



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scaghástála  
National Screening Service

# Choose Screening

Together we can make a difference

National Screening Service  
Strategic Plan 2023-2027



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# Foreword from the HSE Chief Clinical Officer

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On behalf of the Office of the Chief Clinical Officer, I am pleased to present the National Screening Service (NSS) Strategic Plan 2023–2027. This is the first strategic plan that the NSS has produced. It is far reaching and articulates clear ambitions to work in partnerships with stakeholders and participants to improve access, support service development and ensure the continued delivery of the highest quality person-centred care.

The NSS provides a national service, delivering free population screening in hospital and community settings across the country, and works with many different screening partners to enable this to happen. The screening programmes that it provides are a critical component in Ireland’s strategy to improving the health of its population.

There is no doubt that this statement of strategy is published at a defining moment for the Irish health service. Confronted with the unprecedented challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the rising demand for health and social care services in Ireland, the focus on population health through the prevention and early detection of disease is more important than ever before. I would like to acknowledge staff for their resilience in working to deliver screening during the pandemic and to maintain high levels of uptake to programmes.

In this context, population screening is set to become an increasingly important part of our healthcare system’s prevention and early detection work, and support the future preparedness and resilience of our health and social care services.

This strategy for the next five years looks to ensure that the NSS will play its part in service development, anticipating exciting advances in screening practices, provide advice and guidance to colleagues across the wider health service to promote best practice in population screening, and continue to play a key role in improving Ireland’s population health.

I look forward to working with Fiona Murphy, Chief Executive of the National Screening Service, and her colleagues to bring these ambitious aims and objectives to fruition.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colm Henry', written over a large, thin, curved line that underlines the signature.

**Colm Henry,**  
HSE Chief Clinical Officer

# Introduction from the National Screening Service Chief Executive

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I am delighted to introduce the National Screening Service (NSS) Strategic Plan 2023–2027. The NSS has undergone significant change over the last few years. We have developed a strong and robust foundation, have demonstrated ourselves to be an adaptive organisation and have successfully responded to significant opportunities and challenges that have emerged. This strategy builds on this recent work and sets ambitious targets that we believe our organisation can achieve in the next five years.

We anticipate that the period from 2023 to 2027 will be an exciting time for the NSS. We have the expertise, people and governance structures in place to expand our reach and to increase our collaborations with partners across the wider healthcare service. During this strategic period, we look forward to continuing to build on our work with the public and our screening participants. This work informs the **planning and delivery of our services**, strengthens our **governance**, improves our **information resources**, and continually enhances our **quality assurance processes**.

Uptake of screening is crucial to ensuring screening is effective. It is a priority for us that all eligible people can access our services. Ensuring the delivery of a participant-centred service is, and always will be, a central tenet of our strategy. This is a unique aspect of the work we do in the NSS, and a responsibility that we take seriously.

Screening is a choice for the population. The title that we have chosen for our strategy – *Choose Screening*: together we can make a difference – confirms this focus, as only by working together, can we deliver the quality services that we all desire.

Our strategy draws on extensive consultation with our stakeholders, including our screening staff and our Patient and Public Partnership, and also those across the HSE, the Department of Health, our advocacy partners, and associated professional bodies - at home and abroad. It is the result of months of collaboration among our management team, and collaboration of our staff. I would like to extend my thanks to all involved for their participation and enthusiasm. Fulfilling the three pillars of our strategy – **engagement and partnership**; **operational excellence**; and **service development** will be enabled by meeting our responsibilities in three core areas that support the delivery of our services. These areas are people and culture; governance and quality assurance; and data and information.

By 2027, we hope that we will have developed further as an organisation, and that our screening programmes are more accessible to an expanding population. While change is anticipated, we are resolute that our vision and mission will remain constant, underpinned by our commitment to deliver a people-centred service that reflects our values of care, compassion, trust and learning.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Fiona Murphy'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Fiona Murphy,**  
Chief Executive,  
National Screening Service

# The National Screening Service

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## Introduction

The National Screening Service (NSS) was established by the Minister for Health and Children in January 2007. It was formed in response to a national cancer strategy which advocated for a comprehensive cancer control programme\*. Today, the NSS is part of the Health Service Executive (HSE).

It is a priority for us in the NSS that all eligible people can access our services. The NSS works with many different screening partners to enable this to happen. Our teams provide a national service, delivering free population screening in hospital and community settings across the country.

Since our foundation we have worked hard to gain expertise in the development, implementation and delivery of successful population-based screening programmes in Ireland. This expertise is recognised internationally.

## Population screening

Screening is a means of assessing risk of disease, and of recognising disease before symptoms appear. Population screening programmes are a key part of any country's strategy for improving the health of its population.

Organised screening involves people coming for a test at regular intervals. Repeated screening enables a picture of their health to be built up over time. It provides an opportunity for those who have a positive test to receive further checks and, if needed, go on to diagnosis and treatment. If a disease is picked up early the treatment can be easier and the chance of favourable outcomes is greater.

We in the NSS provide screening for both cancer and non-cancer disease. Although we deliver screening at a population level, we aim to put the patient first by adopting a participant-centred approach that focuses on care, compassion, trust and learning.

## Our programmes

We deliver four national population-based screening programmes. We screen for bowel, breast, and cervical cancer, and for retinopathy in people with diabetes. These programmes aim to reduce morbidity and mortality in the population through prevention and/or early recognition of disease and treatment, both of which can greatly improve health outcomes. We aim to do this through achieving high quality, best practice and person-centred care.

**BreastCheck** – the national breast screening programme began in 2000. It offers free mammograms to women aged 50 to 69 every two years. Its primary goal is to reduce mortality from breast cancer by finding and treating the disease at the earliest possible stage.

**CervicalCheck** – the national cervical screening programme began in 2008. It provides free HPV cervical screening to women and people with a cervix aged between 25 and 65 years. Its primary goal is to reduce the number of women who develop cervical cancer and improve the outcomes for those that do through early detection of disease.

**BowelScreen** – the national bowel screening programme began in 2012. The programme invites men and women aged 60-69 years to take a free bowel screening test every two years. The primary goal of the programme is to reduce incidence of and mortality from colorectal cancer in men and women in Ireland. We will, over time, offer bowel screening to all people aged 55-74.

**Diabetic RetinaScreen** – the national retinopathy screening programme for people with diabetes began in 2011. It provides regular eye screening for people over the age of 12 with type 1 and type 2 diabetes and who are at risk of retinopathy. The primary goal of the programme is to identify any diabetic retinopathy changes to the back of the eye and to treat these changes as early as possible to reduce or prevent damage to a person's sight.

\* The National Cancer Screening Service became the National Screening Service following the introduction of Diabetic RetinaScreen, the first non-cancer screening programme.

## Our governance structure

The National Screening Service (NSS) is part of the Health Service Executive (HSE). How we are governed is set out in the HSE Code of Governance. This code outlines the principles, policies, procedures and guidelines the HSE uses to direct and control how we work.

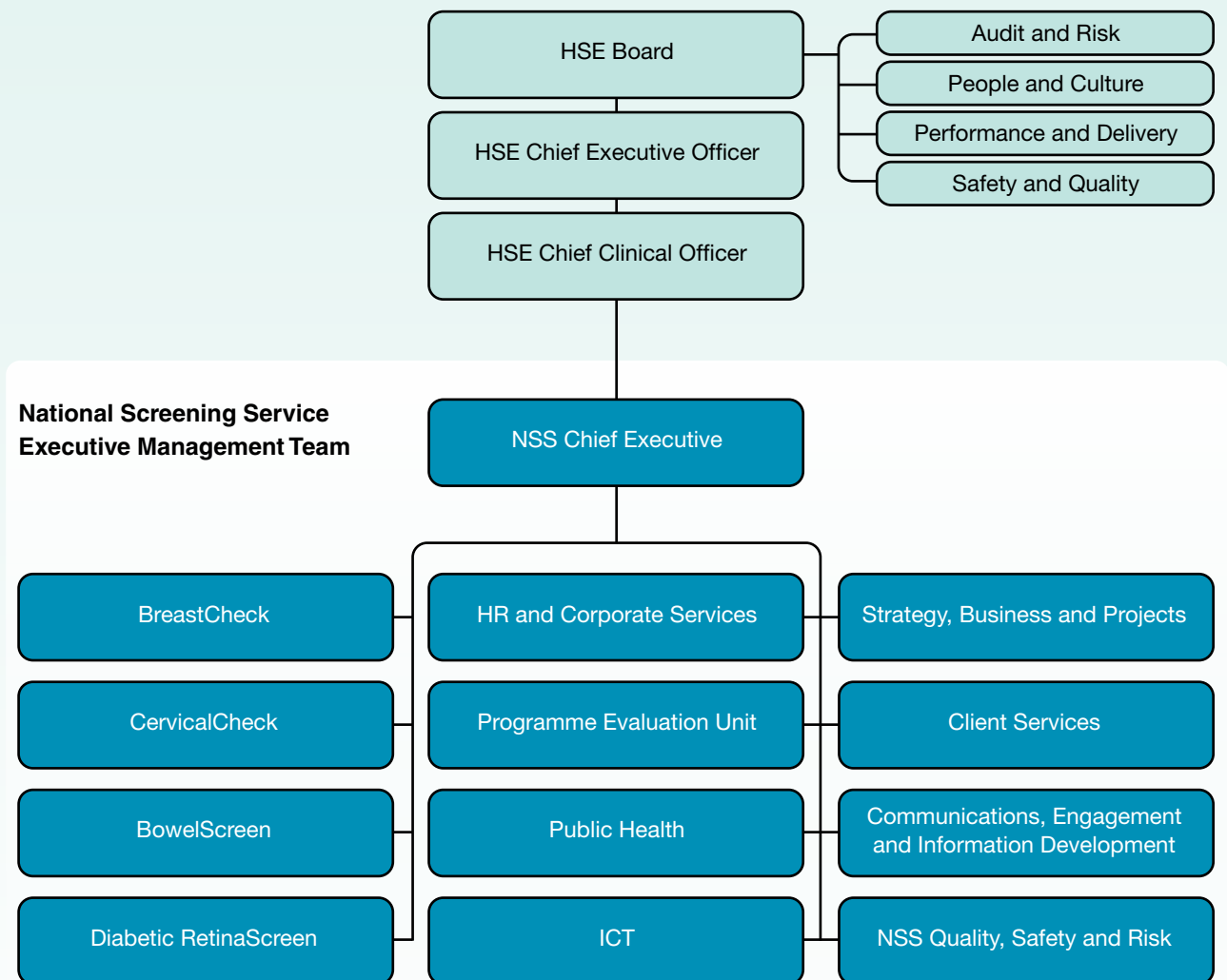
In this governance structure, we report to the HSE Board, and the board reports to the Minister for Health.

Under the leadership of the chief executive, the NSS executive management team (EMT) ensures that we follow the HSE’s governance principles, policies and procedures as we deliver our services.

The NSS EMT is the National Screening Service’s strategic decision-making body. It guides and supports our staff as we provide our screening services. The EMT is supported by our corporate management team (CMT). This team meets to learn from each other’s processes and procedures, and to standardise our decision-making in operational matters.

Each of our four programmes has a clinical director who provides clinical leadership and clinical governance for that programme.

The National Screening Advisory Committee (NSAC) is an independent advisory committee which advises the Minister and Department of Health on all new proposals for population-based screening programmes and revisions to existing programmes.



  
**BreastCheck**  
An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Cíoch  
The National Breast Screening Programme

Every two years, we invite **584,000** women aged 50-69 for screening

We aim to screen

**70%**

of the eligible women

**4** BreastCheck units with 287 staff consisting of nursing, medical, health and social care, patient and client care and admin personnel

**24** mobile units

  
**CervicalCheck**  
AN CLÁR NÁISIÚNTA SCAGTHÁSTÁLA CEIRBHEACS  
THE NATIONAL CERVICAL SCREENING PROGRAMME

Every three to five years, we invite **1,330,000** women and people with a cervix aged 25-65 screening

We aim to screen

**80%**

of the eligible population

**15** Colposcopy units providing colposcopies

**2** Screening labs and

**12** Histopathology labs

  
**BowelScreen**  
An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Putóige  
The National Bowel Screening Programme

Every two years, we invite **521,000** men and women aged 60-69 for screening

We aim to screen

**50%**

of the eligible population

**1** screening lab providing FIT kit analysis

**15** participating endoscopy units providing colonoscopies

**8** histopathology labs

**8** National Cancer Centres providing surgery

  
**Diabetic RetinaScreen**  
An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Reitíní do Dhialbéitigh  
The National Diabetic Retinal Screening Programme

Every one to two years, we invite **193,000** people aged over 12 with diabetes for screening

We aim to screen

**70%**

of the eligible population

**7** treatment clinics

# The story of our strategic plan

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## Why we chose to develop a strategy

This is the first, formal strategic plan for the National Screening Service (NSS). It is our strategy for the next five years. It focuses on the breadth of service we deliver as part of Ireland's national healthcare system.

**This is an important opportunity for us to express the identity and purpose of our organisation, and set out our direction of travel.**

One of our key objectives in 2022 was to develop a comprehensive strategy that sets our direction for the coming years. We have made great strides since our establishment 15 years ago. However, we should not stop there. We must continue to refine our service to ensure we deliver on our responsibilities now and into the future.

In developing our strategy we have taken into account the wider context in which the NSS operates. We have focused on our environment, and looked to ongoing developments in screening and population health – in Ireland and abroad. We have listened to our stakeholders and sought to understand the evolving needs of our participants and partners.

Undertaking a comprehensive strategic review, as well as wide-ranging, meaningful and effective engagement with staff, key stakeholders and our participants, has helped us to identify the areas we will focus on over the lifetime of our strategy.

This strategy's key areas of focus are in line with the commitments set out in *The Office of the Chief Clinical Officer Strategy 2019-2021*, the *HSE Corporate Plan 2021-2024* and the *Department of Health Statement of Strategy 2021-2023*. We have worked to ensure that our plan aligns with the principles of Sláintecare, and Healthy Ireland, and the commitments set out in the Programme for Government.

This strategy is written in a time of significant change across the health service, as well as growing global uncertainty. This plan is a responsive, living document which will be reviewed regularly over the next five years as we move through its implementation.

## The strategic context

Demand for health services in Ireland is set to increase significantly in the coming years due to population increase, and increasing life expectancy.

These changes will undoubtedly put pressure on our public healthcare systems and our staff as they are tasked with increasing capacity to meet the needs of this changing population. This in turn will put pressure on healthcare funding. Within these challenges there are opportunities to adapt the type of care, the range of services, and the technologies we use so we can meet the evolving needs of our changing population.

As our lifespan increases, there is an increased chance of us developing cancer and other chronic diseases. How big this increase is will depend on what we do now, and in the coming years, to prevent disease and reduce its impact through prevention and early detection measures. Population screening programmes are well-placed to become an even more important part of our healthcare system's prevention and early detection work.

Another opportunity for improvement and change is in realising government and wider-HSE aims to achieve a universal and equitable healthcare system – where everyone has equal access to services based on their need, and not their ability to pay. There is already a significant focus on the reform of Ireland's health and social care system; the implementation of Sláintecare – which aims to deliver more care to 'the right patient in the right place at the right time' – is central to this reform.

The development of the NSS has been a key step in Ireland's journey towards earlier cancer recognition and diagnosis, and in earlier management of disease. In the context of cancer prevention, supporting the National Cancer Strategy, and improving people's health, we are committed to further developing our free population screening programmes. The NSS is also enabling an increasing focus on women's health issues, facilitating a greater emphasis on women's experiences of healthcare.



Equity is a key issue for us in the National Screening Service. We are committed to ensuring and improving access to the screening programmes we provide. As such, our strategy will focus on equitable care, seeking out and including those groups of people who have difficulty accessing screening.

Society's increasing focus on health and wellbeing is strongly supported by our government. We are all encouraged to take a more active role in our own health and care, both individually and together. In the NSS we understand the value of a partnership approach to health. We are focused on establishing meaningful partnerships with our stakeholders and participants - this means raising awareness, sharing experiences and embedding patient and public partnership across our work, ensuring that we achieve our strategic aims together.

Staff availability is key to how far we can expand our quality services in line with expected population increases. This is the same across many areas of healthcare. We know that healthcare staff trained in Ireland are in high demand internationally. Ensuring we continue to train and retain the staff we need to support our service expansion – as well as our current service delivery – is therefore a strategic priority for the NSS.

Participants expect greater autonomy in the design and management of their health and care. Along with this, there is a growing expectation that people should have access to their own data. This is important to us also. To honour this expectation we are considering a range of innovative data solutions within an information governance framework. This framework sets out clearly how information should be collected, used and shared. It asks that we stay alert to new developments in health information systems, and to any changes to how health and personal information is exchanged between us, and our partner care providers.

The model for delivering screening will undoubtedly change in the future as technology advances and practices change. This could, for example, involve more targeted or risk-based screening. We must keep up to date with the latest trends in early recognition and prevention methods; for example, understanding what screening will look like in the era of genomics and artificial intelligence. It is our duty to stay informed about recommendations made by international bodies such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), and of European standards which will help us continue to develop the screening programmes which will cater for the population's needs.

As we have moved through 2022 we are aware of the global economic challenges ahead. There may be increased pressure on public finances across all areas of life. The NSS will aim to navigate these challenges through strategic planning, innovative thinking, good governance and efficient delivery to ensure that we maintain high-quality, valued and compassionate services, and maintain good value for money.



## Putting words into action

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We are committed to **protecting and improving** public health.

We aim to **lead, deliver and develop** our screening programmes in a way that ensures the highest quality, that saves lives, and that improves people's health across Ireland.

With great challenge, comes great opportunities.

As part of our strategy, we have thought about our **purpose**; what we do well, what we should do less of, and what we should start doing.

We want to build on our success, capitalise on our **core strengths** and focus on current and future opportunities, demands and patient trends.

We will also look at the barriers and limitations we may face.

We also want to act. Our actions will be focused on how we continue to provide quality screening services – and also on how we prepare for **screening of the future**.

As how we deliver health and social care services changes, we will continue to take a **people-centred approach** to our work, as we focus on the HSE's values of care, compassion, trust and learning.

We will develop a unified vision, promoting **innovation and excellence** in patient care and outcomes – and we will fulfill our mission to lead, deliver and develop our screening programmes in a way that ensures the highest quality service, saves lives and improves people's health across Ireland.

# Developing Choose Screening

## Strategy Development

To produce *Choose Screening*, the NSS Strategy 2023-2027, we worked through an extensive strategy development process in partnership with key stakeholders.

We followed best-practice in completing an in-depth strategic review, a comprehensive, meaningful and effective engagement with key stakeholders, and a quantitative and qualitative environmental analysis.

The strategy development process had six steps, with the aim of shaping the long-term direction of the NSS and its priorities over the next five years. Each of these six stages worked to address three key questions:

- *Where are we now?*
- *Where do we want to go? and*
- *How will we get there?*

This process brought a detailed understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, issues and opportunities we face. It gave us the direction to identify our strategic priorities and help shape the future vision of our service.

Our strategic, policy and environmental analysis included a review of over 50 key national and international publications, and consultation with over 150 NSS staff, service users and key stakeholders. We engaged with our stakeholders via 1:1 interviews, focus groups and written submissions.

Through a series of detailed, consultative workshops with NSS senior leadership we worked on prioritising the range of issues and opportunities identified by our stakeholders. During these workshops, our leadership teams considered how best to navigate the service needs now and in the future, and confirm our organisation's goals and objectives for the next five years.

*This strategy was prepared in consultation with our staff, stakeholders and participants. We engaged with the Department of Health, our HSE colleagues, other external bodies and international colleagues. Every effort has been made to ensure our strategy responds to and adapts to current and future health policy, and to national and international developments in screening and population health. Our strategy development process is illustrated below:*



# Our vision, mission and values

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## Renewing our vision, mission and values

Our work is centred on delivering four national population-based screening programmes, for bowel, breast, and cervical cancer, and for recognising sight-threatening retinopathy in people with diabetes. These programmes aim to reduce morbidity and the cancer programmes reduce mortality in the population through prevention and/or early recognition of disease and treatment. While our core work has not altered, we have renewed our vision and mission to reaffirm our purpose and to clarify our ambition for the future.

Our values underpin how we will deliver our vision and mission. By embedding our values in our work we aim to build a culture that creates a more positive environment for staff and an improved experience for participants.

We have also taken time to explore our values with our staff and our participants, and identify what matters most to us. The values and behaviours we have chosen for our strategy reflect their feedback. They promote a quality service that people are proud of, while operating in a culture where everyone is included, respected, and heard. We undertake to demonstrate our values in every connection we make, showing kindness and accounting for our actions in a transparent way.

### **Our Mission** *Why we exist*

We deliver population screening programmes that help prevent, reduce the risk of, and assist the recognition of, disease in Ireland.

### **Our Vision** *What we hope to achieve*

To work together to save lives and improve people's health through population screening.

# Our Values

*What we believe in*



## Care

We work in partnership with screening participants, staff, and the general population to provide a service that is based on quality, equity and respect.



## Compassion

We support each other, showing kindness and understanding, even when faced with difficult decisions and situations.



## Trust

We build relationships that are based on openness, honesty and accountability to foster a culture where people feel safe and believe in each other.



## Learning

We promote a culture of partnership, reflection and continuous improvement in providing a service based on innovation and excellence.

# Key areas of focus

## Key areas of focus for the next five years

We understand that the needs and expectations of our stakeholders and service users are constantly evolving. We need to ensure that we are continuously developing, not only to meet the needs of the populations we serve, but also to address the opportunities and challenges that the health and social care environment presents.

In developing a new corporate strategy, we reflected on our current position, and the role we play in enabling people to take a more active role in their health and care. Our aim was to learn from the past while focusing on our goals for the future, among the developments in screening and population health. To ensure we maintain our emphasis on being a participant-centred service, it was imperative to listen to the views of our staff, screening participants, and members of the public as well as policy makers, clinical leadership across the HSE, academics, international colleagues, and a range of partner organisations. Research and consultation with these groups was conducted to ensure that we considered a wide range of views in developing our strategic direction.

Following extensive analysis and consultation with our staff, stakeholders and screening participants, we have identified three key areas of focus, or strategic pillars:

- 1 Engagement and partnership**
- 2 Operational excellence**
- 3 Service development**

Each of these areas is of major strategic importance to us, and will guide our efforts, work and development over the next five years.

We have also identified three core areas that will support the delivery of our services, and are essential in ensuring we achieve our strategic priorities. These strategic enablers are:

- 1 People and culture**
- 2 Governance and quality assurance**
- 3 Data and information**

These strategic and enabling priorities will structure our activities over the next five years. A number of long-term goals and objectives have been identified under each priority, as well as a series of actions to achieve each goal.

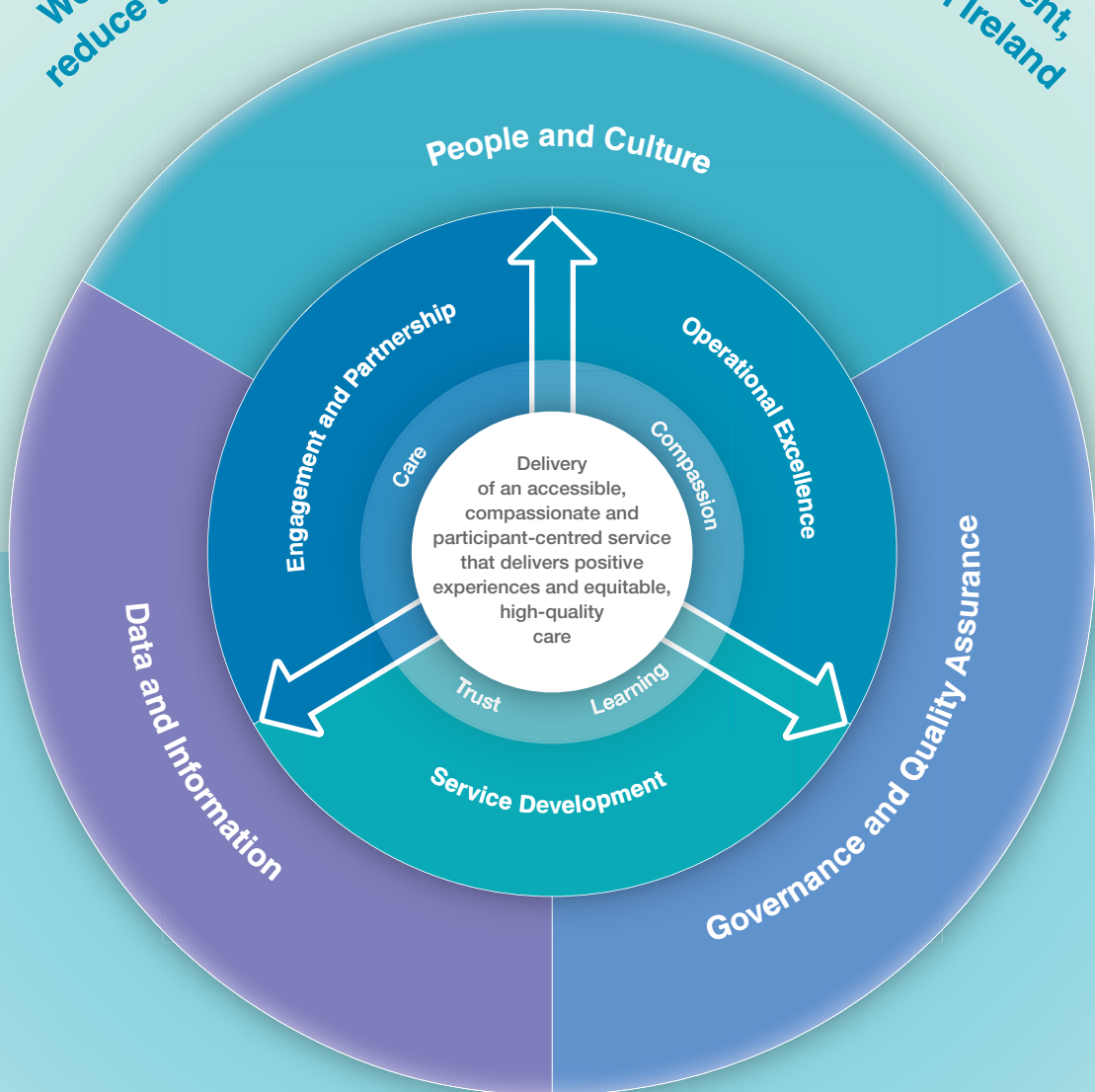
Collectively, achieving our aims and objectives under these strategic and enabling pillars will support us to secure and develop an accessible, compassionate, and participant-centred service that delivers positive experiences and equitable, high-quality care.

We understand that this brings a responsibility to ensure we listen, engage in participant-centred co-design and development of our programmes, and keep the HSE trust and confidence drivers - public good, respect, integrity and competence - at the forefront of our minds. We recognise the benefits of having a wide involvement of stakeholders and, as such are committed to the continued development of a robust patient and public partnership (PPP) function within the NSS.

We are committed to providing people with information on what they can do to reduce their personal risk of the disease being screened for, on symptom awareness, and how to aid early detection. However, only through a meaningful partnership approach can we determine if we have been successful in demonstrating the benefits from our screening programmes, increasing awareness of screening, and embedding public and patient partnership across our work.

## Our Mission

We deliver population screening programmes that help prevent, reduce the risk of, and aid the recognition of, disease in Ireland



Our Vision  
Working together to save lives and improve people's health through population screening

## Strategic Priority 1

# Engagement and Partnership

*We will be an open, trusted, listening organisation that works with national and international partners to support equity, engagement, promote operational excellence and foster proactive service development, to improve the experience of our screening participants.*



### Why is this a priority?

We want to engage with partners to support the development of a compassionate service that delivers positive participant experiences and equitable, high-quality care. We wish to ensure that screening is accessible to everyone. We want to learn from the experience and expertise of our stakeholders and the participants that we serve. We aim to proactively share appropriate information in order to raise awareness and understanding of screening and support people to make individual and informed choices. We want to maintain a high level of trust by reporting on our progress and performance in a transparent way.

### Our strategic objectives

#### 1. Develop new partnerships

Seek out new partnerships and strengthen existing relationships with screening participants, stakeholders, staff and service providers, national and international partners.

#### 2. Improve population health

Establish strategic collaborations with relevant partners to improve Ireland's population health, e.g. the Irish 'Cervical cancer elimination strategy'.

#### 3. Reduce health inequalities

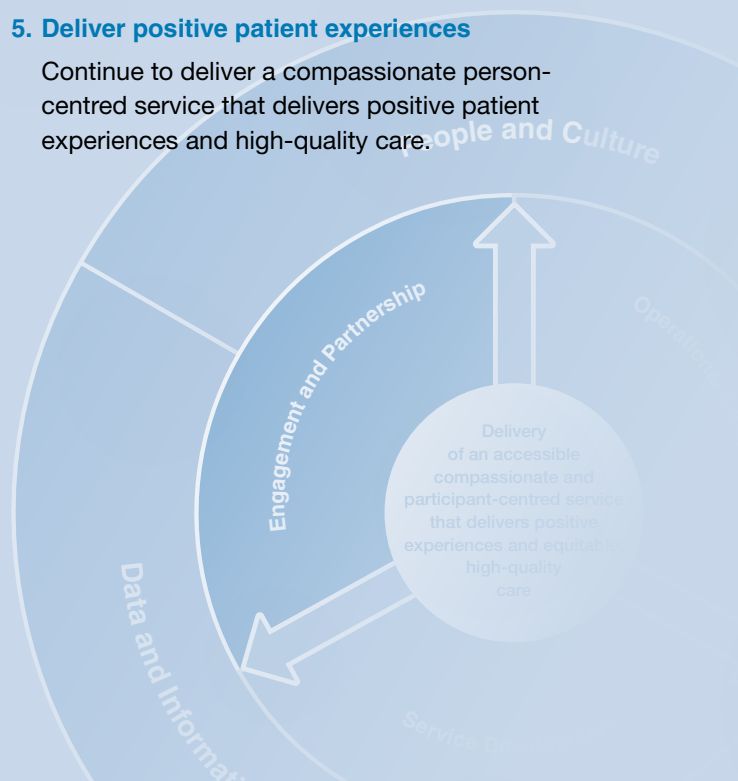
Improve equity and participation in our screening programmes to reduce health inequalities.

#### 4. Enhance participant involvement

Involve stakeholders and partners in the planning and delivery of our services to be an open, attentive, reflective and learning service that consistently translates insights, experience and evidence into action.

#### 5. Deliver positive patient experiences

Continue to deliver a compassionate person-centred service that delivers positive patient experiences and high-quality care.





## 6. Encourage public confidence

Demonstrate the quality, progress and performance, patient experience and governance of our programmes to the right audience using the right medium.

## 7. Improve communication and awareness

Provide open and accessible information to increase health literacy and enable people to make informed and individual choices.



## What we will achieve, and by when

- By end of 2023, we will develop and implement a stakeholder engagement charter.
- Review our stakeholder base, at a minimum every year, to ensure appropriate involvement of strategic partners, and stakeholders are being engaged at their preferred level.
- By end of 2024, we will strengthen our engagement with international screening networks and communities to co-create strategic guidance and transparent, pragmatic communication in relation to the benefits, inequities and harms of screening.
- By end of 2023, we will work with relevant stakeholders to progress baseline modelling and structures in preparation for Ireland setting a target for the elimination of cervical cancer, and developing a coordinated response in relation to screening programmes in Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.
- By end of 2024, we will develop a framework to improve equity in screening.
- By end of 2023, we will implement the NSS Patient and Public Partnership Strategy (PPP) to support the development of a compassionate person-centred service that delivers positive patient experiences and high-quality care, and embeds public and patient partnership across NSS and in operational planning.
- By end of 2025, we will engage with Regional Health Authorities to develop a targeted plan for their screening populations as they are established under Sláintecare structures and work collaboratively/support them to work with their specific populations.
- By end of 2023 we will improve communication with our stakeholders to ensure continued support, education and information for the public on screening programmes.
- By end of 2024, we will highlight our activity, progress and performance by leveraging our new corporate website and social media platforms.
- By end of 2023 the NSS Information Hub will be developed and operational to enable the provision of open and accessible information.
- By end of 2026, complete implementation of the recommendations made in the Expert Reference Groups' (ERG) Interval Cancer reports.

## How will we measure success?

- ✓ Programme participation / coverage rates by group
- ✓ Number of complaints / compliments received
- ✓ PPP participation levels
- ✓ Stakeholder feedback gathered
- ✓ Public feedback submitted through feedback channel
- ✓ Number of briefings / notifications / blog posts / reports / documents published
- ✓ Impressions (corporate website and social media platforms)
- ✓ Engagement rate (%) (total likes, comments & shares / total followers) x 100
- ✓ Virality rate (%) (number of shares / number of impressions) x 100

Our target populations

Our stakeholders & partners

Our brand & reputation

Trust & confidence

A participant-centred approach

Building awareness & understanding of screening

## Strategic Priority 2

# Operational Excellence

*We will deliver internationally leading, evidence-based, quality assured population screening programmes and demonstrate their impact.*



### Why is this a priority?

The NSS is a high-performing organisation. We want to be an international leader that is known for delivering quality assured screening programmes, using technology, data and expertise to enhance our services and demonstrate our performance – ultimately to improve outcomes for our screening participants.

### Our strategic objectives

#### 1. Increase screening uptake

Uptake in our screening programmes will be, at a minimum, a level that is required to ensure screening is effective.

#### 2. Achieve all performance expectations

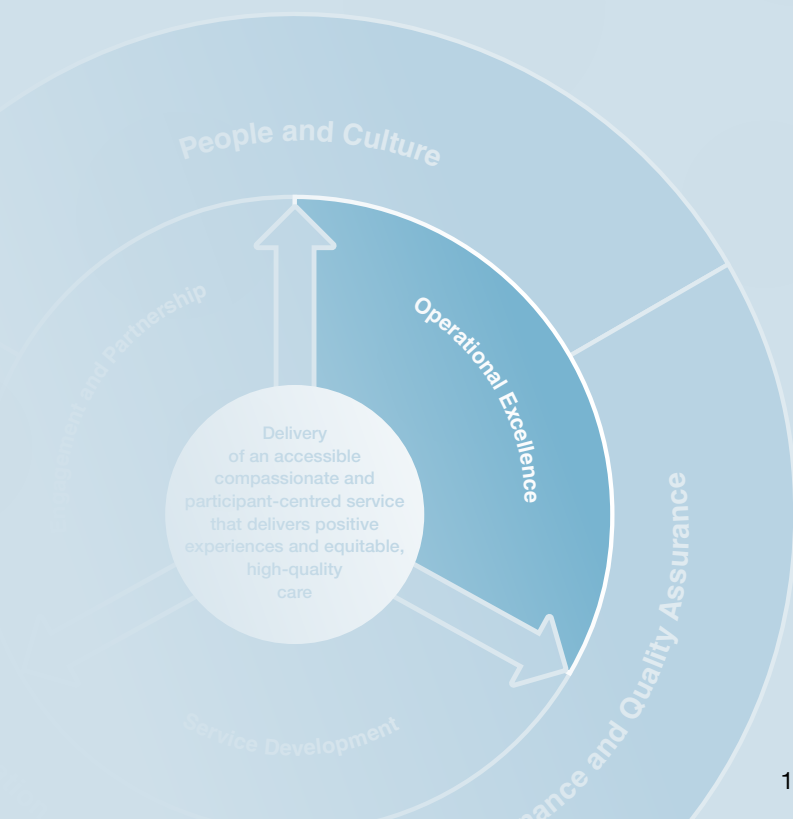
Meet KPIs across all our screening programmes for quality and activity standards and publish data on performance metrics at regular intervals.

#### 3. Reduce inequity in screening

Reduce screening disparities and improve equitable access to our screening programmes.

#### 4. Share our expertise with colleagues across the wider health service

Build on previous success in education of partners to provide clinical, public health and operational leadership with best-practice templates and guidance to support new or existing population screening programmes across the HSE.



## What we will achieve, and by when

- Monitor each programme, at defined intervals, against regularly reviewed standards, measures, and KPIs.
- Identify areas of underperformance and develop corrective actions as required.
- Review our processes around embedding PPP into operational planning, at a minimum every three years, to ensure we are learning from patient experience and improving to meet the needs of users and respond to changing needs of the public, with the first review to take place in 2023.
- By end of 2025, we will capture and publish patient experiences through implementation of Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREMs) pilot programme across all four screening programmes.
- By end of 2025, in line with the European Commission's new cancer screening scheme, we will ensure that 90% of the population who are eligible for our screening programmes will be offered screening.
- By end of 2025, develop an e-learning programme to facilitate education on population screening programmes.
- By end of 2024, engage and advise the office of the HSE chief clinical officer regarding best practice approaches for existing or new screening programmes.



## How will we measure success?

- ✓ NSS programme standards and measures
- ✓ Participant satisfaction rates
- ✓ PREMS



**Programme performance**

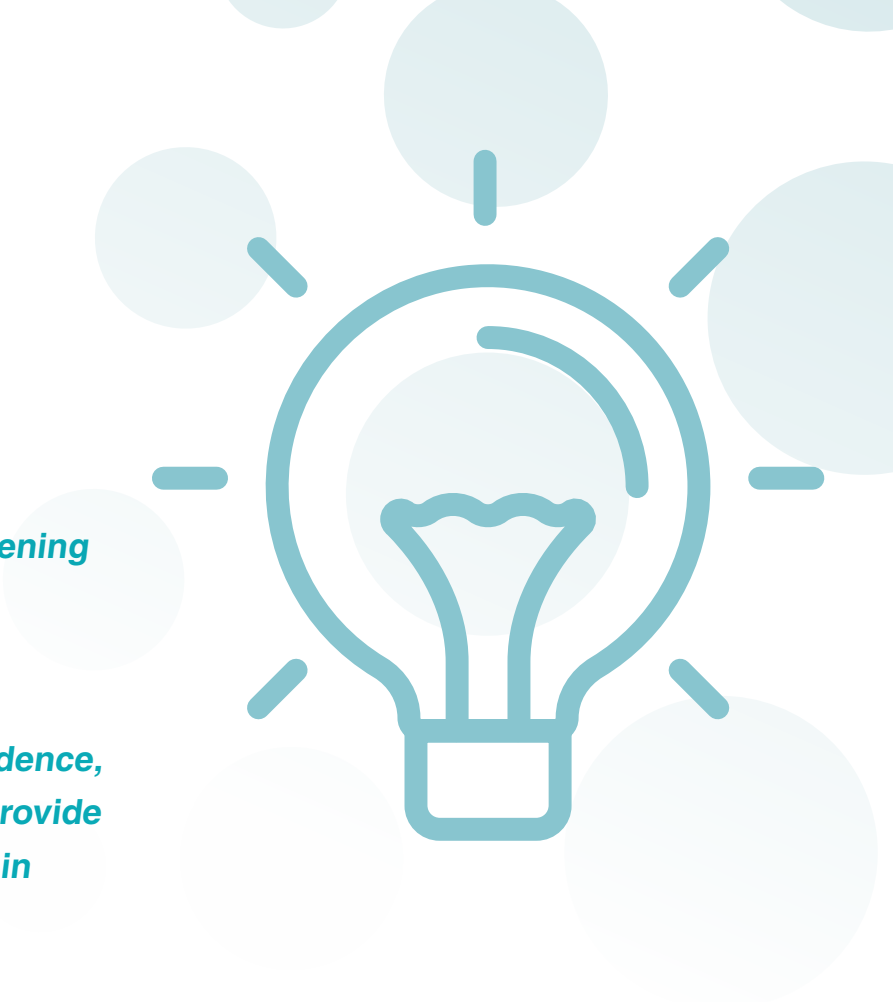
**Organisation capacity**

**Screening pathways**

## Strategic Priority 3

# Service Development

*We will be at the forefront of developments in population screening programmes that support the prevention and early recognition of disease. We will conduct and commission research, review evidence, and work with policy makers to provide an experienced and expert voice in population screening.*



### Why is this a priority?

We want to avail of every opportunity to develop our services, maintain our relevance, and be an organisation for the future. We want to be curious, open and actively anticipate change to remain a recognised leader in population screening, and an active contributor to improving detection rates among our participants.



### Our strategic objectives

#### 1. Pioneer new screening methods

In collaboration with key partners, lead in the exploration and implementation of new technologies, processes and/or models of screening programme delivery, for example artificial intelligence.

#### 2. Support expansion in population screening

In collaboration with the National Screening Advisory Committee, and other key partners, proactively participate in dialogue regarding the introduction of new screening programmes in Ireland.

#### 3. Adopt new models of care

Be responsive and proactive in the implementation of new, or amended screening programme pathways.

#### 4. Promote research and learning

Further embed research in the ethos of our NSS programmes and services.

## What we will achieve, and by when

- By end of 2023, mobilise a structured and routine horizon scanning process for the NSS.
- By end of 2023, ensure a consistent and standardised process for engaging with the National Screening Advisory Committee regarding the consideration and appraisal of new screening technologies, pathways and programmes.
- By end of 2024, complete pilots for a new national pregnancy specific pathway, and digital surveillance-screening for Diabetic Retina Screen.
- By end of 2026, in collaboration with the NCCP, introduce mammography surveillance for women at moderate risk of breast cancer due to their family history.
- By end of 2025, explore the potential for the use of self-sampling for cervical screening in Ireland.
- By end of 2023, commence implementation of recommended age range extension from 55 to 74 for BowelScreen as per National Cancer Strategy 2017-2026.
- By end of 2023, publish and begin to implement a new NSS research strategy for 2023-2027.



## How will we measure success?

- ✓ Portfolio balance of operational improvement vs. service development projects
- ✓ Adoption of new screening methods
- ✓ Number of National Screening Advisory Committee recommendations implemented within agreed timeframe
- ✓ Number of research papers / abstracts authored / co-authored and published



## Enabling Priority 1

# People and Culture

*We will have an open, responsive and supportive environment where our people have what they need to develop, deliver and succeed. The NSS will be a workplace of choice where our staff feel valued, supported and engaged.*



### Why is this a priority?

Our people are our greatest asset. With committed and engaged staff, we can achieve meaningful engagement with screening participants, external partners and the population in Ireland. We want a positive culture where all our staff are encouraged, supported and treated with dignity and respect. We want to embed this culture to enable them to deliver a compassionate and person-centred service.

### Our strategic objectives

#### 1. Develop a culture that embodies care, compassion, trust and learning

Engage, develop and value staff to deliver the best possible care and services, fostering a culture in line with our values of care, compassion, trust and learning.

#### 2. Support the health and wellbeing of our staff

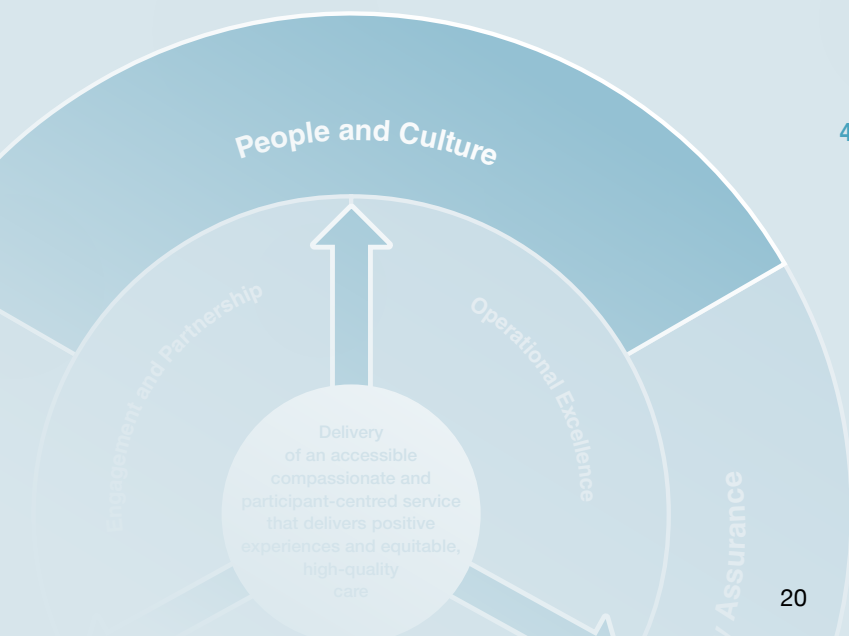
Ensure the policies and practices are in place across our organisation to support our staff health, their wellbeing and work-life balance.

#### 3. Support everyone to reach their full potential

Ensure our staff have access to opportunities for training, learning and development.

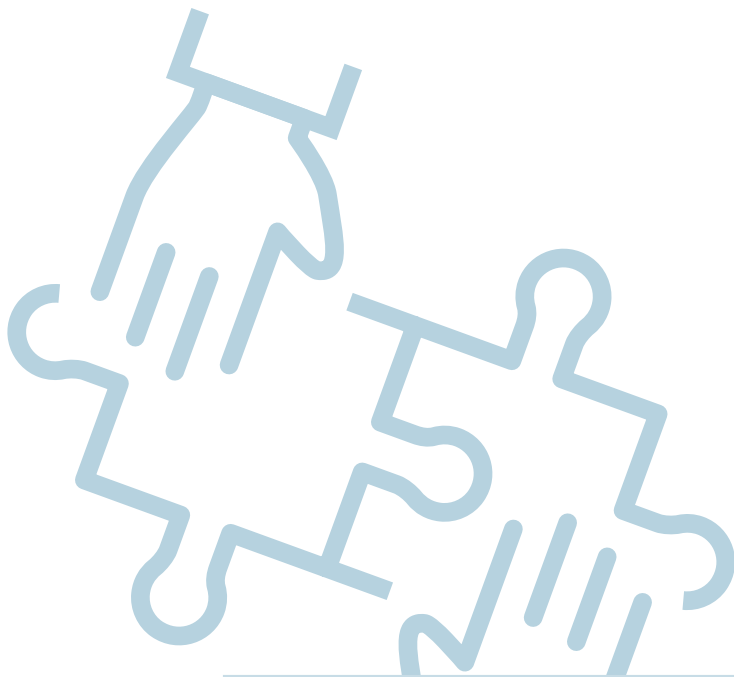
#### 4. Build our future workforce

Ensure that the NSS attracts, recruits and retains the talent to deliver a compassionate, participant-centred service.



## What we will achieve, and by when

- By end of 2023, develop and implement a plan to guide how we embed and monitor our Values, Actions and Behaviours.
- By end of 2025, have supported the implementation of the HSE Health Services People Strategy 2019-2024.
- By end of 2024, develop and implement a targeted learning and development plan to ensure all staff are trained and proficient in the most up-to-date practices to deliver our service to a high standard.
- By end of 2023, we will have developed an NSS workforce plan to support recruitment strategy, staff retention and succession planning.



**Supporting our people**

**Culture, values and behaviours**

**Learning and development**

**Workforce planning & recruitment and retention**



## How will we measure success?

- ✓ Staff turnover (%)
- ✓ Number of vacancies
- ✓ Average time to recruit
- ✓ Staff surveys
- ✓ Learning & development:  
Course participation rates,  
academic sponsorship scheme  
uptake, learning & development  
expenditure
- ✓ Exit interviews data
- ✓ Performance achievement  
meetings
- ✓ Internal promotions
- ✓ Absenteeism rate
- ✓ Learning & development  
evaluation of bespoke  
programmes and initiatives

## Enabling Priority 2

# Governance and Quality Assurance

*We will demonstrate good governance and leadership across the NSS to assure our staff, external partners, screening participants and the public that we are effectively discharging our roles and responsibilities, implementing and supporting a culture of quality assurance & improvement, and delivering value for money.*



### Why is this a priority?

Effective leadership and good governance are central to assuring clinical and corporate performance, and demonstrating accountability to our participants and wider stakeholders. We want to assess and show that programmes are led and delivered in a way that ensures high quality, makes the best use of public funds, of people's knowledge and experience, and provides oversight of all areas required to develop and deliver quality assured programmes. Assurance and continuous improvement of the quality of services is essential if population screening is to achieve the intended benefits to population health, while minimising unintended harms to those taking part.



### Our strategic objectives

#### 1. Ensure our operating model is fit for purpose

To ensure that we have the right structures, systems, processes and procedures in place for delivering and managing our service.

#### 2. Standardise our approach to quality assurance

To fully implement the quality assurance policy framework to provide a standardised cross-programme approach to quality assurance for the national screening programmes.

#### 3. Enhance safety

To guide and support our staff to practice safely, including identifying and reporting quality deficits and opportunities for improvement.

#### 4. Improve our approach to risk management

To proactively identify and manage risks and opportunities relevant to the achievement of our goals and objectives.



## 5. Expand our culture of continuous improvement

To drive a culture of continuous improvement to achieve the intended benefits to population health, while minimising unintended harms to those taking part.

## 6. Exceed international standards

To ensure that our screening programmes meet or exceed national and international standards.

## What we will achieve, and by when

- Review our organisational structure and governance, at a minimum every 3 years, to ensure it is fit for purpose to achieve our goals and objectives and is in line with the HSE Code of Governance; with the first review to take place in 2024.
- By end of 2023, review our processes around investment planning and decision-making to ensure we achieve the best value for money and are compliant with HSE's National Financial Regulations.
- By end of 2023, develop and implement a policy for setting and reviewing programme standards for all NSS programmes in line with the QA Policy Framework, with subsequent reviews at a minimum of every 3 years.
- By end of 2024, ensure a consistent and standardised process for conducting QA activities, e.g. QA visits and monitoring.
- By end of 2024, ensure all programmes have measurable quality indicators as outlined in QA Policy Framework for governance, leadership & management, workforce, data & intelligence, and participant engagement and experience (including equity).
- Work with internal teams and external service providers to educate, train, and ensure compliance with relevant guidance and standards, and address any under performance when standards are not being met.
- By end of 2024, implement systems and processes to improve the screening service we offer participants.
- By end of 2023, work with all programmes and functions to develop robust risk registers in line with HSE integrated risk management policies to ensure all risks identified are appropriately managed.



## How will we measure success?

- ✓ Measure implementation of the quality assurance framework
- ✓ Measure performance of using quality management system
- ✓ Measure compliance against relevant policies, standards and legislation, e.g. compliance with the HSE Code of Governance, HSE National Financial Regulations, HSE Your Service, Your Say, and HSE Incident Management Framework

Quality and safety

Our programmes

Our organisation

Continuous quality improvement

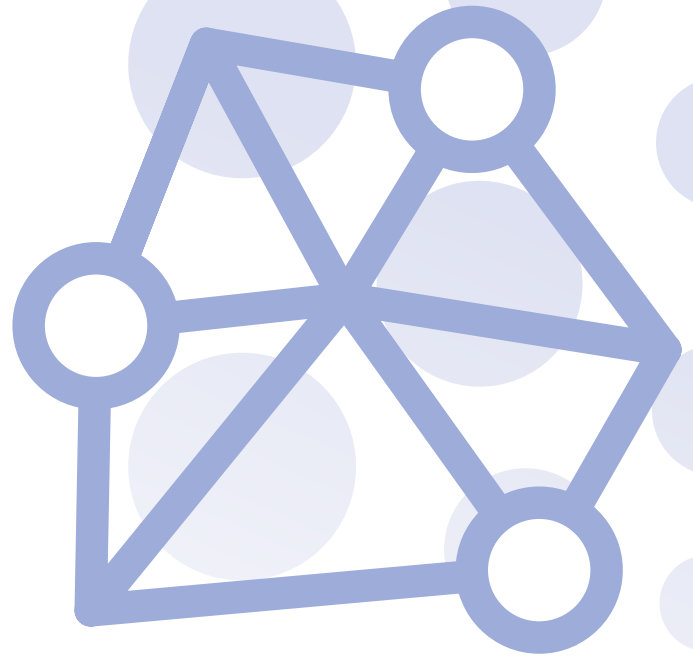
Risk management

National and international standards

## Enabling Priority 3

# Data and Information

*We will use advances in information technology and data to inform and strengthen our service delivery, support evidence-based decision-making and improve our efficiency.*



### Why is this a priority?

Becoming a data driven organisation, actively engaged in real-time monitoring, enables us to demonstrate our performance, and identify strategic opportunities for service development and continuous quality improvement. Utilising optimum information and effective technologies will enable us to deliver a safe and responsive service that meets the needs of our screening participants, and enhances their experience interacting with the service.

### Our strategic objectives

#### 1. Support data-driven decision-making

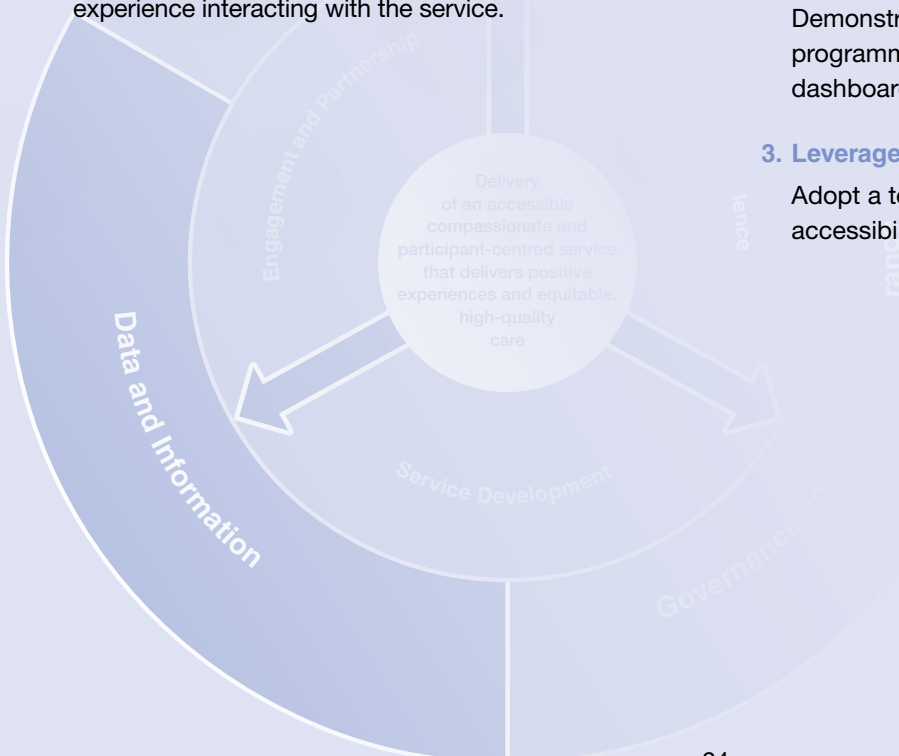
Ensure that NSS has access to real-time, integrated data that can help us make more informed decisions, and to monitor and measure quality across NSS programmes & functions.

#### 2. Enhance transparency and accessibility of our performance reports

Demonstrate our operational excellence and programme impact using data visualisation, KPI dashboards and transparent reporting.

#### 3. Leverage technology to improve engagement

Adopt a technology-first approach to increase accessibility and uptake in screening.



## What we will achieve, and by when

- By end of 2024, develop a NSS data strategy.
- By end of 2025, maintain the confidentiality and integrity, and improve the availability of information within the organisation.
- By end of 2025, collaborate with partners to identify opportunities for the exchange/integration of data across platforms (e.g. NCCP, NIO, NCRI, HSE HIU).
- By end of 2025, develop predictive models to assist capacity planning and forecasting.
- By end of 2026, identify the requirements for our screening registers to facilitate the capture of additional population data to enable enhanced epidemiological analysis e.g. equity stratifiers, geocoding.
- By end of 2025, collaborate with relevant partners to integrate screening data to population health profiles to understand uptake levels and areas of need.
- By end of 2026, implement our ICT strategy and further develop our ICT systems and applications to provide accurate, real-time information and metrics to support monitoring and evaluation of current procedures and processes, and enable accessible digital reporting.
- By end of 2024, establish a working group to progress the publication of open data.
- By end of 2025, develop improved access to performance data and outcomes to enable timely data visualisation, KPI dashboards and transparent reporting.
- Undertake horizon scanning, at a minimum every year, to ensure appropriate ICT capabilities to support the timely and safe introduction of novel evidence-based practices in screening.
- By end of 2026, explore the introduction of digital solutions for screening participants to engage with our screening programmes (e.g. electronic appointment booking, text notifications).
- By end of 2026, implement a single register serving all NSS screening programmes.



## How will we measure success?

- ✓ Project implementation status
- ✓ Identification and appropriate management of quality issues
- ✓ Appropriate and timely reporting of data breaches
- ✓ Volume of open data published

Quality

Our programmes

Risk management

Quality and safety

Our organisation

National and international standards

Continuous quality improvement

# Delivering our strategy

## Implementation roadmap

We understand that a successful strategy involves more than identifying strategic goals and objectives to guide our efforts. Throughout our strategy development process, we have remained focused on implementation by continually asking the question *how will we get there?*

*Choose Screening* provides the National Screening Service with a framework to fulfill our mission and achieve our vision for the future. We will deliver on our six strategic priorities over the course of the next five years. Detailed actions and milestone dates for each action are outlined in an implementation plan.

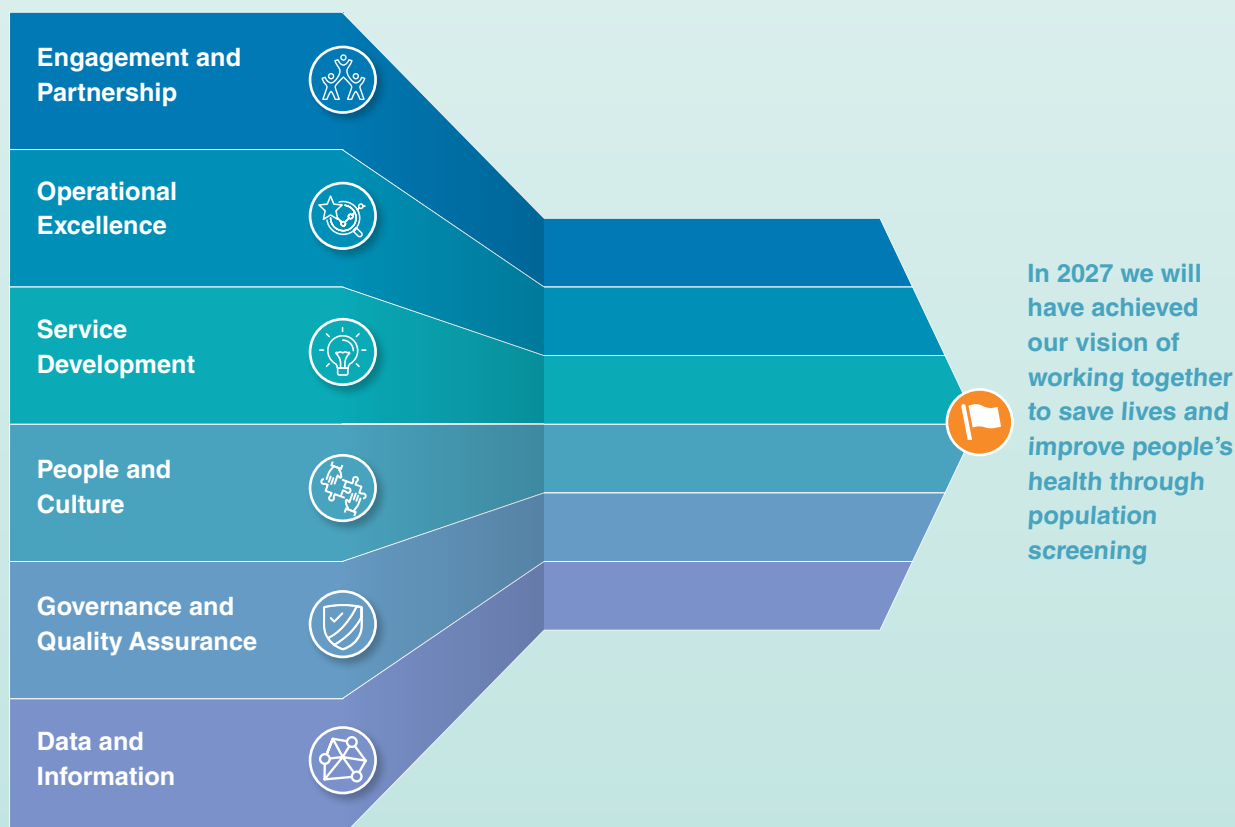
Implementation of these strategic priorities is independent of the ongoing delivery of screening through our four population-based screening programmes. Furthermore, we will continue to progress ongoing projects and deliver the service priorities summarised in the National Service Plan.

## Implementation approach

The strategy sets out ambitious but achievable goals. Implementing this strategy will require a rigorous approach to deliver the strategic priorities over the next five years. Our approach will require clear governance and structures to ensure delivery.

Overall governance for implementation is with the NSS executive management team. Implementation is broken down on a year-by-year basis and delivery will require the input and expertise from all programmes and functions within NSS and liaison with our external partners.

The NSS Strategy, Business and Projects function will be the responsible body for the implementation of our strategy. This function will provide co-ordination, oversight and support to key strategic programmes. Furthermore, Strategy, Business and Projects will lead out on the tracking, monitoring, and reporting on the implementation of the NSS strategy. Implementation progress will be reported on a regular basis to NSS EMT with a progress report developed annually.



## Conclusion

This strategy articulates our ambitions on behalf of our services users. Over the next five years, this strategy will guide our work with our screening participants, colleagues across the health service, the public and all stakeholders towards our shared vision of *'working together to save lives and improve people's health through population screening'*.

Our plan outlines the objectives and actions that we believe will enhance the service we deliver to our screening participants. We will remain responsive and adaptive to our changing landscape, learning from others and sharing best practice and embedding participant partnership in our actions. Most importantly, we will work with, and be accountable to our screening participants as we deliver our strategic priorities, and serve them in all the work that we do.

To do this, we will strengthen our organisation to develop and harness the capability of our staff, who are our most important asset. We will ensure we have robust and fit-for-purpose quality, planning and risk structures and resources in place, to assure our participants and stakeholders that the highest standards are met. Furthermore, we will build strong management and governance structures, using effective technologies to deliver safe, cost effective and responsive services that meet demand and that consistently deliver value for money.



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála  
National Screening Service