Policy landscape

phg foundation
making science work for health

My healthy future: the policy landscape

My Healthy Future aims to set out a vision of personalised healthcare in the next 20 years or so - the next generation of healthcare. The vision will encompass emerging and promising biomedical and digital technologies as well as the changing role of individuals in their health and care.

To picture this future world an appreciation of the interface between innovation, policy and clinical practice is necessary. While acknowledging the variety of health systems, an example of the forms policy takes is a useful foundation and so we have undertaken a review of the landscape in the UK to provide a guide to evolving drivers of change and the policy response.

Our analysis of relevant health policy documents reveals several themes that have emerged over the last ten years including encouraging innovation, integrating health and care services, promoting patient empowerment and personalised healthcare.

Minding the gaps

The NHS has long been grappling with a complex combination of three interdependent and widening gaps that threaten its long-term sustainability:

- **Health and wellbeing gap -** the absence of sufficient local and national programmes designed to help people improve their health and wellbeing, specifically programmes focused on preventing people from getting ill and supporting people to stay healthy
- **Care and quality gap -** the disparity between the availability and quality of services people need and the availability and quality of services currently being offered
- **Funding and efficiency gap -** the expected difference between NHS resources and patient needs of nearly £30bn a year by 2020/21

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Drivers of change

Science and technology push

The evolution of science and technology continues to accelerate at an astonishing pace, carrying with it enormous innovative potential to improve prediction, diagnosis, treatment and monitoring in the NHS.

> "Genomic technologies will facilitate more stratified medicine, enabling earlier and more accurate diagnosis and prognosis as well as helping clinicians to select treatments that are more likely to be effective."

Human Genomics Strategy Group

Social and cultural pull

Public attitudes towards healthcare are changing: people want to be more involved in decisions about their care and those living with long-term conditions want more support to manage their health and well-being.

> "Not only does digital health technology carry the potential to improve resource management and access to specialist expertise but...these new digital capabilities could lead to more systematic, high-quality and targeted care as well as better coordinated care that fosters greater patient engagement."

Nuffield Trust

Demographics

Rising life expectancy and the growing number of people living with multiple conditions are fueling serious concerns about resources, capacity and care pathways.

Evolution of medicine

Personalised medicine is based on 'combining and analysing information from our genome, with clinical and diagnostic information and then comparing that with data from others' to 'help determine individual risk of developing disease, detect illness earlier, provide an accurate diagnosis, and determine the most effective interventions to help improve our health'. Ultimately, it will facilitate the essential shift in healthcare provision from episodic care to more personalised prevention of disease.

Policy documents include:

NHS England: *Five Year Forward View* and *Next Steps on the NHS Five Year Forward View*

House of Lords Select Committee on the Long-term Sustainability of the NHS: *The Long-term Sustainability of the NHS and Adult Social Care*

King's Fund: *People in Control of their own Health and Care: The State of Involvement*

National Information Board: *Personalised Health and Care 2020*

Public Health England: *Strategic Plan for the Next Four Years – Better Outcomes by 2020*

Nuffield Trust: *What is Integrated Care?*

Department of Health: *Generation Genome: Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer*

Evolution of health policy

How have successive UK governments responded to these drivers? We have identified four themes.

Avoidable deaths down by 20%

Innovation

A key policy tenet for decades has been to support innovation to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the NHS and expand the life sciences sector gaining ever more traction.

- The largely consistent growth of government funds earmarked for science and innovation spiked recently with the Industrial Strategy and Life Science Sector Deal
- An increasing appreciation that closing the care and quality gap requires 'combinatorial innovation', where 'single-issue innovations that improve the quality of a particular patient group's care combine with system-wide innovation to help ensure effective implementation'.
- Embracing the evolution of digital technologies such as mobile apps, wearable devices and biosensors, has required expansion of the necessary digital infrastructure, including electronic health records, data-sharing platforms and the interoperability of IT systems

Stroke and heart disease death rates halved for men & women since 2001

> "To maximise the true value of the information available about our health, we need to bring together genomic, clinical and diagnostic, medicines, and lifestyle data. It is the integration and analysis of this information that forms the powerhouse of personalised medicine."
>
> Improving outcomes through personalised medicine
> NHS England

Combined cancer UK mortality rates projected to fall 15% by 2035

Programmes like the Accelerated Access Review, the NHS Innovation Accelerator and the Academic Health Science Networks reflect an ongoing commitment to accelerate useful health innovations, as well as the recognition that effective clinical implementation is an issue with which the NHS continues to grapple.

Just 8% of all deaths in England are from infectious diseases

Integration

Successive governments have prioritised joining up health and care services, including facilitating accessibility, IT interoperability and data-sharing, in order to ensure a more comprehensive and collaborative health system. These objectives have been pursued as part of a wider effort to shift towards local authorities tailoring local solutions to local problems.

The complete redesign of whole health and care systems is being considered. This includes new care models to reduce trips to the hospital, Sustainability and Transformation Plans to expand the role of local health and care organisations, and new methods to involve people in ways that are appropriate to their needs and preferences.

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> Many of the rights allocated to patients seek to empower them, challenging the balance of power and control held by providers and health professionals. At the same time, it is recognised that patients must increasingly play a role in maintaining and managing their own health
>
> King's Fund

Patient empowerment

As the concept of patient empowerment and person-centred care has evolved, health policy has increasingly embraced the importance of ensuring health professionals support fully-informed patients to manage and make decisions about their own health and wellbeing, with a particular emphasis by the Government on personal responsibility for staying healthy.

Personalised medicine and prevention

Health policy increasingly recognises that a health system fit to meet the needs of the population it serves must focus more on preventing illness and supporting individuals in maintaining active and healthy lifestyles. This recognition is underpinned by the evolution of science and technology, which successive governments have embraced to facilitate more personalised medicine and by extension better prediction and prevention, earlier diagnosis, more effective treatment and effective self-monitoring.

New technologies are characteristically viewed by health policy makers as both an opportunity and a threat to health systems.

- By preventing disease and treating it more effectively, they should improve health and reduce the impact of caring for those with long term disabling health problems.

However:

- They vastly increase the range of possible healthcare interventions, creating increased demand for already overburdened services. There are also the upfront costs of development and implementation to consider as well as implications for individuals and society.

Through workshops, roundtables and online discussion we are exploring with experts, enthusiasts - and sceptics - how technologies will change the face of healthcare and how health systems and wider society should adapt to optimise their use.

This is a summary of a short report to be published in spring 2018. To request a copy contact rebecca.bazeley@phgfoundation.org

#myhealthyfuture

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