

NHS Highland



NHS
Highland
na Gàidhealtachd

Meeting:

Highland Health & Social Care
Committee

Meeting date:

14 January 2026

Title:

Finance Report – Month 7 2025/2026

Responsible Executive/Non-Executive:

Arlene Johnstone, Chief Officer

Report Author:

Elaine Ward, Deputy Director of Finance

Report Recommendation:

The Committee is asked to **Examine** and **Consider** the content of the report and take **Limited Assurance**.

1 Purpose

This is presented to the Highland Health & Social Care Committee for:

- Assurance

This report relates to a:

- Annual Operating Plan

This report will align to the following NHSScotland quality ambition(s):

Safe, Effective and Person Centred

This report relates to the following Strategic Outcome(s)

Start Well		Thrive Well		Stay Well		Anchor Well	
Grow Well		Listen Well		Nurture Well		Plan Well	
Care Well		Live Well		Respond Well		Treat Well	
Journey Well		Age Well		End Well		Value Well	
Perform well	X	Progress well		All Well Themes			

2 Report summary

2.1 Situation

This report is presented to enable discussion on the NHS Highland financial position at Month 7 (October) 2025/2026.

2.2 Background

NHS Highland submitted a financial plan to Scottish Government for the 2025/2026 financial year in March 2025. This plan presented an initial budget gap of £115.596m. When cost reductions/ improvements were factored in the net position was a gap of £55.723m. The Board received feedback on the draft Financial Plan which requested submission of a revised plan with a net deficit of no more that £40m. A revised plan was submitted in line with this request in June 2025 and this revised plan has been accepted by Scottish Government.

The Board continues to be escalated at level 3 within the NHS Scotland Escalation Framework. Work continues internally and with the support of SG to improve the financial position by identifying opportunities and implementing new ways of working which will support a move to financial balance.

2.3 Assessment

At the end of October 2025 (Month 7) an overspend of £35.241m is reported with this forecast to increase to £40.005m by the end of the financial year. The forecast position is predicated on the assumption that further work will enable delivery of a breakeven position within ASC by 31 March 2026. This currently presents a risk of £20.758m to the Board.

A review of delivery against targets for identified value and efficiency schemes has been undertaken. This together with the agreement of the Adult Social Care Financial plan presents additional challenge to the Board in delivering the ask of SG to be no more than £40m overspend at the end of the financial year. The Board continues to look at recovery actions to close the additional gap.

Within the Highland Health & Social Care Partnership a year to date overspend of £20.474m is reported with this forecast to increase to £24.129m by the end of the financial year. This forecast overspend includes £20.758m relating to ASC which overall the Board is assuming will move to financial balance by the end of the financial year.

2.4 Proposed level of Assurance

Substantial		Moderate	
Limited	X	None	

Comment on the level of assurance

It is only possible to give limited assurance at this time. The position reported aligns with the Scottish Government expected position but still presents a position with is significantly adrift from financial balance.

3 Impact Analysis

3.1 Quality/ Patient Care

The impact of quality of care and delivery of services is assessed at an individual scheme level using a Quality Impact Assessment tool. All savings are assessed using a Quality Impact Assessment (QIA).

3.2 Workforce

There is both a direct and indirect link between the financial position and staff resourcing and health and wellbeing. Through utilisation of the QIA tool, where appropriate, the impact of savings on these areas is assessed.

3.3 Financial

Scottish Government has recognised the financial challenge on all Boards for 2024/2025 and beyond and are continuing to provide additional support to develop initiatives to reduce the cost base both nationally and within individual Boards. NHS Highland continues to be escalated at level 3 in respect of finance.

3.4 Risk Assessment/Management

There is a risk associated with the delivery of the Value & Efficiency programme. The Board are developing further plans to generate cost reductions/improvements. There is an emerging risk associated with allocations – this has been reflected in the forecast year end position.

3.5 Data Protection

There are no Data Protection risks associated with this report.

3.6 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities

An impact assessment has not been completed because it is not applicable

3.7 Other impacts

None

3.8 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

The Board has carried out its duties to involve and engage both internal and external stakeholders where appropriate through the following meetings:

- Executive Directors Group – via monthly updates and exception reporting

- Monthly financial reporting to Scottish Government

3.9 Route to the Meeting

This has been previously considered by the following groups as part of its development. The groups have either supported the content, or their feedback has informed the development of the content presented in this report.

- EDG
- FRPC

4.1 List of appendices

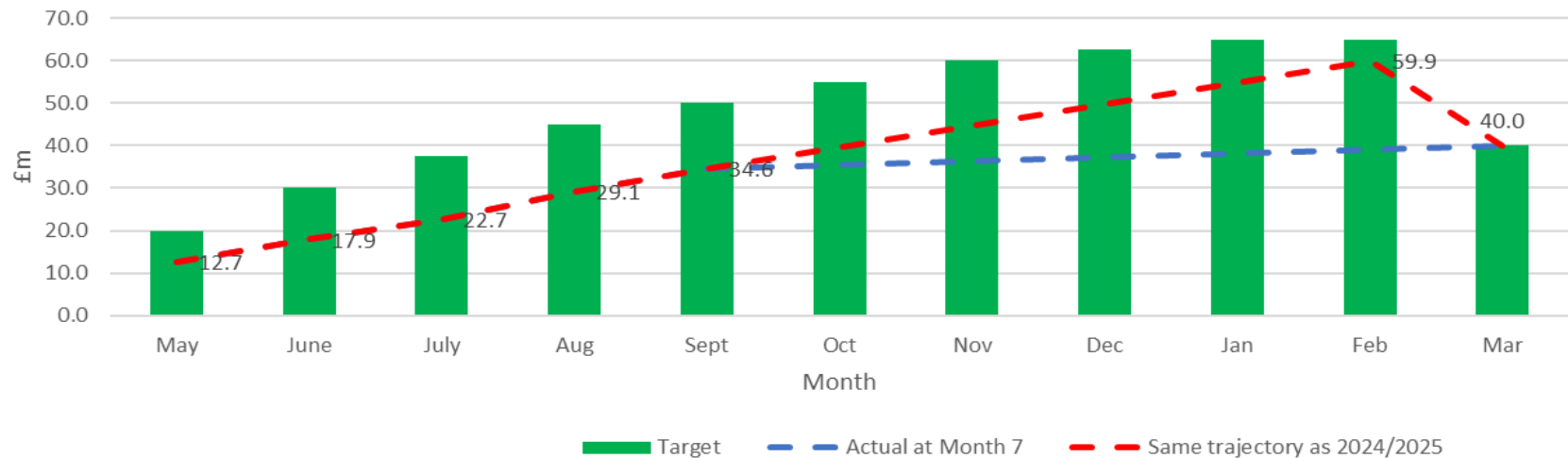
N/A

Finance Report –Month 7 (October) 2025/2026

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MONTH 7 2025/2026 – OCTOBER 2025

Actual v Planned Financial Performance



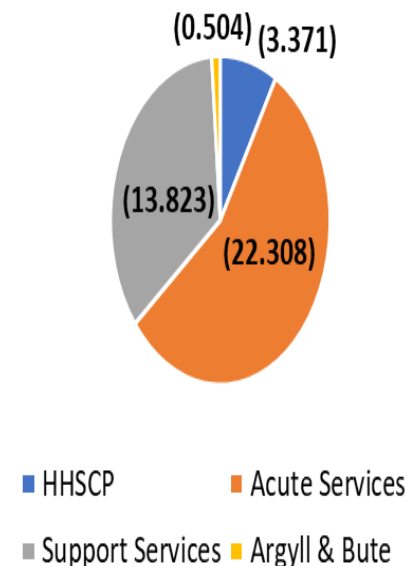
Target	YTD £m	YE Position £m
Delivery against Revenue Resource Limit (RRL) DEFICIT/ SURPLUS	35.2	40.0
Deliver against plan DEFICIT/ SURPLUS	19.8	0.0

- No brokerage available in 2025/2026
- SG requested plan with a deficit no greater than £40m
- SG have confirmed that an allocation of £40m (non-repayable) will be made to cover the planned overspend – if the actual position is higher that this no further funding will be made available
- Current forecast is £40m worse than RRL but in line with SG request and revised plan submitted to SG in June 2025

MONTH 7 2025/2026 – OCTOBER 2025

Current Plan £m	Summary Funding & Expenditure	Plan To Date £m	Actual To Date £m	Variance To Date £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
1,342.613	Total Funding	751.600	751.600	-	1,342.613	-
	Expenditure					
503.927	HHSCP	293.921	314.395	(20.474)	528.056	(24.129)
	ASC Position to breakeven				(20.758)	20.758
	Revised HHSCP				507.298	(3.371)
342.526	Acute Services	199.001	213.328	(14.327)	364.833	(22.308)
190.881	Support Services	90.899	91.166	(0.267)	204.704	(13.823)
1,037.334	Sub Total	583.821	618.889	(35.068)	1,076.835	(39.501)
305.279	Argyll & Bute	167.779	167.951	(0.172)	305.783	(0.504)
1,342.613	Total Expenditure	751.600	786.840	(35.241)	1,382.618	(40.005)

Forecast Deficit by Operational Area



MONTH 7 2025/2026 SUMMARY

- Overspend of £35.241m reported with this forecast to increase to £40.005m by the end of the financial year
- This is in line with the revised financial plan submitted to Scottish Government at the beginning of June 2025
- High risk assumption that ASC will deliver a breakeven position at the end of the financial year
- Also assuming V&E programme will deliver in full – there is currently a risk adjusted gap of £15.325m between plans and the V&E target

MONTH 7 2025/2026 – OCTOBER 2025



KEY RISKS

- ASC – At this stage there is no agreed plan in place to deliver breakeven by the end of the financial year
- Delivery of the Value & Efficiency Cost Reduction/Improvement programme
- SLAs with NHS Lothian and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
- Supplementary staffing – ongoing reliance due to system pressures and recruitment challenges
- ASC pressures – suppliers continuing to face sustainability challenges, NI impact on independent sector providers
- Health & Care staffing
- Financial impact of Agenda for Change pay award from 2023
- Price increases in excess of inflationary assumptions
- Potential impact associated with the cost of new drugs
- Financial impact of fragile services
- Potential impact of any trade tariffs
- SLA Uplift
- Allocations less than anticipated



MITIGATIONS

- Ongoing robust governance structures around agency nursing utilisation
- Sustainability funding received from SG
- Additional funding for AfC non pay element of 2023/2024 pay award
- Funding anticipated from Highland Council in respect of NI rate increase – amount to be agreed
- SG have confirmed a £40m allocation will be available to enable delivery of a breakeven position at year end – based on delivery of a position in line with the financial plan

MONTH 7 2025/2026 – OCTOBER 2025



Current Plan £m	Detail	Plan to Date £m	Actual to Date £m	Variance to Date £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
	HHSCP					
296.534	NH Communities	172.605	180.904	(8.299)	310.315	(13.781)
62.600	Mental Health Services	36.163	37.268	(1.105)	63.677	(1.077)
168.384	Primary Care	98.957	99.643	(0.686)	169.683	(1.298)
(23.592)	ASC Other includes ASC Income	(13.804)	(3.420)	(10.383)	(15.619)	(7.973)
503.927	Total HHSCP	293.921	314.395	(20.474)	528.056	(24.129)
	HHSCP					
321.477	Health	187.174	190.405	(3.231)	324.848	(3.371)
182.450	Social Care	106.748	123.990	(17.243)	203.208	(20.758)
503.927	Total HHSCP	293.921	314.395	(20.474)	528.056	(24.129)

Locum/ Agency & Bank Spend	In Month £'000	YTD £'000
Locum	309	2,806
Agency (Nursing)	199	1,436
Bank	906	6,302
Agency (Non Med)	139	1,655
Total	1,552	12,199

HHSCP

- YTD overspend of £20.474m reported with this forecast to increase to £24.129m by the end of the financial year
- ASC overspend forecast at £20.758m – this assumes delivery of V&E cost reductions/improvements in full
- Drugs/ prescribing pressure forecast at £0.249m
- Locum costs of £0.953m contributing to overspend within Primary Care
- Supplementary staffing costs of £12.199m incurred to date
- High cost out of area placements continue to impact on the Mental Health position

MONTH 7 2025/2026 – OCTOBER 2025

NORTH HIGHLAND COMMUNITIES



Annual Plan £000	Detail	Plan to Date £000	Actual to Date £000	Variance to Date £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Var from Curr Plan £000
83,689	Inverness & Nairn	49,209	52,190	(2,981)	89,959	(6,270)
61,333	Ross-shire & B&S	35,887	38,569	(2,682)	66,454	(5,120)
52,765	Caithness & Sutherland	30,852	31,175	(323)	53,286	(521)
63,288	Lochaber, SL & WR	36,914	37,830	(916)	65,098	(1,811)
17,066	Management	9,439	11,279	(1,840)	17,576	(510)
8,659	Community Other AHP	4,897	4,356	541	7,807	852
9,735	Hosted Services	5,407	5,505	(98)	10,135	(399)
296,534	Total NH Communities	172,605	180,904	(8,299)	310,315	(13,781)
105,580	Health	60,857	61,289	(432)	104,917	663
190,954	ASC	111,748	119,615	(7,867)	205,398	(14,444)

NORTH HIGHLAND COMMUNITIES

- YTD overspend of £8.299m reported with this forecast to increase to £13.781m by the end of the financial year
- Elements of unfunded services with ECS, Chronic Pain and Sexual Health impact on position
- A number of vacancies within services is leading to high levels of supplementary staffing spend
- Non-pay is forecasting a pressure of £1.855m by financial year end – this includes elements of the vaccination service and overspends within the equipment store due to increased demand and inflationary pressures in drugs and surgical supplies are also contributing to the overspend position

MONTH 7 2025/2026 – OCTOBER 2025

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



Annual Plan £000	Detail	Plan to Date £000	Actual to Date £000	Variance to Date £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Var from Curr Plan £000
47,743	Mental Health Services					
	Complex Care	27,887	28,630	(744)	48,986	(1,243)
9,749	Medical & Specialist Hlth Prof	5,673	5,615	58	9,643	107
1,640	Business Enabling Services	819	1,228	(409)	1,734	(94)
3,468	Psychological Therapies	1,784	1,795	(10)	3,314	154
62,600	Total Mental Health Services	36,163	37,268	(1,105)	63,677	(1,077)
47,513	Health	27,359	29,473	(2,113)	50,249	(2,736)
15,088	ASC	8,803	7,795	1,008	13,429	1,659

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- YTD overspend of £1.105m reported with this forecast to reduce to £1.077m by the end of the financial year
- Supplementary staffing costs due to increased acuity of patients is the main driver – however, work continues to bring down the level of overall supplementary staffing spend.
- Recruitment challenges are driving up locum costs within psychiatry but the overall level of vacancies is masking the full cost of supplementary staffing
- Out of area placements continue to be a significant driver to the overspend position - £1.835m

MONTH 7 2025/2026 – OCTOBER 2025

PRIMARY CARE



Annual Plan £000	Detail	Plan to Date £000	Actual to Date £000	Variance to Date £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Var from Curr Plan £000
62,839	Primary Care					
70,494	GMS	36,994	37,943	(949)	64,450	(1,611)
26,111	GPS	41,039	41,275	(236)	70,110	383
6,380	GDS	15,624	14,577	1,047	24,818	1,292
2,561	GOS	3,703	3,721	(17)	6,411	(31)
	PC Management	1,597	2,127	(531)	3,894	(1,332)
168,384	Total Primary Care	98,957	99,643	(686)	169,683	(1,298)

PRIMARY CARE

- YTD overspend of £0.686m reported with this forecast to increase to £1.298m by the end of the financial year
- Ongoing vacancies in PC management and GDS continue to mitigate pressures in GMS and GPS
- The pressure associated with locum usage within the Board's 2C practices is forecast at £0.953m by the end of the financial year
- Prescribing and 2C practices are key areas within the Value & Efficiency programme for 2025/2026

MONTH 7 2025/2026 – ADULT SOCIAL CARE



Services Category	Annual Budget £000's	YTD Budget £000's	YTD Actual £000's	YTD Variance £000's	Outturn £000's	YE Variance £000's
Total Older People - Residential/Non Residential Care	64.124	37.845	37.376	0.469	63.942	0.183
Total Older People - Care at Home	40.188	23.499	26.756	(3.257)	45.571	(5.383)
Total People with a Learning Disability	53.382	31.276	35.679	(4.403)	61.756	(8.374)
Total People with a Mental Illness	11.744	6.862	6.060	0.802	10.407	1.337
Total People with a Physical Disability	10.267	6.023	6.690	(0.666)	11.357	(1.090)
Total Other Community Care	13.735	8.012	7.130	0.883	12.977	0.758
Total Support Services	(10.992)	(6.770)	4.097	(10.868)	(3.405)	(7.587)
Care Home Support/Sustainability Payments	-	-	0.203	(0.203)	0.603	(0.603)
Total Adult Social Care Services	182.450	106.748	123.990	(17.243)	203.208	(20.758)

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

- YTD an overspend of £17.243m is reported with this forecast to increase to £20.758m by the end of the financial
- Forecast assumes full delivery of V&E cost reductions/ improvements
- The overall financial position for the Board assumes that ASC will deliver a breakeven position by the end of the financial year
- £3.062m of supplementary staffing costs within in-house care homes are included within the year to date position

MONTH 7 2025/2026 – ADULT SOCIAL CARE



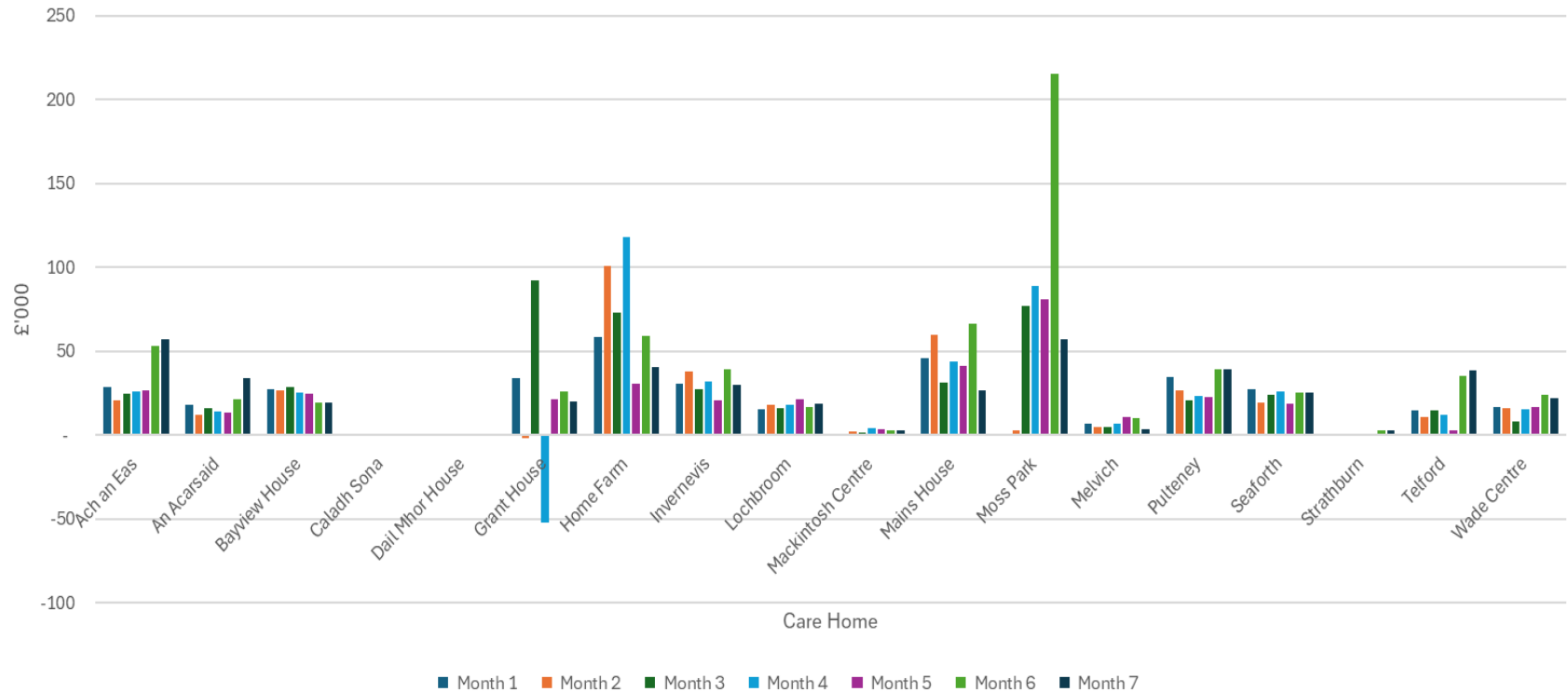
NHSH Care Homes Supplementary Staffing

Care Home	Month 7		Total YTD £000's
	Agency £000's	Bank £000's	
Ach an Eas	13	32	225
An Acarsaid	18	9	120
Bayview House	-	22	171
Caladh Sona	-	-	-
Dail Mhor House	-	-	-
Grant House	9	30	167
Home Farm	27	11	477
Invernevis	9	11	205
Lochbroom	2	17	125
Mackintosh Centre	-	1	17
Mains House	21	9	318
Moss Park	46	6	594
Melvich	(1)	3	45
Pulteney	-	26	193
Seaforth	-	26	167
Strathburn	-	1	3
Telford	10	16	116
Wade Centre	-	24	120
Total	152	243	3,062

- Significant increase in spend in Month 6
- Highest spend continues to be within those Care Homes that have come under NHS Highland operational delivery since 2020
- Moss Park expenditure in Month 6 related to earlier periods the same level of spend has not occurred in Month 7

MONTH 7 2025/2026 – ADULT SOCIAL CARE

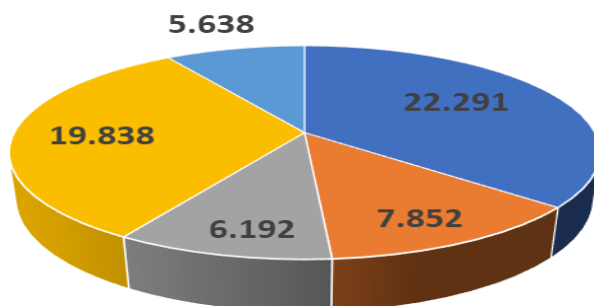
Care Home Supplementary Staffing Spend 2025/2026



- Ongoing reliance on supplementary staffing to maintain staffing levels within in-house care homes
- Continued use of supplementary staffing is impacting on ability to deliver Value and Efficiency target

MONTH 7 2025/2026 – OCTOBER 2025

Cost Reduction/ Improvement Target £m



■ NH Value & Efficiency ■ A&B Value & Efficiency ■ ASC Value & Efficiency
■ ASC Transformation ■ Other Action

COST REDUCTON/ IMPROVEMENT

- NHS Highland submitted a financial plan to Scottish Government in March 2025 detailing a cost reduction/ improvement programme of £54.235m
- Whilst a further submission was made in Jue with a revised net financial gap of £40.005m the savings programme within the March submission remained unchanged

Area of Cost Reduction/ Improvement	Target £000s
NH Value & Efficiency	22.291
A&B Value & Efficiency	7.852
ASC Value & Efficiency	6.192
ASC Transformation	19.838
Other Action	5.638
Follow up actions post March Fin Plan Submission	10.180
Total Cost Reduction/ Improvement Target	71.991

MONTH 7 2025/2026 – VALUE & EFFICIENCY



In the 2025–26 financial year, savings are reported on a risk-adjusted basis. This approach factors in the probability of risks impacting the achievement of the financial plan. The framework categorises risks into five types: Idea, Opportunity, Plans in Progress, Fully Developed, and Moved to Delivery.

2025-26 Value & Efficiency Plan (£'000)

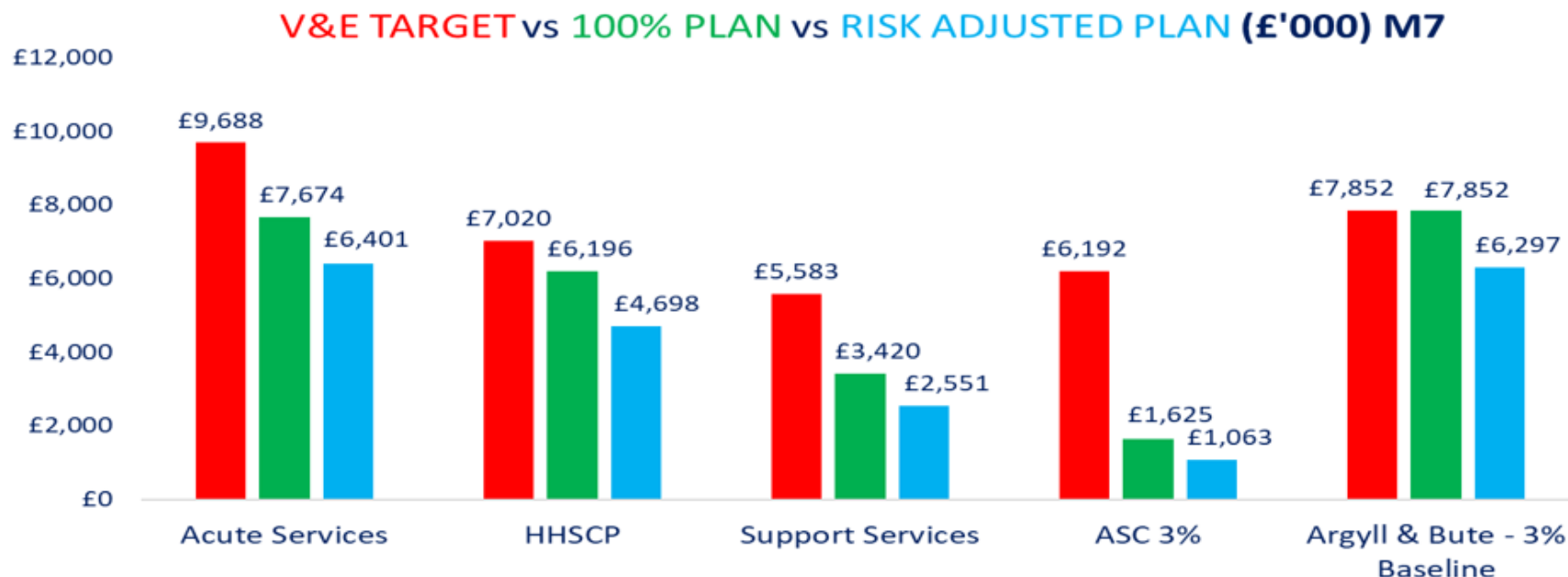
Reduction Programmes - Area	100%			Risk Adjusted Forecast (RAF)			Savings Achieved			
	Allocated Target	Current Plan	Plan GAP	Allocated Target	Risk Adjusted Forecast (RAF)	Risk Adjusted Plan GAP	Allocated Target	Budget Savings Achieved	Cost Reductions Achieved	Current Savings GAP
Value & Efficiency - North Highland	22,291	17,291	-5,000	22,291	13,650	-8,641	22,291	3,945	3,743	-14,603
Value & Efficiency - Argyll & Bute	7,852	7,852	0	7,852	6,297	-1,555	7,852	3,979	0	-3,873
Total Value & Efficiency	30,143	25,143	-5,000	30,143	19,947	-10,196	30,143	7,924	3,743	-18,475
Value & Efficiency - ASC	6,192	1,625	-4,567	6,192	1,063	-5,130	6,192	0	500	-5,692
Total Value & Efficiency incl ASC	36,335	26,768	-9,567	36,335	21,009	-15,325	36,335	7,924	4,243	-24,167

The financial plan submitted to the Scottish Government includes a target of achieving 3% efficiency savings across both North Highland and Argyll & Bute.

This equates to a total Value & Efficiency savings goal of **£36.335m** for the FY 2025–26

There is currently a shortfall of **£9.567m (9.283m in M6)** between the 2025–26 savings target and current delivery plan at its 100% value.

MONTH 7 2025/2026 – VALUE & EFFICIENCY – TARGET, PLAN & RISK ADJUSTED PLAN BY AREA



100% Plan

- Positive movement: Acute Services (from £7.312m to £7.674m and HHSCP from £5.935m to £6.196m)
- Negative movement: Support Services worsened significantly (from £4.218m to £3.420m)
- Mixed: ASC 3% saw a slight improvement in Risk Adjusted but a drop in 100% Plan (from £1.735m to £1.625m).
- Stable: Argyll & Bute unchanged.
- V&E Targets remain constant

MONTH 7 2025/2026 – VALUE & EFFICIENCY RECURRING/ NON-RECURRING BREAKDOWN



2025-26 Value & Efficiency Plan (£'000)										
Reduction Programmes as per Area and Recurrence	Value at 100%			Risk Adjusted Forecast (RAF)			Savings Achieved			
	Current Plan	Recurrent	Non-Recurrent	RAF	Recurrent	Non-Recurrent	Allocated Target	Recurrent	Non-Recurrent	Current Savings GAP
% of the Plan	% Rec/Non-Recvs Curr Plan	74%	26%	% Rec/Non-Recvs RAF	76%	24%	% Achieved vs Target	26%	7%	
Value & Efficiency - North Highland	17,291	15,649	1,642	13,650	12,746	904	22,291	7,160	528	-14,603
Value & Efficiency - Argyll & Bute	7,852	3,124	4,728	6,297	2,547	3,750	7,852	2,079	1,900	-3,873
Value & Efficiency (North Highland)	25,143	18,773	6,370	19,947	15,293	4,654	30,143	9,239	2,428	-18,475
Value & Efficiency - ASC	1,625	1,025	600	1,063	677	386	6,192	329	171	-5,692
Total Value & Efficiency incl ASC	26,768	19,798	6,970	21,009	15,970	5,040	36,335	9,568	2,600	-24,167

The total planned savings (100% plan) are £26,768m with £19,798m expected to be recurrent.

After adjusting for risk, the total expected savings drop to £21,009m with £15,970m being recurrent.

The savings plans from North Highland currently make up the largest contribution across all areas.

MONTH 7 2025/2026 – VALUE & EFFICIENCY – HHSCP



Reduction Programmes	Target Allocated	Value & Efficiency Plan as per Scheme			Savings Achieved (All budget savings recorded on the ledger and YTD cost reductions)			M7	M6	Movement in RAF
		Current Plan @ 100%	Risk Adjusted Forecast	GAP (Target less Risk Adj Forecast)	Savings Achieved	Recurrent	Non-Recurrent	Risk Adjusted Forecast	Risk Adjusted Forecast	
HHSCP										
AHP Direct Engagement		50	27		4	4	0	27	25	2
Dental Redesign		851	851		851	851	0	851	851	0
HHSCP - Clinical Stores		5	3		0	0	0	3	3	0
HHSCP - Postages		10	1		0	0	0	1	1	0
HHSCP - Unfunded Posts		100	67		34	34	0	67	50	17
HHSCP Travel		59	6		0	0	0	6	6	0
MHLD Discharge Pathway		50	5		2	2	0	5	6	-1
MHLD Notes Retrieval		5	0		0	0	0	0	0	0
MHLD Reduction in Costs / Out of Area Placements		425	193		2	2	0	193	193	-1
MHLD Reduction in Drug Costs		10	5		0	0	0	5	5	0
MHLD Reduction in Travel and Transport (inc taxis and pool cars)		115	70		20	20	0	70	71	-1
New Craigs Hospital - Supplementary Nursing Staff		410	410		239	239	0	410	410	-0
Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) Direct Supply		5	3		0	0	0	3	3	0
Police Custody/SARC/ Forensic Medical Examiner (FME)		100	10		0	0	0	10	10	0
Prescribing - Highland - HHSCP		2,751	2,560		1,825	1,825	0	2,560	2,228	332
Prescribing - Sustainable - HHSCP		0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0
Supplementary Staffing - Medical - MH - SUPP REDUCTION IN LO CUM COST		50	38		26	26	0	38	37	1
Supplementary Staffing - Nursing - HHSCP (Community Hospitals)		579	67		10	10	0	67	58	9
Supplementary Staffing Primary Care 2C		327	294		194	194	0	294	0	294
TARA HHSCP		144	14		0	0	0	14	14	0
Time to Care		0	0		0	0	0	0	50	-50
Vaccination Service		150	75		13	13	0	75	75	0
Total HHSCP	7,020	6,196	4,698	-2,322	3,219	3,219	0	4,698	4,096	602

MONTH 5 2025/2026 – AUGUST 2025

SUPPLEMENTARY STAFFING



	2025/2026 YTD £'000	2024/2025 YTD £'000	Inc/ (Dec) YTD £'000
HHSCP	11,498	10,428	1,070

Current Plan £m	Detail	Plan to Date £m	Actual to Date £m	Variance to Date £m
	Pay			
29.142	Medical & Dental	16.913	16.543	0.370
4.678	Medical & Dental Support	2.729	2.698	0.030
75.402	Nursing & Midwifery	44.040	44.052	(0.011)
18.697	Allied Health Professionals	10.797	10.096	0.701
0.034	Healthcare Sciences	0.020	-	0.020
12.097	Other Therapeutic	7.144	6.531	0.612
8.028	Support Services	4.681	4.479	0.202
25.320	Admin & Clerical	14.647	13.924	0.723
0.403	Senior Managers	0.235	0.115	0.120
61.488	Social Care	35.846	32.293	3.552
0.435	Ambulance Services	0.254	0.167	0.087
(2.854)	Vacancy factor/pay savings	(1.682)	-	(1.682)
232.869	Total Pay	135.623	130.899	4.724

SUPPLEMENTARY STAFFING

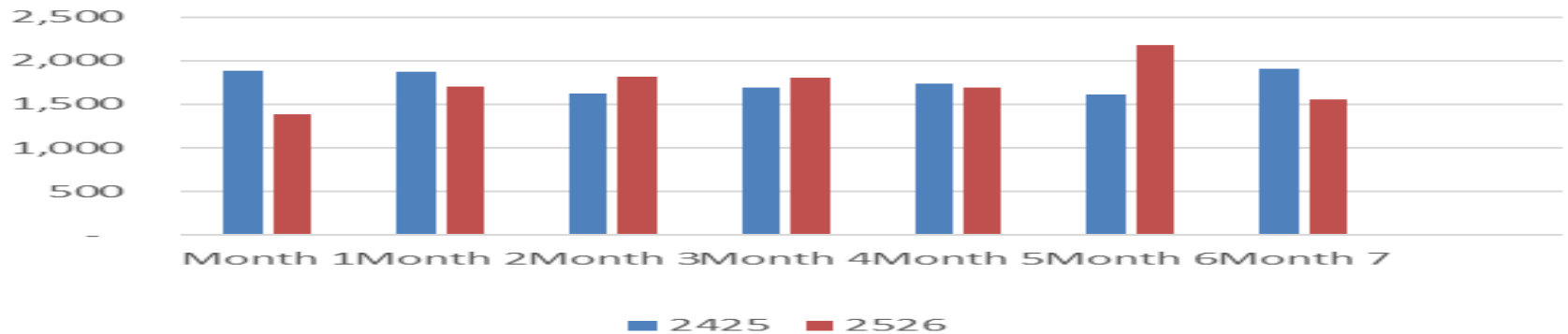
- Recorded spend at end of Month 7 is £1.070m lower than at same point in 2024/2025
- Pay underspend of £4.724 reported at the end of month 7

MONTH 7 2025/2026 – OCTOBER 2025

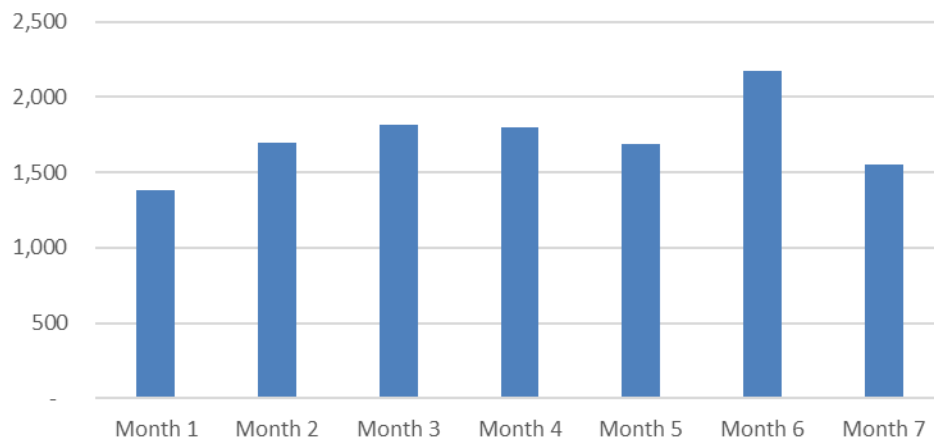
SUPPLEMENTARY STAFFING



HHSCP - SUPPLEMENTARY STAFFING - MONTHLY RUN RATE



HHSCP - TOTAL SUPPLEMENTARY SPEND 2025/2026



- Month 7 spend is £0.623m lower than Month 6 – this reflects additional costs reported in Month 6