

### What our client wanted

NHSScotland was facing with criticism about its performance, particularly in contrast to the NHS in England. As a result NHSScotland wanted to benchmark its performance.

### What Frontline did

Frontline designed an innovative response to this brief which involved 12 months working in close partnership with in-house staff in the Information Services Division of NHSScotland. We identified 6 main themes to cover performance across a full range of services in all sectors of health: organisational efficiency, quality, patient experience, supply and demand, health improvement and finance. We then broke each of these down into more detail and finally identified 100 individual parameters to be used, including hard and soft data. While there were plenty of routinely collected figures available about acute hospital activity, there was little available in primary care and mental health, and generally less data about outcomes: we had to be innovative in finding “soft” yet credible information. A further issue was making data comparable across different hospitals and populations, especially when we came to benchmark against the UK and OECD. We then used statistical tools to determine the degree of significant of the variances we found. We produced a report that highlighted comparisons at a national and local level and went some way to suggesting the causes of some of the variations, based on the wide range of data we had accumulated and analysed. The overall results were displayed very accessibly using a balanced scorecard and traffic light approach. A further and important strand of this project was to assess the relevance of such work to performance management within a restructured NHSScotland, and to review the relevance of existing performance reports. A second report was also produced when a further year’s data was available.

### What difference we made

Our report provided an assessment of the performance of NHS Scotland in totality and by health board: it highlighted the many positive aspects of the service, which had perhaps not been visible. We identified for newly formed organisations and merged boards the areas of good practice within their new responsibilities, as well as those that could benefit from further attention.

This work was also used to inform a review of the performance management system across NHSScotland, and significant changes in the analysis and reporting of data.

