

System Capability and Operations Directorate (including NHS IMAS) Annual Report 2021/22

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 2021/22.

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 and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I):

- NHS IMAS Core offer – providing senior short to medium-term interim management and support to resource the NHS, including NHSE/I, DHSC and ALBs.
- Talent Management – working with NHSE/I both Nationally and Regionally, to develop talent within the NHS.
- Flexible Resourcing for NHSE/I - working with NHSE/I Human Resources and Organisation Development Team on the flexible resourcing operating model for NHSE/I 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/I's Response to Emergency Incidents (including Covid 19) - supporting NHSE/I 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/I's People Directorate, reporting into the Director of System Capability and Operations.

The Senior Sponsor is the NHS 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/I'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/I 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 2021/22 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 14 years. Since its inception, NHS IMAS has had a gross turnover in excess of £98.9 million, producing overall savings for the NHS estimated at £57.9 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 2021/22 alone the gross turnover for NHS IMAS was almost £8 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 £11.4 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 166 live assignments meeting the business plan target of managing between 150 – 170 live assignments at any one given time.

Feedback from clients continues to be positive 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:

“Fantastic value for money. The pool member is a high calibre individual displaying strong consultancy skills, likeable attitude, and flexibility at a much lower cost.” - NHS England and NHS Improvement Director

Alongside the increased number of assignments NHS IMAS supported during 2021/22, the team were successfully able to exceed the business plan target increasing the NHS pool by 11.5% registering 37 new NHS pool members and 45 new

independent pool members in 2021/22. 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 2021/22 year with a total of 822 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, a seventh 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 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. An eighth cohort is planned for 2022/23.

NHS IMAS also hosted six webinar training sessions with over 350 pool members benefitting from these training sessions 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:

- Update on the impact of new Health and Care Bill
- A Personal perspective of forming an Integrated Care System
- An introduction to Consultancy skills
- Discharge to Assess

Long Term Plan and People Plan

NHS IMAS assignments also supported the Long Term Plan and People Plan objectives. Throughout 2021/22, 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, Commissioning Support Units (CSUs), Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Academic Health Science Centres.

For example, NHS IMAS worked with an Ambulance Service NHS Trust by providing senior management expertise to deliver an Integrated Clinical Assessment Service as

part of a large-scale transformation programme to improve patient care, prevent illness and tackling health inequalities.

The team also provided an Assurance Workforce Lead to implement a workforce strategy pilot, working with an NHS Foundation Trust, developing effective recruitment and retention policies for staff members; and resourced a Director of Workforce Strategy to support NHSE/I's development of a workforce data and informatics strategy and future workforce priorities for Phase 4 planning guidance and People Plan to support the whole NHS workforce.

NHS IMAS worked with the NHS to provide assistance to a new digital programme that enabled improved services and patient access. This included programme management expertise to deliver Frontline Digitisation and supported the New Hospital programme to accelerate the uptake of technology, identify digital investment priorities and drive the digitisation of integrated care systems

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 Director of People and Corporate Services was placed at a CCG to lead on the delivery of the CCG People Plan, improving communication and engagement to improve the health and wellbeing of all staff members. Again, through NHS IMAS, an Organisational Assurance Director was placed at an Ambulance Service NHS Trust to assist with the reset, recovery and teambuilding required due to the organisational impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

NHS IMAS has helped resource a Clinical Lead for Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) to develop and implement proposals on the future of the WRES programme, providing a national picture of WRES in practice to colleagues, organisations and the public on the developments in the workforce race equality agenda to drive improvement.

NHS IMAS has worked alongside health organisations to improve patient and health outcomes by utilising subject matter expertise to deliver new ways of working. For example, NHS IMAS resourced an Assistant Director of Delivery and Performance to provide leadership on the planning and performance component of elective care transformation and provided skilled improvement and turnaround leaders at a challenged NHS Foundation Trust to conduct detailed diagnostic reviews of waiting lists, undertaking a demand and capacity analysis across pathways and providing recommendations for change to effectively manage their recovery programmes.

Talent Management

SCO works with NHSE/I colleagues to deliver the best possible support to retain talent in the NHS and develop future healthcare leaders. SCO do this by working with NHSE/I 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 2021/22 and develop its internal Talent Management Programme and facilitation of stretch assignments.
- Assisting the NHS England and NHS Improvement Talent Data Strategy Group to provide direction to the Talent Insights Team on how the data that is required to inform the national talent strategy and approach is collected, analysed and deployed.

Other talent schemes supported by SCO include:

- 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/I access to senior clinical expertise to be deployed to support an incident requiring clinical resources.
- Supported NHSE/I with a register of individuals that have experience in managing Children and Young People's Services to assist organisations who require specialist input in these areas.

Flexible Resourcing for NHSE/I

SCO continues to play a pivotal role in working alongside NHSE/I'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/I's deployment of resources to priority programmes.

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

- Worked with the NHSE/I Elective Recovery Programme to improve the performance of 13 challenged systems to give patients better access to care.
- Provided a Head of Operations for Vaccination Centres and Community Pharmacy to develop operational guidance in line with national policy to improve accessibility and uptake of the Covid-19 vaccination.
- Supported the implementation of the "Kark Review" recommendations, redesigning the current "Fit and Proper Persons Test" to ensure that senior staff who are responsible for quality and safety of care are capable for their roles.

NHSE/I Response to Emergency Incidents

During 2021/22, 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 continued to advise and work with the NHSE/I National EPRR team in the development and continued operation of the National Incident Co-ordination Centre (ICC(N)). This work enabled the co-ordination of over 250 volunteers and successfully managed, in conjunction with demand, a total of 3,515 shifts for the ICC(N) during 2021/22. This included the resourcing and management of 3,013 shifts for the 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.

SCO resourced, placed and deployed skilled senior leaders on 74 Covid-19 assignments, supporting high profile workstreams including: The Vaccination Programme (nationally and locally); Covid-19 response (nationally and locally); Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) reuse, innovation and sustainability and Covid-19 Testing.

SCO established, at pace, a mechanism within the ICC(N) to assist NHSE/I's response to the Afghanistan Repatriation and the Ukrainian crisis, 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.

The Reservists Operating Model developed by NHS IMAS has been recognised as an integral part of any future response and is being developed as part of the new Operations Centre capability going forward. This is a reflection of the continued work SCO has completed in conjunction with EPRR in the recruiting and training of 48 new Reservists.

In addition, SCO has continued to support NHSE/I in their response to Covid-19 by providing Incident Directors to the ICC(N) to lead the co-ordination of NHSE/I's response to the pandemic to ensure organisations can provide the best quality service for patients.

Quality Management System

In 2021/22 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 2022.

The service has successfully held ISO standards for 11 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 a new certification body, Approachable Certification Ltd, the Lead Auditor assessed all aspects of work. The Assessor commented that "the System Capability and Operations Directorate (SCO) had accrued many benefits for having such established and documented systems in facilitating all staff now working from home full time and this success was due to the commitment from the Senior Leadership team."

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/I staff, continued home working arrangements in

2021/22. Working from home and severely curtailing commute travel, allowed SCO staff to make a net reduction of 6.88 tonnes between April 2021 – March 2022 which is equivalent to 17,291 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/I'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.

Looking ahead to 2022/23

Working with the NHS IMAS Strategic Advisory Board and Partners, SCO will assist the development of newer areas of the NHS such as Integrated Care Systems and will continue to develop its systems and processes in order to ensure it can continue to deliver an excellent and appropriate service to the NHS as the system continues to change and develop.

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.

SCO will continue to work with NHSE/I both nationally and regionally in its response to the Covid-19 Pandemic in any way appropriate. Including managing a register of EPRR volunteers that are rapidly deployable to support national or regional EPRR activities and providing a 24-hour, seven day a week on-call service for the National EPRR team.

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.

¹ Information calculated using: <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>., (accessed: 25/02/2022), data accurate as at 25 February 2022.