HSC Business Services Organisation



Business Services Organisation

ANNUAL QUALITY REPORT

Foreword from the BSO Chief Executive



Annual Quality Report 25-26 Chief Executive's Statement

Welcome to the Annual Quality Report 2025-26 for the Business Services Organisation (BSO).

Throughout 2025-26, the health and social care system continued to face significant challenges, including increasing demand, financial pressures and the need to deliver sustainable transformation. Against this backdrop, BSO has continued to provide high-quality, specialist professional services to our HSC partners while supporting wider system improvement.

I am immensely proud of the dedication, expertise and commitment demonstrated by our staff throughout the year. Their professionalism, innovation and focus on continuous improvement have enabled BSO not only to maintain essential services, but also to deliver meaningful change across health and social care.

Collaboration remains central to our approach, and many of the achievements highlighted within this report have been made possible through strong partnerships with our customers, stakeholders and colleagues across the wider HSC family. This year has also seen important progress in strengthening BSO's role as both a trusted service provider and a contributor to wider system solutions.

A key milestone was the successful completion of the regional encompass rollout, creating a single digital care record across all Health and Social Care Trusts and providing a strong foundation for future improvements in the quality, safety and integration of care. Alongside this, we have continued to support a wide range of digital, workforce and service improvement initiatives, helping organisations make greater use of data, technology and innovation.

We have also continued to embrace innovation and new technologies, from the adoption of Artificial Intelligence and digital automation to the delivery of regional transformation programmes, helping to improve efficiency, strengthen decision-making and enhance services for patients, staff and customers.

Our Corporate Plan 2024-27 continues to guide our work through our three Corporate Objectives: Our Customers, Our People and Innovation. Supporting and developing our people remains essential to our success, and we have continued to invest in workforce development, well-being and staff engagement to ensure we are equipped to meet future challenges.

The achievements described throughout this report reflect the collective efforts of our staff and partners and demonstrate the significant contribution BSO continues to make to the delivery and transformation of Health and Social Care services across Northern Ireland.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to strengthening partnerships, supporting sustainable transformation and delivering high-quality services that meet the evolving needs of our customers and the wider system.

It is therefore my pleasure to present the Annual Quality Report 2025-26.



Karen Bailey
Chief Executive
BSO
September 2026

Introduction

The Business Services Organisation (BSO) was established in April 2009 to provide a range of business support and specialist professional services throughout the Health and Social Care (HSC) sector. These services include Procurement and Logistics (PaLs), Counter Fraud and Probity (CFPS), Corporate Services, Finance, Equality, Human Resources (HR), Legal, Family Practitioner Services (FPS), and Internal Audit Services. A range of shared services are also provided, including IT, payroll, payments, accounts receivable and recruitment services.

In 2011 the Department of Health launched the "Quality 2020" – a strategy to protect and improve quality within and throughout Health and Social Care (HSC) in Northern Ireland (NI).

The objectives of the 2020 Quality Strategy are outlined as follows:

- **Transforming the Culture** – to encourage the achievement of a high-quality service, which further promotes, prioritises and develops cross-working partnerships between staff for the benefit of carers, clients and patients;
- **Strengthening the Workforce** – support staff to deliver change and take necessary decisions in delivering a high-quality service through education, empowerment and leadership development;
- **Measuring the Improvement** – measure and deliver Quality Improvement through the effective use of accredited techniques to enhance capacity, patient safety and experiences;
- **Raising the Standards** – develop and maintain evidence-based standards in partnership with all stakeholders to establish a clear framework that will guide best practice;
- **Integrating the Care** – using teamworking and shared learning (best practice) to further develop integrated care pathways.

The Clinical Education Centre (CEC) acts as a representative of the BSO on the Quality 2020 Implementation Team. The Strategic Planning and Customer Engagement (SP&CE) Directorate is responsible for co-ordinating BSO's organisational approach to quality excellence.

The preparation of the Annual Quality Report (AQR) is a key activity aligned with the strategic goal of measuring and improving in the Quality 2020 Strategy. This thirteenth BSO Annual Quality Report highlights significant achievements in quality excellence and continuous improvement during 2025-26.

BSO Objectives

Our Vision:

"BSO – Making delivery of health and social care possible."

Our Values:

The HSC values are central to everything we do and are aligned to our Corporate Objectives listed below which ensure we deliver against our BSO vision:



Our Objectives:

2025-2026, marked the second year of delivery of our Corporate Plan 2024-2027. Our focus remained firmly on delivering against our three Corporate Objectives: Our Customers, Our People, and Innovation. Building on the strong foundations established in the first year, we continued to focus on these priorities to support delivery of our vision in an increasingly challenging environment. During 2025-2026, we aimed to deliver on:

1. Build strategic partnerships with our customers to deliver high quality services, demonstrating value and effective ways of working.
2. Support and invest in our people, their potential and their contribution in ensuring BSO is a great place to work.
3. Offer opportunities that continue to enable and support innovative improvements across HSC.

Our Corporate Objectives are underpinned by the HSC values:

- Working Together
- Excellence
- Compassion
- Openness & Honesty

In 2026 - 2027, we aim to have achieved the following outcomes:

Customers

BSO will strengthen customer partnerships by supporting the HSC reset programme and improving performance reporting and service delivery. The focus will be on delivering efficiencies, identifying savings opportunities, benchmarking services, and ensuring value for money while driving continuous service improvement.

People

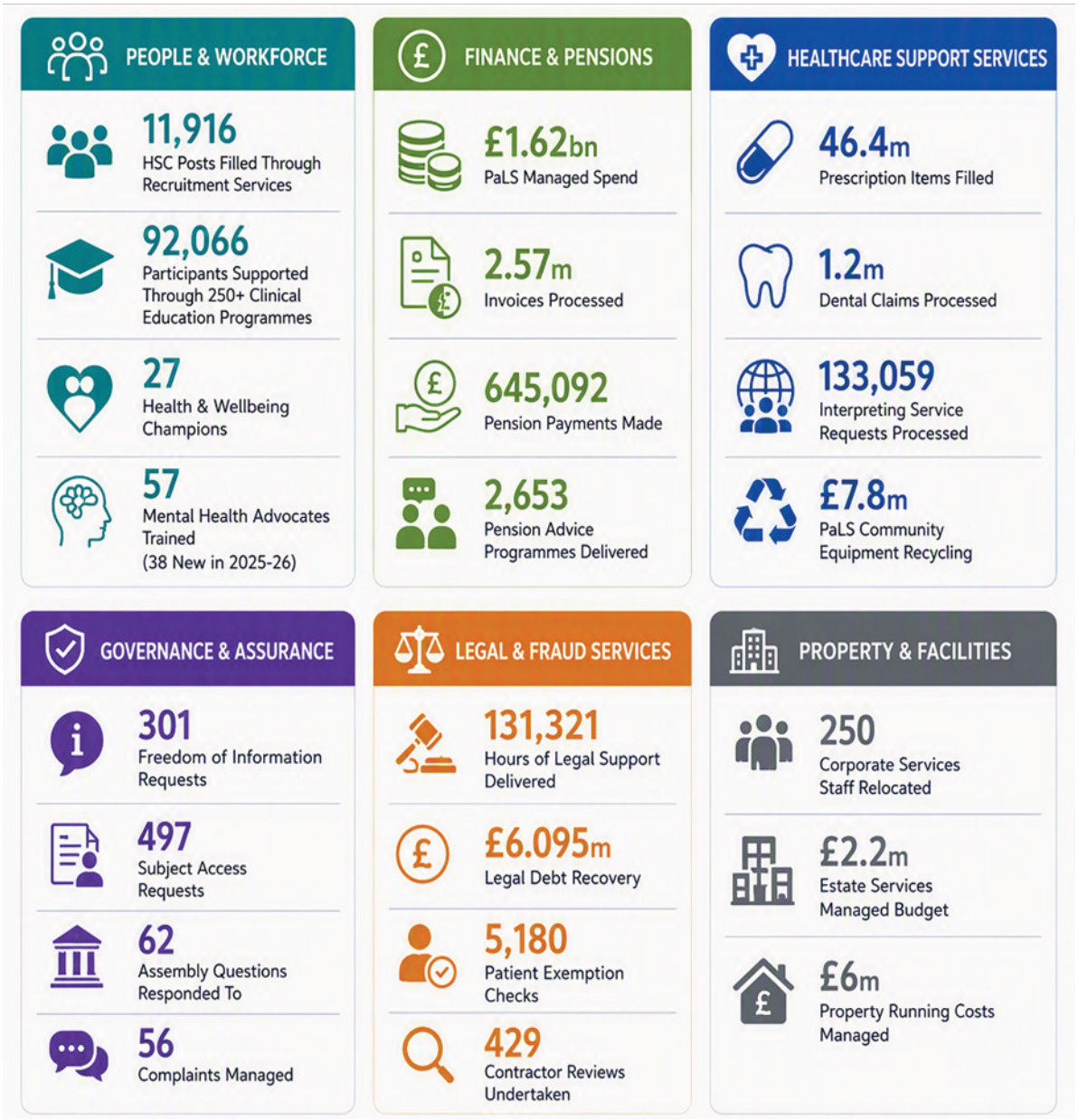
BSO will invest in its workforce through the implementation of the People Strategy 2026-2029, alongside workforce and succession planning, and staff development initiatives. Key aims are to include improving staff wellbeing, attendance, retention and engagement, whilst ensuring that the organisation has the skills and capacity required to support future service delivery.

Innovation

BSO will drive innovation and digital transformation by developing an Innovation Hub, preparing services and staff for equip implementation, and advancing our sustainability objectives. This will include workforce readiness, carbon reduction initiatives, and embedding innovative and sustainable ways of working across the organisation.

Key statistics 2025-2026

Below are some of the key statistics from across service delivery within the BSO during 2025-2026.



BSO Key Statistics 2025-26

Theme 1. Transforming the Culture

The Quality 2020 aim: ***We will make achieving high quality the top priority at all levels in Health and Social Care. We will promote and encourage partnerships between staff, patients, clients and carers to support decision making.***

High-quality care is underpinned by a culture that embodies our values of working together, openness and honesty, compassion, and excellence. A transparent, customer-focused approach, supported by effective governance and meaningful engagement with staff and customers, enables us to place quality at the heart of all decisions and services.

This section highlights how BSO is transforming its culture to foster collaboration and work in partnership to deliver high quality services to our customers and service users. Carefully selected case studies will also highlight how BSO have been transforming our culture across the organisation and HSC.

BSO Board

The Executive and Non-Executive Directors of the BSO Board provide strong leadership to the organisation and are responsible for ensuring that its strategic objectives are achieved. The Board sets the strategic direction of BSO and is accountable to the Department of Health (DoH) and the Minister for Health. The BSO Chief Executive is accountable for the effective operation of the organisation and for ensuring that appropriate assurance is provided to the Board. During 2025-26, several new appointments were made to the Board. These individuals bring a diverse range of knowledge and expertise to BSO and are well positioned to support the organisation in identifying opportunities for improvement and driving continued progress.

The BSO Board and its Committees maintain a focus on quality by reviewing performance information, including key quality indicators, on a regular basis.

This information is presented through: *(see next page)*

- Governance and Audit Committee (GAC)
- Business and Development Committee (BaDC)
- Quarterly Report on Performance (Dashboard)
- Monthly Finance Report
- Quarterly Report on Performance against Annual Business Plan
- Quarterly Human Resources and Corporate Services Report
- Annual Service Catalogue
- Annual Report
- Compliance with Audit Reports and Controls Assurance Standards
- Quality Awards and Accreditations updates
- Service Development Proposals Bi-Annual Report
- SLA Annual Performance Report

Across BSO, Directorates have continued to embed a culture of collaboration, innovation, customer focus and continuous improvement, supporting the delivery of high-quality services and strengthening partnerships across Health and Social Care.

Digital Directorate

Core Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)

The successful roll-out of Core LIMS across five HSC Trusts helped transform the delivery of pathology services by bringing organisations together around a shared regional solution. The programme promoted greater collaboration, reduced variation in ways of working and embedded a more standardised approach to managing and sharing pathology information.

This strengthened cross-organisational relationships and demonstrated the benefits of collectively delivering regional transformation programmes.

Office for Research Ethics Committees (NI)

The team increased stakeholder engagement through monthly researcher satisfaction surveys, feedback from HSC REC members and focus groups with REC Chairing teams, resulting in stronger more collaborative relationships.

Information Technology Services (ITS)

The Business Performance Team established the first regional Digital Customer Forum with DHCNI, giving supported organisations a structured opportunity to ask questions, share experience and influence service improvements. The introduction of the Digital Customer Forum strengthened relationships between BSO and customer organisations by creating a regular mechanism for feedback and engagement.

This has improved transparency and supported a partnership approach to service delivery, ensuring digital services were developed in line with customer needs and priorities.

A 16-week Microsoft Copilot trial was implemented by the Digital Vision team, strengthening the use of AI tools across BSO and HSCNI partners. This involved 1,000 licences, training, approximately 20 priority use cases and formal value measurement. The trial helped build confidence in the use of Artificial Intelligence across HSC organisations, creating opportunities to reduce administrative burden, improve productivity and support staff to spend more time on value-added activities.

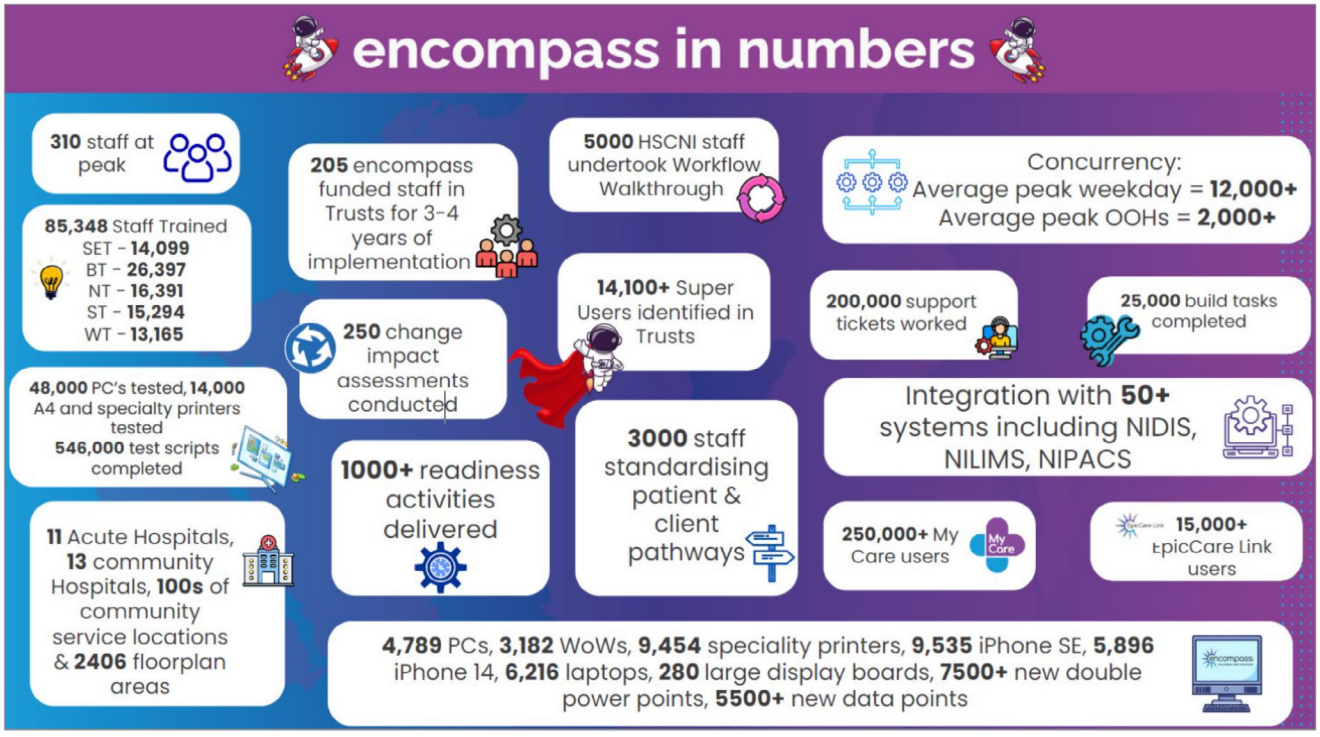
The structured evaluation of priority use cases provided evidence to inform future adoption of AI technologies across the health service.

encompass programme

The successful implementation of the DHCNI commissioned regional encompass programme across HSC Trusts has transformed how health and social care professionals access, share and use information.

This has positioned Northern Ireland at the forefront of digital health delivery. By providing a single, lifelong electronic care record, the programme supports standardised patient pathways across secondary care, community services, mental health and social care, enabling a more integrated, collaborative and "Once for Northern Ireland" approach to care. The encompass programme is currently governed through a Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) and Programme Board and is expected to transition to business as usual arrangements during 2027.

The adoption of My Care by over 250,000 citizens has further supported this cultural shift by improving patient access to health information and services, supporting greater involvement in personal healthcare decisions. The portal has strengthened patient empowerment and provided a more person-centred approach to care delivery.



encompass in numbers

Finance Directorate

Accounts Receivable (Shared Services)

The Accounts Receivable team established a new governance and reporting framework through the Regional Income Group, with the inaugural meeting held in February 2026. Three dedicated subgroups were also created to focus on private patient income, write-offs, and debt enforcement. This strengthened collaboration between Shared Services and key stakeholders, enhanced oversight and decision-making, and contributed to improved service delivery outcomes, including a 38% increase in payment uptake.

Payroll

The team continued engagement with internal teams through regular communication updates and team meetings, fostering a culture of openness and collaboration. This ensured staff remained informed, engaged and aligned with service priorities and organisational objectives, supporting consistent service delivery and continuous improvement.



What Payroll Did → Invested in CIPP Quick Learn for all Payroll employees



Why it was needed → To support their continuous professional development, learning and compliance



Outcome and Impact → This resulted in increased staff capability, knowledge and confidence in payroll legislation and best practice. Impact was measured through customer feedback and service improvement measures

Operations Directorate

Family Practitioner Services (FPS)

General Medical Services (GMS), through its involvement in the Refugee Resettlement Group, worked in partnership with colleagues across BSO FPS, SPPG and the DoH to expedite patient registrations and improve access to primary care services for refugees and resettled individuals. This helped embed a culture of partnership working and shared responsibility across HSC.



CEC staff attending the Florence Nightingale Commemoration Service

Procurement and Logistics Services (PaLS)

Implemented PA23, NIPPPS and Cabinet Office terms, strengthening procurement governance, transparency, and compliance across approximately £1.4 billion of managed expenditure. The introduction of new digital procurement portals improved access to procurement information, enhanced customer engagement across HSCNI, and increased stakeholder confidence. This has supported a more transparent and customer-focused culture across procurement services.

Clinical Education Centre (CEC)

A key milestone was achieved with the refresh of the Vision and Purpose, creating a shared sense of purpose that recognises the evolving reach and impact of education provision.

CEC continued

Launched new and updated education programmes, which increased workforce capabilities in key priority areas including immunisations, dementia care, neurovascular observations and ethical decision making. This in turn supported safer, more consistent patient care through access to current, evidence-based learning resources across the region.

Leadership Centre (LC)

Developed a new Leadership Centre strategy, aligned to the BSO Corporate Strategy and co-designed with system partners, reinforcing a culture of collaboration and shared ownership in shaping future leadership development.

Enhanced collaboration with the HSE through agreed exchange places on leadership programmes and the delivery of bespoke consultancy, strengthening cross-border partnerships and supporting shared learning.

Case Study

Developing Procurement Talent Through the Rising Star Awards 2025

Service Area: BSO Procurement and Logistics Service (PaLS)

Public procurement faces ongoing challenges in attracting, developing, and retaining skilled professionals. Capability reviews, the NI Procurement Capacity and Capability Strategy, and the Public Procurement Skills Audit highlighted the need to strengthen workforce capability and support future procurement leaders. A Procurement Conference was held in October 2025 at Queens University.

Aims and Objectives

At the Conference BSO PaLS sought to:

- Promote professional development and best practice.
- Support talent attraction and retention.
- Recognise staff achievements.
- Strengthen collaboration across the public sector.

Implementation

At the Northern Ireland Procurement Conference 2025, PaLS:

- Assistant Director Linda O'Hare presented the NI Procurement Capacity and Capability Strategy.
- Contributed to discussions on skills, talent, and retention.
- Engaged with around 250 procurement professionals.
- Shared learning on procurement reform and best practice.

The conference concluded with the Rising Star Awards, celebrating excellence within the profession.

Outcomes and Impact

The event raised awareness of procurement capability initiatives, strengthened professional networks, and showcased BSO talent.

BSO PaLS received significant recognition:

- **Patricia Donnelly** – Rising Star Award Winner.
- **Denise Cunningham** – Highly Commended.
- **Sinead Curry** – Highly Commended.

The conference successfully promoted professional excellence, knowledge sharing, and collaboration, while highlighting the contribution of BSO PaLS staff.

Key lessons learned

Building on the success of the Rising Star Awards, BSO PaLS will continue to develop future procurement leaders, recognise achievement, and promote best practice across the public sector. Recognition helps attract and retain talent. Collaboration strengthens workforce capability. Leadership engagement is essential for professional development.

Sustainability and Future Plans

BSO PaLS will continue to invest in staff development, networking, and leadership opportunities, supporting delivery of the Procurement Capacity and Capability Strategy.

People & Place Directorate

Human Resources

As part of its commitment to diversity and inclusion, BSO supported SistersIN throughout 2025 - 2026. SistersIN is a Northern Ireland-based charity that empowers sixth-form girls through an 8-month leadership development programme, combining mentorship, project experience, and career exploration.

In February 2026, BSO mentors hosted a virtual Shadow Day, enabling mentees to engage with senior leaders, explore roles, and gain insight into public service careers. This initiative promotes gender representation, aspiration, and inclusion by helping young women build confidence and access leadership opportunities.



BSO attend SistersIN celebratory event in the ICC Belfast March 2026

BSO expanded its Health and Wellbeing programme through three Health and Wellbeing Weeks aligned to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, delivering webinars, wellbeing challenges, 224 Health Checks and two six-week Menopause Cognitive Behavioural Therapy programmes.

This supported staff wellbeing and contributed to a positive, supportive and inclusive workplace culture.

BSO Social Committee

The BSO Social Committee continued to coordinate a range of health and wellbeing initiatives for staff, including yoga classes, book clubs, a walking club, and a monthly parkrun, all designed to promote employee wellbeing and encourage a healthy work-life balance.

Equality Unit

The Equality Unit worked in partnership with BSO HR and 10 HSCNI customer organisations to develop a Framework for Work Placements for People with Disabilities, supported by innovative collaboration with voluntary sector partners.

This framework has increased opportunities for people with disabilities to gain valuable workplace experience, supported greater inclusivity and accessibility across the workforce, and strengthened organisational commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

As a result, participating organisations are better equipped to attract and support diverse talent, promote a socially inclusive culture, and create more inclusive employment pathways across the HSC.

Strategic Planning and Customer Engagement Directorate

Chief Executives Office

Strengthened Governance arrangements supporting the Board and Executive Leadership Team (ELT) through enhanced agenda planning, paper quality assurance, action tracking and decision monitoring. Internal workflows were reviewed and streamlined, improving transparency, accountability and communication between ELT, Directorates and Corporate Planning & Performance.

These improvements supported more effective decision-making, strengthened organisational oversight and ensured key actions were monitored and progressed in a timely manner.

Communications & Engagement

Business Matters continues to grow and evolve, providing over 2,000 staff with a regular insight into what is happening across the organisation. With more than 50 pages of engaging content, each edition highlights quality improvements, innovation, and best practice across service areas.

It also strengthens partnerships and collaboration throughout the organisation. As an important communication tool, Business Matters celebrates staff awards and achievements while showcasing examples of excellence and innovation in practice.

Risk & Governance

The team provided ongoing support to risk owners and managers, strengthening governance capability across BSO and promoting a culture of accountability, risk awareness and continuous improvement.



Sustainability

The Sustainability Working Group led the development and launch of the Sustainability Strategy 2025-2030 at BSO's annual leadership conference in November 2025, helping to embed sustainability within everyday working practices and fostering environmentally responsible behaviours across BSO.

BSO actively participated in regional and cross-sector networks during March 2026, including Public Body Climate Action Network (PBCAN) workshops, DfE's Energy Managers' Forum and with DFI's Transport Decarbonisation Unit. This further strengthened collaborative working with key stakeholders across Northern Ireland and beyond.

Furthermore, the appointment of a Board Sustainability Champion strengthened leadership accountability and supported the integration of sustainability into organisational culture, decision-making and service delivery.

Theme 2. Strengthening the Workforce

The Quality 2020 aim: **We will provide the right education, training and support to deliver high quality service. We will develop leadership skills at all levels and empower staff to take decisions and make changes.**

Delivering high-quality services relies on a capable, confident, and empowered workforce. Through investment in high-quality training and leadership development, we are strengthening skills and capabilities while fostering a culture where staff feel empowered to strive for excellence in their roles. This approach helps ensure our workforce is equipped to meet future challenges and remains united in a shared commitment to excellence, compassion, and improved outcomes for those we serve.

This section outlines BSO's approach to developing and strengthening the workforce through targeted education, training, and leadership development initiatives that support and empower staff. It also includes case studies that demonstrate the practical steps being taken to build workforce capability and capacity.



Digital Directorate

OREC (NI)

OREC (NI) facilitated 9 training modules for HSC REC members ensuring they have the appropriate skills to review different types of research, alongside 5 training workshops to 214 researchers in both the HSC and academia fields.

ITS

The Business Case Unit ran awareness sessions that improved staff capability, with 98% of respondents reporting greater confidence and an average usefulness score of 4.83 out of 5.

ITS' increased use of recruitment waiting lists meant that 73% of ITS appointments were filled from existing lists during 2025-2026. This reduced recruitment timescales, management effort and supported business delivery.

The continued investment in placements and apprenticeships strengthened the future workforce pipeline and supported succession planning. The progression of eight former placement students into Band 5 roles demonstrated the programme's success in attracting, developing and retaining talent within HSCNI.

encompass programme

Ongoing training and engagement activity equipped staff with the knowledge and confidence required to support a regional digital platform. Continued engagement sessions also empowered frontline staff to identify improvement opportunities and influence future system enhancements.









ITS Programme Milestones

Finance Directorate

Finance

The Finance Directorate continued to invest in their staff and their development with professional qualifications and leadership development alongside wellbeing initiatives. This strengthened capability and technical expertise, improves workforce resilience and supports succession planning.

Payroll

Senior and Middle Managers availed of a bespoke Payroll legislative changes course to ensure updated knowledge of changes that occur year on year to fully understand and implement across Payroll. This resulted in the successful implementation of the legislative changes.

Accounts Receivable (Shared Services)

A health and wellbeing day was held for staff in January 2026, alongside a series of wellbeing events. This focused on improving staff relations and health and wellbeing. Absence at work across the team was reduced to under 5%.

The team introduced the ACT Accredited Technician Programme to build on the Centre of Excellence, to continue to promote staff development and service quality, and align with recognised standards of excellence.

Following retention of CICM accreditation achieved in 2024, the service invested in professional qualifications, leadership development, wellbeing initiatives and recruitment activity to further strengthen capability and support succession planning.

Internal Audit

Leadership capacity was strengthened through the restructuring of the Senior Management Team, creating greater resilience and supporting succession planning within the service.

Operations Directorate

FPS

FPS improved access to effective communication support across Health and Social Care services by delivering “Working Well with Interpreters” and “How to Book Online” training to HSC staff and practitioners across the five HSC Trusts, the Approved Social Work Programme, GPNI and the Western GP Federation. This increased staff confidence and competence in accessing and working with interpreting services, leading to more equitable access to care for individuals with language support needs.

CEC

The Sustain and Revive programme was launched, delivering an evidence based relational care workshop to support staff to reflect on their own core values and relationships with colleagues and service users.

The CEC delivered in excess of 240 post-registration education programmes for Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Professionals, issuing 92,000 certificates during 2025 - 2026. These enabled thousands of healthcare professionals to maintain and develop skills required for safe, effective and person-centred care.

Counter-fraud and Probity Service

The team delivered regional training across all HSC organisations to improve staff understanding of their managerial responsibilities across our customer organisations.

Leadership Centre

The Leadership Centre improved leadership and team effectiveness across the HSC through the introduction of TeamStride, a research-based model developed with Johns Hopkins University that equips teams to work more collaboratively and perform more effectively.

Alongside this, 1,407 participants completed management and leadership programmes, strengthening leadership capability and creating a wider pipeline of skilled managers to drive continuous improvement across HSC services.



PaLS

PaLS strengthened procurement capability and compliance across the organisation through continued investment in staff development and procurement training, supporting the effective implementation of PA23 and NIPPPs. This enhanced professional expertise was recognised nationally through success at the UK National GO Awards, HCSA Awards and NI Procurement Conference Awards, demonstrating excellence and leadership in public procurement practice.

Case Study

Using Educational Escape Rooms to Enhance Clinical Learning

Service Area: Clinical Education Centre (CEC), Business Services Organisation (BSO)

Traditional teaching approaches can sometimes find it challenging to fully engage learners or recreate the fast-paced teamwork, communication, and decision-making required in clinical practice. In response to learner feedback and a growing interest in innovative educational methods, the Clinical Education Centre (CEC) explored the use of educational escape rooms as a new way of developing clinical knowledge, collaboration, and patient safety skills.

Aims and Objectives

To provide a more engaging and realistic learning experience, Wai-Fun Wong, Nurse Education Consultant, developed and piloted an educational escape room in 2025. The initiative aimed to:

- Increase learner engagement and participation.
- Enhance communication and teamwork skills.
- Strengthen clinical decision-making and problem-solving.
- Support the early recognition and management of deteriorating patients.

The overall goal was to create an interactive learning environment where participants could apply their knowledge in a practical, scenario-based setting that reflects real-world clinical situations.

Implementation

A clinical escape room was designed around realistic patient scenarios, requiring learners to work together to solve challenges, interpret clinical information, and make decisions within a structured and time-sensitive environment.

As with any new approach, introducing an unfamiliar teaching method presented challenges. Ensuring the activity remained focused on learning outcomes while maintaining participant engagement was a key consideration. These challenges were addressed through careful planning, pilot testing, and collaboration with colleagues across the CEC, helping to refine the experience and maximise its educational value.

Outcomes and Impact

The pilot successfully delivered a highly interactive and engaging learning experience, with participants reporting a range of benefits, including:

- Improved teamwork and communication.
- Enhanced problem-solving and clinical decision-making skills.
- Increased learner engagement and participation.
- A positive, enjoyable, and memorable learning experience.

The project successfully achieved its objectives and gained wider recognition through its presentation at the International NET Conference, highlighting the innovative work taking place within the CEC.

Sustainability and Future Plans

Building on the success of the pilot, the CEC is exploring opportunities to expand the use of educational escape rooms and other gamification techniques across its programmes.

By incorporating innovative learning methods into future educational activities, the Centre aims to continue enhancing learner engagement, knowledge retention, and the development of practical clinical skills that ultimately contribute to improved patient care.

Key Lessons Learned

The project highlighted several important lessons:

- Gamification can significantly enhance learner engagement and participation.
- Interactive learning environments strengthen teamwork, communication, and collaboration.
- Educational innovation is most effective when clearly aligned to defined learning outcomes.
- Piloting new approaches enables valuable feedback to be gathered and improvements to be made before wider implementation.

People & Place Directorate

Corporate Services

The Estate Team continued to optimise the use of the BSO estate, supporting new ways of working while ensuring facilities remained safe, compliant, and fit for purpose. Refurbishment works at BSO Headquarters, Franklin Street, delivered significantly enhanced staff accommodation, modernised workstations, and increased access to contemporary meeting facilities, improving the employee experience and better enabling hybrid, flexible, and collaborative working.

In addition, the successful closure of Pinewood Villa and relocation of staff to the redeveloped Rosewood Villa maximised estate efficiency, provided a modern working environment, and ensured the continued delivery of high-quality services with minimal disruption.

HR

Mental Health Advocates Training and Refresher training took place which expanded and strengthened the network of staff trained in Mental Health First Aid to support psychological wellbeing at work.

The BSO HR team also led on a varied programme of Organisational Development initiatives and events, to include the biannual BSO Leadership Conference. The conference theme was “RESET”, which focused on the stabilisation, reform and delivery of high quality services across HSC both now and into the future. An address from the Health Minister highlighted the unique position BSO holds within the HSC as a transformation leader.



BSO Leadership Conference November 2025

Staff Training and Development

Ensuring our staff are equipped with the relevant knowledge to complete their roles, is of utmost importance within the BSO. Below are the Annual BSO Mandatory Training Compliance Statistics during 2025-2026, broken down by Directorate.

Training (% of staff)	Cyber Security	Display Screen Equipment (DSE)	Equality	Fire Safety	Fraud Awareness	Health & Safety Awareness	Information Governance	Manual Handling Awareness	Risk Management Awareness
Total Compliance	93.26%	92.03%	85.71%	81.52%	85.39%	84.52%	89.99%	85.07%	95.13%

BSO Mandatory Training Statistics

HR expanded the Training and Development programme by delivering 75 bespoke sessions across 12 different learning opportunities delivered with over 1,400 attendees from BSO and ALBs with an average training feedback score of 4.6/5. They also supported a cohort of staff to attend Leadership Development programmes to include Aspire, Proteus and Aspiring Directors.

Staff Achievements

The achievements of individuals and teams throughout 2025-26 demonstrates the expertise, commitment and innovation of the BSO workforce, while supporting organisational priorities and continuous improvement across BSO and the wider Health and Social Care system.

Examples include:

BSO ITS HR team, alongside the BSO Communications & Engagement Team, were finalists in the Northern Ireland Social Media Awards 2025 for a social media campaign that has made a significant difference in recruiting IT professionals to the Health Service.



BSO colleagues were recognised at the Women in Business Awards. Mellissa Cochrane, Head of Programme Delivery in ITS, won the Transformational Leader.



BSO colleagues were recognised at the Women in Business Awards. Claire Hamilton, Head of Interpreting Services, won the Advancing Diversity and Inclusion Champion Award.



Strategic Planning and Customer Engagement Directorate

Communications & Engagement

The Communications and Engagement team continued to showcase staff achievements, wellbeing initiatives, and organisational updates through a range of internal communications channels. This strengthened staff engagement and organisational awareness, increased understanding of key priorities and developments, promoted a culture of recognition and wellbeing, and helped foster a more informed, connected, and engaged workforce across BSO.

The Communications and Engagement team continued to design and enhance digital recruitment marketing campaigns, generating more than 1,500 applications for vacancies across all BSO Directorates. This increased the reach and visibility of recruitment campaigns, expanded access to a wider and more diverse talent pool, and supported the timely attraction and recruitment of skilled candidates.

Governance & Risk

During 2025-2026, tailored risk management training was delivered across the organisation, including targeted sessions for senior management teams within service areas. This enhanced risk awareness and management capability at all levels, strengthened the identification and mitigation of risks, improved decision-making and governance, and supported a more proactive approach to maintaining organisational resilience and service continuity.

Complaints and Raising a Concern

The team continued to strengthen BSO's speaking-up culture through the Raising a Concern Champion and Advocate Network, empowering staff to raise concerns with confidence and supporting a culture of openness, accountability and continuous improvement. This enhanced staff engagement, organisational learning and workforce wellbeing.

Corporate Planning & Performance

Throughout 2025-26, the Corporate Planning & Performance team enhanced workforce capability through workshops and drop-in sessions on business planning and Service Level Agreements. These sessions improved understanding of planning processes, clarified roles and responsibilities, and supported stronger alignment across BSO.

Chief Executives Office

Staff within the office were supported to achieve a number of qualifications including Scottish Improvement Leadership, PRINCE2 and CMI Award in Leadership and Management as well as Copilot training to support ongoing improvement and innovation work.

Theme 3. Measuring the Improvement

The Quality 2020 aim: **We will improve outcome measurement and report on progress for safety effectiveness and the patient/client experience. We will promote the use of accredited improvement techniques and ensure that there is sufficient capacity and capability with the HSC to use them effectively.**

Improvement is only meaningful when it results in better outcomes for those who use our services. We are committed to ensuring that progress is not only monitored, but also understood, shared, and used to drive positive change.

While collecting data is important, its real value comes from the insights it provides and how those insights are used to inform learning and improvement. Sharing and acting on data helps us identify opportunities for change and enhance service delivery. External accreditations, licensing requirements, and the achievement of recognised standards also play a vital role in assuring and demonstrating quality, reinforcing our commitment to excellence and continuous improvement.

This section explores how, through collaboration and the application of recognised standards, underpinned by compassion and excellence, BSO works to ensure that every customer organisation receives a high standard of service delivery. It also highlights case studies that demonstrate the approaches being used to measure, evaluate, and sustain improvements.

Digital Directorate

encompass programme

The full regional rollout of encompass across all HSC Trusts has delivered a major milestone in digital healthcare, establishing a single electronic care record for every citizen. This has strengthened information sharing across health and social care settings, improved continuity and quality of care, supported standardised clinical processes, and enabled healthcare professionals to access timely and accurate patient information. As a result, the programme has enhanced patient safety, increased service efficiency, and created a strong foundation for future digital innovation across the HSC.

The continued expansion of My Care functionality, including self-scheduling and digital correspondence, has transformed the way service users interact with healthcare services. By enabling more convenient and accessible digital engagement, the programme has improved the patient experience, reduced administrative burden, supported more efficient appointment management, and enhanced service productivity while helping to reduce missed appointments and optimise the use of healthcare resources.

Digital Vision Team

During 2025-2026, the Digital Vision Team supported a range of digital transformation initiatives across BSO, working with service areas to identify opportunities for process improvement, enhance customer experience and modernise service delivery. This included the implementation of digital solutions such as customer relationship management systems, automation tools, dashboards and workflow applications, alongside support for business change and the adoption of new technologies. The team also promoted the use of data and digital innovation to improve reporting, strengthen decision-making and deliver more efficient, user-focused services.

These initiatives reduced reliance on manual processes, improved access to timely management information, enhanced customer engagement and service efficiency, and supported more consistent, data-driven decision-making across the organisation. This has helped ensure digital investments deliver measurable benefits, improve user experience and contribute to continuous service improvement.

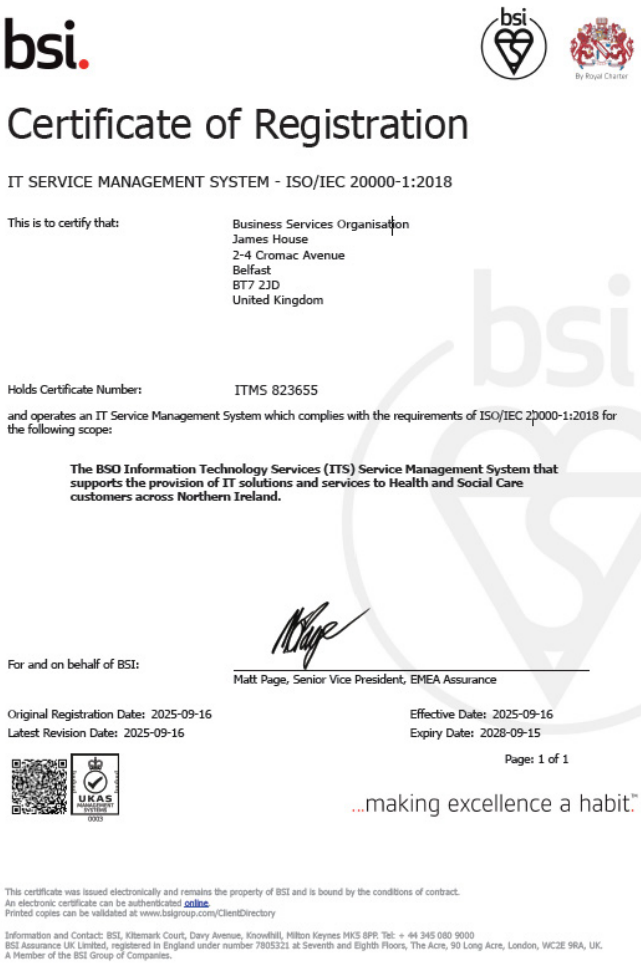
OREC (NI)

Both HSC Research and Ethics Committees received full accreditation. This provides external assurance that research ethics reviews continue to meet national standards, supporting public trust in research governance arrangements and ensuring participants' rights and wellbeing remain protected.

ITS

Robust change management arrangements ensured that service improvements were implemented safely and effectively. Of the 538 changes completed to closure during 2025/26, 534 were successful, resulting in a 99.26% success rate. This ensured staff and service users had dependable access to essential systems, supported business continuity, increased user confidence in digital services, and enabled the effective delivery of health and social care services across the organisation.

ITS also maintained BSO's ISO 20000 and ISO 9001 Certifications.



bsi.

Certificate of Registration

IT SERVICE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM - ISO/IEC 20000-1:2018

This is to certify that: Business Services Organisation
James House
2-4 Cromac Avenue
Belfast
BT7 2JD
United Kingdom

Holds Certificate Number: ITMS 823655

and operates an IT Service Management System which complies with the requirements of ISO/IEC 20000-1:2018 for the following scope:

The BSO Information Technology Services (ITS) Service Management System that supports the provision of IT solutions and services to Health and Social Care customers across Northern Ireland.

For and on behalf of BSI:
Matt Page, Senior Vice President, EMEA Assurance

Original Registration Date: 2025-09-16
Latest Revision Date: 2025-09-16
Effective Date: 2025-09-16
Expiry Date: 2028-09-15

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Certificate of Registration

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM - ISO 9001:2015

This is to certify that: Business Services Organisation
James House
2-4 Cromac Avenue
Belfast
BT7 2JD
United Kingdom

Holds Certificate Number: FS 824692

and operates a Quality Management System which complies with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 for the following scope:

Programmes and Projects within the Business Service Organisation process with a High or Medium risk against the Risk Profile Assessment.

For and on behalf of BSI:
Matt Page, Senior Vice President, EMEA Assurance

Original Registration Date: 2025-09-04
Latest Revision Date: 2025-09-04
Effective Date: 2025-09-04
Expiry Date: 2028-09-03

Page: 1 of 1

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Case Study

Delivering Social Value Through Digital Skills Development

Service Area: BSO - Northern Ireland Pathology Information Management System (NIPIMS) Blood Production and Tracking (BPaT) Programme

The Blood Production and Tracking (BPaT) Programme is delivering a regional electronic blood management solution across Northern Ireland. While the programme's primary focus is improving the safety, efficiency, and traceability of blood management processes, it is also committed to creating wider benefits for local communities through the delivery of Social Value initiatives.

Social Value is a key element of public procurement in Northern Ireland, ensuring that public investment generates positive outcomes beyond the direct delivery of services. Through the BPaT contract, BSO and its supplier, MAK-SYSTEM, identified an opportunity to support women who may face barriers to developing digital skills and accessing careers in technology.

Aims and Objectives

The Digital Skills Development Programme was designed to:

- Improve digital literacy and practical IT skills.
- Build confidence in using technology.
- Support employability and career development.
- Increase access to training and learning opportunities for women across Northern Ireland.

Participants receive practical, hands-on training, helping them develop skills that can be applied in both everyday life and future employment opportunities.

Implementation

Led by Ashleigh Carson, BPaT Senior Project Manager, the initiative was developed in partnership with MAK-SYSTEM and Women's TEC, a leading organisation supporting women through training and skills development.

Together, the partners launched a Digital Skills Development Programme aimed at equipping women with the knowledge, confidence, and practical experience needed to navigate an increasingly digital world and explore opportunities within the technology sector.

Outcomes and Impact

The programme is expected to deliver a range of benefits for individuals, communities, and the wider BPaT Programme, including:

- Increased digital confidence and enhanced employability.
- Greater digital inclusion and participation in technology-related careers.
- Long-term social and economic benefits for local communities.
- Stronger collaboration between public, private, and voluntary sector organisations.

Finance

Finance worked closely with budget holders, Directors and the Department of Health to monitor financial performance, identify emerging pressures and implement mitigating actions throughout the year. This ensured BSO remained within its allocated resources during a period of significant financial challenge across the HSC. This facilitated effective financial management which supported the delivery of services within available resources while maintaining financial stability and compliance with statutory requirements. This further informed decision-making and strengthened financial stewardship across the organisation, helping the organisation achieve break-even status at year end.

Business Services Team (BST)

The Business Services Team (BST) successfully delivered the annual financial year-end roll forward, ensuring a smooth transition with minimal disruption to business operations. Additional system controls and process improvements strengthened data quality, reduced the risk of errors, and improved financial reporting. Enhanced collaboration with system providers also increased efficiency and supported better operational and strategic decision-making across the organisation.

Service Spotlight - Finance

What Finance Did

Successfully coordinated and delivered the financial reporting and year end accounts timetable.

Why it was needed

To ensure timely production of statutory accounts and support effective financial governance across the organisation.

Outcome and Impact

Achievement of all key reporting milestones, delivery of draft and financial accounts within agreed deadline.

Successful completion of audit processes and stakeholder feedback.

Delivered a controlled and efficient year end process, ensuring high-quality financial information was available to support audit, reporting and decision-making requirements.

Strong project management and stakeholder engagement reduced the risk of delays and strengthened confidence in financial arrangements.

Accounts Receivable

Accounts Receivable successfully implemented the organisation's first system-based Direct Debit process, transforming the efficiency and reliability of income collection. The new automated approach reduced manual administration, improved payment collection rates and timeliness, strengthened financial controls, and enhanced the customer experience through a more convenient payment option. These improvements supported more predictable cash flow, reduced operational risks, and contributed to more effective income management across the organisation.

Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable

During 2025-2026, the Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable teams achieved accreditation as a Centre of Excellence following the successful completion of the Q Programme. This recognition demonstrated the team's commitment to continuous improvement, service excellence, and best practice.

This has strengthened the team's capability, service quality and consistency, and reinforced confidence in the team's effectiveness and professionalism.

Internal Audit

Internal Audit successfully maintained ISO 9001:2015 accreditation, demonstrating a continued commitment to high-quality documentation, robust quality management practices, and a culture of continuous improvement. This independent accreditation has strengthened confidence in the quality and reliability of audit services, enhanced governance and accountability, supported effective risk management, and ensured that audit activities continue to deliver meaningful assurance and value across the organisation.

Operations Directorate

Legal Services (DLS)

During 2025-2026, Legal Services enhanced reserves management processes through the introduction of improved procedures, the delivery of regional training, and the development of an internal high-value claims tracker. These initiatives improved the accuracy and consistency of claims forecasting, strengthened financial oversight and governance, and provided greater visibility of future liabilities.

As a result, the organisation is better equipped to plan for and manage high-value claims, supporting more informed decision-making, improved financial resilience, and effective resource allocation across future financial years.

Counter Fraud and Probity Services (CFPS)

During 2025-2026, CFPS developed and implemented a new Probity Case Management System to enhance the recording, tracking, and management of probity cases. The new system improved case visibility and oversight, strengthened governance and audit trails, enabled more efficient case handling, and provided better management information to support decision-making. As a result, the service has improved accountability, reduced administrative burden, and enhanced its ability to identify, monitor, and resolve probity issues in a timely and effective manner.

Counter Fraud and Probity Services (CFPS) enhanced reporting mechanisms for the Healthy Start and Day Care Foods schemes, providing more timely, accurate, and insightful management information. This strengthened oversight and governance, improved the identification and monitoring of risks and trends, supported evidence-based decision-making, and enabled more effective management of scheme performance, helping to ensure resources were used appropriately and benefits were delivered to those eligible to receive them.

FPS

FPS developed new digital dashboards and enhanced reporting capabilities to support a range of pharmaceutical projects and service improvements. These developments increased access to timely, accurate, and actionable data, enabling better performance monitoring, informed decision-making, and more effective management of pharmaceutical services.

As a result, FPS made significant progress in the digitalisation of its services, improved operational data quality, reduced reliance on manual reporting processes, and strengthened the ability to deliver efficient, data-driven services across the organisation.

FPS developed and implemented a new pharmacy information data solution using Python, which has been successfully adopted by 40 pharmacy and prescribing advisors across HSCNI. The solution provides enhanced access to high-quality pharmacy data and insights, supporting more effective monitoring of prescribing activity, strengthening governance and assurance processes, and enabling earlier identification of potential patient safety issues. This has improved data-driven decision-making, enhanced patient safety outcomes, and provided valuable intelligence to inform strategic planning and service improvement across HSCNI.

Family Practitioner Services (FPS) continued the rollout of best practice Reproducible Analytical Pipeline (RAP) methodologies across its Official Statistics publications. This has improved the quality, consistency, and reliability of statistical outputs, reduced manual processing and the risk of error, and enhanced the efficiency and transparency of data production. As a result, stakeholders benefit from more robust, timely, and accessible information to support evidence-based decision-making, service planning, and performance monitoring across Health and Social Care.

People & Place Directorate

Corporate Services

BSO actively participated in Exercise Pegasus, a Tier 1 national multi-agency resilience exercise, enhancing organisational preparedness and strengthening emergency response capabilities across key service areas. Participation improved situational awareness, tested and validated communication and escalation pathways, and strengthened coordination with regional and national partners.

As a result, BSO increased its resilience to major incidents, improved business continuity arrangements, and enhanced its ability to maintain critical services during periods of disruption or emergency.

Equality

The Equality Unit developed a new methodology for undertaking Five Year Reviews, maximising opportunities for shared learning and improving efficiency across BSO and customer organisations.

This revised approach strengthened the evaluation of equality outcomes and supported more effective identification and dissemination of learning.

HR

During 2025-2026, HR introduced Power BI to enhance workforce reporting and analytics capabilities across the organisation. This provided managers and leaders with more timely, accurate, and accessible workforce data, improving insight into key workforce trends and performance indicators.

As a result, the organisation strengthened evidence-based decision-making, improved workforce planning and resource management, increased reporting efficiency through reduced manual processes, and enhanced its ability to monitor and respond to workforce challenges and opportunities.

Recruitment Shared Services (RSSC)

During 2025-2026, RSSC successfully managed 424 Freedom of Information (FOI) and Subject Access Requests (SARs) and processed over 10,000 Access NI applications. This ensured compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements, supported transparency and accountability, and enabled the timely provision of information to individuals and stakeholders.

The efficient processing of Access NI applications also supported safe recruitment practices across the HSC, helping organisations fill vacancies promptly while maintaining appropriate safeguarding and governance standards.

Strategic Planning and Customer Engagement Directorate

Governance & Risk

During 2025-2026, an Integrated Governance and Assurance Framework was introduced and implemented, providing a more coherent and structured approach to governance, risk management, and assurance across the organisation.

This strengthened oversight and accountability, improved the alignment of risk, performance, and assurance activities, and supported more informed decision-making at all levels. As a result, BSO enhanced its ability to identify and manage risks proactively, demonstrate compliance and assurance, and support the effective delivery of organisational objectives.

Communications & Engagement

Communications & Engagement continued to utilise digital engagement metrics throughout 2025-2026 to measure performance and inform continuous improvement. The insights gained enabled the team to refine communication strategies, increase audience engagement, and better target content to stakeholder needs.

This resulted in more effective communication campaigns, improved organisational awareness, and stronger engagement with staff, customers, and partners across BSO.

The team achieved a 378% increase in Google Search clicks, significantly enhancing the visibility, reach, and accessibility of BSO's online information and services. This increase enabled more users to find and access relevant information quickly, improved engagement with key stakeholder groups, strengthened BSO's digital presence, and supported more effective communication of organisational services, initiatives, and priorities.

As a result, customers and stakeholders benefited from improved access to information and a more effective digital user experience.



Complaints and Raising a Concern

During 2025-2026, 18 BSO staff were trained as Raising a Concern (Whistleblowing) Advocates, significantly strengthening the support network available to employees wishing to raise concerns in the public interest. This enhanced access to independent advice and guidance, fostering a culture of openness, trust, and accountability across the organisation.

In addition, the service achieved a 60% response rate within 20 working days, with performance monitored through established governance and reporting arrangements. This improved the timeliness and effectiveness of case management, increased organisational responsiveness, and provided greater assurance that concerns raised by staff were being addressed appropriately and transparently, supporting continuous improvement and stronger organisational governance.

Chief Executive's Office

The introduction and increased use of digital meeting administration tools enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of support provided to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Board Members. The improved digital approach strengthened the ability to measure and track outcomes, streamlined meeting management processes, reduced administrative workloads, and improved access to timely and accurate information. As a result, decision-making was better supported, governance processes were enhanced, and leadership teams were able to operate more efficiently and effectively.

Monitoring and reporting arrangements were strengthened across Governance actions, Assembly Questions, Ministerial Correspondence, Freedom of Information requests and Corporate returns.

Improved tracking processes enhanced visibility of performance, supported timely responses and enabled earlier identification of emerging issues. The increased use of performance information supported continuous improvement and informed executive decision-making.

Sustainability

BSO completed and submitted its first Climate Change Risk Assessment and Climate Adaptation Report to DAERA in March 2026. The report identified the most significant climate-related risks affecting BSO services, operations, and infrastructure, providing a comprehensive evidence base to inform future planning and decision-making.

As a result, BSO has strengthened its understanding of climate-related vulnerabilities, enhanced organisational preparedness and resilience, and established a clear foundation for prioritising adaptation measures to protect service delivery, assets, and the long-term sustainability of the organisation.

Corporate Planning & Performance

A Performance Management Framework was developed to provide a consistent, organisation-wide approach to measuring, monitoring, and improving performance. Supported by clear best practice guidance, the framework has strengthened accountability, improved the quality and consistency of performance reporting, and enabled service areas to better demonstrate outcomes and identify opportunities for improvement. As a result, BSO is better positioned to drive continuous improvement, support evidence-based decision-making, and achieve its strategic objectives.

The Corporate Planning & Performance team played a key role in supporting the successful completion of the BSO Strategic Review, providing valuable insights and assurance to inform future organisational priorities and service delivery. The team also enhanced KPI and SLA management arrangements, clarifying roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations across the organisation. As a result, BSO strengthened accountability, improved performance monitoring and reporting, and embedded a more consistent approach to continuous improvement, enabling better-informed decision-making and supporting the achievement of strategic objectives.

Service Spotlight - Chief Executive's Office



What Chief Executive's Office Did

Reduced volumes of printing for both Executive Team and Board by at least 20% without reducing quality of support provided.



Why it was needed

Printing large volumes of paper created waste, governance issues and information risk.



Outcome and Impact

Introduced paperless meeting packs, increased the use of Teams.

Improved staff training, and practical support to encourage digital working.

Exceeded project target, achieving an average 88% reduction in printing, surpassing the original 20% reduction goal.

Established paperless working as the standard approach while maintaining flexibility for accessibility and business continuity requirements.

Improved document control by reducing version-management issues and limiting the circulation of outdated copies.

Demonstrated that sustainable behavioural change is more effectively achieved through staff engagement, practical support and leadership than through procedural reminders alone.

Theme 4.
Raising the Standard

The Quality 2020 aim: ***We will establish a framework of clear evidence-based standards and best practice guidance. We will establish dynamic partnerships between service users, commissioners and providers to develop, monitor and review.***

Delivering high-quality care requires clear, evidence-based standards and strong partnerships with those who use and deliver services. The voice of the service user is at the heart of this work, with lived experience helping to inform policy, shape procedures, and ensure services remain person-centred and responsive. Through active participation in working groups, audits, service frameworks, and consultations on national guidance, stakeholders contribute to raising standards and supporting continuous improvement.

This section demonstrates how BSO promotes quality through collaboration, consistency, and a shared commitment to excellence. It also showcases case studies that illustrate the approaches being taken to enhance standards and drive ongoing improvement.

Digital Directorate

OREC (NI)

The team continued to collaborate closely with the Health Research Authority (HRA) and the Scottish and Welsh Research Ethics Services to support the development and implementation of consistent UK-wide guidance, policies, and practices for research ethics review.

This strengthened alignment and consistency in research ethics processes across the UK, promoting the adoption of shared standards, improving the quality and efficiency of ethics reviews, and ensuring a more coordinated approach to research.

OREC (NI) continued

The team continued to deliver targeted training and capacity-building programmes for staff and Health and Social Care (HSC) Research Ethics Committee members, ensuring readiness for the implementation of new legislative requirements governing clinical trials and associated research governance processes.

Enhanced organisational and committee preparedness for regulatory change, ensured staff and committee members had the knowledge and skills required to meet new clinical trial legislation. This supported ongoing compliance, strengthened governance arrangements, and enabled the continued delivery of high-quality, efficient, and legally compliant ethics review processes.

OREC (NI) maintained full accreditation by consistently demonstrating compliance with approved Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and established Governance Arrangements for Research Ethics Committees, ensuring robust oversight and adherence to regulatory and ethical standards.

Regional Coding

The team established the 5 Nations SNOMED (Systematised Nomenclature of Medicine) Collaboration, a strategic partnership between the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. The collaboration was created to align and coordinate the adoption, development, and implementation of SNOMED CT, the internationally recognised clinical terminology standard, enabling greater consistency, interoperability, and knowledge sharing across participating healthcare systems. This strengthened international collaboration on SNOMED CT, improving consistency in clinical terminology, supporting interoperable health information exchange, and enabling the five nations to share best practice, influence future development of the standard, and drive more efficient digital health initiatives.

Core Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)

In October 2025, the CoreLIMS team won the Healthcare Science for Service Improvement at the Advancing Healthcare Awards Northern Ireland 2025.

encompass programme

Received recognition at the Belfast Telegraph IT Awards 2025, winning IT Project of the Year and Best Public Sector IT Project.

ITS

ITS implemented a Business Case Unit to standardise and centralise business case processes across the organisation, strengthening governance arrangements, increasing transparency, and supporting evidence-based investment decisions. This ensured that projects and initiatives were assessed consistently against strategic priorities, anticipated benefits, risks, and value-for-money criteria.

ITS also introduced a searchable Service Catalogue, establishing a single point of access to information on services, service levels and support arrangements. By improving transparency and consistency, the catalogue helped standardise service provision and enhance the user experience across the organisation.

Business Case Unit awareness sessions were held. This further improved staff capability, with 98% of respondents reporting a greater confidence and an average usefulness score of 4.83 out of 5. This further supported more developed Business Case throughout BSO.



Digital Directorate achieved significant success at the Belfast Telegraph IT Awards

Case Study

Boneview AI - Enhancing Diagnostic Imaging in Emergency Departments

Service Area: Information Technology Services (ITS) NIPACS+

Emergency Departments (EDs) across Northern Ireland face increasing demand, placing pressure on clinicians responsible for reviewing X-rays. Delays in identifying fractures and other injuries can impact patient flow, waiting times, and clinical decision-making. To address this challenge, BSO implemented a new programme during 2025 – Boneview AI, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool designed to support clinicians interpret X-rays.

Aims and Objectives

The project aimed to improve the speed and accuracy of X-ray interpretation by introducing AI-assisted diagnostic support for patients aged two years and over. Specifically, Boneview was designed to help identify acute fractures, effusions, and dislocations, supporting clinicians in Emergency Departments and Minor Injury Units.

Implementation

Boneview was deployed through the BSO's NIPACS+ Programme, Northern Ireland's regional imaging platform, ensuring a consistent approach across all Health and Social Care Trusts. Governance and oversight were provided by the Regional Medical Imaging Board (RMIB) AI Imaging Subgroup, which developed a structured approach to the safe adoption of AI within diagnostic imaging services.

Outcomes and Impact

The introduction of Boneview has provided clinicians with an additional decision-support tool to assist in reviewing X-rays. Reported benefits include:

- Faster identification of fractures, effusions, and dislocations.
- Reduced image interpretation time.
- Improved diagnostic support and reduced risk of missed injuries.
- Potential reductions in patient waiting times within Minor Injury services.

The project also demonstrates how AI can be safely integrated into clinical workflows to support service improvement and enhance patient care.

Sustainability and Future Plans

Boneview is embedded within the NIPACS+ regional imaging solution, supporting long-term sustainability and continued development of AI-enabled healthcare services across Northern Ireland. Key learning points include the importance of strong governance, regional collaboration, and introducing AI as a tool to support, rather than replace, clinical expertise.

The RMIB AI Imaging Subgroup and NIPACS+ Programme will continue to explore opportunities to expand the use of AI across diagnostic imaging services, supporting the delivery of innovative, efficient, and patient-centred care throughout Northern Ireland.

Finance Directorate

Payroll

The team successfully completed the Annual Internal Audit review of Payroll services controls and processes.

This provides independent assurance and verification that all payroll controls, governance arrangements and processes remain effective and compliant with regulations.

The team also established regional working groups to drive collaboration, consistency, and continuous improvement across key payroll processes, including Manual Payments, Death in Service, Road Traffic Accident/Litigation, and National Minimum Wage. These groups worked collectively throughout 2025-26 to share best practice, standardise approaches, and enhance service delivery across the region.

The groups have driven standardisation, consistency, and service quality across critical payroll functions, reducing process variations, strengthening compliance, and enabled a more efficient and reliable service for employees, customers, and stakeholders throughout the region.

Internal Audit

The team embedded the new Global Internal Audit Standards from April 2025, aligning internal audit practices with internationally recognised best practice and strengthening the effectiveness of assurance, governance, and risk management arrangements across the organisation.

This has strengthened governance oversight, improved risk management and control processes, and provided greater confidence to senior management and stakeholders in the organisation's governance framework.

Operations Directorate

PaLS

Logistics further expanded their services during 2025-2026 by implementing a range of Non-Medicine products into the General Stock Service. This was a transfer from BHSCT Pharmacy to BSO PaLS with a 3-month implementation programme to roll out these additional 140 lines across all BHSCT sites and to enable demand capture via the EMM process. This was highly successful and delivery is now operational.

CFPS

The team continued to chair and contribute to regional working groups to consider and provide advice regarding mitigation measures in respect of areas of high fraud risk.

FPS

Process and methodological improvements continued to be made to the ongoing Margin Survey - a key information source for monitoring sufficiency of Community Pharmacy remuneration.

The implementation of more frequent quarterly sampling has improved the robustness of survey estimates whilst the latest survey cycle had the quickest turnaround on record, reporting results 2 months earlier than in the previous year.

Service Spotlight - PaLS



What PaLS Did

Developed and implemented a Cost to Serve & Uplift Model for GSS and CECs.

Introduced a consistent charging methodology based on activity throughput.

Incorporated value-added services (e.g. EMM and R&D) as additional percentage uplifts.



Why it was needed

To create a common costing approach across all logistics functions.

To provide full visibility of service costs and activity-based charging.

To support business growth in line with customer demand.

To enable greater collaboration and scalability across the region.



Outcome and Impact

Improved transparency and consistency in logistics cost allocation.

Enhanced visibility of service delivery and associated costs.

Created a scalable model that supports future growth.

Strengthened regional collaboration through a standardised approach.

Enabled more accurate and equitable recharging based on actual activity levels.

Case Study

Case Study: Community Wheelchair Service: Delivering Continuity Through Rapid Procurement and Logistics

In July 2025, the liquidation of NRS Healthcare, provider of the Approved Repairer Service for the Regional Wheelchair Service, created an immediate risk to the continuity of wheelchair repair and maintenance services for approximately 22,000 service users across Northern Ireland. The Department of Health directed the Business Services Organisation (BSO) to assume responsibility for the service, requiring the rapid establishment of an in-house Community Wheelchair Service (CWS). This presented a significant challenge, involving the transfer of staff, premises, IT systems, fleet vehicles, equipment, stock, and supply chains within a highly compressed timeframe while ensuring no disruption to service users.

Aim and Objectives

A key objective for PaLS was to ensure the service had the procurement arrangements, supply chain resilience and vehicle fleet necessary to operate safely from day one. Working as part of a cross-functional Steering Group, PaLS supported the transition through two critical workstreams:

- Procurement and Compliance
- Vehicle Fleet Management

The focus was on securing operational continuity, establishing compliant procurement arrangements, and identifying opportunities for improved value and efficiency.

Implementation

PaLS worked at pace to source and secure the resources required to launch the new service.

Key actions included:

- Rapid identification and onboarding of strategic suppliers.
- Establishment of compliant procurement arrangements through existing national frameworks.
- Review of existing supply chains to ensure continuity of wheelchair parts and equipment.

- Negotiation of improved pricing and cost savings on stock components.
- Procurement and deployment of 10 operational vans fitted with specialist equipment to support repairs, maintenance activities and home visits.

Despite the complexity of the transition and challenging timescales, strong governance, close collaboration and daily engagement across multiple BSO teams ensured delivery milestones were achieved.

Outcomes and Impact

The new Community Wheelchair Service launched successfully on 18th September 2025 without interruption to patient services. PaLS made a significant contribution to this achievement through:

- Securing a fully operational vehicle fleet to support frontline service delivery.
- Establishing sustainable procurement arrangements for essential goods and services.
- Bringing 65% of expenditure under national framework contracts, strengthening compliance and value for money.
- Supporting the creation of a resilient supply chain to maintain wheelchair repairs and maintenance services.

The project demonstrated how effective procurement and logistics expertise can play a critical role in safeguarding essential healthcare services during periods of significant operational disruption.

Sustainability and Future Plans

The transition has established a strong platform for future service improvements. Ongoing priorities include increasing procurement compliance towards 100%, improving stock availability, reducing repair backlogs and enhancing the overall customer experience. A key learning from the project was the value of early stakeholder engagement, strong partnership working and agile procurement processes. By working collaboratively across organisational boundaries, PaLS helped ensure that a critical healthcare service continued uninterrupted for thousands of wheelchair users across Northern Ireland.

Lessons Learned

Within weeks, a high-risk regional service was successfully mobilised, protecting continuity of care for 22,000 wheelchair users and demonstrating the vital role of procurement and logistics in enabling frontline healthcare delivery.

People & Place Directorate

Estates

BSO actively participated in Exercise Pegasus, a Tier 1 national multi-agency resilience exercise, enhancing organisational preparedness and strengthening emergency response capabilities across key service areas. Participation improved situational awareness, tested and validated communication and escalation pathways, and strengthened coordination with regional and national partners.

As a result, BSO increased its resilience to major incidents, improved business continuity arrangements, and enhanced its ability to maintain critical services during periods of disruption or emergency.

The team also established a project to digitise the management and monitoring of statutory compliance across the BSO estate.

The new system will record, track and report on regulatory compliance activities, including health and safety inspections and assurance checks, strengthening oversight, enhancing reporting and providing greater assurance that statutory obligations are being met.

Recruitment

The recruitment team delivered improvements in Time to Hire through the implementation and optimisation of the Amiqus system.

This enhanced the efficiency and consistency of recruitment processes, supporting a more streamlined candidate experience and strengthening recruitment service standards across the organisation.

Information Governance/Data Protection Officer

With the appointment of a new Head of Information Governance and Data Protection in 2025-2026, this has significantly strengthened leadership capacity, demonstrating the importance BSO places on data protection, statutory compliance, and robust organisational governance. A key outcome is enhanced organisational oversight and accountability, improved assurance around information governance practices, and strengthened the organisation's ability to manage risk and meet its regulatory obligations.

Strategic Planning and Customer Engagement Directorate

Complaints and Raising a Concern

During 2025-2026 a review and update of the BSO Complaints Policy was undertaken to prepare for the introduction of the new Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) Model Complaint Handling Procedure.

Examples of complaint data and themes were used to identify opportunities for service improvement and organisational learning.

Communications & Engagement

The BSO Intranet continued to see growth across all service areas and Directorates. This improvement is demonstrated through the following statistics:

- Total Event Counts – increased to **2,778,654 from 2,684,309**
- Pages Views – increased to **895,214 from 862,643**
- File Download – increased by **44.99% from 9,463 to 13,720 events.**

Corporate Planning & Performance

The team worked closely with the Finance Directorate to deliver the Realignment Project, supporting a review of service structures, reporting arrangements and resource allocation across the organisation. This work helped to improve transparency, strengthen understanding of service costs and ensure services were aligned more effectively to customer needs.

This resulted in improved transparency and accountability, enhanced customer understanding of the services provided, and strengthened the organisation's ability to plan, prioritise and deliver high-quality, value-driven services to customers.

Chief Executives Office

New technology-enabled tools were fully implemented and embedded to support ELT and Board meetings. Resulting in improved consistency, and quality and efficiency of meeting administration. This further supported clearer reporting, stronger governance and more effective decision-making.

Theme 5. Integrating the Care

The Quality 2020 aim: ***We will develop integrated pathways of care for individuals. We will make better use of multi-disciplinary team working and shared opportunities for learning and development in the HSC and with external providers.***

To deliver truly person-centered care, services must be well-integrated and supported by strong multidisciplinary collaboration. Collaboration across boundaries brings fresh perspectives, strengthens performance, and helps us continuously improve the care we provide.

By engaging with expert providers, both within and beyond HSC, we ensure that staff are equipped to deliver safe and effective care. This approach supports cost-effective service delivery while keeping outcomes for service users at the forefront.

This section highlights how BSO supports the wider health care sector to deliver safe, and sustainable pathways of care for individuals, by driving multi-disciplinary team working. It also highlights case studies outlining the approaches being taken to integrate the care.

Digital Directorate

encompass programme

Full roll-out of programme was completed, and encompass now supports integrated care across acute, community, mental health and social care services through a single electronic care record.

Furthermore, expanding encompass into additional care settings strengthened integration across care pathways, improved information accessibility for clinicians and helped ensure individuals received more coordinated and consistent care regardless of where services were delivered.

ePharmacy

The team was successfully awarded NICS transformation funding to support the delivery of the Go Pharmacy NI and Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (ETP) project.

Additionally, four projects within the ePharmacy programme are on track to be successfully delivered over the next four years via the deployment of NICS Transformation Funding, whilst delivering £19m in cash releasing and £142m in non-cash releasing savings.

BPaT

The BPaT programme will be live in Summer 2026, providing the first regional vein-to-vein system and capability in Europe, providing regional shared inventory of all blood stock, and a public facing Donor Web Portal to allow online registration, appointment booking and pre-submission of Donor Health check questionnaire. This regional solution addresses recommendations from the Infected Blood Enquiry.

Northern Ireland Picture Archiving and Communication System (NIPACS+)

The final NIPACS + go-lives happened in both the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT) and Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) during 2025-2026. This regional imaging solution gives a single point of access for endoscopy, cardiology, obstetrics, dental, medical photography and ophthalmology alongside radiology and digital pathology solutions, significantly improving clinical decision making, contributing to a safer, more efficient patient care pathways and treatment times across the HSC.

OREC (NI)

The team collaborated with UK regulatory partners to support a coordinated approach to research governance and clinical-trial regulation.

Additionally, the team facilitated multiple ethical research involving HSC and NHS service users while protecting participants' rights, safety, dignity and wellbeing.

Core LIMS

CoreLIMS, a single laboratory information system has improved the consistency of laboratory workflows, enhanced information sharing between organisations and enabled more standardised approaches to diagnostics across Northern Ireland.

ITS

Following the administration of the supplier of the Vision GP system, BSO ITS initiated Bronze Command arrangements and successfully migrated 80 GP practices during 2025 with no impact on patient care.

The successful transfer of over 20,000 patient records significantly improved continuity of care by ensuring healthcare professionals had timely access to accurate patient information when individuals changed GP practice. This reduced delays in accessing clinical records, supported safer and more informed clinical decision-making, and enhanced the patient experience through a more seamless transition between healthcare providers.

This improved continuity of care for patients transferring between GP practices and enabled timely access to patient information for healthcare professionals.
Resulting in reduced delays associated with transferring and accessing clinical records.



BSO NIPACS+ presented at DHCNI Programme and Project Management (PPM) Forum in Craigavon Civic Centre in June 2025

Finance Directorate

Finance

In-year payment of Infected Blood services totalling £14.3m to include £11m of interim compensation payments; continuing engagement with DoH and the four nations, providing local expertise to the new national compensation authority established in May 2024 as they prepare to take over the future scheme provision.

Finance also administered the Nursing Bursaries to support HSC healthcare education and workforce sustainability. This enabled students to access training and enter their chosen healthcare profession.

Finance provided financial leadership, governance and oversight for the regional encompass and equip transformation programmes, working closely with programme teams, Digital colleagues, the Department of Health and HSC stakeholders to support coordinated implementation across the health and social care system.

Through effective financial planning, monitoring and reporting, Finance helped ensure funding was used appropriately and risks were managed, enabling continued investment in digital transformation that supports integrated care and improved service delivery across Northern Ireland.

Payroll

The PSS team played a key role in the regional equip Programme, providing payroll expertise to support the design and delivery of the new HR, Payroll and Travel system. Through close collaboration with programme teams and stakeholders, payroll requirements, controls and data quality standards were successfully embedded within the system design.

This strengthened readiness for implementation, reduced operational risks and supported the development of integrated workforce systems across HSC.

Operations Directorate

DLS

The legal team supported transfer of the Community Wheelchair Service (CWS) to BSO providing a coordinated response advising on various areas of law including contract, property and employment.

FPS

FPS implemented Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology to identify and capture more than 11 million previously missing Health and Care Numbers from archived prescriptions dating back to 2017. This significantly enhanced the quality and completeness of prescribing data available for analysis, reporting and service planning.

This improved the accuracy and reliability of pharmacy statistical reporting, strengthened the evidence base for research and medicines optimisation initiatives, and enhanced the ability to support patient safety, performance monitoring and data-driven decision-making across Health and Social Care.

General Medical Services Team is a core participant in the HSC Refugee Resettlement Group, working alongside colleagues from the DoH, HSC organisations etc. to support the healthcare needs of refugees and resettled individuals.

This collaborative approach helps to ensure that healthcare considerations are represented at all levels of the resettlement process and that access to primary care services is facilitated as quickly as possible.

CEC

Collaborated with the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA) to deliver Bridging the Gap, an Interprofessional Simulation for Doctors and Nurses programme.

Make My Voice Heard

BSO played a significant role in the development and launch of the Make My Voice Heard Report, which was commissioned by the Department of Health and launched at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, on 21st May 2025. Through the Leadership Centre, BSO colleagues Bronagh Mahon, Sandra McCarry and Emily Docherty facilitated engagement sessions and led the collation of the report, ensuring an independent and supportive environment where women seeking international protection could openly share their experiences of accessing Health and Social Care services in Northern Ireland.

BSO Interpreting Services worked in partnership with the Leadership Centre throughout the project, providing professional language support in Arabic, Farsi, Ukrainian and Somali to enable meaningful participation from contributors representing 15 nationalities. The quality and professionalism of BSO's interpreting provision was recognised within the report itself and reflected in participants' positive feedback. As a result of the project, valuable insights from 167 women were captured and presented to inform future service development.

The report's recommendations, including those relating to BSO Interpreting Services, were agreed by the Steering Group and accepted by the Department of Health, contributing to an important evidence base to support the commissioning of services, improve access to healthcare, and help tackle health inequalities for people seeking protection and building new lives in Northern Ireland.





Make My Voice Heard - Report Launch May 2025

Case Study

Once for NI in Action - Transforming Point of Care Testing Through Regional Digital Integration

HSCNI previously relied on over 4,000 blood glucose and ketone testing devices managed separately across the five Trusts. Manual entry of results into clinical systems created risks of transcription errors, inconsistent governance, duplicated ICT infrastructure, and limited regional oversight. The introduction of encompass and the Once for NI strategy created the opportunity for a single regional solution.

Aim and Objectives

The programme sought to replace ageing devices, introduce a single regional middle-ware platform, establish Northern Ireland's first fully integrated digital POCT pathway, improve patient safety and governance, and deliver long-term efficiencies.

Implementation

BSO Procurement and Logistics Service (PaLS) led delivery across suppliers, Trust ICT teams and encompass. The programme:

- Deployed more than 4,000 connected glucose and ketone meters.
- Replaced five separate middleware systems with a single regional platform.
- Integrated POCT results directly into laboratory systems and encompass.
- Established regional governance, reporting and quality assurance processes.
- Delivered standardised training to more than 17,000 staff.

Outcomes and Impact

The programme introduced Northern Ireland's first integrated regional POCT pathway linking testing devices, laboratory systems and the electronic patient record. Moving from five Trust-managed systems to one regional platform standardised workflows, strengthened governance, reduced ICT duplication and enabled region-wide oversight.

Key Benefits

- Eliminated manual transcription and introduced positive patient identification, improving patient safety and regulatory compliance.
- Enabled near real-time access to results while improving system resilience and simplifying ICT support.
- Delivered approximately £735,000 annual recurring savings, with almost £6 million projected over the eight-year contract.
- Trained over 17,000 staff and deployed 4,000+ connected devices using a consistent regional approach.

Future Development

The scalable platform provides a blueprint for future POCT and diagnostic services across HSCNI. The programme demonstrated the value of strong governance, stakeholder engagement, outcome-based procurement and effective change management, and will continue to support the Once for NI vision of standardised, digitally enabled healthcare.

Case Study

Improving Medicines Management Reporting Through the PCE Dashboard

Service Area: Family Practitioner Services (FPS) Information Unit

The Pharmaceutical Clinical Effectiveness (PCE) Project supports medicines management and delivers around £8 million in savings across 60 to 70 drug groups. Previously, progress was reported through a time-consuming monthly paper report with limited opportunities for analysis. Feedback from stakeholders highlighted the need for a more accessible and efficient solution.

Aim and Objectives

The aim was to improve access to prescribing efficiency information by replacing manual reporting with an interactive, automated dashboard.

Implementation

Andrew Lawrie developed a digital dashboard using open-source software, incorporating stakeholder feedback and accessibility requirements.

The project involved:

- Converting the monthly report into an interactive dashboard.
- Automating data production and reporting.
- Creating clear, user-friendly visualisations.
- Testing and refining the system with users.



Pictured: Andrew Lawrie

"Outstanding nomination for an individual who clearly led this work with a passion to solve a problem. Clear problem statement in an area clearly needing a new communication method to help stakeholders undertake their work to drive forward efficiencies. Positive user engagement and iteration and consideration in accessibility and impairments even for an internal only product."

Outcomes and Impact

The dashboard transformed reporting and delivered significant benefits:

- Savings of approximately 15 staff days per month across statistical and finance teams.
- Faster access to information.
- Improved data analysis and presentation.
- Better support for timely decision-making.

Sustainability and Learning

The dashboard is supported through automated processes and ongoing user review. Key lessons included the importance of user engagement, automation, and interactive reporting in improving efficiency and decision-making.

Future Plans

FPS will continue to build on this success by expanding the use of automation and interactive dashboards to improve efficiency, accessibility, and data-driven decision-making across services.

People & Place Directorate

Equality

The Equality team facilitated BSO and HSCNI customer organisations in undertaking their Five-Year Review of the Equality Scheme by designing the review methodology and coordinating data collection. Key outcomes included a consistent and evidence-based approach across organisations, strengthened compliance with statutory equality duties, improved stakeholder engagement, and the identification of opportunities to enhance equality outcomes and inform future service planning and decision-making.

Corporate Services

Engagement with regional resilience forums increased throughout the year, supporting consistent planning and aligned response arrangements across organisations.

This strengthened organisational preparedness and resilience, improved coordination and collaborative working across partner organisations, and enhanced the effectiveness of responses to major incidents and service disruptions across the health and social care system.

Strategic Planning and Customer Engagement Directorate

Communications & Engagement

The team supported major regional transformation programmes, including Core LIMS, NIPACS+, NIDIS and BPaT, through the delivery of strategic communications and targeted stakeholder engagement activities. This included developing key messages, raising awareness, promoting programme benefits and supporting engagement across Health and Social Care organisations.

This improved stakeholder awareness and understanding of programme objectives, strengthened engagement across organisations, supported the adoption of new systems and ways of working, and contributed to the successful delivery of regional transformation initiatives across Health and Social Care.

The team delivered communications and engagement support for a range of regional Health and Social Care programmes, working collaboratively with programme teams, partner organisations and stakeholders to ensure clear, consistent and timely communications throughout programme delivery.

This strengthened engagement and collaboration across organisations, increased awareness and understanding of key regional initiatives, supported stakeholder confidence and buy-in, and contributed to the successful delivery and adoption of major transformation programmes across Health and Social Care.

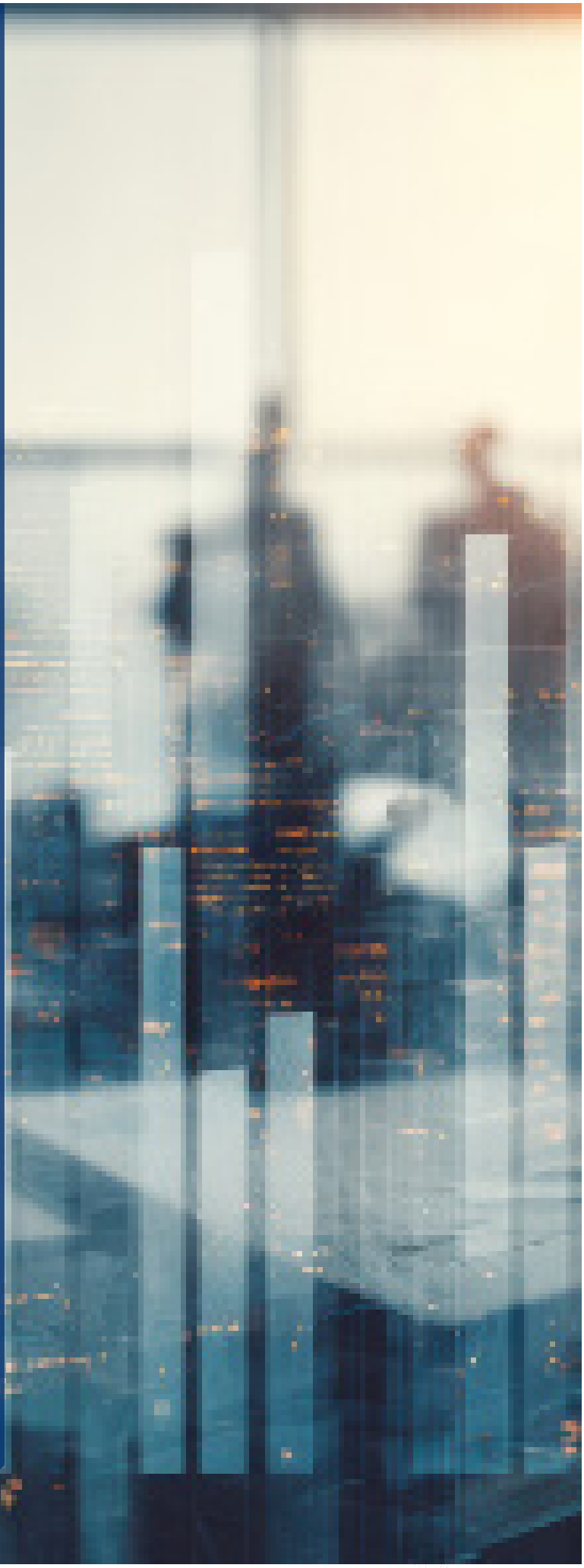
Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to 2026-2027, BSO will continue to strengthen its role as a trusted strategic partner within Health and Social Care (HSC), driving innovation, collaboration and service excellence across the organisation. Building on the foundations established through major transformation programmes such as encompass, My Care and equip, BSO will continue to modernise services through the adoption of emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, automation, advanced analytics and cloud-based solutions.

Investment in workforce development, leadership, digital capability and organisational resilience will ensure staff are equipped to meet evolving service demands and deliver continuous improvement.

A strong focus on regional collaboration and a “Once for Northern Ireland” approach will support greater consistency, efficiency and value across the health and social care system. Enhancements in governance, performance management, customer engagement and sustainability will help shape responsive, high-quality services for patients, service users and customers.

By investing in its people, modernising systems and processes, and strengthening partnerships across the system, BSO will be well positioned to address future challenges, improve experiences and outcomes, and deliver sustainable benefits for the population of Northern Ireland.



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