

Surgical Site Infection Strategy

2023 - 2026



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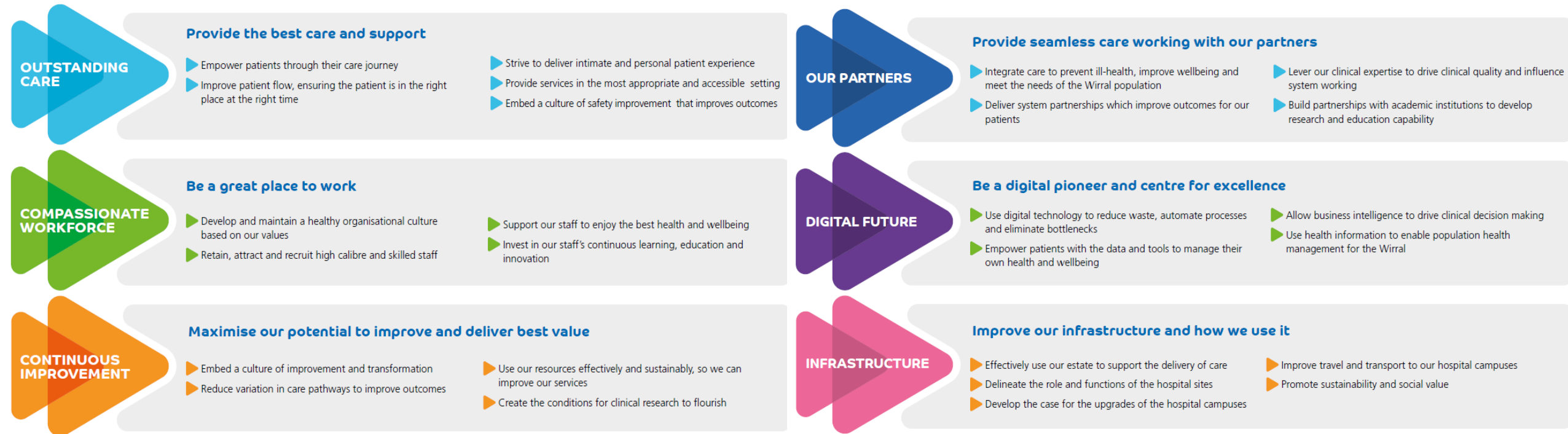
Introduction

Our journey to deliver the best quality and safest care to the communities we serve

To continually enhance the quality and safety of care provided to our communities, our Surgical Site Infection Strategy is designed to empower our staff with the knowledge and tools necessary for improvement. It will enable us to assess our current position, define our goals, and chart the course to reach them. Aligned with our Trust Strategy and Quality and Safety Strategy, this three-year plan ensures the diligent execution of our Surgical Site Infection Strategy, with a focus on prioritising the well-being of both our staff and patients. This strategy introduces a comprehensive framework for managing Surgical Site Infections, comprising five Strategic Objectives and their associated priorities, all aimed at fostering a culture of continuous care improvement.

Our 2021-2026 Objectives and Priorities

Our six strategic objectives and priorities demonstrate our intension to provide outstanding care across the Wirral through our hospital sites and units, as a lead provider within the Wirral system. We will be a Hospital Trust that patients, families and carers recommend and staff are proud to be part of.



Strategic Framework and Alignment

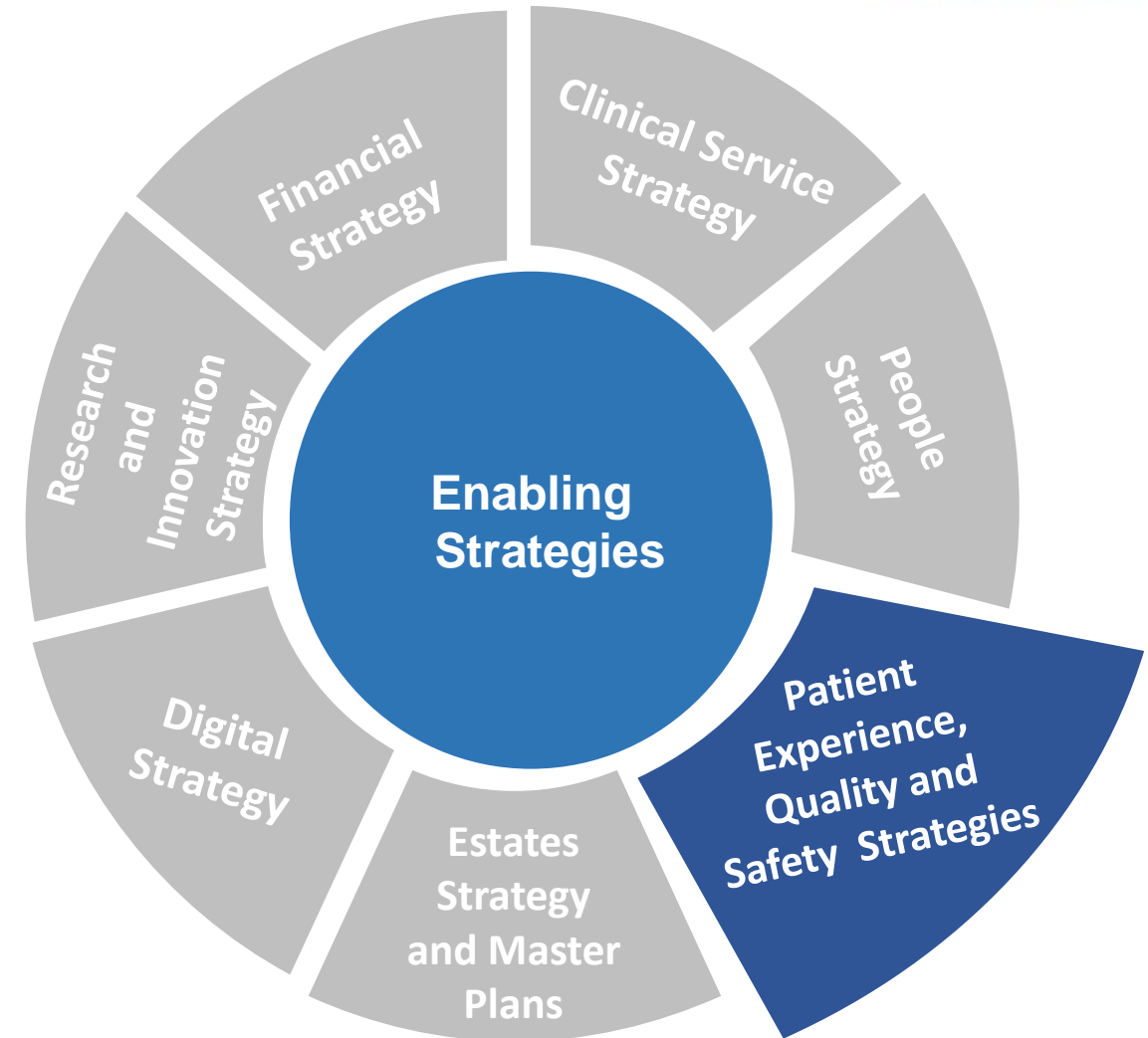
Our Enabling Strategies

Our 2021-2026 Strategy will be implemented through eight enabling strategies as illustrated.

The Surgical Site Infection (SSI) Strategy, presented here, serves as a specialised approach within our clinical divisions and complements the Infection Prevention and Control Strategy. Both the SSI and IPC strategies form a critical foundation for our Quality & Safety Strategy.

The Surgical Site Infection Strategy delineates our commitment to consistently reducing the risk of surgical site infections in alignment with national guidelines, ensuring the safety of our patients throughout their peri-operative journey.

The successful realisation of our SSI strategy objectives will actively contribute to our overarching vision, where we, collectively, strive to provide the highest quality and safest care to the communities we serve.



Developing Our Surgical Site Infection Strategy

National and Local Context

In the absence of a local or national Surgical Site Infection strategy, we conducted a review of national policy to inform our SSI strategy. WUTH is committed to aligning with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) policy, which aids hospitals in documenting SSI incidents to enhance surgical practices and prevent further infections. The UKHSA's healthcare-associated infection and antimicrobial resistance department (HCAI & AMR) manages the surgical site infection surveillance service. Submitting data to this service enables WUTH to record and track post-surgery infection incidents, utilising the findings to review and adjust our practices as needed. This service encompasses mandatory surveillance of SSIs in four orthopaedic categories and voluntary surveillance in thirteen surgical procedure categories.

Data submitted by WUTH is received by the HCAI & AMR department's healthcare-associated infections surveillance network (HAI net), which facilitates data submission for cross-country comparisons of SSI rates; an annual report is produced to provide national benchmarks

Defining a Surgical Site Infection

A surgical site is the incision or cut in the skin made by a surgeon to carry out a surgical procedure, and the tissue handled or manipulated during the procedure. A surgical site infection occurs when micro-organisms get into the part of the body that has been operated on and multiply in the tissues; in serious cases this can spread to organs or implanted material.

Surgical Site Infection Responsibilities

During a patient's peri-operative journey and beyond their discharge, they will interact with a diverse array of specialised teams. It is the shared responsibility of all personnel involved in the patient's care to contribute to the prevention and management of SSIs, while also empowering the patient and their family to do the same. This Surgical Site Infection SSI Strategy is firmly rooted in our Quality & Safety enabling strategy, with a particular focus on aligning with the Women and Children's and Surgical divisions within the Trust.

Our Surgical Site Infection Journey

Progress over recent years

Until April 2021, Wirral University Teaching Hospital diligently followed Public Health England's (PHE) obligatory guidelines for monitoring Surgical Site Infections. Reporting was conducted quarterly, primarily concentrated on Orthopaedics.

However, a significant transformation took place in April 2021 as the Trust made the shift to continuous SSI surveillance. This entailed submitting data for all quarters of the year to enable meticulous comparisons with national benchmarks. This evolution was coupled with an expansion in the purview of surveillance to encompass colorectal specialties. The catalyst for this change was the compelling emphasis on colorectal SSI surveillance stemming from the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) inspection in 2019, which underscored the vital necessity of this focus.

From June 2023 onward, WUTH undertook a strategic consolidation of its data collection efforts, focussing on elective hip replacement and colorectal surgeries. This strategic pivot was prompted by the realisation that the Trust's SSI rates in elective hip procedures were notably higher than the national average. Hence, a focused, concentrated approach was indispensable to augment prevention measures and overall enhancement.

In its endeavour to investigate SSIs, WUTH has adopted a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach. The central focus of this approach is the meticulous execution of root cause analysis reports. These reports, serving as a foundational element of the process, are subsequently presented to the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT). This presentation serves to nurture in-depth discussions on critical issues and the dissemination of invaluable insights. Importantly, this method encourages robust engagement from all members of the healthcare team, ensuring a comprehensive focus on the entire patient journey.

Developing Our Surgical Site Infection Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives and priorities for the 2023-26 Surgical Site Infection Strategy have been crafted by considering the Trust's policies and its journey over the previous five years. We've also conducted a comprehensive review of both national and local policies to ensure that this strategy aligns seamlessly with the Trust's strategic objectives.

Engagement workshops were facilitated with clinical divisions to understand where we are now, and where we want to be in three years. This information was used to develop the five strategic objectives, and the priorities that will underpin them.

Our Surgical Site Infection Strategic Objectives

- 1. Enhancing our Culture**
- 2. Empowering our Patients**
- 3. Improving Surveillance**
- 4. Developing Enablers**
- 5. Collaborative working**

Objective 1 – Enhancing our Culture

Just as important as the knowledge and skills of the staff involved in the patient's journey, is the culture of the workforce in their approach to safety. Enhancing the workforce culture around the management of Surgical Site Infections is the first objective of this Surgical Site Infection Strategy.

We Will:

- Ensure consistent levels of high-quality and safe care, preventing SSIs across all surgical procedures through standardised practices and procedures, quality of documentation.
- Encourage and empower our staff to challenge incidences of poor practice or behaviours that could lead to SSIs with a focus on theatre ethics and etiquette, Trust values, and adherence to policies such as uniform policy, continuously updated training and a commitment to best practice.
- Deliver an interactive and engaging education and training programme for staff at all levels to encourage not only knowledge and skills development at all levels, but a focus on a positive, just culture to improve our understanding and future care around SSIs.
- Ensure training and education is aligned to updated national guidance on the management of surgical wounds, and the processes for risk assessments to address risk factors prior to surgery.
- Highlight the importance of team culture and staff morale in SSI prevention and management through team building and extending education and training opportunities to our partner organisations to develop our skills mix and retain our staff.

Objective 2 – Empowering our Patients

Our patients, with their families and carers are a constant factor throughout all stages of the peri-operative journey and after discharge. It is our responsibility to ensure that our patients, their family and carer's are involved in the prevention and management of surgical site infections at all stages of their journey.

We Will:

- Provide patient information in a wide range of accessible formats including in writing, in various languages and in video format
- Ensure patient information is focused and provided at the appropriate times throughout the journey and by the appropriate member of staff.
- Provide the appropriate facilities for medical optimisation pre-operatively, including patient showers, patient warming and adequate pharmacy support and thorough screening to medically optimise the patient to prevent surgical site infections.
- Prioritise personalised care in our approach to patient communication, adopting a pro-active approach to identify and meet the needs of individuals in a timely manner to ensure all patients receive high quality care and reduce health inequalities.

Objective 3 – Improving Surveillance

Ensuing high-quality surveillance of surgical site infections allows us not only to identify and treat surgical site infections, but to understand why they have occurred and inform and improve future care.

We Will:

- Prioritise the documentation and recording of data for SSIs in order to monitor our progress and identify trends in SSIs in order to inform and improve future surgical care.
- Introduce tools to staff to support in documentation of surgical care to ensure standardised, high quality documentation of interventions, assessments and care plans for the prevention and management of SSIs.
- Ensure staff are provided with education and training on the significance of SSI surveillance and this is introduced into practice as standard.

Objective 4 – Developing Enablers

Understanding and enhancing the enablers for preventing and treating surgical site infections is a key objective in the delivery of this Strategy.

We Will:

- Develop digital enablers to support the recording and monitoring of SSI incidences.
- Develop digital communication tools to support in the education of patients and staff around SSIs, including photography and education videos.
- Support high quality care by focusing on the maintenance of the care environment to support in infection prevention and control practices and spaces that provide dignity and respect for our patients.
- Develop pathways, policies and procedures that thoroughly address all elements of patient care in the prevention and management of SSIs including maintenance of equipment, wound management pathways and dressing formularies.

Objective 5 – Collaborative Working

The surgical patient journey involves the input of a number of specialist teams both within the Trust and after our patients have left our care, therefore identifying ways to collaborate at all levels and with our partners is the final objective of this strategy.

We Will:

- Identify and engage with all teams who are responsible to deliver this Strategy, and ensure they are equipped with the adequate training, education and resources to deliver the priorities we set out.
- Engage with our community partners to identify areas of gaps or duplication in the services in the prevention and management of SSIs
- Develop enhanced communication pathways with our partner organisations so that we can proactively improve the prevention and management of SSIs across Wirral Place.
- Break down barriers to collaboration by providing education and training opportunities to the workforce of our partner organisations to develop shared knowledge and skills and provide seamless, integrated care to the patients of Wirral, reducing SSIs and the need for further inpatient care.
- Develop and implement a robust governance structure to support communication around SSIs both within the Trust and when working with partner organisations to ensure highest level communication and information sharing including documentation and handover procedures, and identifying single point of contacts within the Trust to oversee the prevention and management of SSIs.

Next Steps

How we Get to Where we Want to Be: Implementation, Monitoring and Review



Development and sign-off of the three-year Surgical Site Infections Strategy aligned to the Trust Strategic Objectives.
These objectives and priorities will then be translated into the annual plan for Surgical and Women & Children's divisions.

Key performance indicators for Surgical Site Infections will be determined through the introduction of digital enablers to record the number of Surgical Site Infections recorded within the Trust and across Wirral Place.

Key to the success of this strategy is engagement with patients and partner organisations, supported by a foundation of a safe culture among our workforce and the governance and resources to support our teams.

Surgical Site Infections Strategy priorities will be reviewed as part of annual operational and strategic planning to ensure they remain relevant to our evolving patient needs and maintain delivery momentum.

Strategic Alignment

Our Surgical Site Infections Strategic Objectives Aligned to our 2021-2026 Trust Strategic Objectives

	Outstanding Care <i>Provide the best care and support</i>	Compassionate workforce <i>Be a great place to work</i>	Continuous Improvement <i>Maximise our potential to improve and deliver best value</i>	Our Partners <i>Provide seamless care working with our partners</i>	Digital Future <i>Be a digital pioneer and centre for digital excellence</i>	Infrastructure <i>Improve our infrastructure and how we use it</i>
1.Enhancing our Culture	✓	✓	✓	✓		
2. Empowering our Patients	✓		✓			
3. Improving Surveillance	✓		✓	✓	✓	
4. Developing Enablers					✓	✓
5. Collaborative Working	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Patient Experience Strategic Alignment

The five objectives of our Surgical Site Infection Strategy will support the delivery of our Patient Experience Strategy



	Being made to feel at ease and reassured	Listening to me and respecting me as an individual	Feeling safe and having trust in the staff	Designing my care with me and for me	Working together to plan my aftercare
1.Enhancing our Culture			✓		
2. Empowering our Patients	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Improving Surveillance			✓		✓
4. Developing Enablers					✓
5. Collaborative Working				✓	✓