

THE NHS: DRIVING THE NATION'S HEALTH AND WEALTH

The NHS is an anchor institution in every local community, playing a fundamental role in our health and supporting communities and the nation's economic growth and productivity

The NHS in England:

- Provides free at the point of need care to 56 million citizensⁱ
- Creates jobs for 1.24 million peopleⁱⁱ, making it the country's largest employer

The NHS plays a central role in maintaining the global competitiveness of the UK's life sciences sector, which alone:

- Generates £70 billion a yearⁱⁱⁱ
- Provides 240,000 UK jobs^{iv}

The NHS delivers world class services and will be a key driver of the UK's future prosperity

The NHS is an international leader

- The Commonwealth Fund^v ranks the NHS as the world's best healthcare system, ahead of comparable systems on measures including care process, and equity.
- The NHS provides good value for money; the UK spends \$3,406 per person on healthcare each year compared to \$4,361 in France and \$4,920 in Germany^{vi}

Providing comprehensive care to millions

- In the last year trusts:
 - managed 22 million A&E attendances and over 122 million outpatient appointments^{vii}
 - provided 71 million contacts in community services^{viii}
- In May 2019, trusts:
 - provided services for 1.4 million people in contact with mental health and learning disabilities services^{ix}
- NHS national waiting times targets for a range of mental health services have been in place since 2014 and as of 2019, a specialist psychiatric liaison service now operates in every major A&E in the country.

And has a strong track record on improving quality of care and supporting global competitiveness

- Given the right resources, NHS foundation trusts and trusts have shown that they can make huge gains in improving care quality and outcomes, including heart attack^x and cancer survival rates^{xi}, reducing infections
- The NHS is a world leading research organisation, with billions invested in NHS research every year. The service has been at the forefront of key medical breakthroughs, such as pioneering the first heart, lung and liver transplants^{xii}; introducing CT scans^{xiii}; and the 100,000 genomes project^{xiv}. It has also helped make the UK a global hub for the medicines and health technologies industries, stimulating economic growth and opportunity.
- The NHS is primed to pioneer and capitalise on innovation, particularly in artificial intelligence and digital technology, through its world class universities, the unique patient datasets it generates as a universal service and England's network of 15 Academic Health Science Networks

WHAT THE NHS NEEDS TO BUILD A 21ST CENTURY NHS

The NHS is changing. Our population is aging, demand for health and social care services is increasing and innovative technology is creating opportunities for better, more personalised care and support. Consequently, patients, service users and the public now need and expect different things from the health service. In response, the NHS is transforming to provide care that is closer to home where possible, better joined up across community, primary, secondary and social care services and more responsive to individual needs.

To build a 21st century NHS, we need the right people equipped with the modern facilities and technologies that they need to deliver high quality, safe patient care, and investment in the multiple different services that support individuals to live well in their communities. The NHS needs:

People

Staff are the bedrock of the NHS. With over 100,000 vacancies in health service, however, recruiting and retaining the right people is the number one challenge facing NHS providers today. Growing the future NHS workforce can be supported by:

- A major increase in funding to train up thousands more people with the right skills
- Focussing nationally and locally on culture, making the NHS a great place to work for staff at all levels
- A flexible immigration system that ensures the NHS can continue recruit all the staff that local services, now and in the future

A structural and technological upgrade and capital investment

The NHS can only be as good as its facilities, equipment and technology allows. With a repairs backlog of £6bn, plans already underway to transform how local health and care services work together and new technologies presenting a huge opportunity to improve patient experience and outcomes, the NHS estate, equipment and technological capability need an urgent upgrade. We welcome the renewed political attention on NHS capital funding but a much broader approach is now needed, including:

- A sweeping capital investment programme that brings NHS buildings, equipment and technology up to a 21st century standard
- A digital strategy that supports the NHS to improve how it delivers care and ensures patients get the maximum benefit from digital technology

Whole-system investment

Currently, some of the key opportunities to improve care quality and population health outcomes fall outside of the NHS's core budget. They include:

- Sufficient funding for public health and prevention services
- Improving public health by tackling it not only in health but all related policy areas, including housing, transport and employment
- Designing and rolling out a fair, long term funding model for social care

Locally-led services

Greater collaboration between health and social care organisations in local communities presents an exciting opportunity to improve care and support for patients and service users. Getting this right will rely on:

- Holding trusts and local systems to account through proportionate and efficient regulation

- Balancing central support for closer working between health and social care services against the freedom of local health and care organisations to make decisions in the best interests of their communities
- Maintaining good governance practices as local health and care systems evolve, with any changes to law to be developed together with the NHS

References

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- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/life-sciences-sector-deal/life-sciences-sector-deal-2-2018>
- ^{iv} <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/life-sciences-sector-deal/life-sciences-sector-deal-2-2018>
- ^v <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/chart/2017/health-care-system-performance-rankings>
- ^{vi} http://www.commonwealthfund.org/~media/files/news/news-releases/2014/mirror-mirror-release-final-6_13_14.pdf
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- ^{viii} <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/community-services-statistics-for-children-young-people-and-adults>
- ^{ix} <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-services-monthly-statistics>
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- ^{xi} <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/survival#heading-Zero>
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- ^{xiii} <http://www.nhsgraduates.co.uk/about-the-nhs/history/>
- ^{xiv} <https://www.genomicsengland.co.uk/uk-to-become-world-number-one-in-dna-testing-with-plan-to-revolutionise-fight-against-cancer-and-rare-diseases/>