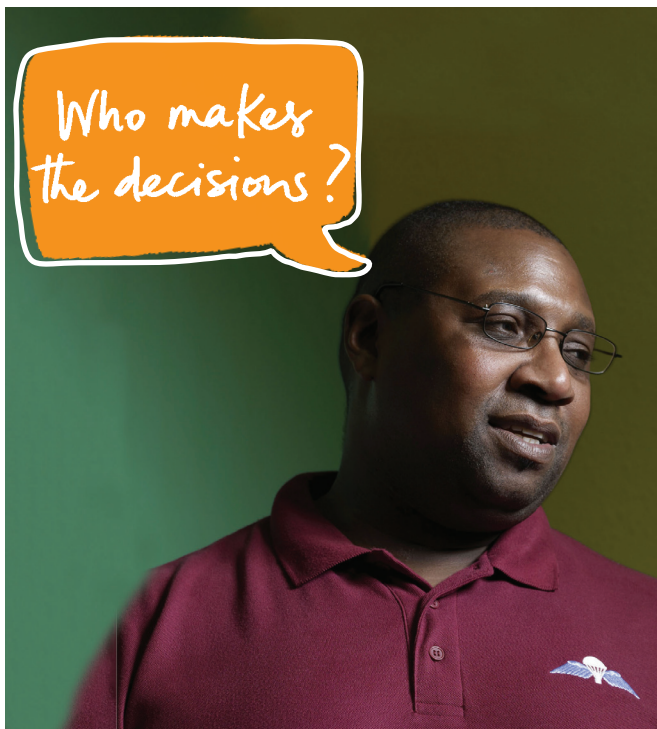




How health services work in Scotland

What's this fact sheet for?

It's important for you to make your voice heard when it comes to health services. Whether the feedback is positive or negative, things only change for the better if you get involved. But to make it count, it helps to know how the system works and where decisions get made. This is a quick overview to help make sense of it all (See Figure 1).



The Scottish Government Health Directorate

These are the people ultimately responsible for developing and implementing health and community care policy across Scotland. They also have overall responsibility for NHS Scotland. The Director General of NHS Scotland heads up the Health Department, which oversees the work of the NHS Boards.

NHS Area Health Boards

When it comes to the actual delivery of health services, this is done through 14 NHS Area Health Boards. They make sure standards are of a high quality within their geographical area. The boards are also responsible for planning which services to provide.

Special NHS Boards

Special NHS Boards work across the whole of Scotland, rather than locally. They cover specific services where the logistics make a national approach more cost-effective. These include the Scottish Ambulance Service, the Health Education Service and NHS 24.



Managed Clinical Networks

Specialist services – including cardiac services – are coordinated through Managed Clinical Networks. These are ‘virtual’ organisations that bring together the whole range of services someone with a cardiac condition might use during their care. The idea is to break down communication barriers between the different services to provide more efficient and joined-up care.

Health Care Improvement Scotland

Health Care Improvement Scotland was set up to monitor the quality of health care across all Scottish health services and ensure things keep improving. The emphasis is on involvement and cooperation.



Figure 1: How health services work in Scotland

