the Trust to match income and expenditure.

Capital

Expenditure on the acquisition of land and premises, individual works for the provision, adaptation, renewal, replacement and demolition of buildings, items or groups of equipment and vehicles, etc. In the NHS, expenditure on an item is classified as capital if its costs exceed £5000 and its useful life expectancy is greater than one year.

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

The Care Quality Commission was set up in April 2009 and replaced the Healthcare Commission. It is an independent regulator to help improve the quality of healthcare. It does this by providing an independent assessment of the standards of services, whether provided by the NHS, the private sector or voluntary organisations.

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

Clinical Commissioning Groups were groups of GPs that were responsible for designing local health services in England. They did this by commissioning or buying health and care services, working with patients and healthcare professionals and in partnership with local communities and local authorities. CCGs were abolished in July 2022 by the Health and Care Act 2022 with the creation of Integrated Care Systems (ICSs).

Clostridioides difficile (C. difficile)

Clostridioides difficile is a bacterium that can cause an infection of the gut and is the major infectious cause of diarrhoea that is acquired in hospitals in the UK.

Control Total

The Control Total is the figure which represents the minimum level of financial performance against which trust boards, governing bodies and chief executives must deliver, and for which they will be held directly accountable.

Current assets

Debtors, stocks, cash or similar whose value is, or can be converted into, cash within the next 12 months.

Depreciation

The measure of the wearing out, consumption or other loss of value of a fixed asset whether arising from use, passage of time or obsolescence through technology, and market changes. The process of charging the cost of an asset over its useful life as opposed to recording its cost as a single entry in the income and expenditure records.

Elective inpatient activity

Elective activity is where the decision to admit to hospital could be separated in time from the actual admission, i.e. planned. This covers waiting list, booked and planned admissions.

Electronic Patient Record (EPR)

A system of recording patient notes digitally rather than on paper.

Emergency inpatient activity

Emergency activity is where admission is unpredictable and at short notice because of clinical need.

Fixed assets

Land, buildings, equipment and other long-term assets that are expected to have a life of more than one year.

Foundation Trust (FT)

NHS foundation trusts were created to devolve decision-making from central Government control to local organisations and communities so they are more responsive to the needs and wishes of their local people. Foundation Trusts have a membership drawn from the community which they serve and an elected Council of Governors. They also enjoy some financial freedoms not available to NHS trusts.

GP

A doctor (General Practitioner) who, often with colleagues in partnership, works from a local doctor's surgery, providing medical advice and treatment to patients.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

A statutory committee of the local social services – in our Trust's case, Oxfordshire County Council. The NHS is obliged to consult HOSC on any substantial changes it wants to make to local health services.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire

Healthwatch Oxfordshire is an independent organisation that listens to people's views and experiences of health and social care in Oxfordshire.

Inpatient

A patient whose care involves an overnight stay in hospital.

Integrated Care Board (ICB)

An Integrated Care Board (ICB) is a statutory NHS organisation which is responsible for developing a plan for meeting the health needs of the population, managing the NHS budget and arranging for the provision of health services in a geographical area. Our local ICB is across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB ICB).

Integrated Care System (ICS)

Integrated Care Systems are partnerships between the organisations that meet health and care needs across an area, to co-ordinate services and to plan in a way that improves population health and reduces inequalities between different groups. Our local ICS is across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB ICS).

International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee (IFRIC) 12

The International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee issued an interpretation – IFRIC 12 – on Service Concession Arrangements. These are arrangements whereby a government (or the NHS) grants a contract for the supply of public services to private operators. Hence for the Trust, the PFI is an example of a scheme that is subject to IFRIC 12.

International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)

The International Financial Reporting Standards provide a framework of accounting policies which the NHS has adopted since April 2009 and which replace the UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (UK GAAP) which was the basis of accounting in the UK before international standards were adopted.

Investors in People

The Investors in People Standard provides a framework that helps organisations to improve performance and realise objectives through the effective management and development of their people.

Market forces factor

An index used in resource allocation to adjust for unavoidable variation in input costs. It consists of components to take account of staff costs, regional weighting, land, buildings and equipment.

Methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)

This is a strain of a common bacterium, which is resistant to an antibiotic called methicillin.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

A body which evaluates drugs and treatments. NICE's role was set out in the 2004 White Paper 'Choosing health: making healthier choices easier'. In it the Government set out key principles for helping people make healthier and more informed choices about their health. The Government wants NICE to bring together knowledge and guidance on ways of promoting good health and treating ill health.

National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)

NIHR provides the framework through which the research staff and research infrastructure of the NHS in England is positioned, maintained and managed as a national research facility.

National service frameworks

National standards for the best way of providing particular services.

NHS England

NHS England is the body which oversees the day-to-day operation of the NHS as set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012. On 1 April 2019 it merged with NHS Improvement. Prior to that NHS Improvement supported providers to give patients safe, high quality and compassionate care within local health systems that are financially sustainable. NHS England also now incorporates NHS Digital.

NHS Digital

NHS Digital (formally the Health and Social Care Information Centre) is an executive non-departmental body, sponsored by the Department of Health. NHS Digital uses information and technology to improve health and care. It merged with NHS England on 1 February 2023.

NHS Resolution

NHS Resolution is the operating name of the NHS Litigation Authority, an arm's length body of the Department of Health. It oversees the operation of a number of indemnity schemes (both clinical and non-clinical) on behalf of the members of the indemnity schemes.

NHS trusts

NHS trusts are hospitals, community health services, mental health services and ambulance services which are managed by their own boards of directors. NHS trusts are part of the NHS and provide services based on the requirements of patients as commissioned by ICSs and NHS England.

Non-Executive Directors

Non-Executive Directors, including the Chair, are Trust Board members but not full-time NHS employees. They are people from other backgrounds who have shown a keen interest in helping to improve the health of local people. They have a majority on the Board and their role is to bring a range of varied perspectives and experiences to strategy development and decision-making, ensure effective management arrangements and an effective management team is in place and hold the Executive Directors to account for organisational performance.

Outpatient attendance

An outpatient attendance is when a patient visits a consultant or other medical outpatient clinic. The attendance can be a first or follow-up visit.

Oxford Biomedical Research Centre (BRC)

A partnership between the University of Oxford and Oxford University Hospitals, funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

A service providing support to patients, carers and relatives.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) provides a way of funding major capital investments, without immediate recourse to the public purse. Private consortia, usually involving large construction firms, are contracted to design, build, and in some cases manage, new projects.

Primary care

Family health services provided by family doctors, dentists, pharmacists, optometrists and ophthalmic medical practitioners.

Provider Sustainability Funding (PSF)

The Provider Sustainability Fund (PSF) replaced the Sustainability and Transformation Fund (STF) in 2018 and its receipt is linked to the achievement of financial controls, with 30% of its value dependent on providers also meeting trust-specific agreed performance trajectories – for A&E, RTT and 62 day cancer waiting standards.

Risk register

A register of all the risks identified by the organisation, each of which is assessed to determine the likelihood of the risk occurring and the impact on the organisation if it does occur.

Secondary care

Services provided by medical specialists. Usually they do not have first contact with patients. Secondary care is mostly provided in hospitals or clinics and patients are generally referred to secondary care by their primary care provider (usually their GP).

Service Level Agreements

Service Level Agreements (SLA) are the main mechanism for service provision between NHS trusts and the commissioners (CCGs and NHS England) for NHS services. An SLA is an agreement that sets out formally the relationship between service providers and customers for the supply of a service by one or another.

Thames Valley Local Education and Training Board (Health Education Thames Valley)

Local Education and Training Boards (LETBs) are responsible for workforce planning and development and education and training of the healthcare and public health workforce.

UK Health Security Agency

Since April 2021 it is the government agency responsible for England-wide public health protection and infectious disease capability, replacing Public Health England. It is an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care.