NHS CONFEDERATION MEMBER BRIEFING

Refreshed Mandate to NHS England

The Government has today published the NHS Mandate for 2014-2015. The Mandate to NHS England sets out the Government's objectives for the NHS, and is published by the Secretary of State every year. Below is a summary of the Mandate's key points and objectives.

THE REFRESHED MANDATE

Announcing the Mandate, Jeremy Hunt, the Secretary of State for Health, said:

"The Mandate sets an ambitious agenda to transform patient care and we expect NHS England to demonstrate significant progress against all the objectives by March 2015...The Government has kept changes to an essential minimum to ensure the refreshed Mandate remains strategic, outcomes-focused and affordable within NHS England's budget."

OUR IMPACT ON THE NHS MANDATE

Many members shared their views on proposals for the refreshed Mandate, and we responded to the Department of Health's consultation earlier this year on their behalf. You can find our submission on our website.

Members told us the Mandate needs to focus on outcomes rather than processes, and should not add too much new detail after only a year. We are pleased to see the Government has responded and implemented many of the key points of our submission. Therefore:

- We welcome the fact that overall, the final version of the Mandate is more strategic and more focussed on health outcomes. A number of specific, unnecessary operational additions that were proposed in the draft have not been included, and the Government has said it will exercise discipline by not seeking to introduce objectives for NHS England between one Mandate and the next. This clearly responds to our comments.

- We also welcome the focus on strengthening local autonomy so that NHS organisations have the freedom to innovate and improve patient care.

- We warmly welcome the amendments which reflect our view that the Vulnerable Older People's Plan cannot deliver improvements through primary care alone but through integrated out-of-hospital care. We emphasised this...
view in our response. The Government has asked NHS England to explore how better integrated out-of-hospital care both for vulnerable older people and the wider population.

- We welcome the focus on achieving parity of esteem for mental and physical health, particularly in relation to those in crisis.

- We welcome the indication that proposals for recovering costs from overseas visitors will need to be cost effective, given the financial challenges facing members.

SUMMARY

The refreshed Mandate includes the following key objectives:

- NHS England must take forward the relevant actions set out in the Government's response to Robert Francis' report on Mid Staffordshire.

- The Mandate sets out some details of the Government's Vulnerable Older People's Plan, including an expectation of rapid progress from April 2014.

- The Mandate sets out an objective for NHS England, working with clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), to contribute to a new system-wide ambition of avoiding an additional 30,000 premature deaths per year by 2020. This will be achieved by supporting earlier diagnosis of illness, reducing variation between hospitals in avoidable deaths and ensuring people have access to the right treatment. In addition, NHS staff are asked to use every contact they have with people as an opportunity to help them stay well.

- NHS England needs to make measurable progress towards supporting people with ongoing health problems to live healthily and independently. This will be achieved by better empowering patients to manage and make decisions about their own care. NHS England should also look to achieve an increase in the use of technology to assist with this. NHS England should play a role in improving the way that care is coordinated and centre on the person as a whole, rather than specific conditions.

- NHS England has a key role to play in enabling local commissioners to stimulate the development of innovative integrated provision. This will involve assisting in removing barriers to integrated care and supporting the integration pioneers.

- NHS England needs to make progress in ensuring that the diagnosis, treatment and care of people with dementia in England is among the best in Europe. NHS England has agreed a national ambition for diagnosis rates that by 2015, two-thirds of the estimated number of people with dementia in England should have a diagnosis, with appropriate post-diagnosis support.

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NHS England should "shine a light" on variations in care and foster a revolution in transparency. As part of this there needs to be more reporting of results at local authority, CCG, provider and consultant-led team level. They will also need to develop systematic clinical audit and patient-reported outcomes experiences measures and give consideration to making it easier for patients feedback on their care.

NHS England will need to ensure that any changes to local health services are put forward by clinicians and that the changes meet four tests: strong public and patient engagement; consistency with current and prospective need for patient choice; a clear clinical evidence base; and support from local commissioners.

NHS England has an objective to put mental health on a par with physical health. The Mandate states that NHS England should work with CCGs to make progress on ensuring crisis services are in place which are accessible, responsive and as high quality as other emergency services. Adequate liaison psychiatry service needs to be in place to achieve this. NHS England will also need to extend more open access to the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme particularly for children young people and those out of work.

In addition, NHS England will need to work with the Department of Health to develop a range of costed options to help improve waiting times for mental health services. Improved standards will need to be implemented by 2015, with a phased approach, depending on affordability.

Following the abuse witnessed at Winterbourne View, NHS England must ensure CCGs work with local authorities to ensure that vulnerable people, particular those with learning disabilities receive safe and high-quality care.

NHS England should continue to reduce avoidable harm and make measureable progress by 2015 to embed a culture of patient safety in the NHS, including through improved reporting of incidents.

NHS England has an objective to get the best health outcomes for patients by strengthening the local autonomy of CCGs, health and wellbeing boards and local providers of services. The Government will hold NHS England to account for achieving this.

NHS England has an objective to work with Monitor to "support the creation of a fair playing field". This has changed from the draft wording which previously said NHS England and Monitor should "drive progress" on the fair playing field.

A link to the full refreshed Mandate can be found on the Department of Health website. In addition, the updated NHS Outcome Framework 2014-15 used to hold NHS England to account for improvements to health outcomes can be found here.

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