

# A WELCOME BY PROFESSOR SIR MALCOLM GRANT, CHAIR

NHS England is an independent organisation established by Parliament at arm's length from Government and charged with the stewardship of the NHS. Each year, the Government sets out its expectations of us, and the funding we will receive, in the form of a mandate which is also laid before Parliament. For 2015/16, the Government allocated us £102 billion and set some challenging objectives.

We are required to ensure that comprehensive health and care services are available to all, where there is clinical need, and regardless of an individual's ability to pay. We are custodians of the values of the NHS Constitution, committed to putting patients at the heart of everything we do, promoting transparency and accountability of our work to citizens, and ensuring the most efficient, fair and inclusive use of finite taxpayer resources.

It is our responsibility to continually improve health outcomes for individuals, communities and society as a whole by investing the NHS budget strategically to ensure real value for money. Central to our role is the commissioning of health services. We commission some services directly (mainly specialised and primary care services), but allocate the majority of the resources we receive to clinical commissioning groups, who commission services at local level, overseen by us.

This annual report describes our work in 2015/16 and outlines some of our most significant achievements. We have faced significant challenges too. Demand for services has continued to rise at a greater rate than funding, placing GPs and hospitals under

huge pressure and making it more difficult to achieve the high service standards enshrined in the NHS Constitution. The last year has also seen a protracted dispute between the Government and the BMA over the new junior doctors' contract.

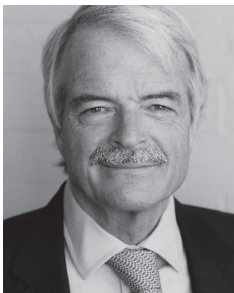
2015/16 saw the establishment of NHS Improvement, created by the coming together of the NHS Trust Development Authority and Monitor. We are in strong support of this move and will be working in partnership with NHS Improvement at every level to ensure consistency and continuity of national leadership and support for providers of healthcare to ensure better care for our patients.

The NHS Five Year Forward View, published in 2014, set out a compelling vision for the future and we have worked tirelessly over the last year to begin to bring the vision to reality. The new Government elected in May 2015 endorsed the Forward View vision and, in the comprehensive spending round, committed additional resources to the NHS over the next five years to support implementation.

It is truly a privilege to chair NHS England, and to be supported on the Board by such a strong team. I pay tribute to the hard work and dedication of our directors, coupled with particular thanks to those who have left the Board during the course of the year. Sir Ciarán Devane and Margaret Casely-Hayford, two of the original directors, reached the end of their terms and Ed Smith stood down upon his appointment as chair of NHS Improvement. Dame Barbara Hakin decided to retire after 41 years working in the NHS and Tim Kelsey took up a new appointment as commercial director at Telstra Health.

I am grateful to all our staff for their ongoing efforts and commitment. The achievements outlined in this annual report are testament to their hard work, and we are profoundly grateful to them for consistently going the extra mile.

And looking beyond NHS England itself, I wish to place on record the Board's deep appreciation of the work of all NHS staff across England in ensuring that the millions of people every day who use health services continue to receive excellent care. The NHS remains one of this country's most cherished and trusted institutions, due in large measure to the sheer professionalism and commitment of clinicians, managers and other NHS staff.



**Professor Sir Malcolm Grant, Chair**