



REPORT TO: HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD – 10 DECEMBER 2025

REPORT ON: NHS TAYSIDE GP OUT OF HOURS SERVICE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2026-2036

REPORT BY: CHIEF OFFICER

REPORT NO: DIJB88-2025

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Dundee Integration Joint Board (IJB) the NHS Tayside GP Out of Hours (OOH) Service Strategic Framework 2026–2036 and to seek approval for the next phase of the work to develop detailed options for future service delivery.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board (IJB):

- 2.1 Notes the progress of the GP OOH Reform Programme and the development of the NHS Tayside GP OOH Service Strategic Framework 2026–2036 being led by Angus Integration Joint Board under the Lead Partner arrangements on behalf of the Tayside Integration Joint Boards as attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.2 Approves the NHS Tayside GP OOH Service Strategic Framework as the basis for the next phase of work to develop detailed options for future service models.
- 2.3 Instructs the Chief Officer to advise Angus Integration Joint Board of Dundee Integration Joint Board’s decision as outlined in 2.2 above.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, however the recommendations of this report will facilitate further consideration of the financial position for the Tayside GP Out of Hours Services. The development of detailed service model options will be undertaken within existing programme resources and supported by the Tayside-wide Urgent and Unscheduled Care funding framework. Future phases of the programme will include comprehensive financial modelling and appraisal to ensure that proposed service models are affordable, efficient, and represent value for money.
- 3.2 However, it is recognised that the service continues to experience increased demand, resulting in a projected overspend of around £2m in the current financial year. NHS Tayside has provided temporary, one-off funding to all three IJB’s to cover this overspend, intended to address system wide pressures and support sustainability in the current year. Recurring financial pressures remain a challenge without service change.
- 3.3 Continued increases in demand for Tayside GP Out of Hours services represent a cost pressure for the health system. While the programme aims to address these financial pressures by developing a more sustainable, efficient, and patient centred model of OOH care,

a recurring cost pressure is likely to remain and will need to be actively managed in future planning and resourcing decisions across the whole system.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Angus IJB is the Lead Partner for the Tayside GP Out of Hours Service, holding delegated responsibility for strategic coordination and operational management on behalf of NHS Tayside. The service provides essential urgent primary care across Angus, Dundee, and Perth & Kinross when GP practices are closed, working in partnership with NHS 24, the Scottish Ambulance Service, community health and care teams, and acute services.

4.2 The current service faces significant challenges driven by rising demand, workforce challenges, increasing clinical complexity, and the changing needs of the population. Reform is required to ensure the service remains safe, sustainable, and person-centred. The NHS Tayside GP OOH Service Strategic Framework sets out a shared vision and direction for the next decade, focused on integration, workforce resilience, digital transformation, sustainability, and engagement.

4.3 The NHS Tayside GP OOH Service Strategic Framework 2026–2036 has been developed collaboratively with staff, professional stakeholders, and the public. It builds on extensive engagement, analysis, and tests of change undertaken across Tayside.

The framework establishes five key strategic priorities:

- Integration across urgent and unscheduled care to ensure people experience seamless pathways of care.
- Workforce resilience, underpinned by a robust training and competency framework.
- Digital and data intelligence to inform evidence-based decision-making and enhance coordination.
- Sustainability and value, ensuring the efficient use of shared resources across the system.
- Public awareness and engagement, strengthening understanding and confidence in how access care appropriately

4.4 Should the framework be approved by the three Tayside Integration Joint Boards, the next phase is to build on the foundation of the framework to develop a multi-year transformation programme which will include:

1. Developing future service model of care options based on the approved Strategic Vision, informed by evidence, engagement feedback, and learning from Tests of Change.
2. Undertaking a structured options appraisal to assess the benefits, risks, costs, and deliverability of potential future service models of care.
3. Continuing engagement with all stakeholders, including staff, professional bodies, partners, and the public to ensure co-production and transparency.
4. Developing an implementation plan with clear milestones, outcomes, and governance arrangements to support delivery of the preferred option.
5. Progressing the Equality and Quality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and embedding its findings in all planning and delivery stages.
6. Strengthening workforce planning, training, and leadership development to ensure sustainable and resilient service.
7. Establishing a formal training and competency framework to support capability, confidence and consistency across the workforce.
8. Expanding digital capability and analytical insight to support innovation, improvement and informed decision-making.

4.5 The next phase of the planned reform will involve developing details options for future models of GP Out of Hours care through structured appraisal, co-design with staff and partner, and further engagement with communities leading to implementation of the preferred option.

4.6 A comprehensive communication and engagement program is central to the strategic vision's further development and implementation and extensive staff, stakeholder, and public engagement has informed the Strategic Framework to date (Appendix 2).

Key activities continue including:

- Public engagement events to ensure inclusivity and gather diverse perspectives.
- Further collaboration with professional stakeholders
- Distribution of accessible materials, such as an easy-read version of the strategic vision document and public surveys.
- Strategic promotion via social media and established networks to maximise reach and transparency.

Engagement feedback has been integral to shaping the strategy and will continue to influence its refinement and implementation.

4.7 Dundee IJB will be updated regularly on the progress of the programme.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Angus IJB are leading the development of a full combined impact assessment as the next steps of this work.

6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk 1 Description	Should there be sufficient pace of change in developing the model of care provided by the GP Out of Hours Service there is a risk of failure to improve population health outcomes for the population of Dundee and continued financial pressures on the IJB's budget.
Risk Category	Quality of Care/Financial
Inherent Risk Level	Likelihood (5) x Impact (5) = Risk Scoring 25 – Extreme Risk Level
Mitigating Actions	Regular discussions with Angus IJB as Lead Partner regarding plan progress and locally support the development of the plan through participation and engagement
Residual Risk Level	Likelihood (3) x Impact (4) = Risk Scoring 12 High Risk Level
Planned Risk Level	Likelihood (3) x Impact (4) = Risk Scoring 12 High Risk Level
Approval recommendation	On the basis of the impact of the mitigating actions this risk should be accepted

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 The Chief Finance Officer and the Clerk were consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.0 DIRECTIONS

The Integration Joint Board requires a mechanism to action its strategic commissioning plans and this is provided for in sections 26 to 28 of the Public Bodies (Joint Working)(Scotland) Act 2014. This mechanism takes the form of binding directions from the Integration Joint Board to one or both of Dundee City Council and NHS Tayside.

Direction Required to Dundee City Council, NHS Tayside or Both	Direction to:	
	1. No Direction Required	X
	2. Dundee City Council	
	3. NHS Tayside	
	4. Dundee City Council and NHS Tayside	

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None

Dave Berry
Chief Officer

DATE: 17 November 2025



Tayside
GP Out of Hours (OOH) Service
Strategic Framework
2026 - 2036

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CONTENTS PAGE

1. Introduction and Purpose	6
2. Case for Change	6
3. Our Vision and Principles	7
4. Strategic Priorities	8
5. Enablers of Change	10
6. A Culture of Continuous Improvement	10
7. Measuring Success	10
8. Next Steps	11
9. Conclusion	11

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Executive Summary – Chief Officer, Angus Health & Social Care Partnership

As Chief Officer for Angus Health and Social Care Partnership, and on behalf of NHS Tayside and the three Tayside Health and Social Care Partnerships, I am delighted to present the Tayside GP Out of Hours Strategic Framework 2026–2036.

This framework has been jointly developed by Angus, Dundee, and Perth & Kinross Health and Social Care Partnerships, working in partnership with NHS Tayside. It sets out a shared and ambitious vision for the future of the GP Out of Hours (OOH) Service, one that is safe, sustainable, and person-centred, and that delivers high-quality, compassionate care close to home for the people of Tayside.

As the lead partner for GP Out of Hours Service, Angus HSCP is proud to coordinate this system-wide reform on behalf of our regional partners. The approach reflects our collective responsibility to ensure that people can access the right care, in the right place, at the right time, supported by a confident, capable, and connected workforce.

This Strategic Framework builds upon months of engagement, reflection, and learning. It draws on the experience of staff and stakeholders across Tayside, as well as insights from a range of tests of change that have helped us to understand what enables safe, resilient, and effective out-of-hours care. The learning is clear, success depends on strong clinical leadership, multidisciplinary teamwork, and a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement.

The framework establishes five key strategic priorities:

- Integration across urgent and unscheduled care to ensure people experience seamless pathways of care.
- Workforce resilience, underpinned by a robust training and competency framework.
- Digital and data intelligence to inform evidence-based decision-making and enhance coordination.
- Sustainability and value, ensuring the efficient use of shared resources across the system.
- Public awareness and engagement, strengthening understanding and confidence in how to access care appropriately.

Delivery of this vision will be supported by clear governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements, ensuring transparency and alignment across NHS Tayside and the three Health and Social Care Partnerships. This approach aligns closely with NHS Tayside's Five Strategic Aims for 2025–2026, which focus on strengthening governance, improving population health and health inequalities, enhancing quality of care, supporting staff wellbeing, and delivering value and sustainability. It will be underpinned by a culture of learning, improvement, and shared accountability, one

that supports our workforce, values innovation, and places people at the heart of every decision.

This document represents an important milestone in the evolution of Out of Hours services across Tayside. It provides a blueprint for transformation that will be implemented through a phased, collaborative, and evidence-led approach. Together, we will continue to build on this foundation to deliver a model of care that is robust, equitable, and future-ready, ensuring Out of Hours services remain a trusted and integral part of the Tayside health and care system.

Jillian Galloway
Chief Officer, Angus Integration Joint Board

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Our Vision

To deliver a safe, sustainable, and person-centred Out of Hours service that brings together a skilled multidisciplinary team to provide high-quality, compassionate care close to home.

Reasons for change

Health and care services across Tayside are experiencing increasing whole-system pressures, driven by an ageing population, rising frailty, and greater clinical complexity. Patterns of demand and patient expectations have also changed, placing added strain on urgent and Out of Hours care. Reform is needed to create a resilient, clinically led, and sustainable model that supports the wider system and meets people's needs now and in the future.

Our priorities

- **Multidisciplinary Model:** Retain GPs at the centre of service delivery, supported by an empowered, skilled, and well-utilised multidisciplinary team working together to provide safe, effective, person-centred care, delivered as close to home as possible.
- **Optimised Capacity:** Build resilience and sustainability by maximising the contribution of all clinical professionals. This includes ensuring that patients are seen by the right clinician, at the right time, enabling GPs to focus on the most complex cases requiring their specialist expertise.
- **Integrated Urgent Care:** Strengthen collaboration across the health and care system to streamline patient pathways, improve coordination, and ensure people receive timely, seamless, and locally accessible care from the most appropriate service.
- **Digital Transformation:** Use data, innovation, and technology to enhance access, improve efficiency, and support evidence-based clinical decision-making.
- **Public Awareness and Education:** Understanding of the Out of Hours service – what it is for, and how and when to access it.

This image is also available in other formats and large print

Tayside GP Out of Hours Service Strategic Vision

Safe, Sustainable and Person-Centred Out of Hours Care (OOH) for the people of Tayside.



Guiding Principles

- **Person-Centred:** Care that is compassionate, respectful, and shaped around individual needs.
- **Safe & High Quality:** Continuous improvement to deliver safe, effective, and evidence-based care.
- **Equitable:** Fair and consistent access to services for all communities.
- **Collaborative:** Working together across health, social care, and community partners to achieve better outcomes.
- **Sustainable:** Making best use of resources to build resilient, future-ready services.
- **Open & Accountable:** Acting with honesty, transparency, and responsibility in all that we do.

What success looks like

- **Improved Access and Performance:** People across Tayside know how and when to access Out of Hours and urgent care services, with timely, consistent responses that meet agreed clinical timeframes and performance standards.
- **Positive Experiences:** Patients and families receive compassionate, person-centred care that is safe, responsive, and clearly communicated, fostering trust and confidence in the service.
- **Integrated Urgent Care:** Closer coordination between Out of Hours, NHS 24, the Scottish Ambulance Service, Emergency Departments, and community partners ensures joined-up pathways, smoother patient journeys, and a more efficient, resilient whole-system response to demand.
- **Resilient and Sustainable Workforce:** A skilled, adaptable, and well-supported workforce – empowered through training, new roles, and effective teamwork – delivers safe, high-quality care and ensures the long-term sustainability of the service.
- **Continuous Learning and Improvement:** Data, evidence, and patient feedback drive ongoing improvement, helping to demonstrate performance, impact, and value across Tayside's health and care system.
- **Financial Stewardship and Sustainability:** The service will be designed to make the best use of collective resources across the system, strengthening efficiency and value while maintaining quality and safety. Reform will support a model that is affordable, resilient, and sustainable for the future.



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1. Introduction and Purpose

This Strategic Framework sets out the collective ambition for the reform and transformation of the Tayside GP Out of Hours (OOH) Service. It provides a shared direction for developing a safe, sustainable, and person-centred service aligned to national policy and local priorities. In doing so, it supports NHS Tayside's Five Strategic Aims (2025–2026) by promoting high-quality care, staff wellbeing, good governance, and long-term sustainability. The framework brings together the strategic vision, priorities, and enablers that will guide delivery and provide clarity for staff, partners, and the public.

It recognises that reform is essential to ensure resilience in the face of increasing demand, workforce challenges, and changing population health needs. This document builds on extensive engagement and learning from tests of change across Tayside, forming the foundation for a multi-year transformation programme.

2. Case for Change

The Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework 2025–2035 provides the foundation for this work. It challenges us to deliver services that are:

- Person-centred, shaped around what matters to people and communities.
- Equitable, ensuring fair access to care and outcomes across Tayside's diverse geography.
- Sustainable, making best use of the workforce, digital tools, and resources available.
- Integrated, bringing health, social care, and community partners together as one system.
- Data-driven and continually improving, using evidence and lived experience to learn and adapt.

These principles guide the way we think about OOH reform, because the needs of our population are changing rapidly.

Tayside's population is changing, bringing new challenges and opportunities for OOH care. More people are living longer, often with multiple long-term conditions, frailty, and complex medication needs. This increasingly shifts the focus of OOH work from quick interventions to longer, clinically demanding consultations that require skilled multidisciplinary input. Alongside this, younger people and families are more frequently seeking urgent help for emotional distress, neurodevelopmental issues, or acute social and wellbeing concerns at times when other supports are unavailable. These trends highlight the importance of compassionate, accessible, and well-connected pathways that respond effectively to a wide range of needs. In some communities, particularly urban and more deprived areas, there remains a continuing rise in crisis presentations linked to mental health and substance use. Addressing these pressures requires coordinated, system-wide responses across OOH, community services, ambulance

and police colleagues, ensuring that people receive timely, safe, and person-centred care, whatever the nature of their crisis or condition.

Health and care services across Tayside are experiencing increasing whole-system pressures driven by an ageing population, rising frailty, and greater clinical complexity. Patterns of demand and patient expectations have evolved, placing added strain on urgent and out-of-hours care. Reform is needed to develop a resilient, clinically led, and sustainable model that meets people's needs now and in the future.

These demographic shifts, combined with workforce constraints, financial pressures, and rising expectations, mean the service model that worked five or ten years ago will not meet the needs of the next decade.

That is why our focus is on reform, not replacement, testing new ways of working, scaling up what works, and aligning our approach with the wider system vision set out in the Service Renewal Framework: prevention, integration, digital transformation, and equity at the core.

3. Our Vision and Principles

A safe, sustainable, and person-centred Out of Hours service that brings together a skilled multidisciplinary team to provide high-quality, compassionate care close to home.

This vision aspires to ensure that everyone in Tayside can access the right care, in the right place, at the right time, delivered by a confident and connected workforce.

This proposed vision describes a service that listens, learns, and adapts to meet the evolving needs of the population. It values the contribution of every professional and builds strong connections across the health and care system. The six guiding principles below aim to shape behaviours, decisions, and priorities at every level.

Person-Centred

Care should be designed around what matters most to people, recognising individual needs, preferences, and circumstances. Staff should be supported to provide compassionate, personalised care that promotes dignity, choice, and trust.

Safe

Safety remains at the heart of delivery, anchored in strong clinical governance, consistent standards, and real-time visibility of performance. Staff are encouraged to speak up, learn from experience, and take collective ownership of improvement.

Equitable

Every person in Tayside should have fair and timely access to OOH care, regardless of where they live or their personal circumstances. Equity means ensuring that services are designed and delivered in proportion to local need, recognising that equity does not always mean the same level of provision in every location, but rather appropriate, safe, and sustainable access for all.

Collaborative

Collaboration is essential for success. The service aims to strengthen partnerships with NHS 24, the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS), in-hours general practice, community nursing, pharmacy, social care, and acute hospital teams. Enhanced collaboration across these services would create clearer, more coordinated pathways of care, ensuring that patients are seen by the right professional, in the right setting, at the right time. This joined-up approach is intended to minimise duplication, streamline handovers, and reduce avoidable delays, supporting safer and more consistent outcomes for patients.

Sustainable

The service seeks to optimise the use of financial, digital, and human resources to support long-term resilience. Sustainability would come through investment in people, alignment of capacity with need, and efficient, system-wide use of shared infrastructure.

Open and Accountable

Transparency and shared accountability are central to building confidence and trust. The service intends to communicate openly with staff, partners, and the public, sharing progress, inviting feedback, and demonstrating how learning informs improvement.

4. Strategic Priorities

The proposed Strategic Vision identifies five core priorities intended to guide transformation and delivery.

Integration & Collaboration

Strengthening integration and collaboration across the urgent and unscheduled care pathway is central to delivering a consistent, safe, and effective service. People should experience a seamless journey of care, regardless of the point at which they enter the system.

To achieve this, the GP OOH Service is expected to continue working closely with NHS 24, the SAS, in-hours general practice, community nursing, pharmacy, acute hospital teams, and other key partners across the health and care system. Improved collaboration should help ensure that patients are directed to the right service at the right time, minimising duplication, reducing unnecessary handovers, and avoiding delays in care. Shared data, consistent triage and referral protocols, and joint decision-making processes are intended to help align practice across all parts of the pathway.

The OOH Service would also contribute to wider system coordination, supporting closer alignment between day-time and out-of-hours services as part of a single, integrated model of urgent primary care. This joined-up approach is intended to promote continuity for patients, reduce avoidable admissions, and help ensure that people receive the most appropriate care as close to home as possible.

Workforce Resilience

A sustainable service depends on a confident, capable, and motivated workforce. The focus will be on attracting and retaining skilled professionals across all disciplines and ensuring the right skill mix to meet demand. Investment in training, leadership, and professional development is intended to provide clear career pathways and help create a culture where staff feel valued, supported, and empowered to work at the top of their competence.

A structured training and competency framework is proposed to underpin this approach. It would help ensure that every member of the workforce has access to appropriate learning, supervision, and mentoring opportunities. This framework aims to support staff to feel confident, competent, and comfortable in their roles, equipped to deliver safe, effective, and high-quality care while developing their careers within the service.

Digital and Data Intelligence

Harnessing the power of data and digital technology is seen as central to improvement. Real-time information should support operational decision-making, while analytics and performance dashboards could enable evidence-based planning and continuous enhancement. Improved data-sharing should connect teams, strengthen governance, and inform service redesign.

Sustainability

A sustainable model would make efficient use of system-wide resources and shared infrastructure. Aligning workforce capacity with population needs, and integrating support functions are expected to strengthen financial and operational resilience. These actions are designed to help ensure the service delivers both quality and value for the public.

Public Awareness and Engagement

Engagement remains a cornerstone of reform. Listening to staff, professional stakeholders, and the public should ensure that the service continues to reflect local priorities and lived experience. A further public survey and targeted engagement are planned to accompany the next phase of implementation, alongside work to improve public understanding of how and when to access OOH care appropriately.

Detailed options for delivery, including workforce configuration, digital priorities, and service models, will be developed through further co-design and formal approval processes.

5. Enablers of Change

Delivering this vision will require the right conditions and partnerships to be in place:

- **Leadership and Governance:** Clinically informed leadership and transparent governance will ensure accountability, national alignment, and effective collaboration.
- **Workforce and Teamwork:** Investment in training, support, and development to build a resilient, adaptable workforce delivering safe and coordinated care.
- **Data, Technology and Innovation:** Harnessing digital tools and analytics to improve performance, connectivity, and innovation.
- **Engagement and Communication:** Structured engagement and clear communication with staff, partners, and communities to inform decisions and strengthen trust.
- **Finance and Sustainability:** Responsible use of public resources, ensuring long-term affordability and value while maintaining quality and safety.

6. A Culture of Continuous Improvement

The success of this vision depends on nurturing a culture that values curiosity, learning, and accountability. The OOH Service will continually seek opportunities to innovate, adapt, and refine. This means creating an environment where staff feel empowered to identify improvements, where ideas are tested and shared, and where data and feedback drive learning.

Central to this culture is a shared commitment to professional growth and learning. Staff would be encouraged to develop their skills, build confidence, and take ownership of their practice within a supportive framework that promotes reflection, collaboration, and continuous development.

Continuous improvement would be embedded at every level through reflective practice, structured evaluation, and collaboration across teams. Over time, this cultural shift aims to establish the OOH Service as a dynamic, adaptive system, one that learns from experience, celebrates progress, and consistently strives for excellence.

7. Measuring Success

Progress would be assessed through meaningful improvements in outcomes for patients, staff, and the wider system. Key indicators could include:

- Improved access, experience, and satisfaction for patients across all localities.
- A stable, skilled, and engaged multidisciplinary workforce.
- Evidence of greater integration and reduced duplication of effort.
- Delivery of safe, effective, and high-quality care.
- A demonstrable culture of learning, improvement, and innovation.
- Sustainable use of financial and operational resources.

Ultimately, success would mean a service that people trust, professionals are proud to work within, and partners regard as integral to the health and care system across Tayside.

8. Next Steps

The next phase will involve developing detailed service model options, conducting structured options appraisals, and co-designing delivery plans with staff and stakeholders. Implementation will be phased, with regular evaluation and continuous engagement to ensure alignment with strategic objectives.

9. Conclusion

The proposed GP OOH Strategic Vision sets a clear and credible direction for the future. It represents a collective ambition to work towards a service that is safe, sustainable, and person-centred, anchored in collaboration, compassion, and continuous improvement.

While this Vision sets out a shared aspiration, its implementation will depend on available resources, national priorities, and the pace of wider system transformation. Delivery is therefore expected to be phased, iterative, and co-produced, evolving through continued collaboration, governance oversight, and engagement with staff, partners, and communities.

Achieving this vision will take time and shared effort, but the ambition remains clear: to build a service that listens, learns, evolves, and continually strives to be better for the people of Tayside.

Above all, this Vision reflects a shared commitment across Tayside to work together in building a service that people can trust and staff can take pride in. It also reaffirms our alignment with NHS Tayside's Five Strategic Aims (2025–2026), ensuring that the transformation of Out of Hours care contributes directly to the organisation's overarching goals for governance, quality, population health, staff wellbeing, and sustainable value.



Tayside GP Out of Hours Service Reform

Preliminary Statement of Engagement

November 2025

(This document is iterative in nature and will continue to be refined and updated as the next phase of engagement progresses).

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PRELIMINARY STATEMENT OF ENGAGEMENT

This statement outlines the engagement activity undertaken to inform the development of the **Strategic Vision for the Tayside GP Out of Hours (OOH) Service**. It summarises the collaborative work to date, the quality improvement (QI) approach adopted, and the wide-ranging engagement undertaken with staff, professional stakeholders, and the public. Together with emerging data and insights from test-of-change activity, this feedback has been central to shaping the direction of travel for the future service model.

The OOH service provides essential clinical support when GP practices are closed, but the current model faces growing pressure from increasing demand, workforce challenges, greater complexity of patient need, and rising delivery costs. These pressures have highlighted the need for a more coordinated, efficient, and sustainable approach that is better integrated with community and urgent care pathways.

Engagement and data analysis have reinforced the importance of improving access, ensuring consistency, and supporting a resilient and skilled workforce. Through the application of QI methodologies, the Programme continues to test and refine improvements that enhance safety, patient flow, and overall service effectiveness.

This evolving context provides a clear opportunity to redefine the strategic vision for GP Out of Hours care in Tayside. The ambition is to deliver a service that is person-centred, sustainable, and adaptable, capable of meeting both current and future demand while maintaining the highest standards of safety, quality, and equity across all communities.

Methodology

1. Developing the Strategic Vision

The development of the Strategic Vision for the Tayside GP OOH Service began with the establishment of a dedicated, multi-disciplinary Working Group. This group brought together representatives from clinical, professional, managerial, and operational backgrounds to ensure that a broad range of expertise and perspectives informed the process.

Guided by a Quality Improvement (QI) approach, the Programme is underpinned by a commitment to continuous improvement and evidence-based practice. The approach emphasises learning through testing - understanding what works, adapting based on evidence, and embedding successful changes into routine practice. This iterative process reflects NHS Tayside's ambition to build a culture of improvement that is data-informed, collaborative, and focused on patient outcomes.

The Working Group has been responsible for shaping a vision that:

- **Integrates pathway improvements**, strengthening coordination and collaboration between urgent, primary, and community care.
- **Implements and evaluates tests of change** to explore new models of access, triage, and workforce deployment.
- **Draws on detailed data analysis** to understand demand, capacity, and equity of access across Tayside, mindful of geographical and demographic variations including rurality.
- **Optimises resources** through improved efficiency, workforce alignment, and system-wide collaboration.
- **Enhances whole-system working**, ensuring the service operates as part of a cohesive and sustainable urgent care network.

Feedback and insight from broad stakeholder engagement, including staff, professional partners, and the public, have been central to shaping the strategic direction. Their lived experience and operational knowledge have provided valuable perspectives on local needs and opportunities for improvement.

Through this combined QI, data-driven, and co-productive approach, the Programme is developing a Strategic Vision and Framework to guide a future service model that is person-centred, sustainable, and adaptable, capable of meeting current and future demand while ensuring equity of access and high standards of care.

2. Project Team Composition and Evolution

The GP OOH Project Team is co-led by the Head of Community Health and Care Services and the Angus Health and Social care Partnership (HSCP) Associate Medical Director (AMD) includes a diverse range of stakeholders, ensuring that the development of the strategic vision is informed by operational, clinical, and improvement expertise from across the system.

Membership includes Improvement Advisers from Acute Services, the Lead Nurse, Senior Nurse, Lead Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP), Clinical Leads from the OOH service, Pharmacy Technician, the Operational Manager, Service Manager, Primary Care Team Manager, and Finance representatives. This breadth of expertise has enabled a balanced focus on clinical quality, operational effectiveness, and financial sustainability.

Above this group sits the OOH Collaborative Group, chaired by the Head of Community Health and Care Services, which provides strategic alignment, assurance, and system-level coordination. The group includes representation from the Perth & Kinross and Dundee Health and Social Care Partnerships, and from partner organisations such as NHS 24 and the Scottish Ambulance Service, ensuring that the reform remains fully integrated with wider transformation activity and aligned to NHS Tayside's strategic priorities.

The reform programme was initiated in response to a commissioning directive from the Chief Officer, mandating a comprehensive review and redesign of the Tayside GP Out-of-Hours (OOH) service. Foundational project documentation, including a Driver Diagram, was developed to build on earlier discovery sessions that highlighted long-standing challenges and opportunities for improvement, many of which staff have since reaffirmed as still relevant to the current context.

3. Tests of Change

A series of tests of change were undertaken to explore how best to optimise existing resources, improve ways of working, and strengthen overall service resilience. Using the Plan–Do–Study–Act (PDSA) methodology, the programme applied a Quality Improvement approach to ensure that each change was evidence-based, measurable, and adaptable to evolving needs.

The initial phase of testing delivered encouraging results, providing valuable learning on access, patient flow, and workforce deployment. Across the four tests of change, measurable improvements were observed, with several approaches demonstrating readiness for wider adoption and others identifying opportunities for refinement prior to full implementation.

The programme continues to apply a PDSA approach, ensuring that each change is continually evaluated and adapted through ongoing learning. Detailed analysis of the outcomes, including demand, capacity, and equity of access data, will inform the next phase of service design and implementation.

This structured, iterative approach reflects NHS Tayside's commitment to continuous improvement, learning, and adaptation, ensuring that future service developments are sustainable, person-centred, and equitable, responsive to variations in geography, rurality, and population need across all Tayside localities.

4. Staff and Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement has been central to the development of the Strategic Vision for the Tayside GP Out of Hours (OOH) Reform Programme, ensuring that the direction of travel is informed by the experience, expertise, and perspectives of those who deliver and use the service. A structured and inclusive engagement plan has been implemented aligned with Health Improvement Scotland (HIS) principles of good engagement and co-design.

Staff Engagement

Seven dedicated engagement sessions have been held with staff from across the OOH service, providing opportunities to participate both in person and virtually. These sessions involved a wide range of staff, including clinical, administrative, and management colleagues, and have been supported by Trade Union and HR representatives from the outset. Discussions have focused on workforce sustainability, service pressures, improvement opportunities, and the development of a more coordinated and flexible service model.

Wednesday 30 July – 10:30–11:30

Thursday 31 July – 14:00–15:00

Thursday 31 July – 17:00–18:00

Thursday 31 July – 18:30–19:30

Wednesday 6 August – 12:30–13:30

Wednesday 6 August – 17:00–18:00

Wednesday 6 August – 18:30–19:30

The Strategic Vision, as outlined in the Tayside GP Out of Hours Strategic Framework (2026–2036), reflects the feedback and insights gathered through this engagement process, ensuring that reform remains aligned with shared values and evidence-based design.

To ensure that staff voices continue to inform the reform process, a feedback form has been developed and remains open for ongoing contributions. Regular staff bulletins are also issued to keep all colleagues updated on progress, emerging themes, and next steps. This continuous feedback loop reflects the Programme's commitment to transparency, inclusion, and shared ownership of the reform.

Professional Stakeholder Engagement

Three structured engagement sessions have been held with professional stakeholders representing all services that interface with the GP OOH function. Participants included colleagues from the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS), NHS 24, Emergency Departments (EDs), Care Homes, Palliative Care, Allied Health Professions (AHPs), and other relevant partners from across Tayside. These discussions explored shared priorities such as improving coordination, strengthening communication pathways, and ensuring equitable access to urgent care across both urban and rural areas.

Tuesday 26 August – 6:00–7:00 PM (Eventbrite)

Tuesday 2 September – 6:00–7:00 PM (Eventbrite)

Thursday 4 September – 6:00–7:00 PM (Eventbrite)

In addition to these dedicated sessions, the reform has been shared and explored through almost 30 established strategic and clinical fora across the region, providing valuable opportunities for reflection, discussion, and feedback. These include partnership groups, operational leadership meetings, and clinical networks where feedback has informed both the emerging service model and the wider integration of urgent care pathways.

Public and Community Engagement

A dedicated session with Tayside Public Partners was held to gather feedback from community representatives and individuals with lived experience of accessing Out-of-Hours (OOH) care. To complement this, a high-level public survey was launched to understand public views and priorities, particularly around accessibility, safety, and what people value most about the OOH service. This feedback will help ensure that the future model is shaped around the needs and expectations of the people it serves.

The survey was promoted through established NHS Tayside communication channels to reach as many people as possible. In addition, posters featuring a QR code linking to the survey were distributed to all GP practices and community pharmacies across Tayside, with a request that they be displayed in visible public areas. Contact details were provided for anyone who required the survey in an alternative format or support to take part, helping to make participation as inclusive and accessible as possible.

5. Approach and Governance

As part of the suite of project documentation, a comprehensive Engagement and Communication Plan has been developed, informed by Healthcare Improvement Scotland's (HIS) *Planning with People: Community Engagement and Participation Guidance*. This plan ensures that engagement remains structured, inclusive, and proportionate throughout the life of the Programme.

The project team reports to the Collaborative Group and feeds into the Urgent and Unscheduled Care Programme Board and Angus Strategic Planning Group ensuring alignment with wider system priorities. Oversight and accountability are provided through the Overarching Out-of-Hours (OOH) Review Group, which sits above these structures. This group is responsible for monitoring progress,

providing strategic direction, and ensuring that the reform remains aligned with NHS Tayside's governance, quality, and performance frameworks.

6. Key Insights from Engagement to Date

Engagement and feedback from staff, professional stakeholders, and the public have been instrumental in shaping the emerging Strategic Vision for the Tayside GP OOH Service. These insights, combined with data analysis and learning from test-of-change activity, have helped identify the priorities, opportunities, and challenges that the future model must address.

Staff Feedback

- Broad support for a collaborative, multidisciplinary model to strengthen coordination across OOH, community, and urgent care services.
- Recognition of the importance of workforce sustainability, supported by flexible deployment, access to professional development, and consistent clinical governance.
- Positive feedback on the open and inclusive nature of the reform process, with a shared desire for continued involvement through ongoing feedback opportunities.
- Confirmation that multidisciplinary teamwork is viewed as central to safe and effective service delivery.
- Recognition of the ongoing critical role of GPs in clinical decision-making, with clarification that there are currently no plans to reduce GP clinical hours.
- Acknowledgement that the strength of the OOH service is derived from the combined skills and contributions of the whole team.

Professional Stakeholders

- Broad support for a flexible and adaptable service model capable of responding to changing patterns of demand across Tayside.
- Recognition of the need for clearer communication and more consistent pathways between OOH services and partner organisations, including NHS 24, the Scottish Ambulance Service, Emergency Departments, care homes, and palliative care services.
- Support for increased use of data and digital tools to improve communication, coordination, and overall patient experience.

Public and Community Feedback:

A total of 966 survey responses were received, with 919 participants providing postcodes. Of those who gave their location, 36% were from Angus, 36% from Perth & Kinross, and 28% from Dundee. This indicates a broadly even geographic spread across Tayside, with slightly fewer responses from Dundee compared to the other two areas.

Overall, respondents expressed a strong appreciation for staff once contact was made, highlighting the professionalism and compassion of those delivering care. However, there was clear frustration with the front-end experience, particularly around phone access, waiting times, and travel. The feedback revealed a consistent public preference for GP-led, face-to-face local care, shorter wait times, and better-resourced NHS 24 and local Out-of-Hours (OOH) sites.

Recurring themes across hundreds of open comments included:

- **Waiting times:** Comments reflected concerns about call queues and delays in receiving call-backs or appointments.

- **NHS 24 access:** Some respondents described difficulty getting through and expressed frustration with the scripted nature of questioning.
- **Travel and transport:** Travel distance and access to transport were noted as barriers, particularly for those in more rural areas.
- **Local access:** Many participants emphasised the value of maintaining local access to OOH services and suggested that bases should be available across Tayside communities.
- **Model of care:** There was a general preference for GP-led models of care, alongside mixed views about extending the roles of other clinical professionals such as ANPs and paramedics.
- **Communication and compassion:** Respondents highlighted the importance of clear communication and being treated with respect and understanding.
- **Joined-up system:** Participants expressed a desire for smoother coordination between daytime GP services, NHS 24, and OOH provision.

Overall, feedback emphasised the importance of timely access, local provision, and person-centred care, with many participants valuing continuity with familiar professionals. Respondents expressed a need for clearer information on how and when to access OOH services, particularly in rural areas, and a strong focus on equity of access, recognising that geography, transport, and demographic factors influence how people experience urgent care.

Taken together, the insights from staff, professional stakeholders, and the public provide a clear foundation for the next stage of reform. They reinforce the shared ambition to deliver a safe, sustainable, and person-centred Out-of-Hours service that is evidence-based, continuously improving, and responsive to the diverse needs of communities across Tayside.

7. Application of Feedback and Next Steps

The Tayside GP OOH Strategic Vision reflects the feedback and insights gathered from staff, professional stakeholders, and the public, as well as the learning from test-of-change initiatives and data on demand and capacity. This feedback has been central to refining the Strategic Vision for the Tayside GP Out of Hours (OOH) Service, ensuring that it aligns with organisational priorities, system-wide objectives, and the values expressed by those who deliver and use the service.

The next phase of the Programme will focus on translating this vision into a preferred service model or models, emerged through a structured option appraisal process. Each emerging model will be tested against agreed criteria, including safety, sustainability, equity of access, and workforce feasibility to ensure alignment with both local needs and national direction.

8. Public and Staff Engagement – Next Phase

Subject to Angus, Dundee and Perth & Kinross's IJBs approval, AHSCP will move into a second phase of public and staff engagement to ensure continued inclusivity and transparency in shaping the future service. Planned activities include:

- **Hosting public events** across Tayside to gather diverse community perspectives on how the new model should operate in practice.
 - **Conducting further engagement with staff and professional stakeholders** to refine implementation strategies, ensuring that they reflect operational realities and local priorities.
 - **Launching a second public survey**, to remain open for a minimum of four weeks, seeking views on the preferred service delivery model(s) that will emerge from the option appraisal.
- Promoting the vision and engagement opportunities** through NHS Tayside's communication channels, social media, and partner networks to reach a broad audience.

This next stage of engagement will build on the momentum established to date, reinforcing AHSCPs commitment to co-production, transparency, and continuous improvement as the GP OOH service evolves toward a sustainable and person-centred future model.

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