

NHS Scotland Brand Policy

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Brand Policy Approvals

Policy Lead	SG Health Marketing		
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Approvals	Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care		
	Chief Executive of NHS Scotland & Director General for Health and Social Care		
	NHS Scotland Chief Operating Officer		
	Head of Scottish Government Marketing		
	Head of Health Sponsorship		
	Head of NHS Scotland Corporate Communications		
	Peer reviewed	NHS Scotland Strategic Communications Group	
		NHS Scotland Brand Advisory Group	
		SG Joint Head of Marketing & Brand	

Brand Policy Review

The NHS Scotland Brand Policy document should be reviewed in its entirety every three years following its launch in 2025, with priority policy content reviewed at key milestones during this time:

Brand Policy Review Schedule		

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NHS Scotland Brand Policy – Introduction

Many individuals and organisations - from NHS staff and Boards to public sector partners and industry bodies - use the NHS Scotland brand. Given the wide range of potential users of the brand, this policy is designed to ensure appropriate use.

Shaped by an evidence-led approach, informed by engagement with the public, stakeholders, NHS staff, and Scottish Government officials the policy is inclusive, practical, and reflects the needs of those who use the NHS Scotland brand. The policy places strong emphasis on accessibility and equality while outlining who can use the brand, under what conditions, and how it should be managed.

The policy is supported by brand guidelines - a visual rulebook that sets out how the brand should be applied consistently and correctly.

Management of the policy and guidelines sits with the Scottish Government's Health Marketing team, who also lead on the development and delivery of public health marketing for Scotland (with the exception of vaccines which is delivered by Public Health Scotland, except during a pandemic).

NHS Scotland Brand – Guiding Principles

As part of the policy development, six guiding principles were created. Rooted in NHS Scotland's core values, these principles outline how the brand should be used and protected. They ensure consistency, integrity, and public trust in the brand.

These principles mean we will:

- always consider the needs of the public and patients first.
 - only use the NHS Scotland identity in ways that support our values.
 - apply the NHS Scotland identity proudly and consistently.
 - work together to enhance and protect the NHS Scotland identity.
 - strive to use the NHS Scotland identity in an accessible and inclusive way.
 - only use the NHS Scotland identity in ways that benefit the public.

See Annex B for detail behind how these principles will be delivered.

Importance of Protecting the Brand

Public trust in the NHS depends not only on what we do, but how we are seen. The brand exists to protect, promote, and enhance the values and reputation of the NHS for the benefit of those who use its services. It also helps patients and the public easily recognise and access trusted NHS services and information.

Evidence gathered during policy development shows that consistent use of a unified brand supports universal access to care and information, reduces confusion, and helps the public navigate health services more effectively.

A consistent and accurate brand helps strengthen public trust, conveys reliability and reassurance, and builds meaningful connections between staff and patients.

Key Elements of the NHS Scotland Brand

The NHS Scotland brand has six key elements – naming, logo, colour palette, typography, visual and audio styles, and tone of voice – which provides assurance, reinforces reputation, and evokes familiarity and trust among patients, public, staff and stakeholders.

4.1 Naming conventions

Consistent naming principles help people identify and navigate organisations and services.

This policy confirms that *NHS Scotland* should be written as two words – enhancing accessibility and aligning with naming conventions across other NHS organisations. This revision to the original brand is endorsed by NHS Boards and consistent with current use.

4.1.1 Ownership and oversight: The term *NHS* is a protected UK trademark. In Scotland, its use is governed by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care (Scottish Ministers), while legal ownership remains with the UK Government's Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. As such, naming decisions rest with Scottish Ministers, supported by the Chief Executive of NHS Scotland, the Director-General for Health and Social Care, and the Chief Operating Officer.

SG Health Marketing manages the practical application of NHS naming conventions, working alongside teams across the Health and Social Care Directorate, including: Chief Operating Officer Directorate (COOD) and People, Governance & Appointments Unit.

Depending on the issue (e.g. naming of National Treatment Centres or Cancer Centres), topic-specific policy officials may be consulted. Advice should consider brand principles, policy context, local landscape, and complexity.

4.1.2 Overall Rules

- NHS Scotland should always be written as two words.
- Only organisations established under the 1978 Act may legally use the NHS Scotland brand. Exceptions require Ministerial approval.
- Names must be clear, consistent, easy-to-understand, and follow NHS Scotland brand guidelines.
- Only Scottish Ministers can create or ratify new NHS organisations. Naming is strictly controlled.
- Use of terms such as *NHS*, *Scotland*, *hospital*, *health centre*, *health service*, *university*, *Royal*, *University*, and *Teaching* is restricted. Exceptions require Ministerial approval.

4.1.3 University status reflects a formal partnership between an NHS body and a university, recognising a shared commitment to research, education, and improving outcomes. These partnerships are typically established with universities awarding medical or dental degrees.

- University status does not alter the legal name of an NHS Board.
- Branding must remain consistent, regardless of university status.
- Communications must align with NHS Scotland's brand policy and guidelines, ensuring clarity, equity of access, and consistency in messaging.

4.2 Identifiable logo: The NHS Scotland logo is a unique visual symbol that supports identification and recognition (by patients, public, staff, stakeholders, and suppliers):



The three essential elements of the logo, which should not be separated, are:

- the initials NHS at the top,
- the caring hands device,
- the word 'Scotland' or the relevant NHS Board name.

No other logos can be created to represent NHS Scotland services, departments, programmes, projects, initiatives, or information.

4.2.1 Parent logo and logo variants: Only statutory NHS Scotland bodies can use the NHS Scotland or an NHS Board logo to represent their organisation (see Annex C).

4.2.2 Subidentity logos: Several approved subidentities are used across NHS Scotland (which must always be presented alongside the NHS Scotland brand, with equal prominence). These include but are not limited to NHS Inform, Scottish Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) and the Give Blood logo and The Scottish Ambulance Service Crest (with permission for use granted by Lord Lyon King of Arms and Scottish Ministers, in conjunction with the NHS Scotland logo). See Point 7 for information about legacy logos.

No other subidentities can be created to represent NHS Scotland services, departments, programmes, projects, initiatives, or information.

4.2.3 Dual-Language (EnglishGaelic) Logos: NHS Boards may request permission to use a dual language (EnglishGaelic) version of their logo. This is only available to Boards with an approved Gaelic Language Plan, agreed by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and requires submission of a business case to the Scottish Government.



To date, only two NHS Boards have permission to use dual language logos:

- NHS Western Isles, which adopted its GaelicEnglish logo in 2000.
- NHS Highland, approved in 2023 following a formal business case.

The NHS Scotland parent brand does not currently adopt a dual language logo.

4.2.4 Partnerships logo

Scottish Ministers approved the NHS Scotland Partnership logo in Spring 2024. It features the NHS Scotland logo prefaced with “*In Partnership with*”, clarifying NHS Scotland’s role and promoting consistency (available in the NHS Scotland Brand Guidelines).

The partnership logo helps distinguish partner-led initiatives from NHS Scotland-delivered services. Logo application must follow brand guidelines and consider factors such as NHS Scotland’s role, lead partner status, funding sources, intended beneficiaries, and the number of organisations involved. In joint projects, if brand alignment is not possible, the lead organisation’s identity guidelines should be followed. Where roles are equal, a neutral approach may be used to ensure parity and clarity.



No other logos should be created to represent partnerships and use of the NHS Scotland brand in partnerships must follow the brand guidelines.

Principles for use

Use of the partnership logo is only permitted when the following conditions are met:

- External use only: The logo may be only used by non-NHS organisations.
- Formal permission: A licence or memorandum of understanding (MoU) must be agreed with SG Health Marketing.
- NHS involvement: NHS Scotland must be significantly involved e.g. through funding, staff, data, or facilities.
- Public benefit: The partnership must offer clear added value or support public health.
- Board collaboration: Use is allowed only when more than one NHS Board is involved.
- Guidance compliance: Partners must follow NHS Scotland brand guidelines and instructions from NHS Boards.

Licence agreements must outline how the partnership logo can and cannot be used, the time-frame of permitted use, accessibility compliance and consequences of misuse.

Restrictions

Use is not permitted if:

- the service does not align with NHS Scotland values or brand principles.
- no formal agreement is in place or terms are breached.
- Used in misleading or unauthorised ways, such as: creating new logos and locking straplines into the logo, used on products or in business names, sublicensing or registering trademarks.

NHS Board Partnerships – one logo: Where multiple NHS Boards (two or more) work together to deliver a particular service or initiative which requires use of a logo for credibility and accountability, this is best represented through application of the NHS Scotland logo – unless there is a clear and obvious lead organisation, and there is no greater benefit in using the NHS Scotland logo. Only two NHS Board or the NHS Scotland logo should feature.

4.2.4 NHS Scotland Primary Care Contractor Logo

Primary care contractors, who deliver NHS Scotland funded services under nationally agreed contracts, are permitted to use a NHS Scotland Contractor Logo.

The NHS Scotland Primary Care logo recognises the value of these services and promotes consistency in how they are signposted to patients and the public.



Principles for use

Use of the NHS Scotland identity by primary care contractors is governed by the following principles:

- Formal approval: Use of the NHS Scotland logo requires consent from SG Health Marketing; NHS Board logo variants require Board Communications approval.
- Contractual alignment: Branding must reflect the scope of NHS-funded services and comply with NHS Scotland brand guidelines.
- Brand ownership: The NHS Scotland identity is owned by Scottish Ministers, with decisions ratified by the Chief Executive of NHS Scotland and the Director-General for Health and Social Care.
- Clarity and consistency: Branding must help patients clearly identify NHS-funded services and uphold NHS Scotland's values, reputation, and accessibility standards.

Restrictions

Primary care contractors must not:

- not imply NHS involvement in privately funded services.
- Use NHS branding to promote private services.
- Include *NHS* or *NHS Scotland* in business names.
- Mislead patients about which services are NHS-funded.
- Create or modify NHS logos.
- Lock straplines into the NHS Scotland Primary Care logo.
- Use NHS branding on products or medical devices.
- Enter contracts allowing third-party use of NHS branding.
- Allow suppliers to use NHS branding.
- Register trademarks using NHS Scotland identity elements.

4.3 Colour palette: The NHS Scotland colour palette supports consistent recognition of NHS services and organisations, helping people distinguish and prioritise trusted information. Development of this policy saw the palette expertly reviewed and refined to meet accessibility standards and legal requirements for both online and offline use.

The two primary colours (blues) remain largely unchanged since introduction in 2000, with the light blue slightly adjusted for accessibility and the secondary palette standardising ten additional colours - for use across print and digital communications.

A 'highlight colours' palette, of five colours, has also been developed as vibrant accents only at the direct request of NHS Board communications and design professionals.

The brand guidelines include rules to ensure consistent and accessible use of colour. For example, vibrant colours may be used on up to 20% of any asset, helping maintain visual balance and brand integrity.

The guidelines also introduce a colour accessibility tool - a practical reference for designers to check which colour combinations meet accessibility standards, including minimum text sizes. This helps prevent the use of inaccessible colour pairings and promotes consistency across all communications.

There is no requirement to update existing assets, but the new colour palette (including the new NHS Scotland light blue in the logo) must be used when creating new or refreshed resources or materials.

4.4 Distinctive typography: Two options have been set out to replace the previous four – Source Sans as our primary font and Arial as our secondary font.

This replaces Stone Sans, Garamond, and Times Roman Numeral (Adobe withdrew the licence and such fonts no longer compatible with accessibility standards).

Source Sans is an open-source sans-serif typeface developed by Adobe and licensed under the SIL Open Font License (OFL). It is free to use for both personal and commercial projects. It is widely recommended for accessible design due to its high legibility. It accommodates translations which require orthography not compatible with the English alphabet (such as those for Baltic States). Optimized for web use and compatible with modern browsers, Source Sans offers a flexible range of weights suitable for a variety of design contexts.

If Source Sans is not available, Arial can be used. This allows graphic designers to reduce issues with templates created within Word.

Exceptions, translations, and campaign guidance is written into the guidelines.

4.5 Relatable visual and audio styles: Cohesive, relatable visuals help NHS Scotland organisations engage patients and the public across all communication channels, ensuring a consistent brand experience. Balancing differentiation with a unified look and tone makes it clear that services or initiatives are part of NHS Scotland.

4.6 Assuring tone of voice: Content should present factual evidence-led information in an inclusive, authoritative voice that evokes trust.

Usage of the NHS Scotland Brand

5.1 Permitted use: Only statutory NHS Scotland organisations (listed in Annex E) may use a variant of the NHS Scotland logo, where the word “Scotland” under the caring hands device is replaced by the organisational or geographical reference.

Use of the letters ‘NHS’ is protected by legislation. Only organisations established under the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 – such as NHS Boards and NHS Scotland-linked Charities – can use the NHS Scotland brand in their identity and name.

Any exceptions or changes to naming must be approved by Scottish Ministers.

The NHS Scotland identity can only be used in relation to NHS Scotland services, programmes, projects, initiatives, and information. This includes by Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Public Health Scotland, and primary care contractors delivering services and information on behalf of, and funded by, NHS Scotland or its Boards. In these cases, contractors may use the NHS Scotland logo in line with brand guidelines.

In some cases, where public-facing content is linked to Scottish Government policy or funding, the NHS Scotland logo may appear alongside the Healthier Scotland logo. This must comply with both NHS Scotland and Scottish Government brand guidelines, with approval from the Scottish Government’s Health Marketing team.

Permission for use of any element of the NHS Scotland brand can only be granted by the Scottish Government.

5.2 Prohibited use: The following are not permitted to use the NHS Scotland brand:

- Suppliers: Providers of goods and services to NHS Scotland cannot use the logo or that of Boards or infer endorsement or further involvement.
- Products: The NHS logos cannot be used on products and items. The only exceptions to this are uniforms, signage and vehicle livery, and staff badges. All are commissioned through approved suppliers in accordance with relevant policies and guidelines.
- Endorsement: The NHS logos cannot be used to endorse third party goods, services, or development or training. The only exception is where services are delivered by a third party on behalf of, and funded by, NHS Scotland or an NHS Board.

5.3 Official NHS Scotland linked Charities: There are 16 official NHS Scotland-linked charities, established under Section 83(1) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978, permitted to use the letters ‘NHS’ in their name. All 16 are members of NHS Charities Together, which holds a rolling licence with the Department of Health and Social Care to use the NHS England identity, alongside 220 other UK charities.

These charities may also use elements of the NHS Scotland brand - such as the NHS Scotland logo or NHS Board logo variants - only with formal approval:

- Use of the NHS Scotland logo requires consent from SG Health Marketing.

- Use of NHS Board logos requires approval from the relevant Board Communications team.

Principles for usage

- Charities must use the NHS letters appropriately and follow provided brand guidance and toolkits.
- Charities are responsible for upholding NHS Scotland's values, reputation, and accessibility standards, and must clearly communicate its relationship with the NHS Board it supports. Use must be also be approved by the charity's Board Communications and Finance teams, with final signoff by the Board.

A licence agreement must be signed with the NHS Board, outlining:

- Permitted use of the NHS Scotland brand.
- Standards for values, accessibility, and reputation.
- Timeframe and permanence of usage.
- Consequences of misuse.

Where the NHS Scotland identity is used, charities must include a clear statement that use of the name does not imply NHS-funded care or services.

Restrictions

NHS Scotlandlinked charities must not:

- Enter contracts allowing thirdparty use of NHS branding without approval.
- Use NHS letters in subbrands or straplines.
- Imply NHS-funded service provision.
- Create or modify NHS logos.
- Allow suppliers to use NHS branding.
- Register trademarks using NHS identity elements.
- Use NHS branding on medical devices or products.
- Undertake activities that damage NHS Scotland's reputation.

5.4 Other Charities:

No other charity in Scotland may use 'NHS' in its name. Charities and organisations may refer to the NHS descriptively (e.g. supporting our local NHS workers), but not in a trademarked or branding sense. Use must not imply NHS-funded service delivery or mimic NHS Board naming formats.

Independent charities and non-NHS organisations may only use the NHS Scotland identity or NHS Board logos if formally partnering with NHS Scotland and with permission from the Scottish Government Marketing team or the relevant NHS Board communications team.

5.5 NHS Scotlandlinked Companies

There are three main categories where use of the NHS Scotland identity by linked companies or entities is restricted, with no automatic entitlement to use the brand:

- Partowned Companies - Entities jointly owned by NHS Scotland and private partners, such as InnoScot Health, which supports spinout companies through NHS Board partnerships. InnoScot Health does not use the NHS Scotland identity in its brand but may reference NHS Scotland under agreed conditions, with logo use approved case by case.

- NHS Scotland Enterprises – Commercial arms of NHS Boards, such as LH Occupational Health (NHS Lothian), which provides services to private clients. These entities are separate from NHS Scotland and do not use its identity. Similarly, services like Lothian Fertility Service operate privately and are outside the scope of the brand policy.
- Procured Private Services – Companies contracted to deliver services to NHS Scotland (e.g. in life sciences) are not permitted to use the NHS Scotland identity. They may describe their role in service delivery using wording only, and must avoid NHS Scotland Blue or branding elements.

5.6 Products: Printers and suppliers of items like identity badges, lanyards, and uniforms have standing permission to use the NHS Scotland logo, as agreed through contracts tendered by NHS Scotland organisations.

To protect the brand's integrity, most other product-related requests are refused, with exceptions considered case by case. Where permission is granted, it must offer clear benefit to NHS Scotland, be time-limited, and comply with brand principles and values. The logo may be used to promote the product, but not the organisation behind it.

It is not permitted to use:

- The NHS Scotland logo on any items or wares produced by a third party, even if some proceeds of sale go to NHS Scotland and/or Boards. This excludes products produced by an NHS Scotland-linked organisation which are considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Use the NHS letters on any items or wares when a third party is profiting from the sale of such items and there is no benefit to NHS Scotland.
- Use the NHS letters where there is a benefit to NHS Scotland but, at our sole discretion, it is considered that any individual or organisation involved should not be associated with the NHS Scotland brand.
- Use the letters where there is a benefit to NHS Scotland but the proposed use would suggest connection with, or approval, by the NHS in Scotland and is likely to mislead the public.

5.7 TV and Filming Licence Requests: Requests from TV production companies to use the NHS Scotland brand are only approved through a licence agreement. A revised template agreement was introduced in March 2025 and should be reviewed annually and tailored to each request.

Requests must submit a business case demonstrating alignment with the NHS Scotland's six brand principles, core values, and public health improvement or prevention goals. The proposal must clearly outline benefits to NHS Scotland, patients, and/or the public.

Requests from statutory NHS Scotland bodies, endorsement from the organisation's communications lead and the relevant Scottish Government Policy Lead is required.

TV licence agreements do not apply to paid NHS Scotland advertising or coverage by mainstream media (e.g. journalists or broadcasters).

5.8 Straplines: Also known as a tagline or slogan, a strapline is a clear, concise, descriptive, and memorable phrase that communicates the key benefits and features of a product or service. While there is scope for straplines to be used in NHS Scotland campaigns, most commonly by NHS Boards, straplines at an organisational level are not permitted.

5.9 Sponsorship and endorsement: Any sponsorship arrangement must not damage NHS Scotland's reputation or devalue its brand.

Sponsorship is a mutually beneficial marketing arrangement where a third party supports an event, initiative, campaign, activity, organisation, or person in exchange for brand visibility. Any sponsorship arrangement must uphold ethical and regulatory standards, ensure transparency and public accountability, be best value and avoid conflicts of interest.

If the NHS Scotland logo is to appear alongside partner or supplier logos - whether NHS Scotland is the sponsor or the recipient - brand identity principles must be upheld (see Annex B) and the approver must:

- Ensure the identity helps signpost NHS Scotland services .
- Prevent unethical or misleading use, including by association.
- Limit use to public benefit, prohibiting use by non-NHS Scotland organisations to promote their own private services or products from the identity.

When receiving sponsorship:

- NHS Scotland or NHS Board logos must not imply endorsement of the sponsor or its products.
- Sponsors must not use the activity as a direct sales channel.
- Sponsorship must be clearly signalled using credit such as 'sponsored by' or 'in association with' above the sponsor's name/ logo or NHS logo.
- Sponsor names or logos should be clearly identified and must not suggest ownership or control.
- A clear disclaimer must state that sponsorship does not imply endorsement of the sponsor's products or services.

Prohibited sponsorship categories:

- Religion, faith or belief systems.
- Adult products and services.
- Gambling.
- Alcohol.
- Tobacco and vapes.
- HFSS foods and drinks
- Caffeinated energy drinks
- Weapons and gun clubs.
- Political or lobby groups.

¹ This does not prohibit or limit engagement or collaboration with bodies that represent different faiths.

Process: Scottish Government staff must seek advice from Health Marketing before entering sponsorship arrangements involving the NHS Scotland brand. Final approval rests with the relevant Policy Lead or Director. All logo use must be logged with SG Health Marketing and may require further approval from the NHS Scotland Brand Board or senior leadership.

NHS Board staff must follow their own policies and consider whether SG Health Marketing, and SG News should be informed – especially where public or Ministerial interest is likely.

6. Accessibility

As outlined in our guiding brand principles, NHS Scotland is committed to maintaining brand integrity while meeting accessible standards that ensure equitable and inclusive access to services, care, and information. Detailed information on lawful and appropriate use of the NHS Scotland brand is available in the NHS Scotland brand guidelines.

7. Legacy Logos

As outlined in section 4.2 *Identifiable logo*, no additional logos or subidentities can be created to represent NHS Scotland services, departments, programmes, projects, initiatives, or information. Where a logo is required the NHS Scotland logo should be used.

A small number of logos with strong public recognition have been granted exemption and may remain in use, as listed in Section 4.

Where unapproved logos exist, NHS Boards will implement a phased withdrawal over a three-year period (2025/26 to 2027/28) as follows:

- Digital assets: To be phased out as marketing, communications, and design teams have capacity, or where visibility undermines NHS Scotland or Board brands.
- Print assets: To be replaced as stock is reprinted.
- Signage and vehicle livery: Where possible, updated using vinyl overlays. If not feasible, NHS Boards will access realistic timescales on a new-for-old basis.

Responsibility for phasing out legacy logos sits with the NHS Board accountable for the service, programme, or resource; or with the Scottish Government Policy team that introduced or funded it. Where this is delivered in partnership – with other NHS Boards or with third party providers – it will be the lead NHS Board which holds responsibility for phasing out the legacy logo.

The NHS Board's Communications Lead should update SG Health Marketing on progress via the NHS Scotland Strategic Communicators Group.

Where this is a service, programme, or resource led by a Scottish Government Policy team, then SG Health Marketing should engage with the Lead Official, with NHS Board Communications Leads updated as appropriate.

8. Governance, Misuse, and Enforcement of NHS Scotland Brand

8.1 Oversight and Responsibility

The Scottish Government's Health Marketing team (SG Health Marketing), in collaboration with NHS Board Communications teams, is responsible for enforcing NHS Scotland brand standards and responding to reports of misuse. SG Health Marketing does not actively monitor usage, therefore NHS Boards are accountable for overseeing their linked charity's use of the NHS brand.

8.2 Assessment of Breaches

Any breaches or complaints regarding brand misuse will be assessed by SG Health Marketing. Where appropriate, cases may be:

- Referred to the relevant NHS Board when misuse involves a Board logo.
- Referred to the relevant NHS Board when misuse involves a primary care contractor, as the NHS Board leads on engagement with the contractor initially
- Escalated to NHS England / UK Government's Department of Health and Social Care to determine if it constitutes an infringement under the Trade Marks Act.

8.2 Enforcement Process

If misuse is identified:

The organisation/company will be asked to correct usage within 7 days.

Up to three notices may be issued, each spaced seven days apart.

If unresolved:

A formal paper may be submitted to the NHS Board or the NHS Scotland Brand Board recommending remedial action.

The case may be escalated to the Scottish Government Legal Directorate, who - if approved by the Brand Board - may issue a formal cease and desist letter.

Legal action may follow if necessary.

8.3 Ministerial Escalation

Engagement with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care should only occur in exceptional circumstances, and only if the NHS Scotland Brand Board deems it necessary or beneficial - particularly in cases involving primary care contractors, given local NHS Board arrangements and national contract commitments

9. Standalone Guidelines

This policy and NHS Scotland brand identity guidelines links with, supports, and underpins related but separate guidelines on:

Standalone Guidelines	Summary	Key Contact(s)
NHS Scotland National Treatment Centres Naming Convention	National Treatment Centres governance arrangements and naming convention was agreed in relation with NHS Scotland brand guidelines. Available on eRDM: 2	Planned Care Policy & Performance, NHS Scotland Chief Operating Officer Directorate, Scottish Government. Waitingtimespolicy@gov.scot
Wayfinding	Building and facilities signage HTM 65 Aug 2016 (nhs.scot)	Architecture & Design Team, Property, Sustainability & Capital Planning, NHSScotland Assure NSS.architecturedesignsupport@nhs.scot

10. Contact

All enquiries, requests, and complaints about usage of the NHS Scotland brand should be directed in the first instance to: NHSScotlandBrandPolicy@gov.scot

Annex A

Glossary

This glossary provides key terms and concepts used in or related to NHS Scotland brand policy. It does not cover all terms used across the brand management and strategy.

- Brand – a product or service that delivers a consistent, distinctive benefit and is shaped by how people perceive and experienced it.
- Brand management – the process of ensuring that a brand consistently communicates the same message, values, and identity; taking into account the landscape, trends, and audience needs.
- Branding – the strategic use of tools and messaging to shape people’s perceptions of a brand. This includes visual elements (logo, voice etc) and intangible elements (such as the mission, values, and storytelling).
- Brand identity – the visual, and verbal expression that make a brand recognisable, including its name, logo, font, colour palette, naming conventions, and tone of voice.
- Brand policy – the strategic rules that govern the brand use , protecting its integrity by formalising who can use it, how, and under what conditions.
- Brand guidelines – practical tools that help people apply the brand correctly. These may include a brand vision, brand identity, brand standards or guidelines, writing style guidelines, design rules, and contact points for support.

Annex B

Six Guiding Principles for the NHS Scotland Brand

Principle 1: We will always consider the needs of public and patients first

NHS Scotland exists to care for people, delivering a trusted, highquality service. Just as staff put patients first , we must ensure the NHS Scotland brand is always used in ways that serve the public's best interest.

We will:

- Make it easy to identify NHS Scotland services.
- Use the NHS Scotland or NHS Board logos to signpost services.
- Be transparent around who is providing services.

We will not:

- Use unnecessary logos or graphics that confuse the public.
- Spend resources on logos that don't benefit the public.
- Use technical or complex language.

Principle 2: We will only use the NHS Scotland brand in ways that benefit the public

The NHS Scotland brand signals the quality and type of service people expect. It must be used responsibly by NHS Scotland organisations and partners to accurately represents services and service public good.

We will:

- Educate and support partners on correct identity usage.
- Ensure the identity is only used to represent NHS Scotland services and products.
- Consider commercial requests only where there is clear benefit to NHS Scotland.

We will not:

- Mislead the public or allow others to do so.
- Allow non-NHS Scotland organisations to use the brand to promote private services or products.
- Allow others to profit from use of the NHS Scotland brand.

Principle 3: We will strive to use the NHS Scotland identity in an accessible and inclusive way

NHS Scotland serves everyone, regardless of location or circumstances. The brand must reflect this by being accessible, inclusive and easy to engage with.

We will:

- Consider the needs of all members of the public and staff.
- Uphold the highest standards of accessibility.
- Use accessible fonts and colours in branding and communications.

We will not:

- Exclude individuals through our communications.
- Use outdated or inaccessible fonts, logos or graphics.
- Use language that is complicated, confusing or exclusive in nature.

Principle 4: We will work together to enhance and protect the NHS Scotland identity

We will work together and support each other to use the identity in a clear, positive way, to continue to build connection and trust with the Scottish people. This is everyone's shared responsibility.

We will:

- Encourage team members to consult the brand guidelines.
- Support partners to use the brand correctly.
- Involve brand and communications teams in brand-related decisions.

We will not:

- Create branding or communications that devalue the brand.
- Modify or change the identity to suit individual preference.
- Put individual needs and interests ahead of the public's needs.

Principle 5: We will only use the NHS Scotland identity in ways that support our values

The brand represents our promise to provide a caring, empathetic service with care and compassion, dignity and respect, openness, honesty and teamwork. Its use must always reflect these values.

We will:

- Be thoughtful in how we represent the brand.
- Represent our staff, the public and patients in an inclusive way.
- Use quality images and graphics that reflect our high standards.

We will not:

- Use the brand in unethical or misleading ways.
- Mislead the public, patients or staff.

Principle 6: We will apply the NHS Scotland identity proudly and consistently

The brand is a symbol of pride and trust. It must be used consistently, boldly and recognisably to maintain its integrity.

We will:

- Apply the brand clearly and consistently.
- Ensure it is prominently shown.
- Use the original form of the brand, where possible.

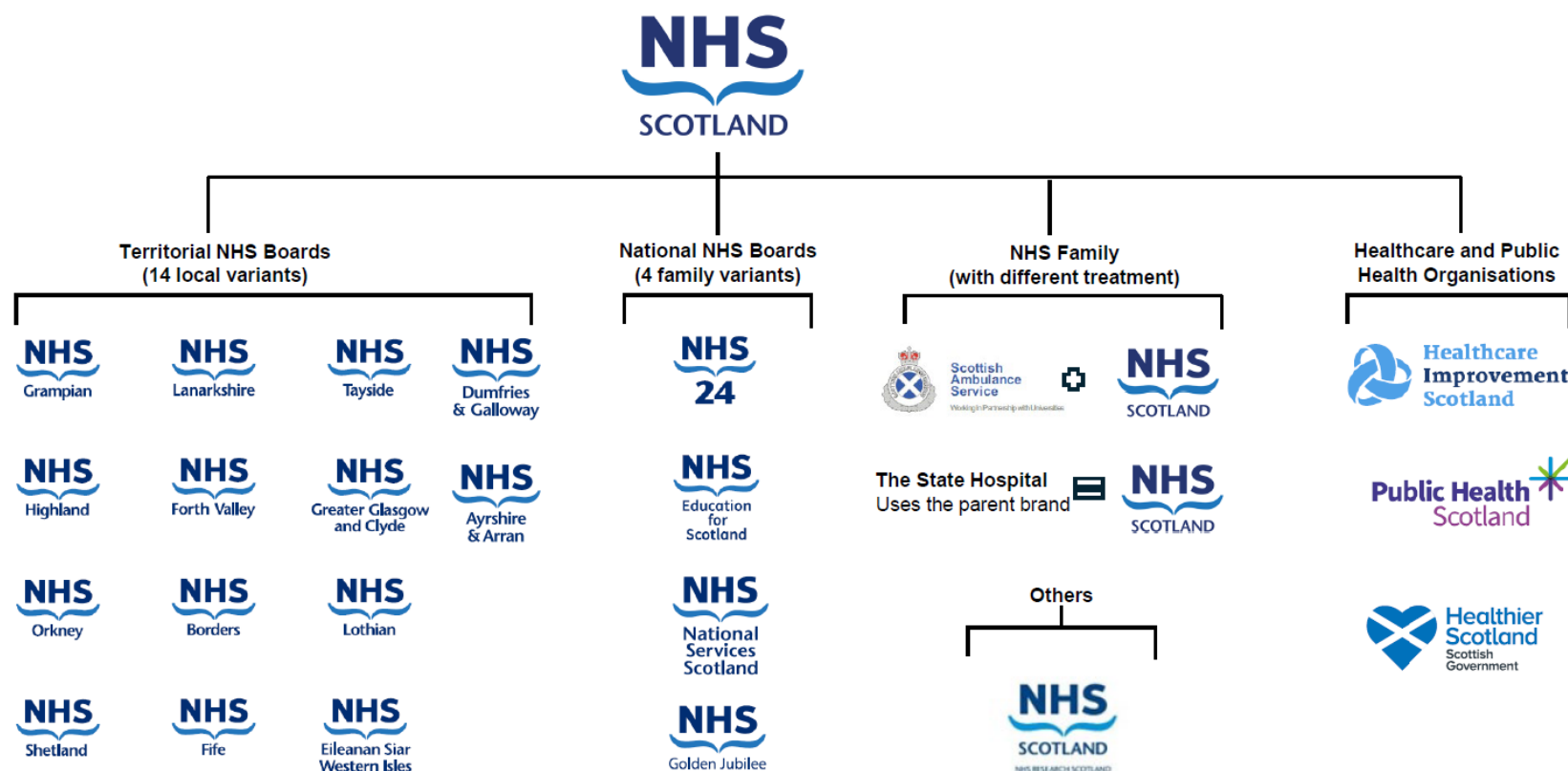
We will not:

- Alter or distort the NHS Scotland brand.
- Use NHS Board brands in a way that dilutes the national brand.
- Use graphics and colours that weaken the brand.

Annex C

NHS Scotland Logos

Only statutory NHS Scotland organisations are permitted to use the identity and be granted a variant of the NHS Scotland logo. All 14 Territorial NHS Boards and four National NHS Boards have an NHS Scotland logo variant of their own, with Scottish Ambulance Service and The State Hospital granted use of the NHS Scotland logo (the latter, alongside their Crest). NHS Research Scotland, a partnership involving NHS Boards and the Scottish Government's Chief Scientist Office (Health), was also granted permission by SG to use the national identity in an agreed way from 2012, recognising NRS as part of NHS Scotland (NRS is not a statutory NHS Board and is, therefore, not permitted to adopt an NHS Scotland logo variant):



Annex E

List of NHS Scotland linked Charities under the 1978 Act

Name of NHS linked charity		Known As (28 Jan 2025)	OSCR Charity registration number	OSCR Notes
	Ayrshire & Arran Health Board Endowment Fund		SC007448	
	Borders Health Board Endowment Funds	The Difference	SC008225	
	Dumfries & Galloway Health Board Endowment Fund	NHS Dumfries and Galloway Charity	SC001116	
	Fife Health Board Endowment Funds	Fife Health Charity	SC011988	
	Forth Valley Endowment Fund	Forth Valley Giving	SC035953	
	Grampian NHS Endowment Fund	NHS Grampian Charity	SC017296	
	Greater Glasgow & Clyde Endowment Funds		SC005895	
	Highland Health Board Endowment Funds		SC016791	
	Lanarkshire Health Board Endowment Fund		SC005674	
	NHS Lothian Charity		SC007342	The charity changed its legal name to NHS Lothian Charity on 26 Sep 2022. The charity was named Lothian Health Board Endowment Fund from 01 Jan 1992 to 26 Sep 2022.
	National Waiting Times Centre Board Endowment Fund	Golden Jubilee National Hospital (Scotland)	SC045146	
	Orkney Health Board Endowment Funds		SC016919	
	Scottish Ambulance Service Endowment Funds		SC027131	
	Shetland Health Board Endowment Funds		SC011513	
	Tayside NHS Board Endowment Fund	NHS Tayside Charitable Foundation	SC011042	
	Western Isles Health Board Endowment Funds		SC001015	

Annex F

Statutory NHS Scotland Organisations

Only organisations established under, or operating functions and powers related to, the 1978 Act, can use the NHS Scotland brand - including a variant of the NHS Scotland logo. These include:

Territorial NHS Boards:

- NHS Ayrshire & Arran
- NHS Borders
- NHS Dumfries & Galloway
- NHS Fife
- NHS Forth Valley
- NHS Grampian
- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
- NHS Highland
- NHS Lanarkshire
- NHS Lothian
- NHS Orkney
- NHS Shetland
- NHS Tayside
- NHS Western Isles

National NHS Boards:

- NHS 24
- NHS Education for Scotland
- NHS Golden Jubilee
- NHS National Services Scotland
- The State Hospital

- Scottish Ambulance Service – as outlined in section 4, Scottish Ambulance Service use their Royal Crest in conjunction with the NHS Scotland parent identity.

Associated Brands:

Healthcare Improvement Scotland – established by the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 as a National NHS Board with regulatory functions for independent healthcare, It does not use the NHS Scotland brand but has permission to use the logo due to the nature of its work.

Public Health Scotland – established on 1 April 2020 as a National NHS Board jointly accountable to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) and the Scottish Government. It has not adopted the NHS Scotland brand to better support cross-sector working, through it has permission to use the logo.