The NHS belongs to the people:
Making public accountability meaningful

Chair: Julie Wood, Director, NHS Clinical Commissioners
Dr Tim Moorhead, Co-Chair, Sheffield Health and Wellbeing Board and Chair, NHS Sheffield CCG
Councillor Cate McDonald, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, Sheffield City Council
Judy Robinson, Chair, Healthwatch Sheffield
Alex Baylis, Assistant Director of Policy, The King’s Fund
Making public accountability meaningful

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The King’s Fund
The landscape is changing...

- Sustainability and transformation plans, and new care models
- Devolution
- Foundation trusts and trusts
  - Not just changes to structures
  - All this while post-2012 changes are still being worked through
- Finance, quality, outcomes
  - All are top priority
  - Significant national oversight
- Not just about providers
  - Commissioners
  - Professional roles
Should public accountability change too?

› Many changes are still too new to assess implications

› Devolution in Manchester has not required new structures or arrangements for public involvement and accountability

› Much focus is on hospitals, but accountability is crucial for commissioners and non-acute providers too

› There has never been a greater need for scrutiny of effects of financial pressure, NHS funding and productivity

Source: Forward View People and Communities Board
‘Accountability arrangements exist to facilitate change’ Stephen Dorrell

› ‘Customer-owners’ not patients
  – Local community provides governance rather than performance management or inspection
  – Community engagement also encourages taking control of own care

› Not merely a health care provider, a broader social purpose
A note of caution...

- Rapid time scales can undermine public engagement
  - Time for people to get involved *and* time to act on what they say
  - Using public accountability as a change driver is likely to be a lengthy process
  - Needs to be iterative: start early and take the public with you

- It can be undermined by cynicism
  - Quality objectives may be perceived as cost-saving objectives
  - A mindset of ‘the letter of the law’ can get in the way
  - Perceived excess of new initiatives

- If a top-down requirement, can seem like box-ticking
  - How are the public’s views connected to the decision-making process?
Where is the public in the factors driving change and improvement?

- Patient power: choice and contestability ...?
- ... or demands for assurance: more inspection?
- ... or partners: improvement from within?
- When do central requirements conflict with localism?
No simple answers

- National picture unclear and has gaps

- What is clear is no reduction in importance
  - Principles of NHS Constitution should still drive local approaches
  - Range of mechanisms to build on

- Leaders in NHS bodies have key role in navigating this
  - Collective system leadership
  - Patients and public see across organisational boundaries
  - NEDs as well as executive leaders have a potential important role