

# Impact report 2021

NHS Clinical  
Commissioners  
The independent collective voice  
of clinical commissioners



# about

NHS Clinical Commissioners (NHSCC) is the only independent membership organisation for clinical commissioners in England. With over 90 per cent of clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) in membership, we are widely recognised as the national, credible voice of local clinical commissioning. We influence key decision-makers on your behalf on the issues that matter most to you.

Our work ensures that clinical commissioners have the support and guidance they need to be system leaders and drive improvements for their local populations.

We do this by:

### **Providing a voice**

Giving members an independent and strong collective voice, and national representation in the debate on the future of the health service.

### **Supporting**

Providing information via regular bulletins and publications, and hosting webinars and workshops on topical themes.

### **Networking**

Giving members safe spaces to share learning, solve problems and engage with other organisations.

Throughout this year we have been working with you, listening to your needs and responding with demonstrable action that gives you full value from your NHSCC membership.

 NHSCC has been invaluable in providing up-to-date briefings and linking up commissioners over the last year, thus ensuring that everyone still has the opportunity to test out and share ideas with fellow colleagues.

**Tim Goodson**  
Chair, Dorset CCG

# A year like no other

As the first cases of COVID-19 reached British soil early in 2020, we had no idea what impact it would have on the NHS, on NHSCC, or on us as individuals. From the unprecedented first lockdown and tackling widespread issues with discharge into care homes, to the rapid development of vaccines and the largest vaccination programme in history, clinical commissioners have often been under huge pressure at the centre of local coordination and delivery.

Like you, in March 2020, we refocused our work on what you told us you needed to meet the challenges of the pandemic and provide your populations with the best possible healthcare during this time. We are proud that we have been able to respond rapidly and effectively to members' needs, working with other parts of the NHS Confederation such as the PCN Network, and with organisations like the Local Government Association, to make sure that our content was as practical and as useful as possible.

However, even against the backdrop of a global pandemic, we had to remain focused on the work that was continuing, such as the CCG mergers programme; the move towards integrated care systems; a forthcoming NHS Bill; and the appointment of Lou as our new chief executive. With two clinicians at the helm, we have been engaging with our members and with the most senior levels of NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) to make sure that all the strengths of clinical commissioning are retained in future so that the right decisions can be made for patients.

This coming year brings unprecedented challenges for CCGs; be assured that NHSCC will remain at the highest level of influence to support members in ensuring current CCG expertise is transitioned successfully to establish the bedrock of integrated care system (ICS) commissioning. With the move to greater system integration, we have improved our member offer and ensured that you will also have access to the full range of support from the NHS Confederation as part of your membership fee.



**Dr Graham Jackson**  
Chair  
NHS Clinical Commissioners



**Louise Patten**  
Chief Executive  
NHS Clinical Commissioners

# VOICE

NHSCC gives our members an independent and strong collective voice. We are firmly established as the credible go-to voice for clinical commissioners, speaking out with authority on your behalf at the national level.

Last year, you told us that you needed support to ensure that, during the transition to system working and ICS establishment, CCGs were supported to evolve their roles and be more visible as strategic commissioners.

## **SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE NHS**

We engaged with over 300 individuals from our membership to inform our national response to NHSEI's consultation on the future of integrated care. Based on your insight, we have been influencing at the very highest levels of NHSEI. Our input, particularly around the more technical elements of the transition, has been welcomed by stakeholders and NHSEI is committed to co-production with us in the year ahead.

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

Our strong relationships mean that our influence reaches the most senior leaders at NHSEI, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), MPs and peers, as well as other influential figures in health policy, allowing us to influence national policy such as the move to system by default.

## **NHS RESET**

Alongside our colleagues at the NHS Confederation, we joined the campaign to feed in CCG perspectives on what the health and care system should look like in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. This campaign has facilitated important conversations with senior ministers and MPs, as well as delivering more than 50 events and ten reports.



## **AMPLIFYING OUR MEMBERS' VOICES**

We have opened up opportunities for you to tell your own stories, in your own words, through the NHS Confederation's NHS Voices blog. Over the past year, NHSCC members contributed 12 blogs to this important resource.

## **STRONGER TOGETHER**

We have worked closely with colleagues within NHS Confederation to ensure that the commissioner voice is prominent in conversations that affect the whole health system. For example, we contributed our members' perspective to the NHS Confederation's response to NHSEI's legislative proposals, on behalf of its members across the NHS.

“ NHSCC's support and leadership have been immense during one of the toughest years the NHS is likely to encounter. They have been instrumental in the pandemic response, and the ability to feedback to the centre over the vaccine rollout. With new changes coming next year, support from NHSCC and the NHS Confederation is going to be critical to the development of the new ICS structures.

**Dr Nazim Jivani**

Chair, South West London CCG



# Support

NHSCC works hard to support you at pace to deliver the best health and health outcomes for the populations you serve.

## **SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS TO RESPOND TO COVID-19**

Within weeks of the start of the pandemic, we worked with the NHS Confederation's PCN Network to rapidly create timely and practical member briefings on the use of [personal protective equipment in primary care](#) and how [CCGs can work with primary care networks \(PCNs\) effectively](#). These briefings have been downloaded almost 2,000 times in total. Recognising the need to rapidly reduce bureaucracy, we hosted a webinar with law firm Browne Jacobson and the Good Governance Institute to support CCGs to streamline governance. Throughout the pandemic we have contributed intelligence from NHSCC members, alongside our NHS Confederation colleagues, to offer direct feedback to the Prime Minister's office.

## **EVOLUTION OF COMMISSIONING**

Recognising that the integrated care agenda was still moving forward despite the pandemic, we produced a [toolkit for CCGs](#) to support the alignment of commissioner 'business as usual' activity to system-level working. This toolkit has been downloaded over 1,000 times and we have heard from members how useful this has been to review their functions. We also held a number of digital roundtables to support learning on streamlined commissioning, and ensured that CCG leaders contributed to the NHS Confederation's report [The Future of Integrated Care in England](#), which had a key role in shaping NHSEI's proposals on the future of integrated care.

## **CCG MERGERS**

Building on our work from the 2019/20 CCG mergers cycle, we delivered four webinars to help members and updated our discussion guide for the 2020/21 mergers cycle. This guide was developed with the Local Government Association (LGA) to support CCGs when discussing mergers with their local government colleagues.



## DRIVING MEDICINES VALUE

In March 2020, the Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal by pharmaceutical companies, which challenged a policy adopted by 12 CCGs recommending the use of Avastin (bevacizumab) for intravitreal administration such as in the treatment of wet AMD (age-related macular degeneration). This is a momentous decision following a lengthy legal case and years of influencing by NHSCC. It is testament to the hard work and dedication of the 12 north east CCGs who defended their position on Avastin in the interests of their patients. We continue to influence at the highest level of the national medicines value work, ensuring CCG medicines issues are raised and addressed in the appropriate fora across the senior management of NHSEI and DHSC.

## LOCALISING DECISION-MAKING

In response to requests from our members, we worked with the LGA and CCG leaders to produce a [toolkit that supports members](#) to ensure decision-making is as localised as possible in the context of system working.

“ NHSCC has continued to be a thought leader and continued to shine a light into the future of our developing national health and care systems. I have felt engaged and informed about the future direction of travel and this has helped accelerate the evolution of our local systems and partnerships.

**Jo Sauvage**

Chair, North Central London CCG



# network

One of the benefits of NHSCC membership is that we facilitate peer-to-peer interaction in safe spaces where members can share learning, solve problems and engage with other organisations.

## **MOVING EVENTS ONLINE**

Due to the pandemic, we moved all of our events online, including holding our annual member event virtually for the first time. This meant that we have been able to open them up to more people than ever before, with four times as many members registering for our annual member event, and almost 2,000 people benefitting from our event offering. We have also been able to deliver virtual roundtables and webinars at short notice to respond to your changing needs and priorities.

“ During the COVID-19 crisis, NHSCC has been instrumental in ensuring commissioners were able to network effectively and support one another in managing the pressures of the pandemic.

### **Dr Phil Moore**

Chair, NHS Clinical Commissioners and Chair, Mental Health Commissioners Network

## **NURSE LEADERSHIP**

NHSCC's Nurses Forum held four 'hot topic' virtual sessions during summer 2020 on care homes, continuing healthcare (CHC), workforce, and safeguarding. These sessions were attended by key figures in nursing including Sam Sherrington, head of community nursing at NHSEI; Crystal Oldman, chief executive of the Queen's Nursing Institute; and Trish O'Gorman, NHS CHC policy lead at NHSEI. These events facilitated rich discussion and shared learning, ensuring that the nursing voice continues to directly influence NHSEI next steps.



## PROVIDING RAPID ACCESS TO LEADERS

This year we implemented regular MS Teams calls between CCG leaders and Lou Patten, to create a more timely sharing of issues, learning and direct feeds into our influencing work. We launched a WhatsApp group for CCG accountable officers and chairs to communicate with us and each other quickly and informally. More than 55 members of the group provide real-time feedback on key issues, share insight and reaction to the latest national guidance, and help to share local good practice such as how to ensure public engagement with virtual board meetings, flu and COVID-19 vaccination programmes, CHC issues and more.

## HIGH PROFILE SPEAKERS

We continue to secure high-profile national speakers for our events, giving you access that you may not otherwise have. Highlights include Simon Stevens, chief executive of the NHS; Prerana Issar, the NHS's chief people officer; Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care; and Nikki Kanani, medical director of primary care at NHSEI.

“ The role of NHSCC has become increasingly more important in 2020/21. This is evident by the influential position of the chief executive and chair in advocating and having the ‘voice’ of CCGs represented and heard at national level.

### **Fiona Taylor**

Accountable Officer, South Sefton, Southport and Formby CCG



# future plans

Our focus for 2021/22: ensuring the current CCG expertise is retained to establish the bedrock of ICS commissioning.



## **CHANGE AHEAD**

2021 will be a year of transition for CCGs, as NHSEI's proposals for legislation take shape and are likely to see commissioning functions pass from CCGs to ICSs. NHSCC has influenced these proposals from the outset and submitted a technically detailed and substantial response, collated from member views. We have been invited to work alongside NHSEI and DHSC colleagues as these proposals are worked through.



## **SUPPORT**

A key priority will be to support our members during this period of change, ensuring that the current expertise within CCGs is retained to establish the bedrock of ICS commissioning. While many NHSCC members are already ICS leaders and we expect more to be in this position, we also recognise the very unsettling nature of these changes for CCG staff and will continue to influence and support as smooth a transition as possible.

In order to ensure consistency of support and understanding of the needs of our NHSCC members, Dr Graham Jackson continues in his role as NHSCC chair and NHS Confederation trustee, ensuring the voice of clinicians is heard at the highest level. Our board members will continue in their roles beyond their current terms of office to oversee this transition, bringing their knowledge of what members need and value from us.



## **INTEGRATION WITH THE NHS CONFEDERATION**

The NHS Confederation has already established a rapidly expanding network for ICS leaders and chairs, with NHSCC chief executive Lou Patten as the lead director for this work. Using her previous experience as an ICS lead and accountable officer, Lou will oversee the NHSCC and ICS work programmes, ensuring a strong member voice is heard by NHSEI, and that ICSs are given the best chance to succeed by being built on a strong platform.

NHSCC members will not only continue to receive the support that they value from us, but will also be able access a wider range of support from the NHS Confederation, including its PCN; acute and community networks; mental health network; and multi-organisation leadership groups, reflecting the move towards system-level working.

The NHS Confederation is introducing an 'access all areas' approach to members that will allow them to connect with different parts of the latest system thinking and encourage real integration across different constituencies. Some resources and events will only be available to members.

As the only system-wide membership body, the NHS Confederation offers a unique opportunity for NHSCC members to work with and influence all the component parts of the system, building the relationships that will ensure the success of system working.

This is all for one single fee. No additional charges or complex pricing structures. One fee for free access to all resources, events, publications, tools, daily briefings and updates, webinars, and plenty of networking opportunities. More information on the new NHS Confederation member offer for NHSCC members is available in the new member brochure. Find out more about the NHS Confederation on page 12.

“ NHSCC is also transitioning its role and ensuring that, as that part of the NHS Confederation, we have not only access to up-to-date advice relevant to CCGs, but that we can also access a whole range of policy and information relevant to the whole system.

**Tracey Cox**

Accountable Officer, Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire CCG, and STP Senior Responsible Officer



# NHS Confederation: delivering for our members

## TEN WAYS WE'VE MADE AN IMPACT

The NHS Confederation is the only membership body that brings together, supports and speaks for the whole healthcare system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We promote collaboration and partnership working as the key to improving population health, delivering high-quality care and reducing health inequalities.

The last 12 months have stretched the health and care system to its limit. We have focused on supporting you to respond to immediate challenges and to look ahead to the next phase. We have been your voice in public and your advocate behind the scenes, lobbying for the changes you have requested.

- 1 COVID-19 response** – From PPE and test and trace, to the roll out of the vaccine (particularly in primary care) and the easing of regulatory burdens, we have been one of the most prominent voices making the case for the issues that mattered most to our members.
- 2 NHS Reset campaign** – We launched the NHS Reset campaign to help shape what the health and care system should look like in the aftermath of the pandemic. Among our successes, we helped secure a commitment for a leaner and lighter approach to governance and regulation. We are launching an update to the campaign in March to focus on what needs to happen in the recovery phase.
- 3 Health inequalities** – Our BME Leadership Network campaigned for action on the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on people from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds, successfully lobbying government for ethnicity to be recorded on death certificates. Our new NHS Race and Health Observatory immediately started work to understand the barriers to take up of the vaccine among BME staff.

- 4 Extra NHS funding** – We worked with the Health Foundation to make the case for additional funding to respond to the impact of the pandemic and to ‘fill in the gaps’ in the 2018 funding settlement. The Chancellor awarded £3 billion in the Spending Review – more than was expected but less than was needed.
- 5 System working** – This has been at the heart of our work and we have engaged with leaders across the system to support the transition to every area becoming part of an ICS from April 2021. We have published three major reports and are influencing NHS England and NHS Improvement’s proposals on next steps.
- 6 Brexit** – We are a leading voice in the health sector on Brexit and run the influential Brexit Health Alliance and the Cavendish Coalition. The UK-EU trade and cooperation agreement met many of the provisions we have campaigned for on behalf of our members and the sector.
- 7 Support for social care** – For the past 18 months we have led Health for Care, a coalition of health organisations that has been increasing pressure on the government to boost funding and support for social care.
- 8 Workforce** – Through NHS Employers, we have provided support and guidance to workforce leaders throughout the pandemic, supplying information and advice on a range of issues, including shielding and testing, pre-employment checks and life assurance, and staff deployment and wellbeing.
- 9 Mental health** – Our Mental Health Network played a key role in highlighting the additional demands on services due to the pandemic, helping to secure an extra £500 million for mental health as part of the Spending Review.
- 10 Membership for the whole system** – We achieved our goal of launching new networks for our PCN and ICS members. Each network meets regularly and we are increasingly acting as the voice of PCN and ICS leaders, providing them with opportunities to influence and raise their profile on key issues.



## OUR SUPPORT IN NUMBERS

### Represent



**3,000+** people took part in our NHS Reset campaign, attending more than 50 events and contributing to 10 major reports



Contributed to **20** parliamentary inquiries, regularly giving evidence based on your insights



**35** policy reports calling for targeted changes that our members want to see



Regular appearances in the national media, acting as the voice of leaders across the system

### Support



**200+** daily COVID-19 briefings, distilling latest news, views and developments



**180+** blogs, sharing learning and sparking debate



**Monthly sessions** for first-time provider chief executives, equipping leaders and providing peer support



**90+** policy briefings, summarising and analysing policy and guidance

### Connect



**100+** events, roundtables and webinars, bringing together leaders across the system



**Regular meetings** of our **3** equality and diversity networks, providing independent safe spaces

“ The last year has shown what we can achieve for patients, families, carers and staff by supporting each other and sharing our expertise. The NHS Confederation is invaluable in helping us achieve it.

**Sam Allen**

Chief Executive, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

# stay connected

## KEEPING YOU INFORMED AND CONNECTED

There are a number of ways to keep in touch with NHS Clinical Commissioners and connect with what we do.

1. We offer a range of email newsletters and bulletins, including our weekly dedicated bulletin for all CCG employees, Connect, and our regular bulletin for CCG leaders. Subscribe by contacting [office.nhsc@nhsconfed.org](mailto:office.nhsc@nhsconfed.org)
2. Members are also able to subscribe to the NHS Confederation's bulletins including daily media summaries, a weekly member bulletin, and a range of special interest bulletins across key topics such as integrated care, system working, Brexit, and diversity and inclusion. Subscribe by visiting [nhsconfed.org/newsletters](https://nhsconfed.org/newsletters)
3. Our popular NHS Voices blogs provide a platform for members to share their stories and case studies of innovative work. If you would like to publish a blog, please contact [sarah.miller@nhsconfed.org](mailto:sarah.miller@nhsconfed.org)
4. The NHS Confederation has a regional lead in each of the seven NHS England and NHS Improvement regions, so please do make contact with them via [regional.leads@nhsconfed.org](mailto:regional.leads@nhsconfed.org)
5. Follow us on Twitter @NHSCCPress
6. And, of course, visit our website: [nhsc.org](https://nhsc.org)

## Contact us

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