

Fit for the Future: the NHS 10-year Plan 2025

In July 2025 the government published the latest 10-year plan for the NHS. It follows on from statements by the Health Secretary proclaiming that “the NHS is broken”. The key proposals focus on 3 themes:

1. From hospital to community: the Neighbourhood Health Service, designed around you.
2. From analogue to digital: power in your hands
3. From sickness to prevention: power to make the healthy choice

All of the health policy think-tanks have written a lot about these plans, and you can find references at the end of this briefing.



Establishing a Neighbourhood Health Service:

At the heart of the plan is the establishment of a neighbourhood health service - integrated, multi-professional teams working in local communities and often co-located. This will help deliver care that is preventative and supports those most in need, including those with long-term conditions.

The principles underlying the changes are that health services should be provided:

- As locally as possible
- digitally by default
- in a patient's home if possible
- in a neighbourhood health centre (NHC) when needed
- in a hospital if necessary

What does it mean for patients?

“A move from passive recipients of care to active partners”

There are proposals intended to make the voice of the patients drive improvements in services rather than just collecting feedback. How this will be implemented is not defined. The plan outlines the following:

- Expanding the use of the NHS App - managing your appointments, getting information and giving feedback
- A Choice Charter - league tables
- Patient Voice - more to be done by DHSC, abolishing Healthwatch, reform the complaints system
- Patient Payment power - withholding payment if not satisfied
- Collecting patient experience in a systematic and comparable way

However, just because you collect lots of patient experience information in different ways it will not automatically drive change in organisations that may have poor cultures and often react defensively to negative feedback from patients.

Some observations:

There have been previous long-term plans - in 2000 and 2014. If you have been around long enough you will notice that some of the authors of the previous plans had a role in writing and implementing the latest version, including Sir Ara Darzi, Sir John Oldham and Alan Milburn.

Despite this there is no mention that previous, remarkably similar initiatives, didn't work out as intended.

There is also no implementation plan included in the 169-page document. So, it could be said to be aspirational and presenting some shiny (but not new) ideas.

There is no new money available.

Staff at the Integrated Care Boards (the people that manage the 'system') are being reduced by 50%.

Plus ça change.



More information about the NHS Plan can be accessed from reports published by a range of health 'think tanks'

The Department of Health publication:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future>

NHS Confederation

<https://www.nhsconfed.org/publications/ten-year-health-plan-what-you-need-know>

The Kings Fund

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/long-reads/ten-year-health-plan-explained>

The Nuffield Trust

<https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/10-year-health-plan-for-the-nhs>

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