

# NHS England Long Term Plan

## A response from the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges

January 2019

### Introduction

- It is good to see publication of a **plan** which provides a clear sense of direction for the NHS
- We will need to consider the proposals in detail and this is an initial high level response
- The key clinical priorities are already well-known and are broadly supported by the Academy. It is for individual colleges to comment on the detail of proposals relating to their specialties.

### Overall view

- The Academy set out its aspirations for the plan in our submission and we therefore will judge the plan by the extent it meets those aspirations
- We said that the overall objective for NHS England's strategy should be to secure equity of access to health and care services across the population and wider health spectrum while focussing on reducing unwarranted variation in both processes and outcomes.

Priorities must be preventing ill-health – especially among children and the more deprived sections of society, improving clinical outcomes, reducing inappropriate care and unwarranted variation and integration of services including with social care.

This requires having effective enablers of workforce supply, digital health and information technology; appropriate roles, valuing staff, education and training and having sufficient headroom for change

- Judged against these criteria the plan has certainly addressed the issues identified by the Academy and that is very welcome
- We support the focus on prevention, health inequalities and reducing variation
- As with any plan, the test will be in how effectively it can be implemented. The Academy would identify two challenges:
  - **Workforce is rightly recognised as fundamental to the success of the plan. Until the improvements in workforce supply, retention and how staff are treated become real, the ambitions of the plan will not be realised**
  - **Timetables and targets, whilst right to be ambitious, must be practical and achievable. The service cannot be set goals it can never be likely to meet with the resources it has available.**

## Workforce

- Addressing the workforce issues is the key to delivery of the plan. In the workforce section we warmly welcome the clear statement about the need for additional staff and a more supportive environment. The commitment to improve the working lives of staff must be made a reality. We particularly welcome the commitment to expand the Healthcare Practitioner Programme for doctors
- We support a further increase in medical students and it is therefore essential that HEE is properly funded for this purpose
- We welcome the commitment to explore expansion of the MTI scheme. This is something the Academy has long called for and we would want to see this move quickly from exploration into concrete action
- Colleges will be keen to contribute to a National Workforce Group and we would hope to see the Workforce Implementation Plan produced as soon as possible.

## Other issues

- The Academy has always recognised that whilst additional resources and staff for the NHS are essential, there also needs to be radical change in the way services are organised and delivered. We support initiatives for new ways of working, better configuration and integration of services and removing waste and unnecessary procedures which can improve the quality and efficiency of the service
- Digital transformation is a key enabler for change. This has to get the basics right for patients and staff before it can deliver the benefits that are without doubt achievable
- The Review of Clinical Standards is important. It is essential that these are clinically focussed and avoid perverse outcomes and we are keen to be involved in further work.

## Conclusion

- Sustaining the NHS also requires proper investment in social care, public health, capital expenditure and education and training. We know that funding for this was not part of the £20bn settlement for the NHS but this investment is absolutely essential in the spending review - otherwise the good intentions of the plan will not be delivered.
- The Academy is very willing to play a wholehearted role with NHS England and partner organisations in taking forward the proposals to ensure the necessary improvements in healthcare as set out in the plan.