

Policy Briefing: Together Now - Making Integration Happen

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Purpose of document

The Local Government Association (LGA) and the NHS Confederation, who are national membership organisations for the NHS and local government, have recently published a joint report about their case for change, and shared long-term ambition for an integrated health and social care system. The purpose of the document is to engage the Government, national organisations, and local leaders who work in health and social care to get the support needed for an effective action plan that will show how integration will happen at national level.

Summary of contents

The document sets out what vision the LGA and NHS Confederation have for the future regarding the integration of health and social care. It shows what they will do together to support local leaders to push for local plans for integrated care, and to make sure that there is progress that is real and constant. It identifies the existing barriers that councils and the NHS are having problems with at local and national level, and describes the main actions that the next Government must prioritise to support local leaders to make the integration a reality despite the existing financial challenges. The report shows the benefits of integrated care particularly for the most vulnerable groups of people such as people with disabilities, addictions, chronic illnesses and mental ill health.

Summary of outcomes

The report recognises that the current health and social care system is not operating to the best standard and not sustainable in the long term. It shows that very often, poor joined-up care can be upsetting and frustrating for service users and carers and therefore, an integrated system where the NHS and social care work more closely together will lead to improvements in: the productivity, quality and delivery of care, support and services; health and social care outcomes; and the experiences of health professionals working in health and social care. This will in turn will help to narrow the funding gap between health and care.

Summary of recommendations

Some of the recommended areas of focus necessary to achieve integration include:

- Better political leadership where national politicians respect the decisions made by local politicians about how best to shape health/social care services.
- Taking away the financial barriers and improving the existing NHS payment system to better support integrated working.
- Having health and wellbeing boards which concentrate on commissioning that is joined up across primary, secondary and social care.
- Developing new, integrated care models for the workforce that will help to bring about integration across various professions and organisations.

Further information and resources - NHS Confederation

<http://www.nhsconfed.org/resources/2014/07/all-together-now>

Document summarised on behalf of Healthwatch Merton by: N Apprey-Abraham

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