

## Response ID ANON-4XV2-SKW9-2

Submitted to NHS Delivery - a new national delivery organisation to lead transformation across our health and social care system  
Submitted on 2025-11-25 10:33:50

### Questions

1 Do you agree that creating a new national organisation to drive forward digital transformation and system change – beginning with the consolidation of NES and NSS into one organisation – is the right approach to deliver the ambitions set out in Scotland's Population Health Framework and Service Renewal Framework?

Agree

Please explain your response.:

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society agrees that a new national organisation could drive forward the ambitions of the Population Health Framework and the Service Renewal Framework. There is an opportunity, with this plan, to provide a strong, coherent, Once for Scotland approach to this strategic delivery arm for the NHS in Scotland.

It will be important to ensure that there is a transparent clarity of purpose for the new organisation whilst protecting the essential functions currently provided by NSS and NES. Of note, pharmacy has good relationships with both NES and NSS. For education, NES performs essential functions of statutory, mandatory and continuous professional development training for pharmacy teams; supports experiential learning and foundation trainee placements and provides support for pharmacists engaging with post-registration career frameworks established by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. NSS oversees the digital infrastructure; through National Procurement optimises the purchasing power of the NHS in Scotland with governance to support nationally commissioned medicines homecare services and through the implementation of RxInfo supports the management of medicine shortages. NSS act as the main interface with independent contractors including community pharmacy.

The phasing of the change will be important to ensure a successful changeover with appropriate support for staff affected by the merger.

Question 2 (a) Do you agree with the proposed strategic objectives for the new organisation (driving innovation, delivering Once for Scotland services, and streamlining structures)?

Agree

Please explain your response.:

When reflecting on the functions of the current national health Boards, duplication exists in relation to digital and data functions, workforce and education therefore streamlining accountability structures should derive benefits and emphasise a focus on delivery.

The Once for Scotland principle is important – but not universal. For some functions national development with local implementation will remain appropriate for equitable healthcare across Scottish geographies and groups of citizens.

Improvement and innovation functions are spread across national and territorial Boards, and a single organisation approach provides the opportunity for oversight and accountability to deliver maximal outputs in an efficient manner.

Question 2 (b) Should the organisation consider additional strategic objectives?

Yes

If yes, please specify using the text box below:

As the professional body for pharmacists we would look for NHS Delivery to formalise collaborative partnerships with professional leadership bodies and other relevant stakeholders. Subject to approvals, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society will become the Royal College of Pharmacy in April 2026.

Partnerships such as these would augment the efforts of NHS Delivery and through professional engagement foster a collaborative approach to the improvement, digital transformation and sustainability of health care delivery in Scotland.

It will be important for the new organisation to ensure that it is outward-looking in its scope, building system capability and not only focussing on its own performance. E.g. workforce development and sustainability

Question 3 Are there services or functions currently delivered by other organisations (in addition to what NES and NSS already do) that should be delivered only by NHS Delivery to improve consistency and reduce duplication?

Yes

If yes, please specify using the text box below:

Current capabilities which are fragmented across multiple organisations include digital and data functions (including analytics), information governance, education and corporate shared services. These are currently shared across territorial Boards, Public Health Scotland, National Waiting Times Centre (NHS Scotland Academy, Centre for Sustainable Delivery), NES, NSS and Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

It is expected that collaboration with these organisations will be necessary but that there is one accountable lead organisation identified.

Question 4 What areas of national delivery could be improved by NHS Delivery to make services more efficient or better joined-up?

Redesigning how services could be planned or improved, Making better use of data and digital tools, Improving supply chains or procurement, Supporting shared back-office services like HR or finance, Strengthening workforce development and training

Other (please indicate below)::

With reference to the redesign of service planning and improvement, there could be better joined up working between NSS, Centre for Sustainable Delivery and the Improvement arm of Healthcare Improvement Scotland. Inputs from Public Health Scotland in a data analysis and population needs assessment would also contribute to this approach.

Currently, when improvements are implemented, there are fragmented reporting mechanisms between different bodies, and this additional scrutiny is often duplicated.

With reference to workforce planning, collaborative working to combine data analysis on demand and capacity alongside workforce pipelines could improve predictions of workforce need across services in Scotland ensuring system readiness for future models of care.

Delays in progress with the digital transformation needed in prescribing and dispensing pathways are significant and a single accountable organisation may be able to make more effective progress.

A national approach to procurement of high-cost medicines such as those managed under patient access schemes may provide an opportunity for national financial risk share.

An example of a shared service approach to HR where improvements could be made is with Agenda for Change re-evaluation. Agenda for Change was brought in to harmonise remuneration, terms and conditions across the NHS; however, the local implementation has led to variation across the Scottish Health Boards. Centralising job re-evaluation processes and using digital technologies to improve the process would drive improvement, reduce variation and improve efficiency.

Question 5 Are there any existing services, programmes, or functions currently delivered by NES or NSS that you believe could be stopped, scaled back, or redesigned (or handed over to another organisation) to better align with current priorities and system-wide impact?

Yes

If yes, please explain in the text box below:

Engagement with our members generated suggestions including:

- Addressing duplication of digital teams and improvement activity increasing coherence
- Addressing duplication of reporting systems for performance monitoring
- Consideration of returning antimicrobial resistance and healthcare associated infection surveillance to local health Boards.

Question 6 Do you agree that NHS Delivery should lead the development of national digital capabilities (e.g. Electronic Health Records, digital inclusion, data architecture) for Scotland's health and social care system?

Yes

Please explain your response.:

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society has repeatedly called for a Once for Scotland approach to a single, digital, shared patient record which is integrated and interoperable and allows healthcare professionals to have appropriate read/write access. Progress with Scottish Government aims have slowed. Building on the work carried out so far, a single accountable lead organisation can ensure clarity of purpose, removal of duplication, delivery on interoperability and stabilisation of existing digital architecture. This must be informed by frontline staff, patients, Health Boards and other strategic partners to ensure a successful digital re-imagining of current paper-based processes and single-silo digital systems. A successful element of the approach taken so far has been through early and sustained stakeholder engagement in the DPDP project.

Question 7 Should NHS Delivery be tasked with improving data sharing, data access and interoperability across health and social care?

Yes

Please explain your response.:

In order to maximise the potential of a technology-enabled future healthcare system, data sharing, data access and interoperability are vital interdependencies. It is essential that these elements are improved to derive the benefits from a modern, safe and patient-centred health system. NHS Delivery is an obvious home; however, we also recognise the current relevant activities of Public Health Scotland. Scottish Government should give thought to how that can be optimised across different organisations.

Question 8 Do you believe NHS Delivery should be tasked with the lead national support role in innovation development & adoption, service redesign, change management, improvement, and commissioning?

Partially

Please give a reason for your answer in the text box below.:

National commissioning of services could be interpreted as hierarchical and proposing that NHS Delivery becomes another layer within the NHS structure in Scotland. Where a national approach has been shown to be beneficial then NHS Delivery should provide that national leadership in development, adoption, improvement and service redesign.

At present Healthcare Improvement Scotland has responsibilities for both improvement and scrutiny and there is an opportunity to address that with this process.

As mentioned above, there will be instances where national development is appropriate but local implementation is more effective. It is also important that the organisation is agile enough to identify when a national approach is appropriate and where local innovation can be supported for the benefit of the local population need. A proportionate balance between a local and national approach is required.

The suggested list of responsibilities is large, and consideration should be given to a proportionate phasing of added responsibilities over time.

Question 9 As NHS Delivery evolves in the longer term, what additional capabilities, functions or bodies should be considered for integration into a single national delivery capability that supports the aspirations of the Service Renewal Framework?

Please provide your answer in the text box below:

Further consultation will be required, but initial reflections draw us towards digital and data functions (including analytics), information governance, innovation and improvement, education and corporate shared services. These are currently shared across territorial Boards, Public Health Scotland (PHS), National Waiting Times Centre (NHS Scotland Academy, Centre for Sustainable Delivery), NES, NSS and Healthcare Improvement Scotland. Some of the work of the Effective Prescribing and Therapeutics Branch at Scottish Government may also contribute to enhanced outcomes if included in a future NHS Delivery organisation focussed on a national approach to improvement with a view to application within prescribing practice. We have given thought to what these proposals means for medicines – a number of functions related to medicines governance, access to medicines and monitoring of treatment outcomes are hosted within Healthcare Improvement Scotland and interface with territorial Board processes, PHS and NSS. This will require deeper thinking and consultation to identify any potential improvements which could be generated from these proposals. The objectives of any further integration should be about optimising the impact and benefit of any change with a robust evaluation. Formal partnerships with professional bodies, education providers and business enterprises with the shared goals of innovation and improvement could also be considered.

Question 10 What principles should guide decisions about future expansion of NHS Delivery's remit and structure?

Examples might include: Alignment with the Service Renewal Framework and Public Service Reform Strategy. Evidence of system-wide benefit. Avoidance of duplication. Stakeholder consensus. Legislative clarity and accountability.:

We agree with all of the above examples. Key principles guiding decisions should ensure that the workforce are enabled to perform, services are evidence based, and data driven, improvements must be sustainable and scalable with clear governance and accountability. Patient experience and safety must be paramount.

Question 11 What mechanisms should be put in place to review and adapt NHS Delivery's remit and performance post-launch?

Please add your response in the text box below:

We suggest a formal independent review is commissioned with extensive stakeholder engagement. This should include staff from NES and NSS to ensure that it has been a smooth transition for the organisations and their people. An annual review should be submitted to Scottish Ministers. Where appropriate, quarterly performance data should be published.

## About you

What is your name?

Name:  
Fiona McIntyre

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

What is your organisation?

Organisation:  
Royal Pharmaceutical Society Scotland

Further information about your organisation's response

Please add any additional context:

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

Publish response with name

Do you consent to Scottish Government contacting you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Yes

What is your email address?

Email:  
Fiona.McIntyre@rpharms.com

Where did you hear about this consultation?

Consultation newsletter, Browsing the consultation hub

If other, please say where::

## Evaluation

How satisfied were you with this consultation?

Very satisfied

Please enter comments here.:

How would you rate your satisfaction with using this platform (Citizen Space) to respond to this consultation?

Very satisfied

Please enter comments here.: