

A united voice for health and care

Impact report 2022/23



Making an impact

2022/23 has been a year like no other. At a time characterised by political change, economic upheaval and industrial disputes, we have sought to make the case for the issues that matter most to you.

Whether it's challenging the government for a fair funding settlement for the NHS, pressing ministers for a long-term workforce strategy, urging the government and unions to end the industrial dispute or making the case for more autonomy for you and other local leaders, we have never shied away from speaking truth to power. Or from playing our part in helping solve the problems our sector faces.

This report provides a snapshot of our achievements over the last year, showing how the NHS Confederation and our networks have represented, supported and connected you.

01

Securing a workforce plan

With the NHS facing one of the greatest workforce crises in history, we ramped up calls for the government to produce a much-needed plan. After continuous lobbying, the Chancellor committed the government to publishing an independent plan for the NHS in 2023. We will work closely with the government to inform the strategy, to secure assurance that it will be fully funded and that the aim is to move to longer-term workforce funding.

02

Fostering a new relationship with the centre

We have been central to one of the most important changes in the healthcare sector this year – devolution and the evolving relationship between the centre and integrated care systems. Our report, *Governing the Health and Care System in England*, led by Professor Sir Chris Ham, has been a catalyst for these changes and enabled us to support the development of NHS England's new operating model and regulatory approaches, as well as Patricia Hewitt's review of system accountability and autonomy.

03

Preparing for industrial action

NHS Employers, which is part of the NHS Confederation, carried out extensive work to help prepare members for industrial action across the NHS. Working with legal partners, Capsticks, NHS Employers developed comprehensive guidance and resources. With the dispute escalating, we have consistently urged the Prime Minister to negotiate on the substantive issue of pay awards, reiterating the message to trade unions that a national resolution is needed as swiftly as possible.

04

Influencing legislative reforms

We had a demonstrable impact on influencing the Health and Care Act 2022 – the first major legislation on health and care in a decade. Rooted in engagement with members, we ensured checks and balances on the Secretary of State's powers and secured mental health representation on integrated care boards. We also influenced the policy guidance underpinning the reforms, including on integrated care strategies.

05

Integrating primary care

We were actively involved in the engagement and development process for the Fuller Stocktake on integrating primary care, with our full range of members and networks taking part in workstreams, steering groups and acting as a 'critical friend'. The watershed report includes many of the key principles our members shared with us. Our primary care members are actively involved in the implementation phase of the review's recommendations.

06

Developing a vision for mental health

In the absence of a government plan to improve mental health and wellbeing, we outlined a vision for what mental health, autism and learning disability services should look like in ten years' time – and the steps needed to get there. Developed in partnership with the Centre for Mental Health, the vision has gained traction, secured engagement with central decision makers and focused attention on the art of the possible.

07

Influencing regulation and oversight

With risk management ranking among healthcare leaders' top concerns this winter, we urged regulators to explicitly take the challenging context into account in their regulatory activity. We successfully influenced the Care Quality Commission, Nursing and Midwifery Council and the General Medical Council to write to NHS leaders to confirm they will do this.

08

Financing the NHS and showing its economic value

Our inflation analysis with the Institute for Fiscal Studies reversed perceptions of the NHS having record funding, revealing that it has had a real-terms budget cut of between £4 - 9.4 billion this year. Our analysis with Carnall Farrar quantified the positive relationship between increased NHS spending, improved health outcomes and improved productivity, stating that every pound invested in the NHS gives £4 back to the economy.

09

Intervening in the cost-of-living crisis

As the cost-of-living crisis started to escalate, we sounded the alarm over the impact of spiralling energy prices and fuel poverty on health outcomes, services and inequalities. Several organisations across the health sector and beyond amplified our message, resulting in action by the government to implement an energy price cap guarantee.

10

Securing discharge funding

In the run up to the mini budget, we worked with other leading health and care organisations to urge the government to reinstate and extend discharge to access funding ahead of winter. Following our interventions, the government announced a £500 million Adult Social Care Discharge Fund.

We have represented you

Through our voice in the media and influence in the corridors of power, we have represented members' views to bring about effective change.

The Messenger review was the central opportunity for influencing policy dictating leadership development in the NHS.

Many of its recommendations reflected what we highlighted as members' key areas for improvement, including greater structure and consistency in leadership development; improving diversity in senior leadership; emphasis on rewarding collaboration; and more support to leaders who take on challenging roles.


In response to deep concerns about the effect of inflation on pensions tax and the impact on NHS care, NHS Employers, which is part of the NHS Confederation, urged the Chancellor to take action on the NHS Pensions Scheme. As a result, significant changes to pension rules were announced, in line with our asks.

As the national voice of integrated care systems (ICSs), our ICS Network was the first port of call to support Patricia Hewitt's review of system oversight and governance. Our involvement helped secure strong engagement with ICS members and our wider membership, and representation on the review's workstreams.

The Acute Network worked closely with members and the NHS Transformation Directorate to influence the digital health and care plan and data strategies, raising key issues for members including the variation in digital maturity, legacy IT systems and the importance of interoperability as the ambition around digitisation grows.

With primary care under sustained pressure and scrutiny, our Primary Care Network engaged national NHS and political leaders on what primary care needs, contributing to the Health and Social Care Select Committee's key report on the future of general practice and meeting the Labour leadership over proposals to review the general practice model.

Our Mental Health Network worked with the Mental Health Policy Group to shape the draft mental health bill, a vital piece of legislation for much-needed reform. Network chief executive Sean Duggan OBE provided oral evidence at the joint committee's inquiry into the bill to ensure workforce implications and the funding needed for implementation were considered.



In response to growing concerns over the cost of living, we sounded the alarm over rising energy prices and the impact of fuel poverty

Our Mental Health Network worked closely with NHS England

on the NHS Long Term Plan (LTP) refresh and review of performance against LTP trajectories, including highlighting pressures, what members need to meet existing targets and where targets need to be flexed.

In response to growing concerns over the cost of living, we sounded the alarm over rising energy prices and the impact of fuel poverty, becoming one of the leading national bodies warning of the impact on health and on health and care services.


We represented the NHS on the European and international stage

to promote NHS innovation; best practice on balancing access to data and protecting patient privacy; and barriers and enablers to cross-border health data sharing. We also played a leading role in the upcoming EU health data sharing legislation and convened a health sector alliance that successfully secured a government U-turn on GDPR legislation.

As part of our work with NHS England to create a disability positive NHS, we held a national Disability Summit to improve the confidence and capability of leaders and managers, and influence policymakers in addressing the inequalities and challenges faced by disabled people in the workplace. 89 per cent of delegates either agreed or strongly agreed that the event improved their understanding.

As the go-to voice of ICSs, our ICS Network provided written and verbal evidence to the Health and Social Care Committee, as part of an inquiry into integrated care systems. The network also engaged with the Secretary of State regarding his request for system organograms, providing guidance and messaging to members.

Through our Provider Collaborative Forum, the Acute Network raised members' views on NHS England's provider collaboratives guidance and development of a maturity matrix. Based on extensive engagement with members, we urged NHS England to continue the permissive framework and enable leaders to develop their collaboratives based on local need and relationships.



The Community Network shone the spotlight on staffing challenges facing community health services

As the national voice of NHS community providers, the Community Network, which we host with NHS Providers, continued to comment on the challenges in discharging patients in a timely way, and the role of community providers in doing so. Prior to the Chancellor's mini budget, the network called for the return of dedicated discharge funding, a form of which was subsequently announced.

The working conditions of black and minority ethnic (BME) leaders in the NHS were thrown into sharp focus in the BME Leadership Network's report, Shattered Hopes. Based on insights from more than 100 leaders, the network called for action to end cultures of discriminatory behaviour, personal support to current and aspiring leaders, and succession planning and talent development schemes.

With staff shortages in the community sector starting to bite, the Community Network raised the alarm over the staffing challenges facing community health services and put forward what is needed – nationally and locally – to avert a crisis.

In support of the wellbeing of trans and non-binary people, our Health and Care LGBTQ+ Leaders Network joined calls for a full and effective ban on so-called conversion therapy and submitted evidence to the consultation. The network also commissioned research to help healthcare leaders become more effective allies.

In response to an NHS Employers letter to the education secretary outlining members' concerns around the removal of BTEC qualifications and its serious impact on supply routes into key professions, the Department for Education agreed to pause its removal of BTEC qualifications in light of the introduction of T Levels.

Our primary care members are actively involved in the implementation of the Fuller Stocktake recommendations, with six design groups established to support and influence implementation. The design groups bring together members across NHS Confederation networks as well as key experts.

We have supported you

From masterclasses and development programmes to incisive research and practical resources, we have supported members to create the best environment to deliver and transform care.

In partnership with the Forward Institute, our ICS Network established Connected Leadership, a unique leadership development programme to support ICS chief executives and chairs as they cultivate their leadership styles.


Our Leading Integration Peer Support programme, run jointly with the Local Government Association and NHS Providers, continued to offer peer support at system, place and neighbourhood. We developed a range of webinars and case studies to share experiences and the impact the programme has had.

We renewed our commitment to tackling inequality and eliminating racism through the launch of our anti-racism offer for members. We proactively worked with members across the system to support greater understanding and action on deep-rooted issues.

Our Acute Network established action learning sets to support emerging policy and practice around provider collaboration and place-based leadership.

Our Mental Health Network supported commissioners to improve services for people with learning disabilities by publishing guidance, alongside the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities and Mencap, following roundtable discussions between people with learning disabilities and commissioners.

More than 300 participants joined our Mental Health Network's webinar on improving early intervention support for children and young people who identify as LGBTQ+. Delegates delved into the learnings from the Queer Futures 2 research project, including how to effectively use the tools created by the research team.



The anti-racism resource also supports NHS leaders to ensure robust procedures deliver their NHS commitment to a safe and respectful environment for all

Our Mental Health Network hosted a webinar on personality disorders and co-morbidities to platform the lived experience of service users. This session was part of the award-winning Tale of Three Cities initiative that aimed to shift the dial on personality disorder stigma.


We produced the first major report on ICSs' role in supporting social and economic development.

We continue to build on this through a practical learning capture project, along with events and materials to help members deliver this fourth objective.

More than 400 delegates from primary care and beyond gained insight into how to improve their leadership at the annual Primary Care Conference. Delegates connected with peers, heard from inspirational leaders and focused on the role of primary care in place and system.

Together with NHS Providers, we delivered the week-long #CelebratingCommunityServices social media campaign in December to highlight the breadth of community services, their importance to people's lives and how they contribute to the smooth running of the health and care system.

We worked with NHS England and the Nursing and Midwifery Council to produce an anti-racism resource for nurses, midwives and nursing associates. The resource also supports NHS leaders to ensure robust procedures deliver their NHS commitment to a safe and respectful environment for all.



The BME Leadership Network's mentoring programme will help black and minority ethnic leaders to navigate their leadership journey

Our Acute Network worked with Proud2beOps

to support operations leads across the country on issues such as pensions, infection prevention and control and career development.

The Community Network engaged with NHS England

over national data for the sector and commented on the publication of urgent community response (UCR) data in national performance statistics. It also published opinion pieces and produced case studies spotlighting the benefits to the system of UCR services.

Primary care health coaches shared learning and resources at our Primary Care Network's

monthly meetings and heard from speakers, giving them the tools to improve their practice and work within their PCN.

Our BME Leadership Network launched a leadership mentoring programme for its members,

following a successful pilot scheme. The programme supports recommendations from the network's Shattered Hopes report and will help black and minority ethnic leaders to navigate their own leadership journey and challenges, and support others to do the same.

We have connected you

We have brought together members from across the system to connect with their peers and regional and national leaders, providing safe spaces to explore shared challenges and potential solutions.

Since ICSs became statutory bodies, our **Acute Network** has held regular roundtables with acute leaders so they can share their thoughts on system working.

We launched our **LGBTQ+ Network Conversations**, creating protected spaces for LGBTQ+ people to come together to discuss pressing issues. The first two online events focused on authentic leadership and the Workforce Sexual Orientation Monitoring Standard.

Primary care members met with sector leaders and senior leaders from **NHS England** and other key stakeholders at a House of Lords reception launching the Primary Care Network.

The **Community Network** facilitated conversations between **community provider chairs**, chief executives and Dr Amanda Doyle, NHS England's director of primary and community care, to shape her understanding of, and national priorities for, the community sector. Further sessions are being planned. The network also met with minister Helen Whately MP to discuss national priorities for the community sector.

The **Mental Health Network** hosted a meeting between **mental health trust chairs and senior CQC leaders**, including chief executive Ian Trenholm, for an open and honest discussion around quality improvement and how the CQC can support trusts on their improvement journeys.

The **ICS Network** supported **integrated care partnership (ICP)** chairs to develop their ICP strategies and facilitated connections with integrated care board (ICB) chairs to ensure a joined-up approach. The network supported non-executive directors of ICBs and provider organisations, offering help and support on governance. It further developed relationships with the Health Devolution Commission, the Health Foundation and the King's Fund, and developed a strategic alliance with NHS Providers and the LGA to support systems.



Our Acute Network convened a cross-system reference group to support the development of NHS England's urgent and emergency care strategy

We brought together over 6,000 people from health, care and beyond for NHS ConfedExpo. Delivered with NHS England, the event provided a unique space to share, learn and reconnect following the pandemic.

More than 250 primary care network managers attended the Primary Care Network's forum for this group of leaders, providing a safe space to help one another navigate this new role and system working.

Forty-eight organisations from across health and care joined our 2022/23 Diversity in Health and Care Partners Programme starting in September 2022. The year-long programme includes face-to-face interactive modules, specialist virtual masterclasses, access to leading industry experts, good practice, guidance and resources.

The Acute Network convened a stakeholder reference group across our membership to support NHS England with the development of the urgent and emergency care strategy.

The ICS Network brought together 160 ICS leaders and partners at its annual conference and member dinners to connect with local authority leaders, VCSE partners, ministers and NHS England colleagues. It convened members as part of its Spotlight series on topics including metrics of integration, children and young people's services and medicines optimisation.



The Health and Care Women Leaders Network held its sixth annual conference, spotlighting progress on gender equality

The BME Leadership Network brought members together

at two in-person events during NHS ConfedExpo in June and Black History Month in October, where we were proud to host John Barnes MBE and broadcaster Adam Rutherford, respectively, to share their insights and spark quality discussion.

Our Mental Health Network ran a series of programmes and regular meetings to connect members

to each other and different parts of the system, including weekly meetings for mental health trust chairs, a Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Systems group, a Learning Disabilities Forum and monthly meetings of the Independent Sector Mental Health Group.

Our ICS Network provided more support to chief executives, chairs and their executive teams by establishing new forums, including forums on provider collaboration and virtual care, and a forum for ICS chief nurses, run with the Queen's Nursing Institute. The forums encourage peer learning and support, information sharing and opportunities to influence guidance.

The Community Network held a session for community providers

on implementing the Fuller Stocktake with Dr Clare Fuller and NHS England's director of personalised care, James Sanderson. The network also hosted a roundtable with members to inform the Care Quality Commission's evolving approach to regulation.

Close to 140 members attended the Health and Care Women Leaders Network's

sixth annual conference in November. The face-to-face event focused on work to progress gender equality, with a focus on women's safety, women's health, inclusive leadership, allyship and supporting creative disruptors.

About us

The NHS Confederation is the membership organisation that brings together, supports and speaks for the whole healthcare system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The members we represent employ 1.5 million staff, care for more than 1 million patients a day and control £150 billion of public expenditure. We promote collaboration and partnership working as the key to improving population health, delivering high-quality care and reducing health inequalities.

18 Smith Square
Westminster
London SW1P 3HZ

020 7799 6666
www.nhsconfed.org
@NHSConfed

If you require this publication in an alternative format, please email enquiries@nhsconfed.org

© NHS Confederation 2023. You may copy or distribute this work, but you must give the author credit, you may not use it for commercial purposes, and you may not alter, transform or build upon this work.

Registered charity no. 1090329