

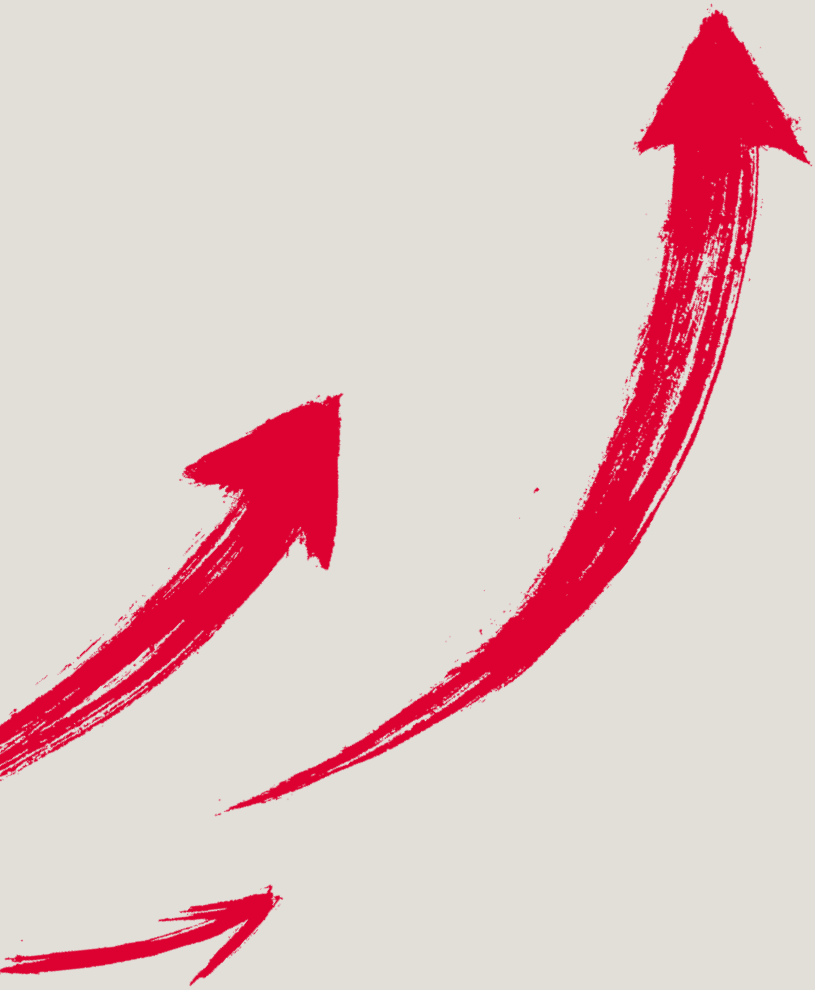
Working to build a healthier UK

Our strategic plan



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About us

We are an independent charitable organisation working to build a healthier UK.

Health is our most precious asset. Good health and wellbeing enables us to live happy, fulfilling lives and frees us up to achieve our potential. It fuels our prosperity – a healthy and productive labour force is the engine that powers our economy. And it helps to build a stronger society by enabling us to play a full part in family life, make social connections and contribute to our communities.

Our health is shaped by a range of factors including our early life, the work we do and the income we earn, the education we receive and the homes and places we live in. The health and care system should support good health and wellbeing by enabling everyone to access the high-quality treatment, care and support they need, when they need it.

Yet, good health remains out of reach for too many people in the UK. Improvements in life expectancy have slowed. We compare poorly with other leading nations on some important aspects of our health, such as cancer and heart disease. Deep inequalities in health between our poorest and wealthiest communities have widened. Meanwhile, health and care services are under huge pressure and struggling to provide access to timely, high-quality care.

It doesn't have to be like this. By valuing our health as an asset, investing in health and care services and focusing on the wider factors that shape our health and drive inequalities, we can build a healthier nation.

A challenging and changing context

These are turbulent times. There are unprecedented pressures on health and care services and widening health inequalities in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The volatile economic situation is jeopardising the public services so vital to the nation's health. The increasingly urgent climate crisis is also looming large.

People are struggling with the cost of living, and there are worrying signs of stalling improvements in life expectancy and health outcomes. Patients are waiting longer for treatment, and unmet need is rising. This is the legacy of a decade of underinvestment in health and care services, growing staff shortages and the erosion of the wider system of services that promote healthy lives. Nevertheless, public support for the core principles of the NHS remains high, despite a decline in satisfaction with services.

The drive for efficiency and productivity is strong, with new technology and better data offering huge potential. But encouraging innovation and translating it into widespread service change to benefit patients is not easy. Undercurrents of uncertainty will continue to characterise the years ahead. The scale of the challenge is clear and we're ready to respond to it.

Our approach

The Health Foundation is uniquely placed to address the challenging context and make a real difference to health and care for the long term. Our endowment gives us ambition, independence and stability.

Over our 2023–25 strategic period we will build on our achievements so far, drawing on our strengths, experience, partnerships and resources to make change happen.

By valuing our health as an asset, investing in health and care services and focusing on the wider factors that shape our health and drive inequalities, we can build a healthier nation.

We will play our part in multiple ways:

- we will build evidence by conducting, commissioning and mobilising the highest quality research and analysis, using the latest innovations in data analytics and learning from other countries
- we will use this evidence to shape policy and practice by influencing national and local government, encouraging long-term thinking and working with stakeholders including health and care organisations, other public services, investors, businesses and communities

- we will build skills, knowledge and capability by supporting people and organisations, including through partnerships, fellowship programmes, networks and events
- we will act as a catalyst for change by promoting improvements to front-line care, spreading innovation and supporting new initiatives where a large-scale, long-term focus is needed to make a difference.

Our multi-faceted approach is what sets us apart and defines our distinctive contribution. But no single organisation can achieve this mission alone. Everyone has a stake and a part to play in improving our health. We will continue to work collaboratively with partners to amplify our impact and build capability together.

We are guided by our values:

- We are independent
- We collaborate to make a greater impact
- We are informed by evidence and experience
- We bring a spirit of constructive challenge and an open mind.

“This strategy is an evolution aimed at strengthening the knowledge, capability, productive partnerships, reputation and trust that we’ve successfully built over recent years.”

Dr Jennifer Dixon
Chief Executive

Our priorities for 2023–25

We are ambitious about the impact we can have over the next 3 years.

Over this next strategic period, three core priorities will guide our work:

-  Improving people's health and reducing inequalities
-  Supporting radical innovation and improvement in health and care services
-  Providing evidence and analysis to improve health and care policy

The following sections set out our plans for each of these three priorities.



Improving people's health and reducing inequalities





Health is our most precious asset. It is shaped by the work we do, the income we earn, the education we receive and the places and communities we live in. The context of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and rising demand for services makes improving – or even sustaining – healthy life expectancy a real challenge.

Improving health and reducing inequalities requires a whole-society approach – we cannot do this alone. Our ambition is to create more favourable conditions that enable others to act. We want decision makers across all parts of society to understand and fulfil their potential contribution to building a healthy nation.

We will use our voice and insights to:

- 1** Increase decision makers’ understanding of the value of health for society and influence them to take a prevention approach to policy.
- 2** Increase public and professional understanding and promote policy and system action on the wider determinants of health.
- 3** Influence the UK governments to take a whole-government approach to tackling the wider determinants of health.

- 4** Equip local government with tools, evidence and insight to support them to exercise their full influence on the determinants of health.
- 5** Improve understanding of how business and investors influence health and catalyse action in the private sector.
- 6** Mobilise cross-sector action to change the narrative about what shapes our health and secure policy change.

Examples of our work to improve health and reduce inequalities include:

- exploring how the conditions in which we live shape how long we can expect to live in good health, including through our evidence hub
- supporting councils to work with partners from their local area to improve health through grant programmes such as Shaping Places for Healthier Lives and Economies for Healthier Lives
- raising awareness of health inequalities by supporting Health Equals to run its public-facing campaigns
- continuing to work with business and investors to support healthy working lives.

Good health enables us to live happy, fulfilling lives and frees us up to achieve our potential. We want this for everyone.

Supporting radical innovation and improvement in health and care services





Innovation and improvement are more important than ever if we're going to ensure that health and care services meet people's needs now and in the future. By 'radical innovation and improvement' we mean the deep-seated and far-reaching shifts needed in health and care over the coming decade, and the application of new and cutting-edge methods and approaches to drive change in services.

We want to give policymakers, system leaders, service providers, health care staff, service users and the public the insights, practical resources and opportunities needed to support these changes.

Through funding programmes and building partnerships, and generating, testing and sharing new ideas, we will:

- 1** Support the development and evaluation of promising new approaches to care so that they better meet evolving health and care needs.
- 2** Contribute to a thriving ecosystem for the generation, spread and adoption of innovation and improvement so that more good ideas have impact at scale.
- 3** Strengthen improvement capability and culture at organisation and system level so that health and care providers deliver change more successfully.

Examples of our work on radical innovation and improvement in health and care include:

- promoting better use of technology and data to support the development of new service models and of more effective ways to evaluate, adopt and spread innovation
- supporting regional systems to improve their approach to innovation, especially looking at health and social care in the community and at home
- leveraging our investments in established partnerships (such as Q, THIS Institute, IMPACT Centre, Flow Coaching Academy and *BMJ Quality & Safety*) to support cross-system learning and improvement
- exploring new types of funding, capability building, long-term partnerships and influencing to achieve our objectives.

We want to support our health and care system to innovate and thrive – to enable high-quality, efficient and equitable care for all.

Providing evidence and analysis to improve health and care policy





Policy decisions on health and social care are often only loosely related to evidence or rigorous analysis, frequently fail to incorporate a long-term perspective, and can have complex effects that aren't well understood. We're here to change that.

Pressures on health and care services in the UK are extreme and the policy context is uncertain. We want to see policy decisions on health and social care informed by the best available evidence and analysis, to improve our health system now and for the future.

We will focus on analysing and informing national policies affecting the NHS and social care in the UK, as well as how policy is interpreted and implemented in different local contexts.

To support more evidence-informed health and care policy, we will:

- 1** Analyse health system performance in the UK and how it compares to other countries.
- 2** Assess the overall approach to NHS reform and identify priorities for the future.
- 3** Assess the state of social care and inform national policy on improvement and reform.

4 Provide in-depth analysis on primary care policy and performance, including inequalities.

5 Produce projections of future health and social care demand, workforce, and funding to support informed public debate and ensure policy decisions take account of long-term trends and implications.

Examples of our work to improve health and care policy include:

- expanding research and analysis to assess the performance of the UK health system and compare policy and performance with other international health systems
- analysing the evolution of NHS reforms and new approaches to improving social and economic conditions shaping health
- focusing our work on social care on the care provider market and its workforce
- identifying options for improving access to primary care in England, as well as looking at policies to reduce inequalities in primary care
- led by the REAL Centre, producing future projections of health and social care demand, workforce and funding, alongside investing in long-term thinking to inspire new ideas.

We want a high-quality health and social care system for the long term – and our role is to provide evidence and analysis to help make this happen.

Evolving how we work in a changing world

As well as adapting and improving what we do, we're also concentrating on how we do it.

The Health Foundation has grown in recent years and is now an organisation of approximately 220 people. We take our role as an independent charitable organisation seriously, and we're doing lots to improve our day-to-day activities.

Over the next 3 years we will strengthen our operating model, delivering an improvement programme to ensure that our internal workings can best support effective delivery of our goals. We will develop our governance, people, processes and infrastructure, to help us work effectively, efficiently and flexibly.

We will continue to improve how we measure the impact of our spending and activity. We know that there are challenges associated with meaningfully measuring impact for an organisation like ours. We therefore aim to keep our impact management practices proportionate to the benefits they can bring to our work. For instance, we will strengthen and systematise our reporting, support staff to plan for impact and learning, and continue to commission external, independent evaluations of our major programmes of work and share the learning from them.

We will also continue to develop our thinking and practice on the ways we can have a positive impact on our mission through how we work, particularly through the following three cross-cutting themes. We know these themes are very important to our staff and our stakeholders alike, and we are working to embed these in all our activities externally and internally.



Equity, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion as an employer, a funder, and in our contributions to health and care policy and practice in the UK. This is a vital aspect of our efforts to build a healthy society. We will:

- conduct research and policy analysis on inequalities in society, health and care – where they are, who experiences them, and what the solutions might be
- leverage our role as a funder to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion are considered in the programmes and research we support
- seek to broaden the diversity of the people who work here and become a more inclusive employer by ensuring that our organisational culture is fair, values diversity and harnesses the abilities of all our people.

Public participation

We're developing how we engage and involve people – individuals and communities – in what we do. We want to embed public participation more consistently and more widely across our work, to realise the benefit of multiple and diverse perspectives. We believe this collaboration will help us achieve greater impact together, and will enable us to be more relevant and responsive to people in the UK.

Environmental sustainability

Climate change is the greatest threat to global human health, and we have a responsibility to act. We are committed to our environmental sustainability work, through both our research and analysis and through our grant programmes.

We are also taking steps to reduce our own environmental footprint, by considering how we manage our workplace and our events, by developing a responsible investment approach, and committing to making our endowment net zero by 2035 (as well as halving the carbon emissions of our investments by 2028).

Find out more

For all the latest news and developments from the Health Foundation, sign up to receive our email newsletter: health.org.uk/sign-up

The Health Foundation

t +44 (0)20 7257 8000

e info@health.org.uk

 [@HealthFdn](https://twitter.com/HealthFdn)

www.health.org.uk

Registered charity number: 286967

Registered company number: 1714937

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