

Transport to Health Delivery Plan

October 2024

Scottish Government Transport to Health Delivery Plan.

Introduction

This Transport to Health Delivery Plan has been prepared to deliver actions to take forward recommendations from the [Transport to Health and Social Care Report \(2019\)](#), which was prepared by the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) at the request of Ministers. This report made 27 recommendations that the Scottish Government should take forward regarding transport to health and social care services.

The establishment of a taskforce and progression of a response to the recommendations was halted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the pandemic, taken together with wider resource pressures and staff turnover, meant that work did not progress as intended. Transport Scotland did give greater emphasis on transport to health within the [National Transport Strategy \(2020\)](#) and [Accessible Travel Delivery Plan \(2021\)](#), but specific actions were not identified.

In early 2023, a joint review by officials of the original recommendations was concluded and a draft delivery plan for discussion with MACS was agreed by Ministers with further updates to Ministers pending further engagement.

The delivery plan has identified 16 commitments which can be taken forward, based on their feasibility, deliverability and affordability. They align with current policy commitments / delivery plans and promote and facilitate a focus on access to healthcare in a fair and equitable way, including through better integration of healthcare considerations into transport planning.

Key to this approach is to maximise the existing structures and policy delivery to better effect, without replicating forums and policies that are already in place. The commitments presented focus around existing regional planning bodies and ensuring access to healthcare facilities is fully considered within regional and local planning.

We will continue to use the NHS annual delivery plans to re-emphasise the need for Health Boards to consider patient access as part of the care pathway and reflecting the opportunity that is emerging for reducing the number of patient journeys through alternative options. The [Re-mobilise, Recover, Re-design Framework](#) (RRR) was published in 2020, and set out the approach for Health Boards to safely and gradually prioritise the resumption of paused services following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The implementation of the refreshed Digital Health and Care strategy was launched in 2021 also focusses on improved patient access to healthcare.

Commitments

Commitment 1: The Scottish Government will work with the Scottish Ambulance Service to make sure it has a meaningful Equalities Impact Assessment process in relation to its Patient Transport Service aligned with the forthcoming Scheduled Care Strategy and 2030 Strategy and may include additional elements out with the scope of the 2030 strategy project, e.g. Patient Needs Assessment review.

Impact: High

Deliverability: High

Expected Delivery Date: January 2025

Scottish Government Lead: Directorate General Health and Social Care – Scottish Ambulance Service Sponsor

Delivery Partner(s): Scottish Ambulance Service

Commitment 2: The Scottish Ambulance Service has already commissioned an independent review around demand and capacity for scheduled care services to explore potential future models for Patient Transport Service. The Scottish Government will continue to encourage the Scottish Ambulance Service to engage, with relevant stakeholders such as the Mobility and Access Committee Scotland, about the next steps that should be taken following the conclusion of that work. Next steps will be outlined as part of the Scheduled Care Strategy that will be published in the near future.

Impact: Medium

Deliverability: Medium

Expected Delivery Date: January 2025

Scottish Government Lead: Directorate General Health and Social Care – Scottish Ambulance Service Sponsor

Delivery Partner(s): Scottish Ambulance Service

Commitment 3: The Scottish Government is committed through the Re-mobilise, Recover, Re-design (RRR) Framework and the [Digital Health and Care Strategy](#) to improving care pathways and the number of ways that people can engage with health and care services.

This includes offering a greater number of digital services and care closer to home, thereby reducing the need to travel in order to access health care services. The Scottish Government is committed to undertaking appropriate engagement with equalities interests including through the Fairer Scotland plans for older and disabled groups.

Impact: High

Deliverability: Medium

Expected Delivery Date: Ongoing

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Scottish Government Lead: Directorate General Health and Social Care - Chief Operating Officer

Delivery Partner(s): NHS Health Boards

Commitment 4: Scotland's [Digital Health and Care Strategy](#) recognises the importance of involving people and staff in the design of tools, technologies and services that support them, noting that those that have been designed with users are more likely to deliver meaningful and lasting change that improves outcomes. Officials, as set out in the [Digital Health and Care Strategy](#), are taking a Scottish Approach to Service Design to ensure the promotion of Equality and Inclusion. As part of this, officials have established a Digital Equality and Inclusion Steering Group.

Impact: High

Deliverability: High

Expected Delivery Date: Ongoing

Scottish Government Lead: Directorate General Health and Social Care - DHAC

Delivery Partner(s): Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
The Health and Social Care Alliance (The ALLIANCE)

Commitment 5: The Scottish Government will include an action in the NHS Board Annual Delivery Plans stating Boards must ensure Patients have access to all information on any relevant patient transport (including community transport) and travel reimbursement entitlement.

Impact: Medium

Deliverability: High

Expected Delivery Date:

Scottish Government Lead: Directorate General Health and Social Care - Chief Operating Officer

Delivery Partner(s): NHS Health Boards

Commitment 6: The Scottish Government and Transport Scotland will consider whether there is potential for transport information to be incorporated into the NHS inform app and other digital information sources, including Traveline.

Impact: High

Deliverability: Medium

Expected Delivery Date: ongoing

Scottish Government Lead: Directorate General Health and Social Care – Primary Care

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Delivery Partner(s): Transport Scotland

Commitment 7: The Scottish Government will consider in more detail the available data on the issue of transport to health, as a means to indicate if the challenge is worsening. Work will also be undertaken with NHS Boards to identify the most appropriate sources of data.

Impact: High

Deliverability: High

Expected Delivery Date: March 2025

Scottish Government Lead: Directorate General Health and Social Care – Primary Care

Commitment 8: The Scottish Government remains committed to reviewing the patient travel expenses reimbursement guidance under which financial support for travel to hospital, including upfront costs, is already available (in line with eligibility criteria and medical requirements). The review will be set within the context of wider reform on health access.

Impact: Medium

Deliverability: High

Expected Delivery Date: To be considered within the context of wider reform on health access

Scottish Government Lead: Directorate General Health and Social Care - Health Finance

Delivery Partner(s): NHS Health Boards

Commitment 9: The Scottish Government will implement and monitor sections 120 and 121 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019: 'In providing non-emergency patient transport services, each health board must work with bodies which provide community transport services in its area'.

Impact: Medium

Deliverability: High

Expected Delivery Date: Implementation complete; Monitoring ongoing

Scottish Government Lead: Directorate General Health and Social Care – Primary Care

Delivery Partner(s):

Commitment 10: Scottish Government will develop work with NHS Boards on integration of transport into wider health planning and reform.

SG will progress with the commencement of the Transport (Scotland) Act placing a duty on Boards in providing non-emergency patient transport services, to work with bodies which provide community transport services in its area and consider the wider economic, and social benefit of contracts.

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Impact: Medium

Deliverability: High

Expected Delivery Date: Ongoing

Scottish Government Lead: Directorate General Health and Social Care – Primary Care

Commitment 11: Through the NHS Delivery Plan, Scottish Government will seek for NHS Boards to ensure accessibility to services is considered an integral part of health care, and that they give consideration to transport needs in the planning and delivery of services.

This should include consideration of how best to work with Regional Transport Partnerships and transport officers from local authorities. A further (NHS) Medium Term Plan commitment will be included (over a three-year window): With due consideration to the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, once commenced, all Boards will, in providing non-emergency patient transport services, work with bodies which provide community transport services in its area.

Impact: High

Deliverability: High

Expected Delivery Date: Annually

Scottish Government Lead: Directorate General Health and Social Care – Chief operating Officer

Commitment 12: Transport Scotland will encourage Regional Transport Partnerships to have appropriate stakeholder groups with a remit on Transport to Health, which includes appropriate representation from local NHS Boards.

In reviewing Partnerships' Regional Transport Strategies, Transport Scotland will seek appropriate consideration of Transport to Health issues in their strategies.

Impact: High

Deliverability: High

Expected Delivery Date: Ongoing

Scottish Government Lead: Transport Scotland - Strategy

Delivery Partner(s): Transport Scotland

Commitment 13: Scottish Government is committed to good quality transport planning, design and delivery, including effective engagement with users and stakeholders, including equalities groups. In doing so the Scottish Government adhere to statutory assessments and good practice appraisal as set out in Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG).

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Example of this are demonstrated through Scotrail Stakeholder Equalities Group and Island Connectivity Plan Stakeholder Group where Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) will continue to be represented. There is also a National Transport Accessibility Steering Group.

Impact: High

Deliverability: High

Expected Delivery Date: Ongoing

Scottish Government Lead: Transport Scotland - Strategy

Delivery Partner(s): MACS are represented on the Transport Equalities Group and the National Transport Accessibility Steering Group. MACS has regular ongoing dialogue with Transport Scotland and Scottish Government officials and engage with island and rural communities and groups to inform and give advice in the development of the National Islands Plan, Islands Connectivity Plan, and the Rural Development Plan.

Commitment 14: In the first half of 2023, the Scottish Government will publish guidance on the preparation of Local Transport Strategies which includes guidance on Transport to Health.

Impact: High

Deliverability: High

Expected Delivery Date: Completed – the [guidance](#) for bodies preparing local transport strategies was published on the Transport Scotland website on 13 June 2024.

Scottish Government Lead: Transport Scotland - Strategy

Delivery Partner(s): all Local Authorities

Commitment 15: The Accessible Travel Framework (ATF) delivery plan 2024-26 includes transport to health as a workstream. The Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland will continue to be represented on the National Transport Accessibility Steering Group (NTASG), which has oversight of the ATF delivery plan.

Impact: Low

Deliverability: High

Expected Delivery Date: Autumn 2024 - 2026

Scottish Government Lead: Transport Scotland – Accessible Travel Team

Delivery Partner(s): Transport Scotland

Commitment 16: Scottish Government will evaluate the impact and benefit of all Mobility as a Service (MaaS) Investment Fund projects which were completed in 2023. A final MIF programme evaluation report summarizing key findings will be due in 2024. This evidence will be used to guide any future investment in MaaS.

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Impact: Low

Deliverability: Medium

Expected Delivery Date: Autumn 2024

Scottish Government Lead: Transport Scotland

Delivery Partner(s): Transport Scotland

Commitment 17: The Scottish Government will work with partners to consider if accessibility improvements can be made to Islander aircraft and associated airside facilities, recognising that in some instances runway restrictions only support smaller aircraft.

Impact: Low

Deliverability: Medium

Expected Delivery Date: Autumn 2024

Scottish Government Lead: Transport Scotland

Delivery Partner(s): Hi Trans

Timescale: review completed by December 2024.

Commitment 18: The Scottish Government will work with Hi Trans to facilitate a working group to assess the impacts of air services in the Western Isles and access to health services. The group will work to improve data and evidence on the issues, identify solutions through joint working and consider longer term actions required.

Impact: Low

Deliverability: Medium

Expected Delivery Date: December 2024.

Scottish Government Lead: Primary Care Directorate

Delivery Partner(s): Hi Trans

Commitment 19: The Scottish Government will support Regional Transport Partnerships to develop their own plans around Transport to Health. An example of this will be the development of a Health and Transport Action Plan for the Highlands and Islands region.

Impact: Low

Deliverability: Medium

Expected Delivery Date: Ongoing.

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Scottish Government Lead: Transport Scotland

Delivery Partner(s): Hi Trans

Commitment 20: The Scottish Government will convene an NHS Scotland task and finish group to develop a framework for delivering sustainable care for remote, rural and island communities. Transport to health considerations will be a component of this work. The group is expected to report findings by Spring 2025.

Impact: Medium

Deliverability: High

Expected Delivery Date: From Spring 2025 subject to approval of recommendations

Scottish Government Lead: Directorate General Health and Social Care – Health Planning

Delivery Partner(s): NHS Health Boards



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