



# The National Maternity Hospital

Strategic Plan 2024-2028



The National Maternity Hospital

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## A Word from the Master

We will continue to focus on the provision of family centered care for women and newborns and continue to develop and improve all areas of women's healthcare.

On behalf of the Executive Management Team, I am delighted to present our Strategic Plan for 2024-2028. We are a centre of clinical excellence in maternal, neonatal and gynaecological health. Our mission remains as leaders in women's healthcare to deliver the highest quality of safe, evidence-based care. We are committed to providing choice to our patients and through excellence and innovation in research and education, we drive the advancement of women and babies' healthcare in Ireland. We will continue to focus on the provision of family centered care for women and newborns and continue to develop and improve all areas of women's healthcare.

A major focus of our work over the next number of years is to progress the development of the new National Maternity Hospital at the Elm Park campus. I am delighted to announce a significant milestone for the project with commencement of enabling works on the Elm Park site recently. We will continue to advocate for funding and investment in the current site and will strive to overcome the day-to-day challenges associated with this to maintain and expand our patient services.

We will build and expand on our four strategic goals over the coming years to maintain and strengthen the role The National Maternity Hospital plays at a national level, in informing policy, choice and safety for patients. We are

extremely grateful to the staff leaders for their excellence in the implementation of the associate objectives within the goals to date.

We will maintain our position as an employer of choice, attracting staff to lead in the provision of clinical care, research, innovation and education.

During 2024 the HSE will undergo major changes and has recently announced six new health regions including the implementation of new structures to facilitate the Programme for Government and the Sláintecare Policy Framework. It is hoped that the new health regions will bring appropriate decision making closer to services to allow for a single integrated approach to providing services to the people of each region. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Martina Queally recently appointed as Regional Executive Officer for Dublin and South East and we very much look forward to working with Martina in the Ireland East Hospital Group to ensure the best integrated and social care services for all people in the Dublin and South East Region over the coming years.

Finally, we are extremely grateful to all staff for their hard work and dedication to the hospital. They continue to provide high quality care to our patients and constantly strive to develop and improve the services we offer to women and babies in our hospital and community.

**Professor Shane Higgins**

# VISION

To continuously advance the health of women and babies through excellence in healthcare led by our dedicated teams.





# MISSION

We are the national centre of clinical excellence in maternal, neonatal and gynaecological health. Our mission as leaders in women's healthcare is to deliver the highest quality of safe, evidence-based care. We are committed to providing choice, listening to and learning from our patients' experiences. Through excellence and innovation in research and education, we drive the advancement of women and babies' healthcare in Ireland. Our team is our greatest asset, and we are dedicated to investing in and supporting our people.

# VALUES

Quality

Compassion

Respect

Collaboration

Innovation

Sustainability

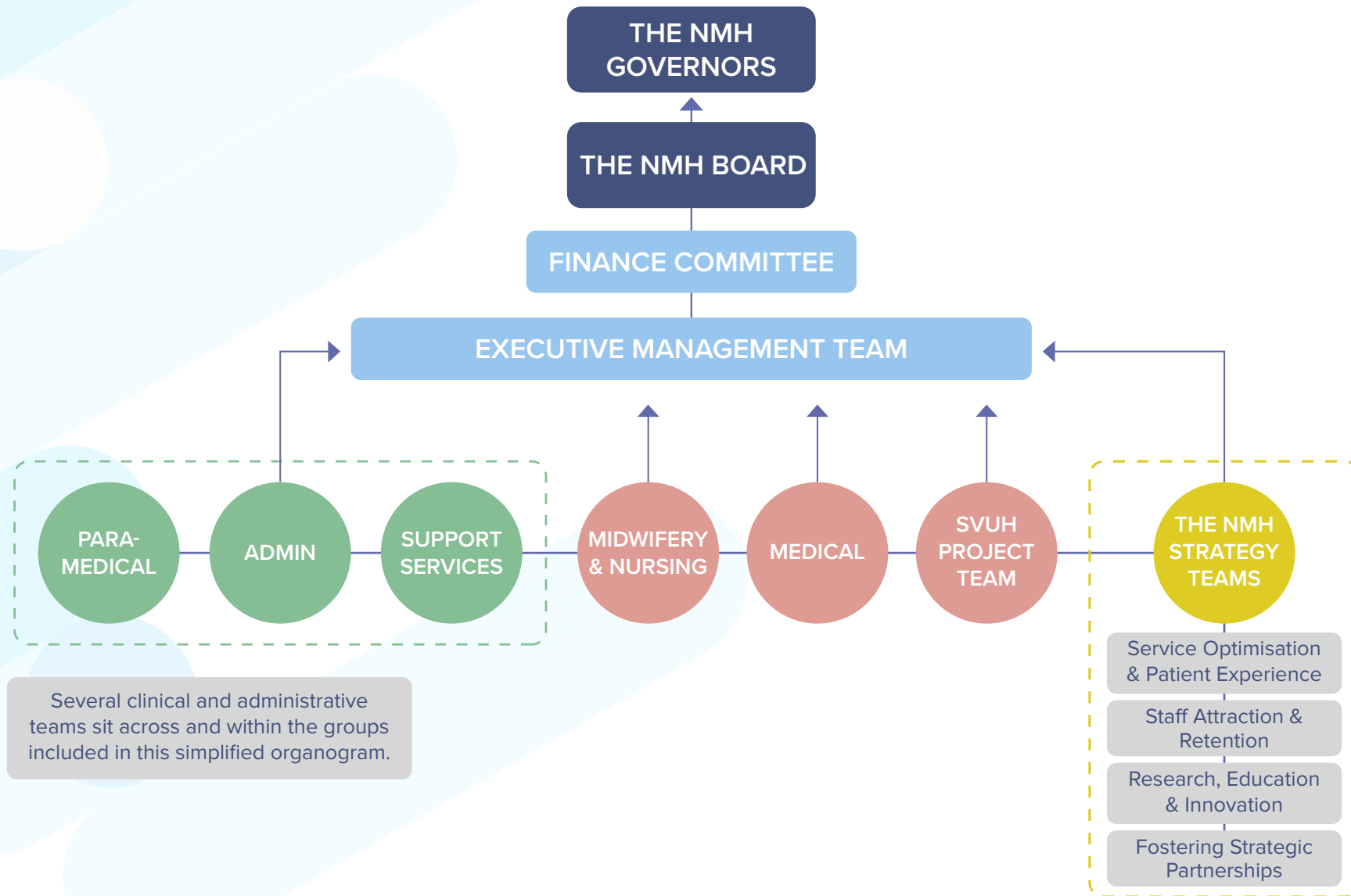




# Organisation Context

- The National Maternity Hospital Organogram
- Hospital Charter & Implementation
- Communications & Information and Communications Technology
- Environmental & Social Governance

# The NMH Strategic Organogram







# Hospital Charter & Implementation

## Hospital Charter

The National Maternity Hospital (NMH) is an independent, voluntary hospital, governed by a Royal Charter granted by King Edward VII in 1903. The Charter formally lays down the governance structure of the hospital and remains to this day the legal basis of the hospital's existence.

In addition, The NMH is governed by a set of Bye Laws which help to ensure that the operational activity of the hospital is consistent with the Hospital Charter, such as the constitution of the Hospital's Executive Board and sub committees.

## Implementation

The ownership of this strategic plan sits with the Executive Management Team, who report on this strategy on a quarterly basis to the board of The NMH. Each Goal is driven by an assigned Lead and core team, who meet monthly to progress the workplans required to deliver on the objectives outlined in this strategic plan.

The Goal Leads will work in collaboration to progress the agreed objectives, harnessing shared resources to deliver on this ambitious plan.

Quarterly planning sessions will enable the Strategy Teams to identify the tasks and targets appropriate within the context of evolving policy, hospital network, and funding landscapes.

An Objectives and Key Results Framework will be applied to inform this work, enabling the relevant teams to achieve meaningful impact, delivering on the overall mission and vision of The National Maternity Hospital.

# Communications and Information and Communications Technology

## Communications

The NMH recognises the importance of both internal and external communications for the effective running of the hospital.

The Covid-19 Pandemic increased the use of available digital platforms and the adoption of online engagement between management, patients and staff or departments. In particular, the launch of a staff newsletter, containing useful information and good news stories from across all hospital departments has been immensely popular, promoting a greater level of awareness and connection across the organisation.

The hospital welcomed a new Communications Officer in April 2023 to advance key developments and implement a hospital-wide strategy on the effective use of communications.

Establishing standardised collateral and materials and ways of working is currently under development. A new website and branding is being crafted with expert external advisors, in partnership with The NMH Communications Officer.

It is understood that effective communication across the teams assigned to implement the strategic plan over the next five years is critical to its successful implementation. To that end, a highly-consultative approach to the development and launching of this plan was carried out.

## Information and Communications Technology

The Maternal & Newborn Clinical Management System (MN-CMS) Project is the national electronic health record (EHR) for all women and babies in maternity services. It was implemented in The National Maternity Hospital in 2018 and requires continual support and development to ensure that the potential benefits are maximized from a data and reporting perspective. As E-health in Ireland continues to develop at a national level, there will be a requirement for The NMH to interface with new national solutions, such as National Integrated Medical Imaging System (NIMIS) and MedLIS - The National Laboratory Information System.

Several current software solutions require interim replacement options and will need careful consideration and investment. Similarly, the Information and Communications Technology infrastructure, including Information and Communications Technology security requires constant monitoring and regular upgrades to ensure stability and security in the delivery of critical services. As with the building infrastructure, there is great need to maintain and invest in Information and Communications Technology systems on the current site.

The NMH Information and Communications Technology systems that are now coming to the end of their operational life will be targeted for replacement. Where possible, opportunities for integration will be identified, including telephony, paging, nurse call, baby security and access control systems.

# Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)

## 1. Environmental

- ✓ Improved energy, water and waste management
- ✓ Started to digitize administrative processes to reduce paper use and postage
- ✓ Reduced the use of single use material in clinical settings

## 2. Social

- ✓ Introduced blended working scheme by updating internal policy
- ✓ Offered staff to participate in different healthy workplace activities
- ✓ Introduced sustainability awareness training for staff

## 3. Governance

- ✓ Embedded ESG awareness through key documents and processes
- ✓ Established a reporting structure and a tracker
- ✓ Achieved buy-in from Department Heads

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations are critical to the future sustainability of The NMH in the delivery of its maternity, women's health, and neonatal services, on behalf of the Health Service Executive (HSE).

It is a requirement for all public sector bodies to achieve at least a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and a 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030. In response, the HSE published an organisational climate action strategy in 2023, outlining their goal to achieve net-zero emissions no later than 2050, delivering healthcare which is environmentally and socially sustainable.

In it, they outline six priority areas, aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were created in 2015 with the aim of "peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future." To support the delivery of the HSE Climate Action Strategy, a detailed Implementation Plan and delivery framework will be created to foster an enabling environment across the wider healthcare delivery network. It is recognised that workforce and local governance structures are key implementation success factor.

The National Maternity Hospital is committed to providing quality care and service in an environmentally sustainable manner. Therefore, it is vital for us to have a clearly defined sustainability approach that is aligned to national policy and integrated within our overall strategic plan. The unique

challenges and opportunities at The NMH require meaningful engagement and planning to develop an approach to sustainability that our staff can embed everywhere. We believe that only by working collaboratively can we achieve our goals.

In 2022, The NMH Environmental Committee was established to review, revise, and evaluate the effectiveness of all Environmental Actions within the Hospital. The Environmental Committee reports directly to the Executive Management Team at The NMH.







The Hospital has begun work on a suitably ambitious plan to address sustainable practices across three key areas, ensuring that The NMH efforts are concentrated on delivering on the overarching Government climate targets, set within an international context. In just eighteen months, the Committee has made significant progress, with over half of the work either complete or underway.



# Contextual Landscape

- Sláintecare Reform & Wider Network
- Current Infrastructure & Future Co-Location
- Relevant Policy



-  FSS an Iarthair agus Iathuaiscirt  
HSE West and North West
-  FSS Bhaile Átha Cliath agus Oirthuaiscirt  
HSE Dublin and North East
-  FSS Bhaile Átha Cliath agus Lár na Tíre  
HSE Dublin Midlands
-  FSS and Iarthar Láir  
HSE Mid West
-  FSS Bhaile Átha Cliath agus an Oirdheiscirt  
HSE Dublin and Sout East
-  FSS and Iardheiscirt  
HSE South West



## Sláintecare Reform & Wider Network

Further to the implementation of the Sláintecare reform programme, the health system is undergoing a period of reform, with the development of Integrated Service Areas (ISAs). The aim of this new network structure is to improve patient access and the integration of community and hospital care.

Currently The NMH is the maternity hub for the Ireland East Hospital Group (IEHG) which comprises of 12 hospitals in total. The IEHG is Ireland's largest hospital group serving 1.1 million people, with University College Dublin (UCD) as its academic partner.

Following the reconfiguration of the new health regions, IEHG will become known as the Dublin South-East Region. Regional Executive Officers will be accountable officers at Health Region level, responsible for the delivery of high-quality, safe, and accessible services for the population of their region.

Within the region, there are satellite maternity units, between which, The NMH and the regional teams engage in significant collaboration for the provision of women and neonatal services.

The National Women and Infants Health Programme is responsible for overseeing all maternity service development and service improvement according with the implementation plan of the National Maternity Strategy 2016-2026. The NMH has benefitted from funding initiatives from National Women and Infants Health Programme (NWIHP) to implement many new services in maternity and women's health care.



## Current Infrastructure & Future Co-Location

### Current Infrastructure

Due to the extended time frame for the building and commissioning of our new maternity hospital, we will be on the current site for at least another 6 to 8 years. Therefore, it is vital that facilities are maintained and expanded to ensure optimum patient safety and the high standard of service provision continues, in the face of both demand and new and expanding services.

There is the need for continued investment in existing, aging infrastructure and several major projects that need to be delivered on-site within a short timescale. These include the installation of a new patient lift, replacement generators, an ambulatory gynaecology suite, a central decontamination unit, and pathology and bereavement suites. These projects are all essential in a modern health care facility.

### Co-Location to Elm Park Campus

The co-location of The NMH to the Elm Park Campus represents the future for The NMH patient services. The new hospital design reinforces our mission and will enable The NMH to excel as a major tertiary referral hospital and provider of maternity, neonatal and women's health care in Ireland.

A fundamental part of the planning and transition process will be to ensure that best practice for The NMH is adopted. This should ensure control and protection over our own systems and infrastructure while linking into cross hospital and national systems. As we are constructing a hospital that will continue to provide services for future decades, the future-proofing of Information and Communications Technology and infrastructural developments are considered carefully.

In transition, the goal will be to ensure that The NMH independent voluntary status is maintained, that our services for women and babies are expanded, and that the investment from the proceeds of our current site is protected. The careful implementation of the tenets of the Mulvey co-location agreement should ensure these goals are met.



## Relevant Policy

### National Maternity Strategy

The National Maternity Strategy 2016-2026, Creating a Better Future Together, sets out a vision for maternity services in Ireland into the future.

It proposes a movement toward a service model that is more woman centred and provides integrated, team-based care with patients seeing the most appropriate professional based on their needs.

In providing greater choice, the strategy proposes a move from consultant-led inpatient care to community-based integrated care depending on the individual needs of the mother and baby.

Three different pathways of care are identified: Supported Care, Assisted Care and Specialised Care.

The National Maternity Strategy identifies four strategic priorities:

- A Health and Wellbeing approach is adopted to ensure that babies get the best start in life. Mothers and families are supported and empowered to improve their own health and wellbeing.
- Women have access to safe, high quality, nationally consistent, woman-centred maternity care.
- Pregnancy and birth is recognised as a normal physiological process, and insofar as it is safe to do so, a woman's choice is facilitated.
- Maternity services are appropriately resourced, underpinned by strong and effective leadership, management and governance arrangements, and delivered by a skilled and competent workforce, in partnership with women.



### HIQA Standards for Safer Better Maternity Services

These are the National Standards that support the implementation of the National Maternity Strategy which sit within the overarching framework of the National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare with the aim of promoting improvements in conjunction with the new National Maternity Strategy. The National Standards aim to give a shared voice to the expectations of women using maternity services, service providers and the public.

### National Standards for Bereavement

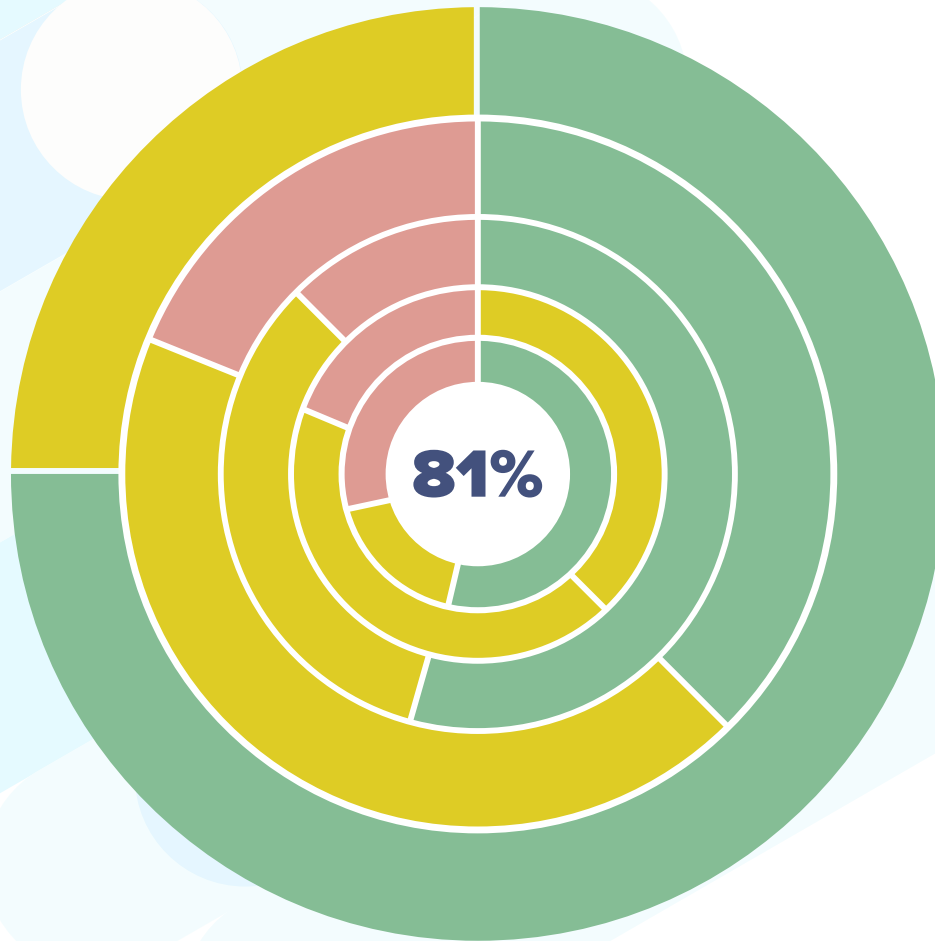
These Standards clearly define the care parents and families can expect to receive following a pregnancy loss or perinatal death. The standards are to be implemented and applied across the health service in all appropriate hospitals and settings to provide compassionate care for patients.

The NMH is committed to the provision of bereavement support in line with the National Standards. A multi-disciplinary Bereavement Team including Bereavement Liaison Midwives, Chaplains, Medical Social Workers, Midwifery Staff and Doctors are closely involved in supporting those who experience loss. This Team provides support, guidance and spiritual care (in certain cases).



## Impact Statement

### Previous Strategic Plan (2019-2023)



The previous strategic plan outlined five key goals:

- 1.** Optimise services for patients in women's health and maternity and neonatal care.
- 2.** Be the employer of choice and recognise that our staff are our greatest asset.
- 3.** Deliver an exceptional patient experience, putting women and babies at the centre of everything we do.
- 4.** Create an environment that fosters excellence in research, education and innovation.
- 5.** Foster strategic partnerships with our wider network.

The teams who delivered on the implementation of the plan achieved over 80% of the targets set out, despite the challenges faced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The results have seen improvements in service optimisation, patient safety and experience, workforce, research, education, and innovation, as well as the focus on fostering key partnerships.



# Strategic Priorities, Goals & Objectives

- Strategic Priorities
- Strategic Goals: Overview
- Strategic Goals & Objectives

## Strategic Priorities

The National Maternity Hospital is one of Europe's largest maternity hospitals and a leading provider of maternity, neonatal and women's healthcare, established over 130 years ago. We are focused on the following four strategic priorities that will help us to deliver on our mission statement.

**SERVICE  
OPTIMISATION  
& PATIENT  
EXPERIENCE**



**RESEARCH,  
EDUCATION, &  
INNOVATION**



**STAFF  
ATTRACTION &  
RETENTION**



**FOSTERING  
STRATEGIC  
PARTNERSHIPS**

## Priorities 1 & 2

### SERVICE OPTIMISATION

Our expert multidisciplinary team is dedicated to providing the highest standard of care to women and their families, through a range of services including **maternity, women's health, and neonatology**.

Subspecialties have expanded in recent years including fetal medicine, maternal medicine, anaesthetic care, neonatal, perinatal genetics, perinatal mental health and bereavement care, pathology and laboratory medicine and radiology.

As part of our **women's health services** the gynaecology team treats over 11,000+ outpatients annually. In partnership with the National Cancer Screening Service, The NMH houses one of the largest colposcopy service units in Europe. We have also developed specialist services catering for urogynaecology, gynaecological cancer, complex menopause care, paediatric adolescent gynaecology, pain management, MESH clinic, fertility, and transgender care.

The **Neonatal Intensive Care Unit** at The NMH is recognised as a national tertiary referral centre for very premature babies and sick infants, with expertise in advanced therapies such as neonatal therapeutic hypothermia. We also contribute to the National Neonatal Transfer Service, offering a national 24-hour service for all maternity units.

The NMH established a **Community Midwifery Service** 25 years ago, offering domino birth, early transfer home programmes and homebirth, and today continues to be the busiest community midwifery service in Ireland.

### PEOPLE

The hospital currently has circa **1,000 employees** within its direct employment. It is our intent to continue to grow this number over the next 3-5 years as part of preparations for the co-location to the Elm Park Campus.

Over the last five years our HR Team, in partnership with our Executive Management Team and **People and Organisational sub committee**, have continued to work towards our collective goal of becoming the employer of choice and recognise that our staff are our greatest asset.

We have developed a strategic workforce plan, invested in our staff, and continued to attract and retain high calibre talent to The NMH. We have been focusing on building established relationships and improving communications in a time of transition. A central aspect of this work has been connecting with the entire workforce by fostering an improved digital culture.

These efforts are demonstrated by the introduction of **several employee incentives**:

- ✓ Performance Achievement.
- ✓ Training platform and pathways development.
- ✓ Growth in academic partnership programs.
- ✓ Development of overseas recruitment networks.
- ✓ Regular staff engagement surveys to identify areas of improvement.
- ✓ New supports such as a digital staff handbook, benefits statement, employee newsletter, staff wellness days and events and staff apps.

## Priorities 3 & 4

### RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND INNOVATION

Over the last four years, the hospital has invested significantly in resources dedicated to the realization of **research projects**. There is a growing number of **MD and PhD students** at The NMH, supported by **scholarships** in many cases.

This has paid dividends as evidenced by **collaborative multidisciplinary research projects** (Latch-on, PRIME, IronMother, PrePop) all of which are contributing to better outcomes for mothers and babies.

The team have produced the highest number of academic papers in Ireland and are ranked in the **top 5% in EU and internationally**.

There has been a great effort to foster the **culture of research** within the wider organization and a central element of this has been the establishment of the **annual RISE symposium, which showcases the hospital wide research and innovation projects** with the presentation of medals to acknowledge best in category projects.

Audit is also a vital aspect of reviewing trends and the standard of care being provided to patients. In order to coordinate this, we have established the Audit Committee which is improving oversight of all the audits being conducted across various teams at The NMH.

### STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The Executive Management Team have established **regular engagement with the Primary Stakeholder Network** including the HSE and the Ireland East Hospital Group (IEHG), which will be replaced by Dublin South-East RHA, the NWIHP, and the DoH on progressing the infrastructural development at current site and the Elm Park Campus.

As the lead maternity hospital in the Ireland East Hospital Group, we continue to provide **expert support as the hub for smaller maternity units**, offering expert clinical advice, sharing of guidelines, accepting the transfer of patients as per clinical pathways.

There are dedicated efforts to **engage with the patient community**. This takes many forms including surveys, communications and regular engagement with **Our Patient Voice Committee**.

There has been extensive consultation with **Our GP Liaison Committee** and the **Public Health Nurse (PHN) network** to improve communications, access, referral pathways, service development.

There is ongoing **collaboration with academic and network partners** in order to enhance clinical care pathways and service delivery in all elements of our maternity, neonatal and women's health services.

## Strategic Goals: Overview



### GOAL 1

Optimise our services across **maternity, neonates and women's health**, to best meet the current and future needs of our patients, focusing on delivering **choice, safety and a positive patient experience**



### GOAL 2

Be the **employer of choice** and recognise that our staff are our greatest asset



### GOAL 3

Create an environment that fosters **excellence in research, education, and innovation** with our staff and academic partners



### GOAL 4

Foster **strategic partnerships** with our **wider network** to realise maximum benefits for women and infants under our care



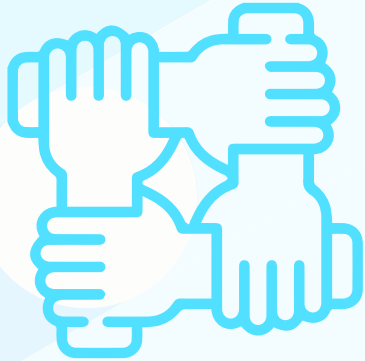
# GOAL ONE

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Optimise our services across maternity, neonates and women's health to best meet the current and future needs of our patients, focusing on delivering choice, safety and a positive patient experience.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1.** Expand the delivery and development of specialist services in women's health, identifying opportunities to optimise all services.
- 2.** Identify potential improvements across maternity, allied health, and support services to realise maximum benefits for patients.
- 3.** Progress the implementation of the maternity care pathways in line with the vision of the National Maternity Strategy, cultivating a greater awareness among staff and our patients.
- 4.** Continue to expand the services within the neonatal unit while promoting it as a specialist care centre.
- 5.** Listen and respond to all patient feedback to ensure we deliver a safe and positive experience for the women and babies who use our services.



## GOAL TWO

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Be the employer of choice and recognise that our staff are our greatest asset.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1.** Enable increased efficiency in ways of working, focusing on a hospital-wide digital culture.
- 2.** Attract a greater number of high-calibre employees, establishing a staff attainment taskforce.
- 3.** Respond to service delivery needs and staff attrition rates at critical career points, employing a dynamic approach to workforce planning.
- 4.** Increase professional engagement, skill attainment and delegated leadership, rolling out a comprehensive learning and development programme.





## GOAL THREE

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Create an environment that fosters excellence in research, education, and innovation with our staff and academic partners.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1.** Improve patient outcomes by investing in impactful research with our academic partners.
- 2.** Cultivate a progressive ethos of innovation and change that elicits excellence, efficiency, and positive staff and patient experience.
- 3.** Define and improve standards of care for patients through targeted access to educational and upskilling opportunities for staff.



## GOAL FOUR

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Foster strategic partnerships with our wider network to realise maximum benefits for women and infants under our care.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1.** Develop a strategic communications plan and measurable metrics, to engage with key stakeholders, within and outside of the hospital, including international links.
- 2.** Foster a culture of excellence in the governance of the hospital and the future of The NMH at Elm Park.
- 3.** Develop and roll out a media strategy in conjunction with The NMH Communications Office, to effectively communicate our key message to all stakeholders.
- 4.** Strengthen our working partnerships with regional maternity units within the RHA organisational structure.

