

Migration of the Health and Social Care Board to the Department of Health

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the HSCB closing?

In November 2015, the decision was taken by the then Health Minister, Simon Hamilton to close the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB). This was confirmed by Michelle O'Neill in October 2016 as part of the wider transformation agenda, with the intention of enhancing strategic system leadership, improving integration and making the decision making process more streamlined.

In February 2020 Health Minister Swann endorsed the decision which will see the responsibility for the functions transfer to the Department of Health (the Department) with the staff transferring to the Business Services Organisation (BSO) under a hosting arrangement.

When will the HSCB close?

The HSCB will close on 31 March 2022.

What will happen to the functions of the HSCB?

Responsibility for all existing HSCB functions will move to the Department. The functions will be undertaken by the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) within the Department.

HSCB staff will be hosted by the BSO, enabling them to retain HSC terms and conditions. The BSO will become the employer for these staff.

Will the contact details for HSCB staff change?

There will be **no change to key services or contacts**; the vital work that the HSCB currently delivers will continue.

What happens if I have a contractual agreement with the HSCB which continues post 31 March?

The Health and Social Care (Northern Ireland) Act 2022 provides for the novation of contracts existing on 31 March 2022. This means that contracts entered into by HSCB will become contracts of the Department from 1 April 2022.

What governance arrangements have been put in place to oversee the closure and migration of functions and staff?

An Oversight Board has been established to provide strategic oversight and leadership to the Project. The Board is chaired by Richard Pengelly, Permanent Secretary and the members are:

- Sharon Gallagher, Chief Executive, HSCB and Deputy Secretary (DoH)
- Aidan Dawson Chief Executive, PHA

- Karen Bailey, Interim Chief Executive, BSO
- Jim Wilkinson, Deputy Secretary, DoH
- Deborah McNeilly, Deputy Secretary, DoH

The Migration Project has also established a Governance Steering Group to provide strategic oversight and decision-making on issues of accountability and governance. Membership comprises senior officials from each of the impacted organisations.

How has the work been progressed?

Eight Design Groups brought teams together to propose how the new structures will work in their area, building on the model agreed by the Oversight Board.

The groups cover the 8 key functional areas of the HSCB and are co-chaired by a representative from HSCB and the Department. In developing the proposals from design groups, staff and key stakeholders from the impacted organisations have been working collaboratively on how the future system will work. The focus is not on re-engineering existing processes but on improving integration between our organisations and teams.

To complement the work of the Design Groups, eight Workstreams have been established to identify and action the activities necessary to ensure a managed closure of the HSCB and the smooth transition of staff and functions from HSCB to the Department.

Business Partners have been identified to represent the Design Groups and Workstreams in project checkpoint meetings and workshops. The Business Partners provide the facility to ensure close working relationships during the transition phase through to migration on 31 March 2022.

How will the hosting arrangement with BSO work?

The Strategic Planning and Performance Group will undertake the current functions of the HSCB. Sharon Gallagher as Deputy Secretary for the Group will have responsibility for directing the Group's staff.

In the main, staff will continue to perform the same functions but working much closer with Departmental colleagues. BSO as employer will be responsible for matters such as pay and conditions and providing IT support and accommodation.

How will the transition of staff be managed?

HSCB staff will become employees of the BSO. Staff will transfer on existing HSC Terms and Conditions; processes will be put in place to ensure all matters in respect of the transfer are protected:

- All relevant HSC policies and procedures will continue to apply in relation to staffing matters.
- Processes will be put in place to ensure employment matters, in respect of the transfer, are protected. BSO and the Department have worked with trade union colleagues to develop a HSCB Staff Migration Framework.

Will there be any redundancies?

There will be no compulsory redundancies.

What are the benefits of closing the HSCB?

Closure of the HSCB is an important first step on a wider transformation journey that will look at how we plan and manage our services differently. It will streamline our structures, reducing bureaucracy and will allow for better coordination of our resource enabling the system to operate more effectively and efficiently. Other benefits include:

- Enhanced strategic decision making and planning
- Making best use of the skills of staff
- Promoting the 'one system' ethos
- Providing clarity on strategic leadership and increased accountability
- Supporting a continued focus on public and population health.

What is the new Integrated Care System?

A new Integrated Care System (ICS) is being developed for NI. This system signals a new way of planning and managing health and social care services based on the specific needs of the population.

The ICS approach brings many partners together, building on the excellent partnership working cultivated by health and social care professionals, local councils, the voluntary and community sectors, patients, carers and service users. Underpinning this new model is the establishment of 5 Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs) across the region. Responsible for local health and social care planning and delivery AIPBs will use local knowledge to plan integrated and continuous services for their local communities in line with strategic direction.

The ICS NI will support people to better manage their health and wellbeing and stay healthier for longer. By bringing all partners together to plan for the health and wellbeing needs of the NI population, the ICS NI will secure better outcomes and results for all. Further information about the Integrated Care System NI, including a Factsheet and Frequently Asked Questions, is available at <http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/icsni>.

Why are Local Commissioning Groups continuing?

The Health and Social Care Act (2021), developed to provide the legislation necessary to dissolve the HSCB, received Royal Assent and became law on 2 February 2022. Given that the closure of the HSCB would currently see Local Commissioning Groups (LCGs) cease to exist, members of the Assembly Health Committee were keen to prevent any potential loss of local input from a legislative perspective whilst the ICS NI, and Area Integrated Partnership Boards, are developed.

Accepting that the secondary legislation pertaining to the ICS is unlikely to be laid by 31 March

2022, Minister Swann acknowledged the Health Committee's concern in facilitating amendments to the HSC Bill to underpin local input:

- to include provision for legislative powers placing a statutory duty on the DoH to bring forth regulations on the new Area Integrated Partnership Boards to be laid in the NI Assembly and be approved by way of the affirmative procedure; and
- to allow for the continuation of Local Commissioning Groups until such time as the DoH brings forward the regulations outlined above.

When can we expect the regulations on the new Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs)?

Regulations on the new AIPBs are provisionally expected in Autumn 2022.