

System Capability and Operations Directorate (including NHS IMAS) Annual Report 2022/23

Introduction

The purpose of this annual report is to highlight the work completed by the System Capability and Operations (SCO) Directorate, including NHS Interim Management and Support (NHS IMAS) for the financial year 2022/23.

The SCO directorate 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 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.
- NHSE's Response to Emergency Incidents (including Covid19) - supporting NHSE Emergency Preparedness Resilience and Response (EPRR) to deliver their statutory responsibilities under the Civil Contingency Act 2004.

Funding, Hosting, and Governance

SCO, including NHS IMAS, is funded and hosted by NHSE's People Directorate.

The Senior Sponsor for SCO is NHS England's Chief People Officer. NHS IMAS is governed by a Strategic Advisory Board that represents the broad spectrum of NHS client organisations.

The SCO Directorate comprises:

- A small core team which concentrates on building the talent pool, assignment selection, evaluation, and project management.
- A small team to enable NHSE's EPRR Team to fulfil its statutory responsibilities under the Civil Contingency Act 2004 by standing up, at pace, a National Incident Co-ordination Centre (ICC(N)).

- Over 800 pool members including Partners, NHS staff and carefully selected independent consultants.
- Over 250 volunteers from NHSE registered to work in both the ICC(N) and respond to any future National Incidents.
- Specialist pools of individuals to support a number of talent and transformation programmes across the NHS.

Achievements

During 2022/23 SCO achieved the following against the four key priorities from the Business Plan:

NHS IMAS Core Business

NHS IMAS has been operating successfully for over 15 years. Since its inception, NHS IMAS has had a gross turnover in excess of £106 million, producing overall savings for the NHS estimated at £61.4 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 SCO delivers. In 2022/23 alone the gross turnover for NHS IMAS was just over £7.1 million with an estimated saving to the NHS of almost £3.45 million. Costs are benchmarked against private sector alternatives, and it is estimated the equivalent cost to the NHS would have been over £10.5 million at prevailing market rates.

The high rate of savings to the NHS can be attributed to the team maintaining an average of 163 NHS IMAS assignments managed at any one time, finishing the year with 163 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 2022/23, 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:

“NHS IMAS has great processes and provided a great service in supporting our requirements, exceeding the service provided by independent consultancies/agencies.” - *Community Interest Company Acting Chief Executive*

“There was nothing [the pool member] could have done differently or better. NHS IMAS provided an excellent service; the process was a positive experience and worked really well.” - *Chief Executive, Foundation Trust*

“The service provided by NHS IMAS, in comparison to the private sector, was great as NHS IMAS has a greater emphasis on the right person for the role and sustainable change, rather than a commercial business/profit generating model.” - *Senior Improvement Manager, NHS England*

Alongside the increased number of assignments NHS IMAS supported during 2022/23, the team were successfully able to exceed the business plan target increasing the NHS pool by 21.4% in 2022/23, with 49 NHS Mentors through the Chair and Chief Executive Mentoring Scheme and Proud2BOps Mentoring Scheme contributing to this increase. 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 2022/23 year with a total of 871 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. For example, an eighth cohort of NHS pool members successfully completed the Introduction to Consultancy and Facilitation Skills blended learning course. The course helps 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 seven 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. Discussions are currently underway regarding a ninth cohort planned for 2023/24.

NHS IMAS also hosted six webinar training sessions with over 228 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:

- Wider impact of the Health and Social Care Bill
- Resilience
- Digital strategies – pool member thoughts

- Working successfully as an interim
- Using a coaching style as a manager
- Using narratives to effect change

Long Term Plan and People Plan

NHS IMAS assignments also supported the Long Term Plan and People Plan objectives. Throughout 2022/23, NHS IMAS carried out assignments in all types of NHS organisations across England, including National Organisations, Acute Trusts, Foundation Trusts (FTs), Community Trusts, Ambulance Trusts, Integrated Care Boards (ICB), Community Interest Companies (CIC) and Primary Care Networks (PCN).

For example, NHS IMAS worked with an Ambulance Service NHS Trust by providing senior management expertise to establish and deliver an Emergency Operations Transformation Project as part of a large-scale transformation programme to improve patient care by providing a timely response to the emergency health needs of the population.

The team also provided an Interim Director of Elective Care Recovery to design and take responsibility for the implementation of the system-wide elective care recovery plan. This also included providing support to the Elective Care Recovery Board in holding plan owners and organisations to account for the delivery of the plan and implementation of improvement workstreams and providing assurance to the ICB and system Chief Executive Officers of progress against the plans.

NHS IMAS worked with a large NHS Acute Trust to provide a Director of Cancer Turnaround and Transformation. This focused on reducing cancer waiting time targets and longer length stays, increasing response times, improving patient flow and capacity management, increasing elective recovery and outpatient response, delivering Electronic Patient Record systems, and working with systems to improve hospital discharges.

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, an Associate Director of Digital Delivery was placed in a CIC that was embedded within their local ICB. The role was to create and effectively communicate a digital strategy that aligned with the ICB, along with establishing service level agreements for delivery, optimising existing infrastructure, and

operationalising enterprise architecture and change advisory processes to allow for successful uptake of new digital solutions across the ICB.

NHS IMAS has also worked alongside health organisations to tackle health inequalities for Armed Forces and their families. NHS IMAS resourced a Senior Programme Lead to support the development of an Integrated Care Centre, working collaboratively with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and partners. Managing the Armed Forces function for the NHS's national input into delivering a world first joint NHS and MoD healthcare facility.

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 Trust in the North West region have been able to secure an executive mentor for their Trust Chair on a mid-term agreement to work through a particular longer-term goal. Similarly, NHS IMAS has been successful in providing an ICB Head of Programmes, Population Health, Prevention and Personalised Care, with a mentor for up to a year to provide support with leading transformational change, improving culture, staff engagement and recruitment/retention, and system collaboration and leadership.

Talent Management

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

SCO 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.

SCO 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 2022/23 and develop its internal Talent Management Programme and facilitation of stretch 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.
 - A total of 102 delegates attended across the four workshops. 51 delegates attended the workshops for Senior HRDs, leads and recruitment managers and 81 delegates attended the workshops aimed at the talent community.
- NHS IMAS supported the North East and Yorkshire (NEY) Regional Talent Team at their NEY talent launch event in March 2023. This was a well-attended event with 88 aspirant directors (ranging from NHS Agenda for Change band 8c – VSM) present.

Other talent schemes supported by SCO 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.
- Established a bespoke register to provide NHSE access to senior clinical expertise to be deployed to support an incident requiring clinical resources.
- Supported NHSE 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

SCO continues to play a pivotal role in working alongside NHSE's Human Resources and Organisational Development colleagues with its resourcing and deployment operating model.

SCO has helped 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.

Examples of how SCO has supported NHSE through the flexible resourcing model include:

- Resourcing a Deputy Director for a National Antivirals Programme to support the implementation of the antivirals deployment strategy and ensure the incorporation of plans to reduce health inequalities.
- Resourcing a Deputy Director of Operations and Delivery to review all vaccination and screening performance activities at National and Regional level and identify areas of improvement to enable effective delivery of the service to patients and the wider public.

NHSE Response to Emergency Incidents

During 2022/23, SCO continued to be commissioned to provide specific support to the organisation's response to Covid-19 and to co-ordinate the deployment, at pace, of internal staff to respond to the National Incident including the provision of a 24/7 on call response for EPRR. SCO used this model to stand up staff to support incidents such as Afghanistan Repatriation Desk, Ukraine Desk and Operation London Bridge within the National Operations Centre (NOC), focussing on supplies, workforce and DHSC liaison. The team also contributed to the management of the NHS's intensive bed capacity and responded to supply and demand challenges throughout the system.

SCO provided advice and support to the NHSE National EPRR team in the development and transfer from a National Incident Co-ordination Centre (ICC(N)) to a NOC. Including, providing a Duty Incident Director expertise for the ICC(N) to develop a workforce model delivering a robust and efficient coordination function and support to emerging incidents including the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, Monkey Pox, and national supply disruption.

During 2022/23 SCO filled 97% of all resourcing requirements for the ICC(N), NOC National Vaccination Operation Centre, which ensured the co-ordination of the vaccination programme roll-out, adapting to the changing demands on the workstream and continued delivery of the programme.

The Volunteer Reservists Operating Model developed by NHS IMAS has been recognised as an integral part of any future response and SCO has shared all information with the National EPRR Team to enable the NOC to have the capability and responsibility for managing this going forward.

Quality Management System

In 2022/23 SCO was again successful in maintaining the International Standards ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001:2015, following a re-assessment to maintain certification in January 2023.

The service has successfully held ISO standards for 12 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 “NHS IMAS has operated to their business model for many years and effective systems are prominent throughout all their operational services. Staff working from home has been the norm for around three years with no drop in service delivery.”

Following the audit, the Auditor stated in their report that:

“It was pleasing to note that not only does the System Capability and Operations (SCO) Directorate comply to the requirements of the ISO standards but does so as a means to achieve consistency of service delivery and support an ethos of continual improvement, above and beyond compliance.”

Specifically aligning to the 14001:2015 Environmental Management System, SCO along with the vast majority of NHSE staff, continued home working arrangements in 2022/23. Working from home and severely curtailing commute travel, allowed SCO staff to make a net reduction in CO2 of 5.4 tonnes between April 2022 – March 2023 which is equivalent to 13,404 miles driven by an average passenger vehicle¹.

To further reduce its carbon footprint, SCO’s 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, SCO 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.

¹ Information calculated using: <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>, (accessed: 28/03/2023), data accurate as at 28 March 2023.

Looking ahead to 2023/24

In October 2022, NHS England published a new operating framework which sets out how the NHS will operate in the new structure created by the 2022 Health and Care Act. The 2022 Health and Care Act formally established Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) on a statutory basis, enabling local system partners to plan and deliver health and care services more effectively.

This framework has two purposes. The first is to help the organisation come together for better, more efficient system working, following the establishment of Integrated Care Systems and the new statutory framework. The second is to bring together NHS England, NHS Digital and Health Education England to better support the health system and to become a more efficient centre.

The new operating framework sets out the roles that NHS England, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and NHS providers will now play, working alongside our partners in the wider health and care system. It describes how we would like to work together and shows how accountabilities and responsibilities will be allocated to improve local health and care outcomes, in a way that maximises taxpayer value for money.

During 2023/24 NHS England will be undergoing significant change as a result of the 'Creating the new NHS England' programme. The purpose of the programme is to create a simpler, smaller, high performing organisation that leads the NHS more effectively and is a better place to work, with equality, diversity, and inclusion at its heart.

The full impact of the programme on the SCO team is currently unknown. However, it has been confirmed SCO will no longer be hosting the NHSE Response to Emergency Incidents. As of 1 April 2023, this service will be handed over to the National Operations Centre within NHS England. Moving forward, SCO will work with EPRR and CSUs to build and develop a national register of EPRR specialist skills to meet national and local incident response roles as and when required across the system.

SCO will be hosted within the Workforce, Training and Education (WT&E) Directorate and remain under the responsibility of the Director of System Resourcing.

SCO 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. SCO 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.

SCO 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, SCO 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.