

University Hospitals of Northamptonshire NHS Group
is a collaboration between Kettering General Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust and Northampton General
Hospital NHS Trust



**University Hospitals
of Northamptonshire**
NHS Group

Dedicated to Excellence

GROUP STRATEGIC DIRECTION

2021/22 - 2023/24



**Dedicated to
excellence**

Foreword

An introduction from our Group Chair and Chief Executive

We are delighted to present our first ever joint ambitions for our newly formed hospital Group. Our three-year strategic aims have been developed following extensive engagement with leaders, governors, staff, patient and carer representatives, partners, and others from Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (KGH), Northampton General Hospitals NHS Trust (NGH), and the Northamptonshire health and care system.

Our aim has been clear from the outset: we wanted to agree an ambitious vision for the Group which transcends organisational boundaries and which achieves benefits for our patients and staff that we would struggle to realise as individual hospital Trusts. We were also determined to involve and engage as many people as possible in the development of our shared goals and plans, despite the backdrop of a pandemic which has seen a major impact on our services, our staff and patients, and how we communicate and engage with people.

For nearly 30 years, our two organisations have been competing for the staff, skills and resources we need. In order to provide high quality, sustainable care that is fit for the 21st century and which responds to the evolving healthcare needs of our local communities, we fully recognise the importance of working in partnership together. Our collective response to the pandemic alone has proven the benefits and opportunities that working in collaboration can offer.

This document sets out our new vision, mission and values, as well as our core strategic ambitions and programmes. It also describes how staff, patients and other stakeholders have been involved in shaping our plans for the future.

The conversations that have brought us to this point are just the beginning of many. We will share our ambitions widely, and will continue to work with patients, partners and others as we develop and deliver plans to achieve them.

Colleagues from across the hospital Group will be involved in ongoing discussions to find ways to work evermore effectively together, so that we can maximise the value we add as a provider, employer, and health and care system partner.

It has taken significant effort and determination to develop shared strategic intentions for our Group, and we would like to thank everyone who has played a part. In particular, we would like to thank our incredible members of staff, who have been willing to contribute and get involved throughout, despite the significant pressures they have faced over the past year.

As always, we welcome comments and suggestions.

You can email us at:

LetsTalkNow.Northants@nhs.net and you can get involved in discussions on social media. Follow us on Twitter, Facebook or Linked In.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best Wishes,



Alan Burns
Group Chair



Simon Weldon
Group CEO

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Our commitment to patients, carers and staff

Our mission is to provide safe, compassionate and clinically excellent patient care, by being an outstanding employer for our people, creating opportunities, supporting innovation, and working in partnership to improve local health and care services

In delivering this mission, we have outlined below a set of promises that we will uphold at all times.

For our patients, their families and carers we will...

- Treat you with care and compassion
- Ensure that the care we provide puts you and your family first
- Strive to provide the highest quality care, and continuously improve our services
- Work to ensure that communication about your care is clear and consistent
- Ensure that we include representation through our patient groups and public forums when designing improvements or changes to the way we provide your care
- Work with our health and care partners across Northamptonshire and beyond so that your care feels joined up

For our staff we will...

- Create an environment and culture that is supportive, compassionate and enables us all to do our jobs effectively
- Improve support for health and wellbeing and ensure everyone feels valued
- Provide an inclusive place to work, taking action to address inequalities
- Ensure key systems and processes will help with our jobs, not hinder them

- Encourage everyone to voice suggestions and provide support to make improvements day-to-day
- Support our managers and leaders to lead, engage and develop their teams
- Ensure everyone is fully engaged and consulted in our plans, and understand the impact on day-to-day work



Creating our Hospital Group

On 10 January 2020 Kettering NHS Foundation Trust (KGH) and Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust (NGH) announced our commitment to create a hospital group. This new approach would see our two hospital Trusts and their leadership teams working in collaboration to strengthen health services across the whole of Northamptonshire, rather than working independently and, in some respects, in competition.

Over the last year, we have taken some important steps towards creating our hospital group, for example:

- We have appointed our new Group leadership team alongside our existing joint Chair, Alan Burns, as follows: Simon Weldon Group CEO (July 2020); Mark Smith, Group Chief People Officer (August 2020); Andy Callow, Group Chief Digital and Information Officer (December 2020); and Teresa La Thangue, Group Director of Communications, PR and Engagement (June 2021).
- Because this is a collaboration and not a formal merger, we have strengthened hospital leadership teams to ensure appropriate focus on the needs of each Trust. Two Hospital Chief Executives have been appointed: Debbie Needham, KGH; and Heidi Smoult, NGH. Whilst both Chief Executives play an important leadership role, Simon Weldon remains the only accountable officer for both hospital Trusts.
- Clinical colleagues are working together to align our clinical services across the Group where appropriate. To support this work we have appointed six joint clinical directors and some of our services, including Breast Surgery, Cardiology and ENT, have already started to develop collaborative ways of working between teams at both hospitals.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has enabled us to demonstrate stronger resilience by working together across both hospitals. Our people have been working more flexibly than ever across both organisations, supporting services where the patient need is greatest; and we have been able to make decisions and choices across both hospitals that previously we would not have made together.

- We have been collaborating across the Group to define what we want the future to be. More than 1,000 staff, patient representatives and others have been directly involved in our work to develop our vision, mission and values. Many more have heard about our emerging direction of travel and have had the opportunity to become more actively engaged. The discussion and feedback during engagement events and various other activities has not only been both valuable and enjoyable, but also instrumental in shaping and strengthening our proposals for the future.

As two hospital Trusts we face a range of challenges, from meeting the growing demands of an ageing population, to providing consistently high-quality care with the financial and other resources we have available, and making sure we have the right number of staff with the appropriate skills. As a hospital Group we will be able to tackle these challenges together, helping to ensure that services across Northamptonshire will be sustainable and fit-for-the-future.

“ We have an ambitious vision for the Group, and one which enables us to realise far greater benefits for our patients and staff than we would ever be able to achieve as separate hospital Trusts. ”

ALAN BURNS, GROUP CHAIR

Key Group facts

Here are some interesting facts and figures to provide an overview of activities across our hospital Group.

We operate  **two hospital sites** and a number of services based in the community. Together they serve a **population of around 900,000 people** across Northamptonshire

We employ over **11,000 staff**  and are one of the **largest employers in Northamptonshire**

We have a budget of around **£620 million** 

In 2020/21 we received more than **£1.4 million funding** for research studies, enabling **4,270 patients** to participate in research trials 

Every year...

We care for around **92,000 inpatients** 

We care for around **765,000 outpatients** 

We deliver more than **8,000 babies** 

We carry out more than **140,000 operations** 

Our Emergency Departments care for more than **226,000 people** 

Our Hospital Trusts

Our Group is made up of two hospital Trusts with two main hospital sites and a number of services provided elsewhere within the community. We are proud to serve the people of Northamptonshire and beyond.

Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (KGH)

An acute hospital with around 600 beds and a 24-hour Emergency Department (A&E). In addition to the full range of district general hospital care, KGH also provides some specialist services including cardiac care for the county. It has inpatient, day case, diagnostic, maternity and outpatient facilities with a dedicated children's ward and outpatients.

In 2019/20 teams at the KGH site cared for approximately 90,000 emergency patients and 120,000 patients referred to us for treatment.



Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust (NGH)

An acute hospital with around 790 beds and a 24-hour Emergency Department (A&E). In addition to the full range of district general hospital care, NGH also provides some specialist services including cancer and stroke services for the county. It has inpatient, day case, diagnostic, maternity and outpatient facilities with a dedicated children's ward and outpatients.

In 2019/20 teams at NGH cared for approximately 135,000 emergency patients and 140,000 patients were referred to us for treatment.



Our population

Together, we will continue to serve our growing population of around 900,000 people across Northamptonshire. This population is varied with a range of needs from our services:

- There are large and growing numbers of people aged over 70, as well as high numbers of people aged under 20 and newborns
- Around 70% of our population live in urban areas, whilst 30% live in more rural areas
- Our six boroughs and districts are diverse, with countryside and urban areas, different age groups between local communities, and differing levels of affluence
- There are growing levels of ethnic diversity, particularly in more urban areas of the county



Challenges and opportunities

We have undertaken events and activities across both Trusts, including with the two Boards, staff, patient representatives and KGH governors, identify both the challenges we face as a Group, and the opportunities to work together to make improvements.

Supported by data and evidence, this engagement has directly influenced our strategic direction and plans for the next five years. The themes are outlined below, and we need to improve in all of these areas if we are to make the progress to which we aspire as a Group.

PROVIDING CARE

Our current situation

In the last four years, demand has increased for our health services, with an increase in both elective and emergency admissions of 8%, 3% more outpatient appointments, and 1% more attendances at A&E. This applies increasing pressure on both our estate and our staffing capacity, making it more difficult to provide consistently high-quality care in a timely fashion. Over the same four years, our performance against key access targets has deteriorated, with patients waiting on average five weeks longer for planned treatment. There are also new and exciting improvements owing to pioneering treatments and technologies, and people are interacting with our services in new ways. There are a number of challenges for us to overcome if we are to provide excellent care to all our patients, their carers and families.

Our challenges

- Our CQC rating is 'Good' for 'Caring' at both Trusts, and whilst a number of our key services are also rated 'Good', both Trusts have been rated as 'Requires Improvement' overall. Robust plans are therefore in place to make the necessary improvements.

- Our performance against key standards and targets has diminished in the last four years, with patients on average waiting five more weeks for planned care, and around 3% fewer patients seen within four hours in A&E.

Our opportunities

- We are delighted to have achieved University Hospital status, working in partnership with the University of Leicester and the University of Northampton. This status will enable us to strengthen our existing research and clinical teams, ensure our staff have access to the latest training and techniques, and provide patients with access to cutting-edge treatment and research trials. As a result, this will improve the quality of care we are able to provide and enhance training and development opportunities for staff.
- Some services have been shared across the two hospitals for several years. These have been successfully consolidated and improved to deliver various benefits for patients. However, we could and should aim to develop more county-wide services. Redesigning services to use staff and other resources more effectively will enable us to enhance services across the county and deliver care which will serve us well for the future.

PEOPLE

Our current situation

Our Group employs more than 11,000 people with a range of roles and skills, and who care for the people of Northamptonshire with skill, compassion and dedication. Making sure that we support and look after our people and address ongoing workforce challenges will continue to be complex and challenging in many ways. We have worked hard in the last year to increase the support we are able to provide our staff in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, including the *We Care café* and *Our Space*.

Our challenges

- Our most recent staff survey saw an increase in the number of staff who responded at both KGH and NGH. Although the results reflected the progress made in a number of areas, there are still some improvements we need to make.
- Despite reductions in the turnover of staff in both organisations, a tenth of our posts remain vacant, putting pressure on our teams to manage their workload and resulting in additional spending on temporary staffing to cover gaps.
- The most prevalent absences from work are stress / anxiety related, which account for around a quarter of all absences.

Our opportunities

- We have an excellent, dedicated and supportive team with clinical and support staff who work together every day to care for our patients. They are supported by our leadership teams, Boards and, at KGH, our Governors.
- We have developed a groupwide people plan to support the delivery of our people priorities and also the national NHS People Plan.
- We have an opportunity to be consistent in our approach to recruitment and development opportunities across the Group, rather than competing for staff.
- In the last year we put in place a number of initiatives to support our staff. We have an opportunity to build on these initiatives and learn from each other about what works best. As a Group we are able to work together to continue improving the support we are

providing staff, allowing us to create new development opportunities and different ways of working.

- We have a commitment to improving our culture of inclusion across the Group, helping every member of staff - regardless of their background or circumstances - feel included, involved and valued.

RESOURCES

Our current situation

Creating the best value from our available finances and meeting our financial obligations continue to be a core part of our commitment as a Group. Making sure we are running the hospitals day-to-day as effectively as possible, whilst securing the investments that we need to create the hospitals of the future, will continue to be a challenge.

Our challenges

- In recent years, both Trusts have reported a financial deficit, with a combined deficit of £43.6m in 2019/20. We continue to work on improving our underlying financial position through improving our productivity of services and reducing the variation we see across the Group in the cost of providing care.
- Our estate is mixed, with some of our buildings more than 100 years old and many in an increasingly poor state of repair.

Our opportunities

- Working as a Group, there is an opportunity for us to reinvent the way that we provide care across the county, ensuring that we are providing the best care and achieving the best value for money for the funding we receive.
- Some aspects of our care are delivered more effectively within each organisation. Coming together as a Group allows us to learn from each other to implement the best of both.
- We already have plans to improve the estate at Kettering General Hospital, and as a Group we will be able to create a strategic estates plan that improves the facilities and environment in both our hospitals.

DIGITAL

Our current situation

Digital technology has great potential to transform and improve the care we provide, as well as the day-to-day experience of our patients and our staff. It is not something that should be 'on the side' of the work we do, but instead needs to be integral to everything we do, allowing us to make progress across our entire agenda.

Our challenges

- Our systems and the infrastructure that supports them are not joined up, which makes sharing information between our own teams difficult and which takes up valuable time that could be used to care for patients.
- A range of different systems currently support our clinical and support services. However, as two separate Trusts we have a number of different systems that struggle to talk to each other which can make things frustrating for both our staff and our patients.

Our opportunities

- We have successfully installed an Electronic Patient Record System at KGH which will allow us to manage care better, and a similar programme is starting in Northampton. Through these programmes, we will ensure that those looking after patients have all the information they need to offer excellent care.
- During the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of our services have been able to provide care remotely and we have used technology to monitor patients at home. There is an opportunity to learn from our experiences and implement other innovative digital solutions.
- We have developed with the Northamptonshire Health and Care Partnership a shared care record that will help us to have a single view of health records across all the different services accessed by patients.

SYSTEM WORKING

Our current situation

The Northamptonshire Health and Care Partnership aims for the people of Northamptonshire to have a positive lifetime of health, wellbeing and care in our community. We are proud partners to other health and care organisations within our local system, and work together on a range of projects and programmes to improve services for the population of Northamptonshire.

Northamptonshire Health and Care Partnership

Our challenges

- Our financial challenges are mirrored within our local NHS and Local Authority partners. Unless we work together differently, within four years we will no longer be able to properly support the health and care needs of our county's older residents.
- We also know that for those people who move between our services and organisations, it can feel disjointed and there can be delays.

Our opportunities

- We have a strong partnership with our local system partners and we have been supporting each other, particularly during the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Northamptonshire Health and Care Partnership aims to become a thriving Integrated Care System by April 2022.
- The creation of two unitary councils in April 2021 provides an opportunity for us to strengthen our overall system relationships and work with the newly formed councils to provide joined-up care.
- We have begun working together on a large transformation programme called iCAN (Integrated Care Across Northamptonshire) which will provide better support for people in our community, simplify moving between services and make sure that people have the right care at the right time in the right services.

Our engagement journey

From the outset we were committed to involving staff, governors and volunteers, patient representatives, healthcare partners and other stakeholders in the development of our Group vision, mission, priorities and values.

We started by holding a number of workshops with members of the Board and senior leaders across both organisations. This was the first opportunity to consider collectively what we wanted to achieve by working together in partnership as a hospital Group. The message from leaders was very clear – we wanted to agree an ambitious, shared vision and mission, supported by strategic aims, and which motivates colleagues across both organisations towards achieving a common set of goals.

Having agreed some key principles, draft statements were drawn up, discussed and developed on an iterative basis. Once the proposed statements had received widespread support from the leadership team, we launched an engagement programme to provide the opportunity for staff, patient representatives, health and care partners, and other stakeholders to contribute. At this point, discussions were extended to include values, having decided that the values we choose for the Group must directly reflect the behaviours which staff, patient representatives and other key stakeholders see as being the most important, relevant and well embedded across both organisations today. At the same time, we discussed the values we would want to nurture and strengthen if the Group is to become the organisation we collectively want it to be.

As the supporting priorities and specific strategies developed in tandem, discussions about these were included within vision, mission and values engagement sessions. Respective Executive leads also organised and led a variety of focused deliberative sessions to share, test, challenge and refine strategic proposals, for example the Academic, People, and Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals (AHP) strategies.

Over the course of four months, many facilitated discussions were held within open forums, regular meetings and committees, and with targeted groups using an on-line engagement tool.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a challenging backdrop for the engagement programme, and most discussions were undertaken virtually owing to the travel restrictions and social distancing measures in place.

More than 1,000 people were directly involved in discussions, with staff across both organisations also receiving regular updates about the developing vision, mission and values. Staff and members of the public were invited to attend open events and share information via the #LetsTalkNow email, and activities were also publicised within the media.

During the first month of the programme, the vision and mission statements were shaped significantly through conversations with staff and stakeholders. They evolved on an iterative basis, having been tweaked and updated to reflect comments after each session. By the fifth week, overwhelming support for the emergent vision and mission was clear, as conversations moved from the 'what' we should do and 'why', to 'how' these goals would be implemented.

The Group's chosen core values directly reflect the most common themes shared by staff, patient representatives and other stakeholders during the engagement programme. The top aspirational values we need to nurture have been woven into the vision and mission statements and will form an important part of our Group organisational plans.

We engaged:

Staff across both organisations and KGH governors:

- Facilitated dialogue sessions with staffside, BAME, disabilities, equalities and COVID-19 shielding groups, as well as the newly formed Joint Staff Reference Group
- Discussions with Governors
- Focused discussions during clinical meetings and committees with medical, nursing, midwifery and Allied Health Professions staff
- Dedicated time-out sessions led by directors within directorate teams
- All-staff virtual briefings at group and hospital levels
- Updates via newsletters, intranets, staff Facebook groups and other social media
- Recordings of events posted onto staff intranets for those interested but unable to attend
- Promotion of the #LetsTalkNow email and hashtag, allowing feedback, challenge and suggestions to be shared directly with programme leaders.

Patient representatives and health and care partners

- Engagement with patient groups - including representatives from Healthwatch/Young Healthwatch, Carers Northamptonshire, Kettering Mind and Northamptonshire Association for the Blind - such as the Patient

Experience & Involvement Steering Group, the Patient & Carer Experience & Engagement Group, the Patient and Family Partners Group and the Prostate Cancer Support Group

- Discussion session with Northamptonshire Healthwatch/Young Healthwatch
- Engagement with health and care partners, including representatives from mental health, primary and community care, commissioners, local authorities and the Local Medical Committee
- Discussions sessions with NGH and KGH volunteers

External stakeholders

- Open, virtual public events
- Media coverage
- Digital communications and engagement using social media and public websites

Values development

During virtual sessions, attendees submitted their views on both core and aspirational values to create a word cloud which developed live on screen. The larger the word or phrase, the more often it was mentioned. In the same session, comments were tested, explored and discussed further and, over the course of the engagement programme, strong themes emerged which reflected the core and aspirant values common across both hospital Trusts.



This word cloud summarises the suggested core values across the Group



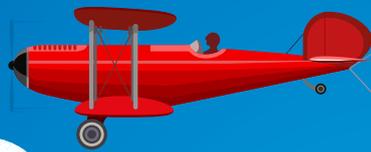
This word cloud shows views on the values we should nurture and develop further as a Group

We recognise that many people prefer to 'think visually' rather than to contemplate written word. For this reason we engaged the services of a graphic scribe, who attended a variety of discussion activities and created drawings to reflect the conversations underway. The consolidated picture, which draws out the common themes from all sessions, can be seen below.



Dedicated to Excellence

These are our Group vision, mission and values. They are a direct product of the extensive engagement we have undertaken with staff, patient representatives, governors, health and care partners, and others.



OUR VISION

Dedicated to excellence in patient care and staff experience, and to becoming a leader in **clinical excellence, inclusivity and collaborative healthcare**.

OUR MISSION

Provide safe, compassionate and clinically excellent patient care by being an outstanding employer for our people, by creating opportunity and supporting innovation, and by working in partnership to improve local health and care services.

OUR EXCELLENCE VALUES

Our core values are at the heart of everything we do and were developed by staff with involvement from patient representatives



Compassion

We care about our patients and each other. We consistently show kindness and empathy and take the time to imagine ourselves in other people's shoes.



Accountability

We take responsibility for our decisions, our actions and our behaviours. We do what we say we will do, when we say we will do it. We acknowledge our mistakes and we learn from them.



Respect

We value each other, embrace diversity and make sure everyone feels included. We take the time to listen to, appreciate and understand the thoughts, beliefs and feelings of others.



Integrity

We are consistently open, honest and trustworthy. We can be relied upon, we stand by our values and we always strive to do the right thing.



Courage

We dare to take on difficult challenges and try out new things. We find the strength to speak up when it matters and we see potential failure as an opportunity to learn and improve.



“ These are all values we would want to see and they reflect our experience as patients. ”

**PATIENT REPRESENTATIVE, PATIENT AND CARER EXPERIENCE
AND ENGAGEMENT GROUP**

“ This strategy not only defines what we need to deliver together to achieve our vision but, importantly, what we need to stop doing. Our focus will be on making the biggest possible impact for our patients and staff, instead of trying to do everything at once. ”

ALAN BURNS, GROUP CHAIR

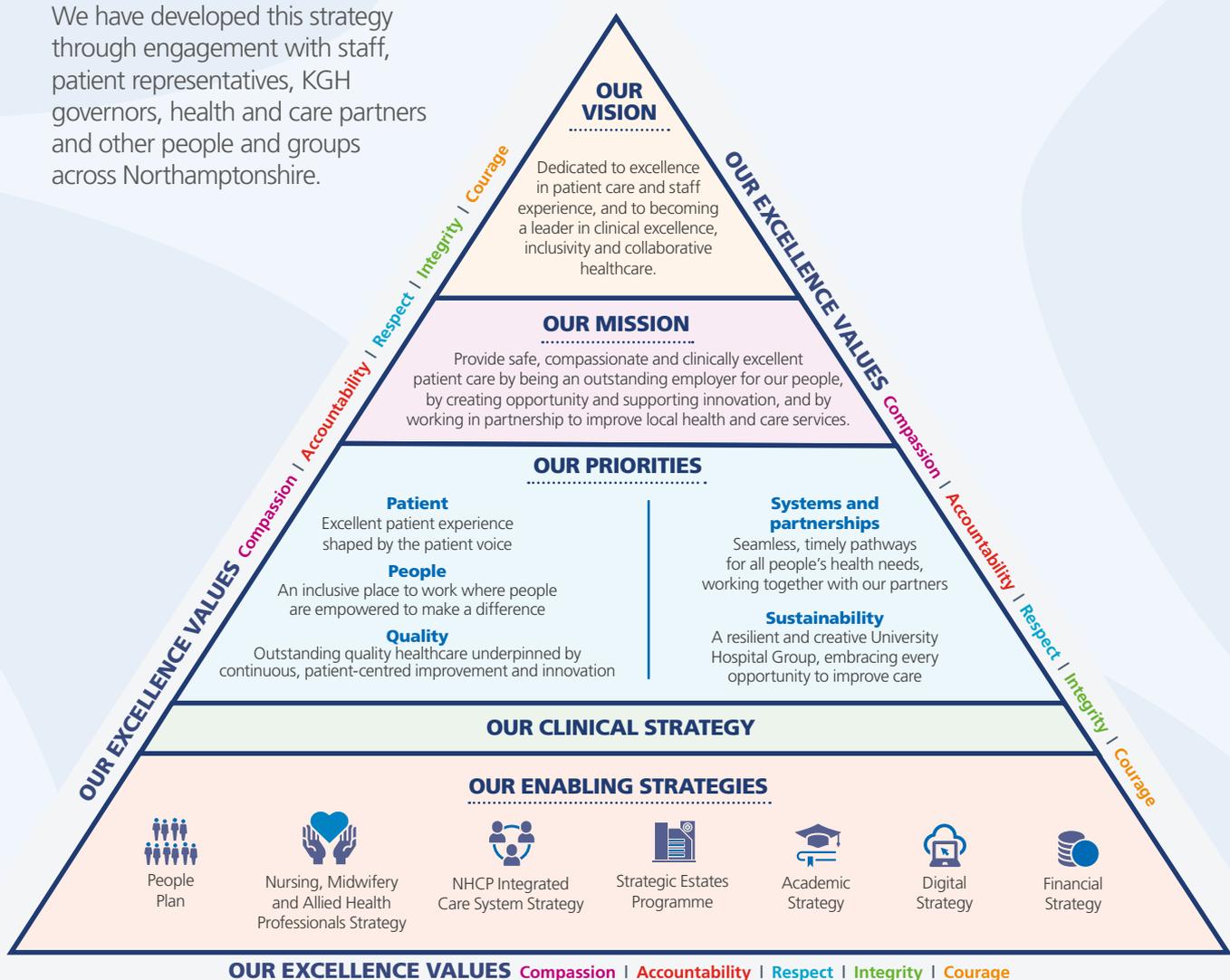
Developing our strategic direction

Joining together as a Group has provided an opportunity to shape our future direction, ensuring we are all committed to - and aligned with - a single vision and mission with shared values and priorities.

Our new shared strategy is summarised in the pyramid below. It allows us as a Group to:

- Have a shared vision, mission and purpose
- Be clear about what the Group priorities are and what we want to achieve
- Prioritise improvements so we work on a small number of important changes at a time
- Know that our transformational activities and strategies will make a difference to the things that matter the most to us
- Identify a small number of metrics that will let us track our progress

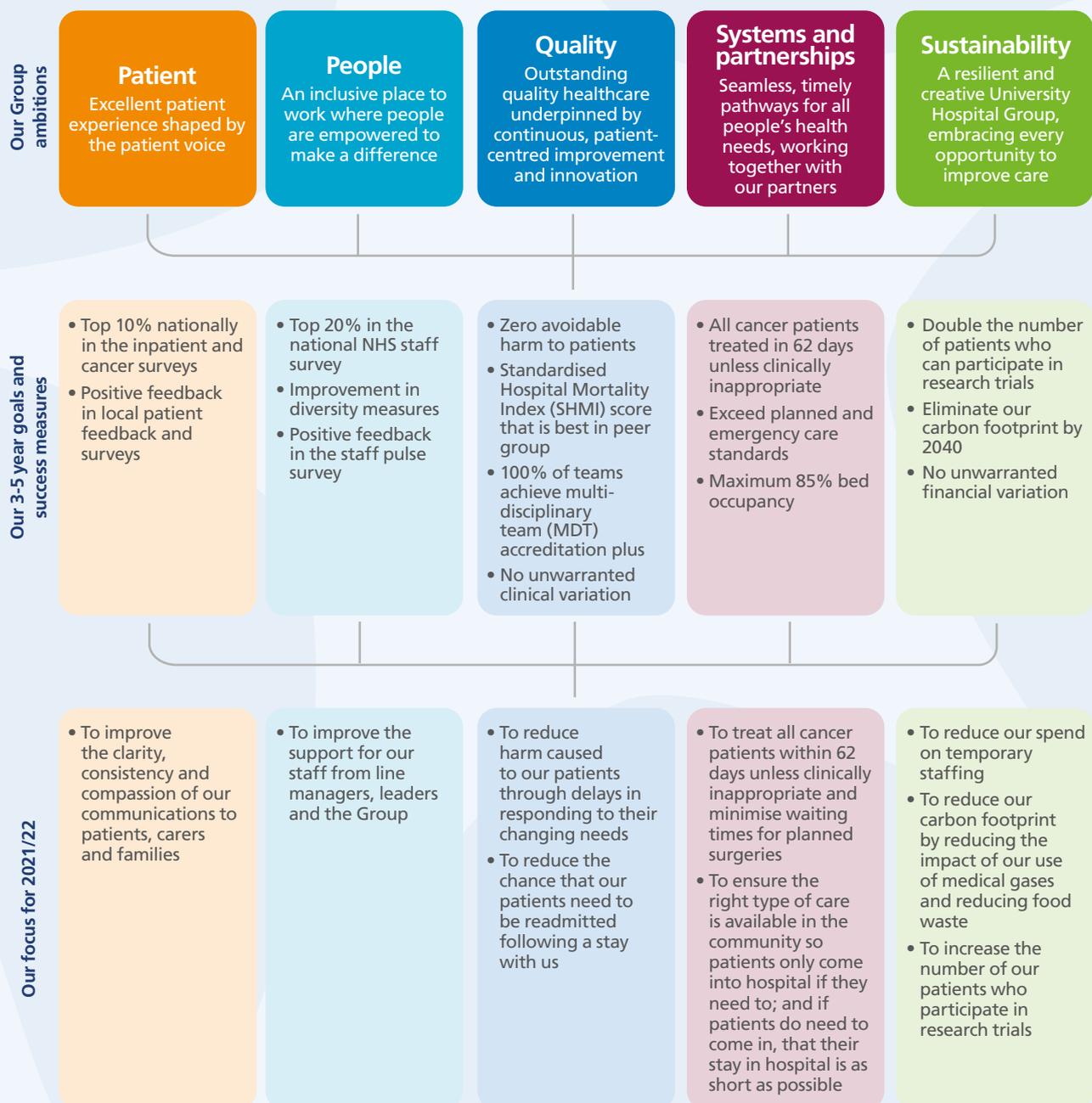
We have developed this strategy through engagement with staff, patient representatives, KGH governors, health and care partners and other people and groups across Northamptonshire.



Our Group Priorities and our focus for 2021/22

We have agreed five priorities for the Group. Everything we do across both organisations should contribute towards achieving goals within at least one of these priority areas. They represent the long-term objectives of the Group, and each has an ambition and a success measure that we can track.

Every year we will analyse our performance as a Group and set annual goals designed to make the biggest impact on each of these areas. Delivering our goals will move us closer towards achieving our overall vision.



“ We are clear that transformation within each of the priority areas we’ve identified is essential to achieving our Group ambitions. There isn’t a single priority more important than the others. ”

SIMON WELDON, GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Patient

Our 2021/22 focus

To improve the clarity, consistency and compassion of our communications with patients, carers and families

Our ambition: Excellent patient experience shaped by the patient voice

What does our ambition mean to us?

We will ensure compassionate patient care through working to provide an excellent patient experience, shaped by engagement with our patients.

We want to be in the top 10% of Trusts in terms of how our patients rate the care we provide.

We will strive to ensure that patient/public representation and engagement is included as part of every major change project.

Our patients, their carers and families tell us that a really important part of how they experience care is how we communicate with them. We want to make sure that we are able to provide clear, consistent and compassionate communication at every step of a patient's care.

How will we measure success?

Success of our work will be measured:

- By being within the top 10% nationally in the inpatient and cancer surveys
- Through regular collections of patient feedback locally

Where are we now?

- Both KGH and NGH are currently below national average in the national inpatient and cancer patient surveys, although there have been recent improvements in scores relating to respect and dignity
- The area with the most room for improvement is ensuring consistent and compassionate communication with patients

What will support delivery of our 2021/22 focus?

Our breakthrough objective is for front-line staff, individuals and teams to improve communications with our patients.

- Each Trust will launch monthly communication discussion groups, beginning in selected wards and services, encouraging staff to share and reflect on positive or challenging experiences regarding patient communication.
- Patient pathway mapping will help us to understand the entire patient pathway, focusing on communication with patients at every step of their journey.
- Existing written patient communications will be reviewed to ensure they are as clear as possible.
- We will build our skills and confidence in delivering honest and personalised communication through strengthening our training programmes. We will get feedback from patients and families to develop this programme.
- Our Digital Strategy will help our systems to work better together. Improving our digital systems will mean our staff will have access to our patients' complete records, rather than our patients needing to tell each new member of staff their story again. It will also provide our staff with new ways to communicate with our patients, whether that is through an app, over the phone or online. Our plan to move towards new Electronic Patient Record systems, in particular, will help us to reduce unnecessary or confusing paperwork and allow us to help our IT systems to talk to each other so all staff can see a patient's record, however they interact with us.

“ I would like to see more focus placed on communication. Improving how different hospitals and departments share and access patient information with each other would make a major difference to a patient’s care and experience. ”

CARER REPRESENTATIVE, PATIENT EXPERIENCE AND INVOLVEMENT STEERING GROUP

People

Our ambition:

An inclusive place to work where people are empowered to make a difference

What does our ambition mean to us?

A focus on our people as a core priority across the Group will ensure that staff feel empowered and supported. Becoming an outstanding employer for our people and ensuring an excellent staff experience will enable colleagues to provide excellent care.

We will continue to improve our support for staff health and wellbeing and create an inclusive place to work where people are supported and valued regardless of their background or circumstances.

We will empower our people to voice suggestions and make improvements to how we deliver care.

We want to build compassionate leadership at all levels and ensure that leaders and managers are supported to lead, engage and develop their teams.

How will we measure success?

Success of our work will be measured:

- Our NHS staff survey results will place us in the top 20% of comparable Trusts
- Improvements in our inclusivity measures
- By seeing an improvement in the feedback we receive from our staff

Where are we now?

- In 2020 our response rate to the national NHS staff survey increased from 40% to 50% at NGH, and from 51% to 58% at KGH. This was a welcome improvement, particularly in the context of challenges presented by the COVID pandemic.
- Our results demonstrate we need to make further improvements in the following areas:
 - How colleagues work with each other
 - How we contribute to improvements within our areas of work
 - Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion
 - How we continue to look after our colleagues' health and wellbeing, which is particularly important after responding to the pandemic over the last 12 months

Our 2021/22 focus

To improve the support for our staff from line managers, leaders and the Group

What will support the delivery of our 2021/22 focus?

Our breakthrough objective is to improve both engagement of all staff with improvement and transformational activity, and staff satisfaction with regard to the support provided by managers, leaders and the Group.

- Alongside the development of our People Plan, which will outline our wider people ambition for the next three years, there are some projects we will focus on this year to improve the support we provide to our staff.
- Management and leadership programmes will be developed to strengthen the compassionate leader, management and coaching skills of managers and leaders. A standard approach to feedback and development will be developed so that everyone is clear about the development and support available to them.
- We have put in place a range of support over the last year to support our staff through the Covid-19 pandemic. We will continue to develop our health and wellbeing offer for staff, including enhanced psychological support. We will also make sure that we are continuing to ask our people what will make a positive difference to their working lives.
- Making sure that everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances, feels included is important to us. We have an inclusion action plan, addressing a range of areas from training and recruitment, through to cultural competence that will make us a more inclusive employer with a more inclusive culture.
- The national NHS staff survey is a really helpful source of information, but it is only completed annually. We want to know how our staff are feeling on a more frequent basis, so we will be setting up a pulse survey so we can be more responsive to how our staff are feeling and how we can support them.
- We have an ambition to make improvement and transformation a part of everyone's day-to-day job with staff having the knowledge and support they need, and feeling empowered to make changes happen. Later in this document we discuss how we will approach this, but we will support building a leadership and organisational culture centred around empowerment and improvement. We will continue to celebrate and communicate successes across the Group.

Both organisations showed that they are committed to hearing the different views from all staff, especially those from protected groups. This really empowered our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion networks to ensure they had a voice and it was respected and used to influence the Group mission, vision and values. This has also been a key driver in building confidence that the Group is serious about ensuring equality for staff and patients. I am happy to say that the Group 'inclusivity' journey has already started as a result of the diverse approach that was taken to ensure we all can relate to the Group mission, vision and values.

CAROL VERNER (MSC) INTERIM HEAD OF EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION/ELECTRONIC STAFF RECORD SYSTEMS PROJECT MANAGER

Quality

Our ambition: Outstanding quality healthcare underpinned by continuous, patient-centred improvement and innovation

What does our ambition mean to us?

We will focus on providing safe and clinically excellent care and a positive patient experience, underpinned by continuous improvement and innovation.

We have an ambition to reduce mortality and avoid harm to our patients. Building on the existing nursing accreditation programmes, we want to have a programme to accredit multi-disciplinary (MDT) teams which are achieving high standards of care and ways of working.

We will aim to embed a culture of continuous quality improvement with patients at the centre, and which will help ensure the quality of care we provide is consistently high.

How will we measure success?

Success of our work will be measured by:

- Having no cases of avoidable harm
- Improving our SHMI score (a national mortality measure) to be the best compared to other similar hospitals
- All of our multi-disciplinary teams having achieved the highest category of accreditation
- Having no unwarranted clinical variation

Where are we now?

- We need to address the many incidents caused by issues relating to delays in responding when a patient's condition deteriorates.
- There is variation in the outcomes for the patients we care for. Compared to other hospitals, a greater number of patients need to be readmitted for the same condition after we have discharged them from hospital.
- Our national standardised hospital mortality indicator (SHMI) score on patient mortality is in line with national averages

What will support delivery of our 2021/22 focus?

Our breakthrough objective is for front-line staff, individuals and teams to identify and respond to deteriorating patients faster.

- Each Trust will revitalise existing safety huddles, and teams will meet daily at an appropriate time with a focus on identifying high-risk patients and discussing recent incident data trends so teams have protected time to reflect and improve.
- We will implement electronic patient monitoring systems for all appropriate patients, which will generate automatic scores indicating a patient's current health status. The processes that support escalation processes will be refined to reflect the new systems and help make sure that staff have the training required to interpret and respond to electronic observation scores effectively.
- A multi-disciplinary team (MDT) accreditation scheme will be developed which will periodically assess best practice provision of care and ways of working. This will help teams to create plans to improve and to identify common themes and challenges across the Group.
- A clinical variation and effectiveness programme will be introduced across the Group to identify specialties where comparisons with other hospitals show there is an opportunity to improve. Clinical teams will work together to learn from both hospitals and best practice to make changes.
- An EPMA (Electronic Prescribing and Medicines Administration) system will be installed in clinical areas. This system will link with medication administration systems and help to make sure that patients are given the right doses and types of medication.

Our 2021/22 focus

To reduce harm caused to our patients through delays in responding to their changing needs
To reduce the chance that our patients need to be readmitted following a stay with us

Systems and Partnerships

Our ambition: Seamless, timely pathways for all people's health needs, working together with our partners

What does our ambition mean to us?

We will strengthen our involvement in partnership activity to improve local health and care services, and to provide seamless, timely patient pathways.

We will strive to identify and resolve causes of delayed access to care, or delays in discharging our patients from our care, when their hospital stay is completed.

We will work together with our partners to make sure that our patients' experience of health and care services in the county is seamless, so that as our patients move between our services, the process is smooth and timely.

How will we measure success?

Success of our work will be measured:

- By all of our cancer patients being treated within 62-days unless it is clinically inappropriate
- By exceeding national standards set for waiting times relating to planned care treatment and attendance at our Emergency Departments (A&E).
- By consistently achieving a maximum of 85% of our beds being occupied

Where are we now?

- Our hospital beds are under pressure, with high bed occupancy. Around a third of inpatients do not have a clinical reason to be in a hospital bed
- Our planned care performance has deteriorated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with increases in average waiting times and the number of patients who are having to wait the longest

- Cancer performance suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the longest delays in endoscopy screening services and GI tumours

What will support delivery of our 2021/22 focus?

Our breakthrough objective is for frontline staff, individuals and teams to ensure every patient has a clinical reason to stay in hospital, and to get patients home sooner if they don't need to be here.

- The iCAN programme (Integrated Care Across Northamptonshire) with our Northamptonshire health and care partners will design solutions and ways of working across the system that will address inappropriate admissions, improve support within the community and enable more timely and effective discharge planning. These solutions will help us to discharge patients more quickly, either to home or to the most appropriate accommodation. It will also prevent people from being admitted to hospital if they can be safely cared for at home.
- A large part of 2021/22 will be recovering from the impact that COVID-19 has had on our non-urgent services. We will take steps to recover waiting times where they have slipped as a result of the pandemic in line with the NHS elective recovery programme, including increasing endoscopy capacity, increasing theatre sessions and ensuring there is additional outpatient clinical capacity.
- As a Group we need to develop a better understanding of the demand for our services and the capacity required, both in terms of physical space and workforce. We will create a Group demand and capacity model for emergency, elective, diagnostic and cancer services which will help us to understand which areas need more capacity and create solutions which resolve them so that a patient's experience with us is smooth.

Our 2021/22 focus

To treat all cancer patients within 62 days unless clinically inappropriate, and minimise waiting times for planned surgeries

To ensure the right type of care is available in the community so patients only come into hospital if they need to, and if patients do need to come in, that their stay in hospital is as short as possible

“ We want to become an excellent partner to other organisations within the Northamptonshire health and care system. This will help us to make a greater contribution towards both improving the entire patient journey and developing sustainable local services. ”

ALAN BURNS, GROUP CHAIR

Sustainability

Our ambition: A resilient and creative University Hospital Group, embracing every opportunity to improve care

What does our ambition mean to us?

A focus on sustainability will allow our hospital Group to be resilient and creative, providing opportunities to innovate.

We want our Group to be fit for the future. This includes ensuring sustainable hospital services and exploring opportunities to innovate, whilst working within the financial budget we have available by becoming more productive.

We will strive to attract increasing numbers of permanent staff to the organisation to create a more stable workforce.

We will aim to reduce our carbon footprint in order to adopt a more sustainable approach and to fulfil our social responsibility as an organisation.

How will we measure success?

Success of our work will be measured by:

- Doubling the number of patients participating in research trials
- Eliminating our carbon footprint by 2040
- Having no unwarranted variation from our financial budget

Where are we now?

- We have posted a financial deficit in recent years within both Trusts, which is in part due to spending on medical and agency pay owing to a high number of vacancies for nursing and medical staff
- In common with many other NHS organisations, our services have a carbon footprint to reduce in line with the NHS plan. We have made progress in reducing the impact of our energy usage and the estates plans will further reduce this. The use of desfluranes in medical gases and food waste are large contributors to our carbon footprint
- There are opportunities to be more productive and learn from each other across the Group, but there is not currently a shared costing system and approach to costs

Our 2021/22 focus

To reduce our spend on temporary staffing

To reduce our carbon footprint by reducing the impact from our use of medical gases and by reducing food waste

To increase the number of our patients who participate in research trials

What will support delivery of our 2021/22 focus?

Our breakthrough objective is for frontline staff, individuals and teams to reduce food waste and increase productivity.

- We will work to design and implement changes to food ordering, production and delivery and to reduce food waste.
- In line with divisional business planning, areas for improvements to the productivity of services and teams will be identified and delivered to meet productivity improvements required to meet our financial targets.
- We will review the current medical staffing levels across the Group for the number of patients that need to be seen and better align the two, allowing recruitment of permanent staff in those areas that require it.
- Medical e-rostering will be introduced at both NGH and KGH, to help make the rostering process easier and reduce our temporary staffing spend.
- A single costing system will be embedded across the Group which aligns costing principles, categorisations, coding and standards. This will help us to gain a better understanding of our underlying costs, to learn from each other and to reduce costs in areas where there are opportunities to do so.
- We will work with anaesthetic teams to reduce desflurane usage and swap desflurane in medical gases to other alternatives where possible, in order to reduce the impact of medical gases on our carbon footprint.
- As we come together in a Group, there are opportunities for some of our corporate functions to collaborate, creating new opportunities for us to do things differently and better. We will review our corporate services to identify how each service can benefit from working together.

Programmes of work

The programmes of work we will focus on delivering will be aligned to our Group shared priorities. These are categorised into three types of programme:

- **Strategic initiatives:** complex programmes that will be delivered over multiple years to drive forward our longer-term ambitions, and which will require dedicated Executive leadership.
- **Supporting programmes:** programmes of work to 'do once across the Group' over the next 12 months that will support delivery of our annual focus in each priority area.
- **Breakthrough objectives:** objectives enabling everyone to get involved in making change happen within staff teams, and which underpin delivery of our annual focus. If we all work towards achieving the same small number of objectives, we will be able to make a big difference.

Our Strategic Initiatives



People Plan



Clinical Strategy



Nursing, Midwifery
and Allied Health
Professional Strategy



NHCP Integrated Care
System Strategy



Strategic Estates
Programme



Academic Strategy



Digital Strategy



Financial Strategy

Our focus for 2021/22, breakthrough objectives and supporting programmes

Based on analysis of our current performance, we have set a specific area of focus during 2021/22 for each of our five priorities. Focusing on a key aspect within each of our long-term priorities will help us make a notable difference in a short space of time.

For each area of focus, we have developed a set of supporting programmes to help us make the progress required over the next 12 months.

For each breakthrough objective, we will be asking divisions how they plan to contribute towards delivering our annual focus, ensuring that these areas are relevant and achievable at divisional level and within day-to-day staff activities.



Clinical Strategy

We will develop a clinical strategy across the Group that outlines how services will be delivered in the future in order to provide the right model of care for our communities.

Our Clinical Strategy will be developed with clinical staff from across the Group. Together, we will develop the overall clinical vision, agreeing what we want to achieve, as well as the model of care we need to achieve our ambitions.

Each specialty will develop a service strategy that outlines how services will work best for our patients in the future, making the most of i) opportunities created by working across the Group and the wider system; ii) innovative digital solutions; and iii) the latest best practice evidence.

The clinical strategy will inform our strategic estates plan and is planned to be developed by Autumn 2021.



People Plan

Our people underpin everything we do, and so developing a plan that increases staff numbers and capacity, offers better ways of working, and develops an empowering and inclusive culture, is central to achieving our ambitions. Above and beyond our people focus for 2021/22, we have developed a People Plan which outlines our wider ambitions for people over the next 3 years.

Our People Plan has been developed with engagement from our leadership, staff and committees. The NHS staff surveys have been supplemented with local surveys and forums to understand our current opportunities to improve.

Key themes which emerged during engagement regarding the People Plan were:

- Health and wellbeing
- People planning
- Volunteering
- People development
- People processes
- Organisational development

The People Plan was finalised and approved by both Trust Boards in Spring 2021.



Digital Strategy

We aspire to be the most Digital Hospital Group in England by July 2023. We will work together and with partners to enable digital care for patients across Northamptonshire.

Our Digital Strategy is being developed through engagement with our staff and patients to understand how Digital can best improve working lives and the care we provide.

Key design principles emerging through engagement are:

- To put patients and staff at the heart of everything we do
- Easy, simple and intuitive systems
- Clinically-led solutions that join up care
- Connected and shared systems that work together
- Innovative and flexible solutions
- Improves information about our services
- Increases accuracy and availability of data

The strategy was finalised and approved by both Trust Boards in Spring 2021.



Strategic Estates Programme

Our objective is to develop a holistic estates plan for both Kettering and Northampton General Hospitals to support changes in the way we organise and deliver services.

Our strategic estates programme will outline the future requirements for the Group to improve the environment within which people will receive care, as well as the environment in which our staff work.

At KGH, the hospital is part of the National Hospital Redevelopment Programme, but we need a single strategic plan across the Group. This will be developed alongside the Clinical Strategy to ensure our estate is fit-for-purpose to deliver the care models outlined.

The strategic estates programme will be developed throughout 2021.

Financial strategy



Our objective is to develop a financial strategy for the Group which supports us in achieving the best value for money from our available funding, and which aligns with the NHS financial planning guidance at organisational, Group and Integrated Care System (ICS) levels.

Our financial strategy will be developed in line with the NHS financial and planning guidance, and in partnership with our finance colleagues across the system.

The strategy will outline how the Group will achieve financial balance, create opportunities to invest for the future, and interact with the Integrated Care System financial planning processes. It will also describe how the new Group financial function will operate.

The financial strategy will be developed over Summer 2021.

Integrated Care System (ICS) Strategy



We will work with our partners to contribute towards achieving a thriving ICS by April 2022, including by advancing the integration of care between NHS organisations, Local Authorities and other partners and sharing responsibility for managing resources and delivering improvements in health outcomes.

Our ICS strategy will be developed together with our system partners in the Northamptonshire Health and Care Partnership (NHCP) in the coming months. Our work will support the NHCP vision to provide a positive lifetime of health, wellbeing and care in our community, as well as the delivery of these four main priorities:

- Integrated Care Across Northamptonshire
- Mental Health
- Children and Young People
- Elective Care

Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals (AHP) Strategy



We will build on our ambition to excel in patient care and create a positive practice environment for staff by working to become the employer of choice in Northamptonshire with regard to healthcare careers.

Our Nursing, Midwifery and AHP strategy is being developed through extensive engagement with our nursing, midwifery and AHP colleagues. We have great successes to build on, including the Pathway to Excellence® accreditation in Northampton, and we plan to develop a roadmap for KGH to become accredited.

In response to engagement undertaken to date, the Nursing, Midwifery and AHP strategy will include:

- Valuing our people
- Strengthening leadership
- Inspiring innovation and transformation
- Developing our workforce
- Ensuring safe and high quality care

The strategy was completed and approved in May 2021.

Academic Strategy



The aim of the Academic Strategy was to achieve University Hospital status through partnership with the University of Leicester, and to strengthen our existing links with the University of Northampton. We are delighted that we were successful in achieving University Hospital Status in Spring 2021, and will now work on ensuring we identify and optimise the opportunities which are now available to us as a result. University Hospitals status will help to improve both the quality of care we are able to provide patients and the development opportunities we can offer to staff.

Our academic strategy has been developed following engagement with our staff, leadership and our external partners.

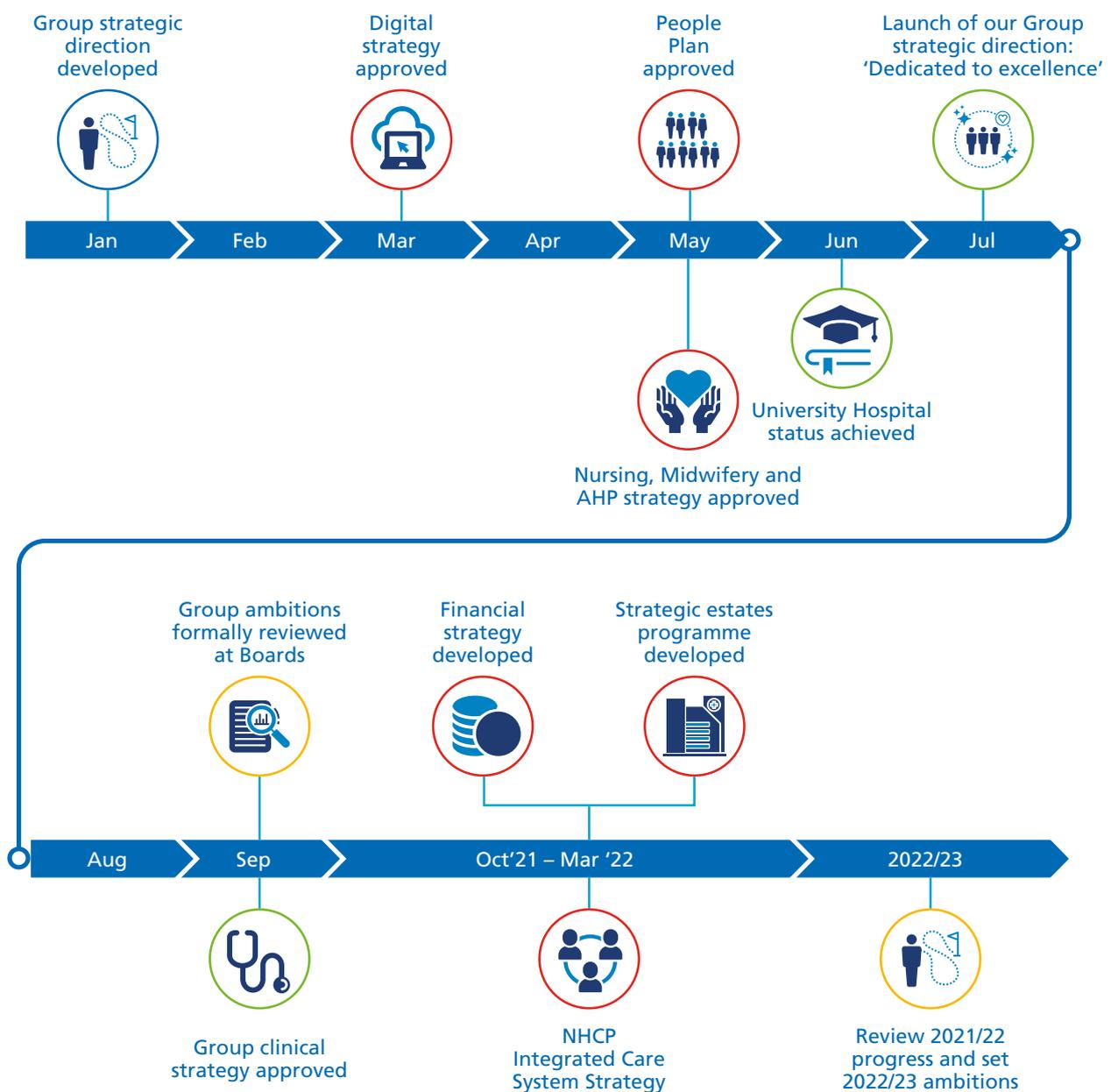
The strategy outlines our objectives:

- Partner with the University of Leicester to become a University Hospitals Group (now achieved)
- Foster a culture of learning, research and development
- Provide a multi-professional academic training and development programme
- Increase opportunities and resources for innovation and research
- Build our supporting infrastructure
- Develop our partnerships with other universities including the University of Northampton

The strategy was approved in Autumn 2020.

Our timeline for developing the Group

We will continue to develop the Group strategy and its constituent parts over the coming year through continued engagement with staff, governors, patient and carer representatives, health and care partners and other stakeholders.



Making Transformation Happen

We have agreed bold ambitions for our Group, and we have developed a shared vision of how things will be in the future. We now need everyone's support and engagement to deliver the transformation required and to turn ambition into reality.

As we set out together on this journey, we all need to be heading in the same direction. We need to know the individual role we play in reaching our goals, and to feel both supported and able to make small changes which make our patients' lives better as well as our own.

Embedding a Group-wide approach to transformation and improvement, building on the existing strengths and achievements of the KGH Improvement Innovation Transformation and clinical Effectiveness Team (KIITE) and the NGH Transformation and Efficiencies Team, will help us to create a culture of continuous quality improvement.

We want to develop an environment where every member of staff is taking steps towards making KGH and NGH a better place to work and to be cared for. We want our priorities to be real, meaningful and

relevant to our staff and what we do on a day-to-day basis. All colleagues will need to understand how what we do daily affects how we perform as a Group.

We will support our staff to have the skills and confidence to make improvements happen and to make a real difference.

Each division, department, team and individual will have their part to play, but we need a common approach. Our framework for transformation and improvement has seven key elements and supports everyone in making change happen, regardless of the role we play.

Over the next few years we will build a culture of improvement where everyone is empowered to make change happen. There will be plenty of opportunities to get involved and understand more about this in the coming months.



Measuring success

We have set out the ambitions for our hospital Group and we have shared our vision, mission and values. By working together, our two organisations will make the best use of our collective resources and will remain committed to delivering excellence in all we do. This ambitious strategy will enable us to bring to life the vision for our hospital Group.

This document has outlined how we will align our transformation and improvement activities with our Group priorities. We have also developed plans for measuring our progress towards achieving these priorities, and for monitoring success measures on an ongoing basis.

Monitoring delivery

Each Group strategic priority has a set of success measures which enable us to track and measure progress. The Group priority success measures will be built into the operational performance monitoring structures within both Trusts and included in reporting packs for committees.

Our business intelligence and analytics teams will support the development of 'board-to-ward' reporting for metrics, which will be accessible by staff on a self-service system and allow teams to understand their own performance and assess the impact of improvements they have made.

Our programme teams will monitor delivery, providing robust programme and project management support to appropriately track delivery, and to manage risks, issues and dependencies.

Assurance and governance

The NGH and KGH Trust boards have overall responsibility for the delivery of the Group strategy in their respective organisations, with assurance provided through committees in common.

The Collaboration Programme Committee provides oversight and assurance with respect to development and delivery of the Group-wide vision, strategy and priorities.

The People Committee, the Quality Committee and the Finance Committee will oversee delivery of the Group priorities during their 'in common' sessions.



Oversight of Group Strategy Delivery

This diagram provides an overview of the governance arrangements we have put in place to ensure we stay on track.





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