



NHS Monthly Insight Report

November 2020

360 assurance is a member of The Internal Audit Network (TIAN) which comprises the 10 NHS internal audit consortiums and in house teams operating in England. These organisations collaborate across a number of areas to leverage their collective knowledge and expertise and drive efficiency and effectiveness. The monthly insight report highlights key publications and is intended as a useful update and reference tool. This report is produced by TIAN and shared by 360 Assurance.

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Introduction

The Internal Audit Network (TIAN) comprises the 10 NHS internal audit consortiums and in house teams operating in England. These organisations collaborate across a number of areas to leverage their collective knowledge and expertise and drive efficiency and effectiveness. The monthly Insight Report is produced by CW Audit on behalf of TIAN and is shared across TIAN members and their clients.

Developments in the NHS

CQC report: State of Care 2019/20



The State of Care is the CQC's annual assessment of health care and social care in England. The report looks at the trends, shares examples of good and outstanding care, and highlights where care needs to improve.

The CQC reports that pre-COVID, care was generally good, but with little overall improvement. In the NHS, improvement in some areas – for example, emergency care, maternity and mental health – was slower than others. The social care sector was fragile as a result of the lack of a long-term funding solution, and in need of investment and workforce planning. In primary medical services, the fact that the overall ratings picture remained broadly unchanged masked a more volatile picture of deterioration and improvement.

Since the arrival of COVID-19, all these things remain true, but so much else has changed. As the CQC took stock of the health and care system's initial response to the pandemic in order to learn lessons for the future, they recognised elements to build on – and elements to reassess:

- The professionalism and dedication of the people who work and volunteer in health and care has always been the system's key strength – and from March onwards, this was more obvious than ever, as staff went to extraordinary lengths to protect those they cared for. This is cause for celebration – as well as for reflection on how to ensure that all staff are recognised for their work, regardless of the sector in which they deliver care.
- The progress achieved in transforming the way care is delivered is also deeply impressive. In a matter of days, services developed new procedures and ways of working, often taking advantage of technology. Changes that were expected to take years – like the switch to more flexible GP consultations by phone and online – took place almost overnight. This report highlights many examples of how collaboration among services has made a real difference to people's care.

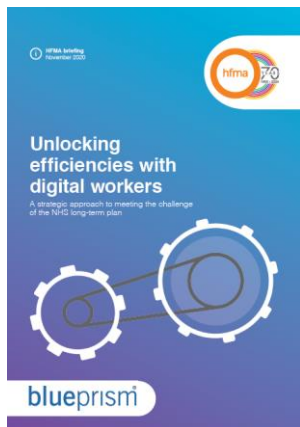
The CQC concludes that the challenge now will be to keep and develop the best aspects of these new ways of delivering services while making sure that no one is disadvantaged in the process. COVID-19 has magnified inequalities across the health and care system that must be addressed going forward.

The report can be found here: [Foreword | Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](https://www.cqc.org.uk/foreword)

For information

Developments in the NHS

HFMA briefing: Unlocking efficiencies with digital workers



HFMA contends that digital workers need to be part of any organisation's digital armoury, and automation should be considered and championed at a strategic level in order to make an organisation-wide impact.

NHS bodies work with a 'vast array of IT systems' that will need substantial investment in time and money to update and integrate. Digital workers are a relatively inexpensive way of integrating systems quickly to improve both the patient experience and the working lives of NHS staff.

The HFMA and Blue Prism have undertaken research on whether technology and digital developments are part of the strategic thinking of NHS boards. They found that while both technological transformation and the wider use of digital solutions were raised in board papers there was little evidence of discussion or focus on how the digital strategy would be achieved or any review of digital metrics/ KPIs.

Most NHS bodies have senior staff championing the digital agenda but staff are often unaware of what that means for them.

This briefing (<https://www.hfma.org.uk/publications/details/unlocking-efficiencies-with-digital-workers>) focuses on the role of digital workers as part of the solution for achieving technological transformation. Digital workers free up staff time to focus on the patient and can help NHS bodies achieve interoperability between IT systems. Those that have worked alongside a digital colleague are enthusiastic champions for their wider roll out throughout the NHS. The briefing used case studies to illustrate how the digital workforce is being used today.

For information

NHSE/I annual assessment of CCGs

NHS England has a statutory duty to undertake an annual assessment of CCGs. The assessment ratings for each CCG are given in this report. The report can be found here: [NHS England » CCG annual assessment 2019/20](#)

For information

Developments in the NHS

Integrating Care – The next steps to building strong and effective integrated care systems across England

This document, “Integrating Care – The next steps to building strong and effective integrated care systems across England”, builds on previous publications that set out proposals for legislative reform and is primarily focused on the operational direction of travel. It opens up a discussion with the NHS and its partners about how Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) could be embedded in legislation or guidance. This builds on the route map set out in the *NHS Long Term Plan*, for health and care joined up locally around people’s needs. It signals a renewed ambition for how the NHS can support greater collaboration between partners in health and care systems to help accelerate progress in meeting our most critical health and care challenges.

Over the last two years, ICSs have been formed across England. In an integrated care system, NHS organisations, in partnership with local councils and others, take collective responsibility for managing resources, delivering, and improving the health of the population they serve. Integrated care systems have allowed organisations to work together and coordinate services more closely, to make real, practical improvements to people’s lives. For staff, improved collaboration can help to make it easier to work with colleagues from other organisations. And systems can better understand data about local people’s health, allowing them to provide care that is tailored to individual needs.

By working alongside councils, and drawing on the expertise of others such as local charities and community groups, the NHS can help people to live healthier lives for longer, and to stay out of hospital when they do not need to be there.

It details how systems and their constituent organisations will accelerate collaborative ways of working in future, considering the key components of an effective ICS and reflecting what a range of local leaders have told NHSE/I about their experiences during the past two years, including the immediate and long-term challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

These are significant new steps towards the ambition set out in the *NHS Long Term Plan*, building on the experience of the earliest ICSs and other areas. The challenge now is to spread their experience to every part of England. From April 2021 this will require all parts of our health and care system to work together as Integrated Care Systems, involving:

- Stronger partnerships in local places between the NHS, local government and others with a more central role for primary care in providing joined-up care;
- Provider organisations being asked to step forward in formal collaborative arrangements that allow them to operate at scale; and
- Developing strategic commissioning through systems with a focus on population health outcomes;
- The use of digital and data to drive system working, connect health and care providers, improve outcomes and put the citizen at the heart of their own care.

This document also describes options for giving ICSs a firmer footing in legislation likely to take effect from April 2022 (subject to Parliamentary decision). These proposals sit alongside other recommendations aimed at removing legislative barriers to integration across health bodies and with social care, to help deliver better care and outcomes for patients through collaboration, and to join up national leadership more formally. NHS E/I are inviting views on proposed legislative options from all interested individuals and organisations, including those who work in, work with or use NHS services, by Friday 8 January 2021. The document can be found here:

For information and NHS bodies should consider responding to the consultation on proposed legislative changes

Developments in the NHS

NHS Providers: Briefing on integrated care system proposals



NHS England and NHS Improvement has published a policy paper setting out their vision of the strategic direction of system working, Integrating Care: Next steps to building strong and effective integrated care systems across England. It sets out a series of policy and legislative proposals to accelerate the development of Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), including a focus on the leadership role of providers within systems, and at-scale collaborative arrangements between providers.

This briefing summarises the key proposals within the NHSE/I document, for NHS trust and foundation trust boards.

It can be found here: [201126-nhs-providers-on-the-day-briefing-integrating-care-final.pdf](https://www.nhs.uk/consult/201126-nhs-providers-on-the-day-briefing-integrating-care-final.pdf)

For information and consideration by provider boards

Developing system working through changes to the NHS financial regime



In June 2020, the HFMA published a discussion paper, which set out a number of areas where the association believed that beneficial changes could be made to the financial regime for the NHS in England, as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. The discussion paper was supported by a survey to enable HFMA members and other interested parties to share their views on the proposals.

As the NHS begins to set out its intentions for its future form, this short briefing builds on the discussion paper and sets out the key changes that are needed to support the continued development of effective system working. This includes a consideration of the contracting arrangements that are needed to underpin this approach as the financial regime is developed for 2021/22 and beyond.

This briefing can be found here: <https://www.hfma.org.uk/publications/details/developing-system-working-through-changes-to-the-nhs-financial-regime>

For information

Developments in the NHS	
HFMA briefing: The future NHS financial regime in England: recommendations	<p>In June 2020, the HFMA published a discussion paper, which set out a number of areas where the association believed that beneficial changes could be made to the financial regime for the NHS in England, as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. The discussion paper was supported by a survey to enable HFMA members and other interested parties to share their views on the proposals.</p> <p>As the NHS begins to set out its intentions for its future form, this briefing builds on the discussion paper and makes a number of recommendations for change as the financial regime is developed for 2021/22 and beyond. The briefing can be found here: https://www.hfma.org.uk/publications/details/the-future-nhs-financial-regime-in-england-recommendations</p> <p><i>For information</i></p>
NHS Providers position statement on effective regulation	<p>During the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, both NHSE/I and CQC scaled back their regulatory approach substantially. CQC paused all routine inspections and provider information requests, and introduced an Emergency Support Framework to respond to areas of critical risk or safety concerns. In October, they published their draft strategy for 2021 onwards, outlining how they plan to transform their regulatory approach. NHSE/I also suspended their core oversight activities during the pandemic and are now developing a system oversight framework to support the progression of system working priorities over the coming year. Now, as they begin to set out their future approaches within this new context, alongside the accelerated shift towards system working and new innovative models of care, regulatory and oversight frameworks are set to evolve considerably in the years to come. This position statement sets out NHS Providers' principles for regulation which will inform how they seek to influence the frameworks on behalf of trusts. It can be found here: NHS Providers</p> <p><i>For information</i></p>
The Health Foundation briefing: Improving the nation's health	<p>The pandemic has shown that good health is necessary for a flourishing society. The Health Foundation contends that effective recovery will require the government to prioritise creating the right conditions for people to lead healthy lives, using the full range of levers at its disposal. Following the government's decision to abolish Public Health England (PHE), the government needs to create a public health system fit to meet the challenges ahead. The new system needs the right strategy, structures and resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The strategy for creating an effective new public health system should include a cross-government commitment to level up health outcomes and enable people to live longer in good health. ○ The structures needed include an independent body to report to parliament on the nation's health, a national function supporting the public health system, and strengthened local and regional infrastructure. ○ The resources needed include, as a minimum, £1bn to restore public health funding to its 2015 levels and a further £2.5bn needed to level up public health across the country. Government should also commit to ensuring that public health funding keeps pace NHS with funding increases in future. <p>The briefing says that the transition to a new public health system needs to be managed carefully, to ensure that the reorganisation does not disrupt the pandemic response or lead to a weaker system in future.</p> <p>The briefing can be found here: Improving the nation's health The Health Foundation</p> <p><i>For information</i></p>

Disclaimer: This briefing paper is intended to highlight recent developments and issues within the NHS that may be of interest to non-executive directors, lay advisers and NHS managers. It is not exhaustive and TIAN cannot be held responsible for any omission.