



Main Glossary Terms (A-Z) – Functions/Processes/Business Terms

ADT (Admission, Discharge, Transfer)

This is a hospital information system used to track a patient's journey through a healthcare facility. It records when a patient is admitted, transferred within departments, or discharged. The system ensures accurate patient flow management and helps coordinate care across teams.

AHR (Access to Health Records / Annual Health Review)

Access to Health Records allows patients or their representatives to request and view information held about them by healthcare organisations. An Annual Health Review is a regular check-up provided to people with long-term health conditions, ensuring that their treatment plans remain appropriate and effective.

AI (Artificial Intelligence)

AI technologies are increasingly used in healthcare for tasks such as diagnostics, clinical decision support, patient monitoring, and service planning. AI supports more personalised and efficient care.

API (Application Programming Interface)

An API enables different software systems to communicate with each other. In healthcare, APIs allow interoperability between electronic health records, apps, and analytics systems.

Application

An application is a software programme used to perform tasks such as managing patient records, scheduling appointments, or analysing health data. In healthcare, applications support both clinical care and administrative functions.

BAU (Business As Usual)

Refers to ongoing, day-to-day operational activities, as distinct from time-limited projects or change initiatives. Maintaining BAU services is essential even during major transformation.

Co-production

Co-Production approach across our health and social care system was developed as part of the Department's programme of work to transform health and social care provision as envisaged in "Delivering Together 2026". It means that service users, carers, and community representatives are involved as equal partners in designing, delivering, and evaluating services. Co-production ensures that services reflect the lived experiences of those who use them, and that care is truly person-centred.

CPD (Continuing Professional Development)

The process by which professionals maintain and enhance their skills and knowledge throughout their careers. CPD is a requirement for health and social care professionals to ensure safe, high-quality practice.

ECR / NIECR (Electronic Care Record / Northern Ireland Electronic Care Record)

The Northern Ireland Electronic Care Record is a secure digital system that allows healthcare professionals to access up-to-date patient information across different care settings. It supports integrated care by enabling appropriate information sharing between clinicians.

eNCOMPASS

encompass is a Health and Social Care programme that has created a single digital care record for every citizen in Northern Ireland who receives health and social care. Encompass will give patients and service users the ability to view and update their health information online wherever and whenever they like via My Care, the patient portal. It will also make it easier for Health and Social Care staff to view important information about their patients and service users both in a clinical setting and while working in the community.

ESR (Electronic Staff Record)

The HR and payroll system used across the NHS and HSC NI to manage staff records, pay, leave, training, and employment history.

FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions)

A collection of common questions and answers about a particular topic. In healthcare, FAQs are used to help patients, carers, and staff understand services, procedures, and policies.

FOI (Freedom of Information Act)

The Freedom of Information Act gives individuals the right to request access to information held by public authorities, including health and social care organisations. It promotes transparency and accountability.

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

GDPR is UK legislation that governs how personal data must be collected, stored, and used. In health and social care, it ensures that patients' sensitive information is protected and used lawfully.

GMS (General Medical Services)

The standard contract under which GPs provide primary medical care services to the public. It defines the range of core services GPs deliver under the NHS.

HIE (Health Information Exchange)

A system that enables the secure sharing of health information across different organisations and care settings. In NI, the NIECR is a key component of health information exchange.

IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies)

Originally a programme developed in England to increase access to evidence-based talking therapies. Some NI services adapt similar approaches, aiming to expand access to psychological support, particularly for common mental health conditions.

ICS NI (Integrated Care System Northern Ireland)

ICS NI is the new framework for planning health and social care services in Northern Ireland which looks to improve the health and well-being of our population by:

- Placing a focus on people keeping well in the first instance, providing timely, co-ordinated care when they are not, and supporting people to self-care when appropriate; and
- ensuring we are maximising the resource we have available to deliver the best outcomes for our population, optimising our effectiveness and efficiency and reducing duplication.

ICS NI signals a move away from the complex, transactional process of the past to one that is focused on collaboration, outcomes and person-centred care.

IT (Information Technology)

IT systems in healthcare include networks, hardware, and software used to manage information. IT underpins clinical care, patient records, communication, and service planning.

KPI (Key Performance Indicator)

A measurable value that indicates how effectively an organisation is achieving its objectives. In healthcare, KPIs help track service quality, safety, efficiency, and outcomes.

MSK (Musculoskeletal)

Refers to services that diagnose and treat conditions affecting muscles, bones, joints, ligaments, and tendons. MSK services include physiotherapy, orthopaedics, and pain management.

My Care

My Care is the encompass patient portal which is available as an app or through a web browser on a digital device. My Care gives you greater control over your healthcare by providing you with personalised and secure online access to specific parts of your medical records.

PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act)

PDSA is a quality improvement cycle used across ICS NI to test and implement service changes. It involves planning a change, carrying it out (Do), studying the results, and acting on what is learned to refine or scale the improvement. PDSA supports continuous learning and improvement.

PID (Project Initiation Document)

A key document developed at the start of a project. It sets out the project's objectives, scope, governance, risks, and resource requirements. PIDs ensure clarity and shared understanding among stakeholders.

POPs (Population Outcome Profiles)

POPs are data profiles used within ICS NI to monitor population health outcomes and inform service planning. They provide information on key indicators such as health inequalities, service access, and health outcomes at a population level. POPs help ICS partners to target resources and interventions where they are needed most.

PPI (Personal and Public Involvement)

PPI is about meaningfully involving service users, carers, and the public in the design, delivery, and evaluation of health and social care services. It ensures that services are shaped by those who use them.

RPA (Robotic Process Automation)

The use of software robots to automate repetitive administrative tasks, such as data entry or appointment reminders. RPA improves efficiency and frees staff for patient-facing activities.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding involves protecting children and adults at risk from abuse, harm, and neglect. It is a legal and ethical responsibility of all health and social care professionals.

SLA (Service Level Agreement)

A formal agreement that defines the services to be delivered, performance standards, and responsibilities between parties — for example, between a Trust and an external provider.

TYC (Transforming Your Care)

Transforming Your Care was a major programme launched in 2011 to reform and modernise Northern Ireland's health and social care system. It focused on shifting care closer to home, promoting prevention, and enhancing patient choice.

Main Glossary Terms (A-Z) – Policy, Legislation, Reviews and Strategies

Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership (2015)

Northern Ireland's policy framework for safeguarding adults at risk of harm. Mental capacity and consent are central considerations, alongside interagency responses to abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

Bamford Review (2002-2009)

A comprehensive review of mental health and learning disability law and services in NI. Recommended reform of legislation, service models, and greater rights for individuals. It directly informed the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 and the Mental Health Strategy.

Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030 (NI)

A cross-departmental framework that includes mental health and wellbeing priorities for children and young people. Emphasises early intervention and integrated care across health, education, and social services.

Co-production Framework (DoH NI)

A Department of Health policy model that mandates involvement of service users and carers in the design, delivery, and evaluation of health and social care services, including mental health. Embedded in the Mental Health Strategy and recovery-focused practice.

Delivering Together

Delivering Together is a 10-year strategy published in 2016 (Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together). It sets out a vision for transforming Northern Ireland's health and social care system to make it more person-centred, community-focused, and sustainable. The strategy emphasises prevention, partnership, and co-production.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) (NI)

Part of the MCA (NI) 2016, these safeguards protect individuals who lack capacity and may be deprived of their liberty in care settings. The legal criteria, assessments, and protections aim to ensure that such restrictions are lawful, proportionate, and in the person's best interests.

Donaldson Report

The Donaldson Report (*Right Time, Right Place*, 2014) is an independent review of Northern Ireland's health system led by Professor Sir Liam Donaldson. It highlighted key challenges and made recommendations for improving service quality, efficiency, and patient safety.

Equality Act 2010 (Limited Application in NI)

While the Act does not apply in full to Northern Ireland, certain elements (like the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) remain in force, affecting how services must accommodate people with mental ill-health.

Human Rights Act 1998 (UK-wide)

Applies fully in NI. Protects the rights of individuals in health and social care settings, including liberty, privacy, and non-discrimination. Influences the interpretation and application of mental health and capacity law.

IMROC (Implementing Recovery through Organisational Change) NI Adaptation

A model adopted in NI recovery colleges and mental health services to embed recovery principles across organisations. Supports the use of peer trainers, co-designed curricula, and strengths-based approaches.

Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016

A landmark piece of legislation that replaces many functions of the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986 for individuals aged 16+. It merges mental health and capacity law and sets out principles for assessing capacity and making decisions in a person's best interests. Includes safeguards such as Deprivation of Liberty. Not fully commenced.

Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986

Predecessor to the Mental Capacity Act. Still applies in certain cases (especially under 16s). Provides legal authority for the detention and treatment of individuals with mental illness. Will be gradually phased out as MCA (NI) 2016 is fully implemented.

Mental Health Outcomes Framework

A structured approach used to define, measure, and evaluate the impact of mental health services and strategies on individuals and communities. It helps ensure that mental health care is **person-centred, equitable, and effective**, and that services are accountable for delivering meaningful improvements. It will allow us to measure performance and determine how best to improve health and social care services for the Northern Ireland public.

Mental Health Strategy 2022-2031 (NI)

The 10-year strategic plan by the Department of Health for transforming mental health services in Northern Ireland. Focuses on early intervention, co-production, recovery, and regional consistency. Includes 35 actions, including Action 31 to develop a Regional Mental Health Service (RMHS).

Protect Life 2 Strategy

The suicide prevention strategy for Northern Ireland. Aims to reduce suicide rates through targeted support, improved access to services, and multi-agency collaboration. It aligns with priorities in the Mental Health Strategy.

Regional Mental Health Service (RMHS)

A key delivery mechanism under the Mental Health Strategy. Seeks to provide equitable, regionally consistent, but locally delivered mental health services across NI, including the integration of voluntary and community sector input.

Right Care, Right Person

Aims to ensure that individuals experiencing a mental health crisis are met by the appropriate professional with the right skills, training and expertise. This partnership model involves different agencies, such as the police and health and social care working together so that calls for health-related incidents are handled by healthcare services instead of the police. The goal is to improve outcomes for vulnerable people and ensure they receive timely, compassionate support from the most suitable agency.

Strategic Outcomes Framework

A structured approach used to measure how well care and support services deliver outcomes that matter most to individuals. It is designed to support transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement across local, regional, and national levels. These strategic outcomes reflect the vision of health and wellbeing that we want to achieve through broad, aspirational statements. They will be the driver for the planning, management, and delivery of services at all levels of the system.

Strategic Outcomes Measures

A **quantifiable indicator** that reflects the success of a health or social care system in delivering outcomes aligned with its strategic objectives. These outcomes often relate to quality of life, independence, safety, and equity. **Strategic Outcomes Measures** are tools used to assess whether services are achieving the long-term goals and priorities set out in strategic frameworks. These measures are essential for ensuring accountability, guiding improvement, and aligning services with what matters most to individuals and communities.

Towards Zero Suicide

Towards Zero Suicide Patient Safety Collaborative involves all five Trusts and Prisons and aims to research and adopt best practice in suicide prevention work across mental health services and the prison population. It involves a system wide commitment to suicide prevention by improving outcomes at all levels and eliminating gaps within the delivery of care. As a programme focused on suicide prevention, it's aim is to gather evidence of best practice locally, nationally, and internationally as relevant to health and social care services. Each Trust and prisons will be working at an organisation level and on the ground to apply best practice at all stages of a service user's journey, with a focus on the involvement of families and carers in providing information and support.

Transforming Your Care (2011)

A major review of health and social care in NI that called for more community-based mental health services. Provided groundwork for later reforms including the Mental Health Strategy.

You in Mind

A framework and care pathway developed by the Department of Health in Northern Ireland that outlines how individuals can access mental health care and support within the HSC (Health and Social Care) system in Northern Ireland. This Care Pathway explains how someone can access mental health care and the steps involved from the point that they are referred to the point that they no longer require care. The Care Pathway describes the standards of care that someone can expect by those mental health professionals who will partner with them in their recovery. It places the person, their family, and their support network at the centre of the decision-making process for their care and recovery.