

NHS Interim Management & Support (NHS IMAS) Business Plan 2023/24

1. Introduction and Overview

NHS Interim Management and Support (NHS IMAS) is hosted by NHS England (NHSE) and is part of the Workforce, Training & Education Directorate.

2. Purpose

The purpose of NHS IMAS is to offer NHS organisations that need short or medium-term support, the means to access the management expertise that exists throughout the NHS: 'By the NHS, for the NHS.'

3. Aims

The aims of NHS IMAS are to:

- Encourage and facilitate the NHS to use the wealth of skills already available to it, to improve and sustain the quality of health care services in the local communities they serve.
- Provide the support that is needed by the NHS, but to do so in a way that builds a sustainable legacy.
- Grow and develop local NHS talent, working with NHS leadership development.
- Provide a real alternative to the private sector, while still offering the option to access their skills.

4. NHS IMAS Funding, Hosting and Governance

NHS IMAS is hosted by NHSE's Workforce, Training & Education Directorate, reporting into the Director of System Resourcing. The Senior Sponsor is the National Director for People.

The governance of NHS IMAS is through a Strategic Advisory Board that represents the broad spectrum of NHS client organisations.

5. NHS IMAS Business Model

NHS IMAS has available an expert resource of experienced and senior leaders. These individuals act as 'Partners' for NHS IMAS.

When resources are needed on assignments, NHS IMAS can draw upon a considerable pool of talented individuals from within the NHS and, if necessary, a hand-picked selection of independent consultants, which NHS organisations rate. NHS IMAS has a small team to facilitate, and programme manage this process.

NHS IMAS continues to build on its track record of providing cost effective and quality support to the NHS. In 2022/23 gross turnover for NHS IMAS was just over £7.1m.

Costs for NHS IMAS are benchmarked against private sector alternatives, and it is estimated the equivalent cost to the NHS would have been almost £10.6m at prevailing market rates. Therefore, it is estimated that NHS IMAS saved the NHS almost £3.5m during 2022/23. Savings anticipated for 2023/24 are expected to be in line with the operating model of providing on average between 150 – 170 live assignments with anticipated savings of around £3.5m.

NHS IMAS is responsible for four key areas, utilising its systems and processes to deliver for NHSE and the NHS as a whole.

The four areas are:

- NHS IMAS Core Offer
- Talent Management
- Flexible Resourcing for NHSE
- NHSE Response to Emergency Incidents

The [NHS Long Term Plan](#) confirmed that from July 2022 all parts of England would be served by a local Integrated Care System (ICS) through the establishment of Integrated Care Boards (ICB), building on the lessons of the earliest systems and the achievements of previous work through Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships and Vanguard.

NHS IMAS will continue to support the system to meet health and care needs across an area, to co-ordinate services and to plan in a way that improves population health and reduces inequalities between different groups.

NHS IMAS continues to support the delivery of the We Are the NHS: People Plan 2020/21 – action for us all and the People Promise with the national [planning guidance](#) and the [Elective Recovery Plan](#) continuing to develop the longer term People Plan. The People Plan 2020/21 sets out actions to support transformation across the whole NHS and focuses on how staff look after each other and foster a culture of inclusion and belonging, as well as action to grow the workforce, train people, and work together differently to deliver patient care by:

- Looking after our people – with quality health and wellbeing support for everyone
- Belonging in the NHS – with particular focus on tackling the discrimination that some staff face
- New ways of working and delivering care – making effective use of the full range of our people's skills and experience
- Growing for the future – how we recruit and keep our people, and welcome back colleagues who want to return.

The NHS IMAS Strategic Advisory Board and management team will work to ensure its services continue to respond to the needs of the NHS and develop effective support models for the future. As national reviews and publications (including the People Plan) are updated and published, NHS IMAS will consider the impact of recommendations and how it might support client organisations in implementing

these. Where appropriate, NHS IMAS will consult its Strategic Advisory Board and adjust its Business Plan to reflect the findings in the way it operates and manages its pools.

NHS IMAS will continue to meet its business objectives through its core funding. However, any reduction to this funding will result in a need to reduce the size of the team and the number of assignments and organisations it can support.

The Business Plan for 2023/24 has:

- considered the possible impact of the New NHS England structure on NHS IMAS. The Business Plan will need to be reviewed following the outcome of the consultation process and confirmation of the structure.
- included a revised provision for supporting the NHS with any future emergency incidents.

Funding, in terms of additional staffing need, will also be sought for any significant work over and above this business plan to ensure that this does not have an impact on NHS IMAS' ability to continue to deliver its core services. Additional costs will not be charged, wherever possible, for management time and the use of NHS IMAS' ISO-accredited quality management systems and processes.

6. NHS IMAS Core Offer

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

NHS IMAS will also source high quality independent pool members to provide support, whilst also ensuring good value for money and remaining within the day rate caps identified by NHSE.

With its focused programme approach, in-house specialists and network of NHS and independent resources, NHS IMAS is committed to providing a supportive professional service including:

- scoping of resource requirements.
- identification of readily available, highly skilled staff and the facilitation provision from initial introduction, interview arrangements through to confirmation of the assignment.
- ensuring pool member records contain up to date information.
- the provision of agreement letters (specifying the objectives of the assignment and working arrangements).
- allocation of a Programme Manager from the NHS IMAS team for each assignment, who remains in contact throughout the assignment to ensure it is progressing well against the agreed scope and objectives.
- regular assessment with the pool member of any support they require to assist them whilst on assignment, including access to health and wellbeing resources and support in addition to coaching and mentoring as appropriate.

- providing a closure report at the end of the assignment which summarises the impact of the work completed and captures any learning and good practice.
- maintaining confidentiality and discretion between all parties throughout the process.

NHS IMAS will continue to evaluate every assignment to ensure that it meets the client's needs and expectations, that the work being done, where appropriate, leads to sustainable change and that pool members deliver a high value service to clients.

Client satisfaction is vital, and NHS IMAS seeks feedback from each assignment to ensure that it remains efficient and effective in delivering the needs of the NHS. The target is for 100% of clients to say that they were so satisfied that they will use NHS IMAS again in the future.

For 2023/24, NHS IMAS aims to continue this evaluation and high level of service.

6.1 Quality Management

NHS IMAS gained certification to a new, revised standard ISO 9001:2015 for its Quality Management System in March 2017. NHS IMAS retained the standard following an external re-certification audit in January 2023 with an external accredited certification body. This is a set of standards that represent international agreement on good quality management practices. The ISO 9001:2015 standard provides a framework for taking a systematic approach to managing processes to ensure that it consistently meets customers' expectations.

The next audit will take place by the end of January 2024.

6.2 Environmental Management

NHS IMAS was certified for its Environmental Management System to the revised ISO 14001:2015 International Environmental Standard in March 2017. NHS IMAS retained the standard following an external re-certification audit in January 2023 which demonstrates that it continues to meet the standard.

The next audit will take place by the end of January 2024.

The NHS IMAS service will continually develop through the practical application of the Quality Management System (certified to standard ISO 9001:2015) and the continuation of the Environmental Management System (certified to ISO 14001:2015), with successful retention through an external surveillance audit in January 2024.

6.3 Communications & Engagement

NHS IMAS' reputation continues to be the main marketing tool to attract repeat and new client organisations.

During 2023/24 NHS IMAS services will be marketed through:

- Regular communications on the NHS IMAS website and social media platforms including Twitter and LinkedIn - posting regularly to raise awareness of NHS IMAS and its services and to encourage new high-quality pool members to register.
- External articles recording the progress of NHS IMAS.
- Appropriate partnerships with other national NHS organisations and teams (such as the NHS Leadership Academy).
- Support to Regional and National Talent Management Boards and initiatives.
- The network of Partners.
- “Word of mouth” – Clients and pool members recommending NHS IMAS to colleagues.
- Working with Partners and Strategic Advisory Board members to identify appropriate events to attend or for information about NHS IMAS to be shared.
- Working with NHS England Programmes who require bespoke support and registers in line with the specialist nature of their work, as follows:
 - Senior Nursing individuals with significant experience to provide Trusts with Intensive Support in the NHS
 - Individuals with significant experience in Infection, Prevention and Control to provide Trusts with appropriate support in the NHS.
 - Individuals with significant experience to provide Trusts with Intensive Support as required.
 - Provide NHS England access to senior clinical expertise to be deployed to support an incident requiring clinical resources.
 - Provide NHS England access to individuals with experience in managing Children and Young People's Services to assist organisations who require specialist support in these areas.
 - Individuals with digital experience to enhance and support the NHS' digital capability.

6.4 Training for NHS Pool Members

NHS IMAS will continue to provide training and support to its NHS pool members using a range of tools.

NHS pool members will be able to access mentoring through NHS IMAS whilst undertaking assignments. NHS IMAS Partners will act as mentors to pool members, and those with coaching qualifications have agreed to provide coaching, as and when appropriate.

NHS IMAS has developed a unique blended learning course to help NHS pool members develop their consultancy skills. Feedback from the first eight cohorts has been overwhelmingly positive with 100% of participants reporting that they have used the techniques and tools since completing the course and feeling that the learning has provided them with the foundations to undertake a challenging NHS IMAS assignment. Following evaluation completed for all previous cohorts, a ninth cohort will take place in 2023/24.

NHS IMAS runs a number of web-based training events on topical subjects and where pool members indicate there is a training need, which receive positive feedback from pool members. Partners carry out web-based events to talk about their experiences and challenges and give pool members information and tips to help them in their career progression within the NHS. Six web-based training events are planned to take place in 2023/24.

6.5 Core Offer Objectives for 2023/24

NHS IMAS will deliver the core offer by managing on average between 150 and 170 live assignments at any one time and working collaboratively with NHS colleagues to develop an offer to fulfil the needs of the NHS, identifying the experience and skills required and the availability of these through NHS IMAS.

NHS IMAS will expand the skills available within the system by increasing the number of new NHS pool members by 10%, and identifying and targeting specific areas of need, offering support to providers, NHSE, ICSs, Commissioning Support Units (CSUs), Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). These skills will be reinforced through the NHS IMAS core business and working collaboratively within NHSE through Flexible Resourcing.

In addition, NHS IMAS will continue to seek guidance and support to ensure that it is operating in a way that promotes and embodies equality, diversity and inclusion. This will include a review of pool member data, within appropriate GDPR guidelines and inform NHS IMAS' recruitment and deployment processes for the future. A targeted recruitment campaign will continue in 2023/24 and NHS IMAS assignments will be offered as 'stretch assignments' for individuals' personal development, where appropriate.

NHS IMAS will continue to document and publicise case studies of pool member's experience and lessons learnt on assignment in regular communications on the website and social media platforms.

7. Talent Management

NHS IMAS supports all seven regions of NHSE in their Talent Management approach.

NHS IMAS is expanding its contribution to the development of future healthcare leaders in three ways:

- In partnership with NHSE and the NHS Leadership Academy developing Talent Management Programmes, supporting NHS senior staff through providing stretch assignments.
- Working with NHSE to develop its internal Talent Management Programme and facilitation of stretch assignments.
- Using Partners' expertise and extensive leadership experience to help NHS pool members understand their development needs and how they can progress towards the higher leadership levels of the NHS.

NHSE's Transformation Directorate refers organisations that require interim support to NHS IMAS. NHS IMAS scopes the requirements directly with the client organisation and records all received enquiries. NHS IMAS manages the matching process, discusses opportunities with individuals and submits CVs to the client for consideration.

NHS IMAS will continue to support the Chief Nursing Officers Exceptional Leaders Network and the work of the Improvement Directorate, holding specialist registers to support sustainable change.

In addition, NHS IMAS will continue to support:

- The Infection Prevention and Control National Programme, to develop a pool of expertise, to ensure patient safety is maintained.
- The Nursing Directorate with access to individuals with experience in managing Children and Young People's Services to assist organisations who require specialist support.
- The Operations Directorate to manage a bespoke register to provide NHSE access to senior clinical expertise who can be deployed to support an incident requiring clinical resources as required, and work with NHSE Transformation Directorate to support digital transformation across the NHS.

7.1 Talent Management Objectives for 2023/24

NHS IMAS will continue to work with NHS organisations to support their Talent Management Programmes and with NHSE to support the ICS Talent Boards.

The NHS' Talent Management Programmes, both within NHSE and across the NHS, will continue to be proactively supported and developed, by utilising the NHS IMAS systems and processes to retain and map data and match individuals to appropriate stretch assignments as and when required by NHS organisations, supporting equality, diversity and inclusion.

NHS IMAS will proactively engage with any individuals identified through the Talent Management Programmes to support individuals working at a senior level with interim redeployment options as appropriate.

8. Flexible Resourcing

NHS IMAS will continue to work in collaboration with NHSE's Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR&OD) colleagues to:

- Refine the deployment process to support the organisational priorities.
- Join up individual systems to create a more cohesive methodology for deploying staff internally.
- Refine internal HR&OD systems to support more flexible recruitment and deployment.
- Develop policy and processes to support Flexible Resourcing across the organisation, including the Regions.

8.1 Flexible Resourcing Objectives for 2023/24

NHS IMAS will continue to work with HR&OD colleagues in NHSE to support an agile way of working and operating model designed by the organisation following the learning from Covid-19 and enable the mobilisation of the required skills and experience to meet the prioritised needs of the organisation.

Working collaboratively, NHS IMAS will ensure that flexible resourcing maximises the talent available across the organisation and through CSUs to improve service to the front-line NHS and will also ensure recruitment and deployment are aligned to make best use of resources and support the talent development of the organisation's staff, supporting equality, diversity and inclusion.

9. NHS England Response to Emergency Incidents (including Covid-19)

The urgent response operating model implemented by System Capability and Operations on behalf of NHSE Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response (EPRR) from April 2021 co-ordinates the deployment, at pace, of internal staff to respond to an incident. It enables NHSE to deploy staff, at pace, who have volunteered, have the right skills and up to date training to fulfil a range of EPRR roles in a National Incident or Operation Centre to meet the requirements of an organisational response to any incident. This operating model transfers to NHSE EPRR Team to deliver on a day-to-day basis from 1 April 2023 with NHS IMAS providing additional senior interim management and support as and when required.

NHS IMAS 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.

10. Organisational Transformation

NHS IMAS will:

- Work with the NHS to meet its need for transformational change.
- Evaluate learning and feedback from clients for continual improvement.
- Strengthen partnership working with key bodies across health and social care, including DHSC, NHSE, NHS Professionals and NHS Providers and third sector organisations.
- Support the development of ICSs and the new operating model.

11. Risks and assumptions

The main risks and assumptions to the delivery of this Business Plan and the on-going development of NHS IMAS are:

- The creation of Integrated Care Systems in July 2022; the merger of NHS England, with NHS Digital from January 2023, and Health Education England from April 2023; and the need to re-size NHSE post the Covid-19 pandemic requires the creation of a new NHS England that, by April 2024, will be at least 30% and up to 40% smaller than the combined organisations. The NHSE process is a risk to NHS IMAS business continuity and performance which will need effort and action to mitigate.

- There is an assumption that any reduction of NHS IMAS should be kept to a minimum to enable the delivery of this business plan. Any reduction in resources will need to be matched by a reduction in volume on the core offer. The core offer will come first, including its' underpinning quality management processes and systems. Anything else will need to be considered in line with available resources.
- An assumption that additional funding will be provided by the appropriate client for significant work over and above the business plan.
- Maintaining the high quality of pool members and their availability to undertake assignments.
- Increasing the pipeline of potential pool members as the demand for assignments also increases, including getting agreement from their employers for them to be released for assignments.
- Ensuring the support of development programmes to register participants with NHS IMAS and undertake stretch assignments to support their development.

A risk register is in place to mitigate against potential risks.

12. Budget

The NHS IMAS Budget required for 2023/24 (based on the current structure less current vacancies = 11 WTE) is as follows:

Funding Source	Budget (£)
NHS IMAS Admin Funding - Pay 2023/24	757,205
NHS IMAS Admin Funding – Non-Pay 2023/34	50,007
Total Cost	807,212

13. The Business Planning Process

This Business Plan for 2023/24 has been agreed by the NHS IMAS Strategic Advisory Board and progress on delivery of the plan will be reported to the Board throughout the year. This Business Plan will also feed into the NHSE Workforce, Training and Education Directorate's Business Plan. Management Information showing progress against the Business Plan objectives will be provided on a monthly basis to the SRO and key stakeholders within NHSE.