

VANGUARD PROJECTS – TWO YEARS ON

BACKGROUND

In January 2015, the NHS invited individual organisations and partnerships to apply to become ‘vanguards’ for the new care models programme, one of the first steps towards delivering the NHS Five Year Forward View (published October 2014). A vanguard is a group of people leading the way in new developments or ideas. Fifty vanguards were selected by NHS England to take a lead on the development of new care models designed to deliver services more appropriate to the changing needs of the population. They set out to act as the blueprints for the NHS and provide inspiration for the future of the health system.

What did the vanguards set out to do?

The fifty NHS vanguards set out to improve the care received by millions of people across England. Through the new care models programme, complete redesign of whole health and care systems were considered. Many of the new models are focusing on care being integrated more effectively around the needs of populations and patients e.g. joining up A&E, GP out of hours, minor injuries clinics and ambulance services so that patients know where they can get urgent help easily and effectively.

Types of vanguards

There are five vanguard types:

1. **integrated primary and acute care systems** – joining up GP, hospital, community and mental health services
2. **multispecialty community providers** – moving specialist care out of hospitals into the community
3. **enhanced health in care homes** – offering older people better, joined up health, care and rehabilitation services
4. **urgent and emergency care** – new approaches to improve the coordination of services and reduce pressure on A&E departments
5. **acute care collaborations** – linking local hospitals together to improve their clinical and financial viability, reducing variation in care and efficiency.

How are they progressing?

Progress is faster in some areas than others but everywhere there is recognition of the need to do things differently not just more of the same. The local health and social care systems selected for vanguard status are already demonstrating much innovative and important work. NHS Providers is working with NHS Clinical Commissioners, NHS Confederation and the Local Government Association to help share learning from the vanguard programme. As part of that work, we are sharing nine case studies of new models of care in practice <https://nhsproviders.org/resource-library/case-studies/new-models-of-care-in-practice>

Governor impact case study: Royal Free London acute care collaboration

In terms of the group model and the Vanguard bid at the Royal Free Hospital, the decisions on the Vanguards and the timescales in which they were submitted made it initially challenging to involve governors. As a Council they have been well-briefed since then on the development and proposed operation of the group model, with seminars and presentations at their Council of Governors (CoG) meeting with ample opportunity to ask questions. Holding non-executive directors (NEDs) to account for the performance of the board is a key role for governors as they are not involved in running services or decision making so they have to operate strategically. In practice, this means understanding the underpinning rationale of the group model and gaining assurance on how the new ways of working will be implemented.

Essentially this model has primarily focused on developing the Royal Free London (Royal Free Hospital/ Barnet and Chase Farm) into a coherent amalgamation of autonomous units that operate within the overarching framework of consistent clinical approaches, quality, eliminating unwarranted variation and as a result delivering savings. There are also significant opportunities for cost savings through joint initiatives in both administration and clinical services e.g. pathology labs and decontamination services. The group model also allows for other trusts to be less than full members of the group, via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), so that they would not necessarily surrender their organisation autonomy (e.g. North Middlesex).

One of the challenges with the membership was getting people to engage with the concept of the Royal Free London Trust as although part of the same trust, these are very separate hospitals. Governors have been quite active in developing how the group model allows them to engage with members at a more local level, including proposals for local "councils" for each hospital that include local HealthWatch, local voluntary groups etc., with the statutory CoG operating at group level. This mirrors the structure at a senior level where directors have been appointed to each hospital as well as an overarching group senior management team. Another strong consideration for governors was how staff has to have a key input, sharing learning with one another.

Eighteen months on the Vanguard at the Royal Free is still a process and they are currently implementing the new group model. The long-term ambition of the vanguard is to create a group which will eventually contain between 15 NHS trusts and bring the benefits of the group structure to five million patients. Nationally there are no new Vanguard monies available and in the interim Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs) have evolved that build on initial developments.