The impact of EU affairs on the wider NHS is constantly increasing, bringing with it both challenges and opportunities.

The NHS European Office is the conduit for the NHS to engage with the EU agenda, enabling the NHS to speak with one voice in Brussels and bringing EU affairs closer to the health sector in England.

Our work, highlighted in the picture opposite, is centred on three closely linked areas which, collectively, support the NHS to prevent illness and to provide safe, high-quality, innovative and cost-effective health services for its population.

These functions are complemented by our representative role in two important European membership organisations – the European Hospital and Healthcare Federation and the European Hospital and Healthcare Employers’ Association – which provide us with access to networks of contacts overseas to identify and collaborate on international good practice in public health and healthcare delivery.

We also act as the representatives of NHS employers in the European Social Dialogue and, in this role, decide directly and jointly with our trade union counterparts on EU policy and regulation impacting on our workforce.

For more detail on the role and work of the NHS European Office see: www.nhsconfed.org/europe @NHSConfed_EU
Priorities for the NHS European Office in 2015/16

- Lead nationally on ensuring that the new EU law on data privacy, currently being negotiated in Brussels, enables the appropriate sharing of health data both nationally, through Care.Data, and locally to support the development of new models of care.

- Support NHS involvement in the EU’s digital health agenda, ensuring it is well aligned to our National Information Board strategy on using data and technology to transform outcomes for patients and citizens.

- Scrutinise negotiations on TTIP, the EU/US trade and investment agreement, ensuring the outcomes will be beneficial to patients.

- Engage with EU proposals on medical devices to improve their safety, while allowing patients to have access to innovative, state-of-the-art health technologies developed by the NHS.

- Provide strategic advice to national, regional and local NHS organisations on how to support specific areas of NHS activity with EU funds, helping to secure inward investment to England.

- Organise national and regional events across England for the NHS and its partners on the range of EU programmes, helping organisations understand the opportunities offered by this funding and how to access it.

- Influence the European Commission’s thinking on future priorities for its funding programmes to ensure they are aligned with NHS research and innovation activities.

- Assist the NHS in accessing European Structural and Investment Funds, supporting the development of strategic partnerships between the wider NHS, including AHSNs, LETBs and HWBs, and the 39 local enterprise partnerships in England, which determine how the funds are spent.

- Continue to act as the National Focal Point for the European Public Health Programme, ensuring the NHS is strategically positioned to tap into this funding.

- Support the delivery of the Five Year Forward View by assisting local health economies to identify and understand successful international models of innovative healthcare delivery and possible lessons for the NHS.

- Introduce integration pioneers and new vanguard sites to fellow EU healthcare bodies, helping them to understand the regulatory enablers of new healthcare models and establish on-going and direct partnerships for learning and training purposes.

- Hold a series of Lessons from Europe events in collaboration with AHSNs, bringing successful regional European innovations in healthy ageing direct to NHS decision-makers.

- Assist specialist acute NHS providers to collaborate with leading specialised centres across Europe, through their involvement in the emerging European Reference Networks.

- Facilitate the participation of national NHS bodies in EU-wide collaborative initiatives, tackling a range of common challenges confronting healthcare systems across Europe.

- Support NHS involvement in the EU’s digital health agenda, ensuring it is well aligned to our National Information Board strategy on using data and technology to transform outcomes for patients and citizens.

- Scrutinise negotiations on TTIP, the EU/US trade and investment agreement, ensuring the outcomes will be beneficial to patients.

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