

NHS reform – what do the proposals mean for general practice?

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Health and social care Bill: a five minute explainer

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Background

- Department of Health and Social Care published proposals for new legislation in February 2021
- The Bill **largely focuses on the NHS** in England, but also limited proposals on social care and public health
- Sets out changes in four broad buckets:
 - ‘working together to integrate care’
 - ‘reducing bureaucracy’
 - ‘enhancing public confidence and accountability’
 - ‘additional proposals’ (eg on social care)
- Changes to be **implemented from April 2022**



Integration and Innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
by Command of Her Majesty

February 2021

CP 381

The changes try to resolve tensions in NHS policy



A story of several parts

- **Part 1:**

Changes to encourage **collaboration** within the NHS and between health and social care—including by removing the 2012 Act's rules on competition and procurement

- **Part 2:**

Changes to **national roles and powers** over the NHS—including to strengthen ministerial control over the day-to-day running of the health care system

- **Part 3:**

Important **things missing or lacking**—including a plan for social care reform

Part 1: collaboration and integrated care

Key changes include:

- **ICSSs:** 'Integrated care systems' to cover every part of England (42), controlling most NHS resources
- **2 'parts' to each ICS:** Integrated care board and an ICS partnership
- **CCGs abolished**, with ICSs taking on their functions
- **Places:** local partnerships with delegated budgets
- **Provider collaboratives** within the NHS
- **Removing requirements to competitively tender** clinical services

Part 2: national roles and powers

Key changes include:

- **Formally merge NHS England and Improvement** to provide ‘unified national leadership’ for the NHS
- **Broad intervention powers for the Secretary of State** over the functioning of the NHS, including to:
 - Formally direct NHS England in relation to ‘relevant functions’
 - Intervene at any time in service reconfigurations
 - Transfer functions to and from Arms Length Bodies (ALBs)
 - Abolish ALBs

Part 3: limited fixes to much bigger problems

Workforce

NHS Bill includes:

- Duty for SoS to publish a report every 5 years setting out roles and responsibilities for workforce planning

Public health

- Moving water fluoridation responsibilities
- SoS powers to direct NHSE PH functions

Social care

- Stronger central oversight
- Direct SoS £ to providers
- Stronger data collection
- New legal framework for the better care fund

Still missing:

Long-term workforce strategies for the NHS and social care

Cross-government strategy for reducing health inequalities (+ adequate £)

The plan promised for comprehensive reform of adult social care in England

What about primary care?

- The only mention of primary care or general practice in the White Paper is in saying that it will be represented on Integrated Care Boards.

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There is slightly more in the ICS design framework

- Each integrated care board is to have 'one member drawn from primary medical service providers within the ICS area'.
- An intention that 'primary care should be represented and involved in decision making at all levels of the ICS'.
- Confirmation that funding for primary care will flow from NHSE to the integrated care board, where the commissioning of primary medical services will be held.

Stay in touch

- BMJ article:
England's new health and care bill
13 July 2021 | by Hugh Alderwick, Tim Gardner, and Nicholas Mays
Link in chat box now
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