

NHS Interim Management and Support (NHS IMAS) Annual Report 2023/24

Introduction

The purpose of this annual report is to highlight the work completed by NHS Interim Management and Support (NHS IMAS) for the financial year 2023/24.

NHS IMAS is centred around four key areas that utilise NHS IMAS and its systems and processes to deliver for the NHS in England and NHS England (NHSE):

- NHS IMAS Core offer – providing senior short to medium-term interim management and support to resource the NHS, including NHSE, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs).
- Talent Management – working with NHSE both Nationally and Regionally, to develop talent within the NHS.
- Flexible Resourcing for NHSE - working with NHSE Human Resources and Organisation Development (HR&OD) Team on the flexible resourcing operating model for NHSE to ensure that the right people, with the right skills, are in the right place at the right time to meet the short and medium-term resource needs of the organisation.
- Emergency Response - Support NHS England Emergency Preparedness Resilience and Response and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to deliver their statutory responsibilities under the Civil Contingency Act 2004.

Funding, Hosting, and Governance

NHS IMAS is funded and hosted by NHSE's Workforce, Training and Education Directorate.

The Senior Sponsor for NHS IMAS is NHS England's Chief Workforce, Training and Education Officer. NHS IMAS is governed by a Strategic Advisory Board that represents the broad spectrum of NHS client organisations.

NHS IMAS comprises:

- A small core team which concentrates on building the talent pool, assignment selection, evaluation, and project management.
- Over 900 pool members including Partners, NHS staff and carefully selected independent consultants.

- Specialist pools of individuals to support a number of talent and transformation programmes across the NHS.

Creating the new NHS England - Change Programme

In 2023, all NHSE, Health Education England (HEE) and former NHS Digital (NHSD) staff were asked to participate in the “Creating the new NHS England” Organisational change consultations. Each of the 17 areas (seven regions and ten directorates) were consulted on the necessary changes and restructuring of teams, with the expectation that the new NHS England would be smaller than the combined size of the three separate organisations, creating a simpler, smaller, high performing organisation that leads the NHS more effectively and is a better place to work, with equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) at its heart.

During 2023/24 NHSE underwent significant change as a result of the ‘Creating the new NHS England’ programme, this resulted in Systems Capability and Operations, which included NHS IMAS, being named solely NHS IMAS and in line with the downsizing of NHSE resulted in the NHS IMAS establishment being reduced from 11.4 whole time equivalents (WTE) to 8 WTE. NHS IMAS continued to be hosted within the Workforce, Training and Education (WT&E) Directorate and under the responsibility of the Director of Workforce Supply.

Achievements

During 2023/24 NHS IMAS achieved the following against the four key priorities from the Business Plan:

NHS IMAS Core Business

NHS IMAS has been operating successfully since 2008. Since its inception, NHS IMAS has had a gross turnover in excess of £110 million, producing overall savings for the NHS estimated at £63.8 million.

The commitment to support the NHS, to embed sustainable change and save money, has been, and continues to be, at the forefront of everything that NHS IMAS delivers. In 2023/24 alone the gross turnover for NHS IMAS was just over £4.58 million with an estimated saving to the NHS of almost £2.44 million. Costs are benchmarked against private sector alternatives, and it is estimated the equivalent cost to the NHS would have been over £7 million at prevailing market rates.

The high rate of savings to the NHS can be attributed to the team maintaining an average of 157 NHS IMAS assignments managed at any one time, finishing the year with 152 live assignments meeting the business plan target of managing between 150 – 170 live assignments at any one given time.

Feedback from clients continued to be positive in 2023/24, with 100% of clients stating that they would use NHS IMAS again and 100% stating that in their experience, NHS IMAS was good value compared to independent consultancies. Further comments received from clients during feedback calls included:

“The pool member delivered the objective of setting up a place-based partnership and also delivered on additional governance requirements. We were really pleased the pool member was able to roll their sleeves up and get stuck in.” - *Place based Director, ICB*

“We are very happy with the pool member. We were surprised how quickly she got stuck into the role. She had a great style and was able to think creatively and has subsequently got the substantive role. We were very pleased with the value for money, and it was a bonus that the pool member was from a talent pool.” - *Chief People Officer, ICB*

“The pool member was fantastic. They were able to deliver across a range of complex deliverables. We received very strong favourable feedback from the Providers the pool member worked with, and compared to the private sector, the pool member was amazingly good value.” - *Director of Performance, National Organisation*

Alongside the increased number of assignments NHS IMAS supported during 2023/24, the team were successfully able to exceed the business plan target increasing the NHS pool to 11.2% in 2023/24. High quality candidates continued to join both the NHS and Independent pools throughout the year, enabling NHS IMAS to continue to source high calibre individuals to fulfil assignment requests. NHS IMAS finished the 2023/24 year with a total of 900 pool members which includes individuals registered for talent management programmes.

NHS IMAS is committed to developing NHS staff joining the pool with a variety of learning and development activities such as the Consultancy and Facilitation Skills blended learning course. Planning for cohort 9 was completed, designing new course content and a revised course schedule ensuring the course does not run into the Winter period. The core purpose of the course will remain the same, to help prepare NHS staff to undertake assignments in other organisations by providing them with the

tools and techniques when operating in an interim role and undertaking a consultancy assignment.

Feedback from the previous eight cohorts has been overwhelmingly positive with 100% of participants indicating that they learnt new skills and techniques that they would go on to use and share within their current roles and organisations as well as using them during NHS IMAS assignments.

NHS IMAS also hosted six webinar training sessions with over 264 pool members benefitting from these, exceeding the business plan target. All sessions received positive feedback. These sessions were delivered in conjunction with NHS IMAS Partners and very senior experienced NHS leaders, who were able to share good practice and learning gathered from within their own organisations.

The webinars covered a variety of topics such as:

- “Life as an NHS Professional Interim – How to Survive and Thrive”
- Using Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) to improve communication and achieve outcomes
- Integrated Care Systems – The first year
- Moving towards a 10-year plan for NHS and Social Care
- HPCA benefits webinar to NHS IMAS Members
- Digital Strategy and Electronic Patient Records: A senior managers guide

Long Term Plan and People Plan

NHS IMAS assignments also supported the Long Term Plan and People Plan objectives. Throughout 2023/24, NHS IMAS carried out assignments across all types of NHS organisations across England, including National Organisations, Acute Trusts, Foundation Trusts (FTs), Community Trusts, Ambulance Trusts, Integrated Care Boards (ICB), and Community Interest Companies (CIC).

For example, NHS IMAS worked with a Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust by resourcing a Director of Midwifery to help provide clinical leadership and transformational expertise in reviewing their maternity and neonatal improvement programmes. This assignment also led the Foundation Trust’s preparatory work for a well led inspection of services by providing robust governance and ensuring best practice processes are embedded to result in safe and effective care.

The team also worked with an Ambulance Trust to resource an Organisational Assurance Director to assist with the reset, recovery and team building required due to the organisational impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and provide support on the UK Covid-19 Inquiry collection of evidence.

NHS IMAS also worked closely with NHS England during 2023/24. The team were able to resource a Clinical Lead for Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES). This role allowed NHS England to develop and implement proposals on the future of the WRES Programme and provide a national picture of WRES in practice to colleagues, organisations and the public, driving improvement and developing the workforce race equality agenda.

The team has worked with NHS organisations across England to improve staff health and wellbeing by resourcing, placing, and deploying experienced subject matter leaders on assignment in order to deliver these objectives.

Through NHS IMAS, a Chief People Officer was placed at a University Hospital NHS Trust to introduce a new operating model and develop a strategy for the People and Culture function, improving the EDI approach and reducing staff turnover.

NHS IMAS also worked alongside an ICB to provide a Digital Programme Lead to support with the development of an ICB digital strategic outline case and investment plan, aligning digital activities with system priorities and engaging with partners across the system to transform the delivery of care and enable people to have a choice of digital channels to access services.

Executive Coaching and Mentoring

NHS IMAS has coordinated a Mentoring Scheme to the Chair and Executive community to share system learning and best practice; and has also provided support to the Proud2bOps Network to enable Operational Managers to gain support from their peers to share learning, leading to improved service delivery.

As part of NHS IMAS' commitment to support the development of quality leadership, the team have also worked with NHS England to deliver and resource executive coaching across Trusts, Integrated Care Boards and National organisations.

For example, through NHS IMAS a commissioning organisation has been able to secure an executive mentor for their newly-appointed Chief Executive on a mid-term agreement to work through a particular longer-term goal. Similarly, NHS IMAS has been successful in providing an Associate Chief Operating Officer with a Proud2bOps mentor for up to a year to give support with leading transformational change, improving culture, staff engagement and recruitment/retention, and system collaboration and leadership.

Talent Management

NHS IMAS works with NHSE colleagues to deliver the best possible support to retain talent in the NHS and develop future healthcare leaders. NHS IMAS does this by working with NHSE to develop its internal Talent Management Programme and the facilitation of stretch assignments.

NHS IMAS offers talent pool members access to a variety of interim opportunities across all NHS organisations and specialities. It also supports talent pool members whilst on assignment, with coaching, mentoring and other development opportunities to enable the individual to successfully deliver whilst gaining experience and expertise to apply for permanent roles.

NHS IMAS shared expertise and learning with the NHS to develop and retain future healthcare leaders by: -

- Working with the seven Regional Talent Management Programme Boards to re-establish support as required during 2023/24 and develop its internal Talent Management Programme and facilitation of stretch and experiential development assignments.
- Working in conjunction with the NHS England Regional Talent teams to co-produce a series of awareness workshops.
 - The purpose of the workshops was two-fold, first to increase the awareness of the opportunities available via NHS IMAS with individuals who may be seeking career development via interim assignments; second, to increase awareness of the NHS IMAS 'core business' to organisations that may be looking to utilise local and regional talent for their interim vacancies.
 - These workshops will be continuing through 2024/25, with developments currently in place.

Other talent schemes supported by NHS IMAS included:

- Working nationally to create and oversee the Chief Nursing Officer Exceptional Leaders Network.
- Managing a bespoke register of experienced Improvement Directors who can be deployed to work in challenged organisations across the NHS.
- Identifying and managing a bespoke register of individuals with significant Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) experience to provide Trusts with intensive support, as commissioned by the National IPC Programme Lead.

- Establishing a bespoke register to provide NHSE access to senior clinical expertise to be deployed to support an incident requiring clinical resources.
- Supporting NHSE, both nationally and regionally with the set-up of a bespoke register of individuals that have vast experience in the digital sector to assist NHS organisations with specialist input in this area.

Flexible Resourcing for NHSE

NHS IMAS continued to work alongside NHSE's Human Resources and Organisational Development colleagues with its resourcing and deployment operating model.

NHS IMAS has previously supported this programme by establishing ways of working such as refining a 'front door' deployment process to deliver the organisation's priorities and developing processes to support flexible resourcing across the organisation, including Regions and NHSE's deployment of resources to priority programmes.

Following the NHSE Organisational Change Programme, work to develop and agree the model has been paused with further work planned to take place in 2024/25.

Quality Management System

In 2023/24, NHS IMAS was again successful in maintaining the International Standards ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001:2015, following a re-assessment to maintain certification in January 2024.

The service has successfully held ISO standards for 13 years to ensure the highest operational standards are maintained. The first, a Quality Management System, which is certified to the international standard ISO 9001:2015 and the second, an Environmental Management System, which is certified to the standard ISO 14001:2015.

During the Audit by Approachable Certification Ltd, the Lead Auditor assessed all aspects of work and processes. The Assessor commented that "It's clear to see the system is working really well to deliver the business successfully". The audit team also concluded that "the organisation has established and maintained its management system in line with the requirements of the standards and demonstrated to the audit team that it can systematically achieve the requirements for products and or services within the scope of its activities and in accordance with its policy and objectives."

Specifically aligning to the 14001:2015 Environmental Management System, NHS IMAS along with the vast majority of NHSE staff, continued home working arrangements in 2023/24. Working from home and severely curtailing commute travel, allowed NHS IMAS staff to make a net reduction in CO2 of 3.8 tonnes between April 2023 – March 2024 which is equivalent to 9,719 miles driven by an average passenger vehicle¹.

To further reduce its carbon footprint, the NHS IMAS Continuous Improvement team continued to share relevant information around the benefits of NHSE's commitment to the reduction of carbon emissions.

Utilising both of these operational and environmental processes and continuously improving them, NHS IMAS can continue to develop the service it provides to meet the changing needs of clients; to ensure a quality service continues to be delivered and the future impact on the environment continues to be reduced.

Communications and Engagement

NHS IMAS engaged expert communications and engagement support to develop NHS IMAS' Communications and Engagement Plan and wider offer to the NHS. The outputs of this programme included:

- Stakeholder Mapping exercise
- Review existing NHS IMAS Communications and Engagement Plan
- Review of effectiveness of existing Communication Methods and branding. Develop an improvement plan.
- Identifying Communication resource requirements for delivery of the improvement plan.
- An Options appraisal of face-to-face communication and engagement activities.
- Develop a proposal of alternative communication channels to explore.
- Identify networks in the new NHS England structure for NHS IMAS to link in with.

The communications and engagement materials produced will ensure the continued success of the NHS IMAS brand and develop opportunities to enter new markets. The outcome of this programme of work will be fully realised in the 2024/25 financial year.

¹ Information calculated using: <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>, (accessed: 08/04/2024), data accurate as at 08 April 2024.

Looking ahead to 2024/25

NHS IMAS will continue to work with the NHS IMAS Strategic Advisory Board and Partners, continuing its work with the development of newer areas of the NHS such as Integrated Care Systems. NHS IMAS will ensure its systems and processes evolve in line with wider system developments so it can continue to deliver an excellent and appropriate service to the NHS as the system continues to change.

NHS IMAS will ensure that it supports high quality NHS pool members and leaders to undertake challenging roles by considering what further training and development can be provided for them and working closely with colleagues developing Talent Management Programmes.

NHS IMAS will continue to proactively work with the NHS' Regional and National Talent Management Programmes, utilising NHS IMAS' established systems and processes to retain and map information on individuals and match and support them on appropriate stretch assignments as and when required by NHS organisations.

Increasing the number of its' NHS IMAS pool members with specific skills to provide support to organisations under pressure, NHS IMAS will continue to improve the number and quality of active candidates registered. The team will source, where available, the required expertise either through the NHS or within the financial limits set for, and by, NHS organisations.

NHS IMAS will continue to work with HR&OD colleagues in NHSE to support an agile way of working and operating model designed by the organisation to enable the mobilisation of the required skills and experience to meet the prioritised needs of the organisation.