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### Introduction from Michael Brodie, Chief Executive

The purpose of the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) is to deliver business service excellence to the NHS to help people live longer, healthier lives. Our vision is to be the provider of national, at scale business services for the health and social care system, transforming and delivering these services to maximise efficiency and meet customer expectations.

As a public sector organisation delivering on behalf of the taxpayer, we recognise the important role we play in society and the positive impact we can have. We are committed to social responsibility and sustainability while delivering efficiencies for the NHS and value for the taxpayer. We are an integral part of the communities we serve as a great service provider and employer of choice, as well as making a positive difference to the wider health and social care system and ultimately the health of the population.

In 2024, we published an ambitious five-year strategy with our absolute commitment to having a positive social impact under our environmental, social and governance goal. Giving something back is fundamental to who we are as an organisation and the people within it. I'm incredibly proud that we have made a bold commitment to being an organisation that truly cares and aims to genuinely help the communities and people we serve.

I'm delighted to report that in the first year of our strategy, we have made great progress on our commitment to deliver social impact. This first annual Data and Social Impact Report sets out how we are helping people to live longer, healthier lives through our public services, our support for the NHS, our data-driven insights, our role as an employer and our approach to maximising social value through our supply chain.

We've set ourselves ambitious targets with clear measures that challenge us to reach even higher, recognising that while we have much to be proud of, we have much more still to do.



Our commitment to social impact from Darren Curry, Chief DDaT Officer and Social Impact Executive Sponsor

As Chief Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) Officer, I'm passionate about ensuring the NHSBSA makes a real difference to the lives of our colleagues, the NHS and the wider population. I'm proud to lead our approach to using service data and insights to have a positive impact on health outcomes for the population. Through digital transformation of our services, we're making it easier for our customers by implementing proactive entitlement of our Help with Health Costs services, ultimately helping people live longer, healthier lives.

I am also proud to be the Executive Sponsor for Social Impact and chair our Social Impact Steering Group. From a personal perspective, I care deeply about social mobility and know first-hand what a difference one organisation can make. In the UK, factors such as where you grew up, what your parents did and where you went to school can be strong predictors of educational and career outcomes. One of the bold commitments we have made in our strategy is to play our part in supporting social mobility and to become recognised as a top employer for social mobility, where we support colleagues from a variety of backgrounds and provide opportunities for people to progress and develop based on merit. Everyone deserves a fair chance to succeed.

Last year we carried out our first socio-economic data survey of our workforce, which showed that 44% of our colleagues are from lower socio-economic backgrounds (SEB), putting us 5% above the UK benchmark of 39%. I was pleased to see that this representation continues across all levels of the organisation, including senior leadership roles. This demonstrates that we are recruiting a diverse and representative workforce in terms of SEB and also that when colleagues from a lower SEB join us, they are able to progress upwards within the organisation.

We want to make a meaningful difference to the communities in which we work and serve, building stronger relationships. In addition to supporting social mobility through employment opportunities, we use our specialist skills, expertise and time to contribute to the wellbeing of the community through education, raising awareness of services and volunteering.

It is also important that we understand our impact on the environment and how we mitigate this through sustainable procurement, continued education and working to reduce emissions and waste. Reducing our environmental footprint and addressing climate change is critical to us.



### **2024/25** at a glance

### Just some of the ways we've made a difference in 2024/25



**£668 million** saved for the wider healthcare system



The School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme distributed over **407 million** pieces of fruit to **2.15 million** school-age children



Listed **18th** in the Top 50 Inspiring Workplaces and **No.2** in Government and Not-for-Profit



Over **110,000**households and
pregnant women
joined NHS
Healthy Start



**5.8 million** interactions with the NHSBSA Open Data Portal



Introduced the collection of socio-economic data in the Employee Staff Record (ESR)



66% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions towards Net Zero



**6,342** hours of employee volunteering donated to charitable and community organisations



Employees raised over **£20,180** in cash donations for several charities



Issued **542,000**Hormone
Replacement
Therapy PPCs



Delivered face-toface outreach to over **2,300** secondary school students across social mobility cold spots



Over **15,000** visits to NHSBSA statistics by over **6,000** users



### NHSBSA services support people to live longer, healthier lives

### **Supporting families**

NHS Healthy Start helps young families and those who are pregnant and on low incomes to access healthy food, milk and vitamins. People on the scheme receive regular payments onto a prepaid card to spend on milk, fruit, vegetables, pulses and infant formula.

In 2024/2025, over **110,000 households and pregnant women** joined the scheme, and more than **£90 million** was spent on NHS Healthy Start prepaid cards.

The Nursery Reimbursement Unit provided 191.5
million portions of milk to children under the age of five. The School Fruit and Vegetable
Scheme distributed over 407 million pieces of fruit to 2.15 million schoolchildren.

portions

Supporting patients with health costs

We provide a range of services to help people with the cost of NHS prescriptions, dental treatment, eye care, travel to and from hospital appointments, wigs and fabric supports. These include:

- exemption certificates to receive free NHS prescriptions for those with certain health conditions or for those who are pregnant or have recently given birth
- the NHS Low Income Scheme to help those with low incomes to get full or partial help towards their health costs
- three or 12-month Prescription Prepayment
   Certificate (PPC) to help people who pay for their NHS prescriptions save money
- the Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) PPC to help people who pay for HRT prescriptions save money for certain HRT medications



### Helping patients to access medication

Medical exemption certificates are usually valid for five years. We issued **484,000** medical exemption certificates in 2024/25, which entitle eligible patients to free NHS prescriptions. The number issued continues to increase.

We identified **2.6 million patients** who were dispensed NHS prescriptions in England where a medical exemption was applied. Experimental estimates indicate that these patients saved **£872 million** in prescription charges.

Maternity exemption certificates are typically valid from early pregnancy until 12 months after the birth of the baby. The number of maternity exemption certificates issued has increased steadily over the last five years. Just under **574,000 certificates** were issued in 2024/25.

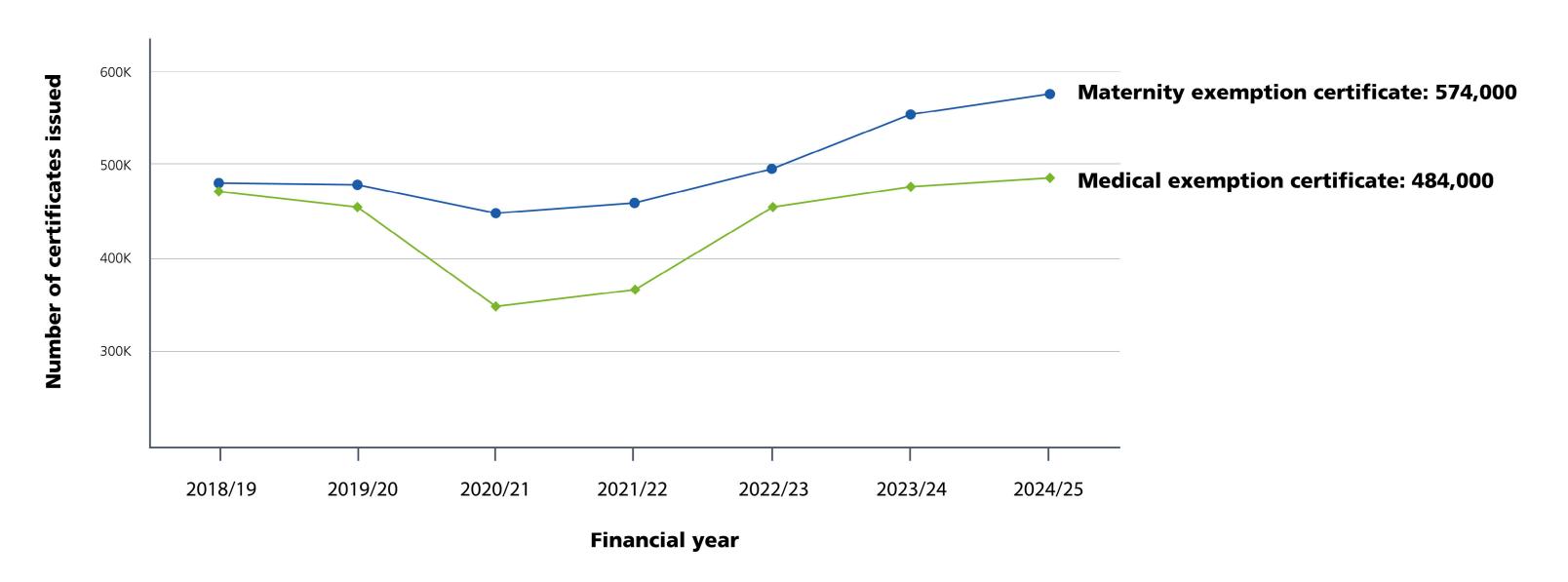
We identified **899,000 patients** who were dispensed NHS prescriptions in England where a maternity exemption was applied. Experimental estimates indicate that these patients saved **just under £52 million** in prescription charges.

In 2024/25, we issued **154,000** HC2 certificates which provided patients with full help with health costs including free prescriptions, free dental treatment and free sight tests. The majority of certificates are issued for a year.

In 2024/25, we identified **196,000** patients who were dispensed NHS prescriptions in England where an NHS Low Income Scheme concession was applied. Experimental estimates indicate that these patients saved **£26 million** in prescription charges.

A further **88,000** HC3 certificates provided patients with partial help with health costs.

### The number of maternity and medical exemption certificates is at its highest value since 2018/19



The total number of PPCs purchased has increased every year since 2020/21. In 2024/25, we issued **2.2 million** 12-month certificates and **984,000** three-month certificates.

We identified **3.3 million patients** who were dispensed NHS prescriptions in England where a PPC exemption was applied. Experimental estimates indicate that these patients could have spent **£883 million** in prescription charges if they did not have a PPC.

We also issued **542,000** Hormone Replacement Therapy PPCs (HRT PPCs). HRT PPCs are valid for 12 months. We identified **616,000** patients who received NHS prescriptions where an HRT PPC exemption was applied for HRT eligible medicines. Experimental estimates indicate that patients could have spent **£33 million** in prescription charges if they did not have an HRT PPC in 2024/25.



### Improving access to our services

We want to make it easier for our customers to receive help with health costs services, ultimately helping them to live longer, healthier lives.

In 2024/25, we made a range of insights and statistics openly available about help with health costs services. This has been used to inform policies, planning and promotion of services locally and nationally. It has also enabled Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), local authorities, charities and other organisations to target interventions.

# Helping patients to access help with health costs

We analysed our data to identify patients who were paying for their prescriptions and would have benefitted from a PPC. During winter 2024, we contacted 51,000 patients who were most likely to benefit, advising them on how to access help with health costs.

In the four months since sending the letters over **4,000 patients** have taken up some form of exemption. They have saved around **£184,000** in prescription charges. We continue to monitor this.

"The Help with Health Costs report and dashboards have helped NHS Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB) to identify areas where support could be improved, especially for people in our local communities who may be missing out on help they're entitled to.

Through the data available we identified that that fewer people in more deprived areas were applying for free maternity exemption certificates. As a result, we provided extra training, especially for new staff, so they can better support patients in accessing these benefits.

We continue to work closely with the NHS Business Services Authority to identify further opportunities to tackle health inequalities through the data that is available to help improve access, experience and outcomes for our local population.

Jon Bartram, Programme Director for Outcomes, Strategic Commissioning Unit, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ICB

# Raising awareness of help with health costs

In 2024/25, we used social media advertising to promote our Help with Health Costs services across England. We also ran targeted regional social media adverts to specifically promote our online eligibility checker and maternity exemption certificates. For this, we analysed our data to identify areas of the country where exemption certificate awareness seemed to be lower.

The overall campaign, including both national and regional advertising, delivered excellent reach

and engagement, generating nearly **22 million impressions** and driving more than **320,000 clicks**(of which over 60,000 clicks were from the regional adverts) to relevant service pages on the NHSBSA website.

While the campaigns were running, monthly applications to NHS Healthy Start increased by an average of 6.5%, and applications to Help with Health Costs services were up by an average of 3.3%.

Supporting the public, particularly people who have low incomes and who receive benefits, to access help with their health costs that they're entitled to.

# Increasing digital take up of maternity exemption certificates

Digital certificates provide timely access to benefits and services for expectant mothers and those who have given birth in the last 12 months.

We used our insight to identify areas with low uptake and found that Mid and South Essex ICS had an especially low percentage of digital applications.

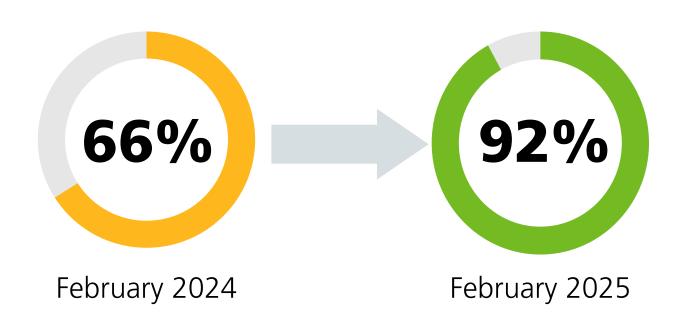
We worked with the Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust and the Mid and South Essex Local Maternity and Neonatal System to increase digital application rates. This also had the potential to:

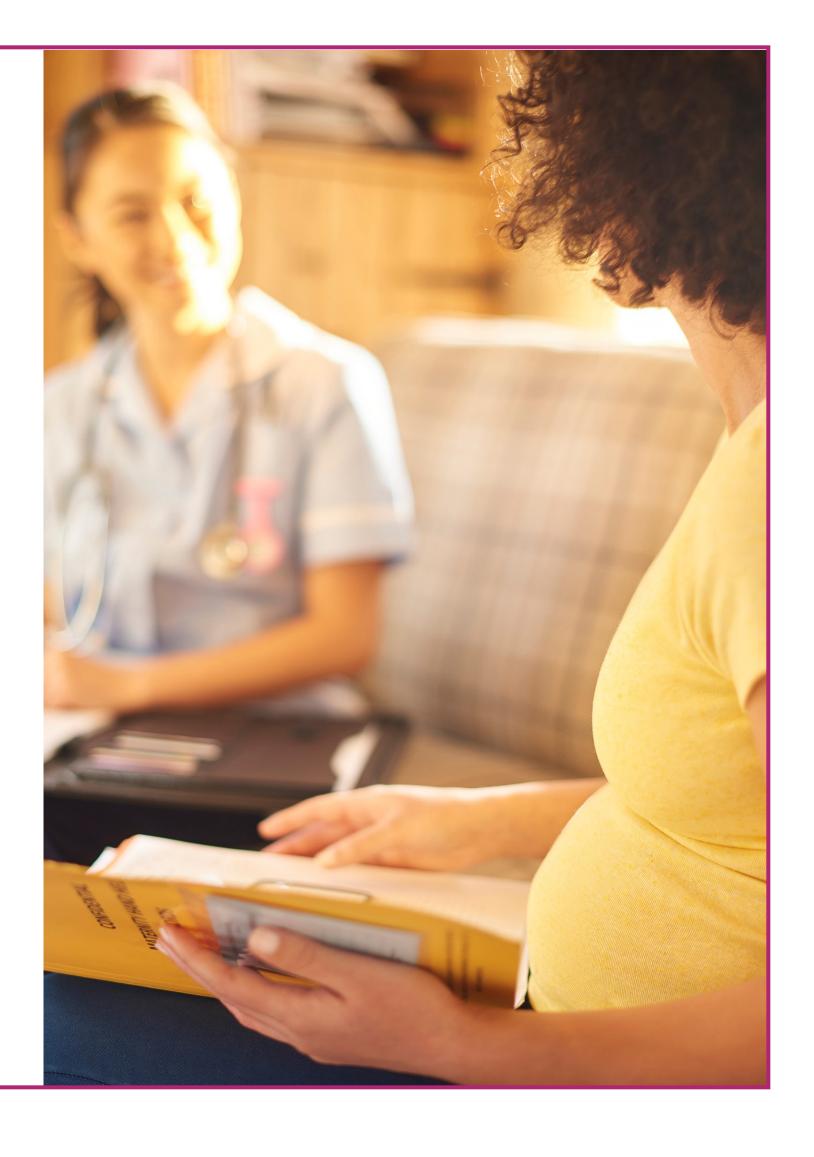
- ensure applicants received their certificates as soon as possible
- extend the active period of maternity exemption certificates
- reduce the number of penalty charge notices by advising applicants on how to claim their exemption correctly

Activities included:

- regular monitoring of uptake
- using the NHSBSA maternity exemption certificate communications toolkit to share information with staff and promote the certificate's use within the organisation
- social media promotion by the Trust and the Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership
- internal communication and education within the Trust to engage employees

### Digital application rates in the Trust have increased significantly





## Tackling health inequalities

Health inequalities are avoidable, unfair and systematic differences in health between different groups of people. At the NHSBSA, we are committed to supporting a reduction in health inequalities through our services and data and insight reports and statistics.

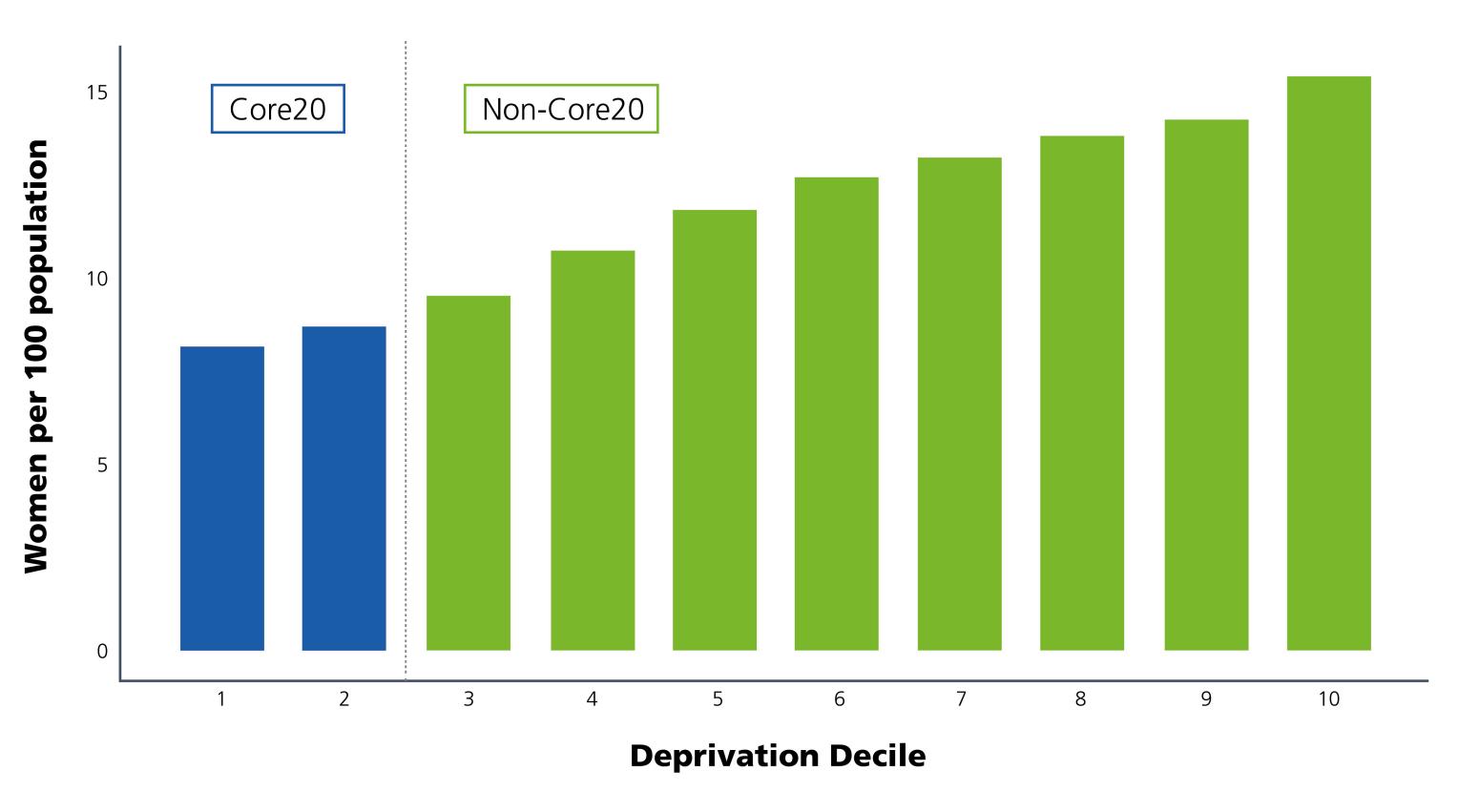
# NHS prescribing of HRT to treat symptoms of the menopause

In 2024/25, we worked closely with Dr Sue Mann, National Clinical Director for Women's Health at NHS England (NHSE), to explore HRT prescribing inequalities for menopause in women aged 40 and over. We combined clinical and data expertise to deliver actionable insights to improve access, awareness and experiences of HRT and women's healthcare inequalities.

The team created an openly available <u>interactive insight</u> <u>report</u> featuring narrative, charts and data to explore patterns locally and nationally. The report provided insights by age, deprivation and a range of geographies as well as different HRT types.

HRT prescribing rates for menopause are 1.5 times lower in the 20% most deprived areas compared to less deprived areas.

#### Women aged 40 and over receiving HRT prescribing by deprivation in 2023/24



Core20 identifies the most deprived 20% of the population using the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Non-Core20 is the rest of the population

The report has received 2,700 visits since its launch on World Menopause Day on 18 October 2024. The report:

- is a vital source of evidence for NHSE to inform the development of an Equity Framework that will signpost the report to all systems to use for their local geographies
- is referenced in new National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance for menopause
- was well received by Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), Trusts, local authorities, charities, GPs and universities

"It helped inform our understanding of the challenges and inequalities facing women and to consider this within our age-friendly borough approach."

Public Health Specialist, Local Authority

"It will help us to implement primary care prescribing guidance."

Senior Prescribing Advisor, ICB



# Prescribing patterns for older care home patients

Many older care home patients have complex healthcare needs, multiple long-term conditions and frailty. They are an important group deserving of specific clinical focus. Insight into prescribing could help to:

- optimise medicines management
- improve the quality of care and patient safety

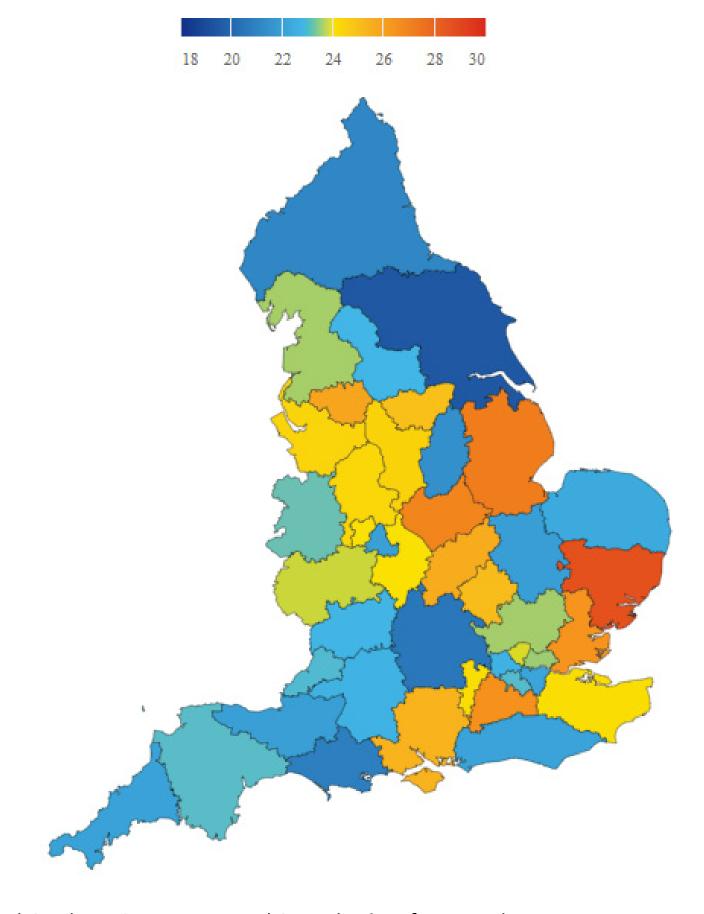
We undertook experimental data linkage work to identify older care home patients aged 65 and over in our NHS prescriptions data. We collaborated with colleagues in NHSE and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to develop prescribing metrics in relation to the use and management of medicines in care homes.

Our report provides key insights into NHS primary care prescribing patterns for care home patients and patients living in their own homes age 65 and over during a four year period. It has received over 1,400 visits since its launch in December.

Insights are provided at national and local levels showing trends over time and variation. The insights can help to inform policies, planning and interventions. "It's vital that we see the difference in the way that we prescribe to those in care homes... Having this at national level is very important to draw attention to the differences but also then having the ability to drill down into the ICS level data gives people an idea of the local picture."

"The report and the insight it gave was excellent. It gave primary care the drive to embed Care Homes teams within their Medicines Optimisation teams and a general understanding of where to act."

ICBs showed considerable variation in the percentage of care home patients aged 65 and over prescribed three or more falls-risk medicines in 2023/24. This ranged between 19% and 29% and highlights the geographic variation of the prescribing of medicines with a falls-risk in England.



This data is presented in tabular format <u>here</u>.

# Child health insights: take up of NHS dental, NHS prescribing and support schemes

In this <u>report</u>, we apply a healthcare inequalities lens to NHSBSA data related to children. This includes NHS prescribing and NHS dental treatments for children and young people aged 0 to 17 years in England and uptake of maternity exemption certificates. We identified a system need for these insights by extensively engaging with the wider healthcare system.

Together, with other evidence, these insights are used by local authorities, ICSs and policymakers to help inform policies, planning, commissioning and promotion of services. They support targeted actions to improve outcomes at both the national and local levels and the <a href="Core20PLUS5">Core20PLUS5</a> approach (opens PDF) to reduce health inequalities for children and young people.

Council, supporting the Public Health team in their Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) programme. I wanted to contact you to say that your interactive child health insights report has been extremely helpful in the development of our latest JSNA - 'Empowering Futures: Growing up Well in Warwickshire' which looks at the physical health of school-aged children. We wanted to cover common long-term conditions affecting children but quickly found that the available data for those was quite limited, specifically asthma."

Business Intelligence Analyst (Population Health), Warwickshire County Council

"Ward-level statistics on children's oral health are absolute gold dust here, as we have considerable variation within the city. These statistics help with targeting and inequalities work in local authority public health. The statutory role of public health is to protect the health of the public, but also to reduce health inequality and that latter priority relies on this sort of detail and breakdown."

Senior Public Health Specialist, Bristol Communities & Public Health



## Improving patient safety and outcomes

We present clinical data to the wider NHS, from frontline pharmacists through to ICB leads, providing information that allows them to make data-driven decisions to reduce patient risk, support better outcomes and reduce waste.

# Dashboards to support national NHS priorities

We host dashboards in a secure environment called ePACT2. Our dashboards cover a range of topics including polypharmacy (patients receiving more than 10 different medications in a month), antimicrobial stewardship and the short and medium-term use of opioids to reduce the risk of addiction.

We launched three new ePACT2 dashboards in 2024/25, focusing on antimicrobial stewardship for urinary tract infections, antimicrobial stewardship within Pharmacy First and the oversupply of medication. We continue to monitor the use and effectiveness of the dashboards and support the treating clinicians in accessing patient details to enable early interventions.

In 2024, there were around 2,000 ePACT2 users from across the NHS every month and we fulfilled over 350 requests for patient data from clinicians. Highlights include:

Supporting the findings of the <u>National Overprescribing</u> <u>Review</u> through the publication of the oversupply dashboard, highlighting:

- 2 million patients at risk of receiving too much medication
- **over £100 million** of potential savings per year in primary care prescribing

Supporting <u>five-year action plan for antimicrobial</u> <u>resistance</u> through the publication of five antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) dashboards – AMS Stewardship, AMS - Children's, AMS - Pharmacy First, AMS - Rightcare UTI Focus Pack and AMS - UTI.

Medicines Safety Improvement Programme uses our data to help ICBs, Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and practices to target high-dose and prolonged opioid use. The programme has reported a reduction of over **7,000** people per month being prescribed high dose opioids. Patients reported a better quality of life and less pain because of improved care.

Using our data to support the Valproate Integrated Quality Improvement National Programme to help ICBs make the use of Valproate as safe as possible.

So far we've seen a **35% reduction** in the number of women of childbearing age prescribed Valproate.



Estimated cost reduction of **£34 million** against expected spend in 2024 through our polypharmacy dashboard.

Supporting the NHS England National Medicines

Optimisation Opportunities Programme which has led
to reductions in the cost of biologics and low priority
prescribing, reduce carbon emissions from inhalers and
reduced use of long-term antibiotics using our medicines
opportunities dashboard.

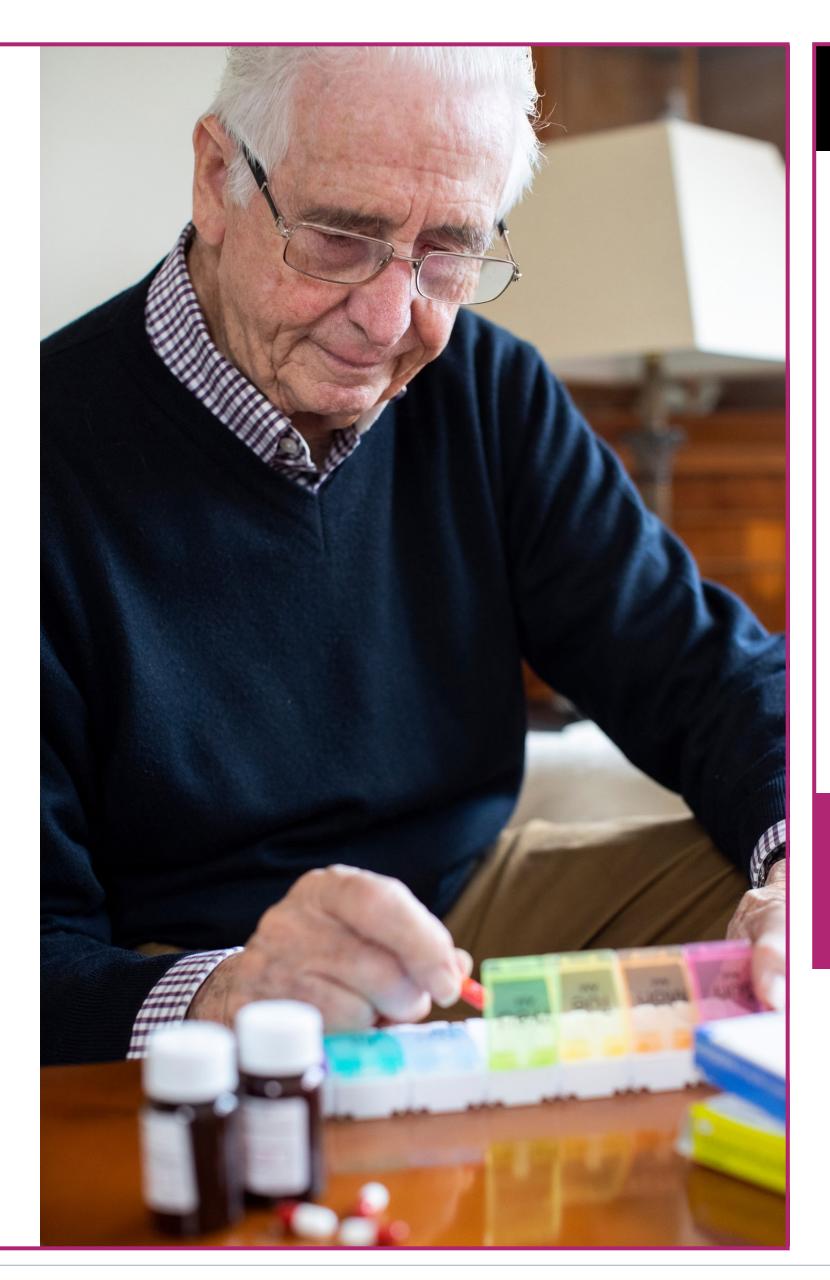
### Reducing prescribing risks

Anticoagulants are medicines that help prevent blood clots and reduce the risk of serious conditions such as strokes and heart attacks. They are commonly prescribed, particularly to older patients. However, there is significant risk when patients take two or more different anticoagulants at the same time; this is potentially fatal.

We worked with NHSE's Patient Safety Lead to develop metrics that could indicate patients at risk. We focused on five chemical substances – apixaban, dabigatran, edoxaban, rivaroxaban and warfarin.

We provided ICB pharmacy leads with summaries of affected patients by General Practice, with enough detail to enable a search of clinical systems. Alternatively practices could request patient information directly from us to allow them to complete medication reviews and ensure the patient was not taking two or more different substances at the same time.

The first summary we provided included **over 450 patients** who had received multiple anticoagulants in the previous three months. After six months, this reduced to **250 patients** in the previous three months. We are working with NHSE to identify other areas of potential risk and how to develop this further.



# Supporting dentists to deliver clinical good practice

Our Clinical Advisors monitor the quality of services provided by dentists and provide advice about dental care based on clinical guidelines. Activities include targeted record card reviews, patient examinations and patient questionnaires, which is led by engagement with regional teams and proactive data analytics.

This work resulted in:

- a direct 'cash effect' from the recovery of erroneous claims
- changes in the behaviour of contractors after intervention, leading to improvements to the quality of treatment that patients receive in line with clinical guidelines

We estimate a £14 million productivity gain for 2024/25 following this clinical intervention.

# Making NHSBSA data, statistics and insight openly available

We are committed to using our service data and insights to have a positive impact on health outcomes for the population by enabling the health and care system to create value from our data and saving the wider system money. During 2024/25, we published **10 Official Statistics publications** with 17 releases.

Our statistics were used in hundreds of articles including in national outlets such as the BBC, Telegraph and The Lancet. They received around **15,000** visits from over **6,000** users in 2024/25.

Our most popular publication, Prescription Cost Analysis – England provides details of the costs and volumes of all prescription items dispensed in the community in England. It received around **6,000** visits in 2024/25. There were **63,500** interactions with the accompanying dataset.

The latest Prescription Cost Analysis of all prescriptions dispensed in the community in England is out now from the NHS Business Services Authority.

It's great to see NHSBSA releasing the underlying code and methodology as open code on their Github. This is really important for transparency and reproducibility of all the claims being made but most importantly, it means others can re-use to make their lives easier!

Director of NHS Service Analytics at the Bennett Institute for Applied Data Science Four of our official statistics publications focus on areas of clinical priority for the NHS. These include:

- diabetes
- dependency forming medicines
- medicines used in mental health
- women's health (HRT)

As well as informing the media and the public, these publications are used by the wider system to support monitoring and activities in these areas.

"This [Dependency Forming Medicines publication] was incredibly helpful... it is used regularly to report on usage patterns to the Medicine Optimisation Executive Group (MOEG)."

Assistant Director of Medicines Analysis at NHSE

Our publications are also used to assess the impact of policy changes, such as the HRT PPC. The HRT publication helped to monitor the introduction of the HRT PPC and associated improvements in inequalities and women's health.

"The HRT publication has been a really good publication, developed alongside a new policy that's demonstrated the impact associated with that policy change."

Deputy Director, Medicine Regulation and Prescribing at DHSC

Our NHSBSA Open Data Portal published 32 open datasets in 2024/25. It includes a range of aggregated datasets including prescribing, dispensing, dental and digital service performance. These datasets are freely available for use. They enable colleagues across the health and care system to create value from our data. There were **5.8 million** interactions with the Open Data Portal during 2024/25.



### **Enabling others to generate value from our data**

The English Prescribing Dataset (EPD) is published monthly through the <u>Open Data Portal</u>. It provides open access to aggregated data on prescriptions issued in England including medicines, costs and prescribing organisation. By making this data widely available we encourage innovative use, allowing experts to develop solutions that improve prescribing across the NHS.

OpenPrescribing, developed by the Bennett Institute for Applied Data Science, transformed this raw data into a powerful, user-friendly tool. It provides interactive insights that help GP practices compare prescribing habits, identify inefficiencies and make informed decisions. As a result, NHS practices using OpenPrescribing have already saved millions of pounds, and ongoing use of the platform continues to unlock further efficiencies and improvements in patient care.

In its first three months, GP surgeries saved £243,000 and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) saved £1.47 million.

University of Oxford

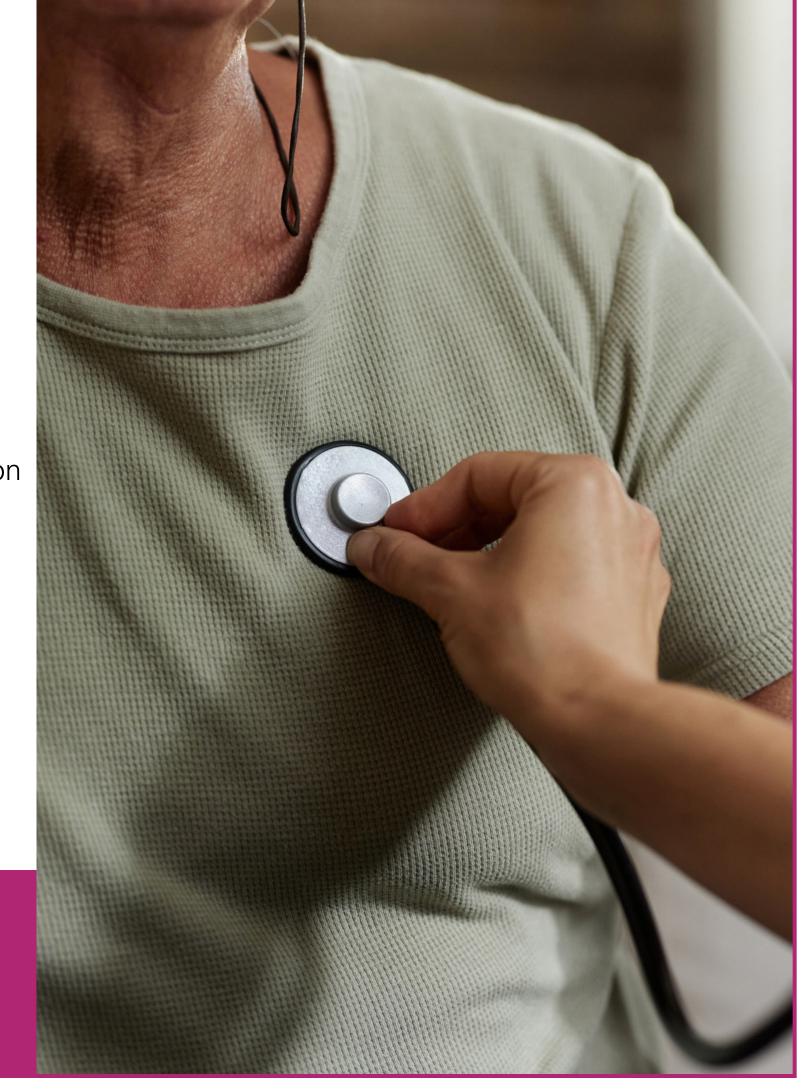
The British Heart Foundation (BHF) used the <u>EPD</u> to examine cardiovascular prescribing patterns across England.

The team accessed aggregated GP practice-level prescribing data on cardiovascular drugs and linked this with geographic data and Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) scores to assess prescribing rates by deprivation decile.

The machine-readable format of the Open Data Portal allowed BHF's data scientists to automate data extraction using scripts, making it easier to regularly update and join prescribing data with deprivation indicators. This allowed them to identify treatment disparities between the most and least deprived communities.

The work formed part of a comprehensive <u>national</u> <u>analysis</u> into socio-economic inequalities, combining prescribing, prevalence, hospital admissions and mortality data, which was published in January 2025.

BHF's findings are informing national discussions on addressing cardiovascular health inequalities and underscore the importance of open data in shaping public health responses.



# Making a difference as an employer

As a public sector organisation, we're an integral part of the communities in which we work and serve and we want to make a meaningful difference to them. This is a key part of our aim to be an employer of choice and to develop our future workforce. In addition to supporting social mobility through employment opportunities, we use our specialist skills, expertise and time to contribute to the wellbeing of the community through education, raising awareness of services and volunteering.



## **Social mobility**

In the UK, factors such as where you grew up, what your parents did and where you went to school are strong predictors of educational and career outcomes. At the NHSBSA, we're committed to enabling and supporting people to reach their full potential and achieve their career aspirations based on their skills and talents, rather than being restricted by the environment they were born into.

We aim to be recognised as a top employer for social mobility, offering opportunities for advancement based on merit. Our goal is to nurture, harness and reward talent from all socio-economic backgrounds, with the ambition to achieve accreditation in the top 75 of the Social Mobility Employer Index by 2029.

We believe boosting social mobility is about more than internal interventions, it's about empowering and upskilling local communities. We're committed to attracting and supporting individuals from lower SEBs and disadvantaged groups to reduce inequalities, raise aspirations and promote inclusion. This drives better decision-making, innovation and helps us provide accessible services that meet our customers' diverse needs.



In 2024/25, we launched our new approach to promote socio-economic diversity and inclusion across the NHSBSA, we're delighted to say that our social mobility work is already receiving recognition and this is highlighted in the key achievements below:

Became a **lead signatory for the Social Mobility Pledge,** focusing on outreach, access, recruitment and progression

Joined Browne Jacobson's **Social Mobility Incubator** mentoring sessions, gaining valuable tools and insights to create an approach that drives meaningful change

Celebrated **National Social Mobility Day** in June 2024, hosting a social mobility insight masterclass in collaboration with Bridges of Hope and Blackbullion, two leading organisations in the field of social mobility. Over 100 colleagues attended to learn more about social mobility, why it's important to us and the role we will play in improving social mobility

Entered the **Social Mobility Employer Index** for the first time, ranking 134th out of 150. We used the insight gathered to further enhance our approach, as we prepare for our second submission in June 2025

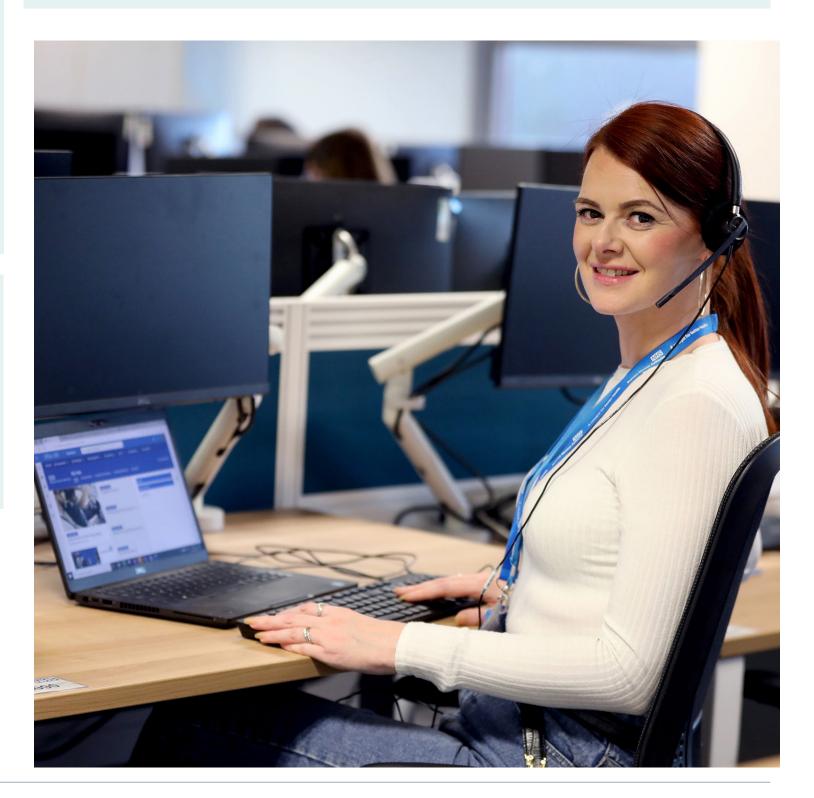
Shortlisted for the Workplace Social Mobility and Inclusion award at the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei)Inclusivity

Excellence Awards 2024 for our work with the Newcastle Women Swahili Group. We piloted a successful bespoke skills development programme that helped break down barriers to employment and bring individuals closer to the job market

Developed a **social mobility mapping tool** that uses national data to guide our outreach to disadvantaged areas, schools and communities. This helps ensure that our initiatives target the right people using a data-driven approach

Introduced the collection of socio-economic data in the NHS Employee Staff Record (ESR), which enables all NHS colleagues to input their SEB information in ESR, meaning that all NHS organisations can collect, report on and analyse this information and take steps to improve or maintain their socio-economic

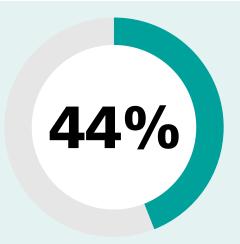
diversity



# Socio-economic background of our workforce

In September 2024, we launched our socio-economic data collection to understand the diversity of our workforce. Using the Social Mobility Commission's four recommended socio-economic data points, we achieved significant participation from colleagues and established a baseline for evidence-led interventions.

The data shows that:



of our colleagues are from lower SEBs, putting us 5% above the UK benchmark of 39%.

All pay band groupings are above the UK benchmark for representation of colleagues from lower SEBs, including our senior leaders.

Whether or not colleagues received free school meals does not appear to influence the roles they work in or their pay band.

We have state school representation across all pay bands.



# Inspiring, engaging and targeting young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds

Not all young people have the same career opportunities and employers play a vital role in helping those from disadvantaged backgrounds access them. Only 40% of young people from lower SEBs have gained workplace exposure\*. Providing meaningful experience of the workplace for young people is core to our approach.

In March 2025, we became a Cornerstone Employer in the North East, partnering with the career hub to address disadvantage, promote career pathways, upskill and inform educators, parents and carers to create better opportunities for young people.

We've created a three-year outreach plan focused on career insights, skills development, workplace experiences and exposure to careers for students from lower SEBs, aligned with the Careers and Enterprise Company's Employer Standards and Gatsby Benchmarks.

Over the last 12 months, additional outreach activities include:

200

Engaged with over 200 students virtually delivering digital career insight sessions organised through Skills Builder Partnership

2,300

Delivered face to face outreach with over 2,300 secondary school students across social mobility cold spots and areas of deprivation

Career

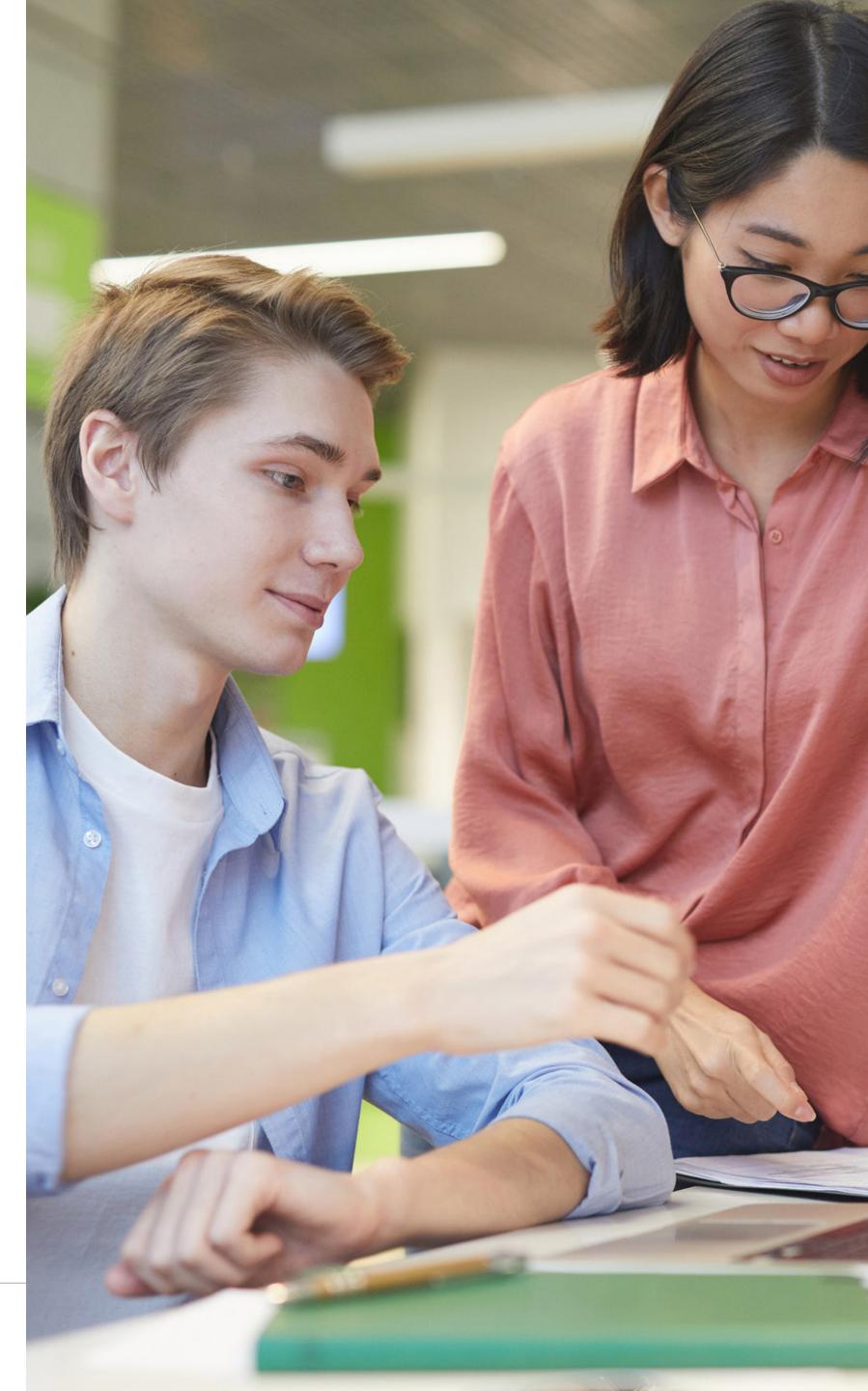
Attended career panels and delivering workshops to North East students from non-Russell Group universities

Over 20 Students

Inspired over 20 year 10 students at Fleetwood High School, a school with a higher-than-average percentage of students receiving free school meals, by linking the maths curriculum to careers in NHS

finance. Students rated their interest in an NHS finance career before and after the sessions. The likelihood of considering a career in NHS finance more than doubled, a fantastic result

\*(KPMG, 2023)



# Supporting access to employment for people from lower socio-economic backgrounds

We aim to attract and support individuals from lower SEBs and disadvantaged groups. In spring 2024, we piloted a bespoke pre-employment programme to help these individuals transition into employment, whether at the NHSBSA, wider NHS or beyond. In partnership with external organisations and charities, we delivered a five-week employability programme designed to break down barriers and create opportunities for progress to over 20 unemployed women from a local community group in the west end of Newcastle called the Newcastle Women's Swahili Group.

The programme received excellent feedback, with participants reporting significant improvements, including:

- increased confidence in job searching, completing applications and interviewing
- reduction in perceived barriers to employment
- improved self-confidence and belief in their abilities
- enhanced knowledge of previously unfamiliar topics

Participants shared that the programme not only empowered them individually but also made a lasting

impact on their community, with one participant commenting:

"The impact of this mentorship extends far beyond the classroom, instilling confidence and hope for brighter futures for ourselves and our families."



# Making work experience accessible to all young people

In July 2024, we ran successful work experience pilots in the North East, receiving over 70 applications from students in years 10 and 12 and hosting 30 students from 16 schools and colleges. Our goal was to boost students' confidence and aspirations, with 50% of participants coming from non-selective state schools and social mobility cold spots. By providing laptops, expenses such as lunch and ring-fenced places, we made these work-related opportunities accessible to students from diverse social backgrounds.

**95%** of students reported feeling welcomed and comfortable during their placement and said they would recommend the experience to others.

"This placement has been great to see the nonclinical side of the NHS, as well as the use of IT and computing in the NHSBSA. It's helped me to develop my teamwork and communication skills."

## Corporate volunteering and fundraising

'Connected to Communities', our corporate volunteering and fundraising offer, plays a vital role in strengthening our connection to the communities we serve. In 2024, as part of our business strategy, we made an ambitious commitment to donate 50,000 hours of volunteering to our local communities by 2029. To enable this, all colleagues can take 15 hours of paid volunteering time

annually to support causes that are close to their hearts, individually or as a team.

We also support colleagues to fundraise for charitable organisations by providing opportunities to participate in fundraising events and a framework for colleagues and our employee networks to fundraise for organisations

that align with their values and areas of focus.

Our approach has reciprocal benefits not only for those we serve but plays a significant role in helping us achieve our strategic goals in the following ways:



### **CUSTOMER**

Connecting colleagues with their local communities provides a greater understanding of our customer base, meaning we can meet their needs in the first instance.



# VALUE AND EFFICIENCY

Volunteering provides cost effective ways of team building and development for our workforce, delivering value for money for the taxpayer.



### **OUR PEOPLE**

Our offer promotes colleague physical and emotional wellbeing, helping teams to connect when working in a hybrid way, while also supporting personal and professional growth. This enables us to attract, develop and retain a diverse workforce, supports colleague engagement and the aspiration to achieve a 3-star accreditation in the Best Companies Index.



# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE (ESG)

We enhance and protect the natural environment through environmental volunteering initiatives. We also support people from lower SEBs through volunteering, which helps us work towards our aim to achieve a Top 75 ranking in the Social Mobility Index.

During 2024/25, we enhanced our offer to increase colleague uptake, including:

### Establishing a Social Impact Steering Group (SISG)

The performance of our offer is governed by our newly established SISG. This group acts as a strategic decision-making function, ensuring that the approach is embedded effectively across the organisation.

### **Data collection and analysis**

Being able to quantify our impact is critical to the success of our offer. We created three short videos to guide colleagues through recording their volunteering time in different scenarios. A volunteering dashboard has been created to help us identify areas of low participation so targeted support can be provided to those teams as well as tracking progress.

#### Improving policy and guidance

We updated our policy and guidance to allow colleagues more flexibility to volunteer outside their usual working patterns, increasing the number of opportunities available. We have also improved our due diligence process as well as ensuring that workplace adjustments are considered when arranging opportunities.

#### **Team engagement**

We actively promote our offer across the organisation, attending Q&A sessions, and work closely with operational workforce planners to develop processes that support colleague participation while balancing business needs.

### **Supporting our suppliers to 'Give Something Back'**

We encourage our suppliers to support our volunteering ambitions through the delivery of our social value obligations embedded across the procurement lifecycle.

#### **Building long term, sustainable relationships**

We have established a number of meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships with local charities and organisations to ensure that longer term social impact is achieved.



# The impact of 'Connected to Communities' for 2024/25

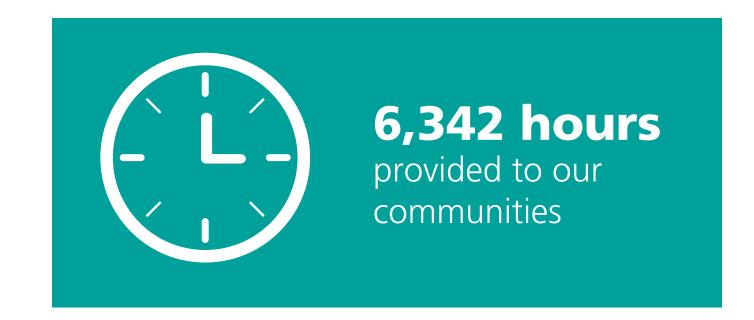
#### Volunteering

This year, our colleagues supported more than 31 different charities and community organisations. This equated to over 6,000 volunteering hours provided to our communities, exceeding our target for this year of 3,018 hours. 7.8% of colleagues participated in our volunteering programmes.

### **Fundraising**

Our colleagues raised over **£20,180** in cash donations, as well as an additional **£1,300** as Gifts-in-Kind, supporting several charities, including:

- Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal
- Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day
- Macmillan's Coffee Morning
- Walking with the Wounded









### Supporting social mobility through volunteering

Sophie and Craig volunteered at Love, Amelia, a North East charity that provides essential items to families experiencing hardship to help children be safe, happy and thrive. Inspired by her experience, Sophie plans to volunteer again and donate items her child has outgrown, hoping to help other families.





### **Supporting healthcare through volunteering**

On World Cancer Day, Jemma and Liam volunteered for Children's Cancer North, a beacon of hope for families facing the unimaginable challenge of childhood cancer, in Newcastle city centre. They listened to stories of struggle and resilience, raising funds to bring joy to children undergoing treatment. Inspired by the courage they witnessed, Jemma and Liam felt a profound sense of purpose, knowing their efforts brought light to those in need.



# Protecting the environment and supporting inclusion through volunteering

Charlotte volunteered with Footprints on the Moon, an environmental organisation that uses the forest as a classroom. This space allows children, often with additional needs, to learn and connect with nature while supporting biodiversity through habitat restoration. During her first volunteering experience, Charlotte helped rebuild a deadwood hedge, clear the area and plant tree cuttings. She enjoyed meeting new colleagues and felt fulfilled contributing to the local community, making the forest more enjoyable for the children.





### Protecting the environment through volunteering

Helen volunteered for Urban Green Newcastle, a charity dedicated to revitalising and preserving the city's green spaces, promoting biodiversity and sustainability. Helen spent a day clearing around the pond at a park, bonding and connecting with colleagues. Helen wholeheartedly recommends this fulfilling experience.









# **Environmental sustainability**

After declaring a climate emergency, in 2024 we set an ambitious goal to reach Net Zero by 2030. So far, we've reduced greenhouse gas emissions by **66%**. We are also committed to improving the efficiency of our operations by eliminating waste at source and moving away from paper-based services.

We actively integrate sustainability within our organisational thinking and processes. This supports us to reduce our environmental impact and increase understanding of environment-related issues within our workforce. By monitoring and improving our environmental performance, we also generate wider social benefits, such as increasing environmental awareness across our workforce, improving access to digital services and contributing to a healthier local environment.

Key activity during 2024/25, included:

### **Energy Cafés**

We partnered with National Energy Action to deliver Energy Cafés which support colleagues to lower their energy use at home, with over 350 colleagues attending since their inception. Colleagues reported increased confidence in managing rising energy costs, supporting both financial wellbeing and reduced energy consumption at home.

#### Cleaner air, healthier lives

We improved the sustainability of our car lease scheme, which now exclusively offers electric vehicles, aligning with both our goals of reducing environmental impact and improving public health. As a healthcare organisation that helps people live longer, healthier lives, we have a responsibility to take proactive steps to reduce our contribution to air pollution.

### **Climate change support**

We understand the concern that awareness of climate change can bring. In collaboration with DHSC, we created a support pack for those feeling overwhelmed by climate change. We have shared this with various public health fora and cross-government groups to be used more widely across government. This resource offers not only comfort but agency with practical ways to act, reflect and feel hopeful, empowering minds in a changing climate.

# Engaging our strategic suppliers on sustainability, using our influence to drive change

A large part of our impact lies within our supply chain, while beyond our direct influence, this is an area we can influence. We advanced our approach to sustainable procurement and have developed a Supplier Net Zero Roadmap with input from key stakeholders to ensure alignment across the public sector. It brings together best practice and maximises the use of existing public procurement notes to drive emissions reduction and reporting throughout our supply chain. We held a Strategic Supplier Event to share our work and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

### **Carbon Literacy Training**

We delivered Carbon Literacy Training across the organisation, focusing on teams with the biggest environmental impact or influence. This initiative helped establish climate champions across the organisation, embedding environmental thinking into everyday decisions and strategy. The training has influenced how teams shape policy, procurement and digital transformation.

As a result of attending the training, one of our Lead Cloud Architects pledged to create a carbon emissions dashboard for service owners, so they are aware of their usage and understand the carbon emissions generated by their use of the cloud

From improving carbon literacy to restoring ponds and so much more, our Environment and Sustainability Strategy is powered by our people. By providing tools, support, and opportunities to get involved, we're embedding sustainability into our culture, bringing everyone on our journey and helping create a healthier future for all.



## Maximising social value through our supply chain

To maximise the social value we can drive through our supply chain and to ensure that the social value public procurement notice is effectively embedded into our procurement processes, this year we established a Social Value Working Group. The group's purpose is to reinforce the "golden thread" of social value throughout the entire procurement lifecycle, from tendering to contract management and delivery.

This year, we made important progress by developing a targeted approach to identifying the specific social value outcomes that matter most to the NHSBSA. We expect our suppliers to deliver on these through their social value commitments. This allows us to track measurable improvements and maximise value added.

We publish performance against key performance indicators (KPIs) for all of our contracts with a value of £5 million or greater via the Government Commercial Function online application, known as Project Santiago. For all contracts awarded since January 2020, a social value KPI is included in Project Santiago publication returns.

# Social value throughout NHS Healthy Start vitamin procurement

The NHS Healthy Start scheme helps young families and those who are pregnant and on low incomes to access healthy food, milk and vitamins. In 2024, the NHSBSA procured two contracts for the provision of Healthy Start vitamins:

- children's Healthy Start vitamins, with an estimated value of £3,000,000
- women's Healthy Start vitamins, with an estimated value of £1,020,000

Social value was embedded in both procurements, with 10% of each bid evaluation dedicated to social value. In line with the Social Value Model Theme 5 – Improve health and wellbeing, suppliers were asked to describe the commitment they would make to deliver improvements in the health and wellbeing of their workforce and beyond. Resulting commitments from suppliers included:

• volunteering **50 hours** per year with charities that improve mental health, combat loneliness and help those that NHS Healthy Start supports

• donating **£500** per month to two relevant specific charities for the duration of the contract

The NHSBSA monitors and publishes supplier performance against social value KPIs. This reporting demonstrates that our commitments are being met and that we're continuing to maximise social value through our supply chain.



### Conclusion

The NHSBSA is guided by our ambitious five-year strategy with strategic goals to improve public health, tackle inequalities and drive positive social and environmental change. As highlighted in this report, we are making significant progress to help people live longer, healthier lives through our services, our data-driven insights, our support to the NHS and our role as an employer.

We are focused on using service data and insights to positively impact health outcomes. We have a proven track record in this area and are keen to extend this further. Our data and insights are improving patient safety as well as creating valuable knowledge and savings for the wider healthcare system.

We are particularly committed to supporting social mobility, aiming to become a top employer where colleagues from diverse backgrounds can progress based on merit. We've taken steps to understand the socioeconomic background of our colleagues so this can happen. Our corporate volunteering and fundraising approach connects the NHSBSA with the communities we serve, making a meaningful difference.

Our environmental initiatives are also seeing tangible improvements, supporting colleagues to reduce our environmental impact and contributing to clear air through our electric vehicle lease scheme.

We're also extending our influence through our supply chain and embedding social value in our procurement processes, ensuring sustainable and equitable outcomes.

While we've made considerable progress, we recognise there is much more we can do. Our call to action is for healthcare providers, businesses, communities and colleagues to engage with our initiatives to drive meaningful change. By collaborating and committing to innovation, sustainability, and inclusion, we can collectively build a healthier, fairer society for all.

