

# A PICTURE OF HEALTH

## DELIVERING THE NEXT GENERATION NHS

The NHS is the keystone in the health of our nation, inextricably linked to our economic and social prosperity.

A comprehensive health service, providing for every individual based on clinical need and not ability to pay, aspiring to the highest standards of care. A service which is accountable, committed to delivering value for money, and to working closely with key partners to offer person-centred care.

These key principles of the NHS – as set out in its constitution – must be championed and protected at the same time as reflecting on the challenges it faces.

We must rally around our next generation NHS – an NHS which serves the population as it is now and as it will be, rather than as it was in 1948. An NHS which is agile in deploying its people, its resources, its partnerships, its technology. An NHS which is responsive to health needs, but which is not solely responsible for them. This is the NHS which wins the trust of the people it serves, which helps drive national productivity and excellence, and which government and parliament can robustly both hold to account and endorse. This is the next generation NHS.

## A picture of health

- A responsive and effective NHS, meeting the current and future health needs of patients and communities.
- An NHS that continuously improves and whose people are proud and excited to work there.
- An NHS that is a key player in driving a healthy and productive society.

**The government and the NHS must work together to deliver the next generation NHS and create a picture of health. Five shared commitments will realise this vision.**

## Five shared commitments

- 1 Reaffirm commitment to the core values of the NHS to improve health and care for all and reduce inequalities.**
- 2 Build a new infrastructure programme for the NHS.**
- 3 Nurture a thriving health and care workforce.**
- 4 Champion a culture of openness, improvement and innovation.**
- 5 Provide care in the right place at the right time.**



### Reaffirm commitment to the core values of the NHS to improve health and care for all and reduce inequalities

We see multiple inequalities across the population, driven by a range of factors including levels of poverty and deprivation, safe and healthy housing, education, employment and access to healthy food and green space. The NHS has significant potential to contribute towards a comprehensive approach to supporting people's health, and this needs to be supported by a prioritisation of health and wellbeing across government policy and action.

We need to support and reform the NHS and social care, and to elevate health as a public good, vital to a thriving economy and to our wellbeing as a society. The government needs to take responsibility not just for treatment when we are sick, but for health, with cross-departmental accountability for the health of the population.

Housing. Food. Employment. Welfare. Education. Justice. The environment. Transport. Culture. The wider determinants of health and the levels of deprivation experienced have the most profound impact on a person's wellbeing and lifelong health. We need to build this into a model of care across the government, making the NHS sustainable, and our national health and wealth prosper.

Through this, we will see a return on the investment and support NHS sustainability. NHS spending has a profoundly positive impact on economic outcomes and regional growth. Every £1 spent on healthcare returns £4 in increased productivity and employment. The impact of a holistic approach to health and wellbeing across the government would be all the greater, with a healthy society driving growth across the economy, innovation and culture.

## The actions we must take together

- Set out, consult on and implement a health and care strategy which looks across the needs of the whole population, now and over the decades to come.
- Reform and fund social care to put it on a sustainable footing and develop the workforce to enable the right care in the right place at the right time.
- Integrate health impact assessments into the work of every government department ensuring the contributions to health of key services such as transport, environmental services, criminal justice, housing and education are better understood, as well as the contribution of a vibrant voluntary sector.
- Assess funding levels and funding flows across the public sector to ensure they best support health, public health, social care and the wider determinants of health.
- Expand the remit of the Office for Budget Responsibility, alongside its existing role, to include consideration of health and care impacts and costs.
- Engage employers, the private sector and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, on the importance of their role in societal health and wellbeing through staff and wider community action.
- Support the breadth of sectors and interventions which heavily influence the health of our communities.

**By focusing on prevention and early intervention, and integrating health and care within the work of every part of government...**



**we will ensure the sustainability of the NHS and secure a significant social and economic return on investment.**



## Build a new infrastructure programme for the NHS

NHS leaders understand their responsibilities for offering value for money and for improving productivity. A drop in productivity in the public sector follows years of underinvestment and the impacts of the pandemic and high inflation. Trusts are embracing the challenge of improving the productivity of the NHS and delivering value for the taxpayer, for example, by developing alternative models of care to enable faster discharge. However, to set the NHS up to meet the challenges of the future, then the government must commit to equipping it with the resources it needs to unlock productivity gains. Sustainable

productivity growth depends on key enablers, notably capital investment in infrastructure and digital technologies.

Current capital allocations are not sufficient to cover the cost of delivering safety critical repairs to NHS estates and equipment. Tight operational capital budgets leave trusts with little headroom to invest in their estate and update antiquated equipment, compounding the impact on the rising maintenance backlog which now stands at around £12bn. Capital investment in acute, specialist, mental health, community and ambulance sectors is essential to address the record-high maintenance backlog and halt the deterioration of the NHS estate, and to enable a more productive NHS.

Alongside this, to meet developing patient needs, the NHS needs an increase in capital funding to strategically invest in estate transformation and an expansion of its capacity in community and inpatient settings. This means widening access to strategic capital investment and enabling trusts to use the money they already have by increasing national capital departmental expenditure limits (CDEL).

A sustainable funding settlement for the NHS, with a strategic investment approach across revenue and capital will make short-term funding needs clearer and offer greater long-term returns. It will also show where productivity of the NHS is interdependent with factors such as staff wellbeing and investment in digital capacity, equipment and modernising the estate, as well as social care and the wider determinants of health.

## The actions we must take together

- Enable digitisation of the service on an industrial scale.
- Clear the maintenance backlog of nearly £12bn, and urgently address instances of unsafe reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC).
- Increase CDEL to provide greater flexibility to invest in NHS estates without breaching national spending limits.
- Expand the NHS bed base and transform the estate – across the hospital, mental health, community, ambulance and primary care sectors – through capital investment and new routes to capital.
- Invest in management as vital to enabling operational efficiencies, improving patient satisfaction, reducing the frontline administration burden on clinicians, and facilitating innovation.

**By investing in eliminating the maintenance backlog and the systematic renewal of our facilities, technology and estates...**



**we will improve the quality and safety of patient care and deliver even greater value for money.**



## Nurture a thriving health and care workforce

People are the backbone of the NHS, and trust leaders know that caring for their workforce enables them to care for others. NHS working conditions must enable safe care for patients and service users, and give them timely access to care, a positive experience of their care, and the best possible outcomes.

However, since 2010, the demands of working in the NHS have been compounded by rising staff vacancies, squeezed funding, increases in patient demand, an underfunded social care system, and a health system designed around treatment rather than prevention. The Covid-19 pandemic, the cost of living crisis and the longest period of industrial action in NHS history have exacerbated these pressures and drive up the rate of staff leaving the service. NHS staff survey data shows that almost half of all staff often or always feel worn out at the end of their shift, over a third feel burnt out because of their work, and almost a third often think about leaving their organisation.

As NHS staff continue to tackle the extraordinary pressures they are facing and look to keep the service fit for the future, it is clear a focus on wellbeing and experience at work will be key. There is a wealth of evidence to show that support for staff wellbeing is a sound investment, helping sustain a happy and healthy workforce and leading to better patient outcomes.

Addressing these issues means implementation of the NHS long term workforce plan, which must be fully funded beyond 2028, and sustainable resolution on pay. There also needs to be a focus on staff wellbeing, morale, retention and making the NHS a great place to work, ensuring compassionate, courageous and inclusive leadership at all levels. This includes action on race equality and tackling discrimination, pursuing a culture of speaking up, investing in excellent management and leadership capacity, and modernising ways of working.

### The actions we must take together

- Sustain work with the unions, medical royal colleges and other sector partners to demonstrate commitment to valuing, retaining and upskilling the workforce.
- Fund and deliver the NHS long-term workforce plan.
- Continue implementation of the Messenger report, leadership for a collaborative and inclusive future.
- Commit to supporting the work underway to improve the equality, diversity and inclusivity of the NHS and tackling discrimination.
- Commit to enabling the NHS in developing a culture of openness, where staff and leaders alike feel confident in speaking up and being met with a supportive response.

By delivering the NHS long term workforce plan, and redoubling efforts to improve the equality, diversity and inclusion experienced by our people...



we will create the capacity and capability to deliver the best possible patient care, now and in the future.



## Champion a culture of openness, improvement and innovation

Supporting the right cultures and enabling the right behaviours to support safety, quality and improvement is one of the biggest and most important challenges in healthcare. Healthcare is delivered each day through the constant interaction of numerous relationships, processes and events.

It is essential that every individual feels able to speak up about anything that isn't working as it should and is confident they will be listened to, with meaningful actions and learning to follow. Developing a positive, values-led culture takes sustained effort, but it is the first and critical step in enabling and driving improvement. We know quality of care – including safety and patient outcomes – is greatly enhanced by building a closer connection between senior leaders and frontline staff, empowering staff, and involving patients in decisions about their care.

We need to continue to create the culture and conditions for continuous improvement within the NHS, allowing trusts to focus on the priorities that matter to their patients and staff, and deliver improvements in experience and outcomes. The implementation of improvement methods and co-production with staff and patients significantly improves the quality of care, patient safety and patient experience. It also positively impacts financial and operational performance and staff experience.

Trusts are clear of the value of a continuous improvement approach, and would welcome long-term support to build improvement capacity and capability. The development of a single, shared NHS improvement approach through NHS IMPACT is an important first step in reinforcing the principles that underpin a systematic approach to continuous improvement and high performance.

A structured approach to improvement works to support the NHS as a world-leading research organisation. The service has been at the forefront of medical breakthroughs making the UK a global hub for the medicines and health technologies industries, stimulating economic growth and opportunity.

The UK is primed to pioneer and capitalise on innovation, particularly in artificial intelligence and digital technology, through its world class universities, and the unique patient datasets the NHS generates as a universal service. We need to prioritise research as an integral part of service delivery, realising its positive impact on quality of care and enabling evidence-based decision making, by investing in workforce capacity and capability across the NHS.

## The actions we must take together

- Prioritise an open, learning culture across the system as the linchpin for success in improvements across NHS safety, quality of care and improvement.
- Support investment over multiple years in embedding a culture of improvement and building capacity and capability.
- Maintain consistency and clarity at national level about the role of improvement, with alignment of priorities across the system.
- Promote the benefits of and skills for evidence-based decision making within the NHS.
- Provide support for a wider range of NHS organisations to secure research funding and develop their research capabilities.
- Continue to focus on improving the status of the UK and NHS as a world-leading research base through streamlined and supportive regulatory approaches and maintaining partnerships with international networks.

**By enabling a learning culture and investing in the skills for continuous improvement and evidence-based decision making...**



**we will improve the safety and quality of care, productivity and staff experience.**



## Provide care in the right place at the right time

A narrow, historical and political focus on hospital and ambulance performance at the expense of a focus on early intervention, community services and mental health can distort our view of the health care model people need. Instead, we need to enable care in the right place at the right time across the system. Integrated care systems are well placed to play a strategic convening role, supporting development and delivery of the services that are right for their local communities in local places, as well as services that are better, and more safely, delivered at scale.

Building on work already underway, a revitalised primary care service working closely with local social care, community services and the voluntary sector, would enable care to be given as close to home as possible, and would better support mental health care as well as those with multiple long-term conditions, and help prevent deterioration through early intervention.

We need to be realistic about the level of unmet mental health need, particularly amongst children and young people, and the socioeconomic factors contributing to increasing demand. And in response we need to build up the mental health offer to fully meet those needs so that we can stem the rising tide of demand and acuity and support a healthy population who can lead fulfilling lives.

Hospital and specialist services need to work together to establish where provision is best placed to meet community needs in a timely way. We can better capitalise on the skills of our ambulance services, drawing on their insights into population data and health inequalities, supporting them to refer callers to the right care pathways for their needs, as well as ensuring their capacity to respond when people most need help.

This work needs to take place alongside investment in public health, social care and wider public services and support. By working with primary care, the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, social care, and across organisational boundaries, NHS trusts and foundation trusts are better serving its patients and achieving more for taxpayers. This is essential so that each can play to its strengths, delivering care in the most effective and efficient way.



## The actions we must take together

- Set out a clear strategy for substantially increasing the proportion of patient demand that is met within primary and community care, with the necessary investment and prioritisation attached.
- Agree a definition of parity of esteem for mental health, and pursue equity of mental health care, with a focus on health inequalities and the socioeconomic drivers of mental ill health.
- See beyond the urgent and emergency care pathway as a proxy indicator of NHS performance, and meaningfully support flow through the system with investment better following patient and community needs.
- Continue to invest in data sharing, interoperability, and data governance skills to support the NHS in focusing its resources where they are most needed.
- Invest in the skills and capacity of the social care sector, accepting that the robustness of social care plays a key role in the performance and sustainability of the NHS.

**By meeting more patient needs in the community and creating a robust social care sector...**



**we will support the performance and sustainability of the whole health and care system.**

## Delivering the next generation

**The NHS provider sector – acute hospitals, mental health, community and ambulance trusts – has a vital role in creating a healthy, equitable and productive society.**

**We need to rally around our next generation NHS. This is an NHS that serves the population as it is now and as it will be, and that plays a key role within a strong network of public services.**

**The NHS can achieve the greatest social and economic value by working with the government, and with patients and communities at the centre of every conversation.**