

# NHS Reset

## Reforming health and care post COVID-19

The coronavirus outbreak has changed the NHS and social care, ushering in transformation at a time of immense pressure and personal and professional challenge. Over the past few weeks, one message from leaders and clinicians across the UK has been clear: we must build on the progress made to chart a new course.

NHS Reset is a new NHS Confederation campaign to contribute to the public debate on what the health and care system should look like post-COVID19. Galvanising members from across the NHS Confederation and wider partners in health and social care, it aims to recognise the sacrifices and achievements of the COVID period, rebuild local systems and reset the way we plan, commission and deliver health and care.

This briefing explores why a reset is vital, what the NHS Reset campaign aims to achieve and the questions it seeks to answer, and how members across the NHS Confederation can get involved.

## Introduction

The immediate health and care response to the ongoing challenges raised by COVID-19 has been exceptional. For a system placed under unprecedented, sudden and intense pressures, we have seen a rapid transformation in clinical practice, new and innovative approaches to public service leadership and provision, and a greater understanding of the skill, value and flexibility of our people and workforce. A global crisis has been met with the very best of community action.

The NHS Confederation believes that this initial response to COVID-19 must form the basis of a new conversation across the UK on how we think about health and care more broadly in future. This conversation will involve the full range of organisations from across the NHS Confederation's membership, working together and with partners in the NHS, social care and beyond, to understand the opportunities and build on the renewed motivation to 'reset' how we accelerate and deliver change.

## Why a ‘reset’?

While our clinicians, leaders and public servants grapple with immediate, complex and formidable daily issues, their actions and decisions are also directly and indirectly shaping the sector in ways that will determine its future in the medium to long term. The message coming from leaders and clinicians across the NHS and social care is clear and consistent: we should not seek to return to the ways of working and approach we once knew, but to reset the way we plan, commission and deliver health and care.

The NHS Reset campaign aims to lead the public debate on what the health and care system should look given the impact of COVID-19. It will seek to influence forthcoming national strategies, including from NHS England and Improvement, and their priorities for a reset. It will also look to guide local systems through their own thinking in the coming months, ensuring they are able to lock in the beneficial changes they have collectively brought forward and are supported in realising their ambitions.

We understand the challenges that our members are facing but also the will to accelerate new thinking and changes to service delivery. We want to work in partnership with those already on this journey, as well as those just starting.

### **This campaign will support leaders to:**

- Recognise both the sacrifice and achievements of the health and care sector’s response to COVID-19, including the major innovations that have been delivered at pace.
- Rebuild local service provision to meet the physical, mental and social needs of communities affected by severe economic and social disruption.
- Reset our ambitions for what the health and care system of the future should look like, including its relationship with the public and public services.

Every corner of the UK, every part of society and every sector of the economy has been impacted by COVID-19. The journey to what the future of health and care may look like will influence, and be influenced by, the wider changes we face. While the relationship between the public and our health and care service has never felt stronger, we owe it to our communities to be honest, collaborative and vocal about what is needed. The debate about the reset matters to everyone.

## Building up to the reset

The NHS Reset campaign is centred on the importance of health and social care as a balanced, interwoven system. It will cover thematic work across three critical COVID19-related phases which, when taken together, will offer a guide in the coming months to the future shape of our sector.

The themes through which we will focus our detailed NHS Reset work will be published in May, but we strongly believe the issues which the NHS Confederation, its members, partners and national decision makers will explore should be approached in a broad manner. It will have an early recognition of what our staff and colleagues have gone through as we seek to restore services; a focus on the short and medium-term priorities for recovering both our service provision and wider community resilience; and a longer-term reset of our ambition for health and care.

We believe the journey to a reset should over the coming year, including a specific focus on the three aspects below:

### **Recognising sacrifice and achievements**

The NHS is a people business. The impact of COVID-19 on the dedicated staff providing health and care and wider public services will be significant, with personal sacrifice and loss coupled with the unrelenting and unprecedented demands made of them.

We do not yet know what the long-term impact will be on staff mental health and wellbeing, but we must first acknowledge the price that has been paid. We should also look to celebrate and recognise their achievements and ensure they are locked in to service delivery going forward. There should not be a return to business as usual, whether in the short, medium or long term. Strategies for restoring services should therefore first seek to understand the ideas, changes and innovations made out of necessity and that have improved services to patients and their families.

The questions our NHS Reset campaign will explore as part of the recognise phase should seek to establish the impact on our staff and our services in advance of the sector looking to recover from the initial COVID-19 surge in the short term. While not an exhaustive list, they will include:

- How can we improve our support for the mental wellbeing of our health and care staff now and in the future, recognising their personal sacrifice and loss?
- How can we review what has happened during COVID-19; celebrating the successes, sharing good practice and innovation, identifying where improvements could be made and applying the lessons learned?
- How can we recognise and build on the response from patients and the public in adapting to new ways of interacting with health and care services, including digitally?
- What COVID19-related innovations in providing clinical practice should continue and how can we develop them further?

## **Rebuilding local service provision**

The impact of COVID-19 on communities will be unprecedented. The health and care sector must urgently develop plans for restoring critical services amid a landscape of severe economic and social disruption, with record unemployment and an expected downturn in population health, further exacerbating already wide health inequalities.

In particular, local reset strategies need to outline how best to reestablish and realign traditional clinical services in new ways to address the changing needs of communities, ensuring the planned recovery in performance does not disproportionately impact on populations.

With resilience severely tested, the speed and ability of individuals, organisations and systems to recover will depend on factors outside of the direct control of the health and care system. Reset strategies therefore need to understand and expand on the role that the NHS and wider systems can play as anchor institutions themselves in supporting the rebuilding and prosperity of their place.

The questions our reset campaign will explore as part of the rebuild phase will seek to establish the partnerships and priorities for systems to focus on as they look to restore services and recover performance. While not an exhaustive list, they will include:

- What are the priorities for the health and care sector in restoring essential services and recovering system performance, recognising and supporting local need?

- How can we ensure that an integrated approach is taken to restoring services that considers impacts on all parts of the patient pathway and associated health inequalities?
- How can we engage and encourage citizens to seek early and prompt diagnosis of their health problems?
- How can we support and engage clinical leadership throughout this journey?
- How will the severe effects of the imminent COVID-19 recession impact on local population and mental health and wellbeing, and subsequently demand for public services?
- How can the NHS and wider systems play their part in rebuilding the local communities in which they are based, both economically and socially, as anchor institutions?

### **A reset of our ambitions for the health and care system**

The ability to fully embed the learning, progress and public support that our sector's response to COVID-19 has generated requires resetting what 'business as usual' means, both strategically and in practice. In doing this, we will need to consider implications for how we design, finance and govern systems and the levels of regulation that national and local leaders deem appropriate.

More generally, this will require a renewed focus on the nature and scope of the relationships that link national, regional and local decision making and the governance of our systems. Finally, to reset our ambitions for how the health and care sector will operate, we must also explore the role of systems more generally in transforming future public service provision, ensuring we act in partnership with our communities.

While not exhaustive, the questions that our reset campaign will explore as we finalise our work should include the following:

- How should existing national policy initiatives such as system by default be shaped given the impact of COVID-19?
- How should governance and regulation be evolved to support the agility of potential new ways of working?
- What form should the system architecture take and how should the relationship between national, regional and local partners develop?

- What structural changes do we want to make to the way that NHS services are commissioned and delivered locally in the future, based on responses to COVID-19?
- How can we support and help shape the fundamental reform of social care, placing it on a par with the NHS?
- What should be the relationship between the NHS, wider public services and the communities we serve?
- How should future UK-wide government decision making be delivered in a way that promotes health and wellbeing in all policies and contains a much greater focus on population health approaches?

Collectively, the NHS Reset campaign will lead a path from the operational challenges we currently face to the future strategic opportunities we know COVID-19 will bring. To support this work, we will bring together learning from across the breadth of our membership – including through our offices in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and our international relationships – with the critical range of other sectors we partner with.

## Playing your part

As the national membership organisation for the whole of the NHS in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the NHS Confederation is clear that its strength comes from the breadth of voices it brings together. Whether viewed from primary, community, acute and mental health, commissioning, ambulance service, STP/ICS or social care, the initial response to COVID-19 has shown the need for the health and care sector to operate both collectively and collaboratively. To reset our thinking how health and care services should be delivered in future will require this approach to be strengthened and emboldened over time.

### **We need your voice, your support and your ideas.**

It is important that NHS Reset represents your views, champions your ideas and influences on your behalf. We want members to get involved in this work, joining the conversation at #NHSReset and sharing your ideas, information and reflections with leaders across the UK.

### Have your say

1. Are the questions and approach we have outlined in this briefing the right ones? Have we missed anything?
2. Would you like to get involved in helping to shape this conversation?
3. Are you aware of any innovations brought about by the response to COVID-19 that you think we should be making people aware of? Would you like to submit a case study that we can draw from in our campaign?
4. Would you be interested in taking part in webinars, blogs and other activities that we will be undertaking over the course of the campaign?

Join the conversation **#NHSRESET**

Find out more at [www.nhsconfed.org/NHSReset](http://www.nhsconfed.org/NHSReset)

Please contact Michael Wood at [Michael.wood@nhsconfed.org](mailto:Michael.wood@nhsconfed.org) to get involved or discuss this further.