

NHS Assembly – Briefing No. 1

Update from inaugural meeting (April 2019) – www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/nhs-assembly

WHAT IS THE NHS ASSEMBLY?

The NHS Long Term Plan (7:17) sets out:

“We will build on the open and consultative process that this plan is built on, and strengthen the ability of patients, professionals and the public to contribute, by establishing an NHS Assembly in early 2019.”

The Assembly is co-chaired by Dr Clare Gerada and Professor Sir Chris Ham and has a membership of 56 individuals drawn from across the health and care sectors.

The membership brings broad stakeholder insight and frontline experience to discussions, serving as a “guiding coalition” on implementation of the improvements outlined in the plan.

The assembly will have an agreed programme of work to allow for additional activity to be conducted in advance of meetings to help bring wider insight to Assembly discussions.

Ambitions for the Assembly

Opening the inaugural meeting with a welcome to members, Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England and NHS Improvement spoke about the potential of the NHS Assembly as a guiding coalition to make real the big-ticket improvements we want to see.

The Co-chairs and members discussed their ambitions for the Assembly as a body that should:

- act as a voice for the system and wider partners in driving delivery of the Long Term Plan;
- tackle the difficult conversations, focusing on how to make the stated ambitions in the LTP a reality;
- be a sounding board for informing policy at an early stage of development;
- help identify where there are blockages to implementing innovations;
- model compassionate and positive leadership with members acting as ambassadors for the plan;
- focus on people not organisations always keep the needs of patients and service users at the heart of its deliberations;
- draw on wider perspectives and evidence to help support the above.

Discussion 1 - Implementing the Long Term Plan (LTP)

Matt Tagney, Programme Director for the Long Term Plan provided an overview of work to support implementation of the plan. This was followed by three context presentations from Assembly members:

Helen Stokes-Lampard, Chair of RCGP described how we are “entering a new era for general practice” with the introduction of Primary Care Networks providing the building blocks for community-based care.

Imelda Redmond, Director of Healthwatch England described how Healthwatch organisations across the country are working with local systems to ensure patients and communities are involved in the development of local implementation plans.

Paul Farmer, CEO of MIND spoke about the LTP having the content to lead to significant changes in mental health and the four elements that he would like to see in the implementation of the LTP: maintaining a clear sense of direction, mapping progress, a focus on co production in delivery, and building positive relationships will be key.

ASSEMBLY NEWS

Wider reading

During the discussion several members referenced Julia Unwin's work for the CarnegieUK Trust "Kindness, emotions and human relationships". You can download the report [here](#).

2019 meetings dates

5 July (London)

5 September (Manchester)

3 December (TBC)

Stay in touch

We will continue to develop resources and opportunities to keep people engaged in the work of the Assembly which will be posted on the [Assembly webpages](#). If you want to receive notifications of new materials, please email your details to: england.nhsassembly@nhs.net with subject line "Stay in touch".

Implementing the Long Term Plan - Key reflections and points of consensus among Assembly members were:

- The implementation framework needs to provide clarity on which aspects will have senior national leadership and which are for local ownership.
- Delivering the plan means addressing both cultural and operational issues, challenging entrenched behaviours and celebrating successes.
- It will require compassionate leadership and an environment where NHS staff are valued and supported to do their jobs to the best of their abilities.
- Local plans need to be developed with partners including local government, NHS staff, residents and voluntary community and social enterprise sector organisations.
- The Assembly should support identification of successful innovations to share across the system.

Discussion 2 – Legislative changes

Ian Dodge, National Director Strategy and Innovation described proposed legislative changes which were set out in the document ["Implementing the Long Term Plan: Proposals for possible changes to legislation"](#).

Claire Fuller, Leader of Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System described how the proposed legislative changes would help to legitimise ambitions for Integrated Care Systems, addressing the very complex governance and individual organisational interests which currently act as barriers to delivering truly integrated care created around the individual.

Rob Webster, drawing on his experience as Leader of the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care Partnership spoke about the importance of good relationships as well as good governance. He described how future legislative changes should build on governance that has been developed in Integrated Care Systems. And emphasised that it is essential that the impact on local relationships is a positive one.

Legislation - Key reflections and points of consensus among Assembly members were:

- General support from the Assembly for removing competition from the system as far as possible whilst maintaining the ability to drive quality.
- A clear consensus that legislative changes should be light touch and only made where it will facilitate implementation of the Long Term Plan improvements – there was no appetite for sweeping legislative changes.
- Agreement that in taking forward legislative changes, proposals needed to be clear and to the point (as described in the discussion document) and effort made to ensure the public sufficiently understand the drivers and impacts of any changes.
- A request that any proposals also consider the impact on the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors and take advantage of the opportunity to contract those sectors as delivery partners.